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THE
TEN
COMMANDMENTS

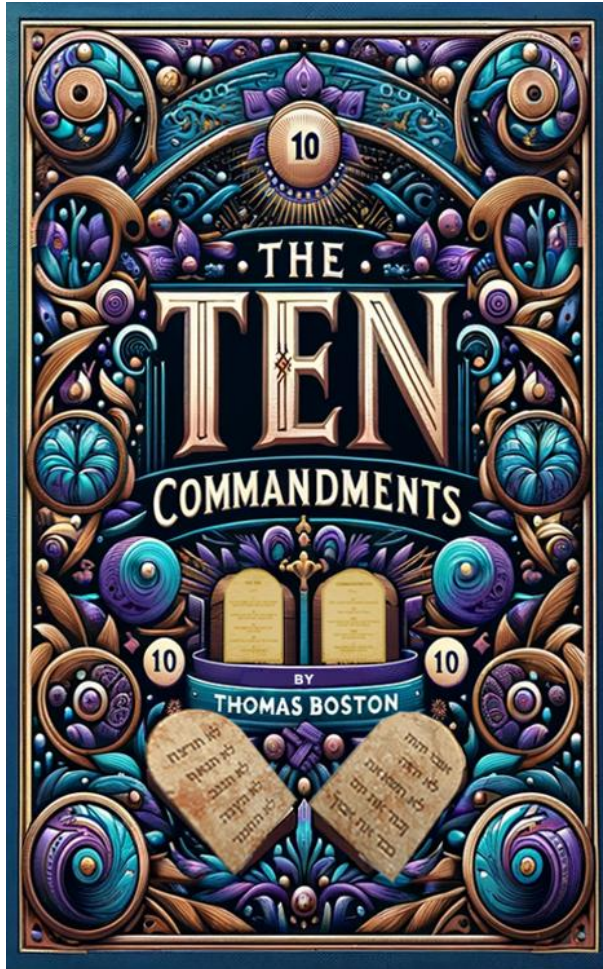
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BY

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The Ten Commandments

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OF THE DUTY WHICH GOD REQUIRETH OF MAN

1 SAM. 15:22.—And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?

THIS text is a reproof given to one that wore a crown, teaching him, that though he was Israel's sovereign, he was God's subject. Saul had been sent, by God's express command, on an expedition against the

Amalekites, with a solemn charge utterly to 'destroy all that they had, and spare them not; but to slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass,' ver. 3. The expedition was crowned with success. Saul having destroyed all the people, took Agag their king prisoner, and saved the best of the cattle; and when quarrelled by Samuel for this his partial obedience to the heavenly mandate, he pretended that the people had spared the sheep and oxen, which had been devoted to destruction as well as the people, to sacrifice unto the Lord in Gilgal. The words of the text contain Samuel's answer to this silly apology: Hath the Lord (says he) as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? importing, that obedience to the voice and will of God is more acceptable to him than all the sacrifices in the world.

In the words we may notice,

1. The duty which God requires of men, which is obedience. This is required of man, of all men, rulers and ruled: those whom others must obey, must obey God.

2. What they are to obey the voice of the Lord, whereby he manifests his will: it is his revealed will, whatever way he is pleased to notify it to them. Hence the obedience in the text is called hearkening; the soul first receiving the knowledge of God's mind, and then complying with it.

3. The excellency and eminency of this duty.

- (1.) God delights in it.

- (2.) All other things must yield to it, but it to none. Burnt-offerings and sacrifices, even the fat of them, are nothing in comparison of this.

The text affords the following doctrine, viz.

DOCT. 'The duty which God requireth of man, is obedience to his revealed will.'

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Explain it; and,

II. Deduce a few inferences for application.

I. For explanation, let us consider the duty which man owes to God, of whom he requires it, the rule of it, the properties of it, and on what accounts we owe it.

First, Let us consider the duty which man owes unto God. That is obedience. We are in a state of subjection to God. He is our superior, and his will we are to obey in all things. He is our King, and we must obey him as his subjects, by complying with all his statutes and ordinances. He is our Father, and we must shew him all respect, reverence, and affection, as his dutiful children. He is our Lord and Master, and we must yield him the most cheerful and unlimited service, as is our reasonable duty. He is our supreme Lawgiver, and we must receive the law at his mouth, every law and precept, every ordinance that is stamped with his authority, whatever is subscribed with a 'Thus saith the Lord,' readily obeying it.

Secondly, Let us consider of whom the Lord requires this duty. Of every man without exception, capable of knowing his will. The greatest are fast bound to his obedience as the meanest, the poor as well as the rich, Pagans as well as Christians, kings as well as subjects. No man can be free from this duty more than he can be a God to himself. Not a son or daughter sprung from Adam can plead

an exemption from this duty of obeying the will of the Lord. It is an easy yoke wreathed upon the necks of all, and is imposed on them by an indispensable law.

Thirdly, Let us consider the rule of that obedience. It is the will of God. His will is our supreme law. Not the secret will of God; for that which God never revealed to man, cannot be his rule; but the revealed will of God, Deut. 29:29. 'The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed, belong unto us and to our children.' Men may fulfil the secret will of God, and determination of his providence, and be deeply guilty, as we see the Jews did in crucifying the Lord of glory, Acts 2:23 under the guilt of which heinous sin that people groan to this day. But conformity to God's revealed will is our duty. Whatever is revealed in the sacred scriptures as the will of God, whether relating to what man is to believe, or what he is to practise, is to be performed and done, and that at our peril.

Fourthly, Let us consider the properties of this obedience which God requires of man.

1. It is sincere obedience to his will. Hence David says, 'I was upright before him,' Psal. 18:23. Hypocritical obedience may please men, but not God, the searcher of hearts. It was the commendation of the obedience of the Romans, that they 'obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered them,' Rom. 6:17. That sacrifice that wants the heart, will never be accepted on God's altar. God weighs not the affections of his people to him by their actions, so much as their actions by their affections, as in the case of Abraham's offering up Isaac, Heb. 11:17.; in that of the Israelites offering to go into the promised land, Num. 14:40 compared with ver. 42, 44 which was an act of downright disobedience to the commandment of the Lord,

notified to them by Moses. All obedience without uprightness or sincerity, is a mere counterfeit, an empty pretence, which will be rejected with abhorrence.

2. It must be constant obedience. We must 'keep God's law continually, for ever and ever,' as the Psalmist resolved to do, Psal. 119:44. Man is ever doing something, yet he must always abide within the hedge of the law. Our obedience to God is all wrong when it comes only by fits, as heat in an ague, or is broke off like those that go to sea for pleasure, who come ashore when the storm rises. God is unchangeable, and we must be constant and steady in obeying his will; at no time daring to act contrary to it.

3. It must be tender obedience. We must 'abstain from all appearance of evil,' 1 Thess. 5:22. We must 'hate even the garment spotted with the flesh,' Jude 23. We must not rub on this hedge, nor come too near the borders of wickedness. We have to do with a jealous God, whom whorish looks will offend, Ezek. 6:9. We cannot be too nice in obedience. We must not, in order to practice, examine whether it be a great or a little sin. All such distinctions are highly criminal, and inconsistent with the disposition of the person of a tender heart, who hates every sin of every kind, whether great or small, the wicked act as well as the wicked thought. A tender, a relenting heart, a heart afraid of sin, and cautions of the least wrong thought or act, is that which God requires, and the obedience resulting from it is the tender obedience here required.

4. It must be ready obedience, like that of those of whom the Psalmist speaks, 'As Boon as they hear of me, they shall obey me,' Psal. 18:24. We must do, and not delay; but be like the good David, who said, 'I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments,' Psal. 119:60. We are not to dispute, but obey; 'not

to confer with flesh and blood,' Gal. 1:16. It was Jonah's sin that he did not readily comply; and it was Abraham's commendation, that he did not dispute God's orders, but' went not knowing whither he went,' Heb. 11:8. The least intimation of God's will, either as to doing or suffering, must be immediately and readily complied with, notwithstanding all discouragements and carnal reasonings. God's call and command must drown the voice of carnal ease, and all arguments arising from Spare thyself. Does God say? we must immediately go whither he directs us: does he say, dome? we must instantly obey the summons, saying, Lord, we are here, ready to do what thou pleasest to order or enjoin us. Without this readiness and alacrity, all our obedience is stark naught, a matter of mere force and compulsion; and therefore unacceptable to the great God. whom we are bound to serve with a perfect heart and a willing mind.

5. It must be universal obedience, Psal. 119:6 in 'having a respect unto all God's commandments.' The whole of the commands of God have the same divine stamp upon them. They are one golden chain: whoso takes away one link, breaks the chain; if the connection be destroyed, the whole machine falls asunder. Hear what the apostle James says on this head, chap. 2:10, 11. 'Whosoever shall keep the law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.' Obedience to one command will never sanctify disobedience to another. The contempt shewn to one is a contempt of the one Lawgiver who appointed the whole. Hear what Christ, the glorious Legislator of the church, hath said on this article, 'Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.' Thus the transgressing of one of the least of God's commandments, if any of them can justly be called such, is a breach of the others, however

great and important, and that because the authority of God, that gives sanction to the whole, is slighted and contemned. Whoso makes no conscience of any one known duty, discovers hypocrisy in the rest.

6. It must be absolute obedience, like that of Abraham, who, when called to go out into a place which he was not acquainted with, went accordingly, 'not knowing whether he went,' Heb. 11:8. Subjects are obedient to magistrates, people to pastors, wives to husbands, children to parents; but absolute obedience is due to none but God: for we are to call no man father upon earth, Matt. 23:9. If their commands be contradicted by God's, they are not to be obeyed; but though God's commands be contradicted by all the world, we must obey them, as the disciples refused to obey the commands of the Jewish council, in not preaching in the name of Jesus, because they clashed with the orders of their exalted Master, Acts 4:19. The most unreserved and unlimited obedience is due to the will and command of the great Lord of heaven and earth, and that without exception or reserve, say to the contrary who will.

7. Lastly, It must be perfect; though now in our fallen state we cannot give any obedience that deserves that epithet. God may and does require of all men in whatsoever state, Matt. 5 ult. 'Be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' Though he accepts sincere obedience from those that are in Christ, yet he requires of them perfect obedience, and every imperfection is their sin. Though he has not suspended their justification on their perfection, yet it is what they naturally owe to God, whose law is perfect, and must have a perfect obedience performed to it, either by man himself or his surety. The believer, sensible of his utter incapacity to perform such an obedience to the holy law of God, renounces all his own sinful and imperfect, though sincere obedience, and betakes himself to the

complete obedience of his Surety, and presents it as his own to God, which he accepts.

In short, all true and acceptable obedience to the will of God flows from a right principle, that of faith and love in the heart. Faith is the hand that unites the soul to Christ, and obedience to God is the fruit of that union. Love is the spring and source of it; for he that loveth Christ, keepeth his commandments. And it must be directed to a right end, namely, the glory of God. We are not to obey God, in order to stop the mouth of a natural conscience, or gain applause among men, but to grow more like God, and bring more honour and glory to him.

Fifthly, Let us consider on what accounts do we owe this obedience to God. On these principally, viz.

1. Because he is our great and glorious Creator, to whom we owe our life and being. He is our Lord, and we are his subjects; he is our Master, and we are his servants. And therefore it is just and right that we should obey him, and conform to his will. He is every thing that speaks an authority to command us, and that can challenge an humility in us to obey. Man holds all of God, and therefore owes all the operations capable to be produced by those faculties, to the sovereign power that endued him with them. Man had no being but from him, and he hath no motion without him; he should therefore have no being but for him, and no motion but according to his will. To call him Lord, and not to act in subjection to him, is to mock and put an affront upon him. Hence it is said, 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?' Luke 6:46.

2. Because he is our chief end, the chief and last end of all being. The Lord hath made all things for himself; and of him, and through him, and to him, are all things. His glory should be the ultimate end of all

our actions, and the mark to which they should all be directed. He gave being to all things, that they might shew forth his praise. All the brute creatures, things animate and inanimate, do this in a passive manner; but men and angels, who are rational agents, are bound to do this actively; and they are designed by God for this very end and purpose.

3. Because he is the conserving cause of all. As he gave man a being, so he upholds and preserves him therein, by his mighty power. The preservation of the creatures is as it were a continued creation; and in order to it there is necessary a continual exertion of divine power, and a constant efflux of providential influence, without which they could not move and act at all. As therefore the life and motions of men depend entirely upon God as their upholder, so that life and those motions should be employed for promoting his glory, and promoting his will.

4. Because of the eminency of his nature, which founds his supreme dominion over us. God is the most glorious and excellent of all beings, and the source and spring of all other beings whatsoever. He is possessed of all perfections in an infinite and transcendent manner. Whatever perfections, excellencies, and amiable qualities, are scattered among the creatures, they all unite in him in the utmost perfection, and in him they shine with the most resplendent glory.— And therefore he has a just title to the homage and obedience of all his creatures.

5. Because he is our good and gracious Benefactor, from whose bountiful hand all our mercies do flow. It is in him that we live, move, and have our being. Our health, strength, time, and all blessings, spiritual or temporal, that we enjoy, are the fruits of his goodness and providential care. Now, this lays strong obligations

upon us to serve and obey him. We find the Lord aggravating the rebellion of the Jews from the care he had taken in bringing them up, and their miraculous deliverance from Egypt, Isa. 1:2. 'I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against me,' which clearly implies, that the benefits he had bestowed upon them were strong obligations to an ingenuous observance of him; and we find him threatening to deprive them of the blessings he had bestowed upon them, and to bring great distress upon them for the neglect of this duty, Deut. 28:47, &c.

6. Lastly, Because he is our Governor and supreme Lawgiver. He is a Lawgiver to all, to irrational as well as rational creatures. The heavens have their ordinances, Job 38:33. All the creatures have a law imprinted on their beings, but rational creatures have divine statutes inscribed on their hearts, as Rom. 2:14, 15. 'When the Gentiles, which have not the [written] law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts.' And they have laws more clearly and fully set before them in the word. The sole power of making laws does originally reside in God, Jam. 4:12. 'There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.' He only hath power to bind the conscience. And therefore to him obedience is due from all to whom he has prescribed laws.

I come now to deduce some inferences.

Inf. 1. Does God require from men obedience to his revealed will? Then, in whatsoever state a man is, he owes obedience to the will of God; and therefore, in the saddest of sufferings, even in hell, men properly sin against God,—For this obedience is founded on the natural dependence of the creature on its Creator, and the creature can no more be free of it than it can be a god to itself. Much more

God's exalting men in the world gives them no allowance to be vile. Whatever men's state be, God requires of them obedience to his will therein; and they are rebels if they with-hold it, and shall be dealt with as such accordingly.

2. The doing of what God does not command can be no acceptable service or obedience to God. Our duty to God is not to be measured by our imaginations, but by the revealed will of God. Therefore, when men make those things to be duties which no revelation from the Lord makes to be so, the Lord may well say, 'who hath required these things at your hand?' Nothing but what is commanded of God can lawfully be the object of our duty.

3. Those who never heard the gospel will not be condemned for their not believing it; for the revelation of God's will must go before our actual obligation to do it, Rom. 2:12. 'As many as have sinned without law, [that is, the written or revealed law of God] shall also perish without law.' This ought to stir up all who bear the Christian name, to be vigorous and lively in obeying God, particularly the great command of believing in the name of his Son; as considering, that whosoever doth not so obey and believe the gospel, shall be damned, Mark 16:16.

4. All men are allowed for themselves to examine the will of their superiors, whether in church or state, to see whether it be not against the will of God; and if it be so, not to obey it, 1 Cor. 10:15. The Bereans were commended for so doing, Acts 17:11. There is a difference betwixt subjection and obedience. These two may be separated in our dealings with men that are our superiors; we may and must refuse obedience to them in evil actions, while subjection to them remains in other things. Thus the apostles shewed subjection to the Jewish rulers, while they refused to obey their unlawful

commands, Acts 4:8, 9, 19. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, when they in any respect clash with his written word. To obey men's unlawful commands, is to sin against God. But in our relation to God, we owe him both subjection and obedience in all things.

5. Let us remember then, that we owe a duty to God, and that is, that we obey his will. Let us therefore lay out ourselves to do his will, and give that sincere, constant, tender, ready, universal, and perfect obedience to him in all things which he requires, looking for acceptance with God through the merits and mediation of Christ; praying to him, that he may graciously forgive all our acts of disobedience, and cover our very imperfect and sinful obedience with the perfect and complete obedience of his Son, who fulfilled all righteousness in the room of his people.

6. Lastly, Let believers be excited to yield this obedience to the will of God, as they have the most noble encouragement thereto, namely, that whatever God requires of them as an article of duty, there is a promise of ability and strength for the performance thereof contained in his word. Thus he says, Ezek. 36:27. 'I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.'—The Lord puts no piece of service in the hands of his people, but he will afford them sufficient supplies of grace for the doing thereof. Let them not, then, decline any duty he lays before them.

THE MORAL LAW, THE RULE OF MAN'S OBEDIENCE

ROM. 2:14, 15.—For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.

THE apostle here shews three things. 1. That the Gentiles have not the law; that is, the law of Moses, or written law. They want the scriptures. 2. That yet they have a law within them, they are a law unto themselves; they have the natural law, which for substance is all one with the moral law. Only it is less clear and distinct, and wants the perfection of the moral law written: several points thereof being, through the corruption of nature, obliterated in it. 3. How they have it. It is not of their own making, nor by tradition, but they have it by nature derived from Adam. The work of that law is written in their hearts; it is deeply inscribed there, and cannot be erased; it is such a work as tells them what is right and what wrong; so their consciences, by virtue thereof, excuse their good actions, and accuse the evil.

Now, this natural law is nothing else but the rubbish of the moral law left in the heart of corrupt man: from whence we gather, that the moral law in its perfection was given to Adam in innocence, while we see the remains of it yet with those of his posterity, who have not the advantage of the written law.

The doctrine arising from the words is,

DOCT. 'The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.

First, It is here supposed, that man always was and is under a law: for being a rational creature, capable of obeying the will of God, and owing obedience to his Creator by virtue of his natural dependence upon him, he behoved to be under a law. The beasts are not capable of government by a law, because of the imperfection of their nature: so those that will be lawless, seeing they cannot lift up themselves to the throne of God, who has no superior, they do in effect cast down themselves to the condition of beasts, whose appetite is all their rule. Indeed all the creatures are subjected to laws suitable to their various natures. Every thing has a law imprinted upon its being. The inanimate creatures, sun, moon, and stars, are under the law of providence, and under a covenant of night and day. Hence it is said, Psalm 148:6. 'He hath established them for ever and ever, he hath made a decree which shall not pass.' They have their courses and appointed motions, and keep to the just points of their compass. Even the sea, which is one of the most raging and tumultuous creatures, is subjected to a law. God hedges it in as it were with a girdle of sand, saying to it, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed,' Job 38:11. But much more are rational creatures subject to a law, seeing they are capable of election and choice. Man especially, being a rational creature, is capable of and fitted for government by a law; and seeing he is an accountable creature to God, he must needs be under a law.

Quest. How could man be under a law, before the law was given by Moses, for we are told, that the 'law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,' John 1:17?

Ans. Before the law was given at Sinai, all the race of Adam had a law written in their hearts, even the light of reason, and the dictates of natural conscience, which contained those moral principles concerning good and evil which have an essential equity in them, and

the measures of his duty to God, to himself, and to his fellow-creatures. This was published by the voice of reason, and, as the apostle says, Rom. 7:12 was 'holy, just, and good:' Holy as it enjoins things holy, wherein there is a conformity to those attributes and actions of God, which are the pattern of our imitation. Just; that is, exactly agreeable to the frame of man's faculties, and is most suitable to his condition in the world. Good; that is, beneficial to the observer of it; for, 'in keeping of it there was great reward.' And thus Adam in the state of innocence had the law of God written on his heart; and therefore it is said, Gen. 1:27 that 'God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.' This image consisted in the moral qualities and perfections of his soul. He was made after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. The Lord imparted to him a spark of his own comeliness, in order to communicate with himself in happiness. This was an universal and entire rectitude in his faculties, disposing them to their proper operations. But of this I spoke largely, when discoursing of the creation of man.

Secondly, There are three sorts of laws we find in the word.

1. The ceremonial law, which was given by Moses. This bound only the Jews, and that to the coming of Christ, by whom it was abrogated, being a shadow of good things that were then to come: a hedge and partition-wall betwixt them and the Gentiles, which is now taken down.

2. The judicial law, which was the civil law of the Jews, given also first by Moses, by which their civil concerns were to be regulated, in respect of which the Jewish government was a Theocracy. What a happy people were they under such a government! Yet does it not bind other nations farther than it is of moral equity, being peculiarly adapted to the circumstances of that nation.

3. The moral law, which is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, binding all men to perfect obedience thereto in all the duties of holiness and righteousness. The ceremonial law was given to them as a church in their particular circumstances; the judicial law as a state; but the moral law was given them in common with all mankind. But of these laws I spoke more largely in a preceding discourse.

Thirdly, This moral law is found, 1. In the hearts of all men, as to some remains thereof, Rom. 2:15. There are common notions thereof, such as, That there is a God, and that he is to be worshipped; that we should give every one his due, &c. Conscience has that law with which it accuses for the commission of great crimes, Rom. 1 ult. This internal law appears from those laws which are common in all countries for the preserving of human societies, the encouraging of virtue, and the discouraging of vice. What standard else can they have for these laws but common reason? The design of them is to keep men within the bounds of goodness for mutual commerce. Every son of Adam brings with him into the world a law in his nature; and when reason clears up itself from the clouds of sense, he can make some difference between good and evil. Every man finds a law within him that checks him if he offends it. None are without a legal indictment, and a legal executioner, within them. This law is found, 2. In the ten commandments summarily. 3. In the whole Bible largely. This is that law which the carnal mind is enmity against in the natural man, which is written over again in the heart in regeneration, Heb. 8:10; and that was fulfilled by Christ in the room of the elect.

Fourthly, As to the revelation thereof, we may consider three special seasons thereof.

1. It was revealed to Adam in innocency, and to all mankind in him. Not by an audible voice, but it was written in his heart: the knowledge of it was concreated with his pure nature; his understanding was a lamp of light, whereby he plainly saw his duty as it was revealed to him.

Note, (1.) That it is a part of the moral natural law, that man is to believe whatever God shall reveal, and obey whatever he commands. Accordingly God did reveal to him the symbolical law of the forbidden fruit, for the trial of him; and then the law so extended was the rule of his duty.

(2.) God added to this law a promise of life upon obedience, and a threatening of death upon disobedience. So it was cast into the form of a covenant, called 'the covenant of works.' This prohibition was founded upon most wise and just grounds. As, first, to declare God's sovereign right in all things; and, next, to make trial of man's obedience in a matter very congruous to discover it. For if the prohibition had been grounded on any moral internal evil in the nature of the thing itself, there had not been so clear a testimony of God's dominion, nor of Adam's subjection to it. But when that which was in itself indifferent became unlawful, merely by the will of God, and when the command had no other excellency but to make his authority more sacred, this was a confining of man's liberty, and to abstain was pure obedience.

2. It was revealed to the Israelites again upon mount Sinai, in ten commandments. For Adam having fallen, and so man's nature being corrupted, the knowledge of this law was darkened, howsoever the godly patriarchs kept up the knowledge of it. But in Egypt they had lost much of the sense of it, which made it necessary to be renewed.

3. By Jesus Christ and his apostles, the law was again revealed to the world, the knowledge of it being then much lost among the Jews as well as the Gentiles. And now we have it comprehended in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

Fifthly, As to the properties of it, it is,

1. An universal law, binding all men, in all places, and at all times, Rom. 2:14, 15. For when the Gentiles, &c.

2. It is a perfect law, comprehending the whole of man's duty to God, and to his neighbour. There were no new duties added to it by Christ, for it was perfect before. So says the Psalmist, Psal. 19:7. 'The law of the Lord is perfect.'

3. It is indispensable and perpetual, Luke 16:17; 'It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail,' Matt. 5:18; 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.'

Lastly, For what use is the law revealed? I answer,

1. It was revealed at first, that man by obedience to it might be justified; but now it is not revealed for that end, seeing no man by obedience to it can obtain justification: For 'that the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh,' Rom. 8:3. 'Since the fall no mere man can attain happiness by the law; for all are guilty of sin, and cannot possibly yield that perfect obedience which the law requires. 'For there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not,' Eccl. 7:20. 'In many things we offend all.' Yet it is of use,

(1.) To all men in general. It is of a threefold use.

[1.] To let all men know what the holy will of God and their duty is, Micah 6:8. 'He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?'

[2.] To let all see their inability to keep it, and so to humble them in the sense of their sin. 'By them,' says David, 'is thy servant warned. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults,' Psal. 19:11, 12.

[3.] To give them a clear sense of their need of Christ. 'Wherefore serveth the law?' saith the apostle. 'It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made,' Gal. 3:19. And says the same apostle, ver. 24. 'The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.' And it brings men to Christ, (1.) As it convinceth them of their sin. The prohibitions of the law convince men of their sins of commission; and the injunctions of it convince them of their sins of omission. Hence says the apostle, Rom. 3:20. 'By the law is the knowledge of sin,' Rom. 7:7. 'I had not known sin but by the law,' &c. There are many things which men had never reckoned sins unless the law of God had discovered them. (2.) By discovering unto them the dreadful wrath and curse of God that is due unto them for their sins. It tells them, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them,' Gal. 3:10; (3.) By awakening their consciences under a sense of their guilt, and apprehensions of their misery, and begetting in them bondage and fear, whereby they are brought to a clearer sight of their need of Christ, and of the perfection of his obedience.

(2.) To the unregenerate: Particularly it is,

[1.] For a looking-glass to let them see their state and case, by convincing them, that 'by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in God's sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin,' Rom. 3:20; and so to bring them to Christ, who has wrought out a perfect righteousness for their justification.

[2.] For a bridle to hold them in with its commands and threatenings, who otherwise would regard nothing. 'The law (says the apostle) is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners,' &c. 1 Tim. 1:9.

[3.] For a scourge, vexing and tormenting their consciences, and making them uneasy in a sinful course, rendering them inexcusable, and laying them under the curse.

(3.) To them that are in Christ. It serves,

[1.] To magnify Christ unto them, shewing them their obligation to him for fulfilling it in their stead. 'O wretched man that I am! (says the apostle); who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord,' Rom. 7:24, 25. 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith,' Gal. 3:13, 14.

[2.] To be a rule of life unto them, wherein they may express their gratitude by obeying the law of Christ. So the law leads to Christ as a Redeemer from its curse and condemnation, and he leads back to the law as a directory, the rule and standard of their obedience to him.

Object. But does not the apostle say, Rom. 6:14. 'Ye are not under the law but under grace?' and Gal. 5:22, 23. 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, &c.—against such there is no law?'

Ans. Believers are not under the law as a covenant of works, to be either justified or condemned thereby. For the apostle says, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,' Gal. 3:13; and that there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.' They are neither under the commanding nor the condemning power of that law, seeing Christ has given perfect obedience to it as a covenant of works, so that under that character it can have nothing to demand of them; and has fully satisfied all its demands in point of punishment, having suffered the very penalty threatened therein. So that as a covenant of works they are entirely delivered from it. And as to the fruits of the Spirit in them, they are the product of the Spirit, agreeable to the will and law of God; and no law can be against them, seeing they are agreeable to the very letter and spirit thereof. But believers are still under the law as a rule of life, according to which they are to regulate their hearts and lives. It is the pole star that must direct their course to heaven, and is of singular use to provoke and excite them to gratitude to Christ, who hath perfectly fulfilled it in their room and stead.

I shall conclude with drawing a few inferences from what has been said.

Inf. 1. That the Pope is Antichrist, and that man of sin, who shews himself as if he were God, by commanding things contrary to and inconsistent with the moral law, 2 Thess. 2:3, 4. The Papists add canons and traditions to the moral law, as if it were in itself an imperfect rule of manners. This is taxing God's wisdom and goodness, as if he knew not to make his own laws, or would not give

a sufficient and complete rule to his creatures. This is a provoking sin in the sight of God; and a most dangerous thing it is to add to or impair his holy law. See Rev. 22:18, 19.

2. Is the moral law the rule of our obedience to which we ought to conform ourselves in heart and conversation? Then what ground of reproof is there here to many among you! Are there not many who cast God's words behind their backs, and trample upon his commandments? Some set up their carnal wisdom, as the standard and rule of their actions, and regulate themselves by the dictates of their corrupt reason. Others subject themselves to the law of their lusts and passions. They study to fulfil the desires of their fleshly mind, and to gratify their sensual appetite; but have no regard to the holy law of God. They break all these cords, and cast all the divine commands from them. This their way is their great sin and folly, exposes them to the wrath of God, and sooner or later will bring down Heaven's vengeance on their guilty heads.

3. It is necessary that the law be preached, in order to convince men of their sin, and inability to yield perfect obedience to it, that they may betake themselves to Jesus Christ, who hath fulfilled all righteousness for every one that will come to him for deliverance from sin and the wrath to come. It is necessary to be studied and known by all who would attain to true holiness both in heart and life, which principally lies in a sincere and upright obedience to the whole law of God, in dependence upon the grace that is in Jesus Christ. The law is a lamp to their feet, and a light to their path; and the more they study it in its spirituality and extent, the more vigorously will they press after conformity to it.

4. Let us remember we are under a law in whatever case we be; and therefore our actions are a seed that will have a proportionable

harvest. And there will be a day of judgment wherein every man's works and actions will be narrowly examined. Let us therefore study to conform ourselves to the holy law of God, being holy as God is holy, and exercising ourselves to keep consciences void of offence both towards God and towards man.

THE MORAL LAW SUMMARILY COMPREHENDED IN THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

MATTH. 19:17.—If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments.

THIS is Christ's answer to a self-justiciary, who expected life by the works of the law. Christ, to convince him of his folly, sends him to the law, saying, If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

There are only two things which I take notice of here for our purpose. 1. That by the commandments are understood the ten commandments, ver. 18 where several of them are specified. 2. That under these commandments he comprehends the whole moral law; for this resolution of the young man's question is founded on that, Gal. 3:12. 'The man that doth them shall live in them;' compared with ver. 10. 'For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse.' The man had deceived himself in taking the commandments only according to the letter, and therefore thought he had kept them; but Christ finds him out new work in these commandments, which he had not thought of.

The doctrine I observe from the text is,

DOCT. 'The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.'

In discoursing from this subject, I shall shew,

I. How the commandments were given.

II. Why the law was thus given and renewed.

III. How the moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commands.

IV. Apply.

I. I shall shew how the moral law or ten commandments, were given. There are ten commandments, not more nor fewer, as appears from Deut. 10:4 where they are expressly called ten. And therefore the papists, who in some sort leave out the second, split the tenth into two, to make up the number. They were given to the Israelites after they came out of their Egyptian bondage; for they that cast off Satan's yoke, must take on the Lord's. They were given two ways.

1. By an audible voice from the Lord on mount Sinai, accompanied with great terror. Never was law given in such a solemn manner, with such dread and awful majesty, Exod. 19 Deut. 4:5. Heb. 12:18. The people were commanded to wash their clothes before the law was delivered to them. By this, as in a type, the Lord required the sanctifying of their ears and hearts to receive it. There were bounds and limits set to the mount, that it might breed in the people dread and reverence to the law, and to God the holy and righteous Lawgiver. There were great thunderings and lightnings. The artillery of heaven was shot off at that solemnity, and therefore it is called 'a fiery law.' The angels attended at the delivery of this law. The heavenly militia, to speak so, were all mustered out on this important occasion. In a word, the law was promulgated with the marks of supreme majesty; God by all this shewing how vain a thing it is for sinners to expect life by the works of the law; and thereby also shewing the necessity of a Mediator.

2. The ten commandments were written on two tables of stone, and that by the finger of God himself. This writing them on stone might hold out the perpetuity of that law, and withal the hardness of men's hearts. There were two tables that were given to Moses, written immediately by God himself, Exod. 31 ult. These Moses brake, chap. 32:16, 19; plainly holding out the entertainment they would get amongst men. Then other two tables were hewn by Moses, yet written by the finger of God, chap. 34:1; for by the law is the sinner hewed, but by the spirit of gospel-grace is the law written on the heart. These two tables were afterwards laid up in the ark of the covenant, in order to be fulfilled by Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. This writing of the law upon tables of stone is justly supposed to have been the first writing in the world; and therefore this noble and useful invention was of divine origin, and the foundation of all Moses's after writings, which have been so useful to the church in all ages.

II. I shall shew, why the law was thus given and renewed.

1. For the confirmation of the natural law. For though there was no need of such a confirmation of the law while man stood, yet such was the darkness of the mind, the rebellion of the will, and disorder of the affections and other faculties, that there remained only some relics of it, which that they might not also be lost, the ten commandments were given.

2. That the same might be corrected in those things wherein it was corrupted by the fall, or defective. And indeed there was great need of it in this respect. For the law of nature in man's corrupt state is very defective. For,

(1.) It cannot carry a man to the first cause of all his misery, even Adam's first sin, and discover the evils of lust and concupiscence that

lurk in his heart. Mere natural light can never teach a man to feel the weight and curse of a sin committed some thousands of years before he was born, or to mourn for that filthiness, which he contracted in his conception, and for those sproutings of sin in his nature. The apostle tells us, that this cannot be learned without the law, Rom. 7:7. 'I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet.'

(2.) The law of nature is defective, because natural Judgment is thoroughly distorted and infatuated, so that it is ready to reckon evil good, and good evil, light darkness and darkness light. Nature is ready to dictate unto men, that they are 'rich and increased with goods, and stand in need of nothing; while in the mean time they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.'

(3.) It is defective, because it doth not drive men out of themselves for a remedy. The sublimest philosophy that ever was did never teach a man to deny himself, but always taught him to build up his house with the old ruins, and to fetch stores and materials out of the wonted quarry. Shame, humiliation, confusion of face, self-abhorrence, condemning ourselves, and flying to the righteousness of another, are virtues known only in the book of God, and which the learned philosophers would have esteemed both irrational and pusillanimous things.

(4.) It is defective, because by nature in particular men never knew nor had experience of a better state, and therefore must needs be ignorant of that full image of God in which it was created. As a man born and brought up in a dungeon is unable to conceive the state of a palace; or as the child of a nobleman stolen away, and brought up by some beggar, cannot conceive or suspect the honours of his blood; so corrupted nature is utterly unable, that has been born in a womb of

ignorance, bred in a hell of uncleanness, and enthralled from the beginning to the prince of darkness, to conceive, or convince a man of, that most holy and pure condition in which he was created.

3. To supply what was wanting in it, being obliterated by sin. In the ages before Moses, the Lord's extraordinary appearances and revelations were more frequent, and the lives of men were much longer, than they were afterwards. In Moses's time they were reduced to seventy, or little more. These aged patriarchs transmitted the knowledge of the law and men's duty to their descendents; and by this means it was handed down from father to son; but by degrees men's lives were shortened, and following generations were involved in ignorance of God and his law. Therefore, to supply this defect, and to prevent the knowledge of it from utterly perishing, was the law promulgated at Sinai.

4. To evince and convince of the necessity of a Mediator, the people that saw not this defect. When the law was thus given anew, and men saw their utter incapacity to fulfil it, by giving that due obedience it required, they would come, through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, to see the necessity of a Mediator for satisfying the law, both as to its command and penalty.

III. I shall shew how the law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments. To be summarily comprehended in a thing, is to be summed up in it, to be abridged and compendised as it were. The commandment is exceeding broad, and runs through the whole Bible; but we have a summary or short view of it in the ten commands given by the Lord on Mount Sinai. The ten commandments are the heads of all the duties of the law largely contained in the whole Bible. They are the text which Christ himself, the prophets, and apostles expounded. They comprehend the whole

duty of man, Eccl. 12:13. There is nothing that God requires but may be reduced to one of these commandments. So faith is a duty of the first command, as it obliges men to believe whatever God reveals. The first commandment concerns the object of worship, requiring us to know and acknowledge God to be the true God, and our God, and to worship and glorify him as such, in heart and life. The second relates to the means of worship, requiring us to receive, observe, and keep pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word. The third respects the holy and reverend use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, words, and works. The fourth requires us to sanctify the Sabbath, that day which he hath set apart for his own worship and service. The fifth relates to the duties we owe to one another in our several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals. The sixth requires the preservation of our own life and that of others. The seventh respects the preservation of our own and our neighbour's chastity, in heart, speech, and behaviour. The eighth relates to the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others. The ninth requires the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, especially in witness-bearing. And the tenth requires us to be contented with our own condition, and to have a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbour and all that is his. And every commandment forbids whatever is opposite to or inconsistent with what it requires.

As to the rules necessary to be observed for the right understanding of the ten commandments, the following things are to be noticed.

1. They respect not only the outward actions, but the inward motions of the heart. The law is spiritual, and so reaches the inward as well as the outward man. It reaches the understanding, will, and affections, and all the other powers and faculties of the soul, as well as our

words, works, and gestures. The law is spiritual, Rom. 7:14 reaching the heart as well as the life; and therefore we ought to study conformity to it in both. The lawgiver is a spirit, and beholds all the motions and inclinations of the soul, as well as the actions of the body; and is grieved and offended with the impurities of the heart, as well as with the enormities of the life; and therefore he requires an internal obedience, as well as an outward conformity to his will. The law extends to the imagination, that most roving and unstable faculty in man, and to dreams that are bred there.

But some may say, What is to be thought of men's dreaming that they are breaking God's commandments, e. g. profaning the Sabbath-day, swearing, lying, &c. while really they are fast asleep, are not doing so, nor opening their mouths, &c.?

Ans. No doubt it is sin, and will damn thee if it be not pardoned, and washed away by the blood of Christ: For, (1.) The scripture condemns it. Hence the apostle, Jude. 8 speaks of 'filthy dreams that defile the flesh.' (2.) The consent of the heart unto sin, the delectation that it finds in it, makes a man guilty; and the soul is always a rational agent, and this consent is given to these temptations in sleep. (3.) A man when awake thinking what he doth is sinful, though upon the matter it be not, yet it is sin to him; e. g. a man taking his own goods, which yet he thinks are another man's, is guilty of theft before God: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. So is it in this case. (4.) As these things arise from corrupt nature, so readily they follow on some such motions that people have been taken up with them awake, or from a loose, carnal, and secure frame. They are looked on as sinful by tender consciences. (5.) As men may do something pleasing to God in a dream, so may they do something to displease him, 2 Kings 3:5. (6.) The law impressed upon the heart is designed to keep it even in sleep, Prov. 6:22, 23. 'When thou sleepest, it shall keep thee. For the

commandment is a lamp; and the law is light.' But ye may say, What if a man has been watching against these things, praying against them, &c. and yet in sleep falls into them? I answer, It is still sinful, in so far as the heart complies with the diabolical suggestion; and the truth is, by grace temptation is sometimes resisted in sleep, as well as when we are awake.

2. The commandments require perfection. No partial obedience can be admitted or sustained. The least defect is fatal, and exposes to the curse. This ought to be seriously considered, that we may see our need of Christ's blood and righteousness, to cover and atone for our obedience, and all its defects.

3. Whatever sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded; and where any duty is commanded, the contrary vice is forbidden. For instance, when God forbids us to have any other gods before him, he at the same time commands us to worship and adore him, the only living and true God. When he forbids the profanation of his name, he requires that esteem and reverence should be given to it.—When he forbids to steal, he commands the preservation of our neighbour's goods, by all the means that are lawful and proper for us to use. When he forbids us to kill, he commands love to our neighbour, and the preservation of his life by all lawful means. On the other hand, when God requires us to remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy, he forbids the forgetting and profanation of it. When he commands us to honour our parents, he forbids us to be undutiful or injurious to them. And indeed the nature of the thing itself requires this: for the duties enjoined by the law cannot be performed without shunning the vices which it forbids; and the sins forbidden by the law cannot be avoided, unless the contrary virtues enjoined by it are performed.—This shews the insufficiency of negative holiness; for we must not

only do what the law forbids, but perform what it requires; otherwise no obedience is given to it at all.

4. Under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden and commanded: For instance, when the Lord forbids us to kill, he forbids us also to beat and wound our neighbour; and all envy, malice, and revenge, are forbidden at the same time. When he forbids to commit adultery, he forbids also incest, fornication, and all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections. When he forbids to steal, he forbids rapine, robbery, and all deceitful dealing by false weights and unjust measures. On the other hand, when the Lord commands to have no other god but himself, he commands us to love him, to reverence, worship, and adore him. When he commands us to remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy, he commands us to make conscience of the duties of his worship and service. When he commands us to love our neighbour, he commands us to do all the good offices unto him which are in our power to perform. And when any sin is forbidden, all means and things leading thereto are forbidden. And so gross actions are named, not to pass over lesser ones, but to make them more abominable, while we see how God looks on them, giving them such gross names.

5. The prohibition of the effect includes also the prohibition of the cause, from which the effect flows. For instance, when the Lord forbids the profanation of the Sabbath, he forbids also all those works by which the Sabbath may be profaned. When he forbids uncleanness he forbids intemperance, drunkenness, gluttony, and whatever may incite thereunto. When he forbids us to kill, he forbids anger and wrath, malice and revenge, from which bloodshed does oft-times proceed. On the other hand, when the law requires chastity, it enjoins also temperance and sobriety, and diligence in those particular callings wherein God has placed men in the world, their

being means and helps thereunto, and the source as it were from whence they proceed.

6. The precepts of the second table of the law must yield to those of the first, when they cannot be both performed together. For instance our love to our neighbour must be subjected to our love to God; yea, we are commanded to hate father and mother for Christ, Luke 14:26. When our love to our parents and relations comes in competition with our love to Christ, and is inconsistent with it, then we are not bound unto it: and when the commands of men run cross to the commands of God, then God is to be obeyed rather than men, as the apostles shew, Acts 4:19.

7. Whatever God forbids in his law is at no time lawful to be done; and whatever he commands is always our duty. Therefore it is said, Deut. 4:9. 'Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life.' Yet every particular duty is not to be done at all times: for there are many duties enjoined us which suppose certain conditions; and if these be wanting, there is no place for the performance of the duties. For instance, we are commanded to honour our parents; but this supposeth they are alive or present with us, or else there can be no place for that duty. But whatever vices are forbidden in God's law, they are at no time lawful to be done. The negative precepts bind us always, and at all times. We are continually to shun and avoid every thing that is evil.

8. Whatever is forbidden or commanded with respect to ourselves, we are bound, according to our places and stations, to endeavour that it may be avoided or performed by others, according to the duty of their places. Hence it is said, Exod. 20:10. 'The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou,

nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, &c.

I shall conclude with a few practical inferences from this subject.

Inf. 1. This doctrine lets us see that the rule of man's obedience is not wrapt up in darkness and shades, is not ambiguous, or hard to be understood. The rule is not far-fetched, and to be found out by hard study and laborious inquiry. No; it is plain and obvious to the common sense and reason of mankind. It is contained in ten plain words, and explained and illustrated in every book of the Bible. Nay, it is in some measure written on the hearts of all men; every son and daughter of Adam has some remains of it written on their hearts, which all the boisterous and dashing waves of corruption have never been able to efface. We may say of it, as the apostle does of the gospel, The rule of thy obedience, O man, 'is nigh thee, even in thy heart and in thy mouth.' So that it is in vain to pretend ignorance of this rule. All pretences of ignorance in this matter are mere affectation, and most unaccountable.

2. What matter of regret is it, that in a land of light, where the Bible is, which contains in it this rule of obedience, and enforces it with the strongest motives, people should be so ignorant of what is so much their interest and advantage to know! They are wofully ignorant of both the law of God, and the spirituality and extent thereof; and pay no manner of respect to it in their heart or practice.

3. The law is perfect, and requires a full conformity thereto. It requires the utmost perfection in every duty, and forbids the least degree of every sin. So that life and salvation are absolutely unattainable by it, since no man can perform such an obedience to it as it requires. Our salvation is suspended in obedience to the law; which since we cannot perform, let us be induced to betake ourselves

to the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, by which the law is magnified and made honourable, and with which God is well pleased; and will be pleased with every sinner that takes the benefit thereof.

4. The commandment is exceeding broad, reaching to every motion, desire, and affection of the heart, as well as to every action we perform. It is a rule both for our hearts and our lives. Let us then study to know this holy law of God in its spirituality and extent, and yield that obedience to it which it requires; sincere, flowing from right principles in the heart, and directed to right ends; universal, in respect of parts, without mincing; cheerful, in respect of the manner; and constant and perpetual, as to the duration. And the Lord give us understanding in all things, to know and do our duty, to the glory of his name.

LOVE TO GOD AND OUR NEIGHBOUR, THE SUM OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

MATTH. 22:37, 38, 39.—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

MARK 12:30.—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,—with all thy strength.

THIS is an answer made by our Lord to a captious question put to him by a learned scribe. If Christ had pitched on any particular

command of the ten, the lawyer, for so the querist is called, would certainly have excepted in some other, and accused him of villifying some other commands; but Christ gives the summary of both tables of the law, yea, of the whole scriptures touching a holy life: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c. In which words may be noticed,

1. The sum of the first table of the law that is, love to the Lord, and that such love is superior and transcendent; such love as gives the whole man to the Lord, with all the strength of all the powers of soul and body.

2. The sum of the second table; that is, love to our neighbour, and that such love as we bear to ourselves, (but not as to God,) sincere and constant.

3. Christ compares the two together, shewing that love to God is the command first to be looked unto, and by which the other is regulated, whether as to loving ourselves or our neighbour. The second is like unto it, as having the same authority, and must be joined with the first, and is the fountain of acceptable obedience to the second-table commands, as the first is the true spring of acceptable obedience to the first table duties.

4. He shews the whole law and the doctrine of the prophets, touching holiness, to depend on these as the sum of all.

The doctrine arising from the words is,

DOCT. 'The sum of the ten commandments is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbour as ourselves.'

The sum of all the commands (ye see) is love. So the ten commandments are the law of love; they are a law that is chiefly conversant about the heart, which is the seat of love. The scope of them is to unite men to God and to one another; for there is no such cement of hearts as holiness.

The text and doctrine consists of two parts.

I. The sum of the first table of the law is love to God.

II. The sum of the second is love to our neighbour.

I. The sum of the first table of the law is love to God.

Here I shall shew,

1. The ingredients of this love to God, whereof it is made up.

2. The properties of it.

3. Why this love is due to God.

4. How love to the Lord stands in relation to other commands.

5. Lastly, Apply.

First, I shall shew the ingredients of this love to God, whereof it is made up.

1. Knowledge of him. An unseen but not an unknown God can be loved with all the heart, soul, strength, and mind. Ignorant souls cannot love God; what the eye sees not, the heart likes not: Hell fire may have heat without light: but all heavenly fire has light as well as heat. Thou must know God. (1.) Who he is to wit, the Lord Jehovah, the one God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. These are

the object of divine love. (2.) What he is in his attributes, as an infinite, eternal and unchangeable Being. Comprehend him ye cannot, but apprehend him ye must, as he has revealed himself. And so when love is shed abroad in the heart, the veil is first taken from the eyes.

2. Chusing him for our God, our chief good and portion, Psal. 73:25. 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.' Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart. If we love him not above all, we do not truly love him; if we chuse him not for our portion, we love him not above all. The soul that loves the Lord, sees that in him which may satisfy it, nothing out of him that is necessary to make the soul happy. Hence it does, by choice, take up its everlasting rest in him, and finds a match to itself in him.

3. Cleaving to him as our God: Love the Lord thy God. Love is a uniting thing; it makes the soul cleave to the object. Thou must cleave to the Lord, to his ways, word, &c. Not to be separated from him by whatsoever wedge the devil or the world may drive. Not to be bribed from him, nor boasted either, Cant. 8:7. 'Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.' And cleave to him as thy God; for so he will be loved. He must be thy God, before thou canst love him aright. Thus was it with Adam, and Christ; and thus it is with believers.

Hence it is evident, (1.) That faith is the first spring of all true obedience. There is no obedience but from love, no love but from faith, whereby God becomes our God.—How can it otherwise be? for although God is in himself the chief good, if he be not ours, the more perfect Being he is, the more terrible an enemy he is.

(2.) The way prescribed by God himself for us to attain love to him, is to apprehend him by faith to be our God; which now can be no

otherwise but by faith in Christ. So that to love God, that he may love us, is a preposterous method. But let us labour to embrace Christ, and so to believe God loves us in him; then shall the heart natively flow out in love to him, 1 John 4:19; 'We love him, because he first loved us.'

4. High thoughts and a transcendent esteem of him, Cant. 5:10. 'My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.' He is the best of beings, the most amiable and lovely, that shines with unparalleled perfections; and therefore is to have the supreme place in our estimation as well as affections. Here our esteem cannot go too high, more than we can reach beyond what is infinite. We cannot launch out too far in admiration of his glory. Thus should we highly and honourably think of him as the best and greatest. It is a sad character of the wicked man, Psal. 10:4 that 'God is not in all his thoughts.'

5. Desire towards him, Psal. 73:25. Whatever other desires we have, the main stream of our desires must run towards the Lord, Psal. 27:4 to the enjoyment of him in this life, and the perfect enjoyment of him hereafter; so that God not being perfectly enjoyed here, it is natural to the lovers of God to desire to 'be with Christ,' Phil. 1:23; 2 Thess. 3:5.

6. Lastly, Complacency in him, Cant. 1:13. The soul must delight in him, have a pleasure in him. The lover of the Lord is well pleased there is such a being, well pleased with all his attributes, all his relations to us, all his words, ways, and works. And the want of this makes men haters of God in the scripture-sense.

Secondly, I shall shew the properties of this love required of us. It is,

1. Sincere, not in word and tongue only, shewing much love, Prov. 23:26, but inwardly, our hearts being with him, to him, and for him.
2. Most strong and vigorous, even as much as we are capable of, all the strength we are masters of. Love may be sincere, though not most intense, and that the gospel may accept: but the law requires a perfection of degrees as well as of parts. The greatest fervour of affection is due to God, and the greatest ardency of love, beyond which we cannot go.
3. Pure and absolute for himself. Not that we are not to love God as our benefactor, Psal. 116:11 but we must love him also and mainly for those excellencies that are in him, Cant. 1:3 for his truth, justice, mercy, holiness, &c.
4. A superlative and transcendent love. We must love God above all creatures whatsoever, ourselves or others, Luke 14:26. And so must all other loves be swallowed up in his; we must love nothing beside him, but for him, and in due subordination to him.
5. An intelligent love, Mark 12:33. We must love him as those that see good cause to love him. There is no blindness in this love; for there are no faults in the object to be hid; but the better we see, the more we love.
6. Lastly, An efficacious working love, 1 John 3:18. Therefore says the apostle, Rom. 13:10. 'Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore 'love is the fulfilling of the law.' Love devotes the whole man to God, to serve his glory in the world, Rom. 14:7, 8 and makes him ready to forego what is dearest to him in the world for God, Acts 20:24 and sets a man on doing and suffering at his call.

Thirdly, I will shew why this love is due to God. It is due because of his transcendent excellency, and absolute loveliness. There is nothing in him but what is good; all goodness is in him, and nothing wanting; and each part of goodness is in him infinitely. No love, then, is suitable to him but such a love. There is nothing lovely in the creatures, but what is eminently in him, Matth. 19:17; but there is something wanting in all the creatures, that must stint our love.

Fourthly, I shall shew how love to the Lord stands in relation to other commands.

1. It is the chief duty. It is what God mainly requires, and what we ought mainly to aim at. It is the end, to which even faith itself is but the mean, and in that respect is by the apostle preferred to all others, 1 Cor. 13.

2. It is the comprehensive duty of all, Rom. 13:10. As is our love, so will our obedience be. Were our love perfect, our obedience would be so too. It is the fruitful womb out of which proceed all other duties.

3. It is an universal duty; it goes through all. Whatever acceptable service we do, must be done in love; and if it be not done so, it is not accepted. Other duties are the meat, but this is the salt to season all.

Fifthly, I shall deduce some inferences from what has been said.

- Inf. 1. What a sweet law is the law of God, that law of love! how rational! how drawing! Did ever prince make a law for his subjects to love him? But God has made such a law: and all his loyal subjects cheerfully obey it, and find their advantage in it.

2. See the excellency of the love of God. The whole law is comprised in love. Would ye have the most short way to obedience? then love

the Lord. Take a hold of this master-link, and ye will draw the whole chain after you. He that loveth God, will keep his commandments; for love is the fulfilling of the law.

3. How little obedience or true holiness is there in the world? for how little love to God is there? Alas for the cold hearts that make benumbed hands and feet! Did men love God as he deserves and requires to be loved, could they break his commandments, and live in such carelessness and unconcern about God and his laws, and the important concerns of their souls, as the generality do? Alas! the coldness of professors in the cause of God, is a melancholy evidence that love to him is at a low ebb amongst us.

4. What an absurd thing is the device of supererogating, and doing more than the law requires? We are required to love God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind? Is it possible to go further than that? Nay, can any man attain to such a perfect love? No person that truly loves God can possibly think he exceeds the pitch of loving him required in the law. On the contrary, it is matter of grief to him that he cannot love him enough. Any measure he has attained proves unsatisfying. He will still desire and labour to have his love more increased, and rendered more lively and intense. So far will he be from imagining he loves God more than it is his duty to do.

5. There is no true religion where there is no heart-religion: and there is no respect to the law, where there is no love. It is in vain for men to pretend to be religious, while they have no principle of love to God implanted and operating in their hearts. External obedience is of no avail without internal, founded upon and proceeding from love to God as its source. All true obedience is the fruit of love to God; and where love prevails in the heart, there will be a sincere respect to God's commandments, to his word, his ordinances, and institutions.

6. Let us all be induced to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind: esteeming and preferring him above all other things, acquisitions, possessions, and enjoyments; giving him the chief room in our hearts, delighting and resting in him as our chief good and upmaking portion; desiring to be more and more acquainted with him, and ardently longing to have copious manifestations of his love and grace made to ourselves; and in a sincere respect to all his laws, statutes, and precepts. And let us be ready to part with all we have, all our enjoyments and possessions, however valuable and dear they may be to us; at the Lord's call and command, whenever we can keep them no longer in a consistency with our love to God and his cause. We must forsake all to follow Christ; and lay down our life, rather than not love the Lord our God.

I now proceed to consider the second part of the text and doctrine, viz.

II. The sum of the second table of the law is love to our neighbour.

In discoursing from this point, I shall shew,

1. Who is our neighbour.
2. What is that love we owe to our neighbour.
3. How we are to love our neighbour.
4. Lastly, Apply the point.

First, I am to shew who is our neighbour. Every man is our neighbour, known or unknown, friend or foe, good or bad, Luke 10:29, 37. This neighbourhood is founded on two things especially. 1. That common relation that is among all as branches of one stock,

having one common nature, Acts 17:26. 2. The common capacity of all to enjoy the same God, and to meet in him; all men being capable of that happiness, because of their immortal souls capable of enjoying an infinite good. Hence see,

1. How the hatred of evil men and love to them may be reconciled, Psalm 139:21. 'Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? Compare the text, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. We have the common grounds aforementioned whereon to love all men; but forasmuch as sin is a depravation of that common nature, and the only thing that mars men's enjoyments of God, we hate their sins, though we love their persons; as we hate the moth, because we love the garment. Hatred to men's persons, whoever or whatever they be, is inconsistent with this command that enjoins the love of our neighbour as well as the love of God. But to hate and abhor their sins and evil deeds, is quite consistent with love to their persons. And agreeably to this, David's hatred to those who hated God, ultimately terminated on their sins, and not their persons.

2. We see here a ground whereon we ought to love our enemies. Their common nature with us, and their common capacity of happiness with us in the enjoyment of God, remains, though they do evil to us; and therefore we are bid pray for them, Matth. 5:44. 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you*.

Secondly, I shall shew what is that love we owe to our neighbour. In it there is,

1. A due esteem of him, 1 Pet. 2:17. 'Love the brotherhood.' There are no persons but who have something for which they are to be

esteemed. Some have grace, all have gifts, natural or moral, in greater or less measure, which are from God, James 1:17. None want precious souls, that are of more worth and value than the world. And the pearl must be esteemed precious, though in a dunghill.

2. Benevolence or good-will to them, Luke 6:31. 'As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.' We are heartily to desire their welfare for time and eternity, to wish them the best things. This good affection we are to bear to all. And this brings in with it a sorrow for the evil that befalls them, and joy in their good and prosperity.

3. Beneficence, doing them what good we can, doing to them as we would be done to, Matth. 7:12. Gal. 4:10. We are not born for ourselves, but for God and our neighbour; and therefore we should lay out ourselves to be useful in the world and to advance the good of mankind, so far as we are capable.

4. Complacency, or delight in them, so far as any good thing appears in them, 1 Pet. 2:17. 'Honour all men.' This doth in a special manner belong to the saints, those excellent ones, in whom should be all our delight, Psal. 16:3. Yet a delight in the good gifts of God in any man, and their amiable qualities and dispositions, is our duty.

Thirdly, I shall shew, how we are to love our neighbor: As yourselves, says the text. Here two things are to be noticed.

1. That there is an allowable self-love, a love that we may and ought to bear to ourselves; for that is the rule of love to our neighbour. We are to love our own bodies, by all lawful means to see to their welfare. For, says the apostle, Eph. 5:29. 'No man ever yet hated his own flesh: but nourisheth and cherisheth it.' And we are to love our own souls, by all means to endeavour their salvation, and to beware of all

that may obstruct it. For, says wisdom, Prov. 8:36. 'He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul.' We are to love ourselves in God, and for God; for he and not man's self, is his chief end. This becomes sinful self-love, when it does not remain in due subordination to the love of God, or destroys love to our neighbour.

2. In what sense we are to love our neighbour as ourselves? This hath a respect both to the matter and to the manner. As to the matter, this likeness lies chiefly in three things.

(1.) That we neither wish evil, nor do evil to our neighbour, more than to ourselves. (2.) That we wish all good to our neighbour as to ourselves, and be ready to do all we can to procure and further it. (3.) That we desire these things to our neighbour, out of a true respect to him, and his advantage, not our own.

As to the manner, (1.) We must love our neighbour as truly and really as we love ourselves. No man feigns a love to himself: so must our love to others be unfeigned, not like the devouring lips, and the wicked heart.

(2.) Earnestly, as we love ourselves, without coldness and remissness, Matt. 24:12. This is a fire that should never slacken, but burn intensely.

(3.) Constantly, without changing. Though they be not so favourable to us at all times, yet we are still to love them as ourselves. Our love to them must not be suspended on their love to us, and the effects of it: but it must glow to them, even though we meet with ungrateful returns.

Fourthly, I shall now draw some inferences from this point, the loving of our neighbour as ourselves.

Inf. 1. Great need have we to have our self-love rectified. For, as when the rule is wrong, nothing can be right that is regulated by it; so, when our love to ourselves is wrong, we cannot rightly love our neighbour. This is the love of companions in sin, who involve themselves and one another in one common ruin.

2. All the commands of the second table have respect to ourselves in the first place as our nearest neighbour. Thus, 'Thou shalt not kill' that is, thou shalt not kill thyself nor thy neighbour. So the duties of religion are reduced to these three, to 'live soberly, righteously, and godly,' Tit. 2:12.

3. Hatred of our neighbour is an universal sin against the commands of the second table; as love to our neighbour is the chief, comprehensive, and universal duty of the second table, so is the hatred of our neighbour, the chief, comprehensive, and universal sin against that table.

4. Several persons are reproveable here.

(1.) Those that in effect do not love themselves, but go on in sinful courses, ruining to their bodies, and ruining to their souls; who treat themselves as the wont of enemies. Men must answer to God for this; for their souls and their bodies are not their own, but the Lord's.

(2.) Those that love themselves only, and not their neighbours; who value not how it be with others, if it go well with themselves; and can comfortably build up themselves on the ruin of others. All seek their own things. This is a most base and selfish disposition, destructive of society, and very offensive to God.

(3.) Those that love some of their neighbours, but not all. One will say, Such an one is my enemy; be it so, but yet love to him is law; and

his enmity against you cannot dissolve the obligation of the law of God to love him. Love him that he may be thy friend; love him, but not his faults. The more need he has of thy love, that he may be reclaimed; as we run to the physician for love to the man, not to his disease. The loving and shewing love to one that is our enemy, is the fairest and readiest way to reclaim and gain him. If any thing will do it, this is the most sensible means.

(4.) Those that love in word, but hate in heart; that love like Joab and Judas: they that speak fair to a man's face, but would cut his throat behind his back. Such a practice is abominable hypocrisy, odious to God, and nauseous to every honest man.

(5.) Those that pretend to love their neighbour, but their love is fruitless; their neighbour is never the better of it. They say they love such a one; but they never give him good counsel, though he stands in need of it; they do him no service, though it be in their power, and his circumstances require it. Such love is all pretence, without substance or reality.

6. Lastly, They that do not love the Lord's people, who are their best neighbours, the substance and strength of a church and nation, who are, as Elijah was, 'the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.' Love is a duty to them above all men, for what they are in themselves, lovers of God, and all good men, and for the relation they stand in to God, as his people, his redeemed, and sanctified ones, who when the time of their warfare here is accomplished, shall be translated to the kingdom of glory, to the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Not to love them is a great sin, inconsistent with the law and love of God; and to hate them, especially on account of their goodness, is direct rebellion against

God, an insult to the Majesty of heaven, whose subjects and servants they are.

5. Let us study to love our neighbour, and to bury all strifes, animosities, hatred, and malice. For motives, consider,

(1.) That little love to our neighbour is a sad sign of little love to God, 1 John 4:20. 'If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?'

(2.) Consider the bond of one common nature, which should cement and knit together all of the same species.—Lions and Wolves do not prey on their own kind, but shew kindness to one another. As men are of one common nature derived from Adam, should they not love and shew kindness to one another? for they are strictly brethren, and are as strictly bound to love one another as such.

(3.) Consider the love of God and Christ to men. It was most free unmerited, unsought, and unsolicited. They loved not friends but enemies and rebels, who had taken up arms against their Creator and Sovereign Lord. Men had by their sin involved themselves in utter ruin, and could not help themselves. In such deplorable circumstances did God fix his love on them, and send his Son to redeem them from the curse of the law, and from the wrath to come, by laying down his life for them. And shall not such a glorious and unspeakable instance of the love of the great God, and his Son Jesus Christ, to the ruined race of fallen man, excite and stir us up to love our neighbour, and to do him all the service we can, both as to his temporal and eternal interests?

Lastly, How happy would the world be if men loved others as themselves? Suppose ten men; so love would contract ten into one,

and multiply one into ten. How happy would each of these ten be, who would have ten hearts to care for him, twenty eyes to see for him, twenty hands to work for him, and twenty feet to travel for him!

Let the Lord's people especially love one another. They are the Sons of God, and the brethren of Christ. God loved them with an everlasting love, and with loving-kindness he drew them to himself. Christ redeemed them at no less price than that of his most precious blood. The Holy Spirit is their Sanctifier and Comforter, and will abide with them for ever. They are members of one family, fellow-citizens, and of the household of faith. They are members of one body, of which Christ is the head. They have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one hope of their calling. They have all fled from one city, that of sin and destruction; and they are all travelling unto one heavenly country. They are all clothed with one garment, the complete righteousness of their Surety and High Priest. They are all the spouse of Christ, who is one. They are all brethren, children of the promise. Shall then such persons fall out by the way? Nay, shall they not dearly love one another? 'Be kindly affectionate one to another, (says the apostle), with brotherly love,' Rom. 12:10. 'Let brotherly love continue,' Heb. 13:1. Such love is a sure and infallible sign of your being the friends and followers of Christ. 'By this (says our Lord), shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love to one another.' Be at peace then among yourselves, and shew that ye are subjects of the Prince of peace, and heirs of the legacy of peace which he has left you.

THE PREFACE TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

EXOD. 20:2.—I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

SOME take these words, which are the first of that speech spoken immediately by God himself, to be a part of the first commandment, shewing who is the true God, that is to be our God. Our Catechism determines them to be a preface to all the commandments; and though they have a particular relation to the first command, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me,' viz. The Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; yet, seeing the first commandment has a common relation to all of them, and is interwoven with all the rest, and the words natively enforce obedience to the whole, they are set here as a preface to all the commands, like a magnificent entry into a palace, decorated with the arms of the owner. In the words consider,

1. The Speaker and Giver of these commandments. It is the Lord, particularly Jesus Christ, who gave this law in the name of the Trinity. This is plain from the scripture, Acts 7:38. Heb. 12:24–26. It was he that brought the people out of Egypt, and that appeared in the bush that burned with fire, and yet was not consumed, giving commission to Moses for their deliverance, Exod. 3:2–8.

2. The speech itself, wherein we have a description of the true God, bearing three reasons for the keeping his commands. (1.) From his sovereignty; he is the Lord. (2.) From his covenant-relation to his people, thy God. (3.) From the great benefit of redemption, and deliverance wrought for them.

DOCT. 'The preface to the ten commandments teacheth us, That because God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.'

But it may be asked, Why does the Lord make use of arguments to induce us to obedience? Ans. Because he loves to work on man, as a rational creature, according to the principles of his nature. Hence he says, Hos. 11:4. 'I drew them with the cords of a man, with bands of love;' and because he delights in no obedience but what is unconstrained and cheerful. It is truly matter of wonder, that the infinitely glorious God should be at so great pains to incline man to pursue his own happiness.

Here I shall consider the several reasons of obedience mentioned in the text and doctrine, and then draw some inferences for application.

First, As for the first reason for obedience to these commandments, it is in these words, I am the Lord, or JEHOVAH; that is, an eternal, unchangeable one, having his being of himself, and from whom all being is derived; Exod. 3:14. I AM THAT I AM. This is a very significant name, and denotes, (1.) The unity of the Godhead, that he is one true God, having no partner, equal, or rival. (2.) The reality and certainty of his being. Idols are nothing; all their divinity is only in the fancies and opinions of men: but God is a real and true being. (3.) The necessity, eternity, and unchangeableness of his being. All other things which have a being were once without being; they had no existence till he gave it them: and if he please, they shall be no more, but be reduced into their primitive nothing; and all their being was derived from, and wholly depends upon him. But he was from all eternity an independent and self-existent being. (4.) The constancy and perpetuity of his nature and will; I am that I am; i. e. I am the same that ever I was, and will be the same, without all mutability in my nature, will, and purposes. This name includes these four reasons for our obeying his commandments.

1. The infinite excellency and perfection of his nature, whereby he is the natural Lord of all his creatures, Jer. 10:7. He is infinitely above us, and so glorious in his supereminent perfections, that the view of them must natively cause us poor worms to fall down at his feet, and receive his commands; and makes our rebellions monstrous, more than if a glow-worm should contend with the sun in its meridian brightness.

2. He is Lord Creator to us, that gave us our being, and we are the workmanship of his hands, and are therefore to be at his disposal, as the pots are at that of the potter, Psal. 100:2, 3. Whatever we have, tongue, hands, soul, body, &c. all is from him; how can we then decline his government.

3. He is Lord Rector, supreme Governor and Lawgiver to us, whose will is our law, James 4:12. 'There is one Lawgiver.' This he is as Jehovah, the fountain of all being, which gives him an absolute and unlimited dominion over us. So that disobedience to his commands is the highest injustice we are capable of.

4. He is Lord Conservator of us, the Preserver of men, Rev. 4:11. Every moment we have a continued creation from him, without which we could no more subsist than the beams of the sun without the sun itself, but would immediately dwindle into nothing. Being then thus upheld wholly in our being by him, should we not wholly be for him?

Secondly, The second reason is from his covenant-relation to us, thy God, The word denotes a plurality; and so shews, that one God in three persons to be the true God, and that all the three are the covenanted God of his people, Isa. 54:5. 'Thy Makers is thine husband;' for the word is plural in the Hebrew. Here I shall shew,

1. What this covenant is.

2. How this covenant bindeth to the obedience of the commandments.

1. What covenant is this? It is the covenant whereby he was Israel's God before the giving of the law on Sinai; for this plainly relates to a former relation betwixt them, by virtue of which they were brought out of Egypt. This was then no other but the covenant with Abraham and his seed, Gen. 17:7 and 15:18 and by virtue of the covenant-promise to Abraham, it was, that they were delivered out of Egypt, Gen. 15:13, 14, &c. That was not the covenant of works, for it is still opposed to the law, Rom. 4 therefore it is the covenant of grace.

Under this covenant with Abraham all Israel according to the flesh were in an external manner, whereby God had a more special right over them than the rest of the world; and so is it with all who are within the visible church at this day. But Israel according to the Spirit, the elect of God, and believers, the spiritual seed of Abraham, were and are most properly under this covenant, and that in a saving manner. Rom. 4:11, 12, 13. So that this reason is not general to all the world, but peculiar to the church.

2. I shall shew how this covenant bindeth to obedience to the commandments. Not as if obedience to the commands were conditions of that covenant; that is the nature of the covenant of works. For mark, God tells them he is their God before ever he proposes one commandment to them; and for God to be the God of a people in the sense of the promise made to Abraham, includes the assurance of their complete salvation, Mat. 22:32. But,

1. The consent to the covenant binds to the obedience of all the commands. The covenant is, 'I will put my laws into their minds, and

write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people,' Heb. 8:10. So consenting that God shall be our God, we take on us the yoke of all his commands, to be for him only, wholly, and for ever, 2 Cor. 8:5. Isa. 44:5.

2. The honour of the covenant. Thereby sinners are advanced into a near relation to God. They become his servants, whose honour it is to serve him; his friends, whose honour it is to advance his interest in the world; his spouse, whose honour it is to be for him, and obey him; his members, whose honour it is to serve himself of them.

3. The privileges of the covenant, Luke 1:74, 75. Such are regeneration, whereby a new nature is given, to be a principle of new life, 2 Cor. 5:17. Justification, whereby the curse is taken off the tree, that it may be no more barren. Sanctification, whereby they die unto sin, and live unto righteousness; even as the curing of the lame and palsied man obliges him to bestir himself.

4. The great end of the covenant, which is no other but to restore fallen man to his primitive integrity, and to bring him to a state of perfect assimilation to God, Cant. 3:9, 10. The holiness required in the ten commandments is the kingdom and the throne, from which the devil had expelled and pulled man down. This covenant is entered into for restoring him again to that kingdom, and so binds to endeavours that way.

Thirdly, The last reason is drawn from the redemption and deliverances wrought for his people. The history is well known, and some of the leading circumstances of it will be mentioned anon. Here I will shew,

1. Why this deliverance is commemorated here.

2. What reason for obedience there is in it.

1. I shall shew why this deliverance is commemorated here.

(1.) To shew the faithfulness of God to his promise and covenant with Abraham, Gen. 15:13–16. And so he shews himself to be Jehovah by ocular demonstration, Exod. 6:3.

(2.) The strangeness of that deliverance. When the Israelites were groaning under their taskmasters in Egypt, and had no prospect of relief, the Lord raises up Moses to be a deliverer unto them. He sent him in before Pharaoh, to work wonders in his sight. The Lord delivered his people with a mighty hand and outstretched arm. He sent plague after plague upon Pharaoh, till he sent Israel away, blasting the fruits of the earth, killing the beasts of the field, the fishes in the rivers, and all the first-born in the land of Egypt; and when Israel went out of Egypt, God made the waters of the sea to part, and become a wall unto them; they marched on dry ground in the midst of the sea; it was a safe passage to the Israelites, but a grave to the Egyptians, Pharaoh and his host being overthrown in the midst of the sea. Now, this was a strange and miraculous deliverance, a mercy never to be forgotten; and therefore it is commemorated here, to bind them to obedience.

(3.) Because it was the greatest and most memorable benefit. They were delivered from cruel tyranny. They were slaves to the Egyptians who made them to serve with rigour. They had cruel taskmasters Bet over them, who put them to hard labour. All their male children were appointed to be killed, or drowned in the river Nile, their affliction and bondage was so great that they were made to sigh and groan, and their cry went up to heaven. Hence Egypt is called 'the iron furnace,' Deut. 4:20; and here it is called the house of bondage. Again, they were delivered from Egypt, a place overwhelmed with

pollutions and abominations. The Egyptians were gross idolaters, having 'changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to a corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things,' Rom. 1:23. They worshipped birds, and beasts, and creeping things; as the hawk, the ox, the crocodile; yea, they worshipped onions and garlic. Now considering how prone the Jews were to idolatry, it was a great mercy to be delivered from an idolatrous land. This was a signal and memorable favour. Joshua reckons it among the chief and most memorable mercies of God to Abraham, that he brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees, where his ancestors served strange gods. And may not this deliverance from Egypt be justly reckoned among the choice mercies of God to Abraham's posterity.

(4.) It was a late and fresh instance of God's kindness to them. Which leaves an imputation of forgetfulness of old mercies on man's nature for which God stirs them up, by the newest and latest, to obedience.

(5.) Because it was a type of the spiritual deliverance by Jesus Christ from sin, Satan, and hell. [1.] It was typical of the deliverance from the bondage of sin. Now, of all servitudes sin is the worst; for it enslaves the soul. Before conversion, says Augustine, I was held, not with an iron chain, but with the obstinacy of my own will. In this slavery the soul is distorted and drawn asunder as it were by the powerful cravings of contrary lusts and passions. [2.] Of their deliverance from Satan. Thus all men by nature are in the house of bondage. They are enslaved to the devil, who is called the god of this world and is said to rule in the children of disobedience. Sinners are under his command, and he exerciseth an absolute jurisdiction over them. He blinds their minds with ignorance and error; rules in their memories, making them to remember that which is evil, and forget that which is good; in their wills, drawing them to the love and

practice of sin, &c. [3.] Of their deliverance from hell. All men by nature are children of wrath, and liable to condemnation in hell for ever. Now the Lord Jesus, by price and power, delivers his elect from the state of bondage to sin and Satan, Heb. 2:15; and from the wrath that is to come, 1 Thess. 1:10. And this is done, not for all men, but only for the spiritual Israel of God, who were typified by the Israelites.

2. I shall shew what reason for obedience there is in this deliverance here commemorated. There is great reason.

(1.) Benefits received are most powerful engagements to duty, Rom. 2:4 and the greatest benefits are the strongest engagements. And no greater benefit are men capable of than that deliverance from the spiritual bondage which the godly Israelites had as well as the other, and which agrees to us New-Testament saints, Col. 1:13. 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

(2.) This deliverance is wrought for that end, and by that deliverance men are put in a capacity to serve the Lord, which otherwise they were not, Luke 1:74, 75. While they were in their hard bondage in Egypt, Pharaoh would not suffer them to go serve the Lord, but now they had nothing to hinder them from it. So when men are under the bondage of the covenant of works, they are withheld by the rigour thereof, from serving the Lord in an acceptable manner; but when once they are delivered by Christ from that rigorous bondage, they are made free men, and can serve the Lord in righteousness and holiness before him all the days of their life, having none to hinder them.

Fourthly, I shall conclude this subject with a few practical inferences.

Inf. 1. The ten commandments were not given to the Israelites as a covenant of works, but in the way of the covenant of grace, and under that covert. Ye saw it was Jesus the Mediator that spoke these, Heb. 12:24, 26.—Amongst all the reasons there is not one of terror; but the sweet savour of gospel-grace*.

2. The true way to attain to the obedience of these commandments, is first to believe that God is our God in Christ, and then to set about the performance of them; first to believe, then to do. The attempting it the contrary way, placing obedience first before faith, is entirely contrary to the Lord's method. Thus to believe, strengthens the soul for obedience.

3. All true obedience to the ten commandments now must run in the channel of the covenant of grace, being directed to God as our God in that covenant, Deut. 28:58. This is to fear that glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD. And so legal obedience is no obedience at all. This obedience is performed not for righteousness, but to testify our love to the Lord our Righteousness; not in our own strength, but in that of our Lord God and Redeemer; not to be accepted for its own worth, but for the sake of a Redeemer's merits; not out of fear of hell, or hope to purchase heaven, but out of love and gratitude to him who has delivered us from hell, and purchased heaven and everlasting happiness for us.

4. All men are obliged to keep these commandments, for God is Lord of all: but the saints especially; for besides being their Lord, he is their God and Redeemer too. So far is the state of the saints from being a state of sinful liberty, that there are none so strongly bound to obedience as they, and that by the strongest of all bonds, those of love and gratitude, arising from the amazing and wonderful obedience and satisfaction which he has performed for them. So that

the love of Christ will sweetly and powerfully constrain them to run the way of his commandments; for his commandments are not grievous, and in the keeping of them is a great reward. They will love him, because he has first loved them; and his love has flowed out to them in the crimson streams of their dear Redeemer's blood, by which their sins are expiated, and their guilt atoned. And those to whom much is forgiven, will certainly love much.

5. Holiness is the most reasonable course that men can take, and the breaking over the bonds of religion is breaking over the bonds of reason. God might have required of us obedience by his mere will, without giving any other reason; and in that case, men had been bound to give it at their peril. But how much sweeter is the command, and agreeable what he demands, when he enforces the requirement he makes by such engaging motives, as that he is the Lord, a being possessed of all possible perfection, of every glorious attribute and excellency, the author of all other beings, and all the amiable qualities and attracting excellencies of which they are possessed; that he is our God, related to us by a covenant, which he hath made with his own Son as our Surety and Saviour, and which is brought near to us in the gospel, that we may enter into the bond thereof, and the righteousness of which is brought near unto us, who are stout-hearted and far from righteousness, that we may accept thereof, and so be delivered from condemnation and wrath? How agreeable and ravishing is it to reflect, that he incites and prompts us to obedience, not by the authority of his absolute sovereignty over us, and undoubted propriety in us, but by the inviting and attracting consideration of the great deliverance he has wrought for us, of which the deliverance from the Egyptian bondage was a bright type! Can we reflect on the great salvation wrought for us by Jesus Christ, by which we were saved from all the horrors of sin and hell, rescued from the power of Satan, and delivered from the present evil world,

and the pollutions thereof; can we reflect on these great and glorious benefits, which afford astonishment to men and angels, and our hearts not glow with the warmest fire of love and gratitude to him who hath done such excellent things for us? Can we hesitate a moment to say, good is thy will, O God, just and holy are thy laws, and we will cheerfully obey what thou commandest us?

Lastly, The more favours any have received from the Lord, the more they owe obedience to him. Repeated favours conferred, are new calls to gratitude and cheerful obedience to the will of God. Every mercy that we receive, every favour conferred upon us by God, is a fresh call to double our diligence, and to labour with our utmost might, to do the will of our gracious Benefactor and Friend. And a continued neglect of the favours and benefits which the Lord bestows on men, will make their sins the greater, and their punishment the sorer. O! that we may lay these things to heart, and fear the glorious and fearful name of the Lord our God!

OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:3.—Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

THE scope of this command is, to direct us to the right object of worship. In speaking to it, I shall follow the method of the Catechism. That is, I will shew,

I. What is required in the first commandment.

II. What is forbidden in it.

III. The import of the words, before me.

I. I am to shew, what is required in the first commandment.

The ground whereon this question is built, is, that every command hath an affirmative part and a negative. The negative is included in the affirmative, and the affirmative in the negative. As in this command, the negative is expressed, Thou shalt have no other gods before me; hence we infer the affirmative part, Thou shalt have me for thy God. Now, the commandment being exceeding broad, many are the duties included in this, the chief whereof are contained in the answer. 'The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.'

Here are the three chief duties of this command. 1. Knowing. 2. Acknowledging. 3. Worshipping and glorifying. That these are required here, is evident: for it is impossible that we can have God for our God, if we do not know him; and seeing the command

requires the obedience of the whole man, it necessarily binds us to acknowledge, worship, and glorify him accordingly.

FIRST, We must know God. Hence said David, 1 Chron. 28:9. 'And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father.' Knowledge is the foundation of all religion, for religion is a reasonable service. The mind of man should be clear and distinct in the uptaking of divine things. So it was when God made it, so it should be without darkness. This commandment requires us to know,

1. The existence of God, 'that he is,' Heb. 11:6, not only that there is a God, but that the God of Israel is the true God.

2. The nature of God, what he is. To know God comprehensively and adequately, is beyond the reach of the creature's capacity. Hence said Zophar, one of Job's friends, Job 11:7. 'Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?' and such a knowledge is not required. But a true knowledge of him we must have. Hence Christ said, John 17:3. 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God;' that is, to know him as he has revealed himself in his word and works. We must know him in the Unity of his essence, Deut. 6:4; and Trinity of persons, 1 John 5:7; in his attributes held out to us in the word, as that he is infinite, eternal, unchangeable, &c. in his works of creation, providence, and redemption.

And forasmuch as where the end is required, the means also leading thereto are required, so the diligent study and observation of the word and works of God, and all means leading thereto, are hereby required of us; such as praying, hearing sermons, catechising, &c.

SECONDLY, we are required hereby to acknowledge him to be the only true God, and our God; Deut. 26:17. 'Thou hast avouched the

Lord this day to be thy God.' This acknowledgement presupposeth,

First, A believing firmly, and without the least hesitation, that God is, and what he is, as he has revealed himself in his word and works, Heb. 11:6; for that is the end of the knowledge of God, even a full persuasion of what is given us to know concerning him. And what he reveals, it is certainly our duty firmly to believe; as that there is one God, this God a spirit; and that there are three persons in the Godhead, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

Secondly, A full and hearty chusing of this God for our God and portion, in opposition to all other persons and things: Psalm 16:2. 'O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord.' Psal. 119:57. 'Thou art my portion, O Lord.' We are not at liberty to chuse our God or our portion, what we will give our hearts to, love most, &c. God, as our great Lord and Master, has determined that for himself. And law vengeance will pursue the neglect of it.

Thirdly, Hence, seeing there is no right chusing of God as our God but in his covenant, it is evident, that covenanting with God personally is a great and plain duty of this commandment, Psal. 16:2, forecited. Is. 44:5. 'One shall say, I am the Lord's;—another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord.' I have before observed, that these commands are proposed under the covert of the covenant of grace, wherein God offers himself to all to whom the gospel comes to be their God in Christ; and this command binds us to accept. And under this duty several things are required of us.

1. A serious deliberation as to the matching of our souls; Josh. 24:15. 'Chuse ye this day whom ye will serve.' Think with yourselves, O sinners, young or old, who must have this heart of yours. Consider the match proposed to thee by God himself; think on the nature of the covenant, that thou mayest deliberately consent to it, Luke 14:28.

2. A breaking off the covenant with our lusts and idols, Matth. 5:24. God says, thou shalt have me for thy God; therefore thou must let these go their way. As one would rise up and say to a woman giving herself in marriage to another, I have a prior right to thee, thou shalt have no other husband but me. So that, could the voice of this command be heard, it would be heard saying and crying out of injury done to thy God, whensoever anything lawful or unlawful gets away the heart inordinately.

3. Faith in Jesus Christ, receiving him as he is offered in the gospel, and taking God for our God in him, even Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which is the accepting of the covenant, Matth. 22:4. For though the law knows not Christ, yet it obliges to believe whatever God shall reveal, and do whatever he commands. And 'this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ,' 1 John 3:23. So that the law confirms this great command in the gospel.

4. Faithfulness in the covenant, continuing with him, and cleaving to him; for this is an everlasting command, a negative binding at all times. He must be our God without interruption, without intermission. We must say with the Psalmist, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee,' Psal. 73:25.

Now, we must acknowledge God two ways; in our hearts, and in our words and actions.

1st, In our hearts, by entertaining a frame of spirit on all occasions suitable to what he has revealed of himself to us in his word and works, applying the same to ourselves; 'In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths,' Prov. 3:6. Many that pretend to know God, acknowledge him no more than if they knew him not at

all. Like the servant who does as he pleases before his master, never acknowledging him to suit himself to his will more than if he did not know he were his master.

We must thus acknowledge him in all his perfections, carrying ourselves in a suitableness to them. I will instance in a few.

(1.) We must acknowledge him as a spirit, from that consideration serving him in spirit and in truth, John 4:24; and doing all things with godly simplicity, 1 Cor. 1:12.

(2.) His unchangeableness must be so acknowledged, as to influence us to a firm trust in him, Psal. 89:34; to constancy and perseverance in the way of God, and not to be given to change, Prov. 24:21. Yet as God repents him of the evil of punishment that he has spoken, so must we of the evil of sin that we have done, Joel 2:13.

(3.) His omnipresence must influence us to carry as ever under the eye of God wheresoever we are, Jer. 23:24 and so we own him as witness to our most secret actions.

(4.) His omniscience must influence us to all tenderness, as believing that he sees our thoughts, Mark 9:4 and even the most secret thing.

(5.) His omnipotence must influence us to fear him, Job 6:14 not to despise his chastening, nor to rise up against him, but to humble ourselves under his hand, and trust him in the lowest condition. And so of the rest of the perfections of God.

We must thus acknowledge him with respect to his word and his works.

[1.] To his word; as,

(1.) Hearing or reading the threatenings thereof against sin, we must acknowledge his justice and truth therein, by approving of them in our hearts, Isa. 39 ult. and trembling at his word, Isa. 66:2. Psal. 119:120. Otherwise we do not acknowledge the speaker as God.

(2.) Hearing or reading his promises, we must acknowledge him as merciful and true, trusting and believing they shall be all accomplished, and giving thereupon the more cheerful obedience to him, Gen. 32:9. For where God is acknowledged as the giver of the word, the arms of faith and hope will receive it.

[2.] With respect to his works.

(1.) The works of creation: at the view of these we must acknowledge him as the maker of all, infinitely powerful, wise, and good, by praising and magnifying his great name, Psal. 8 and 150:5.

(2.) Acknowledging him in the works of his providence; as when we meet with a cross providence, we must acknowledge him just, wise, and mighty, by humbling ourselves under his hand, and patient bearing of the stroke, because it is the hand of our God, Psal. 39:9. And when we meet with a mercy, we must acknowledge him to be merciful and gracious, and the giver of every good gift, by confessing ourselves unworthy of it, Gen. 32:10; and giving thanks for it to his name, 1 Thess. 5:18.

(3.) In the great work of redemption, as that wherein his justice, mercy, love, &c. are gloriously displayed, wondering at the glorious contrivance, heartily falling in with it, and laying our salvation on that bottom as firm and sure, becoming the divine perfections, Phil. 3:3.

2dly, We must acknowledge God externally, in our words and actions, Deut. 26:17 by a religious profession before the world of his being our God and of his truths and ways. Let none scorn a profession of religion; for it is a duty incumbent upon us by virtue of this command. God expressly requires it, 1 Pet. 3:15. 'Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.' It has a promise annexed to it, Rom. 10:9. 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, &c. thou shalt be saved.' The contrary is severely threatened, Mark 8:38. 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.' It is edifying to others, Phil. 1:12–14; and brings glory to God, Phil. 1:20. And the with-holding of it is an indignity done to God, as if religion were a shameful thing, Luke 9:26.

This profession is so necessary, that at no time we must deny the faith, the truth, and ways of God. Yet it is neither necessary nor fit every where to profess what we believe, Matth. 7:6; but in times of persecution we must especially maintain our profession, Heb. 10:23; and when called of God, even to profess before the enemy on whatever hazard, Matth. 10:18.

THIRDLY, This command requires us to worship and glorify God accordingly; that is, as God and our God, Rom. 1:21. Matth. 3:10. For if we take him for our God, we must worship and glorify him as such, Mal. 1:6.

The worship of God is twofold, internal and external. It is the internal that is here required; the external is but the means of worship commanded in the second commandment. The internal is the main thing; in this chiefly true piety consists, and this is that

wherein the life of religion lies. Now, that I may the more plainly lay before you the parts of this internal worship, I shall take them up under these. 1. The duty of our understanding. 2. Of our will. 3. Our affections. 4. Our conscience. 5. Our memory. 6. Lastly, The whole soul in all its faculties. And by these you will see what it is to worship God in spirit, and to be godly indeed.

First, For our minds and understandings, God must be worshipped there. Our minds must not be as dark groves for idolatry or creature-worship, but as lightsome temples for the worship of the true God. Passing what was said of the knowledge of God, we must worship and glorify him internally in our minds,

1. By thinking on him, Mal. 3:16. That is a black character, Psal. 10:4, 'God is not in all his thoughts.' That is our God we love most; what we love most gets most of our thoughts; if we take him, then, for our God, our thoughts must run most towards him. He has distinguished us from brutes by a faculty of thinking, and therefore should our thoughts be most of him, as the most worthy object.

2. By meditating on him, Psal. 63:6. Fleeting thoughts are not enough; he must be the subject of our fixed meditations. The duty of meditating on God and divine things is a necessary duty, pleasant, profitable, practised by the saints of best note, though the corrupt heart has a peculiar unfitness for it. Live no more in the neglect of this duty: enure yourselves to occasional meditation at any time, and to more solemn and fixed meditation especially in the morning and evening. The Lord's day in a special manner is designed for this duty. And as in external worship it would be a notable defect to go about other parts of it, and neglect the solemn duties of that day, so in internal worship to go about other duties, and neglect the duty of meditation.

3. By highly esteeming him, entertaining high and honourable thoughts of him, prising him above all, and in our judgment preferring him to all persons and things, Exod. 15:11. Psal. 73:25. We are naturally blind to spiritual things; hence arises mean and low thoughts of God. We must shake off these, and labour to screw up our esteem of him, fearing no excess. Whatever is worthy of esteem in the creature, is but as a drop of the ocean of that which is in him.

4. By believing him, Exod. 14 ult. firmly assenting to the truths of his word upon his testimony, and so to give him the glory of his truth. He is a God that cannot lie; it is contrary to his nature to deceive; for he is truth; and so the least hesitation about his word is a high dishonour to him. This is a fundamental piece of internal worship; which failing, shakes the very foundation of practical godliness.

Secondly, For our will, as it is the leading faculty in all, so it must be in the internal worship of God. In our will he must have internal worship.

1. By chusing him as our God and portion, Josh. 24:15, 22 of which I spoke before. But this is not to be one single act, but frequently repeated, Psal. 16:2 and 73:25 especially when any person or thing comes in competition with him. The old choice of the saint will still be his new choice, whatever objects present themselves. It is a duty and a pleasure thus to renew our choice of God and Christ. 'To whom coming as to a living stone; they have come already, but they must be coming still; they have chosen already, but they must chuse him still; especially while so many pretenders to our hearts are about our hands.'

2. By making him our chief and ultimate end, 1 Cor. 10:31. As all the good we have is of him, so it should be to him. His glory and honour must be the chief end of our natural, civil, and religious actions, in

which they ought all to meet as the lines in the centre. Whatever view we have to ourselves in living and acting, we must have a view beyond that to God himself. We have not God for our God, if he be not the great end and scope of our life, Rom. 14:8.

3. By self-denial, Matt. 16:24. Self-denial pulls down self from the throne of the heart, that God may have that room which self has usurped, entirely possessed in an unregenerate state, and is still seeking for even in a state of grace. We must no more make ourselves our chief end; God must be master, and self must lacquey at his foot; and what concerns ourselves may be cut and carved as may best serve his honour. We must deny,

1st, Our civil self, all our outward comforts and enjoyments, so as to be ready to part with them, sitting loose to them at all times, and actually to forego them, when we cannot keep them and keep the way of duty to God too, Luke 14:26.

2dly, Our natural self, even our own life, Luke 14:26. If God be our God, neither death nor life must separate us from him. We must let life itself go, rather than that our God should go. All the Lord's people are not martyrs in action, but all are martyrs in resolution.

3dly, Our religious self, Luke 17:10. Whatever we do or suffer for God, we must beware we put it not in Christ's room, for he will endure no rival. We must renounce our confidence in all, as if we had done nothing.

4. By humility of heart, Mic. 6:8 whereby, from a sense of our own weakness and unworthiness, we lay ourselves low before the Lord, and give him the glory of all. This humility towards God implies,

1st, The keeping up a sense of our weakness and imperfection, Isa. 40:6. 2 Cor. 3:5. The humble man will acknowledge that his springs are without himself in God, and that he of himself is but dry and barren, unfit for any good thing, unable for any good work.

2dly, The ascribing the praise of all the good we are, have, or can do, to God, and denying it to ourselves, 1 Cor. 15:8, 9, 10. The humble see themselves decked with borrowed feathers, and therefore acknowledge their debt and holding all of free grace.

3dly, Self-loathing because of sin, the sin of our nature, and daily failings, Ezek. 36:31. As the peacock hangs down his starry feathers while he looks at his black feet, so will the sin that besets the man make him walk humbly with his God.

4thly, Keeping within the bounds of our calling, and meddling with nothing beyond our sphere, Psal. 131:1. If God be our God, he is our great Commander, who has allotted to all their several posts, without which they are not to stir but at his call. And humility will teach a man to keep within the bounds of his station, both because of the authority that set him there, and the sense he has of his having more to do within these bounds than he can well manage.

Lastly, A voluntary undertaking of any thing the Lord calls us to, however mean it may be in the eyes of the world. Such was David's dancing before the ark, his chusing to be a door-keeper in the house of God, rather than dwell in the tents of wickedness, Christ's washing his disciples' feet, &c.

5. By an entire resignation of ourselves to the will of the Lord, Acts 9:6. The renouncing of our own will is a chief piece of internal worship. Our will is the great rebel against the will of God; it must be bound hand and foot, and resigned. We must be resigned, (1.) To the

commanding will of God, that his will must be a sufficient reason of obedience to us, Rom. 6:17; so that whithersoever the command draws, we must follow, though over the belly of our natural inclinations, Gen. 22. (2.) To the providential will of God. We must lay our all at his feet, to be disposed of according to his pleasure, Luke 14:26; and as the shadow follows the body, so should our will follow the will of God, Psal. 47:4. If it be his will to lift us up, or cast us down, it must be ours too. And the more we lie like a ball at the foot of Providence, the nearer we are to our duty, Phil. 4:11, 12.

This resignation must be universal, extending to all things absolute, not suspended on any condition, but in every case; cheerful, so as we may say, good is the will of the Lord.

Lastly, By patience under crosses and afflictions, whereby a man walks tamely and peaceably under the heaviest yoke the Lord lays on him, Psal. 39:9. And why should we not? He is our God, and does us no wrong; we are ever punished less than our iniquities deserve, Lam. 3:23. God is wise enough, and knows to guide the world without us. He knows better what is good for us than we do. We have Christ for our example; and if we take God for our God, we must allow his sovereignty.

Thirdly, Here is required the inward worship of our affections, which are to be devoted to God, and wherein he is to have the chief room. The parts of it are these:

1. Love to God, whereby we love him as the chief good, the best of beings, Deut. 6:5. This holy fire should never be wanting on the altar of our hearts, glowing and flaming. We should love him for himself, his most glorious perfections, and for his goodness to us. We must begin at the last and rise to the first. This is the comprehensive, natural, never-failing duty.

2. Desires after him, Psal. 73:25. These are the breathings of a soul touched with the love of God, which tends always to perfect enjoyment; the silent messengers that should be travelling day and night from the bottom of the heart to heaven, Isa. 26:9. We have many wants: to what door should we go for supply but to his, for communion with him here, and full communion hereafter? Phil. 1:23. And this love and desire must be above all other loves and desires.

3. Delight in him above all persons and things, Psal. 37:4 whereby we take pleasure in God whom we love. A life without any delight, is both a miserable and sinful life. A life that knows nothing but carnal delights, is brutish. If there be nothing in the world to yield delight to us, is there not a God in heaven to give it? If earthly things delight us, should not God himself be our delight much more? Should not these streams of delight in the creature lead us up to the fountain-head in God.

4. Rejoicing in him above all, Phil. 4:4. This is delight raised to a high pitch. We should cheer our hearts in God, in his glorious attributes, words, works, &c. Here only we can joy without hazard of overjoying. He is suited to our case, the field in which being purchased, yea, but discovered, we may for joy sell all that we have; and if he be not suited to our mind, our mind is in a bad case.

5. Sorrowing most for offending him, Zech. 12:10. To offend such a good, kind Father, should of all kinds go nearest our hearts, No trouble in the world, no crosses, should create that degree of grief, that sin should; for there is not so great an evil in the greatest sufferings as in the least sin; neither is the offence of any mortal to be laid in the balance with the offence of a good and gracious God.

Though our hearts will spring with the touch of a cross, that will be like a rock in respect of sin.

6. Zeal for his honour, and against sin above all, Rev. 3:19. Zeal is a fervour of the affections for God, as one we have an interest in, and is a mixture of love and indignation which strongly carry the soul before them, Psal. 69:9. It is an eager concern in the heart, that there be no rival to God within the soul, or without in the world; whereby every piece of dishonour done to God touches a man's heart with that concern which the dishonour of a husband would touch the heart of a wife. It spreads itself to whatever is the Lord's, his people, word, ordinances, works, &c.

7. Fearing him above all, Isa. 8:13. We must keep up such an awful sense of his majesty, greatness, and goodness, as may awe our hearts from meddling with what will be offensive, and may stir us up to please him in all things. The want of this, as it is a great contempt of that sovereign Being, so it is the opening of the sluice of sin and wickedness, Psal. 36:1. Fear of God is twofold; filial and servile. Filial fear is accompanied with love to God, Hos. 3 ult. and makes a man fear sin, not only because of the punishment, but because of the indignity and baseness of the action. Servile fear is only fear of wrath, without any mixture of love. This is sinful, not because men fear wrath, for that is duty, Matt. 10:28. Psal. 119:120 but because there is no regard in it to the goodness of God, nor is it mixed with love to him.

8. Hoping in him above all, Psal. 130:7. This hope is a certain expectation of those good things which faith lays hold on, grounded on the word, Psal. 119:49. The more good, powerful, and true any one is, the more may be our hope in the same; but there is none so good, powerful, and true as God, in comparison of whom the creatures are

but a compound of evil and weakness, and therefore a lie. Where should our hopes be placed, then, but in him? How weak are the pillars they lean on, when created pillars? The soul sinking from hope when looking to the Lord, is sin as well as misery.

Lastly, Trust and confidence in him above all, Isa. 26:4. This is the soul's quiet resting in God in the midst of all tossings from the devil, the world, and the flesh. It is the soul's staying itself on the Lord for through-bearing, holding by his word. Other things might have been mentioned, as gratitude for mercies, &c.

Fourthly, As to the duty of the conscience, which makes a part of the internal worship of God, we may take it up in these following particulars.

1. Subjecting itself to God, and to God alone. Conscience is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly, Prov. 20:27, and to be carried by his hand whithersoever he will. It is his deputy in the soul, and must be subject to him, so as to be given up entirely to him, not to any other, Matth. 23:9 for that is to make a god of the creature. And therefore there is no sin where no law of God is broken: and for conscience to say otherwise, is to betray its trust, and to make an idol of that creature to which it subjects itself.

2. To receive its law from the mouth of God, to be rightly and fully informed of the mind of God with respect to man's duty, as it is revealed in his word and works. The defect of this makes the eye of conscience so far an evil eye, Matth. 6:23. It will not excuse that we sin with an erring conscience, Isa. 5:20 for that error of the conscience is a sin, and one sin will not excuse another. If conscience speak not according to the law and testimony, it is because there is no light in it, Isa. 8:20.

Lastly, To accuse or excuse according to that law, Rom. 2:15 and that exactly and vigorously. Conscience must not be idle, but at its work, giving a verdict, and a right one, upon our actions. It must not pervert the law, and approve what God condemns, nor condemn what God approves; nor go bluntly about its work.

Fifthly, The duty of the memory is to remember God, Psal. 63:6 and keep off from forgetting him, Jude 17. We must remember his word, John 2:17 bringing it out of the storehouse of the heart, where it was laid up, for our direction, instruction, comfort, &c. We must remember his works, Job 36:24. We should be often calling to mind what he has done in his works of creation, his providence towards ourselves, the church and others; and especially the great work of redemption, whereof the sacrament of the supper is a solemn memorial.

Lastly, The duty of our whole soul is, that all the faculties thereof be employed in their several operations towards him, so as the whole soul may be as a parcel of candles in one room, each lighted and flaming. Particularly.

1. Prayer and calling on his name, Phil. 4:6. Prayer is the special duty of the soul, wherein the soul addresses God for all that it stands in need of. And here I mean especially mental prayer, which is always necessary to be joined with vocal; that is, the heart's going along with the words. It is sometimes necessary to be without words, as where we cannot speak but we are overheard, Exod. 14:15. There is also ejaculatory prayer, Neh. 2:4 which may be profitably used amidst our daily employments.

2. Internal praise and thanksgiving, Psal. 45:1. The altar of our heart should never be without thank-offerings, because we are ever in

God's debt; and our good things received while here are more than our evil things, though the latter are deserved, the former not.

Lastly, Giving all obedience to him with the whole soul, Jer. 7:23. Our soul must be at his beck in every thing, and in every case.

Now, consider that these duties are here required of us in their perfection. None of them must thrust out another, but each of them appear in its proper place. We are obliged thereby to use all means leading thereto, and abstain from every thing that may hinder the same, both in ourselves and others.

USE 1. The commandment is exceeding broad, Psal. 119:96. They but deceive themselves that stick in the letter of it, and take it not up in its spirituality and extent. They falsify the measure, and no wonder they deceive themselves, when they measure themselves by it, Rom. 7:9. Were many of us put to the trial on this command, we would plead not guilty, because not gross idolaters. But, alas! if we viewed this command in its spirituality and extent, we would be forced to plead guilty, in respect of our not knowing and acknowledging God to be the only true God, and our God, and not worshipping and glorifying him accordingly.

2. Let these things serve to convince us of our sin, and deeply to humble us, Psal. 19:12. This preaching of the commands is a glass held before your face, wherein you may see your spots. O look unto it, that ye may see what are your sins! And when ye go home, go over these things in your meditation.

3. Learn from hence the impossibility of salvation by the way of the law, or keeping the commandments. Ye have heard yet but a part of the explication of one of these commands; but durst ye venture your

salvation on the fulfilling of this one part of this one? How then can ye think to be capable enough for them all?

4. See the infinite obligations we lie under to Christ, for that he was made under the law, exactly fulfilled it in every point, and offers us his righteousness, whereby we may answer all the demands of the law in point of justification.

5. See the absolute need ye have of Christ. Look rightly on these commands as your creditors, behold the articles they charge on you as a just debt, and ye will see you must have a cautioner. Ye need Christ,

(1.) For justification and pardon, to remove the guilt ye have contracted. There is need of blood to wash away that guilt.

(2.) For sanctification. Here is the rule of your life. To each of these duties, and other duties, ye must set yourselves. Have ye not need of his spirit to strengthen, incline, and make you persevere therein?

II. I come now to the negative part of this command. 'The first command forbiddeth the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying the true God, as God, and our God; and the giving that worship and glory to any other which is due to him alone.'

There are three sins chiefly forbidden in this commandment. 1. Atheism. 2. Profaneness. 3. Idolatry.

FIRST, Atheism is here forbidden. It is the denying of God, a sin that overturns all religion by the root, Prov. 30:6. It is twofold; speculative in the judgment, and practical in the conversation.

First, There is a speculative atheism, which has its seat in the corrupt mind of man. It is also twofold; one striking simply at the being of a

God, another at the being only of the true God manifested to us in his word. Both these are forbidden here; for the command says two things: 1. Thou shalt have a God. 2. Thou shalt have me for thy God.

1. Then there is an absolute speculative atheism, when men's hearts are so filled by Satan, that they do not believe there is a God at all, Psal. 14:1. I do not think that any person can arrive at a constant, habitual, uninterrupted atheism of this sort, more than they can destroy the being of their own souls, God has so interwoven the notion of his being with the very make of the soul. But such a conclusion they may come to lay down, and labour habitually to maintain it against themselves and others. This is consummate atheism.

There is also an initial atheism; that is, doubting of the being of a God, the mind going from one side to another, doubting whether there be a God or not. This arises from man's natural corruption, and is often carried on by Satanical injections. We have all atheistical thoughts. They may be found both in godly and wicked men. But in the godly especially, as they arise from Satan, they will be found exceeding heavy and tormenting. Men may reason against them, but the best cure is prayer, with God's manifesting himself to the soul.

Atheism, less or more, is a dreadful sin. 1. It is of a most malignant nature, striking at the very being of God, and so plucking up all religious worship and service to God by the roots: 'For he that cometh unto God, must believe that he is,' Heb. 11:6. 2. It is most contrary to the light of nature, and does violence even to a natural conscience. It is a flying in the face of nature and revelation at once. 3. It is destructive to human society: for take away the notion of a God from amongst men, there would be no living more than among wild beasts. Lastly, It is a sin whereof devils are not guilty? for,

however they foster it among men, they yet believe and tremble, James 2:19. But if nothing else do, death and hell, where there are no athiests nor atheistical thoughts, will cure the disease.

2. There is a comparative speculative atheism, when men, though they deny not the being of a God, yet do not believe the true God, as he is manifested in the scriptures.—So they have not him for their God, and therefore are athiests in scripture style, Eph. 2:12. Such are Heathens, Jews, Turks, Deists, Socinians, and others, who do not believe one God in three persons, denying any of the three, 1 John 2:23. Such receive an idol of their own fancy, but deny the true God. This is condemned here, and so is all doubting leading thereunto. And the least hankering that makes men come short of a full persuasion of what God is, as he is revealed in his word and works, is a sin here prohibited.

There are two things which ye should take heed of as tending to atheism. 1. The influence of prosperity on a corrupt heart, which is like that of the sun on a dunghill, Prov. 30:9 and therefore often is that added to threatenings, 'They shall know that I am the Lord.' This should make afflictions welcome as antidotes against atheism. 2. Doubting or denying of providence, Mal. 3:14, 15. Psal. 73:13, If men once get God excluded from the earth, it is a great step to the excluding him out of heaven too.

3. There is practical atheism, which is a denying of God in our works, Tit. 1:16. These have a language for or against God which he understands, yea, even men too sometimes, Psal. 36:1. It matters not what principles men have, when their practice is nothing but a contradiction to them, when the web of principles in their head is every day opened out by their conversation. This practical atheism is

opposite to that acknowledgment of God as the true God spoken of before. Accordingly it is twofold.

1st. Practical heart-atheism, which is, when men entertain no frame of spirit suitable to what God has revealed of himself in his word and works, Psal. 14:1, 2, 3. And may not that be a confounding question to us on that point, Mal. 1:6. 'If I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts.' God is light, which discovers itself where-ever it is; but if we look into our hearts, we will quickly find oft-times that he is not there, by an absolute unsuitableness in them to his presence; that they are in no other case than if indeed there were no God; so that if *de non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio*, how oft and justly are we chargeable as atheists?

To instance in a few things. God is a spirit but how do we put him off with mere bodily service, as if we were serving an idol? Isa. 29:13. God is omnipresent; but though we should act as before him every where yet it is scarcely done any where. How often does our heart find a great deal of sinful liberty in one place which it has not in another; and to do that fearlessly in secret, which men would be ashamed to do before a child? He is omniscient; yet what a deal of security do men seem to have from secrecy, while the thoughts of God abide within their own breast, as if he no more saw our thoughts than men do? He is omnipotent; but how soon are we at giving up all for lost in difficulties to us inextricable? and how little awe is there of God on our spirits, when we are in ways wherein his power is engaged against us? What is all this but heart-atheism originally?

If we consider how we handle his word, heard, or read, his promises, threatenings, commands, and how little our hearts are influenced thereby, suitably to what is read or heard, much heart-atheism will

appear; so that when we are closing the Bible, or going out of the church-door, the language of our hearts in effect would often be found, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil, for practically they seem to be but idle tales.

If we consider how little God's works influence us, much heart-atheism will appear. I am sure, that men's hearts often, when they behold the works of creation, could do no less than they do, if the world had been made by a fortuitous concourse of atoms, that is, to pass them unregarded. And for his providence under crosses, how often are men like the dog that snarls at the stone, but looks not after the hand that threw it? and in mercies as the fed horse, that greedily falls to the hay, but regards not him that laid it before him, but to kick at him? And as to the work of redemption, it is not seen, believed, or laid stress upon, by the most part of the world; and those that do, how often do they lay their weight on it but at a venture, as afraid it would break with it?

2dly, Practical life-atheism, which is when men carry before the world as if there were no God, Psal. 36:1.—Such are,

(1.) The factors for atheism in the world, who, by their devilish reasonings, mockings, and cavils at religion, do what they can to banish the notion of a God out of the world.

(2.) Those who, as they have no religion, make as little profession of it. God indeed is not their God, and as little do they avouch him to be so. They are none of God's servants, and they will not wear his livery.

(3.) Those who, whatever they profess, yet live as if there were no God, no heaven, no hell, but the Bible were a fable. There is a spice of this life-atheism in all the irregularities and disorders of our lives wherein our actions do contradict our principles of God.

(4.) Lastly, Those who having had a profession, do at length quit it. Their leaf faileth and falleth. [1.] There are some whose leaf fadeth, as the leaf of a tree in harvest, through want of sap from the stock, and so falls of. There are not a few at this day of that sort, who sometimes were blooming professors, but now they have lost leaf as well as fruit; and nothing ailed them to loose it, but just that the root of the matter was never in them. They have drawn back, and have not staid till they had been driven back. [2.] There are some whose leaf falleth, like the leaf of a tree in summer, by a stormy wind of persecution. They would keep their leaf if it would always abide calm; but they cannot abide the shock of persecution, and so, rather than deny themselves, they will deny Christ before men, Mark 8 ult. and many such our times are likely to produce, because we have no other gods before the Lord.

Go home then, and mourn over the sin that some of us have never been troubled about hitherto; that is, atheism, which is not so rare in the world as is imagined. Thy heart is too kindly a soil for the worst of abominations, to miss any devilish corruption therein, that is going on in the world. And apply to Christ for his blood and Spirit, to remove the guilt of this sin, and destroy its power and influence in you.

SECONDLY, Another sin forbidden in this commandment, is profaneness, which is the not worshipping and glorifying the true God, as God, and our God, and much more the acting against his honour, quite contrary to those duties of worship and honour that we owe him. It will then be necessary that we look back to those duties of worship, which we mentioned to be those of the mind, will, affections, conscience, memory, and the whole soul, with all its faculties, that we may see what is forbidden, under this head.

First, There is a profaneness of the mind, Tit. 2:15; when the minds of men are like a dark grove for idols, confusion, and profaneness, instead of being a lightsome temple to God, where the candle of heavenly light is put out, and darkness from hell takes place instead of it. Consider, then, this profaneness of mind.

1. In opposition to the knowledge of God; and so this command forbids,

1st, Ignorance of God and divine things, especially such as are fundamental, Hos. 4:1, 6. There is a natural ignorance, with which man is born, like a wild ass's colt, that must needs be cured, for it is the sad effect of the loss of original righteousness. There is an effected ignorance among them that have the means yet, through enmity against God and his law, will not learn, or through laziness and carelessness will not be at the pains, Job. 21:14.

Ignorance is a mother-sin, as blindness disposes men to fall over every block in their way; therefore the scripture tells us it is a special destroyer, Hos. 4:6; and has a most terrible threatening annexed to it, Isa. 27:11; 'It is a people of no understanding: therefore, he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.' If it is so terrible in those that want the means, how will it be to others? 2 Thess. 1:8.

But though we be not chargeable with that gross ignorance, we do not satisfy that command, Prov. 30:2. How many things are revealed that we ought to know, which we know not? How imperfect and nuclear is the knowledge we have of many things? but from the beginning it was not so. And how ineffectual is our knowledge! and what little influence has it on our practice!

2dly, Misapprehensions of God, Acts 17:28, 29. O how liable are we to these, to apprehend God to be what he is not! When we begin to apprehend him, the first way the heart goes is to misapprehend him. The world is full of this. Seldom is it that the heart does not blot out some of his attributes, misapprehending his word and works. And such are all false opinions concerning him, Rom. 1:21.

2. In opposition to thinking and meditating on God, is forbidden,

1st, That profane carelessness of the heart, whereby God is not in all our thoughts, Psal. 10:4. He is our first principle, last end, witness, and judge, so that we should set him always before us, Psal. 16:8. But, instead of that, we forget our God, and then forget ourselves, though there is never a moment but we are receiving at his hand, Jer. 2:32.

2dly, The neglect of the great duty of meditation, spending no time on that work, yea, and a disposition of spirit averse to it, and that cannot fix on it. Men's hearts can fix well enough to carnal meditations, that may advance their worldly interest, or gratify their lusts; but to meditations of God they are as unstable as water. They will sink and dive to the bottom in these muddy waters, while they will float like a feather in the waters of the sanctuary and it is as difficult to get the heart off the one as upon the other.

3dly, The resisting of the thoughts of God when they bear in themselves on the soul, Rom. 1:28. Sometimes the Lord makes heavenly thoughts dart into the heart for conviction, humiliation, &c. but like a stitch in the side, presently there is a hand laid on it to press it down. Thus men war against God, and will not think on him, till he himself stop them in their mad career.

3. In opposition to the honourable thoughts of God, required in this commandment is forbidden,

1st, The want of these honourable thoughts of him, the not esteeming, admiring, and adoring him above all. High thoughts will men have of trifles, that have none of the Highest. If we look to what he is, and consider our thoughts, we will be found most guilty in this point.

2dly, Mean and low thoughts of God and Christ These are so frequent in the world, that Christ is said to be despised, and not esteemed, Isa. 53:3; and God contemned by the wicked, Psal. 10:13. Read the thoughts of your heart on the work of your hands in respect of duty, Mal. 1:7, 8.

3dly, Unworthy and wicked thoughts of God, Psal. 50:21 which are heart-blasphemy not to be named. Sometimes these do arise from the corrupt heart by an ordinary influence of temptation, where the heart, like a raging sea, casts up its mire and dirt against heaven; and they follow on a loose and carnal frame, wherein mean thoughts of God have settled themselves; or from some galling of conscience from fear of wrath, while the heart is glued to the sin; or from extremity of trouble, while the spirit is unsubdued. It is a dreadful sin, and has much of hell in it. But there are wicked thoughts, or blasphemous injections, that are immediately from the devil, that come in suddenly, like fiery darts, so as to make a man to shiver, and being continued will sicken the body, and torment the soul extremely. These are not our sins, unless by consenting to them we adopt them, Matt. 4:9.

4. In opposition to the great duty of believing God, several things are forbidden, some in defect, some in excess.

1st, There is, (1.) Doubting of or questioning the truth of whatsoever we know God has revealed. The queries of the false heart, concerning revealed truths, 'How can these things be?' are a great affront to the veracity of God.—(2.) Unbelief, which gives the lie to the Lord's word, whether doctrines, promises, or threatenings, 2 Kings 7:19. Deut. 29:19, 20. This is the great stumbling-block of the perishing world, and enemy of the saints.—(3.) Misbelief; that is, when men believe sin to be duty, and duty to be sin, Isa. 26:9;—(4.) Heresy, which is a pertinacious defending of any error against a substantial point of truth, Gal. 5:20.—(5.) Lastly, Lesser errors want not their own sinfulness, as being contrary to revealed truth, that we are obliged to know, and contrary to that believing of God required in his word. On the other hand,

[1.] Vain credulity, when people, through the instability of their minds, lightly embrace doctrines pretended to be from God, without narrowly examining and discovering the truth, 1 John 4:1. We must answer for what we believe, as well as for what we reject; and therefore the Bereans were commended for searching the scriptures, whether what the apostles taught was agreeable to them, [2.] Tempting God, Matth. 4:7 when people cast themselves out of God's way, and yet expect his protection; when out of the way of the command, they look for the benefit of the promise. There is another way of tempting God, and that in defect, when people will not believe, unless they see signs and wonders, and cannot take God's bare word. [3.] Carnal security, Zeph. 1:12 when, over the belly of all the threatening of God, men promise themselves safety in an evil course.

Secondly, There is a profaneness of the will. It is a stony heart, enmity against God, having a propensity to evil in it, total in the unregenerate, partial in the regenerate. This command directs it to

God. The profaneness of it lies in a departing from and opposition to God.

1. Whereas it is the duty of our will to take God for our God, and enter into his covenant, and to hold by him as our covenanted God, here are forbidden several sorts of profaneness. As,

1st, The total omission of personal covenanting with God, closing with and accepting of God as our God in his covenant. A Sad sign of an ungracious heart, Isa. 44:3, 5. Eph. 2:12. What a profane will must that be that will not come under the bond of the covenant? What way do men think that God can be their God if they take him not in his covenant? Ye that never closed with God in a personal covenant, have your religion yet to begin. Think on it, ye old neglecters, and ye young ones, that have never ratified with your own consent the covenant made for you in baptism.

2dly, The not renewing our covenant with God, and repeating our choice. Our frequent backslidings require it, Jer. 50:4. What hope can we have that so often go a-whoring from our Lord and Husband, if we do not return and renew the marriage-covenant? The neglect of this is a fatal mistake at this day, when judgment is at the door. O! what should we do in such a time, but humble ourselves for breach of covenant, and renew covenant with God, under the view of these evil days? If this were done, it would be a good preparation, and would make way for national renewing our covenant engagements.

3dly, Hypocritical covenanting, consenting in words to the covenant, but not taking God for our God with our hearts, Hos. 8:2, 3. They that would take God for their God, must put away their strange gods, and open their hearts that the King of glory may come in. But, alas! many give him the hand, who give him not the heart. He is our God to whom our hearts are devoted. Though we give God the best of

words, if our lusts get the best of our hearts, we are dealing hypocritically with God.

4thly, Dealing falsely in the covenant, Psal. 50:16, 17. O what matter of shame and confusion is there for us here? What children of Belial are we, whom national, baptismal, and personal covenants will not bind! How often after vows have we made enquiry, returned to those sins which we have renounced, and engaged against, eat in the best words that ever we spoke in making a covenant, and thrown away the happiest bonds that we ever came under!

5thly, Covenanting and engaging against God, his cause and way, and binding ourselves to sin; whether rashly in our private walk, by the vehemency of our passion, Eccl. 5:6; or more deliberately, in obedience to authority, Hos. 5:11. This has been, is at this day, and is still like to be more, the sin and snare of this land. But let us remember, that our covenant with God must regulate all other engagements we come under; and if once we take God to be our God, our hands are bound up from taking any other in his place. For 'we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth,' 2 Cor. 13:8.

Lastly, All compact with the devil. Such is the corruption of human nature, that men will take the devil for their god. Here is forbidden, (1.) All witchcraft, sorcery, malice, and devilry. These renouncing God, become the devil's vassals and servants in a special manner, to have communion with him here in mischief and wickedness, and communion with him in hell fire. Two things readily occasion it: either discontent with one's own condition, or desire of revenge, which ye should beware of. (2.) All using of spells and charms, whether for knowing of secret things past or to come, for curing or preventing of diseases in men or beasts, or for any other effect whatsoever. This is an implicit compact with the devil, which those

that are far from express covenanting with him may fall into. Both are condemned, Deut. 18:10, &c. There are, alas! many of these things which are unworthy to be maintained; but take this rule in this case, That whatsoever is brought to pass by means, which neither by the appointment of God, nor the nature of the mean used, can be expected, is from the devil. The sacraments and medicines are means of divine institution, and by the blessing of God, when used in faith, are conducive to the ends for which they are appointed. But the truth is, spells, charms, &c. are the devil's sacraments. For what virtue can there be in words, a key, riddle, laying such or such things above a door-head, &c. to produce the effects expected by miserable creatures from them? But they are Satan's sacraments, that must be used with a kind of truth or belief of the success, at which the devil produceth the desired effect sometimes, God permitting it: for he cannot always do it.

2. Whereas it is a duty of this command to make God our chief end, it forbids,

1st, Men-pleasing, Gal. 1:10. There is a holy man-pleasing which we should all learn, if we would please God, Rom. 15:2. 'Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.' Paul was dexterous at that holy art, 1 Cor. 9:19–22 turning himself into all colours, but black, to please them, for their good. But this sinful man-pleasing is, when we set ourselves to please men without regard to the pleasing of God, proposing their pleasure as our only or chief end, Tit. 2:9. Compare Eph. 6:6. Col. 3:22. And this we are guilty of, either when we do a sin to please men, or do a good thing, or lawful, more to please them than God.

2dly, Not making God our end at all, Psal. 86:14 when God's honour has no place at all in our projects and actions. Thus he who should

have the chief place in all we do, has none; the chief corner-stone is not admitted into the unsanctified building, but self is the beginning, middle, and end. Many such black pieces without mixture are in the web of our conversation.

3dly, Not making God our chief end, when, though we have an eye to God in our actions, yet not the chief eye; not seeking him above all, in all, and beyond all, 1 Cor. 10:31. Psalm 73:25. Man's will at his creation was made chiefly looking to God; and the least deviation from this is our sin. But O how often is our respect to God inferior to what we have to ourselves! God is made the mean, and ourselves the great end. Many parts of the saints' religion, and all the religion of others, are rather a serving themselves of God than a serving of God.

3. Whereas self-denial is a duty of this command, it forbids,

1st, Self-seeking. Not that we may not at all seek ourselves, but we must not make ourselves our only and chief end, Phil. 2:21. That is sinful seeking, when our own things exclude Christ's things, or are above the things of Christ; when, neglecting God, we seek only our own profit or pleasure; or when in any thing we have no view beyond these to God. In natural, civil, or religious actions, men may seek their own profit and delight, Prov. 27:23. Eccl. 2:24 and 9:7, 8. Cant. 1:2. But these must be directed towards God, being sought, that thereby we may be in the better capacity to serve our God. They must be used as stage-coaches to help us on our way, not as beds to lie down in and rest there. But O what guilt is contracted in these matters! What self-seeking is chargeable on us,

(1.) As to natural actions, Zech. 7:6 having no higher end in these than ourselves, no respect to the command of God, but our own appetite; not to fit us for the duties of our general or particular callings, but to please ourselves.

(2.) In civil actions, Prov. 21:4; no eye to God's command, no eye to his honour; but to our own wealth and outward estate. This was the sin of the old world, Matth. 24:38. Luke 17:27, 28. But religion teaches to eat and drink, because God has said, 'Thou shalt not kill;' to marry, because he has said, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery;' to work, because he has said, 'Thou shalt not steal,' and that they may honour the Lord with their substance.

(3.) In religious actions, Prov. 15:8. How often is religion made to serve men's interest, and lacquey at the feet of carnal projects? What self-seeking is there in our religion, seeking worldly advantages, credit, and a great name, our own peace, and welfare for eternity at best, which is but self-seeking, if we see not that in God which makes us seek him for himself.

2dly. Self-love, 2 Tim. 3:2. Love ourselves we may, our souls, our bodies; but the love of God must regulate our love to ourselves, and we must love ourselves in God and for our God, not more than God, nor as much, Matth. 22:37, 38, 39. The love of God is the first command. Our neighbour must be loved with an inferior sort of love, not as our God, but as ourselves: therefore the love of ourselves must be inferior to that of God. Now, sinful self-love is that inordinate affection which we bear to ourselves, without due subordination to God, a love of ourselves that carries us off our duty to God. This prevails over us when we are not ready to sacrifice our all to God at his call, Luke 14:26. Hence proceeds defection from the truth in time of Trial, the gratifying of ourselves at any time at the expence of God's displeasure.

3dly, Self-pleasing, Rom. 15:1. It is a narrowness of spirit, whereby, if we can please ourselves, we value not the pleasing of others for their good, as if we had been only born for ourselves. It is a sin that is

highly displeasing to God, and the bane of society, wherein men must retrench something from themselves to please others, otherwise they will be as briars and thorns continually in the sides of one another: for what can be expected there where each will needs have his own way of it? Upon this it is that the using or not using of indifferent things is built.

4thly, Self-confidence, whereby men lean to the broken reed of their own wisdom and their own strength, instead of leaning to God, Prov. 3:5 and 28:26. It carries men off from God, and brings down a curse on that in themselves which they lean unto; their parts, their pains, abilities, resolutions, &c. Jer. 17:5. There is much sin this way.

5thly, Self-conceit, Prov. 26:12. It is men's blindness and ignorance that makes them so. Were their eyes opened, they would see they were nothing. Self-jealousy becomes us better, who have so little to make any good of.

Lastly, Self-righteousness. This is the worst kind of selfishness, whereby men, puffed up with an opinion of their own works, put them in Christ's room, and look to procure the favour of God by them, Isa. 58:3. This is a subtle idol, venting itself many ways; as (1.) Reckoning more on the quantity than the quality of duties, Luke 18:11. (2.) More on the quality of duties, when they are done vigorously than on our interest in the blood of Christ. (3.) Expecting returns of favour or debt from the well-doing of our duty. And (4.) Fretting and rising of the heart against God under disappointments, &c.

4. Whereas humility of heart is required in this command, there is forbidden in it, pride of heart, with all the branches of that cursed tree. It is a setting up of a man's self instead of God; a swelling of the empty heart, that is most hateful to God, 1 Pet. 5:5 a sin that

destruction naturally follows. It has many poisonous branches; for it turns itself into many shapes, all here forbidden; as,

1st, Counterfeit humility. Pride often goes abroad under the mask of humility, as the devil transforming himself into an angel of light. There was as much pride in the disfigured faces of the Pharisees, (Mat. 6:16.) as in the proud looks of others; in Diogenes, as in Plato. Men had need take heed they deceive not themselves; for pride of heart may put them upon, and make them please themselves in great external humiliations.

2dly. Insensibleness of our own weakness, sinfulness, and insufficiency, Hab. 2:4. There is little impression of that on our hearts for the most part; and when at any time it is made, how quickly does it go off? for our hearts are like a stiff stick, that will quickly lose the bend. This insensibleness vents itself in, (1.) A woful self-sufficiency, whereby men are carried off from depending on God, and hanging continually about his hand, Jer. 2:31. (2.) A miserable security as to sin, especially sins of the grosser sort, to which we think we have no need to take heed. But if the pride of our hearts were fallen, we would fall in with the warning, 1 Cor. 10:12. 'Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.' (3.) Rigid censuring and rejecting those we judge have sinned. What is the cause of that, but the beam of pride and insensibleness of our own weakness in our own eye? Matth. 7:1, 2, 3. Therefore the apostle recommends lenity and meekness upon this consideration, Gal. 6:1.

3dly, Meddling with things without our sphere, Psal. 131:1, 2 thrusting ourselves on duties that are not the duties of our station. This proceeds from pride of heart, that waits not for God's call, but invades the province given of God to others. Uzziah smarted for this; as did also Uzzah.

Lastly, Refusing any duty we are called to for the meanness of it. It is the pride of heart that reckons any thing unbecoming us that God requires of us; yet in many cases our honour with us takes place of God's honour; and men not only do not their duty, but scorn to do it. God says, seek my face, be reconciled to me; but they scorn to do it. They may honour God by submitting to instruction, the discipline of Christ's house; but they scorn to do it as unbecoming them, 1 Sam. 2:30.

5. Whereas resignation to the will of God is out duty required in this commandment, here is forbidden.

1st, All even the least discontent with our lot, or any thing that God puts in it. If God be our God, he must chuse our inheritance for us, Psal. 47:4. It is a sad character to be complainers, viz. of their lot, Jude 16. that blame or are angry at their lot, Gr. A person has something in his state and condition that is not according to his mind and will, a husband a wife of a disagreeable temper, something they want which they would fain have, something they have that they would fain be free of, and they fret themselves, because what God has made crooked they cannot make straight. It is straight enough to God's will, though not to thine, Job 34:33. The consequence of that discontent is, We will not have this man to reign over us. It is people's duty not to quarrel with their lot, and be always screwing up their lot to their mind, but to bring their will to their lot, because it is God's will.

2dly, An unsanctified contentment with their lot; and that is, when people carry easily under any hardship in their lot, but not upon the Christian principle of resignation to the will of God. There are many other ways to satisfy a discontented mind; business and company may put it out of their heads, taking that content in one creature-

comfort which they cannot get in another, some in lawful, others in an unlawful way, consulting their own peace. But in the meantime the consideration of the will of God does not prevail with them to a contented resignation.

3dly, The bearing of any hardship in our lot as just, but no satisfaction with it as good, Isa. 39 ult. What he does, is not only well done, but best done. It reflects dishonour on God, only to think the work of his providence towards us to be tolerable. Surely we come so far short of our duty, as we do not with satisfaction acquiesce to the hardest piece of our lot, as best for us.

6. Lastly, Whereas patience is here commanded under crosses, here is forbidden,

1st, All impatience, grudging, murmuring, and quarrelling under the hand of God, Psal. 37:7, 8. This is a fire kindled by the devil, by striking a proud heart against firm providence, firm as mountains of brass. It is kindled in men's breasts by the heart's rising against the cross. It often sends out its hellish smoke in passionate expressions by the mouth, and scorches others by the sinful deeds it puts them on: for such are as madmen throwing about firebrands, arrows, and death. It makes a man an enemy to himself; and flies up against God, accusing him of injustice, folly, and cruelty.

2dly, Insensibleness under the hand of God, Isa. 42:25 who stand unmoved under afflictions, as if they were stocks and stones, and cry not when he bindeth them. Thus men are several ways guilty. (1.) Sometimes they are brutish under afflictions, and will groan in their troubles like sick beasts, but nothing more. (2.) Stupid and indolent, without sense of trouble. If they be not the better, they are as little the worse of it. (3.) A Roman courage and briskness of spirit, that will not stoop under what they meet with. And, (4.) patience

perform; they bear the yoke, because they cannot get it off, and they will not worry in the band.

3dly, There is a profaneness of the affections, Rom. 1:25, 26. The affections or passions in themselves are neither good nor evil; but they should be consecrated to God chiefly and to their proper objects in God, and then they are good. But being denied to God, or set on improper objects, they are profaned; and if they be given to their proper objects as much and more than to God, that is idolatry; of which I am to speak afterwards.

1. Then, whereas it is commanded here to love God, there is forbidden,

1st, All want, yea and weakness, of love to God. It is a profaneness of heart to be coldrife in love to the most lovely object, this being especially the principal duty of holiness. 2dly, Love to those things we should hate. How often is our love mislaid thus? The corrupt heart fastens on those things that are like itself. 3dly, Hatred of God, and enmity against him, Rom, 1:30. This vents itself, (1.) In secret wishes there were no God, Psal. 14:1. (2.) That he were not such a God as he has revealed himself in his word, not just, holy, &c. (3.) In risings of the heart against his holy law, which is a transcript of his nature. 4thly, Hatred of his people that bear his image, for that they are strict and holy in their lives. That is malignancy. Lastly, Hatred of his ordinances, work and interest, and of his kingdom in the world.

2. Whereas our desires should go out after God, here is forbidden.

1st, All want and weakness of desires after God, Psal. 10:4. How often are our hearts free of these, no breathings, no longings after the Lord? How weak and languishing, while desires after created things

throng in one upon another? These can have no end, while the other have no beginning.

2dly, Desires after unlawful things which we should abhor. Though these desires be not accomplished, we must not wipe our mouths, and say, we have not sinned, Rom. 7:7. They are the breathings of the corrupt heart after sinful things, suitable to the corrupt nature.

3dly, Aversion to God and communion with him, Job 21:14. This is a backwardness in the heart to the duties of communion with God, when the heart, instead of ardent desires towards him, draws back, like a refractory heifer, that refuses the yoke. A sin which all have reason to be humbled for.

3. Whereas it is our duty to delight and rejoice in the Lord, this command forbids,

1st, The omission of that duty which God so peremptorily requires, Phil. 4:4. 'Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.' Think not little of this. What husband would take it well, if his wife had no delight in him? and with what confidence can we call God our God, if we know nothing of delighting and solacing ourselves in him? It is natural to us to delight in agreeable relations; and so it is to the new nature to delight in God.

2dly, Deadness in duties, going to them, and going on in them, without any spiritual relish, Rev. 3:1 even as we converse with those in whose company we have no pleasure. This is the plague of the generation, who, if they be not profane, are cold and formal. Our services look not like that of the living God, but a dead idol. There is no need to make Abraham children of stones, for they are stones already.

3dly, Wearying in and of his service, Amos 8:5. Hence wandering in duties, for the heart is away; any thing is enough, and the only care is to get the duty over as a task, for there is no delight in God, or communion with him, Mal. 1:13.

Lastly, Carnal desires and joys. Not that all delight and joy in the creature is sinful; for God replenished the world, so as not to serve man's necessity only, but also his delight. But they are carnal and sinful, (1.) When they are on unlawful objects, and men go over the hedge of the law to seek what to delight themselves in. (2.) When they are excessive, though on lawful objects; which is, [1.] When people have no eye to God in them, as not taking them with thankfulness out of his hand, and to use them as what may fit them for the service of God in their general or particular callings; but exclude the thoughts of God out of them, either as the principle or end of them. [2.] When they so carry out the heart, as to unfit us for the service of God, and lessen our delight in the Lord; then is the handmaid taken into Sarah's bed. [3.] When men love them more than God, 2 Tim. 3:4.

4. Whereas it is our duty to sorrow for offending God, this command forbids,

1st, Hardness of heart and impenitency, Rom. 2:5. To move us to sin is easy, but to move us for it is difficult.—How can we pretend God is our God, if his honour be not dear to us; if the grieving of his Spirit be not grievous to us? But this is a main plague of the generation.

2dly, Hiding sin, which is most contrary to the nature of sorrow, Prov. 28:13. This is done, (1.) By denying guilt, Prov. 30:20. (2.) By extenuating it; whereas, if sorrow for it were deep enough, it would aggravate it, Luke 15:18, 19. (3.) By transferring the guilt on others,

as did Adam his sin on Eve. (4.) By palliating and excusing it, as did Saul in the affair of the expedition against the Amalekites.

Lastly, Thinking or speaking of our sins with pleasure, whereby they are re-acted, and the guilt doubled in the sight of God: and much more laughing at them, and making a mock or jest of them, Prov. 10:23 and 14:9. So they glory in their shame, and make a mock of affronting God.

5. Whereas zeal for God is here commanded, there is forbidden.

1st, Lukewarmness and indifferency in the matters of God, Rev. 3:16. Zeal is counted madness by the world; but no body wants zeal for something, but few have it for God. This holy fire is almost worn out in our day, because few have God for their God; and they that have, glorify him not as God. A chill cold has benumbed our spiritual senses. Since the Lord brought this church out of the fire, we have lost our fire-edge. We are fiery enough in our own matters, but very coldrife in God's matters. That coldness of affections, binds men down in the concerns of Christ's kingdom as managed in their own breasts, and then binds them down in these as managed in the world.

2dly, Corrupt, blind, and indiscreet zeal, Rom. 10:2 such as the disciples had in their Master's cause, when they were for commanding fire to come down from heaven to consume the Samaritans, for not receiving him, Luke 9:54. Zeal is such, (1.) When it proceeds merely from a hotness or keenness of the natural temper, so that men are hot in all things, in their own matters as well as God's. (2.) When it is not proportioned to the weight of matters, Matth. 23:23. (3.) When the heat strikes mostly outward against the sins of others, Matth. 7:4. (4.) When it carries men to that unto which they are not called of God. (5.) When it swallows up all pity to the offenders, 2 Cor. 12:21.

6. Whereas this command requires us to fear God, it forbids,

1st, All rashness and irreverence in the service of God, Psal. 89:7. His omnipresence should strike an awe on us at all times; and his special presence should strike a special awe on us when we approach his presence in duties. But, O! how do we rush into it without fear, as the horse rusheth into the battle!

2dly, Unconcernedness of spirit at his threatening word and alarming dispensations, the general sin of the present time, Amos 3:8. Who trembles at his word, though by terrible things he is answering us? Who is preparing to meet him in the way of his judgments?

3dly, Presumptuous sinning in spite of all fair warning, both by the word and providences, Psal 36:1. How do men count the darts of the word and conscience as stubble, and laugh at the shaking of his spear! We are incorrigible under judgments, as if we would bid a defiance to heaven, and desire God to do his worst, Jer. 8:6.

4thly, Bold and curious searching into God's secrets, which he hath thought meet to keep hid from us. Such is consulting with the devil, or those that have the black art, as Saul did with the witch of Endor, consulting with dumbies, psalmisters, fortune-tellers, using any means whatsoever not appointed of God to know our fortune, as it is called, &c. Deut. 24 ult. These things are but the taking of the devil's key to open God's cabinet.

5thly, A superstitious fear, a fear where no fear is by God's appointment, of which they have most that have little of the fear of God. Such is that foolish fear that ariseth from vain dreams, observing of freams, such and such times as unlucky, reckoning such

and such things uncanny without any ground from the word of God, or from solid reason.

Lastly, A slavish servile fear of God, arising from hard thoughts of God, and banishing the love of God out of the heart.

7. Whereas hope in God is required in this command, it forbids,

1st, Presumption, which is an unwarrantable hope in God, not according to his word, which overlooks his justice, holiness, and greatness, Deut. 29:19 and over the belly of these, promises mercy.

2dly, Despair, Gen. 4:13 when people give up with all hope, as if their sins and misery were above God's mercy, power and grace, and the efficacy of his Son's blood.

8. Lastly, Whereas trust and confidence in God is required in this command, it forbids,

1st, All distrust and diffidence, anxiety with respect to his providence, when people cannot fix their hearts for provision, protection, &c. in his way, on the promises, but distrust them.

2dly, All rashness and vain confidence, attempting any thing without a warrant from God, and promising themselves success therein, without acknowledging God in it. A sin very frequent in our day.

Fourthly, There is a profaneness of the conscience here forbidden, Tit. 1:15. And there is condemned here,

1. The making men lords of our faith and conscience, which is, in effect, to make them our God, 2 Cor. 1:24. Matth. 23:9. There used not to be wanting such as would model the consciences of all men to their humours, and will have their will taken for law; and they readily

find those that walk willingly after the commandment, to whom the commandment of men is the great rule. When therefore a man embraces any thing for religion on the mere authority of men, he sets up another god before the Lord.

2. Blindness and misinformation of conscience, Isa. 5:20. This is a setting up of our consciences instead of God, whose deputy only it is, and whose office it is only to declare the mind of God. So that declaring and urging its own mistakes instead of God's commands, it rises against this command, and this is matter of humiliation: For who can understand his errors?' Psal. 19:12.

3. Inactiveness and unfaithfulness of the conscience, whereby it does not effectually check for sin, nor incite to duty. Thus God is rejected in so far as his work in the soul committed to the conscience is neglected. How many are there whose consciences give them all ease in their sinful courses, and that cannot speak but on the grossest faults? and how remiss and slack is it in all?

Fifthly, There is a profaneness of the memory here forbidden. For whereas it is a duty of this commandment to remember God, his word and works, that we may think on him, love, fear, and esteem him; so,

1. Forgetting God is forbidden here, Jer. 2:32. This is one of the great sources of all the wickedness in men's hearts and lives. We do not remember with whom we have to do; therefore we do what our corrupt inclinations lead us to. We forget his word, his commands, his threatenings, his promises; therefore we sin fearlessly and serve him faintly, as working for nought. We forget his works, therefore his mercies engage us not, nor his judgments frighten us. Our memories in spiritual things are like a sieve in the water, leaking vessels that

quickly let all slip. It is not only our misery, but our sin, which we have to be humbled for.

2. Remembering what we should forget. O how tenaciously does it hold those things that should be forgotten! An injury done to us will be fresh and green in our minds, when all the love of God in sending Christ to be the Saviour of sinners, will be quite gone out of our heads. It will much sooner turn up old sins with delight, than old mercies with thankfulness.

Lastly, There is a profaneness of the whole soul, wherein all the faculties thereof cast in something of their corruption to provoke the eyes of the Lord's jealousy. And,

1. Whereas prayer is required here, particularly that of the heart, this command forbids,

1st, The total neglect of prayer, when people do not so much as make a fashion of it in secret or in their families. That God is our God, how shall it be known if we do not pray to him? They that take idols for their gods, pray to them; and with what face will prayerless persons pretend that the living God is theirs?

2dly, The neglect and unfrequency of ejaculatory prayer, 1 Thess. 5:17. O but the so great neglect of this speaks forth the unholiness of our hearts! Are we ever but needing something from heaven? are not new snares and temptations still coming in our way? why are we so unacquainted with this short way of communion with God? It needs mar no business, it needs no secret place.

3dly, Not praying in spirit, when we pray with our mouths; so that all our prayers are but outward worship, lip-labour, not heart-work, John 4:24. Thus we become guilty many ways. (1.) When all our

prayers are but the exercise of a gift, not performed with faith, love, fear, &c. Such are all the prayers of hypocrites. (2.) When the heart goes not along with our words, but remains dead, stupid, and senseless in our addresses to God, as if we were speaking to a dead idol, or to a man who must judge by our words what we would have, because he sees not the heart. (3.) When the heart contradicts our words, as praying that God would take away sin, which we have no will to part with, that he would give us that grace which we have no desire after, or that he would keep us from the temptations which we are longing for. (4.) When the heart wanders in prayer, going after other things, when we are before the Lord.

4thly, Profane prayers to God for mischief to fall on ourselves or others; which are all the prayers that some use; and are more frequent with others than their solemn prayers.

2. Whereas internal praise and thankfulness is required here, there is forbidden,

1st, Unthankfulness, the crying sin of the generation, on which God has heaped so many mercies. Ah! how do we receive our mercies, as if they were debts! When we want, perhaps we will cry; but when we have got the mercy, we are like the nine lepers, who forgot to return to thank their healer. There is no grateful sense of the Lord's goodness on our spirits, and so there is none on our lives.

2dly, Ascribing any good we have or can do, to some other quarter than to God, the true fountain of all. (1.) To fortune and good luck. How often will men acknowledge their good luck, while they overlook a good God? (2.) To ourselves, Deut. 8:17. How ready are we to ascribe our success to our own wit, pains, or industry, like those who sacrificed to their own net, and burnt incense to their own

drag? Hab. 1:16; (3.) Or to ascribe it to any other creature. The instruments of our success will be thanked, when God is overlooked.

Lastly, Whereas we are required to give to God the obedience of our whole souls, here is forbidden. 1. Slighting and despising God and his commandments, making no account of them, and the obedience due to them, Deut. 32:15. 2. Resisting and grieving his Spirit, stifling its motions, and refusing to hearken to its suggestions, Eph. 4:30.

THIRDLY, This command forbids idolatry, which is the giving that worship and glory to any other which is due to God alone. It is twofold, gross external idolatry, and subtle heart-idolatry.

First, As to gross idolatry, this command condemns,

1. The heathens, whose religion brought in a multiplicity of gods. For having lost the right knowledge of the true God, the notion of God was like a broken looking-glass, where every part represents a small face, though when entire it represents one only. The worship of the sun seems to be among the most ancient kinds of idolatry, together with the moon and stars, Job 31:26, 27. And great men deified after their death became objects of worship. Thus at length they came to have a multitude of gods and goddesses.

2. The Papists, whose religion is nothing but the great apostasy from Christianity, headed by Antichrist. They are guilty of gross idolatry.

1st, They worship the saints departed, especially the virgin Mary, in whose worship they are so profuse, that they may be called Marians rather than Christians. To the saints they pray, make vows, swear by them, consecrate altars and temples to them, and offer incense. All which are parts of religious worship due to God alone. And they profess they place their hopes and confidence in them, Matth. 4:10

contrary to God's express command, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.'

2dly, They worship angels, pray to them, to bestow good things on them, and to protect them from evil; and especially the guardian angel, which they allege is allotted to every one, expressly contrary to the authority of God, Rev. 22:8, 9.

3dly, They worship the bread in the sacrament; for as soon as the priest has consecrated it, he falls down on his knees and worships it; then he lifts it up above his head, that the people may see it; and then they worship it too.

4thly, They worship the cross, the tree itself on which they pretend Christ died, and the image of it. They bow their knees to it, and kiss it, pray to it, and consecrate temples and altars to it.

Lastly, They worship the relics of saints, not only their bodies, but what belonged to them while they lived, their bones, blood, flesh, teeth, hair, clothes, shoes, belts, &c. They place these things on the altar, carry them about in processions, give them to the people to touch or kiss, fall down and worship before them. And all this while they keep up the scriptures, which the apostles left, from the people. So that Popery is but heathenism in a new dress.

Secondly, As to subtle heart-idolatry, that is more extensive. Men commit this idolatry with the creatures, when their mind, will, and affections are set on the creature, as much or more than on God. So covetousness is called idolatry. Now, we are guilty of this idolatry.

1. When we love any thing as much or more than God, Matth. 10:37. For that is our god that gets most of our hearts; and that must needs be our idol that gets more of our love than God gets. Thus often we

are found idolizing ourselves, the world, our lawful comforts, and relations. O how disorderly does the pulse of our affections beat! How violent are they towards the creature, but how weak and languishing towards God! The fire of love to God is oft-times like a fire of straw, that makes a sudden blaze and then dies; when that of love to the creature is like a fire of juniper that burns long, and is not soon quenched. This excessive love to the creatures appears, (1.) In the high esteem of them above God, and the communications of his grace. (2.) In the great eagerness that is used in the pursuit of them, more than in seeking God and his favour. (3.) In the greater uneasiness in the want of them, than in that of the consolations of God.

2. When men desire any thing as much or more than God, Phil. 4:6. How extravagant are the desires of the heart! Many things are desired more than the one thing needful. Our desires after created things had need to have their wings clipped, while the wings of desire towards God are far from being grown. How readily would we be filled if we knocked as eagerly at God's door as at that of the creatures? Try then what it is that of all things thou desirest most; That is thy God.

3. When we delight and rejoice in any thing as much or more than God, Luke 10:20. For what is a man's choice, and most suitable to his heart, he will delight and rejoice most in it. O what idolatry will this discover! How often is it found, that men will delight and rejoice more in a good bargain than in the everlasting covenant; in husband, wife, and children, more than in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! in a good farm or store-room, than in the field of the gospel; where the treasure is, there will the heart be also; in a good suit of clothes more than in the righteousness of a Mediator.

4. When we sorrow more, or as much, for any thing as the offending of God. That is a sorrow of the world, 2 Cor. 7:10 that discovers the idolizing of the creature. The offence of man is often more at heart than the offence of God; and people will be at more pains to gain reconciliation with them than with the Lord himself. A small cross or loss in the world will draw tears, when sin will not draw a sigh from us; and ordinarily our afflictions lie more heavy on us than our sins.

5. When we have as much or more zeal for any thing than for God and his honour. Thus self is idolized, men being far more sensibly touched by any thing that reflects on themselves than on God. How often do men unmoved behold God's name dishonoured, while, if ye but touch them in their reputation and honour, ye will find they are not drones in their own cause, though they are so in God's! So men idolize their own conceits, being, as the Pharisees, much more zealous for their own traditions than God's commandments, for their own opinions than moral duties.

6. When we fear any person or thing more than God, Prov. 29:25. The greatest fear being due to God, if we fear any person or thing more than him, we idolize it. Thus men make a god of man, yea, and of the devil. And the fear of the wrath of man will have far more influence than of the wrath of God. This, in a time of persecution, is a special snare.

7. When we have more or as much hope in any thing as in God. Yet alas! how often will the promises of men revive us, when all the promises of God cannot do it!

8. Lastly, When we have more or as much confidence and trust in any thing, as in God, Jer. 17:5. Thus, power, wealth, strength, gifts, and abilities, are idolized, and whatever men trust more to than to God.

If it be asked, Whether it consists with the state of grace to have our love and affection more on any creature than on God? Ans. 1. We must distinguish betwixt the inward disposition of the soul, the habit of love, desire, &c. and the acts thereof. The habit of love, desire, &c. towards God in a godly soul, is always more firmly rooted in his heart, than the habit of love to any creature, Eph. 3:18. But yet the acts of love and desire towards the creature may be more strong under temptation; but that is their sin. 2. The strength of our affections is to be distinguished from the commotion of them, which sometimes may be greater and more sensible in the affection that is less. For, as the greatest joy is not always expressed in laughter, so the greatest affection has not always the greatest sensible stirring with it. But if people be solidly minded, and willing to forsake all for Christ, and to displease any rather than him, though they be more sensibly moved in their affection to earthly things, their affections are not therefore more on them than him.

I shall now shut up all with the consideration of these words, before me. 'These words, before me, in the first commandment, teach us, that God, who seeth all things, taketh special notice of, and is much displeased with the sin of having any other god.'

First, God taketh special notice of the sin of having any other god.

1. He taketh special notice of the gross sin of idolatry. He has a jealous eye on it, and will not overlook it; for it is spiritual adultery; and the husband will overlook many faults in his wife, who will not overlook that. Idolaters have their fig-leaf covers for their idolatry. How do the Papists set their wits on the rack to frame such nice and subtle distinctions as may palliate their horrid idolatry! But though they may deceive the simple with these things, yet they cannot blind the eyes of the all-seeing God.

Seeing God takes such notice of it, how lamentable is it that idolatry makes such vast progress in this covenanted land, and is not duly noticed! How sad is it, that the sin and dishonour against God is not noticed, so as to be mourned over, and to take notice of the danger of it, and that the government takes not notice of it to repress it! This is a sad sign of the danger of being over-run with it.

2. God takes special notice of heart idolatry, of whatever possesseth his room in the heart. That is a subtle kind of idolatry, so hid that others cannot, nay men themselves do not always, perceive what it is that is their idol. But God sees it very well.

(1.) The idol may be of a spiritual nature, which the man cannot discern till the law be carried home on the soul in its spiritual extent. Thus Paul's duties and seeming holiness were his idol, Rom. 7:9.

(2.) It may lie in lawful things. Things unlawful in themselves may quickly be seen with the snare in them. It is easy to discern the devil when he appears with his cloven foot, so to speak: but it is not so easy to see a man's ruin lying in houses and lands, husband, wife, and children, goods and gear: yet these may be the idols.

(3.) The idol may go under the name of an infirmity. Thus many deceive themselves with entertaining reigning sins, under the name of infirmities.

(4.) Self-love acts its part here, being ready to magnify men's good, and extenuate their evil. And so they nourish their disease, and hug the viper that is gnawing at their bowels.

Lastly, There may be a judicial stroke in it. They will not entertain the discoveries which God makes them; and they shutting their eyes, the Lord strikes them blind.

But let us specially notice what God has a special eye upon.

Secondly, God is specially displeased with our having any other god.

1. He is displeased with gross idolatry. He shews his special wrath in this life against idolaters, as against the Israelites, for worshipping the golden calf; and against the ten tribes, for their idolatry at Dan and Bethel. So old Babylon was, and new Babylon will be destroyed. All idolaters will be punished in the other life, Rev. 21:8.

Let us then shew our displeasure against, and resolve in the Lord's strength, to oppose the spreading of idolatry, chusing rather to suffer than sin.

2. He is displeased with the idols which men set up in their hearts. He shews his displeasure several ways.

(1.) Sometimes the Lord, in the fury of his jealousy, forces the idol out of the way, as he did, in the case of Micah's idol, Judg. 18:24.

(2.) Sometimes he reduces the man to a necessity of parting either with his idol or his profession.

(3.) Oft-times the Lord makes the idol men's plague and punishment.

(4.) Lastly, Oft-times there is a rub by a torrent of temptation, that brings forth the idol in its own colours; as in the case of Judas' covetousness, and Demas' love of the world.

Let us therefore cast away our idols, and let nothing keep God's room in our hearts, especially in such a day when God is rising up to plead against us.

From the whole ye may see that the commandment is exceeding broad. Be humbled under the sense of your guilt in the breach of this command. And see what great need ye have to reform; and what need ye stand in of the blood of Christ for removing your guilt, and of his Spirit for cleansing your hearts, and subduing your iniquities.

OF THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:4, 5, 6.—Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing, that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

THE second command comes now to be explained; and this is it, though the Papists will not allow it to be so: And it is so plain against them, that they leave it out of their catechisms and books of devotion which they put into the people's hands, joining the reason of it, For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, &c. unto the first command; and so they count the third the second, the fourth the third, &c. and split the tenth into two (to make up the number), though the apostle expresses it in one word, 'Thou shalt not covet.' And indeed they have reason to hide it; for if they should let it come to the light, it would open the mystery of their iniquity among their blinded people, and spoil the most part of their devotions, whereof idols and images have the largest share.

As the first command fixeth the object of worship, so this fixes the means and ways of worship. The scope of it is to bind us to the external worship of God, and that in the way that he himself has instituted, and that we may be spiritual in his worship. We may take it up in two things.

1. The command itself. 2. The reasons annexed.

The command itself we have, ver. 4 and part of ver. 5. I shall consider the command.

The command is proposed negatively; and two things are here expressly forbidden.

First, The making of images for religious use and service, Lev. 26:1. And that it is thus meant, and not of civil or political images is plain from this, that it is a command of the first table, and so relates to divine worship. And our God is very particular in this point.

1. Graven images are forbidden particularly, that is, images cut or carved in wood, stone, or the like, called statues. These are particularly expressed, not only because they were the chief among idolaters, but because they do so lively represent men, beasts, &c. in all their parts and members, that nothing seems to be wanting in them but life; and so people are most ready to be deceived by them. But that we may see it is not these only that are abominable to our God.

2. Every similitude whatsoever for religious use and service is forbidden, whether it is done by casting in a mould, painting, weaving, or made any way whatsoever, though it be merely by the imagination, and not by the hand; for the words are universal, any

likeness. How particular is this command in things themselves, whereof idolaters would have the images.

1st, No graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, must be made for religious worship. By the heavens above, is meant the air, and all to the starry heavens, and the seat of the blessed. In the visible heavens are the birds, sun, moon, and stars. No likeness of these is to be made; and therefore, to paint the Holy Spirit as a dove is idolatrous. In the seat of the blessed are God himself, angels, and saints, i. e. the spirits of just men made perfect, all invisible; so that it is impiety, yea, and madness, to frame images of them.

2dly, No graven image or likeness of any thing that is in the earth beneath is to be made for religious service, whether they be on the surface, or in the bowels of the earth. Now, in the earth are men, beasts, trees, plants, the dead bodies of men, &c. No likeness of these is to be made for religious worship.

3dly, No graven image, or likeness of any thing that is in the water under the earth, is to be made. Now, these are fishes whatsoever the rivers and seas do produce. But no likeness of these is to be made for religious service.

But why so particular? This is deservedly inquired, when the first command, and most of the rest, are in so very few words. Ans. 1. Because the worship of God commanded here is not so much natural as in the first command, but instituted; and so nature's light can be of less service than in the first: for though the light of nature teacheth that God is to be worshipped, it cannot tell us how he will be worshipped, or in what particular way.

2. Because there is a special proneness in the nature of man to corrupt the worship and ordinances of God. Of old the worship of God was corrupted with vile idolatries and superstitions all the world over, but among the Jews, and frequently among them too. Ye will often read of the Jews falling in with the worship of the nations; but of any nation falling in with theirs, never, Jer. 2:11. And so is it at this day among the Papists, yea, and other churches, as the church of England, and the Greek churches; and there are few Protestant churches, where these ordinances are not changed in greater or lesser measure.

3. There is a peculiar bias in corrupt nature to idolatry. It is natural for men to desire to see what they worship, Rom. 1:23. Exod. 32:1 and to have a pompous worship. There is a natural weakness in the corrupt minds of men, whereby they are easily impressed by idols and images for religious service, ready to fancy something of divinity in them.

4. There is a peculiar hellish zeal that accompanies idolatry, to multiply gods, and to be most keen in the worship of them; like as it is seen in corporal adultery in those who have once prostituted their honour, Jer. 50:38. If you ask, what can put Papists, being men and not devils, on those horrid practices, of which we spake on the fast-day*? I answer, Their idolatrous religion inspires them with that hellish fury, 1 Kings 18:28. Psal. 106:36, 37, 38. So doe sit on multiplying them; for this particularity shews that almost from every part of the universe the heathens fetched their idols. And as the heathens had, so the Papists have, their idols and images of things in heaven, of God, angels, saints; and want not their queen of heaven, as well as the Pagans had. The earth furnishes them with an image of the cross, and with reliques and images of the dead. Remarkable is that which the author of the apocryphal book of Wisdom, which to

the Papists is canonical scripture, chap. 14:15 gives as the original of idolatry, to wit, That a father, in bitterness for his son's death, made an image of his dead son, and first honoured him as a dead man, at length as a god, &c. And as the Pagans had their gods to be applied to by persons of several callings, countries, diseases, &c. so the Papists are well high even with them in that. The Pagans had their gods for the seamen, shepherds, husbandmen, &c.; so the Papists have St. Nicholas for the seamen, St. Wendolin for the shepherd, St. John Baptist for the husbandman, St. Magdalene for the whore, as the Pagans had Flora. The family and country gods are a prodigious number, St. Andrew for Scotland, St. George for England, St. Patrick for Ireland, St. Denys for France, St. James for Spain, &c. And that god-making power that is in the Pope and his Cardinals to canonize any deceased person they think worthy, may fill the world with them. Gods they have almost for every disease. What wonder then that the command is so particular?

Lastly, Because the Lord has (so to speak) a particular zeal for his own worship, and against idolatry. Thus he pursues them out of all their starting-holes. He will not allow them an image of any thing in the heaven above, of any thing under heaven, or in the earth, or of any thing in the waters under the earth. Where then shall they have them but from hell, where the devil and damned spirits are?

Secondly, The worshipping of them is forbidden.

1. The very bowing to them is forbidden, whether it be the bowing of the whole body, bowing the knee, or bowing the head, and much more prostrating ourselves before them, and so consequently uncovering the head. Men may think it a small thing to use such a gesture before them, if they do not pray to them, &c. but our jealous

God forbids, the lowest degree of religious worship to them, and for civil worship they are not capable of it, Gen. 23:7.

2. The serving of them. This implies whatsoever service the true God required of his worshippers, or the Pagans gave to their idols. So the serving of them lies in these things, setting them up on high, carrying them in processions, erecting temples, chapels, altars to them, making vows to them, praying to them, offering incense to them, and dedicating days to them. All which the Papists do to their idols.

The Papists will tell you, they do not worship them absolutely, but relatively; not ultimately, but mediately; whereby they beguile unstable souls. But the command strikes through all these fig-leaf covers, and says absolutely we must not worship them, nor give them the lowest degree of worship: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, &c.—Thou shalt not bow unto them, nor serve them.

But we have not the full meaning of the negative part of this command. Does it only forbid the making and worshipping of images? No. Remember the rule, That where one sort of sin is expressed in a command, all others of that kind are included. When in the seventh command adultery is forbidden, all manner of uncleanness is forbidden, though one of the grossest sort only is named. So here, when the corrupting of the worship of God by images is forbidden, all other corruptions whatsoever of God's worship are included.

The matter of this command is the worship of God and his ordinances; and it says to every man, Thou shalt not make any thing whereby thou wilt worship God. And as the seventh command meets him that defiles his neighbour's wife, saying, Thou shalt not commit adultery; so this meets the church of Rome, and says, Thou shalt not make any graven image, &c. But as the seventh says also to the

fornicator, Thou shalt not commit uncleanness; so this says also to the church of England, thou shalt not make crossing in baptism, kneeling, bowing to the altar, festival days, &c.—And to every sort of people, and to every particular person, it says, thou shalt not meddle to make any thing of divine worship and ordinances out of thy own head.

All holy ordinances and parts of worship God has reserved to himself the making of them for us, saying, with respect to these, Thou shalt not make them to thyself. Men are said, in scripture, to make a thing to themselves, when they make it out of their own head, without the word of God for it. But when they make any thing according to God's word, God is said to do it, Matt. 19:6. If there be not then a divine law for what is brought into the worship and ordinances of God, it is an idol of men's making, a device of their own. And so Popery, Prelacy, ceremonies, and whatsoever is without the word, brought in God's matters, is overturned at once by his word. Thou shalt not make, be thou Pope, King, Parliament, minister, private person, synod, or council. So ye see it is not only the making of images, but worshipping and serving them, that is forbidden.

Next, by the same rule, whereas this command forbids not only the making of images, but bowing to them, and serving them, though they be made by others, that is not all that is included in that. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them. But the meaning of it further is, Whatever any make without the word, in the matter of God's worship and ordinances, thou shalt not comply with it, approve of it, or use it. So that to thee they must be as if they were not made at all, make them who will, under whatever pretence, whether of decency or strictness, seeing God has not made them. To the law and to the testimony, be of what party they will, if they speak not according to this word, fear them not to comply with them in

what they advance in God's matters, that is not according thereto. So much for the negative part of this command.

The positive part of it is implied, according to the rule, That every negative implies an affirmative part. It consists in these two things.

1. Thou shalt worship the Lord, and him shalt thou serve; worship him with external worship. This is implied in that, Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them. This says, But thou shalt bow down to me, and serve me. Even as due benevolence betwixt married persons is implied in that, Thou shalt not commit adultery. Internal worship is the worship required in the first, external in the second command. There is a generation that do not worship images, but they lie fair for it, if it were once come in fashion; it is those that do not worship God, they do not bow down to him, nor serve him. They say, God looks to the heart, and they hope and trust in him, and give their hearts to him, though they do not go about the outward worship as some others do, but their hearts are as true with God as theirs for all that. These, I say, lie fair for worshipping images; for if the devil were come, their house is empty, swept, and garnished. They may worship idols, for they do not worship God in secret, or in their families. If the book-prayers of England, and the idolatrous prayers of Rome, were come to their hand, there is no other worship to be put out for them, for they have no other.

What they talk of their hearts towards God, therein they join with the Papists, who put the second command out of the number of the ten. For the worship of God which they slight on that pretence, is the very worship required in this command. Now, let us try whether ye that will hold with the worship of the heart, or this command that requires outward bodily worship too, has most reason on your side.

1st, Is not God the God of the whole man, the body as well as the soul? Christ has redeemed the body as well as the soul; the Spirit dwells in the bodies of his people as well as their souls. The whole man, soul and body, is taken into the covenant. The body shall be glorified in heaven as well as the soul, or burn in hell as well as the soul. Is it not highly reasonable, then, that we worship God with outward bodily worship, as well as with the inward worship of the heart?

2dly, God will not only be worshipped by us, but glorified before men, Matth. 16:24. But our inward worship cannot do that, for that is what none can know but God and our own souls. Therefore outward worship is necessary. If men will be accounted God's servants, why will they not take on his badge?

3dly, Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh in other cases, and why not in this? The apostle says grace in the hearts appears by the mouth to the honour of God, Rom. 10:10. And though outward worship may be performed where there is no inward in the heart, yet if the heart be a temple to God, the smoke will rise up from the altar, and appear without in outward worship.

Lastly, Outward worship is not only a sign of the inward, but it is a help and furtherance to it. Prayer is a blessed mean to increase our love to God, sorrow for sin, faith, hope, and other parts of heart-worship. So, the partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, another part of external worship, in the profane neglect of which many live, is not only a mean appointed, whereby we publicly profess ourselves engaged to the Lord, but is the mean to strengthen faith, and confirm our union and communion with him.

2. Thou shalt fall in with and use the external worship and ordinances which God has appointed. This is implied in that, Thou

shalt not make unto thee any graven image, &c. They are made already, God has made them, and ye must use those that God has made, that worship, and those ordinances. And thus, by this command we are bound to all the parts of God's worship, and to all his ordinances appointed in his word. If we neglect any of them, it is at our peril. It is not enough to leave idolatrous or superstitious worship and ordinances, but we must inquire what are the Lord's, statutes, that we may do them.

I come now to that question, 'What is required in the second commandment? The second commandment requireth the receiving observing, and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word.'

In handling this point, I shall shew,

I. What is that religious worship, and those ordinances, which God hath appointed in his word.

II. What is our duty with reference to those ordinances.

I. I shall shew what is that religious worship, and those ordinances which God hath appointed in his word. That God has appointed that religious worship, and those ordinances, whereby we are outwardly to glorify him, is evident from this, that God will be so honoured by us, yet has forbidden us to make any thing that way, consequently they are made by himself in his word. These ordinances appointed in the word are,

1. Prayer, whereby we tender to him the homage due from a creature to his Creator, acknowledging our dependence on him as the Author of all good. The parts of it are petition, confession, and thanksgiving. And that public in the assemblies, Acts 2:42; private in lesser

societies, particularly in families, Jer. 10 ult; and secret, every one by himself, Mat. 6:6 none of them to jostle out another. In these we are tied to no form.

2. Praises in singing psalms, whereby we give him the praise due to him. And this is appointed, both publicly, Psal. 149:1 and privately, Jam. 5:13. This is to be done in all simplicity becoming the gospel, singing them with grace in the heart, Col. 3:16; not playing them on musical instruments, of which there is not one word in the New Testament.

3. Reading God's word, and hearing it read, both publicly, Acts 15:21 and privately, John 5:39; whereby we honour God, consulting his oracles.

4. The preaching of the word, and hearing it preached, 2 Tim. 4:2. 2 Kings 4:23. And consequently the ministry is an ordinance of God, Rom. 10:15. Eph. 4:11, 12 and the maintenance thereof, 1 Cor. 9:14 by an ordinance of God, though there should be no ordinance of the state for it.

5. Administration and receiving of the sacraments, to wit, baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Matt. 28:19 and the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. 11:23, &c. both which are left us in much gospel-simplicity. By these we solemnly avouch ourselves to be the Lord's, and receive the seals of the covenant, getting our faith of covenant-blessings confirmed.

6. Fasting, or extraordinary prayer with fasting, when the Lord by his providence calls for it, as when tokens of his anger do in a special manner appear. And this is public, in the congregation, Joel 2:12, 13 and private too, as in families, 1 Cor. 7:5 and secret, Matth. 6:17, 18.

See Zech. 12:12, 13, 14. The same is to be said of extraordinary prayer, with thanksgiving.

7. Church government and discipline. Christ has appointed a government in his church, and has not left it to men to dispose of it, Heb. 3:5, 6. 1 Cor. 12:28. He has appointed his officers, which are pastors and doctors, Eph. 4:11 ruling elders and deacons, 1 Cor. 12:28. And besides these the scripture knows no ordinary church-officers. The three first are, by his appointment, church-rulers. They have the power of discipline, Matth. 18:17, 18 to rebuke scandalous offenders publicly, 1 Tim. 6:20 to excommunicate the contumacious, 1 Cor. 5:4, 5. And amongst these officers of the same kind there is a parity by divine appointment, excluding both Pope and Prelate, Matth. 20:26. There is also a subordination of judicatories, Acts 15 which is the government we call Presbyterial.

8. Instructing and teaching in the ways of the Lord, not only by ministers, but by masters of families, who are to teach their families, Gen. 18:19. Deut. 6:6, 7.

9. Lastly, Spiritual conference, Mal. 3:16. Deut. 6:7 and swearing, of which we shall treat in the third commandment.

II. I shall shew what is our duty with reference to these ordinances. It is fourfold.

1. We must receive them in our principles and profession. We must carry them as the badge of our subjection to our God, Micah 4:5.

2. We must observe them in our practice, Matth. 18:20. For what end do we receive these ordinances, if we make no conscience of the practice of them? We will be in that case as the servant that knew his master's will, but did it not. So here there is a number of duties laid

on us by this command. It requires us also to pray, ministers to pray publicly and the people to join; masters of families to pray in their families, and the family to join with them; and each of us to pray in secret. It requires all of us to sing the Lord's praises, privately and publicly. It requires church-officers to exercise church discipline, and offenders to submit thereunto, &c. &c.

3. We must do our duty to keep them pure, that nothing of men's inventions be added to them, and that whatever others mix with them, we adhere to the purity of ordinances, 1 Cor. 11:2.

4. We must do our duty to keep them entire, that nothing be taken from them, Deut. 12 ult. for both adding and paring in these matters are abominable to the Lord.

Finally, It requires us, in consequence of this, to disapprove, detest, and oppose, according to our several places and stations, all worship that is not appointed of God, whether superstitious or idolatrous, and, according to our several places and stations, to endeavour the removal of the same, Acts 17:16, 17. Deut. 7:5.

I proceed to consider what is forbidden in the second commandment. Ans. 'The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word.' The sum of the second commandment is, That we worship God according as he has appointed in his word, and no otherwise. Hence there are two ways in the general, whereby this command is broken, viz. by irreligion and false worship.

FIRST, Irreligion is the not shewing a due regard to, and not duly complying with the worship and ordinances appointed by God in his word, Job 15:4. It is a sin against this command in defect, as false worship is in excess. It is a not worshipping of God with external

worship and by means appointed, as false worship is worshipping in a way not appointed. And it is as much forbidden in this command, as to have no God at all is in the first. There are several sorts of that irreligion all here forbidden.

1. The not receiving, but rejecting the worship and ordinances of God, Hos. 8:12. This is the sin, (1.) Of atheists, who, as they have no reverence for God, seeing they deny him, do also reject his worship. (2.) Of Quakers, who throw off almost the whole external worship and ordinances of God, under the pretence of worshipping him in spirit. (3.) Of all those who do not receive, but reject any one ordinance of God whatsoever, as some do singing of psalms, others the sacraments, others the government instituted by Christ, &c.

2. All neglect of God's worship and ordinances, in not observing them in their practice. The neglect of these, though men do not professedly reject them, is very offensive, Exod. 4:24, 25. So in this command is forbidden,

1st, The neglect of prayer, Psal. 14:4. How can they read or hear this command without a check, who do not bow a knee to God? This command forbids,

(1.) The neglect of public prayer in the congregation; whereof people are guilty when they unnecessarily absent themselves from the public ordinances, or, through laziness or carelessness, the prayers are over ere they come; or unnecessarily go away and leave public prayers; or do not in their hearts join and go along with the speaker in them.

(2.) The neglect of family worship, and prayers particularly, Jer. 10 ult. Christian families should be churches, wherein God should be worshipped. It is the sin of the whole family, especially of the heads thereof, when it is neglected. I say the whole, because it must needs

be offensive to God, that while his worship lies neglected in a family, there is none there willing to take it up, and supply the defect. Besides, there is a neglect of it, where it is performed, viz. when any members of the family neglect to join therein, but unnecessarily absent themselves, or being present do not join in their hearts with the speaker.

(3.) The neglect of secret prayer. It is a positive ordinance of God, Matth. 6:6 and the neglect of it, as it will not readily be the sin of those exercised to godliness, Cant. 7:11 so it is a sad sign of little desire of communion with God.

2dly, The neglect of singing the Lord's praises, whether in public or in private. There are some who sit mute like fishes in the congregation praising God, who are ready enough to rant in the congregation of drunkards. There are no psalms sung in their families, for they are strangers to spiritual mirth; but they can laugh and sing to express their carnal mirth.

3dly, The neglect of reading, and hearing the word read, in public, private, or secret. Has God commanded to search the scriptures, and will men be such neglecters of it? What irreligion is it thus to neglect the word of life, our Father's testament, the book of God that teaches the way to eternal happiness?

4thly, The neglect of preaching the word is the sin of ministers, 2 Tim. 4:1, 2. This is to starve souls, instead of feeding them, which will make a dreadful account. So this command condemns, (1.) The practice of the lordly prelates, the least of whose work is preaching the gospel. They will needs have Timothy a bishop: with what face can they read, then, that solemn charge, 2 Tim. 4:1, 2. 'I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ;—preach the word; be instant in season, and out of season,' &c. who (as if they would give us the

perfect reverse of John the Baptist's character) are found more in the palace than the pulpit? Matth. 11:7, 8. (2.) Their devolving this work upon their curates and parsons, who often devolve it again upon their hirelings. Ezek. 44:8. (3.) Ministers having plurality of benefices and charges, whereby it is rendered impossible for them to feed them as is necessary unless they could be in several parishes at once. (4.) The non-residence of ministers, whereby they are under the same incapacity. (5.) All negligence of ministers, whereby they lightly, and without weighty grounds, leave their flocks destitute of the preaching of the word, shorter or longer time.

5thly, The neglect of hearing the word. People are thus guilty when they totally absent themselves from the public ordinances, Heb. 10:25. It is lamentable to think how God is dishonoured, and graceless people hardened, by the prevailing of this among us. Whatever religion men place in this, this command makes it irreligion. If we be in our duty to preach, people are out of their duty that neglect to hear. Thus are people also guilty, when without any necessity they do at any time absent themselves, and when they rove and wander, and do not attend to the word preached when present.

6thly, Ministers neglecting the administration of the sacraments. God has joined them together with the word in their commission, and therefore the neglect of any of them must be their sin. Christ has ordered the sacrament of his supper to be often celebrated, 1 Cor. 11:26 though he has not determined how often. I know no church so guilty in this point as our own.

7thly, People's neglecting of the sacraments, to receive them. Thus people bring guilt on themselves, by slighting and neglecting the ordinance of baptism, Luke 7:30 unduly delaying the baptism of their children; and also in slighting the sacrament of the Lord's

supper, 2 Chron. 30:10. Is it not a strange thing how men get their consciences satisfied, while they neglect one opportunity after another, and live in the avowed neglect of an uncontroverted ordinance?

8thly, the neglect of the duty of fasting and prayer, when the Lord by his providence calls for it, whether public, or private, or secret. The neglect of public fasting and prayer is the sin of the church of Scotland at this day, seeing that our melancholy circumstances do evidently hold forth the call of providence thereto. And for family-fasts, how is that duty absolutely neglected in most families though there is no family but sometimes has a private call thereto, by some stroke threatened or lying on them, &c.? And how many are absolute strangers to secret personal fasting and prayer, though they want not calls thereto, either from their temporal or spiritual case? Matth. 7:21. Thus may the church, families, and particular persons, be guilty in the neglect of thanks-giving for mercies.

9thly, The neglect of the exercise of church-discipline by church-judicatories, greater or lesser, in order to the purging of the church of scandalous members, Rev. 2:14. This has been and is the sin of the church of Scotland, for which God may justly take his keys out of our hand. And now matters are come to that pass in most congregations, through the land, and has ever so been in this congregation since I knew it, that the vigorous exercise of discipline cannot be to edification*, Gal. 5:12 the disease being turned too strong for the cure. May the Lord convince them powerfully, and check them effectually, that make it so!

10thly, The neglect of catechising and instructing the weak. Thus ministers are guilty when they are not at pains to catechise; and those who will not be at pains to wait on diets of examination, but

shun it time after time, and will rather enjoy their ignorance than come to learn. So masters of families are guilty who are at no pains to instruct their wives, children, and servants, in the principles of religion; and such as neglect that opportunity of family-catechising. You want not good helps to this; why may ye not take a Catechism, such as Allein's &c. and ask the questions, and cause them to answer? It would be a good spending of the Sabbath, profitable to you and them too.

Lastly, The neglect of spiritual conference, when God puts an opportunity in our hands, especially on the Lord's day, when our talk in a special manner is required to be spiritual, and we have the advantage of speaking of the Lord's word, which we have heard.

3. All curtailing and mincing of God's worship and ordinances, not keeping them entire, Deut. 12 ult. Men are guilty of this,

1st, When they reject any part of an ordinance instituted by Christ, and so leave it defective and lame, as the Papists in taking away the cup from the people, and the reading of the scriptures in private, &c.

2dly, When they receive some of Christ's ordinances, but not all. Thus,

(1.) Churches sin, when they receive his doctrine and worship, but not the government and discipline appointed in his house. A sad defect in some churches since the reformation, where all Christ's ordinances could not get place; as if it had been left to men what to take and what to refuse of his institutions.

(2.) Families sin, mincing God's worship and ordinances. Some will sing and read, but not pray; some pray, but do not read and sing. Some will worship God in their families in the evening, but no

morning-sacrifice can get room there for their throng. Some will do all, but neglect family catechising or instruction.

(3.) Particular persons sin. How men pick and chuse the institutions of God? Some wait on public ordinances, but make no conscience of private ordinances. Some, again, go about the private exercises of religion, but slight public ordinances. Some hear the word ordinarily, but they are habitual neglecters of the sacrament. Some pray in secret, but they pray not in their families; some in their families, but they have nothing to say to God, but what they can say before all their family; their family-prayers justle out their secret prayers. Is this to keep God's worship and ordinances entire? How can men answer to God for this way of it?

(4.) Contempt of God's worship and ordinances, Matth. 21:5. Mal. 1:7. This is a crying sin of our day, that is like to fill up our cup to the brim, 2 Chron. 36:16. God has a special zeal for his own worship and ordinances, and therefore contempt of them must be dangerous to a degree. There are several sorts of this contempt of God's worship and ordinances, whereby men are guilty.

1st, Inward irreverence, when we come to or are at ordinances without due fear of God on our spirits, Eccl. 5:1; when we rush into the presence of God, in public, private, or secret duties, without that composure of spirit which an approach to the great God requires; when we do not prepare to meet with God in his ordinances, but stand not to touch the holy things of God with unholy, unsanctified hands.

2dly, Outward irreverence in holy ordinances, which is a plain contempt cast on them, Mal. 1:12, 13. Such are all foolish gestures in the time of divine worship, talking one with another, and much more laughing, whether in the church or the family. They are foolish, void

of discretion, as well as the fear of God, that give up themselves to these things, and know neither God nor themselves. And those are also guilty of irreverence who sleep at ordinances, public or private, Acts 20:9.

3dly, An open and avowed contempt of God's ordinances, Job 21:14, 15. O what guilt is on the generation this way! They do not worship God in his ordinances, and they are not ashamed of it. They do not pray, and they will not avow it. It is below them to bow a knee to God, especially in their families. They neglect the hearing of the word, and they glory in it. If we offer to touch them any manner of way, they will not come to the church again. They will loiter at home for months together, and think it no fault. They never communicate, and they are not ashamed of it. Contempt of ordinances has been a crying sin in Ettrick these seven years, whatever it was before.

4thly, Contumacy, in not submitting to the discipline of Christ's house. People are not ashamed to sin and give scandal; they think not that below them; but they will commit their scandalous offences, get drunk, swear, revel, fight one with another, as if they would regard the laws neither of God nor man. But whatever be their scandals, if it be not fornication or adultery, they contemn and slight the discipline of Christ's house. With what contempt do many entertain church government at this day!

5thly, Mocking those who make conscience of God's worship, Is. 28:22. Dreadful is that contempt where God's ordinances are made a jest of, and a man is treated like a fool, because he makes conscience of his duty towards God. Mock at preaching and praying as men will, the day will come when they will change their note.

Lastly, Simony, Acts 8:18. It is a desire of buying or selling spiritual things, or things annexed to them, whether the bargain succeed or

not; as buying or selling of baptism, &c. or an office appointed by Christ in his house. This prevails in corrupt times of the church, especially under patronages, is oft-times the sin of those that are getting into the ministry, and of such as are concerned about them, when they take indirect methods, by themselves or friends, to get into charges by Simoniacal pactions, whether by gifts from the hand or from the tongue. And somewhat of this nature is the sin of scandalous curates, and of those that deal with them, who will for money marry people without testimonials, basely prostituting God's ordinance.

5. Hindering God's worship and ordinances, Matt. 23:13. Thus men are guilty of the breach of this commandment.

1st, In hindering God's public worship; which may be done many ways. As, (1.) By the magistrates' laws or force against ministers preaching the word, and going about other duties of their station, Acts 4:18. (2.) By sacrilege, taking away any thing that is necessary for the maintenance of God's worship, and which has been devoted for that end, as the maintenance of ministers and the like, Rom. 2:22. (3.) By discouraging ministers by calumnies, reproaches, and all hard usage, which may make them drive heavily in their work. (4.) Putting in and keeping scandalous men in the ministry, 1 Sam. 2:17. (5.) Men's keeping back those that are under them from attending the public worship. If any be so tied to their worldly affairs that there is no way to relieve them on the Lord's day for many Sabbaths together, it is their sin that tie them so, and theirs that tie themselves so; though I am apt to believe it is but an excuse that some godless creatures make for themselves.

2dly, Hindering family-worship; which may be done many ways; as by a too eager and unseasonable pursuit of worldly business, till

neither time nor strength is left for it; shuffling it off by this and the other thing that is to be done, and not watching the season for it; strife and contention in families, especially betwixt husband and wife, 1 Pet. 3:7 any member of the family drawing back, and creating disorder.

3dly, Hindering secret worship; as not allowing people time to seek the Lord in secret, mocking or discouraging those that do so, &c.

To which we may add, our not doing what we can to further the worship of God in public, private or secret; for it is not enough that we do not hinder it, but what do we to further it? Heb. 10:24, 25; the not stirring up the lazy and careless, and putting them on their duty.

Lastly, Opposing God's worship and ordinances, public, private, or secret. This is more than to hinder them, Acts 13:44, 45. So are guilty, (1.) Persecutors, Acts 4:18. (2.) Those that are fond of their own inventions, set themselves to cast out, or hold out, God's true worship and ordinances out of the church: the sin of many at this day. (3.) Opposing the settlement of parishes with gospel-ministers called according to the word, which, on prejudices and mistaken points of honour, has been and is the sin of many in the land. (4.) Lastly, All such as any way set themselves against God's worship, in public, in congregations, families, or secret. This will be found, whatever people think of it, a fighting against God, Acts 5:39.

SECONDLY, I come now to speak of false worship and ordinances, which is worship and ordinances not instituted or appointed by God himself. And this is expressly forbidden, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, &c. Deut. 12 ult. It is not only a sin not to worship God, and not to regard his ordinances, but to worship him in a way which he has not instituted, to bring in ordinances that bear not his stamp. Of this there are two sorts.

First, Idolatry. There is a sort of idolatry forbidden in the first command that respects the object of worship, when we worship any other than the true God. But the idolatry here forbidden respects the means of worship, when we make use of idols or images in worship, even though we intend ultimately the worshipping of the true God. And here is condemned,

1. All religious imagery; for of images and pictures for a civil or political use merely, the command is not to be understood; for the command being of the first table, plainly respects religion, Lev. 26:1; and the art of cutting, carving, &c. is a gift of God, Exod. 31:3–5; and has had God's allowance for the exercise of it, 1 Kings 6:29. Now, under this article of religious imagery is forbidden,

1st, The making any representation or image of God in our mind, all carnal imaginations of him, as to conceive of him like a reverend old man, &c. Acts 17:29 for God is the object of our understanding, not our imagination, being invisible. This is mental idolatry, which the best are in hazard of.

2dly, The making any outward representation of God by any image. Remarkable is the connection of the first and second command: Thou shalt have no other gods before me: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, &c. It is impossible to get any bodily likeness that can truly represent God as he is; and therefore men that, over the belly of reason and God's own will, will needs have representations of God, are fain to betake themselves to images of some corruptible thing, the very thing condemned in the heathens, Rom. 1:23. And therefore it is abominable imagery, and highly injurious to the great God, to represent him any manner of way. Such abominations are the representing of God by a sun shining with beams, with the name JEHOVAH in it or over it, as in several Bibles:

the representing of the Father by an image of an old man, the Son by that of a lamb, or a young man; or the Father by a large shining sun, the Son by a lesser sun shining, and the Holy Ghost by a dove, as in some great Bibles from England. It is lamentable to think how frequent of late the blasphemous pictures of Christ hanging on the cross are grown among Protestants, by Rome's art, no doubt to fit the nations for their idolatry. All these are directly contrary to God's word, Isa. 40:18. Deut. 4:15, 19.

Though Christ be a man, yet he is God too, and therefore no image can nor may represent him. Yea, what image can there be of his body now, seeing he never sat for it? He is now glorified, and so cannot be pictured as he is even in his human nature. There is nothing more ready to beget mean thoughts of Christ, Hab. 2:18; and if it should stir up devotion, that is worshipping by an image, which is idolatry here forbidden.

3dly, The having of these images, though we do not worship them. For if it be a sin in itself to make them, how can they be innocent that keep them? Deut. 7:5. It is a strange inconsistency in some to pretend to abhor images, and yet themselves will keep them. They may be a snare to others, and therefore should be removed, blotted or torn out of books, if in them. For their very being is an injury to the great, invisible, and incomprehensible Majesty.

4thly, Images of false gods, such as the heathens worshipped, and of such angels and saints as the Papists worship, we should beware of, because of the danger of idolatry, Exod. 32:8. Hezekiah destroyed the brazen serpent, that had been abused to idolatry. A zeal against them as God's rivals, which have got the worship due to him, is very natural to a child of God touched with God's honour, Psal. 16:4.

5thly, Images of God, Christ, angels, or saints, ought not to be set up in churches or places of worship, though men do not worship them. (1.) Because they are monuments of idolatry, that ought to be removed, Deut. 7:5; and destroyed, Exod. 23:24. (2.) Hezekiah is commended for breaking the brazen serpent, because the children of Israel burnt incense to it, 2 Kings 18:4. (3.) It is stumbling, as an occasion of idolatry, and as it prejudices Turks and Jews against the Christian religion, and grieves the hearts of tender Christians.

2. All idolatrous worship is forbidden here as abominable idolatry, Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. The sorts of idolatry forbidden here, are,

1st, Worshipping false gods by images, as the heathens did their Jupiter, Apollo, and the rest. Such was the worship of Baal among the idolatrous Israelites, Rom. 11:4.

2dly, Worshipping the images themselves of God, Christ, and saints, which is contrary to the very letter of this command. See Lev. 26:1. The Papists are most abominable idolaters in this respect bowing to stocks and stones. Their principles allow them a worship more than civil, which they call service, and that for the images themselves properly; contrary to the express words of this command, Thou shalt not serve them, Gal. 4:8. And the images of God and Christ get the most plain divine worship, though some distinguish, they get it not for themselves, but for what they represent. But get it as they will, it is plain they do get it, and that therefore the Papists are as real idolaters as ever the Pagans were, worshipping the work of their own hands. And accordingly they bow down to images, kiss them, offer incense to them, pray to them, &c.

3dly, Worshipping God in and by an image. The Papists wipe their mouth, and say, they have not sinned, when they do not believe the

image to be God, and do not terminate their worship on the image itself, but worship God in and by it. And when they have said this, what say they more than what the heathens had to say, and did say to the Christians of old? Did they believe that their images were the very gods they worshipped? Nay, they made many images of one god, as of Jupiter; and when they grew old, they eat them off, and got new ones. But did they change their gods? No, Jer. 2:11. Were not the Israelites abominable idolaters in the worship of the golden calf? Psal. 106:19, 20. Yet they did but worship Jehovah by it, Exod. 32:5. So Jeroboam's golden calves were intended but as means whereby to worship the true God, 1 Kings 12:26. So the calf-worship remained after Baal's worship was destroyed out of Israel by Jehu. The same was the case with Micah's idolatry, Judg. 17:13 and 18:6.

4thly, The worshipping of a man for some relation to God, of the Pope as God's vicar on earth. They call him their Lord, and a God upon earth. And when he is new made, he is twice set upon the altar, and worshipped by the cardinals. And he does not only admit the kissing of his feet, but expects and requires it as Christ's vicar. He is carried in procession, as the heathens carried their idols, and they themselves the sacrament, which they account God, great and small worshipping him as a God, if they think the honour redounds to God, so did Cornelius, Acts 10:25, 26.

Lastly, The same idolatry is in their worshipping angels, saints, reliques, the cross, bread in the sacrament, though they think the honour redounds to God. As if saints and angels had some deity in them, or God were present in the cross or reliques, and heard prayers better than any where else.

Secondly, There is superstition and will-worship; that is, whatever (though not idolatry) is brought into religion as a part of it, which

God hath not appointed in his word. The command says, Thou shalt not make, &c. that is, but thou shalt receive the worship and ordinances as God hath appointed them, and not add to them of men's inventions, Deut. 1. As irreligion regards not God's ordinances, so superstition brings in others; by irreligion men take away from the ordinances of God, by superstition they add to them. Both are hateful to God. Under this head are forbidden,

1. All making of things to be sin or duty which God hath not made so, Matth. 15:2. Whatever be men's pretences in this, it is an invading of the power and authority of the great Lawgiver, an accusing of his word of imperfection, and very dangerous, Prov. 30:6. This is the great occasion of sad divisions and schisms in the church, while men, not content with plain duty appointed of God, make the conceptions of their own hearts sins and duties, which God never made so, and impose them on others as terms of Christian communion, which superstition can never be sanctified by their fathering it wrongously on the scripture, Prov. 30:6.

2. Religiously abstaining from any thing which God does not require us so to abstain from. Men will have their ordinances as God has his; and O how hard is it to keep men from religious inventions of their own! Col. 2:20, 21. This is sinful in itself, religiously binding up ourselves where God has left us free, as if that could be acceptable service to God, which, like Jeroboam's feast-day, 1 Kings 12 ult. is devised of our own heart. But much more is it so when it justles out plain commanded duty, Matth. 15:5, 6. Such is the withdrawing from the public ordinances dispensed by Christ's sent servants lawfully called, and not mixed with men's inventions.

3. All unwarrantable observations and expectations of effects from causes which have no such virtue from God, either by the nature he

has given them, or by any special appointment of his. Of this sort of superstitions ignorant people are full, being the yet unpurged dregs of Popery and Paganism. Such as,

1st, Looking on such or such accidents as lucky or unlucky, whereby they are filled with fear or hope, as if these things were a part of the bible; as if a hare or a cat cross their way, the salt fall on the table, if they sneeze in the morning when they go out, or stumble in the threshold, the ear tingle, &c.

2dly, Looking on certain days as lucky or unlucky to begin or do a work upon; because there are such days of the week, or of the year, that are called dismal days, or that they are such and such holidays, as some will not yoke their plough on Yule-day, Deut. 18:10.

3dly, Carrying useless things about them for safety from devils, witches, temptations, or dangers: as Papists use to carry the reliques of some saints about their necks. This is not to be expected from the carrying the Bible about with us; for it is only the using it by faith and prayer that prevails; and as little can any such safety be warrantably expected from any kind of wood, &c. and many such like things.

4. All laying an unwarranted weight on circumstances of worship that is appointed of God. And so men keeping by the worship which God has appointed, may be guilty of superstition. As,

1st, When they lay weight upon the place where it is performed, as if it were more holy and acceptable to God, and more beneficial to men, in one place than another; whereas all difference of places is taken away under the gospel. That is superstition to think praying and preaching more holy and profitable in a kirk than in a barn, &c. or on a hill-side than in the church.

2dly, When men lay an unwarranted weight on their bodily posture in worship, carrying these things farther than God requires in his word. Much is made of these external gestures, especially where there is least religion, as in the churches of England and Rome, where these gestures are so appointed and multiplied, that it makes God's worship look very unlike that gravity required of Christians in the worship of God. So men may be guilty, as thinking prayer with their knees on the ground more acceptable than on a cushion, their knees bare than covered, &c.

3dly, Tying the worship of God to certain accidents, as to pray when one sneezeth, and say, God bless. This is originally a heathenish custom. Sneezing was so much observed among them, that it came at length to be accounted a god; and it was their usual prayer, when one sneezed, God save.

4thly, Laying weight upon instruments, administrators of ordinances, as if they were of more efficacy being administered by one than another having the same divine mission, and administering them according to the same institution of Christ.

5thly, Laying an unwarrantable weight on such a number of prayers, and reading such a number of chapters, and hearing such a number of sermons. And, in a word, laying weight on any thing about God's worship where God has laid none.

Lastly, All additions and inventions of men in God's worship and ordinances, Deut. 12 ult. With these the worship and ordinances of God are mightily corrupted in some churches. All these are here forbidden: As,

1st, The five sacraments the Papists have added to the two appointed by Christ, as orders, penance, marriage, confirmation, and extreme

unction.

2dly, The Apocryphal books they have added to the scriptures of the Old Testament.

3dly, The officers in the church that the Papists have added to those appointed by Christ, Popes, Cardinals, Patriarchs, &c. and which with them Prelatists have added, Archbishops, Bishops, Deans, &c.

4thly, The holidays they have added to the Lord's day.

Lastly, The heap of insignificant ceremonies wherewith the worship of God is burdened in Popery, and in the church of England. These are inventions of men, most of which the English service-book has borrowed from Papists who had many of them from the Pagans.

The patrons of false worship, whether idolatrous or superstitious, have a special respect to their own inventions, because they are their own, Psal. 106:39; and go about to impose them on others, under the pretence of their being delivered to them from great and good men, Matt. 15:2, 9; their antiquity, 1 Pet. 1:18; custom, Jer. 44:17; devotion, Isa. 65:5; good intent, 1 Sam. 15:21. But what we call for is divine warrant, Who hath required these things at your hands? There are several ways how people may be guilty of the breach of this command with respect to a false religion and worship.

1. The tolerating of it by those who have power to suppress it, Rev. 2:14.
2. By divising it, Numb. 15:39.
3. By counselling to follow it, Deut. 13:6, 7, 8.
4. By commanding it, Hos. 5:11.

5. By using it, 1 Kings 11:33.

6. Lastly, By any wise approving it.

Let us abhor the idolatry of Popery, and the superstitions of the church of England, which they had from the Papists, and would fain impose on us, remembering that God's command discharges all inventions of men in his worship; and our covenants, particularly the national covenant, whereby we are most expressly bound against them*.

I shall shut up all with laying before you, in a few words, the reasons annexed to this command.

1. God's sovereignty over us, I the Lord. So he has the sole power and authority to appoint the laws and ordinances by which we must be governed in his worship and service; and for others to take it upon them, is an invading of his sovereignty, which we must by no means own, Jer. 7:31.

2. His propriety in us, Thy God. Therefore we most not go a-whoring after our own or others' inventions, which alienate the heart from God, but must keep ourselves undefiled with these things; as a chaste wife holding by her husband, who will neither be a whore nor behave like one, Hos. 9:1. Because he is our God (I mean), we must neither be idolaters nor superstitions, symbolizing with idolaters.

3. The zeal he hath to his own worship, I—a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, &c. Zeal or jealousy is an affection of a husband, whereby he can endure no partner in his wife's love, but is highly incensed against it, if any such thing there be. So the Lord is specially displeased with all false worship, as spiritual whoredom, and has such a peculiar regard to the matter of

his worship, that it is a most dangerous thing to make a wrong step in it, Lev. 10:1, 2. This zeal appears, (1.) In his accounting the breakers of this command haters of him, though idolaters and superstitious persons pretend highly to love and honour him, and threatening to punish them to the third and fourth generation, because so long men may live, and see themselves punished in their children. Not that God properly punishes one for another's sin; but that from the parent's sin he often takes occasion to punish children for their own sins, and such their parents' sins oft-times are by imitation, or some way approving of them. (2.) In his accounting the observers of this command such as love him, and promising mercy unto them to many generations, even thousands of theirs after them.

This part of the subject was delivered Feb. 21. and the discourse here referred to was preached on occasion of a congregation fast, on the 17th, 1714. being the last year of Queen Anne's reign. It is well known that plots were then carrying on by Papists, Jacobites, and malignants, not without countenance from the then Tory ministry, to bring a Popish Pretender to the throne, on the demise of that much-abused Princess, in the place of the late King George 1. upon whom the crown had been entailed by act of Parliament, as the nearest Protestant heir; that great numbers of trafficking priests and Jesuits flocked into this kingdom; that Popish meetings were held more openly than formerly; that Presbyterian ministers were insulted in several places, and threatenings of vengeance uttered to be inflicted on firm and staunch Protestants. At this dangerous season, Mr. BOSTON, with that freedom and boldness that became a true patriot and an ambassador of the King of kings, was not silent, but faithfully testified against the abominations and cruelties of Papists, and the madness and extravagance of Jacobites and malignants, in the aforementioned discourse; and others preached in those perilous times.

As the discourse referred to was seasonable at that time, so it appears to be equally so at this day, when Popery is evidently on the increase in many places of this kingdom, Edinburgh not excepted, wherein there are said to be three numerous Popish meetings, and endeavours are used, by writings and speeches, to represent Popery in a light quite different from what it really is, thereby to beguile unwary and unstable souls; and not only Papists, but many infatuated and pretended Protestants, not Episcopalians only, but some who pretend to be Presbyterians, are as hearty and warm in the cause of a Popish pretender, as they were in any former period, and who, if their power were equal to their wishes and designs, would soon involve the nation in blood, and all the horrors of a civil war. These considerations have determined the preparer of this work for the Press to give the discourse entire, as it may be useful, through the divine blessing, for preserving people from the abominations of Popery, and the snares of Jacobites and malignants, those declared enemies to the religion and laws of their country, who, alas! are still very numerous amongst us, notwithstanding the Lord has signally testified his displeasure, of their unhappy cause, on two former occasions, which will be ever remembered with gratitude by all true Protestants, and hearty friends to the illustrious house of Hanover, which God, in mercy to these kingdoms, has raised and maintained on the throne, and made the guardians of our religion, laws, and liberties. And it will be the hearty prayer of all who fear God, and have a just sense of the invaluable liberties we enjoy under our happy constitution, O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the wicked, particularly the Antichristian beast, and his tool, a Popish Pretender and his abettors.

THE CHURCH'S PRAYER AGAINST THE ANTICHRISTIAN BEAST, AND HER OTHER ENEMIES, EXPLAINED AND ENFORCED

[A sermon preached on a congregation fast-day at Ettrick, February 17, 1714.]

PSAL. 74:19.—O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the wicked.

THIS text represents to us the case of Britian and Ireland at this day (which like Rebekah have two parties struggling within them,) and thereupon an application made to the Lord about it. In the words consider,

1. The struggling parties; these are Zion and Babylon; which never could, and never will agree. The Chaldean Babylon and the Jewish Zion are the parties here immediately pointed at: for it is plain, that this psalm was composed on the lamentable occasion of the Babylonians over-running Judea, and destroying Jerusalem and the temple. The Christian Zion and the Antichristian Babylon are the parties now on the field, the former being both gone; and so the text may be, without stretching, applied to them. The one party is,

(1.) The turtle; i. e. the church. She is compared to the turtle-dove for her fidelity to God. The turtle is a creature of admired chastity, has but one mate, and cleaves closely to that, and will take no other. So the true church of God preserves her chastity, worshipping none but the true God. But it is a bird that often becomes a prey, as being harmless and weak. Only it is pleaded on her behalf, that she is God's turtle. On the other hand is,

(2.) The multitude. This is the Babylonians, ver. 7. An idolatrous cruel people, who of old were so heavy on the church of God. But among the multitude were others, nearer neighbours to the Jews, particularly the Edomites, who, joining with the Babylonian army, were like firebrands among them, to spur them on to do mischief, Obed. 11. Psal. 137:7. This is the case of this church with Papists, the brats of Babylon, with whom join our malignants; not considering, that after they have helped Babylon to destroy us, they will fall on them next: as Edom was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar sometime after the destruction of Jerusalem.

The word rendered multitude, in Hebrew signifies the wild beast, that lives upon other beasts; such as lions, wolves, &c; and so it may be read. And so it points at two qualities of Babylonian enemies. (1.) Their idolatry, being designed a wild beast, in opposition to the chaste turtle. Such are our new, as the old Babylonians were. They are no more the spouse of Christ, but the great whore, that is mad on idols, and multitudes of them; and cannot be at ease with those that will not drink of the wine of their fornication. (2.) Their horrid cruelty; for having divested God of his divine glory, and given it to others, and are divested themselves of humanity, and rage like wild beasts, when they can get their prey, devouring their fellow-creatures.

2. The party holding the balance betwixt the struggling parties; that is, God himself, to whom application is here made. Babylon has not all at will; Zion's God has the balance of power in his own hand, and can cast the scales what way he pleaseth, and give up or preserve the turtle as he sees meet.

3. The address made to the great Arbitrator on the turtle's behalf, which is our work this day, O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove

unto the wild beast. Do not give up the turtle; she will find no mercy from the multitude, the wild beast. They are not content with the mischief they have done to the turtle; nothing less will satisfy them than her life, her soul. The wild beast is gaping for her, not to pluck off her feathers, and send her away wounded, but to swallow her up quite, to destroy her root and branch; for behold the plot, ver. 8, Let us destroy them together. But, Lord, do not give her up to them. It is a most fervent address, intimated by two words in one in Hebrew. We may take up the import of the whole in four points.

I. The church may be in hazard of falling a prey to her enemies, as a poor turtle to be swallowed up by a devouring beast. The church's lot has been in all ages like Paul's to "fight with wild beasts;" and she may well say, "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side; if it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us: then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us," Psal. 124:1, 2, 3. God's enemies, seeing they are not good men, the scripture accounts them beasts. Christ was attacked by bulls and lions, Psal. 22:12, 13; for when men turn persecutors, they set up themselves against the Deity, and withal lay aside all humanity. There are five beasts which God's turtle has been specially in hazard to be swallowed up by.

1. The Egyptian beast, 'the great dragon,' Ezek. 29:3. This was a cruel beast, that made the Lord's people groan long under the greatest bondage. A bloody beast; see the bloody edict, Exod. 1:16. 'When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women,' said Pharaoh to the midwives, 'and set them upon the stools; if it be a son then ye shall kill him.' It had near swallowed them up, Exod. 15:9. 'The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them, I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.' See how the turtle groans to the Lord against this beast, Psal.

68:30. 'Rebuke the company of spearmen,' Heb. 'the beast of the reeds.' And the people of God comfort themselves under their danger in the text, by the end of the Egyptian beast, Psal. 74:13, 14. 'Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragon in the waters. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meet to the people inhabiting the wilderness.'

2. The Babylonian beast, the lion, Dan. 7:4. Jer. 49:19. Dreadful was the havock this beast made on them; it burnt the temple and the synagogues, filled the land with blood, spared neither men, women, nor children. See the whole book of Lamentations. And the text lets you see how they were well nigh being swallowed up by him. Yet God broke out the teeth of that fierce lion.

3. The Persian beast, the bear, a bloody beast, Dan. 7:5. This, though it lay quiet for a while, yet hindered the building of the temple and the city a long time, and kept the church sorely under. But under this beast a bloody massacre was set on foot, Esth. 3.

The conspirators have their frequent meetings, ver. 7 the court is friendly to them, and the bloody day is set, ver. 12, 13 and all because Mordecai would not bow to Haman an Amalekite, one of those against whom the Lord had sworn he would have war for ever. How near was the church then to be swallowed up? but God broke the plot, and ruined that beast too.

4. The Grecian beast, the leopard, Dan. 7:6. This beast had almost swallowed up the church under Antiochus Epiphanes, who raised a most dreadful persecution against the Jews, polluted the temple, forbade the public worship of God, and set up in the temple the image of heathen Jupiter, and cruelly murdered many that would not comply with idolatry, Dan 11:31–34. Yet they survived that beast.

5. The Roman beast, which is nameless, Dan. 7:7. The scripture speaks of two Roman beasts, that were both heavy to the church.

1st, The great red dragon, Rev. 12:3; that is the Roman empire, headed by the Pagan emperors, whom the devil stirred up to persecute the church for the first three hundred years. Horrible was the havock of Christians made under ten persecuting Pagan emperors. So that it is reckoned there were as many Christians slain under them, as that, if ye would suppose them at this butchering work for one year, there would be five thousand martyrs for every day of that year.

2dly, The beast with the name of blasphemy, Rev. 13:1; that is, the Roman Christian, or rather Antichristian Empire, headed by the Pope, the Popish kingdom, whereof the Pope is the head. All the rest are gone. This is the only remaining beast that is threatening, at this day, the swallowing up of the church in these lands. But this beast, the Antichristian kingdom, is the common sink of all the evil qualities of the other beasts, Rev. 13:2 and has outdone them all. So that eight hundred thousand are reckoned to have lost their lives in thirty years under this beast, which has lasted many hundreds of years. Yet multitudes in Britain and Ireland at this day are doing what they can to run us into the paw of this bear, the mouth of this lion and dragon. But let us cry, O deliver not thy turtle-dove unto this beast. We may see that we are in fearful danger of it. The symptoms of it are,

(1.) The frightful appearance that Papists and Popery are making now in these lands. It is known that great numbers of Papists are come, and are still coming from abroad: that they are drawing together in an unusual manner; that they are arming themselves, no doubt for some bloody design. The locusts spoke of, Rev. 9:3 are

swarming in the land, well known in the northern parts; and no doubt through all corners they are trafficking though in disguise. They have dreadful success, perverting many, and mass is said publicly and avowedly in several parts. So that these twenty-five years, since King James was on the throne, they have never so lifted up their heads as now.

(2.) The just fears there are of the Pretender's getting into the throne, a Papist bred up in the maxims of Popery and French government, from whom nothing can be more expected than the ruin of the Protestant religion. To this Papists and malignant Jacobites are bending their united endeavours, and have so far ripened their accursed project! that they are very confident of success.

(3.) The formidable power of France, from whence our enemies have their great encouragement. That cruel tyrant is by the late peace now at more leisure to enslave us, and landing an army for setting the Pretender on the throne, to be a tool, (in his hand) to ruin our liberties and our holy religion, as he has done at home with his own.

(4.) Many vile men are exalted to power and trust, enemies to the Protestant succession, keen for the Popish Pretender, though they have abjured him, for no greater end than that they might thereby get into places to do him service, and further his interest. What wonder then that the wicked walk on every side, and that God's turtle be in hazard of being swallowed up by the Antichristian beast?

II. God may justly give up a sinful church and a sinful people into the power of the multitude of this beast. They have nothing to plead but free mercy, why they should not be so given up O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the wild beast. What has Britian and Ireland, what has Scotland to plead this day, why they should not be

delivered into the power of the wild beast that is gaping to suck their blood, and devour us? We may see we deserve it, if we consider,

1. The sins of the late times. These nations were some time in a thriving condition, having proclaimed war against the beast, and married themselves to the Lord in a solemn covenant for reformation, to cast off and out all Antichristian corruption in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, life and manners, to banish the false prophet and the unclean spirit out of them. But behold, by a heaven-daring wickedness, the same generation in the three kingdoms publicly renounce and break that covenant, and for the greater solemnity it is burnt, and of late the ashes of it were gathered by authority, and thrown into the river of the sinful union between Scotland and England. Is it any wonder that God is now rising up to pursue for the penalty, according to that threatening Lev. 26:25. "I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant?" This is the head of God's controversy with the nations; this was the inlet to other abominations: for that being done, the nations run back to Antichrist again. Scotland takes back the horns of the beast. England and Ireland the horns and the attire of the whore. Profaneness breaks in like a flood; the faithful are persecuted, oppressed, and murdered; and most part of all ranks make fearful apostasy and defection from the ways of truth.

2. The sins of the present times. We have entered ourselves heirs to the guilt of former times, by not mourning over the same by a woful slackness in not pursuing reformation, and heartlessness and faintness in the cause of God. We have gone far to betray the covenanted work of reformation; and enemies want not ground to say, that they have bought the truth of many in the generation, who are not yet convinced they have sold it. If we look to,

(1.) A great man in our land, we will see inordinarily monstrous wickedness, especially, though not only among the nobility and gentry. Atheism and Deism, I believe have made greater advances in our day, than ever they did since the Christian religion was known in the world. All revealed religion and the scriptures are ridiculed; and they that have any sense of religion on their spirits, are reckoned to have been foundered in their education. Hence loose reins are given to all manner of profaneness and debauchery. Whoredom and adultery, and filthiness not to be named, have made inordinary advances, especially since the union was set on foot; for having drank of the cup of English filthiness, they have been made mad. If for these things God have not a sacrifice of the best blood in Scotland and England, it will be strange.

(2.) To the body of the land, we will find them either profane drunkards, swearers, Sabbath-breakers, dishonest, or ignorant, carnal worldlings, that mind nothing but the world, living in a woful neglect of all religion, from whose heart their own case and that of the church lies far off, slighting the precious offers of Christ, and not bettered by all the means of grace which they have been long living under.

(3.) To professors, we will see the provocation of sons and daughters increased to heaven. How have we left our first love? where is the tenderness that we sometimes have seen? A general deadness, formality, and lukewarmness has seized them. Carnality and worldly mindedness has eaten out the life of religion. A light, vain and frothy spirit has got in among them, pride and self-conceit prevail, ordinances are slighted, sermons and sacraments treated as things common and unclean, and a fiery divisive spirit, more frightened at the sins of others than their own, has dishonoured God and broken us.

(4.) Look where we will, guilt stares us in the face. We have all sinned. God has a controversy with magistrates, ministers, and people; for we have all gone back from the Lord, been unthankful for, and have miserably misimproved our privileges, and opportunities of advancing the kingdom of Christ within us and without us. Let us then conclude, that God may justly deliver us up unto the multitude, the Antichristian beast.

III. If God give up his turtle unto the wild beast, the multitude of her enemies, it will be a dreadful upgiving. When God let his people fall into the hands of the old Babylonian beast, terrible was their case. And now the Antichristian beast, to which the malignant party lend a helping hand, is going to devour us; and if God give us up into their hand, it will be a dreadful upgiving. A Popish Pretender mounting the throne, a French army in our country, together with an army of British Papists and malignants, must needs be a thought of horror to us. It will be a dreadful upgiving. For then,

1. Religion is ruined. The Babylonian beast will make sad work of our holy religion, as Psal. 72:4–8. King James was not well warm on the throne, till by his absolute power free liberty was given to Popish idolatry through the nations. But what can we expect in the case before us, but the overturning at first dash all that we have had by the Revolution, yea, and the extirpation of northren heresy, as they call it; We must in that case lay our account with the silencing of ministers, silent Sabbaths, and closed church-doors, till they be opened again for the mass, or at least for the English service which yet will be but an expedient for a time to prepare us for Popery.

2. Liberty and property is ruined. We must lay our account with French government. Our all must be at the disposal of our arbitrary prince, whose will must be our law, to use us, and what is ours,

according to his pleasure. We must no longer look for the liberty of free-born subjects, but must be content to be slaves: and our laws may be burnt, for all law then must be locked up in the breast of the prince. And the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, that enslaving notion, must be quietly learned.

3. Ourselves and our families are ruined in our souls or bodies, or both. We must lay our account to feel the teeth of the Babylonian beast, to swim in blood to glut the scarlet coloured whore, already drunk with the blood of the saints. The Papists are a bloody generation, and we may expect to see our land filled with blood and desolation, if the Lord deliver us into the hand of the wild beast. Let us look about us, and take notice of their cruelties exercised upon the churches of Christ, to awaken us to a sense of our danger from that bloody generation.

In the valley of Piedmont they raised a most barbarous persecution against the church, where simple death would have been a great kindness. But some were flayed alive, and some were buried alive; the mouths of some were filled with gun-powder, and then fired. They beat out the brains of some, then fried and eat them. They ript up women, fixed them on spits, roasted them, and ate their breasts. Maids were carried by the soldiers with spits stuck up through them. Infants were taken out of their cradles, and torn to pieces. I am not speaking, my brethren, of devils, but of Papists.

In Calabria they drave them out of their houses to the woods and mountains. The aged and children that could not flee, they murdered by the way, pursuing the rest like wild beasts. Those that could recover the mountains, being on the top of rocks, besought their enemies to let them but out of the country, and they would leave them their towns and estates. But the barbarian Papists would not

hearken, but still cried, Kill, kill. Eighty had their throats cut, and then they were quartered, and set upon stakes all along the way for the space of thirty miles.

In the valley of Loyse all the inhabitants, being about thirty thousand, fled, upon the approach of the Papists, to the cliffs and caves of the rocks and mountains, whether their enemies pursued them, and set on fire great quantities of wood at the mouth of the caves; some were forced to leap out, and were broken to pieces falling over the precipice; the rest were stifled, among whom were four hundred infants

In the massacre of Ireland there perished above 150,000, some say 154,000 Protestants in a few months, men, women, and children. Some they buried alive, with their heads above the ground. Others they ript up, tied the end of their guts to trees, and forced them round about till their guts were so drawn out of their bodies. Infants were held up on their swords and daggers, to sprawl there. Children were forced to murder their parents, women to hang their own husbands, and mothers to drown their own children; and when they had so far satisfied the bloody beasts, they were murdered themselves. The posterity of these murderers still subsist, and may be got over, if an occasion offer here.

But if ye will believe our Jacobites, the French are a more civil sort of Papists. O horrible civility! Are not the galleys, a civil sort of business, the breaking on the wheel, and the dragooning, all used by this present tyrant? Can we reflect without horror on their blowing up men and women with bellows till they be ready to burst, pulling off the nails of fingers and toes, sticking them with pins from head to foot, &c. beating twelve drums about the beds of the sick, &c. till they should change their religion? It is not many years since a company of

these poor people being met in a barn, the barn was beset by soldiers, and set on fire; and when any put out a hand to escape, the soldiers were ready to cut it off, till they were consumed.

In the Netherlands 18,000 were dispatched. The laws of the inquisition there were, that if they recanted, women were to be buried alive, and men killed with the sword. If they would not recant, they were to be burnt. So that denying the faith will not always do with them. So in Ireland they murdered them after they had got them to abjure.

What should I speak of their cruelties? Death is terrible: but a simple death will not satisfy them, but barbarous cruelty, yea, and villianies worse than death, as binding husbands and fathers to bed posts till they abused their wives and daughters before them, which was done in the dragooning under this present tyrant in France, and in the massacre in Ireland. Now upon all this let me notice a fourfold infatuation.

1. Are not those infatuated, who being Protestants are for bringing a Popish Pretender to the throne, or are indifferent about it? Will the laws bind him, and secure us? But had not the Protestants in France such a security, when thirty thousand of them were massacred in thirty days; and the Protestants in Ireland too. Will we bind him with terms? Had not the Suffolk men Queen Mary's promise ere she came to the throne? Had not the church of Scotland King Charles II. by solemn oath of the covenant? Will we flatter ourselves with hopes of his becoming Protestant? Is it not known that a little before his pretended father came to the crown, some were put to trouble for saying he was a Papist? Look to the flames of martyrs in England in Queen Mary's days, in whose reign, and her father's eight thousand were put to death. Let us call to mind the cruelty of our own Queen

Mary, and with what satisfaction she beheld from the castle of Edinburgh the dead bodies of her Protestant subjects laid out by the French on the walls of Leith.

2. Is not that aversion to the Hanover succession an infatuation, while no other way under heaven appears for our preservation, and that of the Protestant religion? They will tell you, What is Hanover better than a Papist? and what is the difference betwixt consubstantiation and transubstantiation? Papists and Jacobites have spread this. But Protestants ought to honour that family, seeing it was but the present Duchessesdowager's father and mother that lost the kingdom of Bohemia for the Protestant religion, with whose loss of that kingdom the Protestant religion was lost there, and for them many a prayer was put up by the church of Scotland in our forefathers' days. And should we grudge God's giving that family a kingdom, that lost one for his cause? As for the difference betwixt consubstantiation and transubstantiation, there is one, that the Lutherans do not worship the sacrament. And seeing it was an error in which the Lord left Luther himself, the great instrument of the Reformation, it becomes men to be more modest, than to reckon one no better than a Papist on that head.

3. Are not our present divisions an infatuation? Must Presbyterians be worrying one another, while the common enemy is at our doors, that will make no difference betwixt us? Must we be breaking with one another, while we are in such hazard to be all broken together? Are we not all together weak enough for our enemies! Must one party stand at a side till they have devoured another? Herod and Pontius Pilate are become friends. The mass and the English service are contributing joint endeavours to ruin the church of Scotland. Papists and malignants agree together against us; and some of them will tell you, that they would rather be Papists than Presbyterians. Some of

them acknowledge the church of Rome a true church, but not the church of Scotland. They will have us to be no ministers, because we want Episcopal ordination, and you no Christians, because ye are unbaptised in their account, as not being baptised by ministers having such ordination. And yet we must be breaking more and more among ourselves? Learn from the beasts in the ark to lay by your antipathies. They were but in hazard of drowning in a sea of water, but we in a sea of blood. I am not bidding you quit or deny any truth for peace; only do not think that it will absolve you from what is required in the sixth commandment, that ye cannot get others racked your length, who agree with you in the main.

4. Is not our present security an infatuation? Is it not time now for sleepers to awake? Is it not time now to be stirring ourselves in our several stations for the preservation of religion, and the getting it felt in power in our own hearts? For a bare profession will expose you.

IV. Unless the Lord give up his turtle to the multitude, all their power and force shall not be able to hurt her. However we are beset with enemies this day, our God must give us up ere they can reach us. This is comfortable. Therefore let me say,

1. Let us make up our peace with Heaven: for if God be for us, who shall be against us? O that the nations were now so wise as to repent and reform, and renew their covenant with God. We would then have ground to hope, that the Lord would not give them up. But if this cannot be had, be ye so wise, each of you for yourselves, as to lay hold on the covenant and Mediator of peace, repent and reform; and let there be no standing controversy betwixt God and you, come what will.

2. Let us pray much for the church of God. In the year 1588, when the Spanish Armado set off to sink England, to ruin the Protestant

religion in Britain, great was the consternation on the spirits of Protestants then; but there were wrestlers then in Scotland and England; and God armed the winds and waves against them, and made that proud monarch see that his Armado was not invincible. The outpouring of the Spirit of prayer would do more this day against our enemies than all the power of France is able to do for them.

3. Lastly, Let us encourage ourselves in the Lord: prepare for the worst, yet hope that God will plead the cause that is his own. We have a good cause, and a good God to look to, who keeps the balance in his own hand. And we have the sworn enemy of Christ, even Antichrist to oppose; and better die in Christ's cause than live on Antichrist's side; for the day is hasting on, when the Roman beast and its adherents shall get blood to drink for the blood they have shed, Rev. 19:17, 18, 19, 20.

OF THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:7.—Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

As the first command respects the object of worship, and the second the means, so this third hath respect to the right manner of worship. In the words there are two things.

1. The command, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. It is expressed negatively, to strike into men the greater awful reverence of that glorious and great name. Now, as men by

their names are known, and distinguished one from another, so by the name of God we are to understand generally, whatsoever it is whereby God makes himself known, which we learn from his word and works. 'For no man hath seen God at any time,' John 1:18; nor do we know any thing of him, but what he has been so pleased to reveal of himself. So that God being thus revealed unto us, the scope of this command is to bind upon us a holy reverence of him so far as he has revealed himself to us.

To take this name in vain, signifies, (1.) To a lie, or falsely. God is a God of truth; and his name must not be in any ways interposed to falsehood, as they do who father their own lies on him, or call him to witness to a lie in swearing falsely. (2.) In vain; God is great, and we must not use his name in thought, word, or writing, lightly without just cause, rashly without reverence, or unprofitably to no good purpose, God's honour, the good of ourselves or others, and much less contumeliously and wickedly, as in cursing and blaspheming.

The positive part is implied, viz. That we must hallow the name of God, treat it holily and reverently, Isa. 8:13 interposing it only to truth, whereof he is the author, and that upon his own call, with reverence, for his honour, and the good of ourselves and others.

2. The reason annexed to this command. For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Where observe,

(1.) The evil threatened against the breakers of this command. The Lord will not hold them guiltless. Two things are remarkable here. [1.] In that it is said, The Lord will not hold them guiltless, it implies, that profaners of God's name many times hold themselves guiltless. They abuse God's name, and then wipe their mouths, and say they have not sinned. Men hold them guiltless, they escape punishment from men; but while both themselves and others let the plea sleep,

God will awaken it, and take the quarrel into his own hand. [2.] In that it is said, The Lord will not hold them guiltless, more is meant than is expressed, viz. that God will severely punish the profaning of his name. The less they think of it, God will think the more of it, and men shall find peculiar severe resentments of this sin from a highly provoked God. They will find, that though it lies far from their hearts, yet it touches a holy God near.

(2.) How particular the threatening is, Hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. The sin is repeated in the threatening, to shew the heinousness of it, how ill God takes it to have his name taken in vain. And though it be a common sin, yet none shall be hid or escape among the multitude of criminals, but God will bring out this man and that man, even every man that is a profaner of his name, and judge him as particularly, and punish him as severly, as if there were but one man in the fault. And though some by their being set above others in the world, think they may take a latitude in this sin, yet, be the man who he will, him will God punish for it: were he the greatest on earth, he shall know that his tongue is not his own, but that JEHOVAH is Lord over him.

(3.) How peremptory the threatening is: it is not simply said, God will punish him that taketh his name in vain, but God will NOT hold him guiltless. Let him not think to escape, God will not quit his honour so. His glory engages him to resent the dishonour done to his name, and the abuser of it shall not go free. If God's name be profaned by him, it shall be glorified upon him one way or other.

In discoursing further from this subject, I shall shew,

I. What is required in this command.

II. What is forbidden in it.

III. The reason annexed to it.

IV. Make some improvement.

I am to shew what is required in the third command. It 'requires the holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, words, and works.'

And here I shall shew,

1. What is the name of God by which he makes himself known, which is to be hallowed by us.
2. What is our duty with respect to this glorious name, in all the parts thereof.

First, I shall shew what is the name of God by which he makes himself known, which is to be hallowed by us. Under this are comprehended.

1. The particular names that God takes to himself in his word, as Jehovah, Lord, God, I am, &c. Exod. 6:3. And whereas he is one God in three persons, we take in here the names of all the three, the Father, the Son, who is also called Jesus Christ, Immanuel, and the Holy Ghost.
2. The titles of God. For as great men have titles of honour, whereby they are distinguished from others, so God has taken certain titles to himself, as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Preserver of Men, Hearer of Prayer, &c. So the three persons in the Trinity have titles. The Father is called the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c. the Son King of kings, Lord of lords, Head of the Church, &c. and the Spirit, the Comforter, Sanctifier, &c.

3. The attributes of God, that is, his perfections and properties, whereby he is distinguished from all the creatures; such as, his eternity, unchangeableness, infinity, omniscience, &c. in a word, all the glorious properties of the divine nature common to all the three persons. Each of these is as it were a letter of his name, *Exod. 33:19*. 'I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee.' *Chap. 34:6, 7*. 'The Lord—proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.' And happy they that can believingly read this name.

4. The ordinances of God. These are his name by which he is known in the world, *Micah 4:5* with *Luke 1:6*. Such are prayer, praise, the sacraments, &c; oaths, for swearing by the name of God when we are duly called thereto, is a part of religious worship, and a very solemn and awful ordinance of God, *Deut. 10:20*. So are lots an ordinance of God, wherein the decision of any thing is committed to Divine Providence, and thereby God makes his will known, *Prov. 16:33*. *Acts 1:24, 26*.

5. His word, which we have in the holy scriptures, *Psal. 138:2*. This is to be read by us, preached and heard, that we may thereby know our God; for therein is his name unfolded, both in the law and in the gospel, which are the two parts thereof.

6. Lastly, His works. By these is he known, viz. his works of creation, *Psal. 19:1*; and of providence, whether of mercy, *Acts 14:17*; or of judgment, *Psal. 9:19*.

Secondly, I come now to shew what is our duty with respect to this glorious name in all the parts thereof. We may take it up in these two things.

1. We are to use it in all the parts thereof as we are called. God has laid it before us for our use, and we ought to take it up. This is plainly implied in the command, not to take it in vain: for (observe) there is a great difference betwixt the orders Heaven gives concerning the name of other gods, and the name of the true God, Exod. 23:13. 'Make no mention of the names of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth;' compared with this command, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. And indeed when God gives us his names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works, if we use them not we take them in vain, Cor. 6:1. Now, there are three ways how we may be said to use this name.

1st, In thought, whether by simple conceiving it, and the several parts of it, or by settled meditation upon it. Thus we are to take up the name of God into our minds, thinking and meditating upon his names, titles, attributes, &c. And thus that question, 'What is his name,' Prov. 30:4 may be our continual study, our every day's lesson; and it will serve us to learn as long as we are in the world; and no wonder, for it is what the saints in heaven are learning, and will learn through eternity. This is our duty, and would be a most profitable study, being a great part of the life of faith, whereby the soul feeds on God himself.

2dly, In words, whether by speaking of it, or writing of it. And thus we are to take it up in our lips and pens. The first is the duty of all; the second of some only, whom God calls and has fitted thereunto, as he did the prophets, apostles, and others, who by their writings have been useful to particular persons, or to the church of God. To speak of God is the great end of speech that is given to man, made to be the mouth of the creation; and therefore our tongue is called our glory, by which we ought to contribute to the displaying of the glory of God, in his names, titles, &c.

3dly, In deeds; and so we are to take up his holy name in our practice, making conscience of the practice of the duties enjoined in God's word and ordinances, praying, reading, hearing, communicating, swearing by his name, when in a lawful oath duty called thereto, &c. Thus a practical profession of religion, as well as a verbal profession, is a duty of this command. And,

(1.) A verbal profession is necessary at some times; that is, when we are by the providence of God called thereunto, to give a testimony unto the truth, 1 Pet. 3:15. For then it is asked, as it were, By what name are we called? and then we must not be ashamed of our Father, before men, but meekly though boldly declare it even in words, Rom. 10:10; and so take up his name before the world; owning his names, incommunicable titles, attributes, ordinances, &c.

(2.) A real or practical profession is necessary at all times, Rev. 14:1 having our Father's name written on our foreheads; that is, we must not only be, but give out ourselves in our way and carriage to be the servants of God, following the duties of religion, whereby we are distinguished from the world that have no profession; and so professing his name in the several parts thereof.

Three things make this threefold use of the name of God necessary.

[1.] The glory of God, 1 Cor. 10:31. Lev. 10:3; for by his name he has made his glory shine; but if we use it not, we do what in us lies to put that glory under a bushel. Whereas for his honour we should use it in all the parts thereof.

[2.] Our own good, Jer. 32:39. The name of God is good at all times, but especially in a time of trouble, Prov. 18:10. 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.' Every part of his name is a secret chamber, where a believer may feed,

feast, and be safe in the worst of times. His names and titles are cordials to a fainting soul; his attributes are a magazine of comfort, and a fountain of fulness for all wants; his ordinances are breasts of consolations; his word is a good heritage; and his works are full of wonder, declaring what a great and good God he is.

[3.] The good of others. It is a great kindness to a blinded world to take up this name in our lips and lives. It is like the pouring out of ointment, and breaking of spices, that they may find the fragrant smell, and desire to be partakers, John 4. We should commend his names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works to others. It is glory to God, good for us, and may do good to others. It was Christ's work, John 17:26 and was comfortable to him when going out of the world, and would be so to us at that hour.

Secondly, We are to use this name in all the parts of it holily and reverently, whatever way we use the same, whether in thought, word, or deed. This is very extensive; but there are three things especially aimed at in the holy and reverend use of God's name.

1. The using of it in faith. If we use not his names, titles, &c. in faith, we take them in vain, Heb. 11:6. Rom. 14 ult. If we believe not his being, what his names and titles import, our giving them to him is but hypocritical compliment. Do we call him Hearer of prayer? let us be sure of the faith of it, or we do but mock God. If we believe not his word, as it will not please him, so it will not profit us, Heb. 4:2. Unbelief makes us take his name in vain.

2. In fear. To use the name of God without fear and reverence of his majesty, is to abuse it, Deut. 28:58. His names and titles are dreadful, though sweet I may say of them as of the rings, they are so high that they are dreadful, Ezek. 1:18. His attributes are so: for even that love, mercy, and grace towards sinners, comes not but through

the wounds made in the side of the Mediator by the sword of justice. His ordinances need nothing from men to make them awful; in their greatest simplicity they have an impression of divine authority on them, and God's special presence in them, sufficient to awe the hearts of them that are not blinded. His word has a peculiar majesty in it; and the meanest of his works bear the impression of a divine hand. And shall we use them without fear?

3. In singleness, to a right end; not for no end, a carnal selfish end, far less a wicked end; but for the honour of God, the good of ourselves and others. It is a precious treasure opened unto sinners for their eternal welfare, not to be lavished out to no good purpose, but for the highest and best ends. So that these, things must be reserved as sacred, and not meddled with but in matters of highest importance. More particularly,

1st, We must holily and reverently use his names and titles, when we think, speak, or any way handle them, with faith, fear, and singleness, having a holy dread and awe of his majesty on our spirits, as believing him to be what he calls himself, Jer. 5:22 and looking on him as his name is high above all.

2dly, We must holily and reverently use his attributes, thinking and speaking of them in a reverent and spiritual manner, and making such use of them for our own particular case, and the case of others, as the revealing of them is designed for, otherwise we use them in vain, Psal. 130:4. 2 Cor. 5:11.

3dly. We must holily and reverently use his ordinances going about them in the right manner; praying in the spirit, singing with grace in the heart, making melody unto the Lord; preaching or hearing in faith, communicating worthily with grace and grace in exercise, &c.

In a word, it requires all to be done in the ordinances after the right manner. Particularly,

(1.) We must use God's name holily and reverently in an oath. When the oath being lawful, and we are called to it by authority, we 'swear in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.' Jer. 4:2.

(1.) In truth; which implies, (1.) That the thing be truth in itself which we swear to, otherwise we call God to witness to a lie. (2.) That we be persuaded in our consciences that it is truth. So that here is required an agreement of our words with the truth of the thing sworn, and an agreement of our minds with our words, Psal. 15:2. (3.) That it be without fraud or deceit, whereby all equivocations or mental reservations are to be far from oaths, as we would not profane that sacred name; and the intent of the imposer is to be regarded.

(2.) In judgment; which implies, (1.) That we must understand the thing we swear, that it be not dubious and perplexed, swearing we know not what. (2.) That we understand the nature of an oath, viz. that we thereby solemnly call God to witness to the truth of what we assert or promise, and to judge us according to the truth or falsehood of what we swear. And therefore, (3.) That it be gone about with due fear and reverence of God on our spirit, as knowing it is God we have to do with. Hence the righteous man is represented as one that feareth an oath.

(3.) In righteousness; which implies, (1.) That the thing we swear be lawful and just; for an oath is abused when it is made a bond of iniquity; and so that the thing be possible, and in our power. (2.) That it be for good ends, viz. that God be glorified, Josh. 7:19; our neighbour satisfied, and controversy ended, Heb. 6:16; our own innocency cleared, Exod. 22:11, &c. (3.) That we mind well and firmly resolve to perform it.

(2.) In lots God's name is holily and reverently used, when,

(1.) They are used in a matter of weight; for the end of them is the same with that of an oath, Prov. 18:18. And the nature of them is not unlike, being an appeal to God's decision, Prov. 16:33. And so we find they are weighty cases in scripture wherein they are used, as in the cases of Jonah and Matthias.

(2.) When they are necessary, and the matter cannot otherwise be decided without great inconveniences, as in the above cases. And reason teaches, that this being God's decision, men ought not without great necessity to go off the ordinary road.

(3.) When men eye God in the lot, look to him for the decision with calling on his name, Jonah 1. Acts 1.

(4.) When the matter is singly given up to God, and no fraud or trick is used to cast the matter to one side rather than another; for that is to put the decision first in God's hand, and then to take it out again, which is a mocking of God.

(5.) Lastly, When with due reverence that is received which falls by the lot, as coming from the determination of God.

Were these things duly considered, I think men would not make such use of lotting, by casting cavils, drawing cuts, &c. but would satisfy themselves otherwise many times.

4thly, We must holily and reverently use the word, thinking of, speaking, and hearing it with godly fear, as the word of God, and that we may obey it.

5thly, and lastly, We must holily and reverently use his works, thinking of, speaking of, and using them to the honour of God, our

own and others' welfare, adoring the Author, and giving him the praise of all.

To shut up all, we do thus use the name of God, by having a conversation suitable to that great and glorious name we profess to honour, Phil. 1:27. For we take his name in vain when our practice thwarts our profession; for that makes the name of God to be blasphemed, Rom. 2:24.

II. I proceed to shew what is forbidden in the third commandment. It 'forbids all profaning or abusing of any thing whereby God makes himself known.

This command is broken two ways.

1. By not using the name of God as is required, Mal. 2:2. So as many duties as are required, so many sins there are in omitting these duties. Hence this command is broken by our not hallowing and glorifying God's name, by not taking up the name of God into our minds, lips, and lives. We contract guilt against this command by not thinking and meditating on God's titles, attributes, &c. not speaking of them for the glory of God, our own and the good of others; not writing of it when men are gifted for it, and have a real call to do it. So also by not making a profession of religion; a real profession at all times; a verbal profession when men are by providence called thereto. Not using God's ordinances. Particularly it is a sin against this command, to refuse an oath touching what is good and just, when duty called thereunto. For in all these cases there is a neglect of the duty of glorifying God's name enjoined in this command.

2. By profaning or abusing of the name of God; that is, any thing whereby God makes himself known. This is the great sin forbidden in

this command; a bitter root that spreads itself out with many branches. In speaking to it, I shall shew,

1. The more plain and palpable profanations of that holy name forbidden in this command.
2. Other ways how the Lord's name is abused and taken in vain.

First, I am to shew the more plain and palpable profanations of that holy name forbidden in this command. The name of God is plainly and palpably abused,

1. When it is used ignorantly, as it was by the Athenians, whom the apostle Paul charges with worshipping God ignorantly, Acts 18:23. And of this all those that are ignorant of God, Christ, and the way of salvation, cannot but be guilty, when they do at all use that holy name: for as no man can work right in the dark, so the darkness of ignorance on the soul utterly unfits it to glorify the name of God. And in what measure soever that culpable ignorance lies on us, so far are we guilty in that case. How is the name of God abused by ignorant persons, while they mention the name of they know not whom, and speak of him they know not what? They will call God their God, who know not the nature of that God, the covenant of grace, or the way how he becomes ours. They will call Christ their sweet Saviour, while they know not who he is, nor are acquainted with his salvation. They will call his Spirit their Sanctifier, who know nothing of his sanctifying operations and influences.

2. When it is used vainly and irreverently, that is, lightly and rashly. There is so little of God in the hearts of many, that his name, that dreadful name, is much in their mouths, without any necessity or reverence in their common talk. The Jews had so great thoughts of the name of Jehovah, that they would not mention it. They permit

not their children to mention the name of God till they be seven years old. If the Mahometans find a piece of paper in the way, they put it in some hole of a wall or so, because the name of God is or may be in it. But, alas! among Christians it is much used in vain and irreverently. The name of God is thus profaned, vainly and irreverently used.

1st. By exclamations in a way of foolish wonder. It is sad to think how that holy name is profaned by men, when, being surprised to see, or hear, something they wonder at, they cry, O God! O Lord! God bless us, save us, guide us, have a care for us! That it is lawful to pray for these things, none doubt. But such as are in earnest for his blessing, guidance, &c. will see them to be matters of so great moment, that, when they are to seek them, they will compose themselves to a praying frame, and lift up their hands with their hearts to the heavens for them, with singleness, fear and faith, in the blood of Christ. But, to use his holy name, to give vent to our foolish passions, is horrible prostitution of it.

2dly, It is used vainly and irreverently in thanksgivings to God, and salutations. How formally and lightly will many say, God be thanked, Blessed be God, when the very shew of their countenance declares they have no grateful sense of God's goodness, nor reverence of him on their spirits? So God speed you, God be with you, are good prayers indeed, but mostly used so formally, that they are but an abusing of that holy name.

3dly, In obsecrations, wherein the name of God is interposed to beseech a person to do or forbear such a thing. They are very good when in matters of weight they are gravely and reverently used, as Rom. 12:1. 'I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your

reasonable service.' But to use them in small matters, as many do, entreating for God's sake, or God's love, to do so and so, is but abusing that holy name. Common beggars are very guilty in this way.

4thly, In adjurations, wherein the name of God is interposed to oblige a person to do or forbear something. This is a very solemn piece of business, 2 Tim. 4:1 and may very safely be used by those who have authority in matters of weight; and people's slighting of these solemn charges given by ministers, or other superiors, is very sinful. But it is a sin, (1.) To use these things in light matters, as to bid one do any thing we are little concerned about, in God's name. (2.) And though any person may pray to God against devils, that he would bind them up, yet it is a sin for any who have not the gift of casting out devils, to adjure the devil, or command him in the name of God to go, as the vagabond Jews did, Acts. 19:13, 14.

5thly, In appeals to God. We find the saints using them reverently in matters of weight, as the apostle Paul, 2 Cor. 12:2 but to appeal to God in trifles, is the way to bring down the judgment of God on the appellant. The serious thoughts of God's knowledge may make the best to tremble, and strike all with so much awe of his majesty as not to make a by-word of it.

3. When the name of God is used superstitiously, 1 Sam. 4:3, 4, 5. So, to name the name of God over diseases, or against the devil, as if the very mentioning of that name, without faith in him, would do the business. So is that bowing at the name of Jesus, used by those of the church of England, a superstitious abuse of that holy name.

4. When it is used profanely and wickedly. Under this may be comprehended,

1st, Profane swearing. Swearing is an holy ordinance, appointed by God, a piece of most solemn worship, wherein we invoke God as our witness and judge, which makes common swearing a dreadful sin. It is twofold, both of them abounding in our day.

(1.) Swearing by God and Christ. How do many glory in their horrid oaths, which may make one that has any notion of the greatness of that name to tremble! They have a God to swear by, but not to worship and pray to. But indeed it is wounding, that there should be others, who will both pray to and profanely swear by that God, Jam. 3:10.

(2.) Swearing by the creatures. The papists, that worship the creatures, no wonder they swear by them too, as by the holy bread in the sacrament, by St. Mary. But what have Protestants to say for swearing by them? Yet how frequent are oaths, by our faith, troth, soul, conscience, &c.? The mincing of these oaths will not make men guiltless; yet, alas! how few are there that want them, Ha'th Faith, Ha'd'yv, Fa'd'ye, Mary? This swearing by creatures is,

[1.] Impious idolatry, giving that worship to the creature which is due to God alone, Deut. 10:20. Swearing is an invoking of the object we swear by, to be witness of the truth of what we affirm or deny, and so to judge and punish us if we swear falsely; and to whom can this belong but to God? Jer. 5:7.

[2.] The dishonour redounds to God, because these things have a relation to God, Matt. 5:34, 37. The soul is his creature, conscience is his depute, truth his image, &c. Hezekiah broke the brazen serpent when the people abused it to idolatry. Take heed God break not that soul of thine on the wheel of his wrath.

As for your minced oaths, I pray you consider, (1.) That they are at least an appearance of evil, 1 Thess. 5:22. (2.) That they are surely idle words, Matth. 12:36. (3.) Are not the most serious Christians conscientious in this? Phil. 4:9. (4.) That they are offensive to the serious godly, Matth. 18:6, 7. (5.) That they must either be oaths, or they have no sense at all.

2dly, Sinful imprecations or cursings, whereby people pray for some evil against themselves or others, whether absolutely, or conditionally. We find the saints conditionally imprecating evil against themselves, as in the case of clearing themselves of what they are wrongously loaded with, Psal. 7:3, 4, 5. And in this we may imitate them, when in matters of weight we are duly called thereto, behaving therein as in the taking of an oath; for in every oath there is an imprecation. Also there are examples of the saints imprecating a curse against God's incorrigible enemies, out of pure zeal to the glory of God, which they, from the Spirit of prophecy apply to particular persons, Psal. 109:6, &c. But it is a profaning the name of God.

(1.) When people unnecessarily imprecate a curse on themselves or others, conditionally, if they do not so or so, or if it be not truth that they may say, as wishing,—confound them, they may be hanged, or never stir out of the bit, &c. if matters be not so or so, when there is no necessity for it, or edification by it. In that case, the name of God is profaned; and though the name of God be not expressed, it is still abused; for it is God that must be the executor of the sinful wish.

(2.) When people serve their passions against themselves or others, by their curses. Thus people sin in their fits of discontent, wishing evil to themselves, and in their fits of passion and revenge against others, praying, Shame fall, ill chance, &c. This is the product of a

bitter spirit, highly dishonourable to God, whose name is prostituted to serve men's hellish passions.

(3.) When people use them to confirm a lie, or to bind them to sin. Thus people are doubly guilty, and dare the vengeance of heaven, cursing themselves if such a thing be true, which yet they know is not true; or binding themselves to do some evil, by a curse.

(4.) Neither is the matter mended by invoking the devil instead of God. Much homage gets the devil from some, who are often found praying to the devil to take themselves or others. So they mention, Foul Fiend, &c. which are only other names of that wicked spirit.

3dly, Perjury is falsehood confirmed with an oath. It is twofold.

(1.) There is perjury opposite to an assertory oath; and that is, either when a man swears a thing to be true which is false, or a thing to be false which is true. It is opposite to swearing in truth, which is swearing so as a man's mind agree with his words, and his words with the thing. So that a man is not only perjured when he swears against his mind and knowledge, as the false witnesses against Naboth did; but also when he swears against the truth of the thing, though not against his mind, being mistaken; for in both cases God is called to witness to a lie; though indeed the former is far more heinous than the latter. And therefore it is, that no man can lawfully swear what he doubts of; that is to run a dreadful risk.

(2.) There is a perjury opposite to a promissory oath; and that is, either when a man promiseth something upon oath which he has no mind to perform even when he takes the oath; or though he minded to perform it when he took the oath, yet afterwards changes his mind, and does it not, when he both ought and can do it. Only remember, that the breaking of an unlawful oath, so far as it is

unlawful, is not perjury. It is a sin indeed to take such an oath; but it is no sin, but duty to break it. And the case is the same in tows, 1 Sam. 25:22, 32, 33. The sin of perjury is dreadful. For,

[1.] It is a most solemn affronting of an omniscient and just God, and is near akin to atheism. It is a calling of God to be witness to a lie; it is a playing with infinite justice, a daring of heaven's vengeance, while men devote their souls to destruction wilfully; because in every oath men invoke God to judge them according to the truth or falsehood of what they swear.

[2.] It is most provoking in the sight of God; a sin which God's anger smokes against in a peculiar manner, Zech. 5:4. Mal. 3:5. This seems to be engraven especially on the consciences of men; so that this sin amongst the heathen was reckoned most atrocious; and even men that otherwise have little religion, will yet tremble at the thoughts of perjury.

[3.] It is a sin that deservedly makes men infamous, so that their testimony is not afterwards to be regarded among them: for what respect can they have to truth that will swear falsely? It looses the bond of human society; for if an oath cannot bind men, the world would have no security of one another. And therefore such deserved to be hissed out from among others, as the plagues of human society.

4thly, Blasphemy, which is a wronging of the majesty of God, by speeches tending to his reproach. This sin is the most atrocious of all sins; and of this kind is the unpardonable sin. As among men it is a great fault not to believe the word of a faithful prince; yet greater to rebel against him; greater yet to reproach him, disgrace him, speak and use him contumeliously. Men may be guilty of blasphemy against God two ways.

(1.) As they partake with others in their blasphemies. And this we may do several ways; particularly, (1.) When we give no testimony against the blasphemy of others. The custom of the Jews was to rend their clothes at the hearing of blasphemy. And they must needs have a stout heart that can hear it without one way or another manifesting their abhorrence of it. (2.) Much more when men shew any approbation or satisfaction with it, as smiling or laughing at it, when they hear how freely hellish mouths vent their reproachful speeches against God. (3.) When by our deeds we give occasion to wicked men to blaspheme, Rom. 2:24. Thus particularly, (1.) Oppressors and persecutors are guilty of blasphemy, Acts 26:11. (2.) Professors of religion, by their scandalous walk, 2 Sam. 12:14. (3.) Inferiors by their undutifulness to their superiors; as subjects, 1 Pet. 2:13, 14, 15; wives, Tit. 2:5; and servants, 1 Tim. 6:1.

(2.) As they themselves are formally the blasphemers. And so there are two ways that men blaspheme.

[1.] There is a blaspheming of God mediately, when, though men do not expressly speak against God himself, yet with the sword of the tongue they thrust at him, through the sides of his word, way, people, ordinances, works, &c. 1 Tim. 6:1. Tit. 2:5. 2 Pet. 2:2. 1 Cor. 4:13. Mark 3:29, 30. Such blasphemies are very frequent amongst mockers and malicious enemies of the way of God, as when religion is called madness, fanaticism, folly, &c. the Spirit's assistance in prayer, heat of the brain, &c.

[2.] There is a blaspheming against God immediately, when God is directly and immediately attacked with the blasphemous tongue. And that is,

(1.) When men detract from God what truly belongs to him, and makes for his glory, Isa. 36:20; in the case of railing Rabshakeh.

Such blasphemy, some say, is uttered by the French Tyrant, with respect to the bringing in of the Pretender on us, That Heaven itself cannot stop his project.

(2.) When men ascribe to God that which agrees not to him, but tends to his reproach. So did the Pharisees of old blaspheme Christ, Mark 3:30. So do bitter spirits blaspheme God, saying, lie is unjust, cruel, &c. So did these blaspheme when they said, 'Every one that doth evil, is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them: or, Where is the God of judgment?' Mal. 2:17. And many are guilty with them.

(3.) When men insolently rise against God, belching out bitter, virulent, and reproachful speeches against him. So did Pharaoh, Exod. 5:2. 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? I know not the Lord.' So did he, mentioned 2 Kings 6:33. 'Behold, this evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer?' Thus Job's wife advised him to blaspheme, 'Curse God and die,' said she. And so many in their bitterness rising against God under afflictions, are apt to blaspheme.

(4.) When men ascribe that to the creature which is due to God alone. So the Jews, supposing Christ to be a mere creature, accused him of blasphemy, John 10:33. So men blaspheme in calling either Pope or magistrate head of the church. And thus men immoderate in their own praise, or the praise of others, are ready to fall into blasphemy, Isa. 10:13. Acts 12:22.

Each of these four ways men may be guilty of blasphemy against the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost. The world is full of these blasphemies; some blaspheming the Father, denying that relation in the Godhead, as Jews, Mahometans, &c; some the Son, as they do also; and indeed Popery is a mass of blasphemies against Christ;

some the Holy Ghost, as those that deny his personality, and the profane world that make a mock of his work.

But the most dreadful of all sins and blasphemies is that which by way of eminency is called blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, commonly called the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is the unpardonable sin, Matth. 12:31, 32. John calls it 'the sin unto death,' 1 John 5:16; which elect souls never fall into, yea even but few reprobates. It belongs to this command. But as I have spoken largely of this sin in a former part of this work, I shall not further insist upon it.

Secondly, Having spoken of the more gross and palpable breaches of this command, I shall now consider otherways how the Lord's name is abused and taken in vain.

1. With respect to his names and titles. They are taken in vain.

1st, When they are not improved for those uses to which they natively tend. Hence the Lord says, If I be a Father, where is mine honour? and if I be a Master where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests that despise my name,' Mal. 1:6. Thus we take them in vain when they have not their fruit in us. Do we call him Father, and not honour him; Master, and not fear him; Hearer of prayer, and yet put no confidence in him; Lord of hosts, and yet cannot quietly commit ourselves to his protection? Do we not thereby take his name in vain? The strong tower of his name is built but in vain, in that case, when we do not improve it.

2dly, When we make an ill use of them, either to encourage ourselves in sin by them, or to drive us away from him by terror, or to any other use dishonourable to God, and contrary to the intent of the revelation of them to us.

2. With respect to his attributes, God's name is abused,

1st, By the working of unbelief against them, doubting of, questioning, and denying them. Thus the atheistical heart works often in wicked men, calling in question the power of God when driven into straits, 2 Kings 7:2; and when they mind to lie securely in sin, fostering unbelief of his omniscience, Ezek. 9; of his justice, Zeph. 1:12; of his holiness, Psal. 50:21, &c. Yea, thus under temptation it works even in the godly, so that often they are found bordering on blasphemy, through the power of unbelief, questioning his goodness and truth, Psal. 77:8, 9. Jer. 15:18.

2dly, By the aversion of the heart unto them, and its rising against them, Rom. 8:7. There is a natural enmity in the heart of man against God, shewing itself in the aversion they have to his holy nature and attributes. They do not love his perfections; they would wish he were not such a one as he is; and this is the rise of atheism. The heart is glued to sin; and the discovery of God's attributes, his holiness, justice, &c. disturbs sinners in their rest in it. Hence their hearts rise against God, and his perfections.

3dly, By using them to wrong ends and purposes. Thus we sin many ways, perverting the knowledge of his perfections to God's dishonour and our own ruin. Thus the mercy of God is abused to encouragement in sin; his patience to continuance in it; his justice to desperation, &c. Eccl. 8:11. Rom. 2:4, 5.

3. With respect to his ordinances. The name of God is abused in ordinances when we do not go about them after the right manner; for this command directs us to the right manner of performing duties. And as a master reckons his servant has been working in vain, when though he has been doing the thing he bade him, yet he has not done it as he bade him, but marred it in the making; so God reckons those

duties that are wrong as to the manner of them, are a taking of his name in vain, and those ordinances that are gone about in a wrong manner, in vain.

1st, We are guilty of profaning God's name in ordinances and duties of worship, when we are not upright in our end and aim in them; that is, having the honour of his name before us as our great end, 1 Cor. 10:31; shewing itself in seeking to honour him, to get and advance communion with him, and to give obedience to his commands. Instead thereof, his name is abused by going about ordinances formally, out of custom more than conscience, seeking ourselves more than God in them, a name and reputation more than the glory of the Divine Being.

2dly, When we have not a holy principle from which we act, viz. the Spirit of God in us, without whom we cannot worship in spirit, 1 Cor. 12:3; and a renewed heart, 1 Tim. 1:5. Hence it is that no unrenewed man's duties are acceptable or truly good. And no duty can be accepted of God, wherein we act from natural principles, parts, and abilities only, and not from supernatural gracious principles.

3dly, When we go not about duties in the due manner, with those other necessary qualifications of acceptable obedience, which must be sincere and not hypocritical, with faith, fear, fervency, &c.

I shall instance in some particular ordinances how we abuse the name of God in them.

1. In prayer. God's name is abused in prayer several ways.

1st, When before prayer we are at no pains to prepare for it, but rashly and precipitately adventure on it, Eccl. 5:1. How often do we mar it in the entrance, by our not impressing our hearts with a due

sense of our own insufficiency, God's greatness and majesty, our own wants; and by not emptying our hearts of all carnal thoughts, and not using of ejaculations to God for fitting us for a more solemn approach.

2dly, In prayer we fail many ways. As, (1.) When we pray formally and hypocritically, our hearts not agreeing with our tongues in our confessions, petitions, and thanksgivings, Isa. 29:13; so that our heart-labour comes not up to our lip-labour. (2.) When we pray coldly and faintly, without fervency of spirit, Matt. 26:41. This fervency consists not in the loudness of the voice, but in the eagerness of the affections, like Jacob, 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me.' (3.) Heart-wanderings much mar this duty, Rom. 12:12. (4.) When we do not pray in faith, but are lifted up with a conceit of our own worthiness, like the Pharisee, Luke 18:11 have no confidence in the promises of what we ask, Jam. 1:6 and place not our sole confidence in the merits of Christ.

3dly, After prayer, when we quickly put out of our heads the impression of our approach, grow vain and carnal, and not look after our prayers as to their success, Psal. 5:3.

2. In praises, or singing of psalms, God's name is taken in vain many ways. As, (1.) When we rashly venture upon it, not labouring to get our hearts in a tune for praise. (2.) When we do not understand what we sing, 1 Cor. 14:15; God can never be praised ignorantly. (3.) When we make not heart-work of it, sing with the voice, but make no melody in the heart to the Lord, Eph. 5:19. (4.) When we are not affected in a suitableness to the matter that is sung, which being very different, certainly requires that our hearts should follow. (5.) When we make no application of the matter to ourselves in singing.

3. In reading or hearing the word, we take God's name in vain, (1.) When we do not prepare ourselves for it, appointing a meal in it to our souls by prayer and looking to God; and when we make it not our business to get our hearts emptied of worldly thoughts and affections, and come with an appetite, 1 Pet. 2:1, 2. (2.) When we do not strive to understand what we read or hear of the word, Acts 8:30; but pass it, as if bare reading or hearing were all. (3.) When we are not attentive thereto, but let the heart wander in the time after other things, Ezek. 33:30. (4.) When we are dull, drowsy, sleepy, and weary in it, crying in our hearts, When will the Sabbath be over? like Doeg, detained before the Lord. (5.) When we do not receive it as the word of the living God, looking on it as God himself speaking to us, 1 Thess. 2:13. (6.) When we do not subject ourselves humbly to what we hear from the Lord by his word, being affected suitably to every part of the word, approving the commands thereof, believing the promises, and trembling at the threatenings, Heb. 4:2. (7.) When we do not lay ourselves open to the word, to be taught our duty, to be reproved for our faults, to be searched and known as by the candle of the Lord; but ward off convictions, and rise against the speaker when the word toucheth us. (8.) When we hear it partially, having more respect to the speaker, to receive it or reject it according to our opinion of him, than to the Lord's word itself, Acts 17:11, &c. (9.) Lastly, When we do not meditate upon it afterwards, confer about it, and labour to improve it to our soul's good.

4. In oaths (besides what has been already said), we take God's name in vain with respect to them. (1.) When we refuse a lawful oath, being duly called thereto, and the glory of God and the good of our neighbour requires it, Neh. 5:12. 'For an oath for confirmation is to men an end of all strife,' Heb. 6:16; and men might be ruined in their lives, reputation, &c. if men would refuse a just and necessary oath when called to it, which God's honour and our neighbour's good

requires. (2.) With respect to an unlawful oath; it is a sin, [1.] To take it or make it; for it is a terrible profaning of that ordinance to make it a bond of iniquity, as Herod did, Mark 6:23. [2.] To keep it and perform it, as he also did, ver. 26; for what is this but to make the name of God subservient to God's dishonour? And that is to be reckoned an unlawful oath, which is of any thing that is false, sinful, unjust, or impossible to us. (3.) When men use equivocations in oaths, or mental reservations; for so he for whose sake the oath is imposed, is deceived and wronged. But whatever shifts men may use that way, God will reckon them as false swearers. (4.) When men swear unnecessarily, ignorantly, doubtingly, without due regard and reverence of God in our spirits. (5.) Lastly, When a lawful oath leaves no due impression on men's spirits, as a sacred bond which they come under to God.

5. Lastly, In lots. God's name is taken in rain, (1.) When the right manner is not observed in them, where they are lawfully used in weighty matters, as when God is not eyed in the lot, when they do not singly refer and leave the matter to God's decision, and when they murmur and grudge at what falls by the lot to them. (2.) When they are used in matters of very small moment, which are not worthy of an appeal to God's decision, but without any great inconveniency might be otherwise decided. This is a very common sin, which people need no more to convince them of the evil of, but the true up-taking of the nature of lots, as the scripture holds it out, Prov. 16:23 and 18:18. (3.) When they are used in games and plays. For which reason playing at cards, dice, and all games of lottery, are unlawful. For, [1.] That cannot but be a profaning of the name of God, which turns an appeal to God for his decision unto a play. And though men call it fortune, it is certain that it is nothing indeed but God's determination. And it will not excuse men, that they first miscall God's providence by the name of fortune, and then play themselves

with it. [2.] It gives occasion to much sin against God, as blaspheming God's providence under the name of fortune and ill luck; and commending good fortune, overlooking providence when it falls well. And it renders this ordinance of lots contemptible, being so used.

4. With respect to his word, men are guilty of profaning the name of God,

1st, By misimproving and misapplying the word of God, as the Pharisees did, Matth. 5. Ezek. 13:19.

2dly, Jesting upon it, Jer. 23:33.

3dly, Using it to the maintenance of erroneous principles, unprofitable questions, and vain janglings, 2 Tim. 2:14, 15.

5. With respect to his works, men are guilty of profaning the name of God, when they use the works and creatures of God to sinful lusts and practices.

6. Lastly, Men profane the name of God, in respect of religion, and the profession of it.

1st, By maligning, scorning, and reviling religion, and the profession of it.

2dly, By a hypocritical profession.

3dly, By a scandalous walk.

To be a little more particular in these things, the name of God is profaned and abused, and this command violated,

1. By malignity, maligning the truth, grace, and ways of God, otherwise called malignancy. It is a heart-enmity and bitterness of spirit, vented by word or deed, against the truths, grace, and way of God, Rom. 1:29. Such malignants were the Jews, who were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming, Acts 13:45. In our father's days, the spirit of malignancy run with a violent stream against the work of reformation, till it had swallowed it up, and is now again appearing in its violence. A different opinion from the truth in point of church-government is not malignancy; but when a set of men layout themselves to bear down the Lord's work in the land, and in the spirits of his people, when men pretending to be ministers bear down and discourage the power of godliness in others, and men in civil power are filled with a spirit of persecution against those whom they can find nothing against but in the matter of their God, and meaner people aid and assist these, and contribute to, or rejoice at the calamities of the people of God, malignant is their name; for malignant is their nature and course of life. And colour it over as they will, God will not hold them guiltless; for they are his enemies that take his name in vain.

By scorning the ways of God, Ps. 1:1. The scorner has a high seat in the devil's court, where he sits on hell's bench, giving out a sentence of disdain against the way of serious godliness, as unworthy of a man, and inconsistent with his honour, sentencing the serious person to be the fool of the company. Thus Satan's madcaps, whom he has blinded, make a jest of the wisdom of God; but the day will come when their scorning shall be turned to roaring, Isa. 28:22.

3. By reviling the truth, grace, and way of God, 1 Pet. 4:4. Revilers are a generation of hell, who are set to gather together all the filth and vileness they can get to throw upon religion and cover it, that the

world may loath it, 1 Cor. 4:13. And so with them religion is rebellion, soul exercise distraction, communion with God melancholy fancies. They load men with vile calumnies; and if they see nothing without them, they conclude they are but hypocrites.

4. By hypocrisy, while men pretend to religion and take up a profession, but have nothing of the truth of it in their hearts, 2 Tim. 3:5. Hypocrites indeed take God's name in vain, making profession of religion, not out of conscience towards God, from love to him, or a design to honour him, but for some sinister ends, as reputation, worldly advantage, or at best their own peace and safety; which is a horrid prostituting the name of God to cursed self.

1st, They take his name in vain in their hearts; for the truths of religion, they know, have no suitable efficacy on their hearts or lives, Rom. 1:18. The candle of God is set up before them in their knowledge; but in vain it wastes, for they do not work at it. Their knowledge of sin does not make them loath it. The love of Christ does not constrain them to walk in the paths of new obedience.

2dly, In their mouths. They may go about duties but they go about none in the right manner. Their words are good, but their heart is not upright, Ezek. 33:30. Hence their prayers are an abomination, their best works are but glistering sins, like a potsherd covered over with silver dross. (1.) Their largest duties are but half-duties, and that the worst half, as wanting spiritual worship, which is the soul and life of worship. (2.) Their service is but self-service. All the streams of the hypocrite's duties disburden in the dead sea, self.

3dly, On their foreheads; for there hypocrites bear it in an external profession: but in vain; for though they wear Christ's livery, they are but the devil's drudges. If they be not such as fulfil the desires of the

flesh, they fulfil the desires of the mind; they are under the power of spiritual plagues.

5. By being ashamed of religion, Mark 8 ult. Religion is our glory; men will not miss in a profane world to have it turned to shame; but to be ashamed of it is a sin of naughtiness of heart, and want of experience of the power of truth on the spirit. It is a horrible affront to the majesty of God, to be ashamed of his badge; for that is to be ashamed of him as a Master.

6. Lastly, By being a shame to it,

1st, By an uncomfortable, unsuitable walk, Phil. 1:27. The world takes notice of the agreement that is betwixt the principles and practice of professors; and a disagreement there reflects dishonour on religion itself before them, as if it were all but sham and trick.

2dly, By an unwise walk, Eph. 5:15. We should be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves; for the imprudencies of professors are no small handle to the enemies, and much improved for the reproach of religion. There is much need of continual dependence on the Lord for wisdom, especially that we may walk in wisdom toward them that are without, Col. 4:5.

3dly, By an unfruitful walk, Isa. 5:4. The fruitfulness of the vineyard is the honour of the husbandman, and the unfruitfulness thereof reflects dishonour on him, Rom. 2:24. The fruits of holiness are the best testimony to the divine original of ordinances and institutions; and while men have been violently running down these, their credit has been supported that way. But, alas! now their credit is impaired by the barren and unfruitful lives of professors.

4thly, By an offensive scandalous walk, Rom. 2:23, 24. The scandals of professors are the stumbling-blocks whereon the blind would brake their necks, Matth. 18:7. They are the reproach of religion, and the dishonour of God. They harden the wicked, and grieve the truly good.

Lastly, By backsliding from it, Gal. 3:1, 2. Apostates cast shame on the name of God in a peculiar manner; for having tried both ways, they practically prefer the way of evil.

III. I come now to consider the reason annexed to the third commandment, which is, 'That however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.'

Here I shall shew,

1. Whence it is that men think so lightly of the profaning of the name of God, so that in effect they hold themselves guiltless.
2. Whence it is that the profaners of the name of God escape punishment from men.
3. How God will not let men escape with it.
4. What is the great evil of this sin, that is so severely threatened?

First, I will shew whence it is that men think so lightly of the profaning of the name of God, so that in effect they hold themselves guiltless. Nothing is plainer than that little is thought of the taking of God's name in vain, especially by those that are most guilty. They heap up guilt in this way, and yet in effect hold themselves guiltless.

1. It proceeds from that wicked and malicious spirit the devil, Jam. 3:6. He is the sworn enemy of God, and does what he can to make men dishonour him. There is so little of the world or the flesh in it, that it seems in a special manner to come from the devil.

2. It springs from the low and mean thoughts they have of God and his dreadful name, Psal. 36:1, 2. They see not the glory and majesty of his names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works: hence they treat them as common things. A view of God in his glory would cure this profane disposition of spirit. When proud Pharaoh contemns God, and must needs be a god to himself, what wonder he regards not that holy name? Exod. 5:2. Paul unconverted was a great blasphemer; but when he saw the light and heard the voice, he got suitable thoughts of Christ, and so was cured of that.

3. There are many profanations of the name of God, that un-tender men will not allow to be such. They are not and will not be convinced of a fault in them, as in obsecrations, appeals to God, adjurations, &c. But a due sense of the majesty of that name would clear people's minds in these things, Matth. 5:37. It is not enough that these things are common. It is so much the worse, when the world is in a conspiracy against God to join it. Though men go in troops to the pit, they shall not be conquerors, but sufferers. Nor is it enough that people have no ill in their minds, when they so profane the name of God. If there be little ill, there is as little good. Were the third command in your minds, it would lay bonds on your tongues.

4. There are many profanations of that name which men do not at all observe, as profaning that holy name in duties by formality, and want of faith and fervency. If they neglect duty, they will be challenged; but their consciences are stupid as to the dishonour done

to God in them, Zech. 7:3–6. But these will be mountains in the sight of God, that are but as mole-hills in the sinner's eyes.

5. It proceeds from the passion of anger or malice. Anger is a fire in a man's breast; swearing and cursing is the smoke of this hellish fire breaking out at the mouth. Those who are hurried out of themselves with passion, do oftentimes find nothing readier at hand than an oath, which they fling out against heaven itself, when they cannot be revenged on them that have angered them. What but a hellish leaven of bitterness and malice wherewith the heart is soured, can bring forth curses.

6. Custom in taking the name of God in vain takes away the sense of it. The heart being careless about God, the tongue gets a liberty; and when it is set on the run, and has got a confirmed custom, it turns just natural: so that many swearers are never aware till they profane the name of God, and hardly know when they have done it, that it is so. But God will not let wickedness go free, because it is confirmed by custom.

7. Swearing proceeds from unwatchfulness. Men let their tongues go at random. Hence oaths fly out ere they be aware.

8. Lastly, In some it proceeds from vanity and hellish bravery. They will swear, that others may see what a fine sort of people they are, who regard not the laws of God, nor the offence of good men.

Secondly, I come to shew whence it is that profaners of the name of God escape punishment from men.

1. Because of the little zeal there is for the honour of God's name in the world. These things strike not so much against our neighbour's good name, life, or goods, as directly against the honour of God. If

they stretched their injury that way against men, men would avenge it as their own interest; but, alas! the interest of God's honour is the interest of few people.

2. As the laws of men cannot reach many abuses of God's name, so as for those made against common swearing, they are in effect but a mock, in regard of the little tenderness that way found among those that should execute the laws, who are guilty themselves, or have no zeal to put them in execution. Nay, alas! often we see men are obliged by authority to profane the name of God, by taking unlawful, unnecessary oaths.

Thirdly, I proceed to shew how God will not let men escape with it; that he will by no means hold them guiltless. Consider that the profaning of the name of God is a sin,

1. That brings wrath upon a land, Hos. 4:1, 2. Jer. 5:7, 9. Abusers of the name of God are a burden to his spirit, and to the spirits of his people, and make the land mourn, Jer. 23:10. And as every one ought to contribute their assistance to the quenching of a fire that breaks out in a house, so should every one to reformation in this point, while there are so many tongues set on fire of hell, that threaten to fire the nations with a fire of God's wrath.

2. It brings wrath upon families, Zech. 5:3, 4. It provokes God to root out families from the earth; for it brings a curse that a house cannot long stand under. O! then, masters of families, do not ruin your families by this; and take heed to your children and servants that are given to this sin, as to those who would pull down your house about your ears. Many times things go wrong, they do not thrive; which is not for want of diligence; they wonder how it comes to pass; but there is even a secret curse from the Lord on families for this and other sins, that consumes all, Jer. 23:10.

3. It brings a curse upon particular persons, God punishes this sin,

(1.) By strokes upon the body, Deut. 28:58, 59. And remarkable has the sin of some profaners of God's name been written in their punishment, while the sin of profaning that sacred name has been as remarkably written on the miserable case of their mouths and tongues, as ever the adulteress's has been on the belly swelling, and thigh rotting. For there is a God that judgeth in the earth.

(2.) By strokes on the souls. It is a heavy word, God will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. It imports,

[1.] That however men overlook and forget these things, God writes them down guilty on every such fact. There is a book of remembrance written with God, whereby none of them all shall be lost. The sinner affronts God and his holy name; but though he packs up the affront for the time, he does not forget it.

[2.] God will call the man to a reckoning for them sooner or later, Jude 15. Though they may pass without a challenge for the time, the time will come that they will get deep challenges for these things, either in mercy or in wrath. Their words shall some time lie as a talent of lead on their consciences, which now they think light of; and shall pierce their hearts as swords.

[3.] However lightly men may look on these things, the guilt of them shall once be wreathed about their necks; and the man shall see to read his own sentence of condemnation for them, under which he must either die, or be released by the Mediator's satisfaction and intercession. They have profaned God's name, and God will have the indignity offered to his honour wiped off, either by the satisfaction of the sinner, or his cautioner, whom he must produce.

[4.] If ever the sinner be pardoned, as his profaning the holy name shall stick to his conscience in a particular manner when once awakened, so after the pardon, it shall make him go with a bowed down back, as it did Paul, 1 Tim. 1:13.

[5.] Lastly, If he be not pardoned, the wrath of God in hell shall lie upon him, Rom. 2:5 and it shall be more severely punished there than many other sins. The man's sin shall continue with him through the ages of eternity, while the violence of his torments shall make him blaspheme for ever.

Fourthly, It may be asked, what is the great evil of this sin, that it is so severely punished?

1. It is a sin that is directly against God, his glorious greatness and infinite majesty. That name is dreadful which men profane, Mal. 1 ult. The angels adore it, the devils tremble at it; and should vile worms of the earth profane it at every turn? Sins of the second table strike directly against men, but this is one of those that go out immediately against the Majesty of Heaven. And of this sort is the unpardonable sin, which, as I observed before, belongs to this command, Psal. 83:9.

2. It is a direct violation of the law of God, Swear not at all; Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Have you no respect to the authority of God? Consider, I pray you, (1.) Who gave you a tongue and a faculty of speaking? Was it not God? Might he not have prevented this by making you naturally dumb, as many are? (2.) For what end he gave it. Was it not for his glory? and will ye use it against him to dishonour? He thereby differenced you from a beast; and will you make yourself like a devil? Now if he gave it you, might he not set laws for the use of it to his glory?

3. It is not only a violation of the law of God, but a breach of men's laws. Swearing has been punished by many nations. With the Scythians, the swearer's punishment was the loss of his estate; with the Persians, bondage; with the Grecians, cutting off the ears: with the Romans, throwing down a steep rock. And the laws of our land are against it, though it is the crying sin of our magistrates, that they are not put into execution. But God is mocked that way, and it is the sin of the people that do not press them to their duty, and inform them.

4. It is a sin that has a peculiar contempt of God in it, striking most directly against his honour, Psal. 139:20. His name is dreadful, and it is that wherein he has displayed his glorious name unto men: to prostitute and abuse it, then, must needs bear a horrible contempt of God in it. It is a proclaiming of our slighting him, and doing what we can to cause that no regard be had to him in the world.

5. It is most directly contrary to the great end of all divine revelation. The first petition in the Lord's prayer is, 'Hallowed be thy name.' This should be our chief design in all things; for it is God's own design to which all others are subservient, whether in nature or grace. And this flies directly in the face of it, and cannot but be a most heinous sin.

6. It has a particular malignity in it, and in a most special manner proceeds from the devil, as it has less to carry us to it than ordinary sins have.

(1.) What profit is there in it? The thief gets something for his pains, and the drunkard, a bellyfull; but what gets the swearer? Other sinners serve the devil for pay; but swearers are volunteers, that get no reward. What fruit does it bring you, but the abhorrence of serious persons, and the fearful judgments of God.

(2.) What pleasure is in it? The unclean person gets no profit, but a sordid pleasure by his sin; but which of your senses does swearing gratify? If people were minded to give up themselves to all manner of sensuality, yet there is so little that can be strained from this sin, that unless they be resolved to do the devil a pleasure, they might forbear this sin. Love to that sin, then, must be a love to it for itself, a pure devilish love, without the smallest prospect of pleasure or profit by it. And if men will thus court their own damnation, it is pity if prevented from the lowest place in hell, and the highest room among the servants of the devil, who will serve him just because they will serve him.

(3.) Can any say it is the sin of his constitution; We have heard of a covetous, envious, lustful, passionate, &c. constitution, but of a swearing constitution never. Is any man born with it? does the constitution of our bodies incline us to it? In many other sins the body drags the soul; but here the soul, contrary to all God's commands, makes the body its slave, and turns up the tongue against the heavens.

7. Common swearers and cursers, will be found to be men either of consciences already seared, or next door to it. And I would say, (1.) Knew ye ever a truly exercised Christian an ordinary swearer? I believe ye will find it as hard to find a saint a common swearer, as a common drunkard or whoremonger. It is hard to say it is a spot of God's children. (2.) It hath been known, that very wicked and loose men, who were given up to sensuality and voluptuousness, have had a dreadful horror of profane swearing; the little natural conscience that was left them startling at the profanation of that dreadful name. (3.) It is seldom found that those do reform. Many are very extravagant otherwise in their youth, that afterwards take up themselves: but oft-times swearing grows grey headed with men (4.)

Has it not been often seen that, they never know till the oath be belched out; yea, some will swear, and know not they are swearing; nay, they will swear that they are not swearing. Whence can this proceed but from a seared conscience?

8. Swearing looks like hell upon earth. I said before that there is no advantage by swearing: But now I must say that they will have this advantage, that their works will go with them to the bottomless pit. The whoremonger will not get his whores there, nor the drunkard his cups, nor the covetous man his money; but the swearer and curser will still drive on his old trade, and that with improvement, through all eternity. I had once the unhappiness to hear a great swearer, who had often been reproved and admonished, say, he would curse and swear in hell through all eternity. I thought it might be a prophecy. But why should men take the trade of the damned over their head on earth? will not an eternity be long enough to give people their fill of profaning and blaspheming the name of God, and cursing? Why need they begin so soon? there is time enough afterwards. I know nothing on earth so like a damned soul in hell, as a curser or swearer, under bodily pains and despair. And some have been seen to die as they lived, cursing and swearing out their dying breath, to the astonishment of beholders. And if such men should happen to leave the world in the rage of a fever, as many do die raving, it will be a wonder if they die not therein.

I shall conclude all with a very short word of improvement.

1. How can these lands escape a stroke that have so much of this guilt to answer for? Can we think that God will hold nations guiltless, that have come under national perjuries in violating lawful oaths for reformation, that over and over many times have been involving themselves in sinful unlawful oaths contrary to the truth, besides all

the execrable oaths and blasphemies vented by a profane generation that have cast off all fear, and that profanation of the holy name, by cursing, swearing, and profaning of holy ordinances, chargeable upon us?

2. I warn all gross profaners of the name of God to repent, and flee to the blood of Christ for pardon; certifying, that if ye do not, ye shall lie under the wrath of God for ever, and that unruly tongue of yours shall cast you into a burning fever in hell, where you shall not have a drop of water to cool your tongue. Have pity on your souls, have pity on the land, and your families, if ye have any. Pity the rising generation. Is it not sad to think of young ones learning to curse and swear as they learn to speak? Where do they learn these things but at home, or from other children that learn them at home? The blood of their souls will lie at your doors, if they follow your steps; and if God pluck them as brands out of the burning, no thanks to their parents, who do what in them lies by their example to ruin them. Say not, ye reprove them, and do-not allow them in it; for an ill example will destroy what ye build by your good advice*.

3. Let us endeavour not only to reform ourselves, but contribute to the reformation of others in this point. It is Gain's language, unbecoming a Christian, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' In several places and nations, there are societies for reformation of manners. And were there but one in a family that had the courage to speak a word for God, to reprove sin, what good might it do, the work being managed with calmness and love? To neglect this duty is injurious to God, our neighbour, and ourselves. But some may object, Our reproofs will do no good, we may as well hold our tongue, I answer, be in your duty, and leave the event to God. Tour duty ye have laid before you, Matt. 18:15–17. 'If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear

thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.' Habitual profane swearers, are surely more offensive to God and good men, than those that are guilty of a single act of fornication, Lev. 5:1. Tell these things to your neighbours that lie at home unnecessarily on the Lord's day. None are more likely to be guilty of these things than such. Be so kind to their souls as to let them know, that if they continue in these things, what has been said here against them, seeing they were obliged to have come and heard our message from the Lord, shall witness against them at the great day as well as against those who have heard the same, if they continue in such courses. I shall close this with that word, Deut. 28:58, 59. 'If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law, that are written in this book, that thou mayst fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.' And O that all oaths, gross or minced, all profaning of the name of God, and irreverent use of it, and all cursing of whatever kind, might end with these sermons against it!

4. Let us all see ourselves in the glass of this command and threatening, and learn to know our guilt with respect to it, and our danger thereby. God will let us know sooner or later, that he thinks much of what we think very little of. And let us be humbled under, and wash in Christ's blood for our sins in taking God's name in vain*.

OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:8, 9, 10, 11.—Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it.

THIS command respects the time of worship, and is the last of the first table, set to join both together, the Sabbath being the bond of all religion. In the words we have,

1. The command. It is delivered two ways.

1st, Positively, Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. Sabbath signifies rest or cessation from labour. There is a threefold rest or Sabbath spoken of in scripture. (1.) Temporal. (2.) Spiritual, which is an internal soul-rest, in ceasing from sin, Heb. 4:3. (3.) Eternal, Heb. 4:9, 11 celebrated in heaven, where the saints rest from their labours. It is the first of these, the weekly Sabbath that is here meant. Observe here,

(1.) Our duty with respect to the Sabbath. It is to keep it holy. God has made it holy, set it apart for holy exercises, and we must keep it holy, spending it in holy exercises.

(2.) The quantity of time to be observed as a Sabbath of rest, a day, a whole day of twenty-four hours; and the one day in seven. They must observe a seventh day after six days' labour, wherein all our work must be done, put by hand, so as nothing of it may remain to be done on the Sabbath.

(3.) A note of remembrance put upon it; which imports, that this precept should be diligently observed, special regard paid to it, and due honour put upon this sacred day.

2dly, Negatively. Where observe, (1.) What is forbidden here; the doing of any work that may hinder the sanctifying of this day. (2.) To whom the command is directed, and who must observe it; magistrates, to whom belong the gates of the city; and masters of families, to whom belong the gates of the house. They must observe it themselves, and cause others to observe it.

2. The reasons annexed to this command. None of the commands are thus delivered, both positively and negatively, as this is. And that imports,

1st, God is in a special manner concerned for the keeping of the Sabbath, it being that on which all religion depends. Accordingly, as it is observed or disregarded, so it readily goes with the other parts of religion.

2dly, People are most ready to halve the service of this day, either to look on resting from labour as sufficient, or to look on the work of the day as over when the public work is over.

3dly There is less light of nature for this command than the rest: for though it is naturally moral that there should be a Sabbath; yet it is

but positively moral that this should be one day in seven, depending entirely on the will of God.

In discoursing from this subject, I shall shew,

I. What is required in the fourth commandment.

II. Which day of the seven God hath appointed to be the weekly Sabbath.

III. How the Sabbath is to be sanctified.

IV. What is forbidden in this command.

V. The reasons annexed to it.

VI. Make improvement.

I. I am to shew what is required in the fourth commandment. This command according to our Catechism, requireth 'the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word; expressly one whole day in seven to be a holy Sabbath to himself.'

Here I shall shew,

1. That this command requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word.

2. That it requires one day in seven to be kept as a holy Sabbath to the Lord.

3. That the day to be kept holy is one whole day.

First, I am to shew, that this command requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word.

The Jews under the old Testament had several days beside the weekly Sabbath, that by divine appointment were to be kept as holy days, and by virtue of this command they were to observe them, even as by virtue of the second they were to observe the sacrifices and other parts of the Old Testament instituted worship. But these days are taken away under the gospel by the coming of Christ.

But that which this command in the first place requires, is the keeping holy of a Sabbath to God; whatever be the day God determines for it; whether the seventh in order from the creation, as under the Old Testament, or the first, as under the New. And so the command is, Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy; not Remember the seventh day. Thus the keeping of a Sabbath is a moral duty binding all persons in all places of the world.

For it is a moral duty, and by the natural law required, that as God is to be worshipped, not only internally, but externally, not only privately, but publicly; so there must be some special time designed and set apart for this, without which it cannot be done. And so the very Pagans had their sabbaths and holidays. This is the first thing imported here, That a Sabbath is to be kept.

Another thing imported here is, That it belongs to God to determine the Sabbath, or what day or days he will have to be kept holy. He says not, Remember to keep holy a Sabbath-day, or a day of rest, leaving it to men what days should be holy, and what not; but, Remember the Sabbath-day, &c. supposing the day to be already determined by himself. So that we are bound to set time appointed in his word.

And this condemns men's taking on themselves, whether churches or states, to appoint holidays to be kept, which God has not appointed in his word. Consider,

1. This command puts a peculiar honour on the Sabbath above all other days Remember the Sabbath-day, &c. But when men make holidays of their own to be kept holy, the day appointed of God is spoiled of its peculiar honour, and there is no peculiar honour left to it, Ezek. 43:8. Yea, in practice they go before it; for men's holidays where they are regarded, are more regarded than God's day.

2. This command says, Six days shalt thou labour. Formalists say, There are many of these six days thou shalt not labour, for they are holy days. If these words contain a command, who can countermand it? if but a permission, who can take away that liberty which God has left us? As for fast-days or thanksgiving days occasionally appointed, that are not holy days; the worship is not made to wait on the days, as on Sabbaths and holidays, but the days on the worship which God by his providence requires; and consequently there must be a time for performing these exercises.

3. It belongs only to God to make a holy day; for who can sanctify a creature but the Creator, or time but the Lord of time; he only can give the blessing: why should they then sanctify a day that cannot bless it? The Lord abhors holy days devised out of men's own hearts, 1 Kings 12:33.

4. Lastly, What reason is there to think that when God has taken away from the church's neck a great many holy days appointed by himself, he has left the gospel-church to be burdened with as many, nay, and more of men's invention than he himself had appointed?

Secondly, This command requires one day in seven to be kept as a holy Sabbath unto the Lord: Six days shall thou labour and do all thy work: but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. Thus the Lord determines the quantity of time that is to be his own, in a peculiar manner, that is, the seventh part of our time. After six days

working, a seventh is to be a Sabbath. This is moral, binding all persons in all ages, and not a ceremony abrogated by Christ.

1. This command of appointing one day in seven for a Sabbath is one of the commands of that law, consisting of ten commands, which cannot be made out without this was written on tables of stone, to shew the perpetuity of it; and of which Christ says, Matth. 5:17, 18, 19. 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do, and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.'

2. It was appointed and given of God to Adam in innocency, before there was any ceremony to be taken away by the coming of Christ, Gen. 2:3.

3. All the reasons annexed to this command are moral, respecting all men, as well as the Jews, to whom the ceremonial law was given. And we find strangers obliged to the observation of it, as well as the Jews; but they were not so to ceremonial laws.

4. Lastly, Jesus Christ speaks of it as a thing perpetually to endure, even after the Jewish Sabbath was over and gone, Matth. 24:20. And so, although the Sabbath of the seventh day in order from the creation was changed into the first day, yet still it was kept a seventh day.

Thirdly, The day to be kept holy, is one whole day. Not a few hours, while the public worship lasts, but a whole day. There is an artificial day betwixt sun-rising and sun-setting, John 11:9 and a natural day

of twenty-four hours, Gen. 1 which is the day here meant. This day we begin in the morning immediately after midnight; and so does the Sabbath begin, and not in the evening; as is clear, if ye consider,

1. John. 20:19. 'The same day at evening, being the first day of the week:' where ye see that the evening following, not going before this first day of the week, is called the evening of the first day.

2. Our Sabbath begins where the Jewish Sabbath ended; but the Jewish Sabbath did not end towards the evening, but towards the morning, Matth. 28:1. 'In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week,' &c.

3. Our Sabbath is held in memory of Christ's resurrection, and it is certain that Christ rose early in the morning of the first day of the week.

Let us therefore take the utmost care to give God the whole day, spending it in the manner he has appointed, and not look on all the time, besides what is spent in public worship, as our own; which is too much the case in these degenerate times wherein we live.

II. I come now to shew which day of the seven God hath appointed to be the weekly Sabbath. According to our Catechism, 'From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath.'

We have heard that this command requires a Sabbath to be kept, and that one whole day in seven; we are now to consider what day that is. The scripture teaches us, that there are two days which have by

divine appointment had this honour, the seventh day, and the first day of the week.

First, As to the seventh day, it is acknowledged by all, that that was the Jewish Sabbath. And concerning it, consider,

1. Who appointed the seventh day to be the Sabbath. It was God himself that appointed the seventh, which is the last day of the week, by us called Saturday, to be the Sabbath; The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. He that was the Lord of time made this designation of the time at first.

2. Wherefore did God at first appoint the seventh? The reason of this was, that as God rested that day from all his works of creation, men might, after his example, rest on that day from their own works, that they might remember his, and celebrate the praises of the Creator. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth,—and rested the seventh day. The work of creation was performed in the six days, and nothing was made on the seventh day; so that the first new day that man saw was a holy day, a Sabbath, that he might know the great end of his creation was to serve the Lord.

3. How long did that appointment of the seventh day last? To the resurrection of Christ. This was its last period, at which time it was to give place to a new institution, as will afterwards appear. The day of Christ's resurrection was the day of the finishing of the new creation, the restoration of a marred world.

4. When was the Sabbath of the seventh day appointed first? Some who detract from the honour of the Sabbath, contend that it was not appointed till the promulgating of the law on mount Sinai, and that its first institution was in the wilderness. We hold that it was

appointed from the beginning of the world. For proof whereof consider,

(1.) Moses tells us plainly, that God, immediately after perfecting the works of creation, blessed and hallowed the seventh day, Gen. 2:2, 3. Now, how could it be blessed and hallowed but by an appointing of it to be the Sabbath, setting it apart from common works, to the work of God's solemn worship? The words run on in a continued history, without the least shadow of anticipating, upwards of two thousand years, as some would have it.

(2.) The Sabbath of the seventh day was observed before the promulgation of the law from Sinai, and is spoken of Exod. 16 not as a new, but an ancient institution. So, ver. 5 preparation for the Sabbath is called for, before any mention of it is made, clearly importing that it was known before. See ver. 23 where the Sabbath is given for a reason why they should prepare the double quantity of manna on the sixth day; which says that solemn day had not its institution then first. And the breach of the Sabbath is, ver. 28 exposed as the violating of a law formerly given.

(3.) In the fourth command they are called to remember the Sabbath-day, as a day that was not then first appointed but had been appointed before, although it had gone out of use, and had been much forgotten when they were in Egypt. Besides, the reasons of this command, God's resting the seventh day, and blessing and hallowing it, being from the beginning of the world, say, that the law had then place when the reason of the law took place,

(4.) This is evident from Heb. 4:3–9. The apostle there proves, that there remains a Sabbath, or rest to the people of God, into which they are to enter by faith, from this, that the scripture speaks only of three sabbatisms or rests; one after the works of creation, another

after the coming into Canaan; and David's words cannot be understood of the first, for that was over, ver. 3 and so was the other; therefore there remaineth a rest for the people of God, ver. 9.

Some allege against this, that the patriarchs did not observe the Sabbath, because there was no mention made of it in the scriptures. But this is no just prejudice; for at that rate we might as well conclude it was not observed all the time of the judges, Samuel and Saul; for it is no where recorded in that history that they did. Yea, though the patriarchs had not obeyed it, yet that could no more militate against the first institution, than polygamy against the first institution of marriage. But as from the patriarchs sacrificing, we infer the divine appointment of sacrifice, so from the institution of the Sabbath, we may infer their keeping it. And their counting by weeks, as Noah did, Gen. 8:10, 12; and Laban with Jacob, Gen. 19:27, 28. doth not obscurely shew it; for to what end did they use this computation, but that the Sabbath might be distinguished from other days? And the piety of the patriarchs persuades us, that they observed that solemn day for worship; and if any day, what but that designed of God?

Secondly, As to the Sabbath of the first day of the week,

1. Consider the date of it, which was from the resurrection of Christ, to continue to the end of the world; for the days of the gospel are the last days.

2. How the Sabbath could be changed from the seventh to the first day of the week. The fourth command holds out a Sabbath to be kept, and that one in seven. As for the designation of the day, he that designed one could design another; and the substituting of a new day is the repealing of the old.

3. Wherefore this change was made. Upon the account of the resurrection of Christ, wherein the work of man's redemption was completed.

4. By what authority it was changed into the first day. The Sabbath was by divine authority changed from the seventh to the first day of the week; so that the Lord's day is now by divine appointment the Christian Sabbath.

(1.) The Sabbath of the first day of the week is prophesied of under the Old Testament, Psal. 118:24. 'This is the day which the Lord hath made,' viz. the day of Christ's resurrection, when the stone which the builders rejected was made the head of the corner. 'We will rejoice and be glad in it;' that is, we will celebrate it as a day of rejoicing and thankfulness for the work of redemption. Compare Acts 4:10, 11. 'Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.' Hereto possibly may that passage be referred, Ezek. 43:27. 'And when these days are expired, it shall be, that upon the EIGHTH DAY, and so forward, the priests shall make your burnt-offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord.' And it may be called the eighth day, because the first day of the week now is the eighth in order from the creation. As also Isa. 11:10. 'His rest shall be glorious.' As the Father's rest from the work of the creation was glorious by the seven day's rest, so the rest of the Son from the work of redemption was glorious by the first day's rest. On this day it was that the light was formed; so on this day did Christ the Son of righteousness, the true light, arise from the dark mansions of the grave with resplendent glory.

(2.) This day is called 'the Lord's day,' Rev. 1:10. That this Lord's day is the first day of the week, is clear, if ye consider, that John speaks of this day as a known day among Christians by that name. It could not be the Jewish Sabbath, for that is always called the Sabbath, and the Jewish Sabbaths were then repealed, Col. 2:16. Neither could it mean any other day of the week, wherein Christ specially manifested himself, for that would determine no day at all. And that this phrase infers a divine institution, is evident from the like phrase of the sacrament called the Lord's supper.

(3.) It is evident there ought to be a Sabbath, and that from the creation till Christ's resurrection the seventh day in order was appointed by God himself. It is no less evident, that the Sabbath is changed to the first day of the week, and that lawfully, because the Jewish Sabbath is repealed. Now, who could lawfully make this change but one who had divine authority? who therefore is called Lord of the Sabbath? Mark 2:28.

(4.) It was the practice of the apostles and primitive Christians to observe the first day of the week for the Sabbath, John 20:19. Acts 20:1. On this day the collection for the poor was made, 1 Cor. 16:2 and you know the apostles had from Christ what they delivered to the churches as to ordinances, 1 Cor. 11:23.

5. Lastly, The Lord, by glorious displays of his grace and Spirit, has remarkably honoured this day, in all ages of the church; and by signal strokes from heaven has vindicated the honour of this day on the profaners of it. Of this, remarkable instances may be seen in history both at home and abroad.

Let us therefore sanctify this day, as the day which God hath appointed, and blessed as a day of sacred rest in the Christian church.

III. I come now to show you how the Sabbath is to be sanctified. The Catechism tells us, "It is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.

Here I shall shew, what it is to sanctify the Sabbath, and what are the parts of the sanctification of it.

FIRST, I am to shew, what it is to sanctify the Sabbath. The Sabbath-day is not capable of any sanctity or holiness, but what is relative; that is, in respect of its use for holy rest or exercise. So, (1.) God has sanctified that day, by setting it apart for holy uses, designing and appointing it in a special manner for his own worship and service. (2.) Men must sanctify it by keeping it holy, spending that day in God's worship and service for which God has set it apart; using it only for the uses that God has consecrated it unto.

SECONDLY, I come to shew what are the parts of the sanctification of the Sabbath. They are two; holy rest, and holy exercise.

First, The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy rest. Therefore it is called a sabbath, i. e. a rest.

1. What are we to rest from? On the Sabbath we must rest.

1st, From our worldly employments. God has given us six days for these; but his day must be kept free from them: In it thou shalt not do any work. The works of our worldly calling have six days, those of our heavenly calling but one. We must rest from the former, that we may apply ourselves to the latter. Now, such works are to be accounted,

(1.) All handy-labour or servile employments tending to our worldly gain, as on other days of the week, as ploughing and sowing, bearing of burdens, &c. Neh. 13:15 driving of beasts to market, or exercising any part of one's calling.

(2.) All study of liberal arts and sciences. The Sabbath is not a day for such exercises, as the reading of history, the studying of sciences, &c. Isa. 58:13.

(3.) All civil works, such as making bargains, unnecessary journeying travelling to Monday markets on the Lord's day, though people wait on sermons, or take them by the way. It is indeed the sin of those that do not change their market days when they so fall out, and a sin in the government to suffer it: but that will not justify those who comply with the temptation, seeing God hath given us other days of the week. If they cannot overtake their market after the Sabbath, they should go away before, that they may rest on the Sabbath, wherever they are, Exod. 16:29.

2dly, From all worldly recreations, though lawful on other days. It is not a day for carnal pleasures of any sort, more than for worldly employments. Our delights should be heavenly this day, not to please the flesh but the spirit; and sports, plays, and pastimes, are a gross profanation of the Sabbath, Isa. 57:13, 14.

Now, this rest of the Sabbath from these must be,

(1.) A rest of the hands from them. The hands must rest, that the heart may be duly exercised.

(2.) A rest of the tongue. People should not give their orders for the week's work on the Lord's day, nor converse about their worldly business.

(3.) A rest of the head from thinking of it, and forming plans and contrivances about worldly affairs.

But here are excepted works of two sorts.

1. Works of necessity, as to quench a house on fire, &c. 2. Works of mercy, as to save the life of a beast; see Matth. 12. Under which may be comprehended, (1.) Good works, such as visiting the sick, relieving the poor, &c. (2.) Works of decency, such as dressing the body with comely attire. (3.) Works of common honesty and humanity, as saluting one another, 1 Pet. 3:8. (4.) Works of necessary refreshment, as dressing and taking of meat. (5.) Works having a necessary connection with and tendency to the worship of God, as travelling on the Lord's day to sermons, 2 Kings 4:23.

But in all these things it should be regarded, that the necessity be real, and not pretended: for it is not enough that the work cannot be done to such advantage on another day; for that might let out people on the Sabbath, if it be a windy day or so, to cut down their corn, whom yet God has in a special manner provided against, Exod. 34:21; and that would have justified the sellers of fish, whom Nehemiah discharged, Neh. 13:16, 17. And therefore I cannot think that the making of cheese on the Lord's day can be counted a work of necessity, lawful on that day: for as much might be said in the other cases as can be said in this, viz. that the corn may shake, the fishes spoil, &c. Besides, people should take heed that they bring not that necessity on themselves, by timeously providing against it. And when works of real necessity and mercy are to be done, they should be done, not with a work day's, but Sabbath-day's frame.

2. Who are to rest? The command is very particular. (1.) Men. [1.] The heads of the family, the heads of the state, master and mistress, are to give example to others. [2.] The children, son, daughter; they

must not have their liberty to profane the Sabbath by playing more than working. [3.] Servants, whose toil all the week may tempt them to misspend the Lord's day; they must not be bidden profane the Sabbath; and if they be, they must obey God rather than man. [4.] The stranger must not be allowed his liberty: we must not compliment away the honour of the Sabbath. (2.) Beasts; they must rest; not that the law reaches them for themselves, but for their owners; either because they require attendance at work, or put the case they did not, yet it is the work which must not be done. This lets us see, that where even their work may be carried on, on the Lord's day without attendance on them, yet it is not to be done.

3. What makes the rest holy? Respect to the command of God.

Secondly, The Sabbath is to be sanctified by holy exercise.

1. Public exercise; of God's worship, Isa. 66:23; as hearing sermons, Luke 4:16; prayer, Acts 16:13, 14; receiving of the sacraments, where there is occasion, Acts 20:7; singing of Psalms, Psal. 92 title.

2. Private exercises of worship, alone and in our families, Lev. 23:3. Neither of these must jostle out the other. God has joined them; let as not put them asunder.

And these duties are to be done with a special elevation of heart on the Sabbath-day; they ought to be performed with a frame suiting the Sabbath, Isa. 57:13.

1st, Grace must be stirred up to exercise, otherwise the Sabbath will be a burden. Grace will be at its height in heaven, and the Sabbath is an emblem of heaven, Rev. 1:10.

2dly, The heart should be withdrawn from all earthly things, and intent upon the duty of the day. We must leave the ass at the foot of the mount, that we may converse with God.

3dly, Love and admiration are special ingredients here. The two great works of creation and redemption, which we are particularly called to mind on the Lord's day, are calculated to excite our love and admiration.

4thly, We should have a peculiar delight in the day, and the duties of it, exchanging our lawful pleasures on other days with spiritual pleasures on this.

The rest without holy exercise is not sufficient.

1. The Sabbath-rest resembles that of heaven, which is a rest without a rest, wherein the soul is most busy and active, serving the Lord without weariness.
2. If it were enough, we were obliged to sanctify the Sabbath no more than beasts, who only rest that day.
3. The rest enjoined is not commanded for itself, but for the holy exercises of the day.

Now, it is the whole day that is thus to be spent, i. e. the natural day. Not that people are bound to be in these exercises without intermission all the twenty-four hours; for God has not made the Sabbath to be a burden to man, but that we should continue God's work as we do our own on other days, where we are allowed necessary rest and refreshment by sleep in the night.

Use. Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. This note is put upon it.

1. Because of the great weight of the thing, the Sabbath being the bond of all religion. It is God's deal-day, wherein his people may expect furniture for all the week.

2. Because we are very apt to forget it, Ezek. 22:26. There is less light of nature for this than other commands. It restrains our liberty in those things that we do all the week. And Satan, knowing the importance of it for our souls, that it is a day of blessing, sets on us to forget it. If ye would then sanctify the Sabbath,

(1.) Remember it before it come; on the last day of the week, on the Saturday's evening, laying by work timeously to prepare for it, Luke 23:54.

(2.) Remember it when it is come; rise early on the Sabbath-morning, Psal. 92:2. The morning hath enough ado: worship God secretly and privately: prepare yourselves for ordinances, wrestle with God for his presence thereto, that he may graciously assist the minister in preaching, and you in hearing, and may bless the word to you. Remember it while it is going on, that it is God's day, a day of blessing, and ply diligently the work of the day, not only in time of the public work, but after, till the day be finished.

(3.) Remember it when it is over, to see what good you have got by it; to bless him for any smiles of his face, or manifestations of his grace; and to mourn over your failures, and apply to the blood of Christ for pardon and cleansing.

IV. I proceed to shew, what is forbidden in the fourth commandment. We are told in the Catechism, that it 'forbiddeth the omission or careless performance of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful,

or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about worldly employments or recreations.'

There are five ways how this commandment is broken.

First, By omission of the duties required on this day, whether in whole or in part. Many of the Sabbath-duties are the duties of every day; but the omission of them, which is always criminal, is more so on this day, because on it we are specially called to them. We sin against this command, then, when we neglect the public or private exercises of God's worship.

1. Not remembering the Sabbath, before it come, to prepare for it; entertaining a carnal worldly frame of spirit on the night before, not laying aside work betimes, and composing our hearts for the approaching Sabbath; far more when people continue at their work later that night than ordinary, getting as near the borders of the Sabbath as they can.

2. Neglecting the duties of the Sabbath-morning; particularly,

- (1.) The duty of meditation. Those that are in the spirit on the Lord's day, their spirits will be busy, elevated to heavenly things, and conversing with heaven. The two great works of creation and redemption require our thoughts particularly on that day, Psal. 92:5; and we must needs be guilty, when, while God has set these great marks before us, we do not aim to hit them. Has not God made it a day of blessing? should not we then consider our wants, miseries, and needs, and sharpen our appetites after that food that is set before us in ordinances on that day?

- (2.) Secret prayer. The Sabbath-morning is a special time for wrestling with God, confessing, petitioning, and giving thanks. Then

should there be wrestling for the blessing on the day of blessing. And the neglect of it is a very bad beginning for that good day. When will they come to God's door that will not come then? Psal. 91:1, 2.

(3.) Family-exercise. This command has a special respect to family-religion. As God will have the family to mind and see to their own work on the six days, so he calls them to mind his together on the Sabbath. Every family is to be at church, especially on the Lord's day. And if people came with their hearts warmed from family-duties to the public, they would speed.

3. Neglect of the public exercises of God's worship, Heb. 10:25. By this neglect the Sabbath is profaned. The public ordinances on the Lord's day, whatever they do else, they keep up a standard for Christ in the world; and to slight them is to fill the world with atheism and profaneness. As it would be the sin of ministers not to administer them, so it is the sin of people not to attend on them. But O how does this profanation abound, by unnecessary absenting from public ordinances! It is not enough to spend the time in private. God requires both; and the one must not jostle out the other. Nothing should be admitted as an excuse in this, but what will bear weight when the conscience is sisted before God.

4. Neglecting the duties of the day when the public work is over. The Sabbath is not over when the public work is over. When we go home to our houses, we must keep the Sabbath there too, Lev. 23:3. It ought not to be an idle time. Ye ought to retire by yourselves, and meditate on what ye have heard, on your behaviour at the public ordinances, and be humbled for your failings; confer together about the word, renew your calling on God in secret, and in your families, and with variety of holy exercises spend what remains of the day.

Secondly, The Sabbath is profaned by a careless performance of the duties required. Though we perform the duties themselves, we may profane the Sabbath by the way of managing them. Now, it is a careless performance to perform them,

1. Hypocritically, Matth. 15:7 while the body is exercised in Sabbath's work, but the heart goes not along with it.

2. Carnally, in an earthly frame of spirit, the heart nothing savouring of heaven, but still of the world. Hence are so many distracting thoughts about worldly things, that the heart cannot be intent on the duty of the day, Amos 8:5.

3. Heartlessly and coldly. The Sabbath should be called a delight; a special vigour and alacrity is required to Sabbath-duties. But O how flat, heartless, dead, and dull are we for the most part! so that many are quite out of their element on the Lord's day, and never come to themselves, or any alacrity of spirit, till the Sabbath be over, and they return to their business.

4. To perform them with a weariness of them, or in them, Mal. 1:13. Alas! is not the Sabbath the most wearisome day of all the week to many? The rest of the Sabbath is more burdensome than the toil of other days. How will such take with heaven, where there is an eternal rest, an everlasting Sabbath? This is a contempt of God and of his day.

Thirdly, The Sabbath is profaned by idleness. God has made the Sabbath a rest, but not a mere rest. He never allows idleness: on the week-days we must not be idle, or we misspend our own time. On the Lord's day we must not be idle, or we misspend and profane God's time. Thus the Sabbath is idled away and profaned.

1. By unnecessary, unseasonable sleeping in that day; lying long in the Sabbath-morning, going soon to bed that night, to cut God's day as short as may be; and much more sleeping in any other time of the day, to put off the time.

2. By vain gadding abroad on the Lord's day, through the fields, or gathering together about the doors, to idle away the time in company. It is very necessary that people keep within doors on the Lord's day as much as may be; and if necessity or conveniency call them forth, that they carry their Sabbath's work with them.

3. By vain and idle discourse or thoughts. We must give an account of every idle word spoken on any day, far more for those spoken on the Lord's day, which are doubly sinful.

Fourthly, The Sabbath is profaned by doing that which is in itself sinful. To do those things on the Lord's day that ought not to be done any day, is a sin highly aggravated. Thus the Sabbath is profaned by people's discouraging others from attending ordinances, instead of attending themselves; swearing or cursing on that day, instead of praising God. The better the day, the worse is the deed. How fearful must their doom be who wait that time for their wicked pranks, as some dishonest servants, and other naughty persons, who chuse the time that others are at church for their hidden works of dishonesty; because then they get most secrecy? And indeed the devil is very busy that way, and has brought some on to commit such things on the Sabbath-day as have brought them to an ill end.

Lastly, By unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about worldly employments or recreations. The Sabbath is profaned,

1. By carnal recreations, nowise necessary nor suitable to the work of the Sabbath; such as, all carnal pleasures, sports, plays, and

pastimes, Isa. 58:13.

2. By following worldly employments on that day, working or going about ordinary business, except in cases of necessity and mercy, Matth. 24:20. Though, where real necessity or mercy is, it is an abuse of that day to forbear such things, as sometimes the Jews did, who being attacked on the Lord's day, would not defend themselves.

3. By unnecessary thoughts or discourse about them; for that day is a day of rest for them every way; and we should never think of nor talk about them.

O let us be deeply humbled before the Lord under the sense of our profanations of the Sabbath! for who can plead innocent here? We are all guilty in some shape or other, and had need to flee to the atoning blood of Jesus for the expiation of this and all our other sins.

V. I come now to consider the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment. And these, according to the Catechism, are, 'God's allowing us six days in the week for our own employments; his challenging a special propriety in the seventh; his own example; and his blessing the Sabbath-day.'

This command God has enforced by four reasons,

1. The first reason is taken from the equity of this command. God has allowed us six days of seven for our own business, and has reserved but one for himself. In dividing our time betwixt himself and us, he has made our share great, six for one. Consider the force of this reason.

1st, We have time enough to serve ourselves in the six days, and shall we not serve God on the seventh? They that will not be satisfied with

six, would as little be satisfied with sixteen. But carnal-hearts are like a sand-bed to devour that which is holy. Nay,

2dly, We have time enough to tire ourselves on the six days in our own employments; it is a kindness that we are obliged to rest on the Lord's day. Our interest is our duty, and our duty is our interest. It is a kindness to our bodies, and souls too. And shall we not be engaged by it to sanctify the Sabbath?

3dly, There is time enough to raise the appetite for the Sabbath. It comes so seldom, though so sweet to the exercised soul, that we may long for it, and rejoice at the return of it. It is sad if six days' interval cannot beget in us spiritual appetite.

4thly, God might have allowed us one day, and taken six to himself. Who could have quarrelled the Lord of time? Has he reserved but one for six, and shall we grudge it him? The sentence of David in the parable against the rich man that took away the poor man's ewe lamb, is applicable here: 'The man that hath done this thing shall surely die; and he shall restore the lamb fourfold,' &c. 2 Sam. 12.

2. The second reason is taken from God's challenging a special propriety in the Sabbath-day; But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. All days are his; but this is his in a peculiar manner, Rev. 1:10. He has set a mark on it for himself to be reserved to himself. Consider the force of this reason.

1st, If we have a God, it is reasonable that God should have a time set apart for his service, the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. The heathen had days set apart for the honour of their idols; though the dumb idols could not demand them, yet they gave them. Papists have days set apart for saints, who are to them a sort of gods, though some of

them, as Paul has forbidden it. And wilt thou not keep holy the Sabbath of the Lord thy God?

2dly, It is sacrilege, the worst of theft, to profane the Sabbath-day. It is a robbing of God, a stealing of time from him that is consecrated to him, and that is dangerous, Prov. 20:25. We justly blame the churches of Rome and England, for robbing people of a great many days which God has given us; but how may we blame ourselves for robbing God of the day he has kept from us, and taken to himself? Alas! our zeal for God is far below our zeal for ourselves. They stick to their saints' days, but how weary are we of God's days? Mal. 3:8.

3. The third reason is taken from God's example, who, though he could have perfected the world in a moment, yet, spent six days in it, and but six days, resting the seventh, taking a complacency in the work of his own hand; and this is an example to be imitated by us. Consider the force of this reason.

1st, God's example proposed for imitation is a most binding rule, Eph. 5:1. 'Be ye followers of God.' What God does is best done, and we must labour to write after his copy.

2dly, The profaning of the Sabbath is a most eminent and signal contempt of God and of his works. Did God rest on the Sabbath, taking a complacency in the six days' works? Our not doing so is an undervaluing of what God so highly esteemed, slighting of what he so much prized, and consequently a contempt of himself and his works too.

4. The fourth reason is taken from his blessing the Sabbath-day. His blessing that day is his blessing it as a mean of blessing us in the keeping of it. It imports,

1st, The Lord's putting a peculiar honour on it beyond all other days. It is the 'holy of the Lord and honourable.' The King of heaven has made it the queen of days. Therefore it should be our question, What shall be done to that day the King delighteth to honour? Let us beware of levelling that with common things which God hath so far advanced above them.

2dly, That the Lord has set it apart for a spiritual blessing to his people, so that in the sanctification of that day we may look for a blessing, Isa. 56:6, 7; nay, that the Lord will multiply his blessings on that day more on his people than any other days wherein they seek it. So that, as the Lord requires more on that day than on any other days, he also gives more.

3dly, That the Lord will make it even a spring of temporal blessings. He will not let the day of blessing be a curse to people in their temporal affairs. They shall be at no loss in their worldly things by the Sabbath rest, Lev. 25:20, 22. Conscientious keepers of the Sabbath will be found to thrive as well otherwise as those who are not. The force of this reason is,

(1.) God's honour by keeping that day, that we may get his blessings on it showered down upon us. So that the profanation of the Sabbath is like profane Esau's rejecting the blessing.

(2.) Our own interest. Is it a special day for blessing, and shall we not observe it? It is an unworthy mistake to look upon the Sabbath as so much lost time. No time is so gainful as a Sabbath ho-lily observed. And indeed the great reason of the profaning of the Sabbath may be found to lie,

[1.] In carnality and worldly mindedness. The Sabbath is no delight to many. Why? Because heaven would be none to them, for they

savour not the things of God. The heart that is drowned in the cares or pleasures of the world, all the week over, is as hard to get into a Sabbath-frame, as wet wood to take fire.

[2.] Insensibleness of their need of spiritual blessings. They are not sensible of their wants, and hence they despise the blessing. He that has nothing to buy or sell can stay at home on the market-day, and the full soul cares not for God's day.

[3.] The not believing of the blessing of that day. They that think they may come as good speed any day in the duties of the day as on the Lord's day, no wonder they count God's day, and the duties of the day, as common.

USE. Let me exhort you then to beware of profaning the Sabbath. Learn to keep it holy. And therefore I would call you here to several duties.

1. Remember the Sabbath-day, before it come, to prepare for it, and let your eye be on it before the week be done. Timeously lay by your worldly employment, and go not near the borders of the Lord's day, and strive to get your hearts in a frame suitable to the exercises of this holy day.

2. Make conscience of attending the public ordinances, and waiting on God in his own house on his own day. Loiter not away the Lord's day at home unnecessarily, seeing the Lord trusts to meet his people there. This will bring leanness to your own souls, and grief of heart to him that bears the Lord's message to you.

3. Before you come to the public, spend the morning in secret and private exercises, particularly in prayer, reading, and meditation;

remembering how much your success depends upon suitable preparation. Put off your shoes before ye tread the holy ground.

4. Make not your attendance on the public ordinances a by-hand work, and a mean for carrying on your worldly affairs. If ye come to the church to meet with some body, and to discourse or make appointments about your worldly business, it will be a wonder if ye meet with the Lord. If ye travel on the Lord's day, and take a preaching by the way, it may well cheat your blinded consciences; it will not be pleasing to God, for it makes his service to stand but in the second room, while your main end is what concerns your temporal affairs. Among the Jews no man might make the mountain of the house, or a synagogue, a thoroughfare. And beware of common discourse between sermons, which is too much practised among professors.

5. When ye come home from the public ordinances, let it be your care, both by the way and at home, to meditate or converse about spiritual things, and what ye have heard. Retire and examine yourselves as to what ye have gained, and be not as the unclean beasts, who chew not the cud. Let masters of families take account of their children and servants how they have profited, catechise and instruct them in the principles of religion, and exhort them to piety.

6. When ye are necessarily detained from the public ordinances, let your hearts be there, Psal. 63:1, 2; and do not turn that to sin which in itself is not your sin. And strive to spend the Lord's day in private and secret worship, looking to the Lord for the up-making of your wants. As for those that tie themselves to men's service, without a due regard to their having opportunities to hear the Lord's word, their wages are dear bought, and they have little respect to God or their own souls; and I think tender Christians will be loath to engage

so. But, alas! few masters or servants look further than the work or wages in their engaging together! A sad argument that religion is at a low ebb.

7. Do not cut the Sabbath short. The church of Rome has half holidays; God never appointed any such; it is one whole day. Alas! it is a sad thing to see how the Lord's day is so consumed, as if people would make up the loss of a day out of Saturday's night and Monday's morning, which they do by cutting short the Lord's day.

8. Lastly, Labour to be in a Sabbath-day's frame. Let the thoughts of worldly business, far more worldly words and works be far from you. To press this, consider,

(1.) It is God's command, whereby he tries your love to him. This day is as the forbidden fruit. Who does not condemn Adam and Eve for eating it? O do not profane it any manner of way!

(2.) Heaven will be an everlasting Sabbath, and our conversation should be heaven-like. If we grudge the Lord one day in seven, how will we relish eternity? We are ready to complain that we are toiled with the world: why then do we not enter into his rest?

(3.) The great advantage of sanctifying the Lord's day. He has made it a day of blessing. It is God's deal-day; and keeps up the heart of many through the week while they think of its approach.

(4.) Lastly, Ye will bring wrath on you if ye do not sanctify the Sabbath. God may plague you with temporal, spiritual, and eternal plagues. Many begin with this sin of profaning the Lord's day, and it brings upon them the wrath of God, both in this world and that which is to come.

OF THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:12.—Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

WE come now to the second table of the law, which teacheth us our duty to man, i. e. to ourselves and others. There are two parts of religion, piety towards God, comprehending our duty to God, immediately delivered in the four first commandments; righteousness, our duty to our neighbour, delivered in the last six. As God has set the four first commands to maintain his own worship and honour in the world; so he has covered man with the last six. The fifth command is a fence for him in his station, whatever it is; the sixth guards his life; the seventh is a fence to his chastity; the eighth, to his goods; the ninth, to his name; and the tenth, to all that is his. Over these hedges no man must break, under the pain of the Lawgiver's displeasure.

Religion must run through the whole course of our conversation, and mix itself with all our actions, those that respect men! as well as those that respect God immediately. Therefore in vain do they pretend to religion, that make no conscience of their duty to men. Religion makes not a man only a good man but a good neighbour. And it is observable, that these duties are ordinarily made the trying point to professors of religion. And if ye have got any good of the late solemn occasion, ye will not only love God more, but love your neighbour more; not only grow in duties of piety towards God, but of righteousness to men, giving every one their due, Micah 6:6, 7, 8. Zech. 8:16, 17. Matth. 19:18, 19. Rom. 13:8, 9, 10.

In this passage there is a command, Honour thy father and thy mother; and the reason of it, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. In the command two things are to be considered.

1. The object, father and mother. By these are meant not only our natural parents, but also all superiors, superiors in age, 1 Tim. 5:1, 2; such as are superior to us in gifts or grace, Gen. 4:20 and 45:8; but especially such as are by God's ordinance over us in authority, whether in the family, as husbands, 2 Sam. 12:3; masters, 2 Kings 5:13; in the church, as ministers and other church-officers, 2 Kings 2:12 or in the state, as magistrates, supreme or subordinate, Isa. 49:23. These are more directly meant by father and mother who are to be honoured.

These are the objects of this command expressed. The objects implied are,

(1.) All inferiors; that is, not only children, but the younger, the weaker in gifts and grace, wives, servants, people, subjects. That these are also the objects of this command, is clear, if ye consider, that their superiors are called fathers and mothers to them in the command, and consequently it binds them to be as fathers unto them.

2. All equals; that is, brethren, sisters, friends, neighbours, and all amongst whom there is little difference as to age, gifts, grace, place, or dignity. That the command respects these also, is clear if we consider, that Christ sums up the whole second table in that general, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' Therefore our neighbour in the general must be the object of this command, as well as the rest of the second table.

3. The duty, Honour, All these must be honoured by their relatives. Giving honour does not imply the superiority of the person honoured; God himself will honour those that honour him; and all men must be honoured by us, whether they be our superiors, inferiors, or equals, 1 Pet. 2:17. God has put some excellency of his in every person, for which they are to be honoured. The titles of father, husband, teacher, and ruler, are honourable, for they are God's titles. The station wherein God has set every one, though inferiors or equals, is honourable; for they shine most beautifully, that shine in their own sphere. And there is no person on whom God has not bestowed something of his own, for which that person is to be honoured even by his superiors; esteemed inwardly in the heart, which is to be vented by a respectful outward carriage to them.

For the further opening of these words take notice,

1. That this command, whose scope is the performance of relative duties, is the first of the second table. In which the wisdom of God is to be adored, this command having a general influence on all the rest, so that we cannot transgress the rest but we transgress this in the first place. And it is worthy of observation, that such as bring themselves to an ill end, by murder, adultery, theft, &c. ordinarily pitch on disobedience to their parents as the inlet to all these, Prov. 30:17.

2. That as the fourth commandment is particularly directed to superiors, so this is to inferiors; particularly because subjection and submission is that which goes worst down with the proud hearts of the children of men; and therefore God doth the more expressly require it.

3. That superiors are styled fathers and mothers. And that is, (1.) To teach superiors their duty towards their inferiors, that they owe them

such tenderness and kindness as parents to their own children, Num. 11:12. (2.) To make inferiors the more cheerfully and willingly to give due honour to them, 1 Cor. 4:14, 15.

In discoursing from this subject I shall shew,

I. What is required in this fifth commandment.

II. What is forbidden in it.

III. The reason annexed to it.

IV. Make improvement, as I go along.

I. I am to shew, what is required in this command. According to our Catechism, it requires 'the preserving the honour, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations; as superiors, inferiors, or equals.'

In speaking to this I shall,

1. Take notice of God's appointment of several places and relations.

2. Consider the necessity of the performance of relative duties in general.

3. Shew the duties of the particular relations wherein we severally stand.

FIRST, I am to take notice of God's appointment of several places and relations. Observe, that a difference of places and relations amongst the children of men is of divine appointment. All are not alike. Some God will have to be superiors, others inferiors, others equals; yea, the same persons superiors in respect of some, and

inferiors in respect of others. This command supposeth this, as the eighth doth a propriety of goods. God is a God of order, not of confusion: so that the levelling design is levelled against the divine will. It serves,

1. To manifest the sovereignty of God that invests one man more than another with dominion and honour, though all are of one blood; takes one piece of clay and sets it on a throne, and sets another piece of the same on a dunghill. He himself is the King of the world, and the fountain of honour.

2. To beautify the world, God, who has made the natural body of man not all one lump, but consisting of several members, some more, some less honourable, for the beauty of the whole, has so shewed his wisdom in the political body.

3. It is necessary in this state of sin, especially for the preserving of the world, which, without rules and government in families, churches, and states, would be like a ship without a pilot amongst dangerous rocks.

Use. Let every one then be content with his place assigned him by the Divine Providence. Are worse than yourselves set above you? God has done it; say you Amen to your own post. And do the duty of your place and relation; and that will be your greatest honour. The moon shining by night is very beautiful, but in the day there is little beauty with her. As little is there in those who, forsaking their own place and the duties thereof, thrust themselves into that of another, and act without their proper spheres.

SECONDLY, Let us consider the necessity of performance of relative duties in general. Observe that the conscientious performance of relative duties is a necessary piece of true religion. The fifth

commandment requireth 'the preserving the honour, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations.' True religion consists of faith and holiness; and true holiness is made up of personal and relative holiness. Do not think that religion has no concern in thy domestic and civil affairs. All of us are in some relations, husbands, wives, children, servants, neighbours. Each of these has its own train of duties. Be thou master, servant, &c. here are thy instructions sent down from heaven, how to carry in thy place and relation. Thou wilt say, Who is concerned how I carry to my relations? I tell you, God is concerned, and he will require it. His commands are like a man's shadow; wherever he goes, they follow him. The necessity thereof is apparent.

1. The conscientious performance of relative duties is necessary in respect of the command of God. The command for them is the first of the second table. God, who hath placed us in these relations, binds us by his sovereign authority to perform the duties of the same. The same stamp of divine authority is on these commands that is upon the command to pray, &c. And he will not be satisfied with our overlooking our duty.

2. It is necessary to evidence us to be Christians indeed, no man can justly pretend to be a new creature, that does not make conscience of relative duties, 2 Cor. 5:17. Saving grace goes through all relations, like leaven in a lump, and sets men right in them. It makes the man not only a good man, but a good neighbour, husband, servant, &c. the woman a good neighbour, wife, servant, &c. For,

(1.) Relative duties are an integral part of true godliness; they are a part of the new man, Eph. 4:24, 25. A body that wants a leg or an arm is no complete body; and a man that wants relative holiness is

no complete Christian, no evangelically complete Christian, 2 Pet. 1:7, 9.

(2.) Relative holiness is an essential part of true godliness; it cannot be without it, more than the body can live without the soul, 2 Pet. 1:7, 9. 'Shew me thy faith by thy works,' says the apostle; and so may we say, Shew me thy personal holiness by thy relative holiness, Eph. 5:9.

(3.) Relative duties are the great trying points of the work of Christianity, which, if any thing, will try what metal people are of. A man is that really which he is relatively. And if there be any defect in the professor of religion, search for it in his relations, and it will readily be found in one or all of them. The pride of men's hearts makes them often very difficult of access; superiors, through their pride of heart, are apt to tyrannise; inferiors, through theirs, think themselves as good, and cannot comport with subjection. Every man naturally loves to be master, and seeks himself; hence there is no dutifulness to equals.

3. It is necessary as a piece of conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is not a complete Christian that has not received of Christ grace for grace. We must prove our union with him by our conformity to him, 1 John 2:6. He stood in various relations, and therein was a pattern to us. He is a loving husband to his church, Eph. 5:25 a faithful Servant to his Father; a kind and affectionate Master to his servants; a dutiful subject to the magistrate; and an obedient child, Luke 2:51.

4. It is necessary to make a useful Christian. Cumber-grounds must be cut down, Luke 13:7. And a useless Christian is like the vine, which if it bear not fruit, is good for nothing but the fire, Ezek. 15. Now, shall we be useless in the world? And useful we cannot be but in our several places and relations, discharging the duties of the same; and useful we are, if we do the duties of the relations wherein

we stand. How is the eye, the tongue, &c. useful? Why if they remain in their proper place, and do their proper office: whereas, if they either be removed out of their place, or in it do not their office, they are useless. Let us make a help meet for man, said God, when he brought the first relation into the world. So that relative duties, as we stand in relation to others, in family, church, or state, are the proper orb of usefulness. They that are useful there, are useful indeed; and they who are useless there, are useless altogether in the world.

5. It is necessary to make a straight Christian. If we will go straight in religion, we must go as it were with these two legs, personal duties and relative duties. If either of these be wanting, then our way is like 'the legs of the lame that are not equal,' Prov. 26:7. An unequal pulse shews a distempered body. How many such crooked professors are there, saints abroad, but devils at home? But see Psal. 125:5. 'As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.'

6. Lastly, It is necessary for personal holiness. These are like live coals; put them together, and they will burn: but put them asunder, and they will both go out, 1 Pet. 3:7. A sad evidence of this is to be seen in many, who, while they were single, gave good hopes of themselves, and had fair blossoms of religion: but being married, and making no conscience of their duty to their relatives, all good goes from them, their spirits sour, their souls wither, and their spiritual case goes quite to wreck.

It is a common observation of such as slight relative duties, that their relatives are not in their duty to them. But though it be so, this tie is laid on them by divine authority, and so cannot be taken off that way. Must I go out of my duty, because another goes out of his duty to

me? No. See 1 Pet. 2:18, &c. It is the way to gain them to their duty, chap. 3:1.

USE 1. Of information. This lets us see, that,

1. There is very little true religion in the world, there is so little relative holiness in it. There are two things that make this evident.

(1.) How few are there that make any conscience at all of their duty to their relatives? We may take up Micah's lamentation over the land at this day, Micah 7:1–6. If we look to the church, what confusions are there, with untender ministers, and unruly people? the stars losing their light, and trampled under foot with contempt. If we look to the state, magistrates abusing their authority, and people despising them and their authority too. If we look into families, what disorder is there? parents careless, children disobedient, husbands untender, wives stubborn, masters rigid, and servants unfaithful. A sad evidence of the decay of religion, that the world is so far out of course.

(2.) The relative duties that are done, how few of them are done in a right manner? To do the duty itself may please men; but God will never accept it if it is not done in a right manner. A good humour is all with many, who have no principle of a new nature. A natural affection prevails with some; love to peace makes others do their duty: and fear of their relatives puts on others to do their duty; while, in the mean time they are nowise stirred up thereto from the fear and love of God; nor have they any respect to the command of God in what they do. But is that religion? will God ever accept of that as obedience to him? No, no, Rom. 13:5. 1 Pet. 3:6.

2. This lets us see what need all of us have to be humbled for our defects in relative duties; what need we have of the blood of Christ to

wash away our guilt in these; what need we have of the Spirit of Christ to help us unto these duties. Oh! they are not easy: nature will never comply with the work, or at best but bungle at it. We have much need to pray for the Divine assistance in this matter; as without him we can do nothing, even in these outward duties.

USE II. Of exhortation. Set yourselves to make conscience of relatives. For motives to press this, consider,

1. This will be a notable mean of good to yourselves. He that thus lays out himself, lays up for himself indeed what the world cannot take from him. (1.) It will be an evidence of the sincerity of your obedience, if to personal holiness ye join relative holiness too, Psal. 119:6. (2.) It will be a great promoter of personal holiness; for he that watereth, shall be watered also himself. (3.) It will waft you in within the compass of the promise in the text.

2. The conscientious performance of relative duties is the way to do good to others. Would ye be useful for God, or useful to your relatives? then do this? This would make you a blessing like Abraham. There is nothing more convincing, and more likely to make others fall in love with religion, than this, 1 Pet. 3:1.

3. If ye make no conscience of these duties, it will discover the rottenness and unsoundness of your hearts, Psal. 119:6. When God changeth the heart, he writes his laws on it, and these laws among others. And the want of this will bring in that dittay, notwithstanding all thy pretended religion, 'One thing thou lackest.'

4. The neglect of these duties, and unfaithfulness in them, does much ill to religion. The world will observe how people manage the duties of their relations; and a flaw there is a sad stumbling-block, that makes others dislike religion. That religion that tends not to the good

of society, what does it avail? Suppose a professor to have a graceless neighbour, can he take a readier way to stumble him at religion, than to be an ill and unconscionable neighbour? That is a remarkable admonition, 1 Tim. 6:1. 'Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honour; that the name of God, and his doctrine, be not blasphemed,' Many pride themselves in their contempt of magistrates and their authority; but I am convinced it has no small influence on the malignancy and atheism of the age, and scares many from the religion that we profess. The malicious Jews knew very well the influence that it would have; and therefore tempted our Lord with a question relative to paying tribute to Cæsar, Matth. 22:16, &c. But see our Lord's practice, Matth. 17:27.

5. God takes special notice of the conscientious performance of relative duties; for indeed those that are most observant of them are most useful for God in the world. What a noble commendation is that of Enoch, that he walked with God? Gen. 5:22 of Abraham, of whom the Lord said, 'Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment,' Gen. 18:17, 19; and of Sarah, 1 Pet. 3:6 who 'obeying Abraham, calling him lord.' Nay, at the great day of judgment, it is relative duties that are pitched upon as evidences for the saints; and the neglect of these is the ground of the condemnation of the wicked. It is not what passed or did not pass betwixt God and them, but what passed betwixt their neighbours and them, upon which the sentence of absolution or condemnation is founded.

6. Ere long all these relations will be taken away, and then ye will have no more access to do a duty to them. Ordinary emergencies may separate betwixt the servant and master, minister and people, one

neighbour and another. Death comes and dissolves all relations, Job 3:17, 18, 19. This dissolves the relation betwixt husband and wife, parents and children. Should we not then take that warning? Gal. 6:10. 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith?' When they are gone, many times the neglect stings terribly.

7. Thy undutifulness that way may ruin thy relative; for by such a stroke ordinarily it is not one, but two that fall together. And if God do keep them up, yet ye do what in you lies to ruin them. The rich man in hell desires not to see his brethren. Why, dreadful is the meeting that many relatives will have one with another at that place.

Lastly, The neglect of these duties will undoubtedly ruin you, if ye get not pardon and grace to reform that neglect, Heb. 12:14. If ye have any love to your own souls, then endeavour after this.

I offer you the following directions.

1. Keep up a sense of your own inability for relative duties, and look to the Lord for strength to perform them. People look on these but as common things, and live not by faith with respect to them, and the Lord leaves them so as they mar all. Prayer and faith in the promises are necessary to the performance of these duties.

2. Watch. Satan bends his force against this particularly, because he is in a fair way to ruin two at least at once. So relatives should join forces to resist him, and carefully watch against this subtle enemy.

3. Lastly, Consider ye have to do with God in that matter, and not merely with another. It is he that has set you in your several relations, and has prescribed the laws whereby ye must walk with

him in them. He is your witness, and will be your Judge with respect to your behaviour in that relation, according to these laws.

THIRDLY, I come now to consider the duties of the particular relations wherein we severally stand; and they are two in general; those of superiors and inferiors, and that of equals. The former is of two sorts. There are some relations where one of the relatives has power and authority over the other; and those that import a mere preference. The first of these we may consider with respect to the family, the church, the commonwealth.

In the family we find three relations, of superiors and inferiors, husband and wife, parents and children, masters and servants, wherein one of the relatives has power and authority over the other.

I shall begin with the family-relations, and therein with the first relation that was in the world, and from which all others do proceed, viz. that of husband and wife, and so proceed to the rest in order. And we must be particular, that we may declare the whole counsel of God. I shall show you the laws of heaven with respect to each of these relations, which if observed would make happy societies, families, &c. and when neglected keep the world in wild disorder; and these are laws by which we shall be judged.

FIRST, As for the relation betwixt husbands and wives, read Col. 3:18, 19. 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.' The apostle here lays down the duty of married persons one to another. He begins with the duty of the wife, as that of the children and servants, because their duty, through the subjection that is in it, is the most difficult, and being conscientiously performed, is the stronger motive to the husband, to do his duty, as well as to the parent to do his. And here we have,

1. The sum of a wife's duty to her husband. Self-submission to him, subjecting herself to him, comprehending the duty she owes to him in her heart, words, and deeds. The qualification of this submission, the only restriction of it, is in the Lord; that is, so as it be consistent with her duty to God. That limitation observed, it extends to every thing, Eph. 5:24. (3.) The reasonableness of this, it should not be complained of; it is fit, just, and equitable in respect of God's ordinance enjoining it, the infirmity of the woman as the weaker sex, and the inconveniencies arising on the refusal of it.

2. The sum of the husband's duty is love to her. This comprehends in it the whole of his duty; for love will always be active, and spread itself into the several duties he owes her, yea, and will season all these duties, and tincture them with kindness to her. The apostle comprehends all in this, both to sweeten the wife's subjection on the one hand, and to temper his authority on the other. And therefore he cautions against bitterness, and that both in heart, that he hate her not, nor coldly love her, in words, and in deeds.

Husbands and wives may not carry to one another as they list, but must be dutiful to one another, according to the word of God, as they will be accountable to God.

Here I shall shew,

1. The duties common to both husband and wife.

2. Those more peculiar to each party.

First, I shall shew the duties common to both husband and wife.

1. Conjugal love, Tit. 2:4. They must love one another with a special love, not communicable to another. God's ordinance has made them

one flesh, and God's law obliges them to be one heart. They must love one another more than father or mother, yea, as their own flesh, Eph. 5:28, 31. And where that love is wanting, God is dishonoured, and the society is uncomfortable. And however scarce they may be of lovely qualities, we must love them because they are ours.

2. Cohabitation, dwelling together; which comprehends the ordinary use of the same house, bed, and board, I Pet. 3:7. 1 Cor. 7:10. This is such a necessary duty, that an obstinate refusal in either party to dwell together dissolves the marriage, 1 Cor. 7:15 that is wilful desertion. And if a man remove to another place for a long time, and upon no bad cause, his wife is obliged to go with him, if he desire, unless there be some imminent danger, either of her body or soul; and he is obliged to take her, if she desire. For though it belongs to the husband as the head to determine the place of their habitation, yet he cannot shake off his duty to his wife, 1 Cor. 7:5. Gen. 12:11.

3. Living together in peace, 1 Cor. 7:15. We must follow peace with all men; but there are double ties on married persons to follow peace with one another, and to watch that it be not broken. No war is so unnatural as that which is betwixt them; and none so hopeless if they make it not up betwixt themselves. Did we see a man tearing his own flesh, or a woman beating her head against a wall, we would conclude they were mad. Yet thus it is in effect where there is no peace betwixt husband and wife. The ancient Pagan Greeks when they cut up the wedding-sacrifice, took the gall, and with eager loathing flung it behind the altar, to shew that in wedlock all bitterness must be put far away. There is none so hopeless if they take it not up between themselves; for there is none to judge betwixt them but God: therefore, if they cannot clear, they should bury their controversies, yielding for peace sake. And though certainly it is most natural that the woman should first yield, yet he is a foolish man that

will not sacrifice of his own right to peace, and yield, though to the weaker vessel, as Moses did to Zipporah, Exod. 4:25, 26. Certainly whoso first yields shews most respect to God, and stands fairest for the blessing, Matth. 5:9. 'Blessed are the peacemakers.'

4. Carefulness to please one another. The wife ought to suit herself to the will of her husband, so far as lawfully she may, 1 Cor. 7:34 watching against what is displeasing, and doing in things lawful what she knows is pleasing, Gen. 27:9. Yea, and the husband must be careful to please her too, ver. 33. It is a piece of that conjugal tenderness he owes her, not to do any thing that he knows may justly displease her, and even to humour her in things lawful and fit, for her greater comfort; for though he is the head, yet she is his own flesh. This would keep peace.

5. Living together not only in peace, but in love, delighting in one another's company, Eccl. 9:9 living cheerfully and familiarly together. A careless, morose, and unconvertible humour, is opposite to the end of the state of marriage, which is the mutual comfort of the parties.

6. Honouring one another. The woman ought to honour her husband, walking under a conscientious respect to that superiority God has granted him over her, 1 Cor. 11:7. So that she may not trample upon his character as a husband. Yea, and she must labour to walk so with others, as she may bring no dishonour to him by her indiscreet carriage, but be a glory to him by her meek and quiet conversation, 1 Pet. 3:4. So as he is her head, she becomes a crown to that head. 'A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband,' Prov. 12:4. The husband must also honour his wife, 1 Pet. 3:7 both in his words and actions, shewing his esteem of her virtues, praising her when she does well, Prov. 31:28 reposing trust and confidence in her as to the

management of his affairs, and not keeping up the knowledge of his business from her, but communicating counsels with her, Prov. 31:11. This he must do when she is worthy; otherwise that must take place, Micah 7:5. 'Keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.' In a word, he ought to carry so respectfully to her, as to shew that he looks on her as his companion, and may gain respect to her from the rest of the family, Gen. 16:6 and this because she is the weaker vessel, both naturally and morally, in which respect she is more easily crushed and broken in spirit, especially by the austere and undutiful carriage of her husband.

7. Sympathising with one another in all their crosses, and griefs, and joys, whether of body or mind. Being one flesh they must shew it this way. It is a common duty we owe to all, 'to weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that rejoice;' and so both their griefs and joys should be mutual, in a special manner; otherwise they will be as jarring strings in an instrument that mars the harmony, 1 Sam. 1:8. And they must bear with one another's infirmities, covering them with the mantle of love, Gal. 6:2.

8. Faithfulness in respect of their bodies, communicating themselves one to another, according to the ends of marriage, with modesty and soberness, marriage putting the body of each in the other's power; and therefore the apostle in this case forbids them to defraud one another, 1 Cor. 7:5. Another piece of that faithfulness is keeping by one another, and not embracing a stranger, which is that horrible breach that dissolves the bond of marriage.

9. Lastly, A due concern for one another's soul and eternal welfare, 1 Pet. 3:7. They must be helpful to one another in the way of the Lord, doing what they can to advance one another's eternal interest; watching over one another, joining together in holy duties;

instructing and admonishing one another, lovingly and meekly, each one proposing to themselves the salvation of their relative, as well as their own, 1 Cor. 7:16.

This is a weighty point, which few lay to heart. I shall lay before you these few things with respect to it.

(1.) Married persons, for this end, that they may be helpful to one another's soul's welfare, ought to walk so together as that they may have in each other's consciences a testimony of their integrity, 2 Kings 4:1. They should take heed they lay not stumbling-blocks before one another, nor carry so as to engender hard thoughts of one another that way. The testimony of God is above all, the testimony of conscience next, but the testimony of a yoke-fellow's conscience after that.

(2.) They should labour to beget and advance the fear of God in one another, to bring them to and carry them on in the truth of religion, 1 Cor. 7:16. They are not meet helps they are only helpful for the body and temporal concerns; for in that case the better part has no help of them. Interest as well as duty engageth to this; for the better a man be, the better husband will he be, &c. No wonder that those who fear not God, regard not man.

(3.) They should entertain communion in prayer and addresses to the throne of grace, praying for one another, and praying with one another, 1 Pet. 3:7. The husband should hold up his wife's case to God with his own, and the wife the case of the husband; and help them by prayers with, them and for them, which is true Christian help. They know one another's weaknesses, temptations, and difficulties, better than any one else, and therefore ought to be the more particular in this.

(4.) They should be acquainted with one another's case, and therefore inquire into the same, and observe it, that they may the better suit the help to the case, 1 Sam. 1:8. And O what a happiness is it for one to have one that is their own flesh to whom they may freely unbosom themselves! And what a sad thing is it where religious conference is not observed betwixt such parties?

(5.) They should watch over one another. This is living as being heirs together of the grace of life, 1 Pet. 3:7. They should stir up one another to duties and good works; and happy are they who so prove monitors to one another, 2 Kings 4:9, 10. They should warn one another of what appears sinful in their way, and so not suffer sin upon them, Eccl. 4:9, 10. If men see a spot on their face, they will tell them of it; but spots in the conversation are most dangerous. But withal special care must be taken that there be no bitterness mixed with it, for that mars the operation; the season must be observed when it will take best, 1 Sam. 25:36, 37; and it should be mixed with love. Yea, sometimes entreaties should be used rather than rebukes, especially from the wife to the husband, as prudence itself may teach, and may be gathered from 1 Tim. 5:1. 'Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father.' And such warnings should be kindly taken, and readily complied with, as the best evidences of love.

(6.) Lastly, A joint care for the religious government of the family. The one ought not to devolve that entirely on the other, but each take his share; otherwise it cannot miss to be mismanaged. Each of them owes a duty to the souls of their children and servants; and therefore should watch over them, admonish and rebuke, and stir them up to duty; and see that God be worshipped in the family, that it be not neglected in the husband's absence, or any thing else; for though the wife be the weaker vessel, she is the head of the family under her husband.

Secondly, I come to shew the duties more peculiar to each party.

1. The duties of the husband of this sort may be reduced to this one, viz. that he carry himself towards her as a head for her good, ruling her in the fear of the Lord. It is not a name of power only, but of duty; for he must be such a head to her as Christ is to the church, Eph. 5:23. And whoso reckon upon the authority of that name without eyeing the duty of it, put asunder what God has joined in his grant, and will join when he calls men to an account.

2. The duties of the wife may be reduced to this one, viz. submitting herself to her husband as her head, Eph. 5:22, 23. She is not to lord it over him, but to be subject to him. And in this respect there is a reverence and fear of the husband enjoined in the wife, Eph. 5:33. 1 Pet. 3:2 which is a due regard in the heart to his character as a husband, seeing in that God has put off his own name upon him, God himself being called our husband; a fear to offend him, flowing from love, venting itself in speaking and carrying respectfully to him, 1 Pet. 3:6.

Now the husband as the head of the wife owes her,

1. Protection, so as she may be as safe and easy under the covert of his relation to her as he can make her. For this cause God has given the husband as head to the weaker vessel: and therefore it was an ancient ceremony in marriage for the husband to spread his skirt over his wife, Ruth 3:9. He is to protect her to the utmost of his power from the injuries of others, 1 Sam. 30:18 and particularly from the insults, whether of children or servants in the family, as well as neighbours, Gen. 16:6. And if so, sorely he himself is not to bear hard upon her, but to shew her a peculiar tenderness as the weaker vessel, a tenderness to her body and spirit too; and not to suffer her, far less to oblige her, to distress herself above measure.

On the other hand, she owes him obedience, a submission to, and compliance with, his admonitions. It is observed of Job's wife, for as ill as she was, when he calls her a fool, she does not give him the same epithet again. Reason itself teaches, that whoso puts himself under the protection of another, must be ruled by that other, and not by himself.

2. Provision, 1 Tim. 5:8. The husband ought to provide for his wife, and cheerfully furnish her with what is needful and convenient according to his station and ability; and lay out himself by all lawful means for her comfortable through-bearing. And this he should have an eye to, not only for the time of his life, but even after his decease.

And on the other hand, the wife ought to be helpful to her husband by her frugal management, Prov. 31:27. And God's word and frequent experiments plainly shew, that a man's thriving or not thriving has a great dependence on his wife's management, Prov. 14:1. While he, then, is busy without doors, she should be careful within; and therefore it is recommended to women to be much at home, Tit. 2:5. Yet she may well go abroad when her business calls her, as Abigail did, 1 Sam. 25.

3. Lastly, Direction, with calmness instructing her, how she should carry in every thing, both with respect to things of this life and of the other, Prov. 2:17. He ought to be as eyes to her, which have their place in the head, and so should be capable to guide, 1 Pet. 3:7.

On the other hand, the wife should be pliable and teachable, 1 Tim. 2:11 yea, and be ready to seek instruction from her husband, 1 Cor. 14:35. She should be obedient to his commands and directions, ver. 34 for in every thing wherein the law of God has not bound her up, the husband's will ought to be complied with, Eph. 5:24. Gen. 3:16.

The reasons of the husband's duties are these,

1. Because husbands are appointed to be such heads as Christ is to the church, Eph. 5:25. And if men would reflect on this, it would make them very dutiful, and bear with many things as Christ doth, else we would be ruined.

2. Because thy wife is thy own flesh, thy second self, ver. 28, 29; and so undutifulness is monstrous.

3. Because she is the weaker vessel, 1 Pet. 3:7; for it hath pleased the Lord to exercise the woman with a special measure of infirmity, both natural and moral.

The reasons of the woman's duty are these.

1. Because the woman was created for the man, 1 Tim. 2:13 compare 1 Cor. 11:9.

2. Because the woman was the first that sinned, 1 Tim. 2:14 compare Gen. 3:16.

3. Because she is the weaker vessel.

Use 1. Let all such as have been, or are in that relation, be humbled under a sense of their sin in that point, and fly to the blood of Christ for pardon. And let every one look on that relation as a serious matter, in which people must walk with God, and under which they are bound to so many duties, of which they must give an account to the Lord.

Let husbands and wives study to make conscience of their duty one to another, and frame their life accordingly. For motives, consider,

(1.) God lays them on. Nature may storm at them, but they are God's commands; and whoso breaketh over the hedge, the serpent will bite.

(2.) Your marriage-vows and voluntary covenant engage to these. Though we forget them, God does not, and will not.

(3.) Your own comfort depends upon them; and so does the happiness in that relation.

Lastly, Death comes, and that will dissolve the relation. Therefore, before that awful event, let every one make conscience of performing their respective duties, that they may die in peace.

As to the relation betwixt parents and children, See Col. 3:20, 21. 'Children obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.'

In the first of these, we have, 1. The duty that children owe to their parents; and that is obedience in all things lawful. The word rendered obey, points at obedience flowing from inward respect to them. 2. The reason of it; it is pleasing to God, who has enjoined it.

In the next place, we have the duty of parents to their children. Where, 1. There is something supposed, that they must use their parental power and authority over their children for their good. 2. Something expressed, that they use it moderately, not abuse it to the irritating of them, lest they crush them and make them heartless.

Parents and children must carry to one another as they will be answerable to God who has given them their orders. Here I shall shew,

1. The duties that children owe to their parents.

2. The duty of parents to their children.

First, I am to shew the duties which children owe to their parents.

1. Singular love to them as the parents ought to hear them. This is called natural affection, the want whereof is accounted among the most horrid abominations, Rom. 1:31. Such a natural affection did Joseph shew to his father, Gen. 46:20 when 'he went to meet him, fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while.'

2. Reverence and fear. Their fear is to be squared with love, and their love salted with fear, Lev. 19:3. The mother is there particularly mentioned; and that, in the first place, because as people are ready to break over the hedge where it is lowest, so children are most apt to despise their mother; and they being much about her hand while young, lest familiarity breed contempt, God hath expressly provided against it. They must have a conscientious regard to that authority God has given them over them, and fear to offend them, as those who to them are in God's stead.

3. An outward reverent and respectful behaviour towards them. They ought not to be treated rudely by their children, as if they were their companions, Mal. 1:6; but they ought to speak respectfully to them, Gen. 31:35; and carry respectfully to them, Prov. 31:28. This was Solomon's practice even when a king, 1 Kings 2:19; for as the candle if lighted, will shine through the lantern, so reverence in the heart will appear in the outward carriage.

4. A ready obedience to their lawful commands, Col. 3:20. If it be not contrary to the command of God, they ought to obey. Subjection and obedience to parents is the honour as well as the duty of children. Joseph's ready obedience to his father is recorded to his

commendation, Gen. 37:13. Yea, Christ himself was a pattern to children in this regard to the parental authority, Luke 2:51.

5. Submission. They are to submit to their instructions and directions, readily receiving them, and complying with them, Prov. 1:8. Man being born like a wild ass's colt, has need to be taught. They are to submit to their reproofs and admonitions, to take them kindly, and amend what is amiss, Prov. 13:1. Yea, they are to submit to their corrections, for the folly bound up in their hearts makes the rod necessary, Heb. 12:9. They are children of Belial, indeed, that will not bear this yoke of subjection.

6. Bearing with their infirmities, and covering them with the wings of love. Whether they be natural or moral infirmities, they would beware of despising or insulting them on that account, or any way exposing them, as some foolish youngsters are apt to do, Prov. 23:22. Gen. 9:22.

7. Following their reasonable advice, and taking along with them the authority of their parents, in order to their calling or marriage. That children ought not to dispose of themselves in marriage without the consent of parents, is the constant doctrine of the Protestant churches. And the reasons are these. (1.) The scripture gives the power of making marriages for children to the parents, Deut. 7:3. Jer. 29:6. 1 Cor. 7:37, 38. Yea, even after parties have consented, it is left to the parent, whether to give his abused daughter to him that has been guilty with her, Exod. 22:16, 17. (2.) The most approved examples of marriage in scripture go this way, Gen. 24:3, 4. 28:1, 2 and 29:19. Judg. 14:2. Lastly, The reason is plain; for the child cannot give away any thing, that is his parents' against their will. Now, the child himself is the parents, a part of their self-moving substance, in which they have a most undoubted property. So, when

the devil was permitted to fall upon what was Job's, he fell upon his children, and killed them in the first place. Yet, upon the other hand, no parent can force a child to marry such and such a person; for consent makes marriage, and that which is forced is no consent. The child must be satisfied as well as the parent, Gen. 24:57. So the short of it is, that the consent of both is necessary, and that the parent must neither force the child, nor the child rob the parent.

8. Readiness to requite their parents when they are in need of it; that as they did for them when young, so they must do for them when old, or reduced to poverty. This God requires of children, 1 Tim. 5:4. It is a piece of that honour to parents which the fifth command enjoins, Matt. 15:4, 5, 6. So did Joseph, Gen. 47:12. This was a piece of duty which the Lord performed to his mother while he hung on the cross, John 19:27.

9. Lastly, In a word, children should so live as they may be an honour to their parents; for according as they are, their parents are either credited or ashamed. Yea, and when they are dead and gone, they should be reverently remembered, their wholesome advices religiously followed, and their debts satisfied, so as no body may get occasion to reproach them when they are away.

Use 1. This may serve for conviction and humiliation to us all, who either have had parents since we came to the years of discretion, or yet have them. Who can say in this, I have made my heart clean.

2. I exhort such as have parents, whether one or more, to be dutiful to them according to the word. There is indeed a great difference betwixt children in their father's family, and those who, by tacit or express consent, are left to their own disposal; but the duty of filial affection, reverence, and gratitude, abideth. For motives, consider,

(1.) That parents with respect to their children, do in an especial manner bear an image of God, as he is our Creator, Provisor, and Ruler. So are parents those from whom, under him, we had our being, by whose care and government God provided for us, when we could neither provide for nor rule ourselves.

(2.) Hence it is evident, that do what we can to them, or for them, we can never make a full recompense, but, after all, must die in their debt. But how little is this considered by many, who look on what they do for their parents in a magnifying glass, while they are blind to what their parents have done for them!

(3.) Lastly, Consider, that God takes special notice of your conduct towards your parents, Col. 3:20. It is a piece of duty which God readily regardeth according to his promise; and the neglect thereof useth not to be overlooked, but as it disposeth to an ill life otherwise, so God readily pays it home, so as the sin may be read in the punishment.

Secondly, I come to consider the duty of parents to their children; and I may take this up under five heads, viz. while they are yet in the womb, while in their infancy, from the time they come to the use of reason, at all times, and when a dying.

1. The duty which parents owe to their children while yet in the womb.

1st, Parents are obliged to use all care for the preservation of the child, to beware of any thing that may harm the child in the belly, and especially that may procure abortion, Judg. 13:4.

2dly, Dealing with God in behalf of the child, praying for its preservation, and for its soul, as soon as it is known to be a living

soul. I think that no sooner should the mother or father know a living soul to be in the womb, but as soon with Rebekah, they should go to God for it, Gen. 25:21, 22. If Hannah could devote her child to God before it was conceived, 1 Sam. 1:11. Christian parents may and ought to devote their children to God when quickened in the womb. Whoso neglect this, consider not that then the child is a sinful creature under the wrath of God, and the curse of the law; that it is capable of sanctification, must live for ever in heaven or hell, and that possibly it may never see the light.

Lastly, Labouring by all means that it may be born within the covenant; which is to be done by parents making sure their own being within the covenant; for so runs the promise, 'I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed.'

2. The duty they owe to them in their infancy.

1st, Parents should bless God for them when they are born, Luke 1:67. &c. Children are God's heritage; the key of the womb is in his hand; he gives them to some, and withholds them from others; and they should be received with thankfulness from the Lord's hand.

2dly, Giving them up to the Lord as soon as they are born, renewing the dedication of them to God, and accepting of the covenant for them; and procuring to them the seal of the covenant without any unnecessary delay. Under the Old Testament, infants were to receive the seal on the eighth day. Now there is no set time, but common equity bids take the first opportunity, and not delay it needlessly. The undue delay of circumcision was punished in Moses, Exod. 4:24; and the delay of baptism cannot but be displeasing to God too, as a slighting of his ordinance.

3dly, Tender care of them, doing all things necessary for them, while they are not capable to do for themselves, Isa. 49:15. And here it is the duty of the mother to nurse the child herself, if she be able, Hos. 9:14. And this care of infants, the burden of which lies most on the mothers is one great piece of their generation-work, wherein they are useful for God, and which they ought to look on as special service for their comfort in the trouble which therein they have.

3. The duties they owe to them from the time they come to the use of reason, and so forward.

1st, They are to provide for them, and that aye and until they be in a capacity to provide for themselves, 1 Tim. 5:8. This arises from the natural obligation and instinct that is common to men with beasts whereof the wildest will feed their young till they be able to do for themselves. Thus parents are, (1.) To provide suitable maintenance for their children for the present, and to lay out themselves for it, though with the sweat of their brows. (2.) And, as God prospers them, they are to lay up something for them, 2 Cor. 12:14: for though the possession be their parents entirely, yet he is stinted to the use of a part according to what is necessary. Only no man is to take from present necessities for future provisions; but what God has given, let men take the comfortable use of it; and what remains, let them lay by for their children, Eccl. 2:18, 19, 24. But for people to deny themselves things necessary and comely, that they may lay up for their children, is a curse; and if their children should follow their example, to deny themselves the use thereof, to transmit them to theirs, the use of it should never be had: but ordinarily what the parents narrowly gather, and keep so as they cannot take the convenient use of it themselves, the children quickly run through.

2dly, Civil education, that they may be useful members of the commonwealth. This we may take up in these three things.

(1.) Parents should polish the rude natures of their children with good manners, so as they may carry comely and discreetly before themselves or others, Prov. 31:28. It is the dishonour of parents to see children rude and altogether unpolished as young beasts; and religion is an enemy to rudeness and ill manners, 1 Pet. 3:8.

(2.) They should give them learning according to their ability, and see that at least they be taught to read the Bible, 2 Tim. 3:15. What is it that makes so many ignorant old people, but that their parents have neglected this? But where parents have neglected this, grace and good nature would make a shift to supply this defect.

(3.) They should train them up to do something in the way of some honest employment, whereby they may be useful to themselves or others. To nourish children in idleness is but to prepare them for prisons or correction-houses, or to be plagues to some one family or another, if Providence do not mercifully interpose, Prov. 31:27. Christians should train up their daughters to do virtuously, ver. 29. For their own sakes, let them be capable to make their hands sufficient for them, seeing none knows what straits they may be brought to. And for the sake of others to whom they may be joined, let them be virtuously, frugally, and actively educated, otherwise what they bring with them will hardly quit the cost of the mischief that their unthriftiness and silliness will produce, Prov. 14:3. Whether ye can give them something or nothing, let them not want Ruth's portion, a good name, a good head, and good hands, Ruth 3:11. Sons should be brought up to some honest employment, whereby they may be worth their room in the world, Gen. 4:2. This is such a necessary piece of parents' duty to their children, that the

Athenians had a law, That if a son was brought up to no calling at all, in case his father should come to poverty, he was not bound to maintain him, as otherwise he was.

3dly, Religious education, Eph. 6:4. If parents provide not for their children, they are worse than beasts to their young; if they give them not civil education, they are worse than heathens; but if they add not religious education, what do they more than civilised heathens? When God gives thee a child, he says, as Pharaoh's daughter to Moses' mother,' Take this child and nurse it for me.' Exod. 2:9. Though we be but fathers of their flesh we must be careful of their souls, otherwise we ruin them.

(1.) Parents ought to instruct their children in the principles of religion, and to sow the seeds of godliness in their hearts, as soon as they are able to speak, and have the use of reason, Deut. 6:6, 7. Such early religious education is a blessed mean of grace, 1 Kings 18:12 compare ver. 3. Not only is this the duty of fathers, who should teach their children. Prov. 4:3, 4 but of mothers, who, while the children are young about their hand, should be dropping something to them for their soul's good. Solomon had not only his father's lesson, but the prophecy his mother taught him, Prov. 31:1. See chap. 1:8.

(2.) They should labour for that end to acquaint them with the scriptures. 2 Tim. 3:15 to cause them to read them. Let the reading of their chapters be a piece of their daily task; and cause them read the scriptures in order, that they may be acquainted both with the precepts and histories of the Bible. Let them be obliged to learn their Catechism, and catechise them yourselves, according to your ability. For teaching by way of question and answer is most easy for them.

(3.) If they ask you any questions concerning these things do not discourage them, but take pains to answer all their questions,

however weakly they may be proposed, Deut. 6:20, 21. Children are often found to have very misshapen notions of divine things; but if they were duly encouraged to speak, they might vent their thoughts, which parents thus get occasion to rectify.

4thly, Labour to deter them from sin. The neglect of this was Eli's sin, for which God judged his house, 1 Sam. 3:13. Endeavour to possess their hearts with an abhorrence of sinful practices, and a dread of them. Carefully check their lying, swearing, cursing, or banning, and Sabbath-breaking. If they learn these while young, they will be fair to accompany them to gray hairs. Let them not dare to meddle with what is another man's, if it were not worth a farthing. Encourage them in taking up little things, and they may come in time to bring themselves to an ill end, and you to disgrace.

5thly, Stir them up to the duties of holiness, and the practice of religion. Often inculcate on them the doctrine of their sinful miserable state by nature, and the remedy provided in Christ. Shew them the necessity of holiness, pointing out Christ to them as the fountain of sanctification. Commend religion to them, and press them to the study of it, as the main thing they have to do in the world, Prov. 4:4, &c.

6thly, Pray with them, and teach them to pray. For this cause let not the worship of God be neglected in your families: but for your children's sake maintain it. No wonder that those children seek not God who never see their parents bow a knee. Ye should take them alone, and pray with them, and teach them to pray, laying the materials of prayer often before them; and let them learn the Lord's prayer, and use it as a form till such time as they can conceive a prayer by that directory. For though we do not think the Lord has bound us to that form, (if he has, the forms of the English liturgy are

most impertinent, which intrude themselves on us, and do not leave us to it), yet that it may not be used as a prayer, or as a form, I know none that do affirm; though it is plain it is principally intended for a directory in prayer, Matth. 6:9.

Lastly, They should often be put in mind of their baptismal vows: and I judge it advisable, that when ye have been at pains to instruct them in the principles of religion, and they have attained to a tolerable measure of knowledge, so that with judgment they may personally consent to the covenant, as a child religiously educated may be able to do betwixt nine and twelve years of age, if not before; it would be profitable to call them before you, and solemnly declare how ye have laboured to do your duty to them, as ye engaged in their baptism, and require them expressly to consent unto the covenant for themselves; taking them personally engaged to be the Lord's.

4. Correction, Eph. 6:4. The Greek word there signifies both correction and instruction; and so does the English word nurture. They must go together; for instruction without correction will hardly succeed. Parents must keep their children in subjection; if they lose their authority over them, the children will be children of Belial indeed, without a yoke, the end of which will be sad, Prov. 29:15. They must not only be corrected by reproof, but, when need is, with stripes, Prov. 19:18. Begin early, as soon as they are capable to be bettered by it; and let your love to them engage you to it; and not restrain you, Prov. 13:24. As ever ye would keep them out of hell, correct them, Prov. 23:13, 14. I offer the following advices in this point.

(1.) Take heed that ye correct not your children just to satisfy your own passion; for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. That is revenge, not correction. Let the end of your correction

be the child's good. It were good that parents, if they find themselves in a passion, would first beat down their own disordered spirits before they beat the child.

(2.) Let them know well wherefore ye correct them: for if the child know not what he has done amiss, he can never be bettered by the correction. And therefore pains should be taken to convince them of the evil of the thing; otherwise we deal not with them as rational creatures.

(3.) Consider well the disposition of the child. That severity may be necessary for one, that will quite crush another. A man will not take his staff to thresh his corn, nor yet his flail, to beat out his kailseed. Measure your correction, then, by the child's disposition.

(4.) Go about the work with an eye to the Lord for success. Correct thy child in faith of the promise, Prov. 22:15. 'Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him,' viz. as a mean appointed and blessed of God for that end. It is our belief, and not our blows, that will do the business. And no doubt the neglect of this is one main cause why correction oft-times does no good.

Lastly, Take heed ye correct not your children only for faults against yourselves, letting them pass with their sins against God. Many will give them a blow for a disrespectful word against themselves, who for lying, banning, Sabbath-breaking, will never touch them. Their children's crossing them must not go unpunished, but it will be long ere they correct them for their sins against God.

5. The casting them the copy of a good example, Psal. 101:2. Children are apt to imitate their parents, but especially in evil. He that sins before a child, sins twice, for he may expect that his sin shall be acted

over again. Let them, then, not see you do any thing ye would not have them to do, nor speak words ye would not have them to follow you in. Your good precept will not stick, if it be not fastened with a good example.

6. Encouraging them to do well; and when they do well, with kind looks, speeches, and actions, 1 Chron. 28:20. Ingenuous spirits are but abused, when they are always driven by way of authority, and not drawn in the way of kindness. The name of a father and mother sounds of bowels of kindness; it is a pity it should ever degenerate into the nature of mere masterly authority.

7. Lastly, Seasonable disposing of them in marriage, if need be, Ruth 3:1. 1 Cor. 7:36. So did Abraham with his son Isaac, Gen. 24; and Isaac with his son Jacob, Gen. 28; always consulting their own inclinations, not forcing them to this or that marriage against their will, which is but either to oblige them to disobey their parents, or to make themselves miserable to please them. The neglect of this duty may prove a snare to the child, and bring grief and sorrow to both.

4. There is a duty they owe to them at all times; and that is praying for them. Sometimes this is all they have access to do for them. But be they over so far away, they should not be forgotten. Though they be out of your family, they should not be out of your prayers, as Job's children were not, Job 1:5. And parents should consider the several cases of their children, and be very particular before the Lord for them. It is marked of Job, that 'he offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all,' ib. And though in some cases this may not be convenient in family-prayers, yet, in secret, parents should have their particular petitions for their particular children, according to their particular cases.

5. Lastly, The duty that parents when a-dying owe to their children. We must all die, and leave our children, else they will leave us before. Lay up these few advices, then, for that time.

(1.) If providence surprise you not, call together your children, that you may do them good by your advice at your latter end, as Jacob did, Gen. 49:1. And do it timeously, lest, if you delay, you be not able to speak to them when you would. A word from a death-bed has usually more influence than ten words in a time of health; and words spoken with the dying breath of a parent are fair to stick.

(2.) Lay over your children whom ye are to leave, on the Lord himself; and whether ye have any thing to leave them or not, leave them on your covenanted God by faith, Jer. 49:11. Accept of the covenant now, renew it then, and lay the stress of their through-bearing on that God on whom ye have laid the stress of your own souls.

(3.) Give them your testimony for God, against sin, and concerning the vanity of the world. If ye have had any experience of religion, commend Christ and the way of the Lord, to them from your own experience, Gen. 48:15, 16. If ye have had experience of the evil and bitterness of sin, shew them the ill of it. What courses you have found profitable for your soul, and what hurtful; mark these to them particularly. If experience fail, yet conscience may help you out, if awakened, to this testimony.

(4.) Give them your dying advice to make choice of Christ as their portion, and holiness as their way, to cleave to it, living and dying in it. And what faults ye know are in any of them, which ye could not before get reformed, let your dying lips again reprove, exhort, obtest, and testify against, if so be they may be persuaded to hearken at last.

(5.) Bless them, in praying for them to God, the fountain of blessing; declaring withal, that they shall be blessed, if they keep the way of the Lord.

(6.) Let your temporal affairs be so ordered, as that after your decease they may not be a snare to your children, a bone of contention, or an occasion of grudge, one of them against another, Isa. 38:1.

Use 1. This serves for conviction and humiliation to those that are in that relation. In these things we offend all, both in the matter and manner of duty; which may send us to the Father of mercies, through Christ, for grace to remove our guilt, and to fit us to reform.

2. I exhort parents to be dutiful to their children, according to the will of God laid before you in his word. For motives, consider,

(1.) The strong tie of natural affection laid upon you. Our children are parts of ourselves, and therefore our bowels should yearn towards them, moving us to do them all the good we can. There are three things that may make our affection work towards dutifulness to them.

[1.] They have sin conveyed to them by natural generation, Psal. 51:5. We may rejoice in them, indeed, as God's gifts; but, alas! we may mourn over them as bearing naturally our own sinful image. As they are our children, they are children of wrath; they have a corrupt sinful nature conveyed unto them. Did they derive some hereditary bodily disease from us, how would we pity them, and do what in us lies to help them? but they derive a hereditary soul disease from Adam by us, and should we not pity and pray for them?

[2.] Great is the danger they are in, if we do not our duty to them. They are in a world of snares; if we be not eyes to them, they may fall to their ruin. If the wild ass's colt be not tamed by education, they are in a fair way to be ruined in time by a sinful life, Prov. 29:15; and if mercy prevent it not, they are in a fair way to be ruined to eternity.

[3.] Education is a blessed mean of grace. So was it to good Obadiah, 1 Kings 18:12; and so it was to Timothy, 2 Tim. 3:15; compare chap. 1:5; Why, because it is a mean appointed of God for that end, and therefore may be followed in faith of the promise, Prov. 22:6; 'Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.' Chap. 23:14; 'Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.' Augustine's mother was a good woman; but such was his life, that it cost her many prayers and tears; and weeping to one about his case, 'Go thy way (said he to her), for it cannot be that a son of these tears can perish;' and so it was.

(2.) This is a great part of our generation-work, the work that we have to do for the honour of God in the world, Psal. 78:3, 4 to do our endeavour to hand down religion and honesty to the succeeding generation. And we must give an account of it to God. And as kings must account to God for what they have done for him in their kingdoms, and ministers in their congregations, so must parents account to him for what they have done in their families.

(3.) The vows of God are upon us for that cause. These are little minded by many, but God does not forget them: As Sarah was under the bond of the covenant by her husband's circumcision; so mothers are under the bond of the covenant by the vows taken on by their Husbands; and are therefore obliged to use their utmost endeavours to fulfil these vows in the education of their children.

And the due consideration of this might engage children to be obedient and pliable to the commands, instructions, and directions of their parents, for their good.

I come now to the relation between masters and servants, for which you may read Col. 3:22 and 4:1. 'Servants obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers but in singleness of heart, fearing God. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a master in heaven.'

The servant's duty is laid down, ver. 22. 'Servants obey in all things your master.' &c. Wherein consider, (1.) The duty enjoined them, 'obedience.' (2.) The extent of it, 'in all things,' in things religious and civil, in eager or harder pieces of service; nothing is excepted but what is sinful; and that is excepted in that clause, 'your masters according to the flesh;' that is, the outward man to distinguish them from the great Lord and master of the conscience; in which respect we are forbidden to be 'servants of men,' 1 Cor. 7:23; and to 'call no man master,' Matth. 23:8. Therefore Joseph is commended for refusing the solicitations of his mistress to uncleanness, and Saul's servants that they would not slay the Lord's priests. (3.) The manner of it; negatively, 'not with eye-service;' that is, when the master's eye is the measure of their work, busy before him; but if he turn his back, they slacken their hand; positively, 'in singleness of heart;' that is, faithfully, as under the eye of God, to whom they must give account.

The master's duty is laid down, Chap. 4:1. Wherein (1.) We have the duty they owe to their servants. It is taken up in two general heads. [1.] They are to 'give them what is just:' that is, what they are obliged to give them by strict law or condition; give them what they owe them by strict justice. [2.] 'What is equal;' that is, what they are tied

to by the law of charity and Christian meekness though not of strict justice. (2.) The reason enforcing it is, because masters on earth 'have a Master in heaven,' to whom they must give an account, as of other things, so of how they do to their servants.

Before I come to the duties of servants and masters, two things are to be considered, viz. who are meant by servants, and who by masters.

1. Who are meant by servants. Not to speak of bond-servants or slaves, whose bodies are perpetually under the power of their masters, there being no such servitude among us; servants, who are mercenary, or hirelings, are of two sorts. (1.) Domestic servants, who live in their master's family. (2.) Extra-domestic servants, who, though they live not in their master's family, but by themselves, yet receive his wages, whether for a few days, as day-labourers, men or women; or for certain terms, as herds, hinds, &c. All these come under the name of servants, and owe a duty to their masters, according to the law of God.

2. Who are meant by masters. (1.) There is the principal master, the master of the family, who pays the wages. (2.) There are subordinate masters. Such are, [1.] The mistress of the family, Psal. 123:2. [2.] Fellow-servants, or others deputed by, and having power from the principal master to oversee others, Gen. 24:2. These must be obeyed, as having the master's authority, unless it be known that they go cross to the will and interest of the principal master. And here I shall consider,

1. The duty servants owe to their masters.

2. The duty of masters with respect to their servants.

First, I am to shew the duty which servants owe to their masters. They owe,

1. Inward reverence towards them, and fear of them, 1 Pet. 2:18. Mal. 1:6. They should have a hearty respect to the character of a master, with a conscientious regard to the superiority that God has given them over them, wherein they are, so far, to them in the place of God, Eph. 6:5. 'as unto Christ.' They should fear to offend them, to displease them by doing or omitting any thing which they know will offend them, Eph. 6:5.

2. Honour, Mal. 1:6. They ought outwardly to, carry respectfully to them, whatever they be, if they be their masters, and that both in word and deed. An humbly submissive and respectful countenance and carriage towards a master, is an excellent ornament of a servant. Neither the badness of the master, nor his goodness and piety, leaves servants a latitude in this point. Though they be bad men, yet they are masters, 1 Tim. 6:1 and if they be fellow-Christians, that takes not away the distance of stations, ver. 2.

3. Carefulness to maintain the credit of the family, not disclosing the secrets thereof, nor blazing abroad their infirmities. The king of Syria was troubled to think that any of his servants should be as spies upon him, 2 Kings 6:11. And surely tale-bearing servants must be a great plague to a family. It is reckoned among the mischiefs of an evil time, when there is no trusting of any body that a man's enemies are those of his own house, Mich. 7:6. It is a Judaslike treachery, when men or women are brought into a house to eat their bread and work their work, to go abroad among others and wound their reputation.

4. Standing to the master's allowance, both in things determined by condition, and not determined. Some things, are determined by condition, that the servants may require; and when the master allows

that, though the servant may think it too little, he ought not to take more at his own hand. So when servants are allowed to keep so many beasts, and no more, it is their sin to keep more; though they may think it is no fault if they can get it kept secret, it does no great wrong to the master. But that is injustice to the master, and our sin before God, in whose sight it will be reckoned theft, Gen. 30:23. And in things not determined by condition, as the measure of diet and liberty, certainly the master's allowance in that is to be stood to. As to their diet, it is observed of the virtuous woman, Prov. 31:15. 'She giveth meat to her household:' they do not take it at their own hand. The secret waste that some make in the houses of others for their bellies, is oft-times, I believe punished with hungry bellies when they come to their own. As for their liberty and time, it is carved out by the masters, not by the servants, ver. 15, 18. And for servants to take their master's time to employ for themselves, without their master's allowance, is injustice.

5. Meek and patient submission to the checks and rebukes of the master, not answering again, Tit. 2:9. The ears of servants are bored to hear, and their tongues not filed to speak. It is very good reason, will ye say, when we are in a fault; though many will not take a word in that case, without giving the master as good as he brings. But if they have done no fault, they think they are not obliged to bear a rebuke. But the spirit of God does not teach so, 1 Pet. 3:18, 19, 20. 'Servants, be subject to your masters, with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently; this is acceptable with God.' It may be the master's sin to chide unreasonably, but it is the servant's sin not to bear it meekly. Sarah dealt hardly with her maid, which was her sin; yet the angel

will not allow Hagar to take her heels for it, but obliges her to turn and submit, Gen. 16:9

9. Lastly, Serving them conscientiously and honestly. If servants expect their wages, they owe their master service; and God will have them make conscience of their service. If we look to the word of God there is much that goes to this.

(1.) Servants must be obedient and pliable to the commands of the master in all lawful things, Tit. 2:9. Though the service required may be painful and hard yet they ought not to refuse it. Thus Jacob served Laban, Gen. 31:40, 41 without considering, that he was as good a man as his master was. They that put their necks under the yoke, should resolve to bear it.

(2.) Ye should follow the master's direction in the management of the work, not only doing what you are bidden, but as ye are bidden, Psal. 123:2. The master is the eye to direct, and the servant the hand to do what is directed. That the servant may calmly advise the master, there is no doubt; but they that will do nothing pleasantly, if they get not their own way of it, forget themselves and their duty.

(3.) Ye should do your business cheerfully, Col. 3:23. Such a servant was Jacob to his uncle Laban, Gen. 29:20. Sullenness and going about business grudgingly, makes it unacceptable, though otherwise well done.

(4.) Ye should do your business singly. This a servant does when he does not consult his own ease and humour, but his master's true interest, truly aiming at the thriving of his affairs, carefully avoiding every thing that may tend to his loss; and therefore pursuing his interest when the master is absent as well as when present, aiming at his duty, as under the eye of God.

(5.) Ye should do your business faithfully. Faithfulness is a necessary qualification in a good servant, Matth. 24:45. Servants having their master's substance among their hands, had need to be faithful, they having occasion to wrong him easily, if they have no respect to conscience. But the fear of God will make people faithful to men in little and in great things. They must not take of their master's goods to their own use, without his allowance, Tit. 2:10. They must be faithful in their accounts, and not give up false accounts, as the unjust steward did, Luke 16:6; nor allege false commissions from their master, as Gehazi did, 2 Kings 5:22. Jacob's faithfulness was his comfort, that though he had his master's flocks among his hands, he was free of them, Gen. 31:38.

6. Diligence and carefulness about their master's business, Prov. 22 ult. Negligence and carelessness is a piece of injustice, whereby servants defraud their masters, Prov. 18:9; for the loss may be all one to the master, whether it be procured wilfully or through carelessness.

7. Lastly, Readiness and quickness in the dispatch of business. A slothful lazy servant is most uneasy, Prov. 10:26. Such a one, quick and ready, was Abraham's servant, Gen. 24:33. 56. It is an apostolical precept, Rom. 12:11. 'Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit;' for servants should ply their work, and honestly employ their strength for their master's behoof, Gen. 31:6.

SECONDLY, I come now to shew the duty of masters with respect to their servants, 1. In the choice of them; and, 2. When they have got them.

First, In the choice of servants, two things are to be noticed.

1. Christian masters should look to the conversation of those whom they take to be their servants, that they be piously inclined, as David did, Psal. 101:6 lest they bring an Achan into their camp. A pious servant may bring a blessing to the master, as in Joseph's case. It is observable, that Potiphar saw that God was with Joseph, ere he entrusted him with his business, Gen. 39:3, 4. When Jonah came to the shipmaster, he took him into his ship without asking questions, but ere all was done he was made to do it, Jonah 1:8.

2. They should look to their fitness and ability for their service, Psal. 112:5. So Laban had knowledge of what Jacob could do before he engaged with him; for he staid with him a month, Gen. 29:14, 15.

Secondly, When they have got them. There are two things in the general that they owe unto them.

1. That which is just. Just things must be done to all, and particularly to those that are under us. God takes special notice of injustice done by superiors to inferiors, who cannot so well get themselves righted. And by the law of strict justice masters are,

(1.) To allow their servants sufficient maintenance, whether within or without the house, Prov. 27:27. If masters get their work, it is just they should allow them food convenient, whereby they may be fitted for their work. The mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn was not to be muzzled; for our sakes doubtless God saith it, that those who work should eat sufficiently.

(2.) To give them payment of their wages, the keeping back whereof is a great oppression and crying sin, Jam. 5:4. Masters should beware of all fraud and deceit in this. It stands as a blot on Laban's memory, that he did not keep conditions with Jacob, but changed his wages ten times, Gen. 31:41 for which he might make some plausible

pretence as well as others. To pay them what is insufficient, putting them off with any thing that may make up account, is unjust, Amos 8:6. Nay, the keeping it up, and delaying to pay them, when it is in the power of our hand, is contrary to justice, Deut. 24:14, 15.

(3.) They should require no more of them than they are able to do. Servants should not be kept idle, Prov. 29:21; neither should they be rigorously pressed above their power, but allowed convenient time for rest and refreshment, Lev. 25:43. It is just not only because they are fellow-creatures, but fellow Christians.

(4.) Oversight and direction in what they should do, Prov. 31:27. Thus Boaz is found in the field with his reapers. It is very unjust to find fault with what servants do, while men will not be at pains to tell them how they would have their business done.

2. They owe them that which is equal by the law of Christian meekness and charity. Now, thus they owe unto them these things.

(1.) Masters ought to rule their servants gently and meekly, as being of the same blood with themselves, Eph. 6:9. A proud and imperious carriage does not become Christianity. They should moderate or relax threatening, not do all with them with boasting and terror, but by meekness draw them on.

(2.) They should be ready to hear them in what they have to say. It is the character of a Nabal, that 'he was such a son of Belial, that a man could not speak to him,' 1 Sam. 25:17. Job declares himself to have been of another temper, Job 31:13. The advice of a servant modestly proposed, is not to be slighted, 2 Kings 5:13. 14 and if there be any thing they have to complain of, masters should hearken thereto, and do them right, as they would have God to hearken to themselves.

(3.) They should be wary of hearkening to ill tales concerning them, Prov. 29:12. An easiness to believe every tale makes an uneasy life, especially ill tales concerning those in whom people are particularly concerned.

(4.) They ought to take care of them when they are sick, especially when they have none other to care for them. It is highly reasonable that they should be cared for in their sickness by those in whose service they have spent their strength, Matth. 8:6. It is noted as a piece of the cruelty of an Amalekite, that he left his servant when sickness overtook him, 1 Sam. 30:13.

(5.) They should encourage and shew special favour, even by letting something beyond condition fall to faithful and diligent servants. This is very equal; reason, interest, and religion, call for it, Prov. 14 ult. For a faithful servant is one of the best of friends.

(6.) Lastly, They should be concerned for the good of the souls of their servants. For in this case masters are instead of parents to them. They should instruct them in the principles of religion, and labour to train them up in the ways of godliness, setting them on and stirring them up to duty, Gen. 18:19. They should daily pray with them and for them, by keeping up religious duties in their family, Jer. 10:25. And they should labour to bring them to the public ordinances, Josh. 24:15 restrain them by their authority from scandalous and sinful words or deeds, as from profaning the Sabbath, &c. and reprove them for their sins against God, as well as faults against themselves; and if they will not refrain they ought to turn them out of their family, Psal. 101:7.

Use 1. This may serve to convince and humble both masters and servants.

Use. I exhort servants to be dutiful to their masters. For motives, consider,

1. That in your service ye have two masters, one on earth, and another in heaven, Col. 3:23. Your master on earth says, Do this so or so; and your Master in heaven says, 'Whatsoever he saith unto you do it,' John 2:5. And here know, (1.) That your Master in heaven has given you his orders how ye must carry in service to men, as well as in praying, &c. to himself. (2.) He sees how ye obey these orders. His eye is always on you. (3.) He will call you to an account how ye obey these. (4.) He will account the service faithfully done, service to himself; and, on the other hand, un-dutifulness to men, undutifulness to himself.

2. God himself will be your paymaster, according as ye carry yourselves in your station. (1.) God will reward dutiful servants. There is a temporal reward that God ordinarily bestows on such, Prov. 17:2. 'A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.' And that is what Providence lays to the hands of honest servants, that are not sincere Christians. But true Christian servants shall get the reward of the heavenly inheritance, Col. 3:24. (2.) God will reward undutiful servants too, ver. 25. Ordinarily God writes his indignation against their undutifulness in their lot in the world; but if they repent not, the quarrel is pursued to another world. That is a sad word, Luke 16:11. 'If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?'

Let masters be dutiful to their servants according to the will of God. For motives, consider,

1. Ye are as fathers to them. The fifth command supposeth this; and so the scripture elsewhere teacheth, 2 Kings 5:13. Ye are civil fathers,

and instead of natural fathers to them. They are committed to your charge, as under your roof and power. God would have air superiors to put on fatherly bowels towards their inferiors, as he who is supreme Lord calls himself 'Our father which is in heaven.' If masters would thus look on themselves, it would engage them to their duty towards their servants. When God brings a servant into a house, especially those of the younger sort, either wanting parents, or leaving them to serve you, he says, as John 19:26, 27. 'Man, behold thy son;' and to the servant, 'Behold thy father.'

2. Ye have a master which is over you and your servants too, to whom ye must give account, Col. 4:1. And there is no respect of persons with him. He has given a law to the master as well as to the servant; and in judging them he will not favour the master more than the servant. Pride makes men imperious and oppressive. Here is a sovereign remedy to curb it. Let us remember that we have a Master in heaven, Job 31:13, 14. And so much for family-relations.

I come now to consider the relation betwixt ecclesiastical fathers and their children. These fathers are preaching and ruling elders. Here I shall consider, 1. The duties of ministers and people; and, 2. Those of ruling elders and people.

FIRST, I shall shew the duties of ministers and people.

First, I shall shew the duty people owe to their ministers.

1. They owe them singular reverence, and that because of that honourable station wherein Christ has placed them, sending them to deal with sinners in his own stead, 1 Cor. 4:1. 2 Cor. 5:20. This founds that debt of reverence, Rom. 10:15 and should be expressed in word and deed. They are the stars whom Christ holds in his right hand; and though they shine not so clear as ye would wish, people

would beware of treading them under foot, seeing Christ holds them in his right hand, Rev. 1:20 compare chap. 2:4, 14, 20, &c.

2. Endeared love to them for their work's sake, 1 Thess. 5:13. Gal. 4:14, 15. The gospel is the greatest benefit that men can partake of; and it is very natural to love those who are the instruments by whom the Lord conveys great benefits to us. And as ministers must lay their account with the hatred of those that hate the light, so those that got good of ordinances will as naturally love them as the child does the father and mother. But as there are unnatural children in the family, who little regard the father that begat them, or the mother that bare them; so it is not to be wondered that there are unnatural children in the church, that reject those by whose means they have got any acquaintance with religion that they have, and cast reproaches on the breasts of ordinances, in sucking which they grow up.

3. Diligent attendance on ordinances of all sorts dispensed by them, as word, sacraments, catechising, &c. Heb. 10:25. Luke 10:16. In vain do these stars shine, if there be none to receive their light. The same word that obliges ministers to dispense ordinances, must needs oblige people to attend them; and that even though they may lie at a considerable distance from them, 2 Kings 4:22, 23. The woman there mentioned had sixteen miles to go to the man of God.

4. Submission to them in things pertaining to their office, Heb. 13:17 submitting to discipline exercised by them in the name of Christ; to their instructions, cordially receiving them from the word, to their reproofs, whether public or private; to their exhortations and charges, wherein they hold forth to you the will of God, ib. Jam. 1:21. They who do otherwise, sin against their own souls, as well as discourage ministers by their untractableness, and do but lay up witnesses against themselves, to be led against them at the great day.

It is not the hearers of the word, but the doers thereof, that are justified. It will be no advantage to you to have heard, but never complied.

5. Praying for them, 1 Thess. 5:25. The work in which they are engaged is a great work. Who is sufficient for it? They have need of prayers for them. Your own interest may engage you to it. They may do their work, but the success of it must be fetched from heaven by prayer, 1 Cor. 10:4. We have the sword, but how shall we get the arm? We may compass Jericho, and give the shout; but it is the power of God that must make the walls to fall. Like Gideon's three hundred men, we may bear the lamps in our empty pitchers, blow with the trumpet, and the earthen pitchers may be broken in the cause, but God only can do the work, Judges 7.

6. People should be very tender of the reputation of ministers; it being a tender thing, so much interwoven with the success of the gospel. The Spirit of God, seeing that the devil would be very ready to mark at their reputation in a special manner, by a wicked world and false brethren, has set a double hedge about it, 1 Tim. 5:19. 'Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.' So that ye ought not only to slander them, but to be loath to receive those slanders vented by others against them, believing nothing therein without proof.

7. Lastly, Maintenance. This by divine right is due from people to their ministers, 1 Cor. 9:14.

Secondly, I shall shew the duty of ministers to their people,

1. They owe tender love to the souls of their people.—They should be full of bowels towards them, 1 Thess. 2:7, 8 which should appear in their preaching, and all parts of their work.

2. Diligent and faithful dispensing of all gospel-ordinances to them, word, sacraments, &c. It is a labour, and they must take it so, willing to spend and be spent in the service of their Lord, and of precious souls. And indeed they are as lighted candles, which while they shine waste, 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Thess. 2:3, 4.

3. Behaving so as they may be examples of holiness and tenderness, Tit. 2:7 for precept, without example, will have little influence.

4. Watching over their flocks, that being ready to be acquainted with their state and case, they may be in capacity to instruct, comfort, and admonish them, &c. as the case requires, Heb. 13:7.

5. Lastly, Praying for them, Eph. 1:15, 16.

SECONDLY, I come to shew the duties of ruling elders and the people over whom they are appointed overseers. And as we are this day to ordain some to that office, I shall discourse of this subject a little more fully than I would otherwise have done in a catechetical exercise. I propose to discourse on this occasion, from that text,

THE DUTY OF RULING ELDERS AND PEOPLE

1 TIM. 5:17.—Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

THE church is the kingdom of Christ, and the holy scriptures are the book of the manner of the kingdom. There the institution of church

officers, their work, and the duties owing them by others, are only to be found. And whatever officers of the church men pretend to be, if their office be not found there, they have no due call to their work, but are usurpers and intruders.

In the words read, the apostle gives us the work assigned by Jesus Christ to elders of the church, and what is due for it unto them from the church: Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour. Here he distinguishes two sorts of elders of the church.

1. Ruling elders. The word elder originally is a name of age; but here, and in many other places of scripture, it is evident, that it is the name of an office, being the name of ruling church-officers, because usually taken out of the elder sort, or that, though of the younger, yet they ought to be men of gravity and authority. Here consider,

(1.) The work of these elders, from whence their designation is taken. It is to rule, and govern the church, as those who are set over it by the Lord. For the Lord has not left his church in a state of anarchy and confusion, but appointed some to rule, and others to be ruled.

(2.) How they ought to manage their work, well; i. e. rightly, worthily, according to the rules prescribed them by Christ, the chief bishop.

(3.) What is due from the church to those who so manage it double, i. e. abundant honour. This honour implies two things, viz. (1.) Maintenance. This is evident from ver. 18. (2.) Esteem and reputation, Phil. 2:29.

Episcopalians, as they have given us the prelate, an officer whom Christ never appointed, so they rob us of the ruling elder, which the text so plainly discovers to be a church-officer of divine institution.

To evite the force of which, they turn this older into various shapes; but in vain. For by the elders that rule well, cannot be understood superannuated ministers, as some say; for it is evident that the preaching elder is to have more honour than this elder. But it is shocking to the common sense of the people of God, to honour and esteem a young laborious minister more than an old one, who has spent his strength in the work. Nor by them are to be understood magistrates as others say; for at this time they were not so much as members of the church. Nor are deacons meant hereby, as others say; for their work is not to rule the church, but to serve tables, Acts 6:2. Nor are we to understand by them the fixed pastors of flocks, in opposition to those that travelled up and down to visit and confirm the churches, whom they understand by those that labour, namely, to weariness in the last part of the verse. For the work of the fixed pastor is such a labour too, 1 Thess. 5:12. Nor yet such as were unfit for preaching yet administered the sacraments, prayed with the church, and privately admonished the unruly. But such an officer, I am sure, is unknown to the Bible. It remains, then, that they are those whom we call ruling elders, whose work is, as in the text, to govern the church, but not to preach the word; and therefore they are distinguished from preaching elders, as is plain from the particle especially; as Phil. 4:22. 'All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household.' Chiefly is the same word in the Greek that is here rendered especially; and it plainly implies, that there were some saints at Rome not of Cæsar's household. So here are described some elders that rule well, and do not labour in word and doctrine.

2. Preaching elders: Their work is to preach the gospel; to labour in the word and doctrine. To them in a special manner, by the text, double honour is due, i. e. maintenance and respect, forasmuch as their office is greater and more honourable, not only in ruling the church, as the others do, but preaching the gospel besides. Where, by

the by we may see, that if Paul's doctrine had place in the world, the preaching parish-minister would have more honour than the non-preaching bishop, who contents himself with ruling but puts not his shoulders to the labour in the word and doctrine. Maintenance, we see, is due to both sort of elders, by divine right. But it is no sin for either to quit their right in certain circumstances. And with us the ruling elders are allowed no maintenance, but the preaching elders are. The reason of this is the poverty of the church that cannot bear it; and that our ruling elders are not taken off their secular employments, as ministers are.

The doctrine deducible from the text is,

DOCT. 'Ruling elders rightly discharging their duty, are worthy of abundant honour.'

Having sufficiently cleared the divine institution of ruling elders from the text, which is clear also from Rom. 12:8. 1 Cor. 12:28. I shall, in prosecution of the doctrine, shew,

I. What is the duty of these officers.

II. What it is to discharge the duties of that office well.

III. What is the honour that people owe to their ruling elders.

IV. Apply.

I. I am to shew what is the duty of these officers.

The apostle tells us in the general, that their work as ruling elders is to rule the church. The keys of jurisdiction and government are not given to one, but to the unity of church-officers acting together; so, together with the pastor, they are to rule the congregation. God

setting a minister in a congregation, says to him, It is not meet the man should be alone, I will make him an help meet for him.—And a society of diligent and faithful elders are a meet help indeed. And without that the weight of a congregation is too heavy for the shoulders of one, as Exod. 18:18. But more particularly,

1. They are to be careful overseers of the manners of the people. Hence the apostle says to the elders of Ephesus, Acts 20:28. 'Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God.' And as ministers are a mouth to the church, so they are to be instead of eyes. And therefore it is necessary, for the good of a congregation, that there be of them in every corner. For they are truly watchmen, whom the Holy Ghost has set over the flock, as well as ministers are. And they ought to acquaint themselves with the way of the people, that so they may encourage those that do well, and warn those that do evil. And unless elders do so, and communicate their help in that matter to the pastor, he may be long in a congregation, and yet be a stranger to many under his charge; and so ministerial visitations may be very useless.

2. Though they are not to preach the word, yet they are to apply the word privately to people by virtue of their office. They are to have a mouth to speak, as well as eyes to take heed to the flock of God, 1 Tim. 3:2.—'Apt to teach.' There is a word pat to this purpose, 1 Thess. 5:12.—'Are over you, and admonish you.' It is the same word in our text. The word admonish there used, is far from expressing the full meaning of the word the Holy Ghost useth here, used also, Eph. 6:4. It properly signifies 'to put into the mind.' And so it implies a fivefold duty.

(1.) Exciting people to their duty. Observing negligence, they ought to stir up people to their duty; e. g. those that neglect family-prayer, secret prayer, attending regularly on ordinances, or are negligent of their soul's state any way, they should drop a word to stir them up.

(2.) Rebuking sin. Reproofs of wisdom are as necessary for church-members as salt is to keep meat from corrupting. It is necessary to discourage sin and wickedness in the church, which should be a holy society. And there wants not occasion for this, in swearing, lying, profaning the Sabbath, drunkenness, strife, variance, and whatsoever is contrary to the rules of the gospel.

(3.) Warning such as they see in hazard of sin; to tell them of the snare, their hazard and danger, and so to prevent people's falling in to it, as far as lies in their power. Sometimes people may be discerned staggering, and a word then duly put into their mind may, by the blessing of God, keep them from falling.

(4.) Comforting those that are cast down, and strengthening the weak. It was the practice of holy Job, chap. 4:4. 'Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.' And church-rulers ought always to have a special eye upon those that are the weak and distressed in Christ's flock, to labour to support them in the Lord.

(5.) Instructing and informing them privately. And indeed rule without instruction is dumb, and not agreeable to the way of our Lord's governing his house; and excitations, rebukes, &c. can never be rightly managed without information of the mind. For if we would gain our end in dealing with people, we must not think it enough to tell them their duty or their sin, but by reasoning with them to convince their consciences.

These things are the duty of all church-members, however little it is laid to heart. Only what others are bound to by the common band of Christianity, we are bound to by our office, Lev. 19:17. 1 Thess. 5:14.

3. They are to visit the sick, and should be sent for, for that end, James 5:14, 15. But otherwise discretion and christian love may engage them to go even when they are not sent for. They ought to pray with them and for them. And, by the same reason, they are to counsel, instruct, and comfort them, according to the grace bestowed on them, and as they see the party's case does require. This would be a means to render the office more esteemed than, alas! it is with many. And it needs not hinder the pastor's visits.

4. They are to concur with the pastor in the exercise of discipline, according to the word of God, and the constitutions of the church agreeable thereto. For ministers and elders make up that church, having the power of censures, Matth. 18:17. And thus they are to delate scandalous persons to the judicatory, either when their private admonitions will not do, or where the offence is in its own nature public, and cannot be passed with private admonition. And in the managing of matters in the judicatory, they are not only to give their opinion and vote according to their light, but to reason the matter calmly, for the finding out of the best expedient. Admission to, and debarring from, the sacrament of the Lord's supper, is a weighty piece of this work, belonging to the kirk-session, wherein all tenderness, caution, and wisdom should be used, to separate as far as we can betwixt the precious and the vile, that holy things be not cast to dogs.

As for the collecting and distributing of the church's money, it is so far from being the main work of ruling elders, that it is no part of their work as elders at all, but belongs to the deacons, which is an

inferior office. But the superior offices of the church including the inferior ones, the elders may do it, and must do it, where there are not deacons.

II. I come now to show, what it is to discharge the duties of that office well.

1. It is to discharge it faithfully, 1 Cor. 4:2. It is a great trust the master puts us in, and we must act in it with that faithfulness to our own souls, and to the souls of those who are under our charge, as our conscience may not have wherewith to reproach us.

2. Diligently, Rom. 12:8. The slothful servant that closeth his eyes, and gives up his watch, will never be approved of God. Be diligent in your duty, and it will not want its reward.

3. Zealously, Psal. 69:9. Zeal for the master's honour, and advancing the kingdom of Christ in real holiness, and suppressing the devil's kingdom in sin and wickedness, in the congregation, and otherwise as we have access, is well becoming church-officers especially.

4. Prudently, Matth. 24:45: Church-officers had need to join the wisdom of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove. And they will find it necessary many a time to sweeten with prudent management the bitter pills they must give, Gal. 6:1.

III. I proceed to shew, what is that honour that people owe to their ruling elders.

1. They ought to esteem and respect them for their work's sake, 1 Thess. 5:12, 13. Their work is honourable, their Master whom they serve in that work is great, and the advantage of their work redounds to the church. People's esteem of them is but a necessary

encouragement to them in the work they have undertaken, without any prospect of worldly advantage. And if people esteemed the Lord's work, they would even esteem the workers too.

2. Obedience and submission to them in their doing the work of their office, Heb. 13:17. If it be their duty to watch over you, excite and admonish you, &c. ye ought not to account them meddling in what belongs not to them, when they inquire into your way. Ye ought to fall in with the duties they excite you to; meekly to receive their rebukes, admonitions, and warnings; honourably to receive their consolations, as those that have a commission from the Lord; and heartily to receive their good admonition and counsel; and subjecting yourselves as Christ's subjects to the discipline of his house.

3. They ought to pray to God for them, 1 Thess. 5:15. It is a great work we have in hand, and your interest is concerned in our right discharge of it; which therefore should make you to give us a share in your prayers.

4. Shutting your ears against reproaches cast on them, and being backward to receive ill reports of them, staving them off, unless there be sufficient evidence, 1 Tim. 5:19. Church-officers are those whom Satan mainly aims to discredit, and therefore stirs up rotten-hearted hypocrites, false brethren, and a profane generation, to cast reproach upon them, that so their work may be marred in their hands, religion despised, and sinners hardened.

Use 1. As to you that are already in this honourable office, and you that are now to be ordained to it, I exhort you to labour rightly to discharge your duty. To press this exhortation, I offer the following motives.

Mot. 1. Consider it is a sacred office in the house of God, to which God has called you; and therefore let us together take that exhortation, Acts 20:23. 'Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' The office is honourable in itself, however the world may esteem it. David though a king, would have thought it no disparagement to him, when he said, 'A day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness,' Psal. 84:10. But it has work annexed to it; and being sacred, it is not to play with. Labour to approve yourselves to your Lord and Master.

Mot. 2. Ye have thereby a fair occasion to be serviceable to God and to advance Christ's kingdom, and suppress that of the devil, in the congregation. And O what should we not do to do good to souls? Jam. 5:20. 'Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.' I think that now, of a considerable time, I and my brethren of the eldership might have said, 'The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish, so that we are not able to build the wall,' Neh. 4:10; and it has gone near to the sinking of some of our spirits. But now that God has inclined the hearts of so many to come over and help us; if we take courage in our Master's work, to ply it faithfully, diligently, zealously, and prudently, and the Lord bless us with unity among ourselves, and real zeal for his honour, to put to our shoulders jointly to the work, we may hope, by the blessing of God, to see a more promising face on this congregation, sin more discouraged, and piety more increased.

Mot. ult. You and I must give an account to our great Master, how we have carried ourselves in this work, Heb. 13:17. If we be faithful we

shall not want our reward from the chief Shepherd, who will give us a crown of life. If we be unfaithful, woe will be unto us for betraying our trust.

I give you a few advices.

1. Remember always that it is God whom ye have to do with. This will make you little to regard men's feud or favour, if ye do your work agreeable to God's will.

2. Study to act in dependence on the Lord; for he sends none-a-warfare on his own charges. Eye his promised assistance, when ye set about your work.

3. Labour to believe, that the way of uprightness and faithfulness is the sure way. 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him,' Prov. 16:7. 'He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flat-tereth him,' Prov. 28:23. Let men's corruptions say what they will, their consciences will speak in favour of faithful dealing.

4. Watch over your own persons, that in your personal walk ye be blameless and exemplary, 1 Tim. 3:1, 2, 3. If ye be untender in your walk, ye will do more hurt than ye can do good. Being honoured to be governors in the house of a holy God, ye must be holy as the master is holy; tender in your words, circumspect in your actions, and therefore watchful over your hearts.

5. Watch over your families. Every one that has a family is obliged to this, and you in a special manner, 1 Tim. 3:4, 5. The sinful practices of those of your family will reflect a peculiar dishonour on you, and by you on your Lord and Master. Therefore your families should be a church wherein God is to be duly worshipped morning and evening;

and good discipline kept up by admonition, reproof, and watchfulness.

6. Ye must watch over one another, each over his fellow-elders, knowing, that any thing scandalous in one of the society reflects a dishonour on the whole, and by them on the Lord himself. And if ye be not careful on that side, there will be little good of your watching over the flock. And therefore strict discipline among yourselves is absolutely necessary.

USE II. As to you the people, I would exhort you to make conscience of your duty towards your officers. Alas! for the little conscience that is made of that among us. I am sure we may and matter of mourning this day in that matter.

Instead of honouring them, many despise and pour contempt on them, more than otherwise they would do; thus vilely treating their sacred office.

Instead of submission and obedience, what refractoriness and spurning of discipline for scandalous offences! Some cannot endure to be told of their faults; but if we admonish or reprove them, even privately, they are made worse instead of better; and rather than take a reproof, they will give up with ordinances.

Instead of being careful of their reputation, some will bawl out upon them, and abuse them on every occasion. And there is nothing with many more readily received, than the vomit of malicious and spiteful spirits against ministers and elders, which is greedily licked up, 1 Cor. 4:13.

Hence it is, that men's hands are weakened, and they are discouraged in their work, while they see the people of that temper,

Hos. 4:4. And hence it is, that it is so very hard to get men to undertake the office of elders; for they see that if they engage therein, they must be the very butt of the malice and spite of bitter spirits; and that if they will be faithfull, they engage themselves in a fighting life, and that the stream will go against them. But allow me to put you in mind of three things.

1. Whose part you act in that matter. It is the part of Satan against these men and yourselves too. Can you fall upon a more expedite way to advance the kingdom of the devil in the congregation, than to discourage and weaken the hands of those that are set over you in the Lord? Is there a fairer way to rout the army, than to make their leaders useless?

2. Whose servants they are. They are clothed with a commission from the King of the church; and the contempt poured on them reaches to their Master; 'He that despiseth you (says he), despiseth me,' Luke 10:16. Will the laws of the land avenge the affronts done to a petty officer, who comes to execute the sentence of a civil court? did David severely avenge on the Ammonites the maltreating of his servants, whom he sent on a congratulatory message to them as ye find in 2 Sam. 10? and will not the Lord Jesus resent in his wrath the maltreatment of those that are clothed with his commission?

3. Lastly, Are ye not the professed subjects of the kingdom of Christ? Why then will ye not submit yourselves to the laws of his house? Why will ye not be obedient in the Lord to those whom he sets over you, complying with their exhortations, admonitions, and rebukes? Luke 19:27. Why do not ye strengthen their hands in the Lord's work? If ye have any interest in Zion's King, it is the work of our common Lord, which you are obliged to in a private way, as well as they by virtue of their office; and therefore ye are bound to co-operate with them in

what serves to promote the interest of that King, whose servants ye profess to be.

I proceed now to consider the relation between political fathers and their children; that is, magistrates and subjects.

First, I shall shew the duty of subjects to magistrates.

1. They owe them singular respect and honour, 1 Pet. 2:17 They are to be honoured by us in our hearts, thinking of and esteeming them reverently and carrying a reverent fear and awe of them within our breasts, 1 Sam. 26:16, 17. Prov. 24:21. And this is to be expressed in a respectable behaviour towards them in word and deed.

The grounds of this are specially two. (1.) The ordinance of God, whereby they are set above us in the way of power and authority, Rom. 13: and subjects ought to walk in a conscientious regard to the superiority that God has given their rulers over them. (2.) The image of God that shines in their dominion and eminency above their subjects, Psal. 82:6. They are God's vicegerents on earth, whose office bears a representation of God's dominion.

2. Subjects owe them the charity to construct the best of their actions that they will bear, and to beware of passing a rash judgment of their administrations. Notable is the instance of it in David, 1 Sam. 26:19. 'Now therefore, I pray thee, let my Lord the king hear the words of his servant: if the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go serve other gods.' The liberty that many take in speaking of magistrates, and wresting their actions still to the worst side, is what proceeds not from the spirit of the gospel, but is contrary to the word, an effect of their own pride and

presumption, Exod. 22:28. Eccl. 10:20. 2 Pet. 2:10. Jude. 8. This is also highly reasonable, and hath these grounds. (1.) That candour and charity we owe to all men, but in a special manner to our superiors, requires it, 1 Cor. 13:5, 7. (2.) Our unacquaintedness with the springs of public business, secrets of government, and reasons of state, Prov. 25:3. And natural modesty, as well as religion, teaches men not to answer a matter before they hear it, Prov. 18:13. This dutiful children will allow to their parents, wives to their husbands, servants to their masters, and inferiors to their superiors; and why should not magistrates have it too?

3. Subjection, loyalty, and obedience to their just laws and commands. It is bad religion where loyalty to the magistrate must stand in place of all religion towards God, but it is also bad religion where people's pretended religion towards God justles out their loyalty to the magistrate, Rom. 13:5. This duty Papists exempt churchmen from; and no wonder, for it is a part of the character of Antichrist, 2 Thess. 2:4; but the scripture subjects ministers to the magistrates, as having souls as well as others, Rom. 13:1. 'Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.'

4. The payment of their tribute, Rom. 13:6, 7. This is a debt of thankfulness, and justice too, for the benefits of government which the subjects enjoy, without which the government cannot be supported, but all would go into confusion.

5. Defending them in danger, each one according to his station, 2 Sam. 18:3. 1 Sam. 26:15.

6. Lastly, Prayer to God for them; supplications for supply of wants, prayers for good things to them, intercessions for turning away of evil from them, and thanksgivings for mercies bestowed on them, 1 Tim. 2:1, 2. There is a reason for it too; for the welfare of subjects is

wrapt up in theirs, ib. Much depends on their management, God's honour, our own good; and their high place has many dangers, difficulties, snares, and temptations.

USE. Let me therefore exhort you in the words of the apostle, 1 Pet. 2:13, 14. 'Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.' Let us honour and dutifully subject ourselves, according to the will of God, to our gracious Sovereign King George, our rightful and lawful King by virtue of the laws of Scotland, pointed at in the claim of right, and upon which was founded the late happy Revolution. Let us adore that bountiful providence, by which his grandfather [Frederick Elector Palatine of the Rhine], having lost one kingdom [that of Bohemia], besides his private estate, in the cause of the Protestant religion, three kingdoms are now conferred on the grandson. Let us thank our God, who did so seasonably bring him to the throne, and that in peace, to the surprise of all parties, so as we were like men that dreamed. Let us suppose that the Popish Pretender had effectuated his purpose, what a case had we been in this day! Yet rejoice with trembling; it is hard to say that Heaven and these sinful nations are become friends yet. Let us be dutiful to subordinate magistrates under him, and honour those whom God has honoured by their office, saying to them, Ye are gods. Let us not stumble atheists, Jacobites, and malignants, against our holy religion, by contempt of the magistrate. We read the Bible, where subjection is commanded to subjects oft and again, even to magistrates that were enemies to Christianity. We are the followers of that Jesus who paid his tribute, and taught the people of the Jews, who were more solemnly covenanted with God, and more strictly bound up in the choice of their kings, than any nation under heaven,

yet not to deny their tribute to Cæsar, the Heathen Roman emperor, who then was their chief magistrate, Matth. 22:19–21.

Secondly, I shall shew the duty of magistrates to their subjects', which I shall only name.

1. They ought to establish good laws among their subjects, and to see them duly executed, Zech. 8:16. 2 Chron. 19:5, 6, 7.

2. To govern them with wisdom, justice, and clemency, 2 Chron. 1:10.

3. To punish evil-doers, and encourage them that do well, Rom. 13:3.

4. To protect them, and provide for their common safety, 1 Tim. 2:2; to see to their prosperity, and not to oppress them, Prov. 28:16.

5. Lastly, They ought to promote true religion, and advance the interest of Christ's kingdom among their subjects, Isa. 49:23. Some will have the magistrate to be the fountain of church-power. Others leave him nothing to do in religion but to defend the church, and execute her acts. Thus go the Papists. Truth goes the middle way, allowing the magistrate a cumulative, though not a privitive, power in church-matters; and though he ought not to exercise a spiritual function, yet he can command and oblige ministers and other church-officers to do their duty, authoritatively call them to do it. And this is no more to usurp church-power, than a minister's charging magistrates from the word, is to usurp civil power. See Confession of Faith.

There are other relations that import a mere preference; as, betwixt the aged and the younger, the weaker in gifts and the stronger, and between equals.

First, As to the relation betwixt the aged and the younger,

1. I shall consider very briefly the duties of the younger to the aged, for these are fathers and mothers in scripture-language, 1 Tim. 5:1.

(1.) They ought to submit to them, so as to follow their wise advice, and not to stand upon points with them, but be ready to yield to them, where lawfully it may be done, 1 Pet. 5:5.

(2.) They ought to honour them, and carry respectfully to them. The Ancient of days, commands us to honour old age, Lev. 19:32.

2. The aged ought, (1.) To be ready to profit the younger sort by their good advice, to tutor them, as Eli did young Samuel, 1 Sam. 3:9. (2.) To give them the example of a virtuous and holy life, Tit. 2:2.

Secondly, The duties of the weaker in gifts to the stronger are,

(1.) To reverence and respect them for the gifts of God in them, Gen. 45:8. (2.) To be willing and ready to learn of them. (3.) To beware of judging harshly of them in things wherein they have a greater liberty than they, Rev. 14:3.

The duties of the stronger in gifts are, (1.) To communicate cheerfully to them what God has given them, and so to help them by their gifts. (2.) To encourage them, and bear with their infirmities, Rom. 15:1.

Lastly, The duties of equals are, (1.) To regard the dignity and worth of each other, and carry respectfully to them, 1 Pet. 2:17. (2.) To carry modestly towards one another, preferring in honour each other, Rom. 12:10. (3.) To endeavour after and rejoice in one another's welfare as their own, ver. 15, 16.

II. I proceed now to shew, what is forbidden in the fifth commandment. According to our Catechism, it forbids 'the

neglecting of, or doing any thing against the honour and duty which belongeth to every one in their several places and relations.

This question, is a field as large, or rather larger than the former, in so far as to one duty several sins are opposed: but fearing that ye cannot bear enlargement, having heard so much already on these relations, I shall contract my discourse on this into a very narrow compass.

This command is broken, (1.) By neglect of the duties we owe to our relations, which ye have heard. (2.) By doing any thing against and contrary to these duties.

First, Husbands and wives break this command, and sin against one another, many ways. As particularly,

1. Against that tender conjugal love they owe to one another, is all unkindness, whereby, laying aside, and divesting themselves of natural affection, they are surly to, careless of, and unconcerned for their relatives, or their comfort. Of this sort are their bitter speeches, reproaching and reviling one another. That selfishness, whereby they are at no pains to please one another in lawful things, and void of sympathy in one another's joys and griefs; unreasonable suspicions and jealousies, whatever be done to please them; blazing abroad their own shame, in speaking to the discredit of their relatives; contempt of and despising one another. All these are quite opposite to conjugal love.

2. Against that faithfulness they owe to one another, in respect of their bodies, is infidelity in the gross breach of the marriage-contract, deserting and leaving one another, and defrauding one another. In respect of their means, is all idleness, mismanagement, and wastery; and in respect of their souls, is unconcernedness about

them, being at no pains to instruct, admonish, and watch over one another; and if at any time they tell them of their faults, it is to their reproach, being before others, or in their passion, so that it can do no good. And much more when they become snares and hinderances to one another, instead of meet helps, leading and provoking their relatives to sin against God, and ruin their own souls.

Wives particularly sin against their husbands, by casting off all reverence to them, carrying themselves imperiously towards them, being disobedient, wilful, and untractable, and, like Vashti, Esth. 1:10, 11, 12 who would not come to the king, when sent for by him, will not go an inch by their own will to please them. It is not their honour to command, whose province God has made it to obey, Ezek. 16:30. Eph. 5 ult.

Husbands sin against their wives in dealing untenderly with them, tyrannizing and domineering over them in a masterful way, not protecting them, from the insults of others, nor providing for them; giving them that are their wives no trust, but making them, like Nabal, accountable to the utmost farthing; nor encouraging and praising them when they do well; most of all in beating them, a thing in use only with furious or mad men, Eph. 5:25, 29.

Secondly, As to parents and children:

1. Children sin against their parents by disobedience to them. Such are in the midst of the black roll, Rom. 1:30 and are in a near way to ruin, Prov. 30:17. So do they by all irreverence to them, and slighting and dishonouring them in word and deed, Deut. 27:16 and much more by cursing them, Exod. 21:17. Many, again, sin against God and their parents, being unteachable, and will not hearken to their instruction, Prov. 5:7 they will not take a sharp word from them, but their hearts rise against them and it too, Prov. 13:18 and others,

though they will bear with words, yet they are stubborn, and will not submit to correction, Deut. 21:18, 19. And what will we say of those that, like cursed Ham, make a jest of their parents' infirmities, waste their substance, and prove unnatural and hard-hearted to them when they are old and in distress? Prov. 19:26. Finally, they sin by disposing of themselves to callings, or in marriage, without consent of their parents, Gen. 26:34, 35.

2. Parents sin against their children many ways, while they are not concerned for them while infants; but many are careless as to the bringing up of their children to some honest employment, but, by encouraging them in idleness, prove a snare to them. Most men, if they bring their children to be able to shift for a livelihood to themselves, think they have done enough, while they have not been at pains to bring them up for God. Many will learn them to work that will not learn them to read, pray, &c. What shall we say of those that will learn them to ban, swear, lie, pick, and steal, and encourage them in such things? Some kill their children by cockering them; they indulge them fondly to their ruin. And how indiscreetly will parents dote on one child by another, where it is not grace but mere fancy, that makes the difference? Gen. 25:28. Some, on the other hand, are wofully harsh to their children, and break their spirits, by holding them so short by the head that they are driven to extremities, using them as drudges rather than as children, immoderately beating them when they are in a fault, and inveighing against them with bitter words, Col. 3:21 indiscreet and untender dealing with them with respect to their callings or marriages.

Thirdly, As to masters and servants;

1. Servants sin against their masters by irreverent, disrespectful, and saucy carriage towards them, without any respect to the honour

which God calls them to give to their masters. Many are disobedient, and will plainly tell, that they will not do what they are bidden; or if they do it, they will do it in such a manner, as shall vent their pride and passion. Though the scripture commands not to answer again, they will answer, and have the last word too, and by no means will submit to reproofs. Many are unfaithful to their masters, their service is eye-service, unfaithful service, either by their negligence and sloth bringing their master to loss, or by dishonesty in that which is under their hands. Some professing servants are by their way a scandal to religion in families where they are. Others are a plague to the family by the aversion they shew to every good thing or religious duty, as if their masters were no more concerned in them, if they work their work, Eph. 5:5, 6.

2. Masters sin against their servants, not allowing them sufficient maintenance, but niggardly pinching them, keeping back their wages from them in whole or in part, and so oppressing the hireling; rigorously keeping them at work, not allowing them convenient time for rest, nor worshipping of God in secret, or attending on public ordinances. And so they sin against them by continual chiding, and uneasiness to them, and carelessness with respect to their soul's good, Eph. 6:9.

Fourthly, As to ministers and people:

1. People sin against their ministers by their slighting and despising them, and nowise treating them as the messengers of Christ; going on in their evil ways over the belly of all warnings and reproofs, being stubborn, and refusing subjection to discipline; slandering them, creating them trouble, by forsaking ordinances, &c. or any wise making their work burdensome, or them to drive heavily in it; and restraining prayer for them.

Ministers sin against people by an unconcernedness about their souls' case, laziness, and unfaithfulness in discharge of their duty, proving stumbling-blocks to their people by a loose walk, and not being earnest in prayer for them, for the blessing of God on them and their message.

As to ruling elders and people, I have nothing to add to what I said before.

Fifthly, As to magistrates and subjects:

1. Subjects sin against magistrates by carrying disrespectfully to them, rebelling against them, and disobeying their just laws, reviling and speaking despitefully of them, denying them subjection and their just dues, and not praying for them.

2. Magistrates sin against subjects by using their power to satisfy their lusts, and giving bad example to others, by tyranny and oppression, unjust laws, and discountenancing piety and virtue, and opposing themselves to the kingdom of Christ.

Sixthly, As to the aged and younger: How little respect do the younger shew to the aged! Instead of that honour due to age, people are ready to befool them, if not to count them witches or wizards, forgetting that either they must come to their age themselves, or die by the way. On the other hand, few old people carry so to the younger, as to command respect by their exemplary piety and holiness; but, on the contrary, grey hairs are often found in the way of wickedness.

Seventhly, As to the weaker and stronger in gifts: It is often the sin of the weaker to envy the stronger, and if they can to misrepresent

them. The weak judge the strong, and the strong despise and stumble the weak.

Lastly, Equals sin against one another, undervaluing the worth, envying and grieving at the good of one another, and usurping preeminence over one another.

The spring and source of all this is, (1.) Want of love to and fear of God; for while people are not in their duty to God, how should they be in their duty to man? (2.) Pride and selfishness, while every one seeks himself, and not the good of others.

These things may be very humbling to all of us. Who can say his life is clean in any of these relations? But even those who are very dutiful in their several relations as to the matter, may be guilty of the breach of this command, in so far as what they do in these things does not proceed from gracious principles; for indeed the first command must be carried along in all the rest.

III. We come now to the reason annexed to this command; which is, 'A promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.'

This is a promise to encourage the conscientious performance of the duties here required. The apostle tells us, that it is 'the first command with promise,' Eph. 5:2.

Quest. 1. How is this command the first with promise, seeing the second is a promise also?

Ans. It is the first command of the second table: for it is the most weighty of them all, as comprehending all the rest in it; so that we

cannot sin against the rest, but we must first break over the hedge of this, which encompasseth all the rest. For one cannot violate another's life, chastity, &c. but he first violates the honour due to him by this command. And it is the only command that has a special promise of a particular mercy annexed to it. The promise annexed to the second command is but a promise of mercy in the general, and that not particularly to those that keep that command, but all the commandments.

Quest. 2. But does the law promise any thing but to perfect keeping of its commands? and if so, what are we the better?

Ans. We must distinguish betwixt the law as a covenant of works, and the law as in the hand of Christ for a rule of life to believers. As it is a covenant of works, nothing less than perfect obedience can interest men in the promise; for the least failure knocks off the man's fingers from the promise, by virtue of the curse, Gal. 3:10. 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' So that we can be nothing the better of this promise. But Christ being the Surety of the better covenant, having made a new covenant of grace in his blood, he takes the same law in his hands, and gives out the commands of it as a rule of life to his covenanted people, and renews the promises of it to their sincere obedience of them, 1 Tim. 4:8. 'Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' As for the curse of it they hear of it no more, he having borne it away himself. And so he crowns the fruits of his own grace in them with blessed rewards. And as all these promises are yea and amen in him; so for his sake, through faith in his blood, they are obtained.

In the words we may consider these three things; the blessing promised, the place where it is to be enjoyed, and the regard the Lord

allows his people to have to that blessing to further them in obedience.

FIRST, The blessing promised; that is, long life, that thy days may be long. It is a temporal mercy, a mercy much desired ordinarily by all men, and promised to them that keep this commandment. There are four things here to be considered.

First, What is meant by men's days being long. It denotes two things.

1. Long life, Prov. 4:10. 'The years of thy life shall be many.' Death in its best colours has something frightful about it. It is a dissolution of soul and body, which nature shivers at. But there is no eviting of it; all must die; they must go through that dark valley to their eternal state. But the best that can be made of it is promised here, viz. that such shall be full of days, and not be taken away till they be ripe for the sickle.

2. Prosperity to accompany that life; for non vivere, sed valere, vita est. Long life in miseries is a continued death, rather than life. So that the nature of the thing teaches us, that a prosperous long life is here promised. It is a good old age, Gen. 15:15. And thus the apostle explains it, Eph. 6:3. 'That it may be well with thee, and thou mayst live long on the earth.'

Secondly, That long life is in itself a mercy, and therefore is promised. There are many things that may mortify men's desires of long life. Old age is ordinarily accompanied with a train of miseries; and the longer the godly live, they are the longer kept out of heaven. Yet there are four things that make this long and prosperous life here promised to the godly's keeping of this commandment, a great mercy.

1. A good old age is an honourable thing, Prov. 6:31. 'The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.' God commands a particular reverence to be given to old men, Lev. 19:32. 'Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man.' It is true, sin and wickedness spoils the greatest glory, and no man is more like the devil than a wicked old man, Isa. 65:20. 'The sinner being an hundred years old, shall be accursed. But it is an honourable character which the Spirit of God puts on Mnason, Acts 21:16. 'An old disciple.' And old godly men are most like God, Dan. 7:9. Rev. 1:14.

2. It is profitable for the exercise of godliness, in so far as it makes them proof against many temptations which youth often carries men headlong unto, 2 Tim. 2:22. The frothiness and fire of youth dying out through time, their grace is the better it wants them. Young people's grace may be more bulky, but old people's grace, though of less bulk, is more worth, because it is more solid. Though new liquor may work and swell up more, the old is better. John was the oldest of the apostles, and last of them who wrote. In his younger years he could have burnt whole towns for Christ, Luke 9:54 but if ye will look to his epistles written in his older days, they breathe nothing but love, meekness, and solid godliness.

3. Long life makes way for the more proofs and experiences of the goodness of God on the earth, 1 John 2:13. The young soldier may be more mettled and venturous; but the old soldier is more to be trusted, because of his experience and skill. It is no small advantage to have been an eye-witness of the several appearances God has made for his church, and of several storms that have gone over her head.

4. Lastly, They have the better opportunity of glorifying God here, and being serviceable in their generation, the longer they live on the earth; and therefore shall have a larger measure of glory hereafter, as they have been more serviceable for God than others, 2 Cor. 9:6; How many are cut off in their early days, while they were just budding for the honour of God and the service of the church! It is better for themselves that they are soon taken away; but the church is less the better of them, Phil. 1:23, 24. The Spirit of God' takes notice of this in the old men that outlived Joshua, how useful their age was for God and his church, Josh. 24:31. 'And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that over-lived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord that he had done for Israel.' And though glory is not the merit of good works, yet according to the sowing, so shall the harvest be.

Thirdly, A holy walk, particularly in the conscientious performance of relative duties, is the way to a long and prosperous life. Holiness, and particularly relative holiness, is the way to a long and happy life in the world.

1. As to holiness in general, it is clear from two things.

(1.) From the promise of God in his life-giving word. 'Man lives by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' The unbelieving world may think a scripture-promise but a poor fence for a man's life. Give them good entertainment, ease, medicine, they will lay more weight on these than on a cluster of promises; but yet a promise from the Lord is better than all these, Dan. 1:15; for 'man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,' Matth. 4:4. Now, it has the promise, 1 Tim. 4:8. It has the promise of health, wealth, and long life, Prov. 3:7–10, and 16.

(2.) From the nature of the thing. A holy walk keeps us back from those things that hurt and ruin the body. And no man's body is so little abused to its hurt as his whose soul has respect to walk within the hedge of God's precepts. Drunkenness and gluttony devours more than the sword doth. Covetous care and anxiety wastes the body. Inordinate affections are the consuming of the constitution. Holiness, that represses these things, must then be as health to the flesh, Prov. 4:22.

2. As for dutifulness to our relatives: Consider,

(1.) It hath God's promise for it in the text, which hath been made out to many in their sweet experience, as in the case of Ruth, and that of the Recabites, Jer. 35:19. And so the contrary is threatened, Prov. 30:17. 'The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it;' and has been fulfilled in many to the full extent.

(2.) Dutifulness of that sort procures the blessing of relatives; it natively draws out their hearts in thankfulness to God for them, and in prayers to God for them, which under God is a mean to bring down a blessing upon them. The blessing of them that were ready to perish was not in vain to Job; it sprung up in a liberal increase.

(3.) Such persons are of a meek disposition, and such have a peculiar promise to inherit the earth, Matth. 5:6. It is the want of the spirit of meekness, and pride and selfishness in the room of it, that mars relative dutifulness.

4. Lastly, The nature of the thing leads to it; for that is the ready way to make relations comfortable; and the comfort that people find in their relatives does good like a medicine, while the contrary is as rottenness in the bones.

There are two objections that lie against this doctrine.

Object. 1. Have not wicked men, that cast off all personal and relative holiness, oft-times a long and prosperous life?

Ans. It is so indeed. Job observed it long ago, ch. 21:7 'Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?' But there is one thing that makes the difference wide enough; i. e. they have it not by promise. What of that? will ye say. There is very much in it. (1.) He cannot have the comfort of it as a godly man can have, no more than he can have the comfort of a well-furnished house, that knows not but every day he may be turned out of it, while he knows no where else to go, in comparison of one that has a tack of it, and is to move to a better when the tack expires. (2.) There is a secret curse in it that destroys and ruins him; so that the morsel may be fair, but there is a bone in it that will stick in his throat, Prov. 1:32, 33. (3.) Lastly, The last dish spoils the feast. No man can be said to live a long and happy life, that dies a miserable unhappy death, as all wicked men do. Can that life be prosperous and happy that has such a black hinder end? Does not death soon catch that man, that catches him ere his salvation be secured.

Object. 2. Are there not many godly people whose life in the world is neither long nor prosperous, and have neither much health, wealth, nor long life? The answer to this brings us,

Fourthly, To shew how this promise is to be understood. It is to be understood, as all other temporal promises are, not absolutely, as if in no case it could be otherwise; but with these two limitations: (1.) As far as it shall serve for God's glory; and God may be more glorified in their early death than their long life. The honour of God is the immoveable rule by which these things must be all measured. (2.) As far as it shall serve for their good; and so it may be a greater mercy to

them to be hid in the grave, than to be left on earth; and surely it is no breach of promise to give one what is better than what was promised. And these two are not to be separated, but joined together; for whatever is most for God's honour, is most for the godly man's good. Now, upon this we may lay down these conclusions.

1. Upon this promise the godly, walking in the way of personal and relative holiness, may confidently expect from God as much long life and prosperity in the world as shall be for the honour of God, and their good to enjoy. And to have any more would be no favour.

2. A short and afflicted life would be more for their good than a long and prosperous one, Psal. 119:71. Isa. 57:1. And why should men quarrel with their blessings, or cast at their mercies? Good Josiah was soon taken away, because the Lord would not have him to see the evil that was coming on.

3. Many of the children of God may be guilty of such breaches of this command in the mismanagement of their relative duties, that they may, by their own fault, fall short of the mercy promised here in the latter, Psal. 99:8; and so need not wonder if they reap that correction which themselves have sowed. And though others, that have managed worse than they, may escape, no wonder either; for God will let that pass in another, because of an after-reckoning, when he will correct his own children for less, because, that is to put an end to the quarrel.

4. Lastly, Whatever they want of this, it shall be made up by what is better. The afflictions of the body shall be health to their souls; their crosses shall not be curses, but blessings; and if they be deprived of the residue of their years here, they shall get them made up in heaven.

SECONDLY, The place where that blessing is to be enjoyed; in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee; that is, the land of Canaan. So it respects the Jews. But as it respects Christians, it refers to any place of God's earth; and so the apostle turns it, Eph. 6:3. 'That thou mayst live long on the earth.'

LASTLY, That regard which the Lord allows his people to have to that blessing, to further them in obedience: Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Though the chief motive to duty should be the honour and command of God, yet God allows as to eye the promised reward, even in temporal things, as a secondary motive and encouragement to duty.

USE. Let this recommend to us the living in dutifulness to our relatives. This is physic of God's appointment for the sick; it is the way to wealth of God's appointment for them that have little; it is the prolonger of life appointed by the Lord of life to those that would see many days, and these good. And there is no sure way to these where the appointment of God lies cross. Religion is the way to make the world happy. God has linked our duty and our interest together, so as there is no separating them. Relations are the joints of society; sin has disjointed the world, and so no wonder it he miserable; a relative holiness would set the disjointed world right again.

OF THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:13.—Thou shalt not kill.

THE scope of this command is the preservation of that life which God hath given unto man, which is man's greatest concern. No man is lord of his own or his neighbour's life; it belongs to him alone who gave it, to take it away. It is observable, that this and the three following commands are proposed in a word, not because they are of small moment, but because there is more light of nature for them than those proposed at greater length.

This command respects both our own life and the life of our neighbour. That it respects our neighbour, there can be no doubt; and as little needs there to be of its respecting our own. The words are general, agreeing to both; and so the sense of them is, Thou shalt not kill thyself, nor any other. He that said to the jailor, 'Do thyself no harm,' taught no other thing than what Moses and the prophets did say. Man is no more lord of his own life than his neighbour's; and he is in hazard of encroaching upon it, as well as that of another; and it is no where guarded, if not here. Nay, the sum of the second table being, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' whereby love to our neighbour is made the measure of love to ourselves, it is evident that it respects our own life in the first place.

As every positive command implies a negative, so every negative implies a positive. Therefore, in so far as God says Thou shalt not kill., viz. thyself or others, he thereby obliges men to preserve their own life and that of others. And seeing all the commands agree together, there can be no keeping of one by breaking of another;

therefore the positive part of this command is necessary to be determined to lawful endeavours. Hence the answer to that,

Quest. 'What is required in the sixth commandment?' is plain, viz. 'The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life, and the life of others.' The duties of this command may be reduced to two heads. 1. The preserving of our own life. 2. The preserving the life of others. But both these are to be qualified, so as it be by lawful means and endeavours. For God has given us no such law, as for the keeping of one command we may or must break another. Only there is a great difference betwixt positive and negative precepts; the practice of positive duties may be in some cases intermitted without sin, as a man attacked in time of prayer, or on the Sabbath-day, may lawfully leave the prayer, and external worship of the day, to defend his life, Luke 14:5. But never may a man do an ill thing, be it great or little, though it were even to preserve his own life or that of others, Rom. 3:8. Is it a thing of which God has said, Thou shalt not do so and so? it must never be done, though a thousand lives depended upon it.

Hence it is evident, that a person may not tell a lie, nor do any sinful thing whatever, far less blaspheme, deny Christ or any of his truths, commit adultery or steal, though his own life, or the life of others, may be lying upon it. For where the choice is, suffer or sin, God requires and calls us in that case to suffer. And therefore the example of such things in the saints, as in Isaac, Rahab, &c. are no more propounded for our imitation, than David's murder, &c. Peter's denial of Christ, &c. And though we read not of reproofs given in some such cases, that will no more infer God's approbation of them than that of Lot's incest, for which we read of no reproof given him. The general law against such things does sufficiently condemn them, in whomsoever they are found.

Object. This is a hard saying. A man may be in the power of some ruffian, that will require on pain of death some sinful thing; and must one sell his life at such a cheap rate, as to refuse to deny his religion, drink drunk with him, lie, or do any such thing for the time:

Ans. It is no more hard than that, Luke 14:26. 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' We must love God more than our own or other's life, and so must not redeem it by offending God. Sin ruins the soul; therefore says our Lord, Matth. 10:28. 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.'

Object. In the case of martyrdom in the cause of Christ, it is very reasonable; but that is not the case.

Ans. That is a mistake. The case supposed is indeed the case of martyrdom in the cause of Christ. And I confidently aver, that whosoever suffers for the testimony of a good conscience, and because he will not break any one of the commands of God, is as true a martyr for the cause of Christ as he that dies on a gibbet for the maintenance of any of the articles of our creed. Is not holiness the cause of Christ? Has not a man in such a case the cause of martyrdom by the end? does he not lose his life for the sake of Christ? has he not the call to martyrdom, Suffer or Sin? may he not look for the martyr's reward? And if he redeem life by sinning, falls he not under the same dreadful doom, as in that case, Matth. 10:39. 'He that findeth his life, shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it,' Mark 8:38. 'Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he

cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.' Are not the ten commands Christ's words, as well as the articles of faith? Whatever difference may be betwixt these cases, an impartial consideration will manifest the case supposed is a greater trial of faith than the other. And God will surely make up to these secret unknown martyrs at the day of judgment, the honour which the open and manifest martyrs have before-hand.

In discoursing further from this subject, I shall shew,

I. What is required in this command.

II. What is forbidden in it.

I. I am to shew, what is required in this command. It requires, as I said before, 'All lawful endeavours to preserve our own life, or the life of others.'

FIRST, It requires, that, by all lawful endeavours, we preserve our own lives. Self-preservation is the leading duty of this command. Brute creatures have a natural instinct for it. Our kind God has given man a written law for it, whereby it may appear that we are dearer to our God than to ourselves. We may take up this in two things.

FIRST, Thou must preserve the life of thine own soul. When God says, Thou shalt not kill, doth he only take care for the body? No; doubtless of the soul too. He looks not to the cabinet only, overlooking the jewel. The soul is the man, at least the best and most precious part of him. Two things here are in general required.

1. The careful avoiding of all sin, which is the destruction of the soul, Prov. 11:19. It is by sin that men wrong their own souls; whereby they

wound them, fill them with poisonous things, and prepare the way for their eternal death, Prov. 8 ult.

2. The careful using of all means of grace and holy exercises, for the begetting, preserving, and promoting spiritual life, 1 Pet. 2:2. As we must eat and drink for the life of our bodies, so must we use these for the life of our souls; eating Christ's body, and drinking Christ's blood, by faith, drinking in his word. The soul has its sickness, decays, &c. as well as the body. Let it not pine away, but nourish it.

SECONDLY, Thou must by all lawful endeavours preserve the life of thine own body. We may take up this in these three things.

1. Just self-defence against violence offered unto us by others unjustly, Luke 22:36. So a man ought to defend himself if he can, against thieves or robbers; and therefore it is said, 'If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him,' Exod. 22:2. Yet this must be only in the case of necessity, where the violence cannot be escaped but by a violent repelling it; for all violent courses must be the last remedy, Luke 6:29. Where a soft reception will still the violence offered, it is not the spirit of Christ, but of Satan, that repels violence with violence. And when it is necessary, no greater violence may be offered than what is necessary to repel the attack, Exod. 2:2, 3:1.

2. Furnishing our bodies with whatever is necessary for their health and welfare, according to our ability; taking the moderate use of the means of health and life unto ourselves, Eph. 5:29 for in so far as we use not the means of preserving them, we are guilty of destroying them. Therefore it is our duty to allow ourselves a competent portion of meat and drink, wholesome food, as the Lord lays to our hands; to provide competent housing and clothing, to refresh our bodies with a competent measure of rest and sleep; to use moderate labour,

exercise and recreations, and medicine for the removal of distempers. The use of these is necessary, and the immoderate use of them hurtful; therefore the moderate and temperate use of them is our duty.

3. Keeping our affections regular, subduing all inordinate and evil affections; for these are destructive to the body as well as to the soul. So that a patient disposition, a quiet mind, and a contented and cheerful spirit are duties of this command, as necessary for the welfare of our bodies; whereas inordinate passions are the ruin of them, Prov. 17:22. 'A merry heart doth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.'

SECONDLY, This command requires, that by all lawful endeavours we preserve the life of our neighbours. We may also take up this in two things.

FIRST, We must endeavour to preserve the life of their souls.

1. By giving them the example of a holy life, for that edifies and builds up, Matth. 5:16; whereas a scandalous walk is a soul-murdering practice.

2. By instructing, warning, reproving, and admonishing them as we have opportunity, where the case of their sin requires it, Jude. 23; and comforting them in distress, 1 Thess. 5:16; and praying for them, Gen. 43:29. No man must say with Cain, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' We are required to watch over one another. If our neighbour's ox or his ass fall into the ditch, we must also help them out: how much more when his soul is in hazard of falling into hell?

SECONDLY, We must by all lawful endeavours preserve the life of our neighbour's body. Here God requires of us,

1. To protect and defend the innocent against unjust violence, according to every one's power, as they have a fair call to exercise the same, whether it be in respect of their name, goods, or life, Psal. 82:3, 4. Prov. 24:11, 12. And so it is a duty of this command to repress tyranny, whereof we have commended example in the interposition of the people to save the life of Jonathan, 1 Sam. 14:45. 'And the people said unto Saul, shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not'.

2. To give unto others the necessaries of life, when in want, according to our ability. For as he that feeds not the fire puts it out, so unmerciful people that shut up their bowels from the needy, are guilty of their blood before the Lord, James 2:15, 16.

3. To entertain such affections towards our neighbour, as may keep us back from injuring him, and him from doing harm to himself; such as charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness. These are as water to quench fire in us which may burn up others, and as oil unto others to refresh them, Eph. 4 ult.

4. A peaceable, mild, and courteous conversation, Prov. 15:1 in looks, speech, and behaviour.

5. Lastly, With respect to injuries, we ought to take all things in the best sense, 1 Cor. 13:5, 7 to avoid all occasions of strife, yea, even to part sometimes with our right for peace as Abraham with Lot; to bear real injuries, Col. 3:12, 13; to forbear and be ready to be reconciled, and forgive injuries, yea, to requite good for evil, Matth. 5:44.

With respect to both our own life and the life of others, we are called to resist all thoughts, subdue all passions, avoid all occasions, temptations, or practices tending to the destruction of our own life, or that of others of soul or body.

Who can understand his errors? What shall come of us, if God enter into judgment with us? Our omissions would ruin us, even in those things where we judge ourselves to be in the least hazard.

II. I come now to shew what is forbidden in the sixth commandment. It forbids 'the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbour unjustly, and whatsoever tendeth thereunto.'

Here I shall consider this command as relating to our own life, and the life of our neighbour.

FIRST, I shall consider this command as relating to our own life; and that, 1. With respect to our souls; and, 2. With respect to our bodies.

FIRST, Thou shalt not kill thine own soul. Our kind God forbids us to be self murderers and soul murderers. We become guilty of the blood of our own souls these ways:

1. By neglecting the means of grace and salvation, Prov. 8:34, 36. The life of our souls is a flame that must be kindled from above, and fed by means of grace. Whoso then neglect them, are guilty of their own blood. Consider this, ye prayerless persons, ye that are at no pains to get knowledge, slights of public ordinances, private duties, reading, meditation, &c.

2. By opposing and fighting against the Lord's quickening work in the soul. They that murder convictions, murder their own souls, as if they were resolved that they should never stir in them, Prov. 29:1.

Some, with Felix, put them off with fair promises; some, with Cain, with the noise of axes and hammers; which is in effect, they will not let their souls recover.

3. By continuing in sin impenitent. God calls by his word and providence to the man, as Paul to the jailor, 'Do thyself no harm.' But, as if he were resolute on his own ruin, he will not forbear these courses. Wilful impenitency is the grossest self-murder, because soul-murder, Ezek. 18:30, 31. His soul is standing under a decayed roof, tell him that it will fall on him; but he will not stir a foot; is not his blood then on his own head?

4. By unbelief, and not coming to Christ by faith, John 5:40. Many means are essayed to preserve the soul; but still it is ruined, because the main cure is neglected. Let a man use ever so many remedies for his health, if he will not use the main cure necessary, he is his own murderer. So resolutions, watchings, engagements, are tried; but if faith, and employing Christ for sanctification, is not tried, he is still a murderer.

O sirs, consider this. Murder, self-murder, soul-murder, is a crying sin. What wonder the man perish, who will perish? Will God spare the shedding of the blood of that soul, which the man himself is so liberal of?

And hence see that people not only may, but this command of God obliges them to seek the welfare and good of their souls. Fear hell, hope for heaven; and let this stir you up to duty: but do not rest there, go forward and make the love of God your main motive; and that of itself would be sufficient to stir you up to all the duties of a holy life.

SECONDLY, Thou shalt not kill thine own body. This is simply and absolutely forbidden. We may take away the life of others in some cases justly; but in no case our own, unless there be a particular divine warrant, which I suppose in Samson's case, which is not to be expected by us; for, therein he was a type of Christ. There are two things forbidden here.

1. The taking away of our own life, by laying violent hands on ourselves. This is the horrid sin of direct self-murder; of which Saul, Ahithophel, and Judas were guilty; and many sad instances of it have been of late. The law of God utterly condemns it, and nature itself abhors it. It is the effect of a desperate envenomed spirit, rising from pride and impatience, a horrible leaping into eternity ere the call come from God. It is highly dishonourable to God, charging him with cruelty, and refusing to wait his leisure. It is the thing the grand murderer is seeking. Civil laws strike against it; with us self-murderers are denied Christian burial, their goods are escheated, that respect to their families may deter people from it: in other places they have hung them up on gibbets. And though we will not take on us to determine the case of all such to be hopeless for eternity, that is sufficient to scare us, 1 John 3:5. 'Ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.'

2. Doing any thing that tendeth thereunto. Men may be guilty of killing themselves indirectly many ways, all of which are here forbidden. Here are forbidden as tending to the murder of the body.

- 1st, All entertaining of any thoughts against our own life, that is heart-killing; wearying of our own life, and fretful wishing to be gone, as was Jonah's case, chap. 4:3; all tampering with temptations of that sort, and not rejecting them with abhorrence, Job 7:15. Our life is a mercy, and not to be wearied off fretfully; for it is God's

goodness that we are out of hell. And it is horrid ingratitude to account God's gift a burden.

2dly, Discontent, fretfulness, and impatience. It is a dangerous thing, Psal. 37:8. It was that which prevailed with Ahithophel to make away with himself. It is like ink cast into a fountain, which makes all the water blackish. It unfits for society with men, and for communion with God; it destroys the soul and body too; for the fretful man is his own tormentor. We should study to be content with our lot, and easy whatever our circumstances be, Heb. 13:5; and that will set all our wrongs right, Prov. 15:15; for then our spirit is brought to our lot; and the vulture preys no more on our liver.

3dly, Immoderate grief and sorrow. When we go into the waters of godly sorrow for sin, we are out again ere we are well in; but in carnal sorrow we will go over the head and ears, 2 Cor. 7:10. How many have conceived that sorrow upon some cross which they have met with! something within their fancy has been balked, that has ruined their bodies as well as their souls. We should enure ourselves to a patient bearing in the Lord's hand; and not smother that fire within our breasts, but lay it out before the Lord and leave it there, 1 Sam. 1:18 and labour to please God and consult our own welfare by a holy and moderate cheerfulness, Prov. 17:22.

4thly, Anxiety, distracting carking cares about the things of this life. As men fearing that they shall not sleep, do thereby mar their own rest; so the body is often ruined by too much anxiety for it, Matth. 6:31. 'Take no thought what ye shall eat, &c.' Gr. 'Rack not your mind.' When the mind is on the tenter-hooks, the body must smart for it. As the ape kills its fondling by hugging it, so do men kill themselves by indulging anxious cares. Let us labour then for a holy carelessness in these matters; let us use lawful means, and leave the

success quietly on the Lord. Though anxiety will not add a cubit to our stature, it may through time take a cubit from it, Phil. 4:6.

5thly, Neglecting our bodies, Col. 2:23 when we do not make a convenient use of the means of life and health; as when people deny themselves the necessary measure of food, sleep, exercise, recreations, physic, clothes, and housing. People may be guilty against their own lives this way, (1.) By a careless negligent disposition, Eccl. 10:18. (2.) From the plague of a covetous pinching humour, that they cannot find in their heart to use the gift of God to them, Eccl. 6:2. (3.) By means of inordinate passions, 1 Kings 21:4. (4.) Sometimes Satan has driven people under convictions to this, suggesting to them that they have no right to these things. But as long as men live, though they have not a covenant-right, they have a common providential right to the means of life; and the command binds, Thou shalt not kill. It is a duty of this command, then, to take care of our bodies and provide them necessaries so far as we can: they are not ours, but God's.

6thly, Intemperance, when people keep no measure in satisfying the flesh, Luke 21:34. They pamper the flesh, till the beast turns furious, and ruins itself. When God made man, he impressed an image of his sovereignty on him, made him lord over the beasts; but now, without the beasts, and within the affections, are turned rebels. This is a monster with three heads.

(1.) Gluttony, intemperance in eating. Man should eat to live; but some, like the beasts, live to eat. The law of God will not allow people to cram their bellies, and sacrifice to a greedy appetite, Phil. 3:19. It is a degree of self-murder; for it cuts short people's days, which sobriety would prolong. There is a curse entailed upon it, which is often seen to take effect, Prov. 23:20, 21. 'Be not amongst wine-

bibbers, amongst riotous eaters of flesh. For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.' The glutton and the drunkard, in scripture-language, is equivalent to a ne'er-do-well in ours, Deut. 21:20, 21. It is a beastly sin. A heathen calls the glutton's belly a swine's trough.

(2.) Drunkenness, intemperance in drinking, Luke 21:34. A sin that makes quick work for the grave, and has carried many thither ere they have lived half their days. Reason differences men from beasts, but the beastly sin of drunkenness takes away that, robbing men of reason. It is the devil's rack, on which while he has men, they will babble out every thing; for quod in corde sobrii, in ore ebrüs. It is an inlet to other sins: for what will a man not do in his drunkenness, if he have a temptation to it? It destroys a man's health, wealth and soul; murders soul and body at once. The Lacedæmonians used to fill their slaves drunk, that their children, seeing the picture of drunkenness might loath it. We have the picture of it, Prov. 23:29, &c. (1.) It embroils men in quarrels 'Who hath wo? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions?' Many have wo and sorrow that cannot help it; but drunkards wilfully create them to themselves. When drink is in, wit is out. Thence proceed drunken scuffles; babbling in scurrilous language; and from words they go to blows, wounds without cause. (2.) It ruins their bodies; redness of eyes, a sign of inward inflammation, through drink and watching, not through weeping and praying. (3.) It exposes them to uncleanness, ver. 33. 'Thine eyes shall behold strange women.' (4.) It makes their tongues ramble, speak contrary to religion, reason, common civility, yea, nonsense. (5.) It besots them; it makes their heads giddy, and they are fearless of danger, ver. 34. 'Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or he that lieth upon the top of a mast.' (6.) Lastly, It is a bewitching sin. The man sees the ill of it, but his heart is hardened, he has no power to leave it, ver. 35. 'They have stricken

me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not. When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.' The curse of God is entailed on it, Isa. 28:1, 2, 3, 'Wo to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine. Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under feet.'

(3.) Intemperance in any other sensual pleasure, Luke 8:14. The pleasures of the senses are often chains to the soul, and scourges to the body; and intemperance in them will make them so. Too much pleasing the body may make mourning at last, Prov. 5:11. A man may sin against God and his own body in the intemperate use of any sensual pleasure whatsoever, though in itself lawful; and no doubt much guilt is contracted in the intemperate use of tobacco, and such like things, 1 Cor. 6:12.

7thly, Immoderate labour and painfulness, Eccl. 2:22, 23. Labour and exercise in moderation is like a sober wind that purifies the air, and is good for the body and soul too: but immoderate labour and exercise is like a violent wind that throws down the house, and plucks up the tree by the roots.

Lastly, Exposing ourselves to unnecessary hazards, Matth. 4:7. To put ourselves in hazard where we have no call, is to sin against God and ourselves. And in this case, God desires mercy, and not sacrifice.

SECONDLY, We will consider this command as relating to our neighbour's life.

FIRST, Thou shalt not kill thy neighbour's soul. It is sin that is the killing thing both to our own and our neighbour's soul. And there are several ways how men fall into this guilt of murdering the souls of others. As,

1. By giving them an example of sin. God forbade to lay a stumbling-block before the blind; but the world is filled with these, and so ruined, Matth. 18:7. Men do ill things, and think that if they do ill, it is but to themselves. No; but thereby thou dost what lies in thee to ruin others.

Yea, example is not only ruining to others in evil things, but also, (1.) In doing what has the appearance of evil: therefore we should take heed to that, because others may take the appearance for reality, and so be ruined by us. (2.) By an uncharitable use of our Christian liberty in things indifferent. Thus the strong may ruin the weak, Rom. 14:15.

2. By co-operating directly to the sin of our neighbour, which is indeed the lending of our destroying hand to ruin his soul, whereby his blood comes to be charged on us. It is the putting of a cup of poison in his hand to dispatch himself, and a reaching of the sword to the madman, which whoso do are accessory to his death. Thus men are guilty,

1st, By commanding others to sin, as Jeroboam made Israel to sin. So magistrates by sinful laws, and all superiors whatsoever, when they use their authority to oblige another to an ill thing; or whosoever commands another to do what is sinful.

2dly, By counselling others to it, or advising them in it. The world is full of these murderers. So that, where a person is under temptation, there is often at hand one like Jonadab to give counsel to some ill

course, 2 Sam. 13:5. Such counsel often has the force of a command. So drunkards murder one another's souls, Hab. 2:15.

3dly, By joining with others in sin, Psal. 50:18. Going along with others in their sin, ruins not only ourselves, but them too.

4thly, By provoking others to sin, 1 Kings 21:25. Thus people are many ways guilty, by a provoking carriage, by provoking words; and not a few so devilish that they take a pleasure to provoke others, that they may get something to laugh at. These are like them who stir up the fire to burn another's house, that they may warm themselves at it.

5thly, By soliciting and downright tempting to sin. Such agents the devil has in the world, who make it their business to draw others to sin, by an ensnaring carriage or plain words; so that it is evident they are gone out on the devil's errand, Prov. 7:18.

6thly, By teaching sin. When men call truth a lie, and lies truth, when they give out a sinful practice to be duty, and a duty to be a sinful practice, they contribute directly to the sin of others, and bring that woe on themselves, Isa. 5:20. 'Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.'

By all these, two fall at once; for the sin of him that commands, counsels, &c. does not excuse the other.

(1.) By consenting to the sin of others, countenancing them in it, and encouraging them in their sin, Acts 9:1. We may countenance sinners in their duty, but by no means in their sin. These two are very different, but they are often confounded; and the confounding of them is the cause of much disorder in our church at this day.

3. By neglecting what we owe to our neighbour for the welfare of his soul. In not doing what we ought to preserve or recover his soul, we are guilty of destroying it, and so indirectly operate to his sin. As,

1st, By neglecting the means for preventing sin in others, Ezek. 3:18. When people do not teach, warn, and admonish, those whom they see to be in hazard, or generally neglect to restrain sin by all lawful means competent to them. Thus Eli sinned, 1 Sam. 3:13. 'His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.' Thus much guilt is contracted by ministers, magistrates, husbands and wives, parents, masters, &c.

2dly, By neglecting the means to recover those that have fallen into sin; suffering sin to lie on them, and not reprovng it, Lev. 19:17; compare 1 John 3:15; or reprovng them so imprudently, passionately, or weakly; as that it can do them no good. So did Eli.

3dly, By not compassionating the sinner, and mourning over his sin before the Lord, but hardening our hearts against him, and being careless what come of his soul, Ezek. 9:4. O what guilt is contracted this way in shutting up our bowels of compassion! How many will exclaim against the sins of others, whose consciences witness that they never had a sore heart for the dishonour done to God, and the ill to the sinner's soul by it.

4thly, By being pleased with their sin. This is in effect to be pleased with their ruin, Rom. 1 ult. Thus men are guilty,

(1.) By approving the sin of others, Psal. 49:13. This is to set our stamp on an evil way, that it may pass current.

(2.) By rejoicing at it and making a jest of it. It is devilish mirth that riseth from our neighbour's ruining himself. Yet much of this guilt is

in the world, Prov. 14:9.

SECONDLY, Thou shalt not kill thy neighbour's body unjustly. There are three cases wherein the life of our neighbour may be taken away justly. (1.) In the case of public justice, Gen. 9:6. (2.) Of lawful war, Judg. 5:23. (3.) Of necessary self-defence, Exod. 22:2, 3. The reason is, because in these cases a man does not take, but God, the Lord of life and death, puts the sword in his hand; so that judgment in these cases is the Lord's. Unless in these cases, it is murder, an unjust taking away another's life. Now, there are two things here forbidden with respect to this.

First, The taking away of our neighbour's life unjustly. This is actual and direct murder. This was the sin of Cain. This is a horrible and atrocious crime, for which men's laws condemn the guilty to the gallows, and God's laws condemn them to hell, 1 John 3:15. A sin so flat against nature, that even a natural conscience uses to kindle a hell in the bosom of the murderer; and a crime it is which Providence specially watches to bring to light. This is to be extended not only to what is commonly reckoned murder, but to these three cases.

1. The taking away of men's lives, under colour of law, and forms of justice, when the law is unjust, and there is no real crime; as in the case of Naboth, 1 Kings 21:12, 13, 19. And therefore all the laws of the world will not free persecutors from the guilt of murder, in their taking away the lives of the martyrs.

2. The taking away of men's lives in an unjust war, Hab. 2:12. For in such a case an army is but a company of robbers and murderers before the Lord; seeing God puts not the sword in men's hands in an unjust cause.

3. The taking away of a man's life in a set duel or combat, which, whether it fall in the hand of him that gives the challenge, or his that accepts it, is downright murder. There is not the least sort of approbation thereof in the scriptures. And therefore the laws of duelling, like the laws of drinking, are not given by God, but by the devil. David's combating Goliath was by public authority, in a public cause, and besides, from an extraordinary impulse of the Spirit. Duelling is from the devil, as being the effect of pride and rage; a taking into men's heads the disposing of that life which God only is Lord of; it is an usurping of the magistrate's sword, and invading God's right of vengeance, Rom. 12:19; And the pretence of honour, the usual plea for duels, is as far different from God's laws of honour, as hell is from heaven, Prov. 16:32. Matth. 5:44.

Secondly, Whatsoever tendeth to the taking away of our neighbour's life unjustly. This is virtual interpretative, indirect murder. It is of several sorts, all here forbidden.

1. There is heart-murder; and of that there are several sorts.

1st, Carnal anger and wrath, which is rash, causeless, and excessive, Matth. 5:22. Some people's anger is like a fire in straw, soon blown up and soon out; others like a fire in iron, which it is hard to get laid. But of whatever sort it is, it is a short madness; and the longer it is kept, it is so much the worse, Eph. 4:26, 27. 'It resteth in the bosom of fools.' All murder begins here. It is a fire that kindles the anger of God, and of our neighbour, against us, and so casts all into confusion. Let us study meekness; which is what will make us like to Christ, Col. 3:12.

2dly, Envy, whereby people grieve and grudge at the good of others. It is the devil's two-edged sword drawn to slay two at once; the envious himself, Prov 14:30; for he is like a serpent gnawing its own

tail, Job 5:2; and the party envied, Prov. 27:4. While other sins are entertained for pleasure or profit, this is like a barren field, bringing forth only briars and thorns; there is not a dram of any sort of pleasure in it. But this was it that put Joseph's brethren on a murdering design. A charitable frame of spirit is our duty, Rom. 12:15.

3dly, Hatred and malice against our neighbour. This made Cain imbrue his hands in his brother's blood. And such as live in malice and hatred go in his way, 1 John 3:15. It is the sad character of persons estranged from God, that they are 'hateful, and hating one another,' Tit. 3:3. But of all hatred, that is the worst which hates good men for their goodness. However, we may hate every man's faults, but no man's person. 'Love thy neighbour as thyself,' is the express command of heaven.

4thly, Revengeful thoughts and desires; which are so much the worse as they are the longer entertained, Rom. 12:19. That heart is a bloody heart that longs for a heart-sight, as they call it, on those that have wronged them. God sees the most secret wish of ill to our neighbour, and will call us to an account. Let us learn long-suffering and patience, to forgive, a disposition and readiness to be reconciled; otherwise our addresses to Heaven for pardon will be vain, Matth. 4:15.

5thly, Rejoicing at the mischief that befalls others, Prov. 24:17, 18. Nothing makes men liker the devil than that murdering disposition to make the ruin of others our mirth, and their sorrow our joy; for man's sin and misery is what affords pleasure to the devil. We should sympathize and weep with them that weep, as well as rejoice with those that do rejoice.

Lastly, Cruelty, an horrid unrelenting disposition, that is not affected with the misery of others, but carries it on, and adds to it with delight. A disposition most inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel, that teaches tender heartedness even to the very beasts, Prov. 12:10. But those that delight in cruel treating of these, want but an opportunity to exercise it on men.

2. There is tongue-murder. Solomon observes, that the tongue, however little a member it is, is the Lord of life and death, Prov. 18:21. and 21:23. If it be not well managed, then, no wonder it be sometimes found guilty of murder. The natural shape of the tongue resembles a flame of fire, and therefore in Hebrew one word signifies a flame and the tongue; yea, and it is what it seems to be, 'a fire, a world of iniquity,' Jam. 3:6. It resembles also a sword, and so it is oft-times, 57:4 and Psal. 59:7. The mouth and tongue resemble bow and arrow, and so they are, Psal. 64:3. The rage of an ill tongue must needs be dangerous, then, seeing such an one lays about him with his bow and arrow, and advances with fire and sword, which must needs bring him in blood-guilty. Now, this sword devours several ways.

1st, By quarrelling, provoking, and contentious speeches, Prov. 23:29. Such words have oft-times begun a plea that has ended in blood. And therefore the apostle compares such to beasts, that begin to snarl and bite one another, till it end in the ruin of either or both, Gal. 5:15. Let us make conscience, then, of peaceable, mild, and gentle speeches.

2dly, By bitter words. These are the impoisoned arrows that tongue-murderers shoot at their neighbour, Psal 64:3. 4. Their tongues are dipt in gall, and they pierce to the heart, and give a home-thrust like a sword, Prov. 12:28. They become not the disciples of the meek

Jesus. Lay aside these as ye would not be reckoned murderers in the sight of God, Eph. 4:31.

3dly, By railing and scolding. This was Shimei's murdering deed, 2 Sam. 16:5, 6, 7 for which he died as a murderer in Solomon's days. Thus men and women manage their tongue-battles with eagerness, making their doors or the town-gate the field of battle, where words pierce like swords to the heart. These are the plagues and the pests of society, whose bloody mouths proclaim their hearts fearless of God. Hear ye what the Lord says, 1 Pet. 3:9. 'Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise, blessing: knowing that ye are thereunto called; that ye should inherit a blessing.'

4thly, By reviling, reproachful, and disdainful speeches. Men think little of these; they are but words, and words are but wind. But they are a wind that will blow people to hell, Matt. 5:22. They are the devil's bellows to blow up the fire of anger; which may make fearful havock ere it be quenched, Prov. 15:1.

5thly, By mocking, scoffing, and deriding speeches. These are reckoned among the sufferings of the martyrs, Heb. 11:36. 'Others had trial of cruel mockings.' The soldiers mocking Christ, John 19:3 is compared to the baiting of dogs, Psal. 22:16. See how children paid for this usage to the prophet Elisha, 2 Kings 2:22, 24.

Lastly, By cursings, imprecations, and wrathful wishings of ill and mischief to our neighbours; which is but throwing up hellish fire on others, that comes down and burns up him that threw it, Psal. 109:18.

3. There is eye-murder, which vents itself by a wrathful countenance, and all gestures of that kind, such as high and proud looks, and fierce looks, Prov. 6:17. The spirit of God takes notice of Cain's

countenance, Gen. 4:5. As there is adultery in looks, so there may be murder in them, not only angry looks, but looks of satisfaction on the miseries of others, which God knows the meaning of, Obad. 12 gnashing with the teeth, and all such gestures of a person, denoting a heart boiling with wrath and revenge, Acts 7:54.

4. There is hand-murder, even where death killeth not. And people may be guilty of this two ways.

1st, By way of omission, when we with-hold and give not help to those that are in distress, to save their life or living, Judg. 5:2, 3 neglecting the sick, not visiting and helping them as need requires, Luke 10:31, 32 not affording means of life to the poor in want, Jam. 2:15, 16 for those put out the flame of life that do not feed it. We should then put on bowels of mercy and charity, in imitation of Job, chap. 31:16, &c. It is observable that the sentence against the wicked runs on unmercifulness to the poor members of Christ, Matt. 25:41, &c.

2dly, By way of commission. And so men are guilty,

(1.) As they strike against the living of others, their means and way of subsistence. This goes under the general name of oppression, a crying sin, Ezek. 22:7. Thus this command is broken by extortion, landlords racking of their lands so as labourers cannot live on them, tenants taking other's lands over their heads, sometimes to the ruin of honest families, masters not allowing servants whereupon to live; and, generally, by all kind of oppression, which in God's account is murder, Isa. 3:14, 15. Micah 3:3.

(2.) As they strike against the body and life itself, Thus men are guilty, by fighting, striking, and wounding others, Exod. 21:18, 22.

How many have been guilty as murderers in the sight of men, that have had no design to go the full length, when they fell to fighting?

Persecution is a complication of all these; and therefore the better the cause is, the worse is the deed. It is a main engine of him who was a murderer from the beginning. And God will reckon with them as murderers at that great day, Matt. 25:41, 42, &c.

Lastly, Men may be guilty of the blood of others otherwise. As,

(1.) By sinful occasioning in others those things whereby our neighbour sins against his own soul, *Quod est causa causæ, est etiam causa causati*. So people sin by occasioning in others discontent, fretfulness, immoderate sorrow, &c. 1 Sam. 1:6. Wherefore we should beware of that, as we would not be guilty of their blood.

(2.) By all the ways we said men co-operate to the destroying of other souls, they may be guilty of killing others' bodies; as by commanding, counselling, or anywise procuring the taking away of men's living or lives unjustly. So David murdered Uriah by the sword of the Ammonites. So informers against the Lord's people in time of persecution are murderers in God's sight, Ezek. 22:9. Yea, the approving, or any way consenting to it, makes men guilty, Acts 8:1.

Now, Sirs, examine yourselves in this matter; and who will not be brought in blood-guilty, guilty of their own and their neighbour's blood, the blood of their souls and bodies! God's law is spiritual and sees the guilt of blood where we plead Not guilty. Let us be humbled and convinced, and apply to the blood of Christ, that we may be washed from it.

OF THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:14.—Thou shalt not commit adultery.

THE scope of this command is the preservation of our own and our neighbour's chastity and purity. God is a holy God, and the devil is an unclean spirit: we must therefore study purity in all manner of conversation. Our Lord puts this command before the sixth, Mark 10:19 because our chastity should be as dear to us as our life, and we should be as much afraid of that which defiles the body as that which destroys it.

This command is a negative precept, and expressly forbids adultery: but under that is comprehended all manner of uncleanness whatsoever, with all the causes and occasions leading thereunto. And the positive part of this command is, that we must preserve our own and our neighbour's chastity by all due means.

In discoursing further, I shall consider,

I. The duties required in this command.

II. The sins forbidden therein.

III. Make some practical improvement.

I. Our first business is to consider what is required in this command; and the Catechism, agreeably to holy scripture, tells us, that it requires 'the preservation of our own and our neighbour's chastity in heart, speech, and behaviour.'

The duties of this command may therefore be reduced to two general heads. 1. The preservation of our own chastity. 2. The preservation of

that of our neighbour.

FIRST, This command requires us to preserve our own chastity and purity. There is a twofold chastity. 1. In single life; when it is led in purity, it is like the angelical; when in impurity, it is devilish. 2. There is conjugal chastity, when married persons keep themselves within the bounds of the law of that state. This lies in two things. (1.) With respect to all others, keeping themselves pure and uncorrupted. (2.) With respect to another, keeping themselves within the bounds of Christian sobriety and moderation. In whatsoever state we are, 'this is the will of God, even our sanctification, that we should abstain from fornication; that every one of us should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the lust of concupiscence,' 1 Thess. 4:3, 4, 5.

Now, there is a threefold chastity required of us, and to be preserved by us.

First, Chastity in heart, 1 Thess. 4:5 forecited. God knows the heart, and therefore his laws reach the heart, and he will judge for heart-sins. We must keep our minds pure, that the thoughts be not led astray and corrupted. Hence Job 'made a covenant with his eyes,' chap. 31:1. And we must keep our affections pure, that they be not vitiated. Job saw this when he appeals to God, 'If mine heart have been deceived by a woman,' ver. 9. This is to be pure before God, who seeth in secret, and searcheth the hidden things of darkness. The least glance over this hedge is a crime.

Secondly, Chastity of speech, Col. 4:6. 'Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.' As there is tongue-murder, there is tongue-adultery. But our speeches must savour of sobriety and purity: and so they will, if the heart be pure; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The Holy Ghost, in the scriptures,

gives us a pattern to be imitated in our speeches concerning those things that have a natural turpitude with them, vailing the same in modest expressions.

Thirdly, Chastity in behaviour, which comprehends both the keeping of the body undefiled by any gross act, and a modest carriage every way, 1 Pet. 3:2. Modesty must appear in the whole of our behaviour, that the purity of the heart may shine forth thereby, as the candle gives light through the lanthorn.

Now, as this threefold chastity is required here, so the proper means for preserving it are also required.

1. Watching over our senses. These are the ports at which Satan breaks in, and ruins people's purity. The heart and the senses are like a candle-wick, at the end of which lies a heap of powder. Objects set fire to the senses at the wick, and these carry it along to the heart where the corruption lies as a heap of powder. Particularly,

(1.) The eyes, Job 31:1. These were the gates at which sin first entered into the world; and these have been the gates of destruction to many, whereby their fame, body, and souls, have been destroyed together. It is remarkable that the Sodomites were smitten with blindness, who took so little care to watch their eyes while they had the use of them. Curious glances of the eye have been fatal to many, as to David, 2 Sam. 11:2 and to Joseph's mistress, Gen. 39:7.

(2.) The ears. The corruption of the heart makes people liable to be chained with Satan's fetters by the ears as well as the eyes; as appears from Prov. 7:21, 22. 'With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks.' And curious listening to rotten speeches, or

whatsoever has a tendency to corrupt the heart is to open a door to let out our purity.

2. Temperance, a sober use of meat, drink, sleep, and recreations. Hence our Lord warns his disciples, Luke 21:34. 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness.' Temperance is a necessary hedge for chastity, and the breaking over that hedge is a near way to sacrifice the other. See Acts 24:24, 25. 'And, after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.—And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.' Why did the apostle chuse that subject before these great persons? Why, truly it was very fit. Historians tell us, that this Drusilla was a most libidinous woman, and had left her husband, Aziz king of Emenessa; and while he was yet living, she was married to Felix, who was taken with her beauty; and so they lived together in adultery. The body being pampered becomes a luxuriant beast; and those that cram their bellies with meat and drink, are but one remove from, and in near disposition to filthiness; for one sensuality makes way for another.

On this account it is that fasting and prayer may be to people a duty of this command; for, as some devils are not cast out, so some are not held out but by fasting and prayer. They that would keep themselves pure, must have their bodies in subjection, and that may require, in some cases, a holy violence, 1 Cor. 9:27.

3. Keeping of chaste and modest company. Hence Solomon exhorts, Prov. 5:8, 9. 'Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house: lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel.' How many have been ruined by the company

they have fallen into, worse than they had fallen into a den of lions and wolves! III company wears off insensibly the impressions of virtue on people's spirits; and if they be not at war with them, the maintaining of peace and converse will make people like them.

4. Being busied in some honest employment. Those that would be virtuous indeed, must not eat the bread of idleness. Honest labour and business cuts off many temptations that idle persons are liable to. Had David been in the field with his army, when he was rising from off his bed in the evening-tide, 2 Sam. 11:2 he had preserved his chastity when he lost it, and so had Dinah, if she had been at her business in her father's house, when she went out to see the daughters of the land, Gen. 34:1.

5. Marriage, by those that have not the gift of continency. Hence says the apostle, 1 Cor. 7:2, 9. 'To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.'—Neither marriage nor single life are in themselves morally good or evil, but indifferent. But that state of life is to be chosen by every one, that will most conduce to their leading a holy life. So every particular person ought by themselves to ponder their gift, and other circumstances, which will let them see what is sin and what is duty in this case.

6. Cohabitation and conjugal love and affection betwixt married persons, without which that state will be no fence to purity, but a snare. Hence Solomon says, Prov. 5:19, 20. 'Let her be as the loving hind, and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times, and be thou ravished always with her love. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?'

7. Lastly, Shunning all occasions, and resisting all temptations, to the contrary, Prov. 5:8 forecited. So did Joseph, Gen. 39:8. It is a dangerous business to parley with them. The town that is content to capitulate with the enemy, is next door to surrendering. There are two sins that the scripture bids us flee from. 1. Idolatry, 1 Cor. 10:14. 2. Uncleanness, 1 Cor. 6:18. Why? Because they are bewitching evils. It is safer to flee, than to stand to fight them.

SECONDLY, This command requires us to preserve the chastity of others, and that so far as we can, in their hearts, lips, and lives. For so far as we might prevent the sin of others, and do it not, and much more when we occasion it, it becomes ours. Besides, that in preserving our own chastity, we preserve that of others, and so the means conducing to the one do also conduce to the other. Our duty in this point may be reduced to these two heads.

1. That we may do nothing which may ensnare others. For whosoever lays the snare is partner in the sin that comes by it. A lamentable instance of this we have in Judah and his daughter-in-law: they were neither of them careful to preserve the other's chastity, and so they fell each by another's snare, Gen. 38:14, 15, 16. For this cause modest apparel is here required, 1 Tim. 2:9: and a careful avoiding of all unseemly behaviour, which may have a tendency to defile the minds of others, though we ourselves have no ill intention. Thus, Bathsheba's washing herself in a place where she might be seen of others, was the sad occasion of the sin that David and she were plunged into, 2 Sam. 11:2. And truly where both grace and good manners are wanting, it is little wonder that people break their necks over one another.

2. That we do every thing incumbent on us to preserve the chastity of others, in heart, speech, and behaviour. Let married persons live

together in due love and affection to one another. Let each one be an example of purity to others. Let those whom ye see in danger be rescued by all means, whether by force or persuasion, as the circumstances require. And let none bring others' guilt on their own heads, by being silent when they see the smoke, till the flame rise and discover itself. Let parents and masters do what they can to prevent the ruin of their children and servants, by rebuking any lightness about them, exhorting them, and praying for them; keeping them out of ill company, not suffering them to be idle or vague, and seasonably disposing of children in marriage. Our bodies are the Lord's; we are or ought to be the temples of God; the heart is the most holy place of the temple, and our speech and behaviour the holy place. Let us take heed we bring in no unclean thing there, but keep his temple pure; for if any defile the temple of God, him will God destroy.

II. I come now to shew, what is forbidden in this command. It forbids 'all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.'

In nothing more quickly did the corrupt nature of man vent itself, than in inordinate concupiscence, which brought shame along with it, as its just punishment; which makes it hard to speak of it, and so much the rather that corrupt nature is apt, through Satan's influence, to turn the very commandment against it into an occasion of sin. Therefore, though there is a necessity of speaking something on it, we cannot enlarge with that freedom upon it that we can do on other commands. Sift your hearts, then, as in the presence of a holy God, who will call us to an account in this matter before his tremendous judgment-seat, and hear his holy law, Thou shalt not commit adultery.

In this short abridge of the law of God, where one sin is expressly condemned, under it are forbidden all sins of the same kind. So here

the whole dunghill of filthiness is set before us for our abhorrence, and detestation of our souls, as we would not bring down the wrath of God on us. Here then all gross acts are forbidden. As,

1. All unnatural lusts, not to be mentioned without horror; filthy fellowship with devils, as the guilty do suppose; Sodomy, persons abusing themselves with those of their own sex, Rom. 1:24–27; bestiality, Lev. 18:22; And to these we may add incest, which is betwixt persons within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity or affinity, Lev. 18:6. Concerning which this is to be observed, that a man must hold at the same distance from the relations of his wife as his own, and contrariwise, Lev. 20:14; and such unnatural mixtures can never be sanctified by marriage.

2. Adultery, where one of the parties, or both are married. In this case the aggravations of the sin of the married party will be justly charged upon the single person; and for both, 'whoremongers and adulterers God will judge,' Heb. 13:14. And bigamy and polygamy are adultery; for the vile fact cannot be sanctified, but made worse, by marriage with the adulterer or adulteress, Hos. 4:10; 'They shall commit whoredom, and shall increase.'

3. Fornication, which is betwixt single persons, Col. 3:5, 6. 'Mortify your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, &c. For which thing's sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.' Whoredom is a sin that without repentance is a sad badge of a subject of Satan, Eph. 5:5. 'No whoremonger nor unclean person—hath any inheritance in the kingdom of God and Christ.' And a vast inconsistency there is betwixt being a member of Christ, and that of a harlot, 1 Cor. 6:15.

4. Rape, or forcing a person to filthiness, Deut. 22:25. This is a capital crime by the laws of God and men.

5. Secret uncleanness in a person by themselves alone, whether they be waking, Eph. 5:12; or sleeping, at least so far as they have occasioned it to themselves by their own corrupt imaginations.

6 Lastly, Immoderate and unseasonable use even of the marriage-bed, and much more of the bed of whoredom. Mark these passages, 1 Thess. 4:3, 4. 1 Cor. 7:5. Isa. 58:13. Ezek. 22:10 and 18:6.

These are the several kinds of vileness here forbidden. But this command goes further, and forbids three sorts of uncleanness besides.

1. Uncleanness in heart, all speculative filthiness, unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections, though people do not intend to pursue them to the gross act, Matt. 5:28; 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' Chap. 15:19; 'Out of the heart proceed—adulteries, fornications.' These fall not under the eye of men, but are open to the eye of God, who will judge accordingly. A voluntary thought of these things is dangerous, a delightful rolling of them in the heart is uncleanness before God, and a vitiated habit, whereby on every light occasion these filthy sparks are kindled in the heart, is worst of all, and most abominable.

2. Uncleanness in words, all filthy communications and obscene language, Eph. 4:29; 'Let no corrupt communications proceed out of your mouth.' They are the discoveries of a filthy heart; for 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,' contrary to nature, propaling those things which nature teaches to keep secret. They are snares to the hearers; and to speak of them for delight is to act the filthiness in words, when they cannot do it otherwise. Neither will the art some have in dressing up their filthy notions in figurative terms excuse; but these in some sort are most dangerous, because

the devilish wit displayed in them makes them more sticking; and so by means of the like phrases occurring in holy exercises, they are the readier even to defile these. Of this sort are filthy songs and ballad singing; and the delightful listening to such things, as the simple youth did to the speeches of the adulterous whore, Prov. 7:18–21.

3. Uncleanliness in actions. Besides the gross acts, there are others leading thereunto, which are there also forbidden. As,

(1.) Wanton looks: there are 'eyes full of adultery,' 2 Pet. 2:14; 'wanton eyes,' Isa. 3:16; even a look for unlawful carnal delight is the venting of the impurity of the heart; and though it be only from levity and curiosity, it is sinful, as a mean leading to evil.

(2.) Impudent and light behaviour, and immodest gestures, Isa. 3:16; indecent postures, contrary to religion and good manners. These are hellish matters of sport, that defile the actors, and those that are witnesses to them without abhorrence. And on this ground stage-plays and filthy pictures are amongst the things forbidden in this command, Ezek. 23:14–16.

(3.) Luxurious embraces and dalliances. These are as smoke going before the flame, and were practised by the adulterous whore, Prov. 7:13.

Now, as all these are here forbidden, so all occasions and incentives to lust are forbidden, all that has a tendency to corrupt our own or neighbour's chastity.

(1.) Immodest apparel, Prov. 7:10. God appointed apparel; [1.] For necessity, to cover our shame and nakedness; [2.] To distinguish sexes; [3.] To distinguish callings, the more noble from the meaner sort. The devil has found out the fourth to be enticements to lust.

(2.) Keeping ill company. This has been the ruin of many: therefore Solomon advises, Prov. 5:8. 'Remove thy way far from her,' a strange woman or whore; 'and come not nigh the door of her house.' It was Joseph's commendation that he fled from his mistress. Whatever the company be, people should beware that they cast not themselves into snares.

(3.) Idleness, the nursery of all filthiness, Ezek. 16:49. This exposeth to many temptations; for Satan will be ready to find idle people work. Gadding and vaguing abroad can hardly miss to have an unsavoury end.

(4.) Intemperance, gluttony, and drunkenness. These have a tendency to murder, which is forbidden in the sixth command, and to uncleanness, forbidden in the one under consideration, Prov. 23:30, 31, 33. Notable to this purpose is that scripture, Jer. 5:8; 'They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife.'

(5.) Promiscuous dancing, or dancing of men and women together. This entertainment, however reckoned innocent among many, is evidently an incentive to lust, Isa. 23:15, 16, 17. It is supposed, that it was to a dancing match among the daughters of the land that Dinah went forth, when she was dealt with as an harlot. This practice seems to be struck at by these scriptures, Rom. 13:13; 'Let us walk—not in chambering and wantonness,' 1 Pet. 4:3 where mention is made of 'walking in revelling.' It is offensive to the grave and pious, is condemned by our church, yea, and has been condemned by some sober heathens.

(6.) Undue delay of marriage, 1 Cor. 7:7, 8, 9; for they that refuse the remedy, strengthen the disease.

(7.) Unjust divorce, Matth. 5:33; wilful desertion, 1 Cor. 7:12, 13; want of conjugal affection, and all harshness and unkindness betwixt married persons. These are to be avoided as incitements to uncleanness.

(8) Lastly, The popish doctrine and practice of forbidding lawful marriages, 1 Tim. 4:3; dispensing with unlawful marriages, Mark 6:18; tolerating of stews or bawdy houses, Deut. 23:17; and entangling vows of single life, Mark 9:10, 11.

I shall next make some improvement of this subject.

1. Let those that have fallen into the sin of uncleanness, repent, and walk humbly all the days of their life under the sense of it. There are, alas! not a few amongst us to whom this exhortation belongs. And perhaps, if their eyes were opened, they would see something in their lot that God has sent to go along with them, as a mark of his displeasure against that their sin; wherein they might with no great difficulty read their old sin in a continued punishment. That sin may be forgotten with us, that is not so with the Lord.

2. Let those that stand take heed lest they fall. Labour to get your hearts possessed with a dread of this sin, and watch against it, especially ye that are young people, seeing it is a sin most incident to youth when the passions are most vigorous; which yet may stick fast with the blue marks of God's displeasure upon you when you come to age. For motives, consider,

(1.) It is not only a sin, but ordinarily, if not always a plague and punishment for other sins. It is a mark of God's anger against the person that is permitted to fall into it, Prov. 14. 'The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the Lord, shall fall therein.' This is a heavy mark of God's indignation, which is

worse than to fall into a fever, or some lingering distemper; for a person may recover of these in a short time, but it is not so easy to recover the other.

(2.) It is a sin that very few ever get grace to repent of. It stupifies the conscience, and wastes all sense of sin from it, Hos. 4:11. I have seen, alas! too many that have made public satisfaction for that sin; but allow me to say, I have seen very few by whose repentance I was much edified. Hear what the Spirit of God says of these unhappy people, Prov. 2:19. 'None that go unto her, return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.' None, that is, very few; but some indeed do, as among the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 6:9, 11. And be not offended, but cautioned, if I say, that few women particularly ever get grace to repent of it. Solomon said it before me, Eccl. 7:28. 'A woman among all those have I not found.' And observe what is said, Acts 24:25 that Felix trembled when Paul preached, though he repented not; but there is not a word of Drusilla's being moved.

(3.) It dishonours and debases the body, 1 Cor. 6:18. Our bodies are the members of Christ or should be; but how are they debased, being made members of an harlot? And how low and contemptible a thing is such a wretched creature, even in the eyes of those that join with them?

(4.) It leaves an indelible stain upon their reputation; their honour is sunk, and there is no recovering of it, Prov. 6:33. Though the sin may be pardoned before God, yet the blot lies on their name, while they have a name on the earth. Yea, and when they are dead and gone, there bastard posterity still lie under the stain, whereof they could be no cause.

(5.) Poverty and want oft-times follow it. It natively tends to poverty, Prov. 5:10 and there is a secret curse of that nature that often

accompanies it, Prov. 6:26. 'By means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread.' How many have been made miserable by it, who have had occasion as long as they lived to remember they had ruined themselves?

(6.) Lastly, It is ruining to the soul, Prov. 6:32. 'He that doth it,' commit adultery with a woman, 'destroyeth his own soul.' It ruins it here, in so far as it defiles the conscience, fetters the affections, blinds the mind, utterly unfits for communion with God, till the guilt be washed off by the application of Christ's blood, after a frightful awakening of the conscience. And if they do not repent of this sin, it will destroy the soul for ever. Let these scriptures imprint a horror of it on the minds of all, Heb. 13:4. 1 Cor. 6:9. Gal. 5:19, 21. Rev. 21:8.

I close with a few directions in so many words.

1. Give yourselves away soul and body to Jesus Christ, and learn to live by faith, sensible of your own weakness, and relying on his promised strength; for without him ye can resist no sin, nor temptation to sin.
2. Beware of a carnal frame of sloth and laziness. Labour to be spiritual and heavenly in the frame of heart, Gal. 5:16. 'Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.'
3. Watch over your heart and senses. Make a covenant with your eyes, as Job did, that ye may avoid unlawful looks; and never venture on the devil's ground, otherwise ye will fall into the snare.
4. Study mortification of all your unruly lusts and passions, and beware of all occasions and incentives to this wickedness.

5. Keep at a distance from immodest company, and be not too frolicsome and foolish, light and airy in your discourse.

6. Lastly, Pray fervently and importunately, that the Lord may save you from this foul sin, and all temptations to it; saying with David, Psal. 119:37. 'Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.'

OF THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:15.—Thou shalt not steal.

THIS command respects men's goods and outward estate in the world; and the scope of it is to procure and further the same by all good means. And the law of God respecting this plainly says, that religion is highly concerned in our civil actions, working, buying, and selling, and all the ways of advancing of the outward estate. In these we are hedged about by this command, as well as in natural things by the sixth and seventh. God's law follows us wherever we go, to the house or field, bed or board, church or market. This command also plainly establishes distinct properties, and that there is no universal community of goods, but every one has his own portion.

This being a command of the second table, it respects ourselves as well as our neighbour. And so the meaning is, Thou shalt not steal from thyself nor any other; thou shalt not wrong thyself nor others. And as in every negative is applied an affirmative, so while stealth or theft is here forbidden, the contrary is required, namely, the procuring and furthering of our own and others' welfare in these things, but by means only that are lawful.

In discoursing further from this subject, I shall shew,

I. What is required in this command, viz. 'the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.'

II. What is forbidden, viz. 'Whatsoever doth or may unjustly hinder our own or our neighbour's wealth or outward estate.'

III. Make application.

I. I am to shew what is required in this command. And,

FIRST, God requires us in this command, by lawful means, to procure and further our own wealth and outward estate. We may take up this in these seven things.

1. We should look unto God for things necessary and convenient for us. Here we should begin our care about temporal things; 'for he it is that giveth thee power to get wealth,' Deut. 8:18 and without his appointment our endeavours will not succeed, Psal. 127. All the creatures depend on God's provision, as caged birds on those to whose care they are committed, Prov. 30:3. And so our Lord teaches us to pray every day, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' Matth. 6:11 seeing God has comprehended this in the promise.

2. A provident care and study to get things necessary and suitable to our condition, 1 Tim. 5:8. To pray, and cast off means, is presumption; to use means, but neglect praying, and looking to the Lord, is atheism. We should keep the middle way betwixt carelessness and anxiety, and hold in the way of moderate care in these things; for we are not to expect to be like the lilies that toil not, neither spin, and yet are clothed.

3. For this cause every body must have a lawful calling and employment, and duly use it, that so he may be useful to himself, and worth his room in the world, and not like mice and rats, good for nothing but to devour what others labour for. Adam in innocence had a calling, that of dressing and keeping the garden of Eden, Gen. 2:15 and so had his sons afterwards, though born to greater estate than any now can pretend to, the one being a keeper of sheep, and the other a tiller of the ground, Gen. 4:2. But we must be sure it be a lawful calling, Eph. 4:28. But what avails it if it be not duly used? Therefore God requires of men that they labour to be skilful in it, and not bunglers at what they take in hand, Prov. 14:8 and he allows men to look to himself for that end, Isa. 28:26 and likewise that they be diligent and industrious in it, and not loiterers, Prov. 10:4 for laziness will make a thief, either directly or indirectly. And this is quite opposite to God's appointment, Gen. 3:19.

4. We are to take the moderate comfortable use of the product of our diligence, using and disposing it for our necessity and conveniency, according to our condition in the world, Eccl. 10:12, 13. For to what end do men get wealth, if they have no power comfortably to use it? As good want it, as not to have the necessary and convenient use of it. Such steal and rob (in the sense of this command) from their nearest neighbour, that is, themselves.

5. Withal God requires men here to be frugal and honestly sparing, i. e. to keep a due medium betwixt lavishness and niggardly pinching, Prov. 21:20. This frugality directs to the right managing of what God has given, so as, (1.) People do not cast out their substance on trifles that are for no good purpose, but on such things as there is some solid use of, Isa. 55:2 and amongst these are to be reckoned extravagant furniture for back and belly, in which people cannot satisfyingly to conscience answer the question, What needs all this

waste? (2.) That of those things which may be useful, there be nothing lost. When Christ had provided bread enough, he gives particular orders to gather up the fragments, John 6:12. (3.) That this care proceed not from carnal affection to the world, but from conscience towards God, that we abuse not his benefits, and take care to do good by what is spared to ourselves or to others, though it were even to beasts. Lastly, True frugality will be effectual to make us ready to lay out for God on pious uses, to the poor and otherwise, as the best way to save, Prov. 11:24.

6. Careful avoiding of whatsoever may embarrass our affairs, and wrong our own wealth and outward estate.—Thus God requires men to take heed that they do not inveigle themselves in unnecessary pleas and law-suits, 1 Cor. 6:1–8 rash cautionry, Prov. 11:5 whereby sometimes men ruin themselves and families, and so sin against God, themselves, and their house. Of this sort may be reckoned people's rash and foolish engaging in things that they are in no probable case rightly to manage, stretching farther than they can well be supposed able to reach.

7. Lastly, Moderation of heart with respect to worldly goods, Phil. 4:5. (1.) We must moderate our judgment about them, that we put not too high a value and esteem on them, 1 Tim. 6:17. (2.) We must moderate our wills about them, that we be not among those that will be rich; for that will carry us over this hedge, ver. 9. (3.) We must moderate our affections to them. We must beware of love to them, ver. 10; for the covetous heart will not stick at undue means. We must moderate our care about them, resting in God's promise, and depending on his providence, Matt. 6:25, 26 and be content with our lot, Heb. 13:5. For they that are not content, have what they will, are always poor; and their eye will be evil towards others also.

SECONDLY, God requires in this command, that we, by lawful means, procure and further the wealth and outward estate of others. We are not born for ourselves, nor must we live for ourselves. We are members one of another as men, and much more as Christians; and selfishness is offensive to God, and destructive to society. We may reduce this to two general rules of practice, founded on the light of nature, and confirmed by the word.

First, Give every one their due. The natural conscience dictates this, however little it is regarded; and God's word confirms it, Rom. 13:7. If ye do it not, ye rob them, or steal from them. So God will reckon, and so will men's consciences reckon at last. In whatever relation ye stand to them, as masters, servants, neighbours, or under any particular bargain with them, or obligation to them, give them what is due to them.

Secondly, Do as ye would be done to. This also a natural conscience dictates, and the word confirms, Matt. 7:12. If we must love our neighbour as ourselves, we must not do to him what we would have nobody do to us. If ye do otherwise ye steal from them, ye wrong them, your own consciences being judges. For if they would do so to you, ye declare they are unjust to you; so if ye do so to them, ye must either find out a law for them, which ye are not under, or else your own consciences will condemn you as breakers of the law of God, which is common to both. To move you to walk by these rules, consider,

1. In vain will ye pretend to Christianity without it.—This is natural religion, which revelation came not to destroy, but to confirm, Tit. 2:12. And the Heathens, who in their Pagan darkness saw these rules of righteousness, and walked more by them than many Christians, will rise up in judgment against many that profess the name of

Christ, and yet make so little conscience that way. People must either walk by them, or quit the name of Christians. If they will do neither of them now, Christ will strip them at length out of their player's coat, and make them appear before the world in their proper colours.

2. Ye will never see heaven without it, 1 Cor. 6:9. If people get to heaven in another way, they must step over all the law and the prophets, Matth. 7:12. I grant that these will not bring people to heaven; people may walk by them, as some sober heathens have done, and yet go to hell; but without it people will never see it. For though our good works and honest dealings with men will not save us, yet our ill works and unrighteous dealings will damn us, 1 Thess. 4:6. But to be more particular, we may take up this in five things.

1st, God requires of us that we be careful to prevent our neighbour's skaith and loss, as we have opportunity, Deut. 22:1. For the loss we see him get and can prevent, but do it not, is in effect the same as if we downrightly procured it to him. That which we can hinder, and do not, is our fault before the Lord; and in this sense each man is bound to be his brother's keeper.

2dly, That we deal honestly in all matters between man and man. If we would not come under the guilt of stealing from them, we must in all our dealings with them be strict observers of truth, faithfulness, and justice; dealing in simplicity and plainness, Psal. 15:2, 4; Zech. 7:4, 10; whether it be in bargains, buying and selling, in matters of trust concredited to us, or any thing of his we have under our hands. We must deal with God as if the eyes of men were on us; and with men as knowing the eyes of God are on us. A Christian indeed will do so. He will be an upright dealer with men, a slave to his word, a man that never wants a quick-sighted witness to his actions. And therefore it will be all one to him whether his party be absent or

present, skilful and that will not be cheated, or simple and easily deceived.

3dly, Restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the right owners thereof. This looks especially to two cases.

(1.) Things lost and found ought to be restored to the owners, and not concealed and kept, Deut. 22:2, 3: for the keeping up of what is another's against the owner's will, is a sort of theft and injustice, contrary to the rules aforesaid. And therefore it cannot be kept with a good conscience.

(2.) Whatsoever we have wronged our neighbour of, by taking it away from him, ought to be restored, Lev. 6:2, 4. There is, [1.] The case of trust, wherein a thing committed to him by another is kept up, on some pretence that it is lost or so. [2.] In case of fellowship in trading together, when one puts a thing in his partner's hand, in which case it is easy for one to deceive another. [3.] In case of violence, when it is taken away by robbery, stealth, yea, and oppression, 1 Sam. 12:3. [4.] In case of cheaterly, when by fraud and circumvention it is taken away.

Now, in all these cases, and the like, restitution is necessary. It is true, actual restitution is sometimes beyond the power of him that should restore; yet in such a case the party is bound to go all the length he can, as appears from Exod. 22:3. But a readiness to restore to the utmost of our power is absolutely necessary. For he does not truly repent of his sin, who is not willing to do all he can to repair the wrong; nor is the love of righteousness and his neighbour in that man, who is not ready to give every one their due. And in this sense the rule holds, *Non tollitur peccatum, nisi restituitur*. It is remarkable that it is made one of the signs of true repentance, Ezek. 33:15. 'If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had

robbed, walk in the statutes of life without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.' And said Zaccheus, Luke 19:8. 'If I have taken any thing from any man by fake accusation, I restore him fourfold.'

Now, the party obliged to make restitution, is not only the person that took a thing away, but he in whose hand it is found; though he had it not fraudulently, yet upon the discovery of the thing, he is obliged to return it, because the person who (suppose) sold it to him, had no right to it, and therefore could give him none. But particularly the person himself and his heirs, are bound to restore, Job 20:10; and that the thing itself, or the value of it, yea, and a reasonable acknowledgement for the loss of it, Lev. 6:5. Luke 19:8. The restitution is to be made to the owner, or, if he be dead, to his heirs; and if neither can be found, to the Lord, Numb. 5:6, 7, 8. Luke 19:8.

In case the reputation of the party be in hazard, the restitution should be managed with that prudence that it may not be unnecessarily blasted; for which cause they that are in straits that way ought to consult some prudent person, either minister or Christian, that will be tender of them.

4thly, Charity and justice in the matter of loans. Here,

(1.) Lending to our neighbour in his necessity, is a duty we owe him for the welfare of his outward estate, Matth. 5:42; not only lending upon interest, which is lawful, so that it be moderate, Deut. 23:20; but freely, viz. to those that are poor, and require the loan for pressing necessity. In that case we ought to lend them freely such a quantity of money and goods as we can well enough bear the loss of, in case they be rendered incapable to pay it again. And so is that scripture to be understood, Luke 6:35; 'Lend hoping for nothing again.'

(2.) Returning or paying again thankfully what is borrowed by us, Exod. 22:14; And therefore we are not to borrow more than we are in a probable capacity to pay; which while some have not regarded, they have liberally lived on other men's substance, and in the end have ruined other men's families, and quite devoured their money as in another case, Gen. 31:15: for no man has more that he can call his own, than what is over and above his debt, Psal. 37:21; If the incapacity flow from mere providence, it is their affliction, but not their sin, 2 Kings 4:1.

Lastly, Giving unto the poor or those that are in need, according to their necessity and our ability, Luke 11:41. They are our neighbours, to whose outward estate we are obliged to look; they are to have mercy shown to them that way. A disposition of soul to help them is requisite in all, even in those that have not a farthing to give, Prov. 11:25. What people give must be their own, 1 John 3:17 it must be thy bread, Eccl. 11:1. And therefore such as have not of their own, they cannot give what is another's, without the tacit consent and approbation or allowance of the owner; neither will God accept their robbery for burnt-offering. But even people that must work hard for their own bread, must work the harder that they may be able to give, Eph. 4:28. But they to whom God has given a more plentiful measure of the world's goods, must be so much the more liberal to the poor; for to whom much is given of him is much required. In helping the necessitous, the apostle's rules are to be observed, that special regard is to be had to our relations that may be in straits, 1 Tim. 5:8; and that though all that need are to be helped, yet special respect is to be had to the poor members of Christ, Gal. 6:10; and the greatest need is to be most regarded and most helped.

This duty is to be managed with these qualities.

(1.) People must give to the poor out of conscience towards God, and a design to honour him, Prov. 3:9; not out of vain-glory, else the work is lost as to acceptance, Matth. 6:1, 2.

(2.) With an honourable regard to the poor, either as Christians, and members of the same mystical body of Christ, or at least as of the same blood with ourselves, and not with contempt, and shaming of them, 1 Cor. 11:22.

(3.) Cheerfully and freely, not grudgingly and as by constraint, 2 Cor. 9:7.

(4.) According to the measure of what the Lord has given unto us, 1 Cor. 16:2; So the more we have, the more we ought to give. The particular quantity cannot be defined, but by wisdom and charity it must be defined by every one for themselves, Psal. 112:5.

To engage you to this duty, consider,

[1.] We are not absolute masters, but stewards of our goods. The whole world is God's household; and he has made some stewards to feed others, Luke 16:10, 11, 12. We must give account of our stewardship to him, who could have put us into their case, and them into ours.

[2.] It is a duty bound on us with ties of nature and revelation. The law of God requires it, 2 Cor. 8:9. Nature itself binds it on us, teaching us to do to others as we would be done by, if in their case. Not only Christianity, but humanity calls for it.

[3.] In this duty there is a singular excellency. For (1.) It is a blessed thing by the verdict of our blessed Lord, Acts 20:35; 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' (2.) The image and likeness of God

shines forth in it in a peculiar manner, Luke 6:35, 36; 'Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again: and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful.' Though Christ became poor for us, yet he gave to the poor, to commend it to us by his example. (3.) It is particularly taken notice of in the day of judgment, Matth. 25:34, 35.

Lastly, It is the most frugal and advantageous way of managing of the world's goods. For,

(1.) It is the way to secure to ourselves a through-bearing; there is a good security for it, Prov. 28:27; 'He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack.'

(2.) It is the best way to secure what we have, which is liable to so many accidents, Eccl. 11:1. 'Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.' Laying out for God is better security than laying up what God calls for. For so it is put in a sure hand, that will be sure to pay it again. The poor and needy are God's receivers, Prov. 19:17; 'He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again.'

(3.) It is the way to be rich, as the Bible points out the way, Prov. 3:9; 'Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of thine increase. Solomon observes the accomplishment of it, Prov. 11:24. 'There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth.'

(4.) It is the way to secure comfort to us in the time when trouble shall overtake us, Psal. 41:1, 2, 3; Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon the

earth; and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.'

Lastly, God has promised that such shall find mercy, Matth. 5:7; always taking along what is said, ver. 3. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' See Luke 16:9. 1 Tim. 6:17, 18, 19.

II. I come now to shew, what is forbidden in the eighth commandment. It 'forbids whatsoever doth or may unjustly hinder our own or our neighbour's wealth or outward estate.'

The sins forbidden in this command may be reduced to these two heads: whatever doth or may hinder our own wealth unjustly; and whatever doth or may unjustly hinder our neighbour's wealth or outward estate.

FIRST, Whatsoever doth or may hinder our own wealth unjustly. This is necessarily understood; for we may neither do a sinful thing to procure our own wealth, nor yet to preserve it. But when there are lawful means which Providence calls us to the use of, and we do not use them, we sin against God and ourselves. Thus this command says to each of us, in the first place, Thou shall not steal from thyself. Thus we are guilty,

1. By idleness, when people that are able do not employ themselves in some honest calling or work according to their ability, 2 Thess. 3:11; The idle man wrongs himself, while he exposes himself to poverty, and so to a snare, by his not using means to preserve and improve his substance. And he sins against God, who has appointed, that in the sweat of his face man shall eat bread, Gen. 3:19; And this is so although he have enough of his own, and needs not be

burdensome to others, Ezek. 16:49; He makes himself a waif for Satan to pick up.

2. By carelessness, sloth, and mismanagement in our calling, Prov. 18:9; Carelessness lets occasions of furthering our own wealth slip; and slothfulness in business is next to doing nothing at all. And they that cannot put down their hands to work diligently, will hardly miss some time or another to put out their hand to steal. Careless and slothful management of business by one hand in a family, may do more mischief than many diligent hands can remedy, Prov. 14:1. Religion does not allow either men or women to be drones in their family, good for nothing but to make a noise, take up room, and feed on the product of the diligence of their relatives, Rom. 12:11.

3. By not owning God in our business, and so slighting his blessing, who gives man power to get wealth, Deut. 8:18; It is he that gives rains and fruitful seasons, that makes the cattle to thrive or to be diminished, and that prospereth the work of our hands. Do they not stand in their own light that acknowledge him not in these things?

4. By wastefulness and prodigality, whereby people foolishly spend and lavish away what God has brought to their hands, Prov. 21:17; And indeed these two ordinarily go together, unthriftiness and wastery; for readily they that have no hands to gather, have two to scatter; and they that can do no good to get, are active at putting away. Thus they not only misapply what God has given them, but take the high way to poverty and stealing.

5. By rash engaging in such things as may ruin our wealth and outward estate, as unnecessary inveigling ourselves in law pleas, whereby the contentious humours of some have made them like the ass in the fable, that seeking his horns, lost his ears, 1 Cor. 6:6, 7, 8; as also cautionary, which although it be duty in some cases, as giving

and lending is, yet if it be not managed with prudence and discretion may prove but a plucking out of the mouths of our own, to put it in the mouths of strangers, Prov. 11:15 and 6:1, &c.

6. By distrustful and distracting care in getting and keeping worldly things, Matth. 6:31. Can that man be wealthy indeed, who, have what he will, never has enough, and whose abundance suffereth him not to sleep? Eccl. 4:8. This keeps him from the comfort of what he has, that he robs himself of, which is the only valuable thing in worldly enjoyments, Prov. 10:22.

7. Lastly, By sordidness, which is when a man has no power to enjoy the gift of God, Eccl. 6:1, 2. We can scarcely say, have what they will, that they have it, but it has them; for they have not the convenient decent use of it. They are of no use but to be serviceable to people's necessities and conveniencies; so that where that is wanting, it is as good as if they had them not.

To conclude this: Let us walk conscientiously in these things, knowing that we are accountable to God in them. We are not at our own disposal, but must lay out ourselves as God calls us. Neither may we do with our own what we will; for we are but inferior lords of them, and must use them agreeably to the will of the great Proprietor.

SECONDLY, Whatsoever doth or may unjustly hinder our neighbour's wealth or outward estate, is forbidden here as theft in God's account. Whatsoever way we wrong others in their outward estate, comes under this notion of stealing. So this command says, Thou shalt not steal from others. In respect of our neighbour, this command is broken two ways.

First, By direct stealing, which is the taking away of what is our neighbour's against his will, to his hurt and loss. If it be done secretly, without the knowledge of the owner, it is called theft; if it be by violence, it is robbery, whether by sea or land. There are two sorts of it.

1. Stealing of persons, called man-stealing, 1 Tim. 1:9, 10. It was the stealing away of men, women, or children, either to use them or sell them for slaves. Slavery having no place among us, there is no practising it with us, so far as I know. But there want not other sinful practices participating of the nature of this sin, such as running away with persons for marriage, whereby their parents are robbed of what is their own; enticing away other people's servants, to the prejudice of their masters; and seducing people's children to vicious and lewd practices. All which are contrary to the golden rule of justice, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.'

2. Stealing of substance. Whereof there are three kinds. (1.) Stealing from the public or commonwealth, whereby the magistrate and nation are wronged. (2.) Stealing from the church, taking away of what is devoted for pious uses, for maintaining the service of God and the poor. It is called sacrilege, Rom. 2:22. These are the worst kinds of theft in regard of the relation these things have to God. (3.) Single theft, whereby private persons are wronged in their private substance. Whether the thing stolen be little or great, he that takes it away, is a thief, and is therefore excluded out of the kingdom of heaven, 1 Cor. 6:9, 10. A man may lose his soul by the unlawful getting of what is not worth a penny, as well as of what is worth a thousand. Did men and women believe the curse of God which they take up with the thing they take away from others, they would see they had a sad bargain of it, Zech. 5:3, 4.

Secondly, By indirect stealing, which, though not accounted theft among men, yet it is so in the sight of God. And of this there are a great many ways, all here forbidden. People are thus guilty of theft, and break this command.

1. In their hearts, by nourishing those lusts that have a tendency thereto; for as there is heart-adultery, so there is heart theft. And this especially lies in these three things: (1.) Discontent with our condition, Heb. 13:5. This lays people open to the worst of snares. (2.) Envy and grudging at the good of others. This is the evil eye, which devours the substance of others. (3.) Covetousness. A covetous heart is that which stretches out the hand to steal.

2. In their conversation, by taking such ways as tend to the wronging of others in their outward estate, and really do wrong them, and take from them unjustly. This command is broken,

1st, By the idleness and sloth of those that are not able otherwise to maintain themselves. Every one is bound by this command to have a calling, and be diligent in it, if they be able. Therefore it is a sin for such to give themselves up to idleness, and live without a calling, or to be lazy in it, Eph. 4:28. 2 Thess. 3:10. 11. Hence it is evident,

(1.) That sturdy beggars are not to be tolerated; and no person being able to work for their maintenance can with a good conscience make a trade of begging. They that are able to work, but are not willing, ought to be compelled to it; and it is the sin and shame of the government that it is not so. For they directly set themselves in opposition to God's ordinance, Gen. 3:19. They carry not themselves either as subjects or church-members, and dispose themselves that way to all manner of wickedness without controul.

(2.) That no person can with a good conscience lay the burden of their maintenance on others, further than what they cannot prevent by their own utmost diligence in labouring for themselves. And therefore those that will rather seek than work, though they be able, are reckoned in God's account to steal it, though they think not so.

Idle and lazy persons are guilty of stealth two ways. They wrong them that have, being without necessity a burden to them. They wrong others that are really poor and unable to help themselves; for they rob them at least in part of what they should get; and whereas they ought to labour to help them, they do it not, Eph. 4:28.

2dly, By unlawful, base, and unwarrantable ways of getting gain. This the Spirit calls filthy lucre. For men must not only work, but work that which is good, that they may gain a maintenance. And if they take sinful ways to obtain it, it is theft in the sight of God.

(1.) Using unlawful arts in trades, Acts 19:19, 24, 25. Such are not working the thing that is good, but in itself evil, and tending to the debauching of mankind.

(2.) By raking together gain by our own sin, or the sin of others, as for gain to play the whore, or to do or help others to any sinful thing. Of this sort is the selling drink to those that go to excess in it, where people are instrumental in the ruin of the souls, bodies, and means of others, for their own filthy gain. Of this sort also are your set drinkings to help people to some stock; which is an occasion of much sin and excess. It must needs be base gain that is made that way, as being no way warranted by the word of God of helping them that are in need; and ordinarily it is seen to be blasted, so that it does little good. Must men be obliged to abuse themselves and God's good creatures to help others? Is that a way becoming Christian gravity and sobriety for helping those that need? But they will cast out their

money liberally that way, that will not part with a penny to a poor object. Let those that need ply their hands well; and if that will not do to help them, let them take Christian methods for their help otherwise, and not run themselves on the sword-point of the curse denounced against such base gain, Hab. 2:15. 'Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drink: that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also.' And let men of gravity and sobriety discourage those ways, and not partake of other men's sins.

(3.) By making merchandise of things that ought not to be sold or bought. If they be spiritual things, as sacraments and church-offices, it is Simony, Acts 8:20. If it be of justice, it is bribery, Job 15:34. Or whatsoever it is that people make merchandise of, which ought neither to be bought nor sold.

(4.) It is a base gain that is made by your penny-weddings, as they are commonly managed, being condemned both by the laws of the land and of the church. And for people to begin the world with treading upon the laudable laws of the state, and constitutions of the church, for a little base gain, cannot be but a sinful way, being offensive and disorderly, 1 Cor. 10:32. 2 Thess. 3:6. Our church, by act of Assembly, has declared them to be fruitful seminaries of all lasciviousness and debauchery, as well by the excessive number of people convened thereto, as by the extortion of them therein, and licentiousness thereat, to the great dishonour of God, the scandal of our Christian profession, and the prejudice of the country's welfare. And I appeal to your own consciences, if it be not a just character of them. The drinkings, dancings, excesses, and quarrelings that accompany them, are they suitable to the rules of Christianity? They are generally reckoned oppression, and a gentle way of begging; but I fear God will reckon them stealing, as a way of base gain. But we have such fresh experience of your respect to warnings from the

Lord's word, that I need not doubt but if ye had occasion, we should have a penny-wedding next Tuesday, Hos. 4:4.

(5.) It is base gain that is made at playing at cards and dice, or any such game of hazard. For the lot being an appeal to God, it is dangerous to make a play of it. They occasion much sin of blaspheming God's providence under the name of ill luck when people lose, commending their good luck when they win, misspending time through a bewitching in the matter, whereby they cannot give over, the winners hoping to win more, and the losers hoping for better. Surely it is no working of that which is good, Eph. 4:28. A Popish doctor, in a treatise of his on plays, tells us, that all games of hazard are condemned by Pagans, the fathers, the most able Popish and Protestant doctors, and that even Jesuit casuists find a mortal sin in playing at cards.

(6.) It is base gain when people stand at nothing, whether credit or conscience, if they can but reach it. Thus many reckon gain sweet, whatever way they get it. They will debase themselves to the meanest things to win a little thing, without any necessity. They will toil themselves excessively for what is very inconsiderable; and if charity and gifts be going, they will without necessity put in for their share, to the great prejudice of those that are truly needy, and cannot help themselves. These and all other ways of base gain are forbidden here as stealing.

3dly, This command is broken by family-frauds and robbery. For in this case one's enemies may be those of their own house. These family-frauds are committed,

(1.) By the husbands spending and wasting their money or goods, to the detriment of their wives and children. It is abominable robbery for men to ware that on their lusts, which should serve the

necessities and conveniences of their families, as it falls out in the case of drunkards, adulterers, and mismanagers. But worst of all, while they themselves are kept full and their poor families sadly pinched, 1 Tim. 5:8.

(2.) By wives embezzling and putting away their husbands' goods-to his loss, by which means a man may soon be stolen off his feet, as we term it. It is quite contrary to the character of a virtuous woman, Prov. 31:12. 'She will do him (her husband) good, and not evil, all the days of her life.'

(3.) By children embezzling and taking away their parents' money or goods without their consent. There is no doubt a child may steal from his parents seeing he is not proprietor of their goods, Prov. 28:24. Though they think they may take at their own hand, God's word says the contrary.

(4.) By servants wronging their masters in their substance that is among their hands. By their employment and trust, they have occasion to steal from their masters, if conscience engage them not to honesty. And so they may be guilty of taking of their master's either for themselves or to give away to others, Tit. 2:9, 10.

(5.) Lastly, I will add by all such as tempt or encourage either husbands, wives, children, or servants, to wrong their relatives. These are deeply guilty; for, as we say, there would not be a thief if there was not a resetter, Psal. 50:18. Thus hostlers and others that entertain men to the prejudice of their families, steal from these families. Thus covetous neighbours, who have their intrigues with other people's servants and fawning flatterers that draw about people's houses, to make a prey, whether of simple wives, children, or servants, engaging them to rob their husbands, parents, or

masters, to give them, are thieves in the sight of God, to be avoided as plagues and pests to a house, Prov. 29:24.

4thly, This command is broken by injustice and cheaterly in bargains and commerce, 1 Thess. 4:6. What is gotten that way is stolen in God's account, Lev. 25:14. Thus men are guilty,

(1.) When they take advantage of their neighbour's necessity, either in buying or selling; as when a person is necessitated to sell a thing, the buyer takes the advantage to gain it much below the worth; or when the seller knows the buyer must needs have it, then to rack it above the worth to him, Lev. 25:14. Indeed, if the seller would not otherwise part with the thing, but to answer that necessity, or the buyer would not otherwise take it, the case alters; for then parting with his money or goods in that case requires a rational compensation.

(2.) When the seller commendeth, and the buyer dispraiseth the wares, contrary to their own conscience and knowledge, that so they may over-reach one another, Prov. 20:14. So no doubt the way of priggling so long before people come to the due worth, is an insnaring way of dealing.

(3.) When men take advantage of their neighbour's ignorance in buying or selling. This sometimes falls out in buying, when the seller knows not the value of the thing, but the buyer does, and so gets it from him far below the worth. Oft-times in selling, when the seller imposes on the buyer's ignorance, either by express lying, saying the thing is what he really knows it is not, or concealing fraudulently the fault of it, as if, in selling a beast or any other thing, a man should conceal a known fault of the commodity, which he knows if the buyer knew, he would either not have it at all, or not at the price. In this case, men think it enough that the neighbour's eye is his merchant.

But will ye apply this practice to the golden rule, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, Matth. 7:12; and let conscience say if it be fair dealing or not, Lev. 19:11. 'Ye shall neither do falsely, nor lie one to another.'

(4.) By adulteration of wares, mixing them with worse, to the prejudice, and without the knowledge of the buyer; the commodity perhaps good and sightly, where it appears to the buyer's eye, but full of refuse that is good for little or nothing, but to make weight, or fill up the measure, which he finds not till he is to make use of it. Amos 8:6.

(5.) By using false weights and measures, Micah 6:10, 11; or any deceit whatsoever about weights or measures, whether in buying or selling; as in the case where the party is absent, and therefore it is made scanty, or when men have one to buy with, and another to sell with, or whatever way men take to 'falsify the balances by deceit,' Amos 8:5.

(6.) When that which is bought is not precisely delivered, but is vitiated; as by taking away a part of what is good in it, and making it up with what is worse; so that though they have the same weight or measure which they bought, yet it is not of the same goodness. This is direct stealth: for what is once sold is no more ours; and with the same justice ye might take a shilling out of your neighbour's pocket, putting in a sixpence for it.

(7.) Unfaithfulness in not performing condition, Psal. 15:4; when people make no conscience of keeping their word. This is not to be rigidly interpreted to involve men in guilt, when they use all moral diligence to perform their condition, but Providence puts a stop in their way; for in all promises of that nature, such an exception is to

be understood; but when people have a sinful hand in not performing exactly according to promise.

(8.) Lastly, When payment is made with uncurrent money, consisting with the knowledge of the payer, Gen. 23:16; or like Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5 keeping back part of the price; a base and unjust custom with some, who still eat up a part of what they are obliged to pay, Prov. 3:27, 28.

5thly, This command is broken in fellowship, when people trade together, or have a common interest in one room together, and in the management thereof defraud and go beyond one another; which is the rise and spring of many brawls and grudges that neighbours have against one another, Lev. 6:2; So in over-stenting of ground beyond what falls to their share, shifting to bear proportionable burdens to their profit, breaking over any of the conditions of their fellowship, and raising their own gain out of their neighbour's loss, and many such things which men do to others that they would not have done to themselves; and therefore are pieces of injustice, and sorts of theft, here condemned.

6thly, It is broken in the matter of neighbourhood, as by removing marches or land-marks, Prov. 22:28; carelessness to keep our neighbours from skaith by us, whereas justice requires we should be as loath to do wrong to our neighbours, as to receive it from them. Far more when it is done designedly, as for people to stand and feed their beasts on their neighbour's grass, at times when they know they cannot be caught in the thievish act. And of this sort is the turning out of beasts in the night-time, when there is no probability but they will be in their neighbour's skaith, though they resolve to rise early, and set them right ere they can be noticed.

7thly, It is broken in matters of trust. Treachery under trust is amongst the worst pieces of injustice. Thus men are guilty when they give hurtful counsel to those that trust to them, and so betray them; when partners in trading are unfaithful one to another; when men have other people's business among their hands, their substance or their work, and prove unfaithful, because it is in the power of their hand. But the worst of all this sort is unfaithfulness to poor orphans left to men's care and tutory, whom many hard hearts can treat most unjustly, to their loss or ruin, and to the bringing of a curse on themselves, God being the Judge of the fatherless in a special manner.

8thly, It is broken in the case of hiring many ways. As, (1.) When men wilfully or carelessly abuse a thing which they have hired, it is a piece of injustice. So men may be guilty in abusing the house they dwell in, or the horse they ride on, or the land they possess. (2.) When hirelings make no conscience of working honestly for their wages, as when they take wages for work, they have not skill to manage to the advantage of those that employ them; or when they spend time carelessly, and are not diligent for the advantage of those that employ them; and much more when they designedly work slightly for their own greater gain. (3.) When the hireling is defrauded in the matter of his wages, either by keeping it from him altogether, or not giving it him in due time, when it is in the power of our hand, or paying him with any insufficient thing, Jam. 5:4.

9thly, This command is broken in retaining instead of restoring what is not ours, but our neighbour's. Thus men are guilty in concealing things found, and with-holding them from the right owners when they are known, whom, according to the weight of the matter, they should be at pains to know; much more when, being found, it is dispatched so as our neighbour can never have it again, Deut. 22:1, 2;

So in all cases, where restitution is necessary, the retaining is a continued theft; for what we have taken away from others, we should be ready to restore. Indeed the party's giving of it takes away the necessity of restitution, and that though it be but rationally presumable that they do not desire such restitution.

10thly, It is broken in the matter of borrowing and not paying again. As, (1.) When people make no conscience of restoring what they have borrowed for their use, or preserving it entire, that it be not notably the worse of them. Borrowing and lending is a necessary bond of society among neighbours; and as lenders are obliged to be neighbourly, so borrowers should be so too, Exod. 22:14. (2.) Refusing to help our neighbour, by lending where our own affairs will spare it, and he is in straits, Matth. 5:42; and particularly a rigid standing at a distance from all lending to those that are low in the world, and under a particular strait; for in that case, I shewed before that it was a duty to lend to such, such a portion of money or goods as we can well bear the loss of, though never repaid, Luke 6:35. (3.) Not paying our just debts, if we are able, Psal. 37:21. And of this sort is borrowing what we are in no probable condition to pay. (4.) The staving off of payment, and shifting it, and obliging people to vexatious law-suits for the recovering of their due; for that is a sort of robbery, Prov. 3:30; And so is the involving people in law-suits for an unjust debt (5.) Lastly, Extortion in compensation for loans, Ezek. 22:12; which we call usury or ocker, Psal. 15 ult. and the requiring of all our debts rigidly, without mercy or compassion, Isa. 58:3.

11thly, It is broken by an uncharitable use of what is our own. The sovereign Proprietor of the world may do what he will; but so may not we, that are bound to use what is ours in the way of charity towards our neighbour. This is done many ways, particularly by the two following, taken notice of in the Larger Catechism on this command.

(1.) By unjust inclosures and depopulations, that is, inclosing grounds and dispeopling them, whereby it comes to pass that houses are pulled down, and families cast out, to make room for beasts or so; and so the country is dispeopled, and some one, or a few, are built up on the ruins of many, Isa. 5:8. Micah 2:2.

(2.) By ingrossing commodities to enhance the price, whereby one gets such a commodity all in his own hand, so that he makes all that need it depend on him, and makes his own price as he will, seeing people cannot mend themselves at another hand. Such is the hoarding up of corn and other necessary things for a dearth, that they will net sell when people stand in need of them, Prov. 11:26.

12thly, It is broken by oppression, when a man, by his own power, favour, or interest, bears down his neighbours, either thrusting them from their right, or with-holding them from their due, or stretches beyond what his own right and title will warrant him, to the prejudice of a weaker party. Thus magistrates may oppress their subjects, masters their servants, landlords their tenants, and one powerful tenant or neighbour his weaker neighbour. This is a horrid sin in the sight of God, for men to use their power to distress others that are weaker than they. It is a sort of murder, condemned in the sixth command, Micah 3:2, 3 and of theft or robbery, condemned in the eighth, Ezek. 22:7.

13thly, It is broken by partaking with thieves or unjust persons, 50:18 and partakers in sin may lay their account to be partakers in plagues with the sinner. Now, partakers with thieves or unjust persons are,

(1.) All that encourage and tempt them to it: these directly concur to the guilt.

(2.) All that receive or harbour, stolen goods, Prov. 29:25. Such are all that join with them to hide what is taken away from their neighbours; such as wittingly and willingly take them from them as gifts, or that buy them from them, because they get a round pennyworth; but they are the dearest ever they bought, if they knew the matter as it is; such as wittingly and willingly receive the profit of them; so the husbands, wives, children, and servants, are guilty of the theft of their relatives in that case. Doubly deceitful and cruel are they who receive the pickeries of children.

(3.) Such as do not hinder it when it is in their power; when people see a person at that soul-ruining trade, and let them be doing; certainly know them guilty, and yet will not so much as tell them of it prudently; though perhaps they will spread it to others, and then set their foot on it.

Lastly, This command is broken by unmercifulness to the poor, shutting up our bowels of compassion against them, which locks up the hand from giving them in their need. I shall say two things of it.

(1.) It is a complication of many sins in one. For,

[1.] It is a theft, Eph. 4:28. It is a taking from them what is their due by the law of God: for though we have the right of property in our own goods, the truly poor have a right of charity in them, so far as they need and we can spare.

[2.] It is ingratitude to God, who has given us so much, and yet in that case we will not part with a portion of it, when he requires it back by the poor, his receivers. It is the Lord himself that asks of us by the poor, and it is horrid ingratitude to refuse him, Mat. 25:40, 41.

[3.] It is perfidiousness in the stewardship which God has committed to us, Luke 16:10 as if a steward should use all for himself, and starve his master's family.

[4.] Lastly, It is a sort of murder, 1 John 3:15–17. For as the fire may be put out by with-holding fuel, as well as pouring water on it; so a man's life may be taken away by denying him the supports of life, as well as by cutting his throat.

(2.) So it brings on a complication of strokes from God. [1.] It is a moth in what a man has, and directly tends to poverty and want, Prov. 11:24, 23 for what men thus hold together, God in his anger scatters. [2.] It is inconsistent with the love of God, 1 John 3:17 and the want of bowels to the poor is the want of pure religion before God, Jam. 1 ult. [3.] Lastly, As men deal with the poor unmercifully, so they may expect God will deal with them, Prov. 21:13. Jam. 2:13.

Thus I have gone through the duties required, and the sins forbidden in this command, as they occurred. But a tender conscience, in applying this command in practice, will find much more than what I have said. And when we come to the light of the Lord at the great day, things will be seen required and forbidden in it (I doubt not,) that neither you nor I have thought of. Who can understand his errors? O what need of the blood of Christ, and grace to repent, and turn from our evil ways!

I shall now shut up my discourse on this command with two dehortations.

FIRST, I would dehort all and every one from stealing. Let every one abhor this sin. Let such as have stole, steal no more, but repent. I wish there were no ground to insist on this; but I am convinced that there is. I shall,

1. Offer some motives to press the forsaking of this sin.
2. Consider some occasions of it, and expose them.
3. Point out the remedies against it.

FIRST, I shall offer some motives to press the forsaking of this sin.

1. Consider how shocking it is to nature's light, that teaches us to do to others as we would be done to. So that if conscience be but in the deadthraw with the thief, and not quite dead, he is judged and condemned from within in the very act. No wonder the heart quake, and the hands tremble, when they are put out, over the belly of the conscience, to that unlawful gain.
2. Consider the reproach of it. How disgraceful a name is that of a thief! If conscience have no weight with people, may they not regard their credit? Do not people regard to be hissed at by others? Job 30:5. It is true, they hope to carry it secretly; but how often is it seen that a bird of the air carrieth the voice, and they are surprised one time or other with shame covering their face?
3. It quite mars our acceptance and communion with God. The thief excommunicates himself from the presence of the Lord. He may pray to God, but God will not hear him; may come to sermons, but there is nothing for him there but words of anger. Judas was a thief, and both preached and prayed; but had no intercourse with God in these exercises. When the thief brings in the stolen goods, God goes out; and is not that a sad exchange, and are not the things stolen dear wares? And while he enjoys the sweet of it, it is mixed with the vinegar of God's wrath; till he repent, and restore to, if he be able, he can have no more access to God than the murderer while he has his

sword in his neighbour's body, or the adulterer while his whore is in his arms, Jer. 7:9, 10.

4. Nay, it brings down a curse instead of a blessing. While he swallows down these goods, the curse goes down with it, which will choke him at length. It brings a curse on him, and that he has otherwise, Zech. 5:2–4. Sometimes it works on his own substance like a moth, and what he has decays, and do what he will he is always poor. Sometimes it works like a lion, so that though he have a full life of it a while by the gains of unrighteousness, yet at length all is swallowed up from him together, either by the hand of God or of men. However, it makes always a blasted, withered soul.

5. Lastly, It will ruin people eternally. The thief is liable to three tribunals. (1.) Of the state, seeing the laws of the land strike against it. Theft is punished with death, how equitably, I shall not say, for there seems to be no proportion betwixt men's goods and lives. Pickery, or small theft, is punished arbitrarily, with disgrace enough. (2.) Of the church: for the discipline of the church ought to strike against it, and they are censurable for it, even to excommunication, 1 Cor. 5:11, 12. But it is for the most part so cleverly carried, that neither church nor state can touch them. But they will not escape. (3.) The tribunal of God, who is a Judge that will not want witnesses to prove the fact which no eye saw, while himself is omniscient, and there is a conscience within men's breast. And therefore I, as a messenger of that Judge, the eternal God, do in his name and authority summon, arrest, and bind over, every stealer, and partaker with stealers, hearing me, or that should be hearing me this day, to answer it before the tribunal of God; denouncing the eternal vengeance of God and everlasting damnation against them, to be assuredly executed against them if they repent not in time. And let the timber and stones of this house, and every one of you, be

witnesses to this execution, to be produced when they and I shall stand before that tribunal, 1 Cor. 6:9, 10. And O but it is dear bought that is got at the rate of eternal burnings!

SECONDLY, I shall consider some occasions of this sin, and expose them.

1. Solitude, people dwelling alone, which gives them fair occasion to play their tricks. It is marked of that graceless place Laish, Judg. 18:7 that they were far from neighbours. Such a solitary place we live in; and readily solitude produces either great saints or black devils, as in other things, so particularly uncleanness and thievery; and therefore the night is the thief's time, because of the solitude of it. It is no small business to keep a clean conscience on a hill head or in a glen, or in the black and dark night, where there is an occasion of sinning.

But O consider, that God's eye is on you at all times and in all places! and whatever solitude ye may have to sin in, ye will be called to an account before the throng of the whole world, angels and men, and in broad day-light.

2. Poverty becomes an occasion of it, through the corruption of men's hearts, Prov. 30:8, 9. Graceless poor bodies can hardly think but they have a dispensation to steal.

But surely God, who will not have the persons of the poor respected in judgment, Lev. 19:15 never gave a dispensation to them to steal, but commands them to be content, and to seek for his sake what they have not, and cannot want. Poor thieves are thieves as well as others; and I doubt not but it is that which keeps some always poor, Job 30:3–5. It is true, Solomon says, that as his temptation is stronger, his guilt is less than others, Prov. 6:30; but still he is guilty, ver. 31;

and all that can be expected from this is to have a less hot place in hell than others; and that is but cold comfort.

3. Idleness and laziness, Eph. 4:20. There is a generation that will not ply themselves, work and win, and they cannot want, and they must steal. They idle away their time when they might be provided as others, and then the time comes that they cannot want, and they steal from their neighbours what they provided for themselves with the sweat of their brows.

Ye have two sins to account for here, your idleness and stealth; the one will not excuse, hot aggravate the other. Ye make yourselves a prey to the devil; and when the devil finds you idle, it is no wonder he puts work in your hands.

4. A fair and easy opportunity meeting with a covetous heart. When there was a wedge of gold lying for the uptaking before Achan, he could not hold in his hands. People that have a mind to steal in such a place, need not go off their own field, or from their own flock, to steal; their neighbour's goods cannot be kept from mixing with theirs, and their is an opportunity to the wish of a covetous heart.

But if people would think with themselves, Now, God in his holy providence is trying me, now the devil is waiting for my ensnaring: shall I sin because I have an opportunity? May not God send me to hell then, having such an occasion against me?

5. The smallness of the thing. They think it is but a small thing the owner may well enough spare that, it will not do him much harm. It is but this and but that.

But be what it will, it will make thee but a thief for stealing of it. And wilt thou sell thy soul for such a small thing? The way of sin is down

the hill; let the devil get in a finger, and he will have in his hand next. He that for a little will sin, will mend his service if the devil will mend his wages. At first perhaps it is but a bit of meat, then a parcel of peats, then a quantity of fodder, and then a sheep, and so on till they come to the gallows here, and to hell hereafter.

6. The difficulty there is in finding it out. It is a work of darkness, which there use not to be witnesses to, and so the man or woman defies the world to make out any such thing against them; and so they go on without controul, boasting like Ephraim, 'He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand; he loveth to oppress. And Ephraim said, yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance; in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me, that were sin,' Hos. 12:7, 8.

But O what avails that? Will ye defy the God of heaven, and your own conscience, to make it out before the tribunal? and then ye say something. Till then thou art a criminal before God, and dreadful shall thy doom be. But take heed, they have been discovered that thought themselves secure because no eye saw them. When a man's day comes to fall in such a course, God can infatuate them, that he guides not his matters with common sense.

7. Lastly, Bearing with them. I will not meddle with them says one; I will not meddle with them, says another; let them fall in another's hand, and so on it goes. Justice is neglected, neighbour's are robbed, the souls of the guilty are rained, and others involved in their sin, that might prevent the progress of it, and will not. It is marked of that Laish, that there was none in it to put it to shame, Judg. 18:7. Respect to men's credit more than to their consciences, is like the tender mercies of the wicked, that are cruel.

THIRDLY, I come now to point out some remedies against this sin.

1. Let the guilty flee to the Lord Jesus Christ, for his blood and Spirit to wash away their guilt, and take away their sin. They are no more beyond the reach of mercy than other gross sinners are. In the catalogue of the Corinthian sinners, were thieves; and yet we are told, that they were washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, 1 Cor. 6:10, 11. Put the covetous heart in his hand, that he may take it away.

2. Labour to awe your hearts with the dread of the all-seeing God whose eye is ever on you; and remember, that for all these things ye do God will bring you into judgment.

3. Labour to be content with your lot, Heb. 13:5. Be content with little, if it be your lot. A little will serve nature, grace will be content with less; but lust will never have enough.

4. Lastly, Lay more stress on the quality than the quantity of what ye have. A little with God's favour, in a righteous way, is better than much with the wrath and curse of God.

SECONDLY, I would dehort from all injustice and unrighteous dealing whatsoever, in all the ways that I have shewn that the eighth commandment may be broken, besides by direct stealing, and any other way whatsoever. Be precisely upright and just in all you do, and do nothing to others that ye would not have done to you. For motives consider,

1. Whatever you gain by any unjust way, it is indirectly stolen, it is stolen in effect. Therefore God forbids all these, under the name of stealing. And there is good reason for it; for no right can be founded in wrong. Injustice can give no man a title to what is his neighbour's before God; and therefore what you have of him unjustly, is still his,

and ye are fraudulent and wrongous possessors of it, as well as if ye had directly stolen it.

2. Just and upright dealing is necessary to prove you to be saints, Psal. 15:1, 2. It is true, it will not prove it alone; men may be just to their neighbours, and yet be no saints. But he can be no saint that makes not conscience of it, be his profession and practice in religion otherwise what it will. This is clear, if you consider,

(1.) Righteousness towards men is an essential part of the image of God, Eph. 4:24, 25. And as the half-image is no image, so piety without righteousness is not God's image, nor true piety. Will God ever regard what we give him, when we make no conscience what we take from our neighbour?

(2.) Without it our service to God is but half-service, Luke 1:74, 75; and that can never be sincere, Psal 119:6. In regeneration, God writes his law on the heart, and not shreds here and there of the first table: so that where righteousness, a principal duty of the second table, is not, the law, of God is not written there.

3. That injustice in professors of religion gives a deep wound to religion itself, Rom. 2:22, 24. And indeed that religion which does not make men just neighbours to deal with, can hardly be thought to make them saints. That craft, cunning, and fraud, used by many, how inconsistent is it with Christian simplicity, the fear of an all-seeing God, and contempt of the world, which religion teaches.

4. How opposite is it to the nature of God, who is just and righteous, and whom we must follow as dear children! The unjust stand in direct opposition to him who cannot but do right. God has a special love in righteousness, Psal. 11 ult. and all injustice is an abomination to him. He has set a particular mark of abhorrence on it, Micah 6:10,

11. 'Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable? shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights?' And he has also set a particular delight in just dealing, Prov. 11:1; 'A just weight is his delight.'

5. It brings a blasting curse along with it, Prov. 13:11; 'Wealth gotten by vanity, shall be diminished.' And although it may prosper for a while, it will have a foul hinder end, Prov. 20:21; 'The end thereof shall not be blessed.' It is as a moth in the man's own labours, and sometimes eats away his substance, makes wings to it that it leaves him, and often hurries him away from it. That is a heavy word, Jer. 17:11; 'He that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.'

6. It leaves a sting in the conscience, which will be felt to smart sooner or later. Conscience is the deputy of a just God in the soul, which will be able sometimes to act its part, and both accuse, convince, condemn, and torment the unjust dealer, so that he will be ready to throw away his unjust gain, as willingly as ever one ready to be burnt did live coals out of his bosom, and as Judas did his thirty pieces of silver, though perhaps it may be out of time. A Pythagorean bought a pair of shoes upon trust: the shoemaker dies: the philosopher is glad, and thinks them gain: but a while after his conscience twitches him: he repairs to the house of the dead, casts in his money with these words, 'There, take thy due; thou livest to me, though dead to all besides.'

7. Lastly, It will exclude you out of heaven. There is a bar drawn on all unrighteous persons, that they cannot come there, 1 Cor. 6:9. The treasures of eternal glory are lost by unrighteous dealing in the world, Luke 16:11. Where then is the profit, though a man gain the

whole world? It is sad gain where a thousand times more is lost by it. Peace with God and conscience is lost by it; the soul is lost by it, and that for ever. And they who walk not by the rules of justice in the world, shall lie under the strokes of divine justice eternally.

The occasions that ensnare men into stealing might be repeated here, as occasions of other pieces of injustice. But to fence you against this evil, I offer these things.

1. Consider your unrighteous nature, and carry it to Christ to be healed by him. When Adam's nature, and ours in him, was corrupted, it was wholly so, not only with respect to the first, but the second table. There is need, then, that the plaister be as wide as the wound, Eph. 4:24. And he that would remove the bitter streams, must apply to get the fountain sweetened.

2. Accustom yourselves to acknowledge the Lord in your civil Actions, Prov. 3:6. The want of this betrays men into much unfair dealing; for where there is so little of God, there must be much of the devil.

- (1.) Eye God in these matters, as he who is your witness, and will be your judge to them. Set the Lord before you in your business, and you will fear to step wrong. May be thou canst wrong thy neighbour, and he shall not know it. But God knows it, and it cannot be hid from him. May be he cannot right himself for want of witnesses; but pray remember, that God and thy own conscience are witnesses to all that passeth betwixt you and others. And though ye may think it is long to that court-day, yet remember that awful declaration, Mal. 3:5. 'I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right,

and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.' May be thou canst bear him down from his right, but mind, the wronged party has a strong avenger, 1 Thess. 4:6. O how well might it go, if men in all their bargains, work, neighbourhood, &c. would set God thus before them!

(2.) Eye God in these matters as the fountain of strength. Alas! most men have no diffidence in themselves in these affairs, but trust themselves as in no hazard there, and thus are the betrayers of themselves, Prov. 28:26. The least of duties are too much for us alone, and in the plainest way we will go wrong, if we be not led right. Satan has snares laid for us in these things; and therefore we have need of strength from the Lord to resist them.

3. Remember ye are not only to seek your own, but your neighbour's welfare, Phil. 2:4. Selfishness is the cause of much unfair dealing. 'Lovers of themselves more than God,' and exclusively of our neighbour, are in bad condition. For a man to build up himself on another's ruins, is contrary to that love which we owe to our neighbour, as fellow-partakers of the human nature, and as members one of another as Christians, Eph. 4:25. The goodness that is most diffusive and communicative, is most like God.

4. Consider the vanity of the world. It is an overvaluing of earthly advantages that leads people aside into unrighteous ways, Hos. 12:8. A due impression of the vanity and emptiness thereof, would let you see that they are not worth a man's going off his way for them. It is not long till very little will serve us; death comes, and we have no more to do with it, a coffin and a winding sheet, and a little room in the heart of the earth, which none will grudge us, will be all we will need. What madness is it, then, to wound the conscience for such a pitiful business? All the gains of unrighteousness will never quite the cost.

5. Labour to mortify the lust of covetousness, which being indulged, the conscience will get sore stretches to satisfy it, Heb. 13:5. It cannot miss to pierce people through with many sorrows. Therefore 'love not the world,' 1 John 3:15; for whoso follow it too closely at the heels, it will dash out their brains at last.

6. A little well gotten is more worth than much otherwise, Prov. 16:8. There is a blessing in the one, a temporal one at least; but there is a curse in the other. A man may use the one with a good conscience; the other is with an ill conscience, and that is a sad sauce to the meal. The one a man has on free cost, having nothing to pay for it; the sweet of the other is squeezed out by a dear reckoning following.

7. Lastly, Remember the day is coming wherein all wrongs are to be righted, secret things brought to light, and open violence reckoned for. If men were to have no after-reckoning for these things, they might do in them as they list; but thou shalt be countable for the least farthing. The Judge is infinitely wise, and the most cunning and tricky will not get him outwitted nor shifted. He is omnipotent, and they who force their way now through all the bands of justice, shall not be able to make head against him. In all temptation that way, then awe your heart with that meditation, 'What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?' Job 31:14.

OF THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:16.—Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

THE scope of this command is the preservation of truth amongst men, which is a necessary bond of human society. And forasmuch as all the commands of the second table relate to ourselves as well as others, the meaning of this is, Thou shalt not bear false witness either against thyself or thy neighbour, and so neither wrong thy own nor thy neighbour's good name.

The positive part of this command is implied in the negative, viz. Thou shalt bear real and soothfast witness (as our law terms it) for thyself and thy neighbour, and so maintain thy own and thy neighbour's good name, so far as truth will allow. This witnessing is to be understood not only of judicial, but extrajudicial witnessing.

Quest. 'What is required in the ninth commandment?' Ans. 'The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbour's good name, especially in witness-bearing.'

I shall consider this commandment, as it relates,

- I. To truth betwixt man and man in general;
- II. To our own good name; and,
- III. To our neighbour's good name.

I. As it relates to truth betwixt man and man in the general. Truth is a sacred thing, which we are to cleave to as we would to God, who is true essentially, and therefore called truth itself. It was a notable saying of a philosopher, that truth is so great a perfection, that if God would render himself visible, he would chuse light for his body, and truth for his soul. He was not far out, for the scripture tells us of Christ, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, that he is the light, and the truth. And, on the other hand, it holds out Satan as the prince of darkness and father of lies. And there is a mighty affinity betwixt light and truth, darkness and lies. Truth is to the soul as light is to the body; and they that walk in the light, will walk in truth. Now, this command requires the maintaining of truth. We may take up this in these two things.

1. We must speak truth at all times when we speak, Eph. 4:25; 'Speak the truth every man with his neighbour.' I say when we speak, for we must not be always speaking. Nature having drawn a double bar on our tongues, teaches that our tongues must not be in our mouths as a loose window in the wind, ever clattering. And if discretion keep the key of the door of our lips, we will not be of those that cannot rest till all the truth that is in be out, Prov. 14:33; but we must never speak any thing but truth.

What is truth? Pilate asked the question at Christ, but did not stay for an answer, John 18:38. Truth is a harmony, a double harmony. Anatomists observe, that the tongue in man is tied by a double string to the heart. To speaking of truth is required, (1.) A harmony of the tongue with the heart. (2.) A harmony of the tongue with the thing itself.

(1.) If we think not as we speak, we do not speak truth; the discord betwixt the tongue and the heart mars the harmony, Psal. 15:2. We

must speak as we think, then, and the tongue must be a faithful interpreter of the mind, otherwise it is a false tongue. So truth may be spoken by a man, and yet he be a false speaker, because he thinks not as he speaks.

(2.) But that is not all: if we do not speak also as the thing in itself is, we do not speak true. For there must be a harmony betwixt our hearts and the thing as it is in itself. For we must not think that our mistaken apprehensions of things can stamp lies to pass current for truths, just because we think them so, 2 Thess. 2:11.

The sum of the matter lies here: It is our duty to speak truth, that is, so as our mind agree with the matter, and our mouth with our mind. We must speak things as we think them to be, and think them to be what they are. And hence we may see that modesty is very necessary to preserve us in the truth, in this our weak and dark condition. Self-conceited ignorance, and weakness joined with confidence, whereby people are so peremptory in their own uptakings of things, without any regard to the different light of others, is a great enemy to truth.

2. We must especially speak the truth at sometimes, that is, in witness-bearing. This is twofold.

1st, Witness-bearing in judgment. This command requires us to bear witness, and that faithfully, when called thereto. Now, we are to speak the truth judicially, when we are lawfully called thereunto, by the authority, whether of church or state.

2dly, Extrajudicial witness-bearing, wherein a man is called to declare the truth, though there be no human authority obliging him thereto, as often falls out in the case of private controversies betwixt neighbours, where a third person is desired to witness the truth. Yea, a man may be obliged to this witness-bearing where he is not so

much as desired to speak, as when we hear our neighbour charged with any thing unjustly, we are obliged to vindicate his innocency, it being known to us.

Now, the rule in both these cases is this, that then is a man or a woman called to declare the truth under the pain of God's displeasure, when God's glory or their neighbour's good may be procured by it; when the dishonour of God and their neighbour's hurt, either of soul, body, name, or goods, may be avoided by it.

Both these sorts of witness-bearing are necessary for the maintaining and promoting of truth, the honour of God, and our neighbour's real good, though it appear perhaps to be for his hurt, in discovering his wickedness, or the wrong done by him, Zech. 8:16.

In judicial witness-bearing, God calls men to witness the truth, by the mouth of those to whom he has given authority, making them either gods, or ambassadors for God on the earth. And therefore to decline it in that case, is to decline the divine call, and mar the course of justice, Isa. 59:14; and so the honour of God and the good of our neighbour.

And in the other case there is a real call from the Lord unto it, as we tender his honour and our neighbour's welfare.

Neither ought people to scare at witness-bearing judicially, because of the oath of God; for a lawful oath, imposed by lawful authority, for the honour of God and the good of our neighbour, is a duty whereby we worship and glorify our God, Jer. 4:2. Now, in this case of witness-bearing,

1. It is our duty to tell the truth; and, (1.) Not to conceal it, or any part of it known to us, which may make for the clearing of the matter

in question, 2 Sam. 14:18, 19, 20; that is, to tell it fully. (2.) Freely, not being awed by any person, or any evil that may thereby come unto us by the guilty or otherwise, 1 Sam. 19:4, 5. (3.) Clearly, not mincing, obscuring, and wrapping up the truth, so as they who hear it know not what to make of it, Josh. 7:19. (4.) Sincerely, 2 Chron. 19:9; without any influence of malice, or partial counsel, without feud or favour.

2. It is our duty to tell nothing but the truth; that were to bear false witness with a witness indeed. Truth stands in no need of lies to support it, Prov. 6:19.

II. As it relates to our own good name, we are to maintain and promote it. It should be every body's care to procure and maintain their reputation; for a good name is a very precious thing, which we should love and be careful of, Prov. 22:1. And they who value not their reputation, will hardly be found to value either their souls or bodies. Now, it must be cared for and maintained in words, and by deeds.

First, In words, and that these three ways.

1. By speaking nothing but the truth concerning ourselves. They that seek a name to themselves by lying and boasting, ordinarily lose what they have, instead of getting more, Prov. 25:14. And they that would preserve their name, let them be careful of their word, to fulfil their lawful promises, Psal. 15:4.

2. By concealing prudently those secrets concerning ourselves which we are not obliged to discover. They sin against God and themselves who unnecessarily give another their reputation to keep, Prov. 25:9, 10; 'Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another; lest he that heareth it, put thee to shame, and thine

infamy turn not away.' This is not to be extended to the concealing of scandalous sins, which people are lawfully called to confess: for in that case the name of a confessing penitent is better than that of an obstinate scandalous sinner, Prov. 28:13; 'He that covereth his sins, shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.'

3. By defending our good name when it is unjustly attacked, as our Lord did, when he said to the Jews, 'I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me,' John 8:49. It is a tender point to be wounded in; and if it be done wrongously, we are enemies to ourselves, if we use not all means competent to clear ourselves.

Secondly, By deeds, we are to care for it practically.

1. If we would maintain our good name, let us not do evil things. An ill name will follow an ill life; who can help it? If a man steal, let him thank himself that his good name is lost. A vile practice will at length make a man's name stink.

2. We must not do what is like evil, 1 Thess. 5:22. They who take a liberty to themselves in suspicious practices, throw away their own reputation. And if they be innocent as to gross things, they are in the nearest disposition to be guilty. We should follow the apostle in this case, Phil. 4:8. 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise think on these things.' Julius Cæsar having divorced his wife, was called to witness against her; and being interrogated, declared he knew nothing of the business; and being asked, Why then he had put her away? Because, said he, I would have all my relations as free from the suspicion as the guilt of a bad action.

III. As it relates to our neighbour's good name. We are to maintain, and promote it too, as far as is consistent with truth. And for this cause there is required of us,

1. A charitable opinion and esteem of our neighbours, 1 Cor. 13:7; being ready to hope the best of them, unless the contrary be evident.

2. A desire of, and rejoicing in, their good name and reputation, Rom. 1:8. We are to love them as ourselves, and therefore should be glad of the sweet savour of their name, though their reputation outshine ours.

3. Sorrowing and grieving for their faults, 2 Cor. 12:21. The blasting of any body's name by their sins, should make us mourn, and the rather that the same root of bitterness is in all naturally: and they are the deeper in God's debt that get through the world with an unblemished reputation.

4. Covering their infirmities with the mantle of love, 1 Pet. 4:8. Every body has some weak side, and needs a cover from others in love: and it is a dangerous business to aggravate and blaze abroad this to their dishonour.

5. Freely acknowledging the gifts and graces that are in any, 1 Cor. 1:4–7. As none are so good but they have some discernible infirmity, so hardly is one so bad but there is some one thing or another praiseworthy in them. And if it were but one thing, it is our duty frankly to own it.

6. Defending their innocence, as Ahimelech did David's, 1 Sam. 22:14; 'Who is so faithful,' says he 'among all thy servants, as David, which is the king's son-in-law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house?' It is necessary and just to defend the

innocent, especially if absent, against the poisonous bites of a viperous tongue lest we be held consenting to the tongue-murder of him, in God's account.

7. An unwillingness to receive an ill report of them, and a readiness to admit a good report of them, 1 Cor. 13:6, 7. Psal. 15:3. Love readily opens the door to a good report of our neighbour, but is not very hasty to let in an evil one, being truly sorry if it should be true.

8. Discouraging tale bearers, flatterers, and slanderers, who go about gathering all the filth they can find to throw upon the name and reputation of others. These should be discouraged as the pests of human society, as David did, 'Whose privily slandereth his neighbour,' says he, 'him will I cut off,' Psal. 101:5.

9. Lastly, Watching over one another giving sound and seasonable admonitions, checks, and reproofs, for what is ill or ill like in others, Lev. 19:17; and telling themselves of it, so as it may not be blabbed out without necessity: whereby both their souls might be timely preserved from the snare, and their good name preserved too.

Having thus given a view of the duties required in the ninth commandment, I proceed to consider what is forbidden in it.

Quest. 'What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?'

Ans. 'The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbour's good name.'

The sins forbidden in this commandment are here reduced to three heads.

1. Whatsoever is prejudicial to truth.

2. Whatsoever is prejudicial to our own good name.
3. Whatsoever is prejudicial to our neighbour's good name.

These I shall consider in order.

I. This command forbids whatsoever is prejudicial to truth. The God of truth has set this command as a hedge and fence about truth, that it be not wronged. For it cannot be prejudiced but by the same means that we wrong God and our neighbour too. Now there are two cases in which truth is apt to suffer hurt.

First, Judicially, in judgment, in judicatories, whether ecclesiastical or civil. There truth is to make its most solemn appearance, Zech. 8:16; and lies there are most sinful. The judges judge for God, and so the solemnity of the thing ought to strike the greater awe on all to do or say nothing prejudicial to truth. Now truth is prejudiced in judgment, and this command broken,

1. By judges when they pervert judgment, respecting persons, and passing unjust sentences, Prov. 17:15 calling evil good, and good evil, and rewarding the righteous as the wicked, and the wicked as the righteous: and iniquitous laws can never bear men out in this, Isa. 5:23 and 10:1.

2. By the complainer, while he falsely accuses or charges another, Luke 19:8; forges writs, Psal. 119:69; or suborns false witnesses, Acts 6:13.

3. By the defender, when he denies a just charge, being called to a free confession, Prov. 28:13. And seeing judges are set to judge for the Lord, this must be reckoned a lying to the Lord.

4. By the witnesses, and that when they either conceal the truth, not discovering freely and fully what they know, or when they tell any thing that is not truth, Lev. 5:1. Prov. 19:9. And thus people may prejudice truth, when they keep up what might make the truth appear, and the cause go right in judgment.

5. Lastly, By the pleaders, while they appear for an unjust cause to bear down truth and justice, Acts 24:2, &c.

Secondly, Extrajudicially, in common conversation and otherwise. Wheresoever we go, we should carry truth along with us; but out of judgment truth is often prejudiced; and that these three ways.

1. By unfaithfulness in conversation, when people slip the bond of their word, and make nothing of breaking lawful promises, Rom. 1:31. A man ought to value his word highly, as a man, and much more as a Christian. That is a sad complaint 'There is no truth in the land,' Hos. 4:1; when men do with their promises as an ape with its collar, slipping it on and off as it sees meet.

2. By undue silence. Strange is the disorder that sin has brought into the world; as in the tongue, which is often going when it should be quiet, and often quiet when it should speak. Our tongues are our glory; but they are often found wrapt up in a dark cloud of silence, when they should be shining forth. Truth is prejudiced by silence, when the honour of God, or the good of our neighbour, either in the way of justice, or charity, calls for the discovery of it. Thus men sin against God, the truth, and their neighbour, when they hold their peace, (1.) When iniquity calls for a reproof from them. (2.) When it calls for a complaint to, or giving information thereof, unto others, Lev. 5:1. Deut. 13:8. God has given men a tongue as a banner to be displayed for him. To run away then with flying colours, in such a case, is very dishonourable to God, and dangerous to ourselves, Mark

8:38. It is most injurious to our neighbour, whom we think so to gratify, being a snare to his soul, Lev. 19:17; and to ourselves, by involving us in their guilt, Eph. 5:7, 11.

3. By undue speaking. The world is a world of iniquity, and several ways speaks to the prejudice of truth. Truth may be prejudiced thus,

(1.) By speaking it unseasonably. Truth hath suffered much prejudice by the unseasonable venting of it: therefore people must take heed, not only what but when they speak; for 'there is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak,' Eccl. 3:7; 'A fool uttereth all his mind; but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards,' Prov. 29:11.

(2.) By speaking truth maliciously, as Doeg did. It was both unseasonable, while Saul was in a rage against David, 1 Sam. 22:8, 9; and malicious, Psal. 52:2, 3. This is the way how the devil speaks truth; as he stirred up the damsel possessed with a spirit of divination, to cry concerning Paul and Silas, 'These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation,' Acts 16:16, 17; and this very maliciously, as the context shews.

(3.) By perverting truth to a wrong meaning, as the false witnesses did against Christ, Matth. 26:60, 61. What he spoke of his body, they turned it to the temple of Jerusalem. So it is not enough that we speak truth, but it must be seasonable and charitable too.

4. By equivocal expressions to the prejudice of truth or justice; in which the sense goes doubtfully, either true or false. Of the same nature are mental reservations. Thus Isaac sinned in denying his wife, and calling her his sister, Gen. 26:7, 9. They are indeed lies, an untruth, spoken with an intention to deceive; for words must be taken according to the common use of them, and answers are

understood as given according to the question. The devil, who is the father of lies, brought this manner of speaking into the world, Gen. 3:5 and that way he was wont to deliver his oracles; for he never speaks truth, but either maliciously or equivocally, as he moved the false prophets to speak in the affair of Ahab's going up to Ramoth-Gilead, 1 Kings 22:6, 12.

5. Lastly, By lies, Eph. 4:25. Lying is prejudicial to truth, as darkness to light, and is from the devil. But observe some speeches that are like lies, but are not so.

(1.) Figurative speeches, though not literally true, are not lies, as Christ's calling himself a vine, John 15:1. Of this sort are allegories and fables, such as Jotham's parable, Judg. 9:8; parables, Luke 16; hyperbolic speeches, John 12 ult; ironical speeches, Gen. 3:22. 1 Kings 18:27. In the former the sense and meaning of them is agreeable to truth, and fables and parables are a sort of speech by pictures. In irony the gesture readily explains the meaning, 1 Kings 22:15.

(2.) The telling a part of the truth, and concealing another part of it, when there is no obligation on us from the honour of God or our neighbour to discover it, is not lying, 1 Sam. 16:2; for though we are never to tell but the truth, yet we are not always obliged to tell all the truth.

(3.) Speeches according to present intention, without prejudicing further liberty, as when one at table refuses such a thing, yet changes his mind, and takes it, or on importunity yields, as Gen. 19:2, 3. 2 Cor. 1:17.

Lastly, Threatenings not executed when the condition understood is done, and promises not fulfilled when the condition is not

performed. Now, these being set aside, consider,

1. Sometimes, though the words agree with the mind of the speaker, yet not with the thing itself. This is called a material lie, or an untruth, and is sinful, as disagreeing with the truth, Isa. 59:13.

2. If the words agree not with the mind of the speaker, that is a formal lie, the tongue speaking contrary to what the mind thinks. Lies are of four sorts.

1. Jestling lies; that is, when a person speaks that which is contrary to the known truth, in a jesting or ludicrous way; and embellishes his discourse with his own fictions, designing thereby to impose on others. This they are guilty of who invent false news, or tell stories for truth, which they know to be false, by way of amusement. Hosea complains of this practice, chap. 7:3. 'They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies.'

2. Officious lies; that is, when one speaks that which is contrary to truth, and the dictates of his conscience, to do good to himself or others thereby, or with a design to cover a fault, or excuse ourselves or others, Job 13:7. 'Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him?' Rom. 3:8.

3. Pernicious lies; that is, when a person raises and spreads a false report with a design to do mischief to another. This is a complicated crime, and the worst species of this sin, a thing which is an abomination to the Lord, Prov. 6:17.

4. Rash lies; that is, when a person uttereth that which is false through surprise, inadvertency, and customary looseness, as in the case of the tidings brought to David, that Absalom had slain all the

king's sons at the entertainment he had provided for them at Baal-hazor, 2 Sam. 13:30.

Concerning all these species of lying, we may say, that God is a God of truth, but the devil, the father of lies, who incites men to imitate him in this ancient hellish trade, by which he destroyed the founders of the human race; that the word of God expressly condemns every kind of untruth; and that people should never reckon that a small thing which will land the transgressors in hell, Rev. 21:8.

II. This command forbids whatsoever is injurious to our own good name. We ought all to be very careful of our reputation, and not to bear false witness for or against ourselves. Now, people may be guilty of the breach of this command with respect to themselves,

1. In their hearts, either by thinking too meanly of themselves, or too highly. Though people can never be too humble, yet they may be too blind to what God has done, for them; and there may be a great deal of bastard self-denial, which hinders men to be thankful to God, and useful to others, as in the case of Moses, Exod. 4:10–14. But the most dangerous extreme is thinking too highly of ourselves, Rom. 12:16. This is a most dangerous piece of false witness, which the false heart gives in favour of self.

2. In their actions, when people either do evil, or that which at least is evil-like. When Eli's sons lost their tenderness, and gave themselves to debauchery, they lost their good name. An unsavoury report followed their vicious and base life, 1 Sam. 2:24. And there are such things as are of evil report, suspicious practices, evil-like things, that though they be not the worst of things, yet they make way for them; by these, persons throw away their good name, Prov. 5:8, 9 and witness against themselves, that they are untender and vicious persons, in a near disposition to the greatest evil.

3. In words. And thus men may be guilty by,

(1.) Bearing witness against themselves unnecessarily, without a due call, discovering their own secret faults and infirmities, especially to those who have no true sense of piety, but are ready to improve the same to the reproach of them, or of religion, or both, Prov. 25:9, 10. 'Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another: lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away.'

(2.) Bearing false witness against ourselves, as accusing ourselves unjustly, denying the gifts and graces of God in us, as Job says, chap. 27:5, 6. 'God forbid that I should justify you: till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.' Pride often puts people on this, that they may appear the more humble. But humility never teaches men to rob God of his praise, or to lie against the truth. Lying against our minds can never be good, though it seem to humble us.

(3.) Bearing false witness for ourselves. Thus people are guilty, upon being duly called to confess their sins, they deny them, hide them, and, over the belly of their conscience, cause their tongues witness for them, Prov. 28:13: 'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.' It is sad witnessing when the conscience within tells people they are lying.

Of this sort is vain-glorious boasting and bragging. There are some, who, when they speak of themselves, are sure to speak very big, as the Pharisee did, Luke 18:11. A man or woman that is a boaster, will be found to be a liar ordinarily. They will boast of what they have not, or of doing what they never did, Prov. 25:14. 'Whoso boasteth of a false gift, is like clouds and wind without rain.' Yea, some will accuse

themselves of wickedness which they did not commit, for the pleasure that they take in boasting of mischief. And where the man has any ground to walk on in his boasting, he is a liar in magnifying it, as was the case of the Pharisee, Luke 18:12. It was one of the basest offices for a man to trumpet his own praise: It is a great evidence there is little in him, that he makes so much noise with it. Such are in the black roll, 2 Tim. 3:2.

III. I come now to consider this command as it forbids what is injurious to our neighbour and his good name. We may contract guilt in injuring our neighbour, over the belly of this command, several ways.

First, In our hearts; for all the commands of God reach to the heart as well as the outward man. We are injurious in our hearts to our neighbour's good name, by,

1. Unjust suspicions of him, 1 Tim. 6:4. Thus Potiphar injured Joseph, suspecting him of that villainy which he was far from. Christ bids us beware of men, and so not to be credulous. But there is a medium betwixt vain credulity and evil groundless suspicion, which fills men's heads with a foresight of what others will do when they have such and such temptations, from no light but that of their own uncharitable spirits.

2. Uncharitable judging and condemning of others in our hearts, Matth. 7:1. The prevailing of the censorious humour amongst us, is a speaking evidence of this waspish disposition, which is a compound of pride, rashness, harshness, lightness, and emptiness, directly opposite to the love and charity that we owe to our neighbours, which 'beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things,' 1 Cor. 13:7. I grant, that to call an evil action an evil thing, and an habitual grossly profane life a mark of a profane

heart, is no breach of charity, Gal. 5:19. But to lash men in our hearts, beyond what the habitual frame of their lives gives ground for, is that uncharitable judging.

It is the product of pride and self-conceit; for the man makes himself the rule, so all that is beyond him, or does not reach his length, must fall under his condemnatory sentence; he invades the throne of God, setting up one for himself in his neighbour's heart, not confining himself to his outward actions, Rom. 14:10. It is rashness, flowing from want of consideration; it is harshness, carrying their judgment farther than the matter will bear; it is lightness and emptiness, for they are confident of that which really they do not know. How confident were the barbarians, upon seeing the viper fasten on Paul's hand, that he was a murderer! &c. Acts 28:4. Thus men condemn the actions of others, merely from their own rashness, as Eli did Hannah; and, which is worst of all, they will judge their state before God from things utterly unable to bear the weight of their presumptuous sentence, as Job's friends did; and thrust in themselves to the secrets of their hearts, as those mentioned, Rom. 14:4. 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?' V judging their consciences: the like whereto was the horrible judgment some have expressed touching those that took the oath of abjuration, that they had gone over the belly of their conscience, and in other cases too. If you think that I am speaking for it, ye are uncharitable: but I would not for the world judge other men's consciences at that rate. It is sufficient for me to condemn men's evil actions which I see, not to judge their consciences, which I neither see nor can see. Were the impressions of the tremendous tribunal of God more on men's spirits, they would not be so hasty to judge before the time.

3. Misconstructing others, their intentions, words, and actions. No innocence can be a safeguard against that temper, which is always

ready to give the worst turn to the intentions, words, and actions of their neighbour, which they are capable to bear. It is like the corrupted stomach, that corrupts whatever is put into it. See Neh. 6:6. Rom. 3:8. Psal. 69:10.

4. Contempt of others in our hearts, undervaluing and thinking basely of them; when men stop their eyes from beholding whatever is praise-worthy in their neighbour, and gather together what makes against them, and sit brooding on that. This is evil in all cases, but especially where men contemn others for what is good in them, 2 Sam. 6:16. We are even in our hearts to give every one their due; and so far as we with-hold it, we are guilty, Luke 18:9, 10, 11.

5. Envy and grieving at the just and deserved credit or reputation of any. This is a most unchristian and truly Pharisaical temper, Matt. 21:15. It is the nature of envy to torment a man with the good of his neighbour. What refreshes the charitable spirit, vexes and frets theirs. They are like the moon that turns pale and wan whensoever the sun begins to shine above the horizon. But if men loved their neighbour as themselves, and their God more than themselves, they would rejoice at their neighbour's reputation, though it should outshine our own, Numb. 11:29.

6. Rejoicing in the disgrace and infamy of others, Jer. 48:27. This is a devil-like sin, for dust is the serpent's meat. Whatever mischief befalls men is the devil's delight: and so there are many, that if a black cloud be thrown over the reputation of others, it tickles their hearts, they have a secret satisfaction in it; their hearts say within them, Aha! so we would have it. And many vent their satisfaction in outward rejoicing at it.

7. Lastly, Fond admiration of men, Jude. 16. As the former are sins in defect, so this is a sin in excess. And indeed we become guilty by

thinking too highly and above what is meet of any man, as well as thinking too meanly of them, 1 Cor. 4:6. This is both a sin and a snare: for those whom we fondly admire, we are apt to imitate in evil as well as good, and so to follow them to the prejudice of truth. It is a sad evidence of the corruption of a man's heart, that he is ready either to idolize or else to despise others.

Secondly, In our lives and actions. Men may injure the good name of others without speaking a word against them.

1. Men may be guilty of the breach of this command, to the prejudice of their neighbour's good name, by bare gesture of the body, Prov. 6:13. 'He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers.' A man may with a wink, a nod, a grave look, a sigh, &c. stab another's reputation, filling others by these means with suspicions of him unjustly; or when one is slandered in our presence, making such signs as import our consent thereto.

2. Drawing others into things that are ill or evil-like, and of bad report. Thus many ruin one another's reputation, till they are as rotten things laid one upon another, which corrupt each other, till both send forth a stinking smell, Matth. 18:7. They that lay the stumbling-block, and they that fall over it, are both ruined together, though double vengeance abides them who ruin others together with themselves.

3. By not hindering what we can in others those things that procure an ill name. The evil that befalls others which we might have prevented, will justly be laid at our door. This brought the judgments of God on good Eli and his house too, so that they went all to ruin together, 1 Sam. 3:13. The Spirit of God records, for the justification of poor Tamar, the care she had of preventing the ill name of herself and of Amon, 2 Sam. 13:12, 13. So that neither by terror nor

allurements she could be drawn into the villainy, though she was forced, which was her misery, but not her sin.

Thirdly, In our lips. The tongue is the principal mischievous instrument whereby people ruin or wound the good name of others. And here come in the sins of the tongue against our neighbour in a special manner. Thus men injure their neighbour,

1. By silence, when they forbear to speak what they ought and can for the credit of their neighbour. Thus men may wrong others by their silence in their neighbour's cause while he is aspersed, Prov. 31:8 for in that case silence is consent. As also when their neighbour is justly commended, the entertaining thereof with silent looks, as if they knew something that may justly mar his reputation. If that be not the sense of it, it reflects on the silent person as grudging the reputation of the person commended.

2. Our neighbour may be injured by sinful speaking; and this command may be broken many ways.

- (1.) By unnecessary discovering of the faults and infirmities of others. O how much guilt is contracted this way, by people's going in the way of cursed Ham, Gen. 9:22 unvailing instead of vailing the weaknesses of others, without any necessity, but to the lessening of their reputation.

- (2.) By aggravating their lesser faults, Matth. 7:3, 4, 5. Men see motes like beams in the eyes of others, while beams are as motes in their own. It is a mischievous tongue that, counting the faults of others, for fifty sets down a hundred, and still looks to them through a magnifying glass. Had we the dexterity of aggravating our own as we have of aggravating the faults of others, we would be happy, because very humble people.

(3.) By reviving the memory of our neighbour's crimes which were worn out of mind, especially being repented of. Thus many vent their malice against others by casting up their former faults to them, as Shimei did to David. Truth it may be, but it is uncharitably and maliciously spoken, for which the speaker must give an account to God.

(4.) By betraying secrets committed to us. It is true, if the honour of God and the good of our neighbour require the discovering of a secret, in that case, as we ought not to promise, so we ought not to conceal it. But when we have lawfully promised to keep it, either expressly or tacitly, we sin against truth, justice, and friendship, to betray it. And though there be no promise in the case, yet when the revealing of it tends to the detriment of our neighbour, it is sinful, Prov. 17:9. 2 Tim. 3:4.

(5.) By detracting, or endeavouring any manner of way to impair the deserved credit of our neighbour, Ezek. 4:12, 13. This is the native result of envy and ill-will at our neighbour; for those who cannot endure others to sit on high, where they are deservedly placed, will go about one way or other to undermine them.

(6.) By evil reports to the prejudicing of our neighbour unjustly. In these many are involved in guilt. [1.] The raiser of it, Exod. 23:1. Satan has the mouths of many at command for a forge of ill reports, who strike that hellish coin with their stamp, that it may pass for current. [2.] The receivers and spreaders of it, who are guilty here as well as the raiser; for they are to the raiser as the receiver is to the thief: Report, say they, and we will report. If others will gather filth, they will throw it on their neighbours' faces, and yet are not innocent, though they can give their authors, Neh. 6:6. See Psal. 15:3.

(7.) By slandering, which is an ill report without all ground, Psal. 50:20. This is the venom of a wretched tongue, made use of to kill and bury alive the innocent. It has been the trial of the people of God in general, and seldom if ever do any of them escape without it. Satan loves by his agents to vomit out against them reproaches and slanders, wherewith their good name may be blasted, and especially if religion and the cause of God can be wounded through their sides. The scourge of the tongue is a sharp scourge.

(8.) By backbiting and whispering, Rom. 1:29, 30. Both agree in that they speak evil behind men's back, accusing them, and loading them with reproach when they are not present to answer for themselves. The backbiter does it openly, and the whisperer does it secretly.

(9.) By tale-bearing, Lev. 19:16. This is a sort of pedlar-trade for the devil, driven by many whose work it is to carry tales out of the house or company where they happen to be; and these are the wares they have to vent in other houses or companies, where they will be ready to take up new clashes and tales to where they go next. These are the plagues of society, like Satan sowing discord among brethren. Hence secret grudge against one another, and none knows wherefore; and when they are searched to the furthest, it is all grounded on some talebearer's credit.

(10.) By countenancing and encouraging the black tribe of slanderers, backbiters, &c. Prov. 29:12. If these merchants for hell got not their wares taken off their hands, they would be ashamed of their trade, and forced to quit it. But many are as ready to take them off their hands as they are to deliver them.

(11.) By stopping our ears against the just defence of the parties lesed, as the malicious Jews did against Stephen, Acts 7:57, 58. How

rare is it to find a person as ready to receive a defence for, as an accusation against their neighbour?

(12.) By scornful contempt, and scoffing, and mocking others. This was the way of Ishmael's persecuting of Isaac, Gal. 4:29. These viperous tongues work upon the miseries of others, as the soldiers did at Christ in his sufferings, Matth. 27:28, 29. The natural imperfections of others are their sport, though reproaching the poor they despise his Maker; yea, and their sinful imperfections too, for fools make a mock at sin.

Some have a mighty fondness for gibing and taunting; their whole converse runs that way, to make others uneasy and themselves merry with their taunts. Let them not value themselves on their talent; if any spark of tenderness be left in them, I doubt if they dare look to it as a good gift given them from above, but as an abuse of the good gift of God. It was Ishmael's way, for which he was cast out of the family of the faithful, Gal. 4:29.

(13.) Reviling and railing, giving others reproachful and opprobrious names, piercing them with bitter words, and murdering them with their tongues, Matth. 5:22. 1 Cor. 6:10. Revilers are among those excluded out of heaven.

These are some of the ways how the wicked tongue gives home-thrusts to others, and pierces like the piercing of the sword, following the example of him who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning. But would ye see them all gathered together in one, ye have them in,

(14.) Lastly, Scolding and rating, an abominable disorder which we are so much disturbed with. There their wicked hearts, stirred up with passion and revenge, vomit out all at once this filthy stuff. For

there their neighbour's faults are unnecessarily discovered, aggravated, &c. as if hell's forces were rendezvousing betwixt them. Wonder not at the expression. See Jude. 9. No, the angel durst not engage Satan with these weapons, whereof he was the proper master, and at which none can outdo him. If ye take not better heed to your tongues, they will ruin you, Psal. 52:2-5.

There are some other evils of the tongue here forbidden, the hurt whereof does not so plainly appear.

1. Talkativeness, or much speaking. Some are ever talking, and are never in their element but when prattling; and when once they loose, it is as hard to stop them as to stop a flood, and turn it another way. Of it I say,

(1.) It is a sign of a loose and frothy heart, where the fear of God hath little place, Eccl. 5:2; for that would make our words few, true, weighty, and useful. When God has given us two ears, and but one tongue, that we may be swift to hear and slow to speak, it is a pregnant evidence of a naughty heart, to be swift to speak and slow to hear.

(2.) It is the fool's badge, Eccl. 5:3. Talkative persons, for want of acquaintance with themselves, thinking to shew themselves wise, ordinarily present a fool to the company. They will have a flood of words, who have hardly a drop of good sense or judgment; so that they are just a voice, and no more. They that are given to much speaking, can hardly speak either true or well; which made an orator ask a double fee of a talkative scholar, one to learn him to speak well, another to learn him to hold his peace. It is the character of a virtuous woman, that 'she openeth her mouth with wisdom,' Prov. 31:26. Her month is not always open, but duly shut, and discreetly opened.

2. Idle speaking, Matth. 12:36. The tongue was given to man to be for the honour of God, and the good of himself and neighbour, Though our words, then, be not evil in themselves, they are evil because they are idle; that is, words spoken to no good purpose, tending neither to the honour of God nor the good of ourselves or others, neither to his moral good, to make him more holy, nor to his civil good, as not being upon the necessary concerns of human life, nor his natural good, to maintain the moderate cheerfulness of society. It may be comprehended under foolish talking, rash, raving, and impertinent discourse, doing no good to the hearers, but bewraying the folly of the speaker.

3. A trade of jesting, Eph. 5:4. It is not sinful to pass an innocent jest for begetting of moderate cheerfulness. The wise man tells us, 'There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh, Eccl. 3:4. It may in some cases be necessary to cheer the spirits, as a cordial is to restore them, or a pleasant gale of wind to purify the air. It was not unbecoming the gravity of the prophet to mock Baal's priests, and to say, 'Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey; or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened,' 1 Kings 18:27. But sinful are,

(1.) Offensive jests, which tend to the shewing a despising of our neighbour, to the irritating or provoking of him. And indeed it is often seen, that those who are much given that way, their conversation is most offensive, sparing neither friend nor foe, and will rather lose their friend than their jest.

(2.) Profane jests, either making a mock of sin, or of that which is holy, particularly wresting and abusing scripture, to express the conceits of their light and wanton wits. It is a dangerous thing to jest in such matters.

(3.) People's being immoderate in jesting. To make every word a jest is liker the stage than Christian gravity. This is as absurd as to present a man a dish of salt to feed on; a little of it is good for seasoning, but to give it for the whole entertainment, is absurd.

4. Lastly, Flattery, Psal. 12:3. This is a most dangerous stroke, and the more deadly that the wound it gives does not smart, but by it a man is hugged to ruin. The words of a flatterer are smoother than oil, yet are they in effect as drawn swords. It is a compound of lying, abjectness of spirit, and treachery. The flatterer gives the praise that is not due, professes the kindness that is not real, and screws up all to a pitch far above truth; and so he is a liar. He debases himself to please others, turning himself into every shape to humour the party he is to flatter; and betrays him into self-conceit and unacquaintedness with himself.

I shall shut all with a twofold dehortation.

First, Speak truth, and beware of lying. Lying is a very common sin; repent of that guilt, and beware of it for the future. For motives, consider,

Mot. 1. That God is the God of truth, the Author and Lover of truth, so that he cannot lie; and therefore lying is most contrary to the nature and mind of God: it is therefore singularly abominable and hateful to him, Psal. 10:5. Prov. 6:16, 17. We find that God suffered Adam's sons to marry their own sisters, and the Israelites to spoil the Egyptians of what they had borrowed of them; but never did the God of truth at any time dispense with men's speaking lies. Hate that abominable thing, then, which God so hates.

2. All lies are from the devil in a special manner, John 8:44. It was he that first broached lies in the world, ruined mankind with them; and

having sped so well with that engine of hell at first, no wonder he sets himself to keep up the trade. He is the father of lies, that begets them in the false heart, and they are brought forth by the lying tongue. Whom do liars resemble then, the God of truth, or the father of lies?

3. Lying is a part of the old man of sin, which must be put off, if we would not be put out of God's presence, Eph. 4:24, 25. It is the way to which our corrupt natures do kindly and quickly incline, Psal. 58:3; 'The wicked go astray as soon as they be borne, speaking lies.' Hence children are not to learn this; they have the art of it from their first father Adam. But as soon as grace enters the heart, it rectifies it in that point. Hence the Lord's people are called 'children that will not lie,' Isa. 63:8.

4. There is a meanness or baseness in lying beyond what is in other common sins, either because it proceeds from fear, or tends to deceive. Hence liars themselves cannot endure to be called liars; the baseness of the sin being so much acknowledged in the world, that though many bring forth and cherish the vile brat, none can endure to be reputed the father of it. And no wonder it is reputed such a base thing; for when once a man is known to make no conscience of truth, he has lost his credit, and is looked upon as a man that cannot be bound with the common ties of society, nor trusted.

Lastly, It will bring God's wrath heavily on the guilty, Prov. 19:5, 9. A false witness shall not go unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape. A false witness shall not be unpunished; and he that speaketh lies shall perish.' God's truth is impawned for the liar's destruction, even eternal destruction. Shall liars have access to heaven? No, they are barred out from thence, Rev. 21 ult. 'There shall in nowise enter into it any thing that—maketh a lie.' Their lodging is

appointed to them in another place, with the devil the father of lies, in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, Rev. 21:8 and 22:15.

I shall give you a few advices.

1. Strike at the root of lying, and so the fruit will wither and come to nought. The great root of all is the corrupt nature, that needs to be mortified by grace from Jesus Christ. There are also particular lusts on which lies depend. Labour to be humble, for pride and self-seeking occasions many lies, as the boaster's lie. Some are founded on covetousness, as the lies in bargaining; some in fear, slavish fear of men, as denying truth; some in the vanity and rashness of our natures, whereby lies come to be broached without a formed design.

2. Accustom yourselves to few words, for 'in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin,' Prov. 10:19. It is but just with God, that idle words be punished by suffering people to fall into lying words.

3. Remember that God will discover truth; and that his eye is upon you at all times. And though ye may deceive others with your lies, ye cannot deceive the omniscient God. He is witness to the truth, and will call you to account for your contradicting it. And indeed the trade of lying is hard to keep up without discovery. Liars had need of good memories. 'A lying tongue is but for a moment,' Prov. 12:19.

Lastly, Curb lying in young ones, out of pity to their souls, and care of their credit when they come to years. For some get such a habit of it when they are young, that there is no mending of them when they grow old.

Secondly, Beware of carrying an evil tongue. The lying tongue is contrary to truth, the evil tongue to charity and love to our

neighbour, being employed in slandering, backbiting, reproaching, reviling, scolding, &c. For motives,

Mot. 1. Consider the woful perverseness that is in an evil tongue. God gave man speech, which he denied to other creatures, that by his tongue he might glorify God, and do good to himself and others, Psal. 57:9, 10. Shall we thus turn our glory into shame, and pervert the ends of speech? How just were it that we were struck dumb?

2. It is a murdering instrument. I observed to you before, that an ill tongue is a parcel of murdering weapons, a bow and sharp arrows to pierce, a sword to stab, and a fire to devour others. Yea, Solomon observes, that death and life are in the power of the tongue. It is a fire that kindles strife and contention in all societies, and turns them into confusion; and oft-times returns heavily on the head of those who carry it. The tongues from heaven were cloven, to be the more diffusive of good; but those fired from hell are forked to be the more impressive of mischief.

3. Consider the wickedness of it. It is a world of iniquity, Jam. 3:6. They have much ado that have an ill tongue to guide, a world of iniquity to guide. It is a broad stream from the fountain of the wickedness of the heart.

4. An unbridled tongue outs off all pretences to true religion, Jam. 1:26. For where the fear or love of God and our neighbour is in the heart, it will be a bond on the tongue to keep it within the bounds of Christian charity.

5. We must give an account of our words at the day of judgment, Matth. 12:36, 37.

Lastly, An ill tongue will ruin the soul. Bridle your tongues; however unruly they be, they shall be silent in the grave. And, if repentance prevent it not, the day will come that they will be tormented in hell-flames, Luke 16.

I shall conclude with an advice or two.

1. Begin at the heart, if ye would order your tongues aright. Labour to get them cleansed by the sanctifying Spirit of Christ. Study love to God and your neighbour, which are the fulfilling of the law. Labour for meekness, and patience, and humility, which will be the best directors of the tongue.

2. Set yourselves, in the faith of promised assistance, to watch over your hearts and tongues. Unwatchfulness is dangerous in the case of such an unruly member as the tongue is. God has guarded it naturally. Do ye also watch it.

OF THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:17.—Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

THE scope of this command is to strike at the root and first risings of sin in the heart, in the desires going out of their right line of purity and equity. It is a strict boundary set to the unbounded desires of the heart.

In it, there are, 1. The act. 2. The object The act, Thou shalt not covet, or lust, as the apostle terms it, Rom. 7:7; which implies an inordinateness of desire, a feverish motion of the soul towards the creature, irregular and disorderly; and so a dissatisfaction with one's present condition, as appears from Heb. 13:5. 'Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have.'

The object is held forth particularly for example's cause, thy neighbour's house, thy neighbour's wife, his servants, and goods. Thou shalt not only not take away thy neighbour's house from him by oppression, nor entice away his servants, nor steal his goods, nor entertain a fixed and deliberate desire to do him that injury as is forbidden in the eighth command; but the inordinate desire of having them shall not rise in, nor go through the heart, however lightly, if it were like a flying arrow, saying, O that his house, his servant, his ox and ass were mine! Thou shalt not only not defile his wife, nor deliberately desire to do it, as is forbidden in the seventh commandment; but thou shalt not say in thine heart, O that she were mine! though thou hast no mind, right or wrong, to make her so.

This object is held forth universally, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's: whereby it appears, that this command looks through all the other commandments of the second table, and so condemns all inordinate desire of any object whatsoever. And therefore the Papists dividing this command into two is absurd, and but a trick invented to atone for their confounding the first and second. While this command says, nor any thing, it says, Thou shalt not only not dishonour thy neighbour by insolent and contemptuous behaviour, but there shall not be a desire in thy heart, saying, O that his place and post were mine, as in the fifth command; nor, O that I had his health and strength, as in the sixth; nor his reputation and esteem, as

in the ninth; though you have no deliberate design or desire to wrong him in these.

I do not wonder, if some are surprised at this, and say, Are these sins? for indeed this command goes deeper than the rest; and if it did not so, it would be superfluous; for you see it aims not at any new object, but holds by the objects of the former commands; therefore it must look to some more inward and less noticed motions of the heart, than the rest do. And therefore Paul, though he learned the law at the school of divinity under Gamaliel, a professor of it, yet, till he learned it over again at the school of the Spirit, holding it out in its spirituality and extent, he did not know these things to be sin, Rom. 7:7. It was this command brought home to his conscience, that let him see that lust to be sin which he saw not before.

And seeing this is a command of the second table, and ourselves are our nearest neighbour, the lust or inordinate desire of those things that are our own must be condemned here, as well as lusting after what is not ours.

So much for the negative part of this command, which in effect is this, Thou shalt not be in the least dissatisfied with thy own present condition in the world, nor have any inordinate motion in thy heart to that which is thy own or thy neighbour's.

The positive part is implied; and that is, Thou shalt be fully content with thy own lot, whatever it be, and arrest thy heart within the bounds that God has inclosed it in, bearing a charitable disposition to thy neighbour and what is his. For all covetousness implies a discontent with our own condition.

Quest. 'What is required in the tenth commandment?' Ans. 'The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own

condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbour, and all that is his.'

Here I shall consider the duty of this command, as it respects,

I. Ourselves.

II. Our neighbour.

III. The root of sin.

I. I shall consider the duty of this command as it respects ourselves. If we consider, that this command forbidding coveting in the general, says, in effect, these two things, 1. Thou shalt not covet or lust after what thou hast; nor, 2. What thou wantest; the great duty of this command with respect to ourselves will appear to be twofold.

First, A thorough weanedness from and indifferency to all those things that we have, in which our desires may be too eager. There are some things whereof our desire cannot be too much, as of God, Christ, grace, victory over sin; and therefore we read of a holy lusting, Gal. 5:17. The renewed part not only desires, but eagerly and greedily gapes for perfect holiness and entire victory over sin. This is holy lusting, where there is no fear of excess, although indeed even that may degenerate, when our own ease, that is disturbed by sin, may be more in our view than the sinfulness of sin; and in this respect these lustings are mixed, and therefore sinful and humbling in the best; and they are so far contrary to this command, as they are lusting after ease, more than conformity to the holy will and nature of God.

There are other things to which our desires may be carried out too eagerly and inordinately; and the desire of them is lawful, but the

coveting or lusting after them, which is the inordinate desire of them, is here forbidden. Thus we may sin, not only in the inordinate desire of sensual things, as meat, drink, &c. but in rational things, as honour, esteem, &c. The desire of these things is not sinful; but there is a lust of them which is so.

Now, in opposition to this, we must be thoroughly weaned from and holily indifferent to these things, not only when we want them, for that falls in with contentment, but when we have them. So should one be to his own house, wife, servants, and any thing that is his; keeping our love to, desire after, and joy in them, within due bounds, as the Psalmist did, Psal. 131:2. 'Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.' We may take it up in these four things following.

1. The heart's sitting loose to them, so as the heart and they may fall asunder as things closely joined, yet not glued, when God shall be pleased to take them from us. For if they must needs be rent from us, it is an argument that our love to them was indeed a lust towards them. Therefore this disposition is called a hating of them, Luke 14:26; for things that we have, we can part with, without their tearing as it were a piece of our heart along with them. We can say little on this piercing command, but what will be accounted hard sayings, by all that have not a clear view of the transcendent purity of the law, which is carried to the height in this command, because to the root, the corruption of our nature. And that corruption we must still keep in view here, or we will do no good with it.

2. The heart's looking for no more from them than God has put in them. God has made created things as inns in the way to himself, where a person may be refreshed, but not as a resting-place, where the heart is to dwell. For the desire is inordinate when the man seeks

his rest and satisfaction in these things instead of God, Psal. 4:6. The corrupt judgment magnifies earthly things, and looks on shadows as substances; and then the corrupt affections grasp them as such, and after a thousand disappointments lust after them still, Isa. 57:10.

3. The soul's standing on other ground, when these things stand entire about the man; drawing its support from God as the fountain, even when created streams are running full, 1 Sam. 2:1. Psal. 18:46. The world's good things must not be thy good things, Luke 16:25. Thou mayst love them as a friend, but not be wedded to them as a husband; use them as a staff, yet not as the staff of thy life, but a staff in thy hand; but by no means a pillar to build on them the weight of thy comfort and satisfaction.

4. The using of them passingly. We must not dip too far in the use of them. Lawful desire and delight, like Peter, walks softly over these waters, but lust shines in them; in the one there is a holy carelessness, in the other a greedy gripe. The apostle lively describes this weanedness, 1 Cor. 7:29, 30, 31. 'It remaineth that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.' The violent pulse of the soul in our high-bended hopes, perplexing racking fears, vehement love, swelling joy, and overmuch sorrow about these matters, is a sad symptom of the distemper of natural corruption that has seized, all Adam's sons. The greedy appetite that the heart is carried with these things, is a sad sign of an unweaned soul. A man may have a sinful lust to his meat, which yet is necessary to support his body; and a lust in the using of it, as those of the old world, Matth. 24:38. 1 Sam. 14:32. The dogs of Egypt, they say, lap the water of the river Nile running, for fear of the crocodiles;

for not only in every berry of the vine, but in all created things there is a devil. See how the Lord tried the people, Judg. 7:6. 'And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men; but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.'

All these things the law requires in their perfection without the least mixture. Where is the clean man to cast a stone at the rest? It must be on a very transient glance of the heart that men say, The world is not their temptation, they care not for the world. For a view of the spirituality of the law would make us see that the world is fixed in our hearts, and only grace can loose it at the root, and only death can cast it over the hedge.

Secondly, A full contentment with our own condition. As for the sin in our condition, it is not from God, and there is no good in it; we are not called to be content with it, because it is not the condition which God set in us. But whatever else be in our condition, we are obliged to be content with it, because so is the will of God that we should be in it. Every one is to look on his condition, as the paradise that God has set him down in; and though it be planted with thorns and briers, he must not look over the hedge; for thou shalt not covet. Though that which is wanting in thy condition cannot be numbered, and that which is crooked cannot be made straight, yet none of these things must render us uneasy in the least. There is required a full contentment, without a discontented glance of the eye. Much goes to the making up of it, all here required.

1. Hearty renunciation of our own will, saying with the pattern of contentment, Not my will, but thine be done. We must no more be chusers for ourselves of our own lot; but as little children standing at the table, not to carve for themselves, but to take the bit that is given

them. 'He shall chuse our inheritance for us,' says the Psalmist, Psal. 47:4. Shall not Infinite Wisdom rule the world? This lies in three things.

(1.) We must not determine the kind or sort of our comforts, as we often do, like petted children, that will not have this the parent holds out, but that which they set their eye on. Like Adam, whom the fruit of the tree of life could not serve, but he would have the forbidden fruit. The desire of fruit was natural, therefore not evil; other fruit would have served that desire, if kept orderly; but the lusting desire could not want forbidden fruit. Rachael had a husband but she must have children too. Orpah must have a husband. Ruth wants both; but she determines nothing, but only she must have a God, and that she got, and both too.

(2.) We must not be positive as to the measure of our comforts; and there is no reason that beggars should be chusers. If the heart say, of our comforts, They are too little, and of afflictions, they are too great, it flies in the face of this command, and of God's sovereignty, setting up for independency, 1 Tim. 6:1. 'Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content,' though the food be coarse, though scanty, &c. Nature is content with little, grace with less, and sets no measure; but the measure of lust can never be filled.

(3.) We must not be wilful in any thing, 1 Tim. 6:9. 'They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare,' &c. They that will have these things, and will not want them, will never be truly content till God's will be brought down to theirs; which will never be altogether; and if in a particular it come to be so, they will readily get their will with a vengeance, as the Israelites in the wilderness got. Psal. 78:29–31. 'So they did eat, and were well filled; for he gave them their own desire; they were not estranged from their Inst: but while the meat was yet

in their months, the wrath of God came upon them and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel.' Thus we must renounce our own will.

2. Absolute resignation to the will of the Lord, Matth. 16:24. 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.' We must give over the war betwixt our will and the will of God, and our will must run as a captive after his triumphal chariot. His preceptive will is the rule of our duty; and his providential will, must with our consent, be the rule of our condition. Our will must follow his, as the shadow does the body, without gainsaying. If he will let us have a created comfort, we must be content to keep it; if not, we must be content to part with it. We must lie at the foot of Providence, as a ball before him that tosses it, to be thrown up and cast down as our God sees meet. This Providence will do with us whether we be willing or not; but if we be thus resigned, then our necessity is our obedience.

3. Entire submission to the will of God, 1 Sam. 3:18. 'It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.' As they resign themselves to his disposal, they must stand to his decision in the case. We must no more dispute the sovereignty with God, but allow the divine will and pleasure to carry it over the belly of our corrupt inclinations, and be disposed of by him, as the weaned child is by the nurse. If that which is crooked cannot be made straight, we must ply to it as it is; if our lot be not brought up to our mind, we must bring down our mind to our lot, as Paul did, Phil. 4:11, 12. 'Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.' In this submission to the will of the Lord the soul of content lies. For God does not subject the

man only, or cast him down, as he can do the most discontented person, making him walk with the yoke wreathed about his neck, whether he will or not. But the man voluntarily submits himself to God's disposal in the whole of his condition, whatever his wants be. Whatever be wanting in our condition, if we would be content,

1st, We must submit to them as just without complaining, as Cain did; saying with the prophet, Micah 7:9. 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.' We meet with no hardships in our lot, hut what we have procured to ourselves. And it is but just that we kiss the rod, and be silent under it. Let us complain of ourselves; why not? only leave our complaints there; but not set our mouths against the heavens; no, not in our hearts, for God knows the language of our hearts as well as our mouths. We most love his holiness and justice, in all the works thereof, though against ourselves. Nay more,

2dly, We must be quiet under them, without murmuring, as tolerable, Lam. 3:27–29. 'It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope.' So was Job at first, though his corruption got up at length, Job 1:22. 'In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.' How often do we cry out of insufferable affliction? yet we do bear up under it for all that, and would bear the better if we could be content and quiet under it. A meek and quiet spirit makes a light cross, for a proud unsubdued spirit lays a great overweight upon every cross; as Rachel's unquiet spirit made the want of children wonderfully heavy, which others go very quietly and contentedly under. Nay more,

3dly, We must be easy without those things we want, as things we can want, without anxiety to get them, Phil. 4:12. Weaned hearts will be very easy without those things which others cannot digest the want of. What is the reason of so much uneasiness in our condition, but that we are wedded to this and the other thing; and being glad of the having of it we are exceeding uneasy at the parting with it, as Jonah was with his gourd? The contented man will be easy, and that not upon a sensible prospect, but on the faith of the promise, Phil. 4:6. 'Be careful for nothing: but in every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' But more than that,

4thly, We must be well satisfied and bear up comfortably under the want of them; standing upright when they are gone, as we did when we had them, or would do if we had them; even as the house stands when the prop that it did lean upon is taken away, Hab. 3:17, 18; 'Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olives shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' It is a sad evidence of the corruption of our nature, that woful lust after the creature that is bred and born with us, that our comfort waxeth and waneth, according to the waxing and waning of created enjoyments, and ebbs and flows as the breasts of the creature are full or empty. So, many lose all spirit and life in religion, when God pulls their worldly comforts from them; and even good people walk much discouraged and damped, not so much with the sense of God's anger, as the affliction in their lot. But what is yet more,

5thly, We must have a complacency in our condition, as what is good for us, otherwise we can have no full content. Observe the language

of a contented mind, not only just, but 'Good is the will of the Lord,' Isa. 39 ult. Content suffers not a person to go drooping under God's yoke, but makes him carry it evenly with a sort of complacency in it. Wise men have a pleasure in the working of physic, though it gripe them sore, if their physician thinks it good for their health, and they think so too. And grace sometimes finds a pleasure in pain, and a paradise within the thorny thicket of afflictions. See how the apostle gathered olive berries off the thorn-hedge of crosses, 2 Cor. 12:10. 'Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecution, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong.' Ay, there is a refined pleasure there, to see how God stops the entry for provision, that lusts may be starved; how he cuts off the by-channels, that the whole stream of love may run towards himself; how he pulls and holds off the man's burden, that he may run the more expeditely in the way to heaven. Nay, more than all that,

6thly, We must have a complacency in our condition, as that which is best for us for the time. Though he take health from thee, wealth, relations, &c. How is that possible? It is not easy to do it, but you must endeavour to see it; for that must be best that God judges best, and by the event it appears that God sees that condition best for thee for the time. Therefore we should meet it as David did Abigail, with 'Blessed be the Lord that Sent thee to meet me this day.' So did Job. chap. 1:21. 'Blessed be the name of the Lord.' Faith in the promise makes it practicable. All the works of God are the most perfect in their kind. But to come to the top of the ladder, the full sea-mark of content,

Lastly, We must rest in that condition, without the least squint look for a change of it, till God's time come. There must be no motion for it, but as heaven moves to carry our condition about with it. And so

this hinders not prayer, nor the use of means, in dependence on God: but requires patience, faith, hope, and absolute resignation, 2 Sam. 15:25, 26. In this sense he that believeth doth not make haste; that is, the unbelieving haste which cannot wait God's time.

Quest. Is this full contentment possible? Ans. There is a twofold contentment: the one legal, which is full in the eye of the law; and this we can no more attain to than the perfect fulfilling of the law. It ceases not, however, to be our duty, and will be humbling to gracious souls so far as they come short of it. The other evangelical, which is full in the eye of the gospel, i. e. it is sincere: though it is not full in degrees, yet it is full in parts; it is in all the parts of contentment, though none of them are perfect; there is a submission to the whole will of God, though not perfect in degrees. And this is a necessary part of the new man, so that without it we are not sincere.

I shall now give reasons why we should be fully content with our own condition, whatever it be.

1. Because he that made the world guides it, and it is highly reasonable we allow it to be so. Let the discontented person answer that question which God proposes to sinners to silence their murmurings.' Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Matth. 20:15. The world is made by the Lord; and shall he not govern it, and dispose of it and all things therein as he sees best? Must the clay be allowed to say to the potter, 'Why hast thou made me thus? Should it be according to thy mind?' Job 34:33. Providence guides all, the Creator sits at the helm; and will not we be content with the course that is steered?

2. Thy condition is ordered by Infinite Wisdom. There is nothing that befalls us without the providence of God; and that is no blind chance, but a wise disposal of all according to the counsel of God's will. If the

product of Infinite Wisdom content us not, we do but shew ourselves headstrong fools. He that numbers the hairs of our heads, Matt. 10:30 no doubt keeps an exact account of all the crosses in our lot, and of every ingredient in our cross, and gives them all out by weight and measure, as may most suit his infinitely-wise ends. And it is the height of folly to impeach the conduct of Infinite Wisdom.

3. All the good that is in our lot is undeserved, Lam. 3:22. The bitterest lot that any has in the world is mixed with mercy; and mercy is still predominant in our cup. It is true, discontented persons are like wasps and flies that look not near the sound parts, but swarm together on the sore place. They magnify their crosses, and multiply them too; but deal with their mercies as the unjust steward, instead of a hundred setting down fifty, and hardly so much. But let there be fair count and reckoning betwixt us and Providence, we shall find we are in God's debt, and every mercy we enjoy we have it freely and undeservedly from God's hand, Job 2:10.

4. All the evil that we meet with in our lot, we deserve it, we have ourselves to thank for it, Lam. 3:39. Shall men's hearts rise against God for what they have procured to themselves? Is it not a reasonable resolve, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him?' Mic. 7:9. A discontented spirit will always be found an unhumbled spirit, insensible of its ill deservings at God's hand.

Use. I exhort all to labour for a full contentment with their own condition. For motives to press this, consider,

1. The beauty of the rational world, under the conduct of Divine Providence, lies in every one's contentment with their own condition. One last shall as soon serve every foot, as one condition shall be agreeable to all. What confusion would be in the world, if there were

not variety? If time were all day and no night, the moon and stars every one a sun, how would we be able to endure it. If the whole body were an eye, where were the useful and pleasant variety of members. And if all men were set under the same smiles of Providence, where were the beautiful variety and mixture in the web of providence that inwraps the world. Let us remember we are in the world as on a stage, where one must represent a king and another a beggar. It is God's part to chuse what part we shall act; and it is our business contentedly to act the part allotted for us.

2. Contentment makes a man happy and easy in every condition. It is the stone that turns all metals into gold, and makes one to sing and rejoice in every condition. A strong man will walk as cleverly under a heavy burden, as a weak man under a far lighter one, because of the proportion that is betwixt the strength and the burden in each. One man has his lot brought up to his mind, another has his mind brought down to his lot; is not the latter, then, as easy as the former is. All our uneasiness proceeds from our own minds; and could we manage them to a full contentment in every condition, no condition could make us miserable.

3. Time is short, and ere long we will be at our journey's end. The world's smiles will no more follow us, neither will the frowns of it reach us. Eternity is before us, and we have greater things to mind than our condition here. One traveller walks with a rough stick in his hand, and another with a cane: the matter is small which of them be thine, for at the journey's end both of them shall be laid aside.

Quest. How may we attain to full contentment with our own condition in a gospel-sense. There are two sorts of persons to whom we speak, some in a state of nature, others in a state of grace. One answer will not serve both; for though unrenewed sinners may have

a shadow of contentment, it is impossible they can have true Christian contentment in that state: They may have a sort of contentment from a careless easy humour, yea, they may reason themselves into a sort of contentment as some Heathens did do. But true contentment with their condition they cannot have.

This is clear, if ye consider, that a restless heart can never be a contented heart; and seeing the heart of man is capable of enjoying an infinite good, and the whole creation is not capable to fill it, it follows, that the heart can never rest, nor be truly content, till it be so in God himself. Adam falling off from God, left us with a breast full of unsatisfied desires, because he left us seeking our satisfaction among the creatures, which are dry breasts, and cannot fill the heart; so till the soul return to God, it can have no true rest nor contentment. We may say enough to stop the mouths of the discontented, whatever they be; but no considerations will avail to work true contentment in a person out of Christ, more than a hungry child will be reasoned into quietness while you give him no bread. Therefore the great and,

First, Direction for contentment is, that ye take God for your God in Christ, as he offers himself to you in the gospel. The great thing that ye want is a rest to your heart, and satisfaction to the unbounded desires thereof, to possess that which if you had your desires would be stayed, and ye would covet no more. I know, your false hearts and your foolish tongues have said, O, if I had such and such a created thing, I would be content, I would desire no more! But when ye got it, was it so indeed? was there not still a want? So it will be to the end. But here is the way to contentment: Jesus Christ, in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead, offers himself to be yours. Accept of him by faith and then the sun is up with you, and ye will be content, though the candles of creature-comforts be put out. The wise merchant is content with the loss of all when he finds the one pearl, but not till

then, Matth. 13:45, 46. Thus the foundation of full contentment is laid. And so I may go on to shew you further how to attain it. Therefore,

2. Believe that God is your God in Christ; apprehend him by faith as your portion; and contentment with your condition will follow of course, though your condition be very gloomy, Heb. 3:17. Full contentment with one's condition goes in equal pace with a man's clearness as to his interest in Christ. Let that be darkened, and he shall find himself grow more fretful and uneasy with crosses in the world. Let that be rising clearer and clearer, and the more clear it grows, his cross will grow the lighter, and easier to be borne.

If any should say, There is a particular thing in my condition that above all things I cannot be easy under; there is something I would have, and God sees it not meet to give it me: what shall I do to be content under it. I would say, be what it will, go to God, and make a solemn exchange of that thing. If he has kept that from you, he offers you as good and better, that is to say, himself, instead of it. And do you renounce that thing, and give up with it, and take Christ instead of it; and having taken him so, believe that ye have him instead of it. Say, Lord, there is an empty room in this heart of mine, such a comfort would I have to fill it; but thou seest meet to refuse it; therefore I give up with it; thy will be done; but I take thyself instead thereof to fill up that room. And now I have made the exchange, and Christ is to me instead of that which I want. So shalt thou find thy heart satisfied. And if God see the comfort meet for thee, thou art then in the fairest way to get it too, Psal. 37:4.

This is the way of the gospel to full contentment, viz. the way of believing, by which all Christian duties are done, and gospel-graces

are nourished in the heart. And to let you see the efficacy of these means for contentment, consider,

1. The heart of man is an empty hungry thing, that must be filled with something, and cannot abide want. Therefore it is, that when people miss their desired satisfaction in one thing, they go to make it up by another. Mordecai's not bowing to Haman discontented him, and he went to make it up by a revenge on all the Jews. But the misery is, there is a want in that thing too. It is like the putting of an empty spoon in the child's mouth, that may stop it for a moment; but as soon as it finds it is disappointed, and there is nothing in it, it falls a-crying again. Now, this directs you to that which infallibly makes up the want, and in which there is no want. And it is a sad matter, that those who have tried so many ways to make up their wants, will not try this too.

2. God is the Fountain of all perfection, and whatever is desirable in the creature is in an eminent way in God, Mat. 19:17. If the sun shine in at your windows, ye do not complain for want of candle-light. If all the vessels in your house were emptied of water, and the fountain were brought into it, ye are at no loss, but in better case than before. Even so, if all created streams should dry up, if ye have God for your God, ye may say indeed, that ye want these created things, but ye have all the good that was in them, in another, to wit, in God. Ye want the vessels, but ye want not the water of comfort that was in them, for ye have it in God.

3. Having God for your God, ye have all in the promise, Rev. 21:7. He is unreasonably dissatisfied that has a good stock in bills and bonds from a sure hand, though he has little in his pocket, especially when all that is needful will be upon them answered on demand. He that

has the lively faith of inheriting all things at length, will find it none of the most difficult tasks to be served with very little for the present.

4. Lastly, Having God for your God, the nature of your afflictions is altered. Your crosses are changed from curses into blessings; and however heavy they be, they run in the channel of the covenant to the common end of all covenant-blessings, your good, Rom. 8:28.

This way of believing in order to contentment is,

1. A sure way, which will infallibly produce it, as surely as the laying of a hungry babe to a full breast will stay it. How many ways do men try for this which all misgive? but this cannot misgive, seeing God in Christ is a full contenting object. And if our faith were perfect, our contentment would be so too. When faith is perfected in sight in heaven, the saints will be warm without clothes, full without meat, and rich without money, for God will be all to them.

2. A short way, by which we may come quickly to it. What a far way about do men go for contentment, while they compass the creation for it, and when all is done miss it? But here we may say, 'Be not afraid, only believe,' Mark 5:36.

3. The only way; there is no other way to come to it. Fulness in the world will not do it; for as the estate enlarges, the desire enlarges too, and knows no bounds till it comes to that which is infinite; and thither it cannot come till it comes to God. A kingdom could not content Ahab, discontent crept in under a crown on his head, 1 Kings 21:4. If ye do not take up your soul's rest in God as your God in Christ, no considerations will prevail to content you. But if ye do, there are several considerations that may be of good use to you. As,

1. Consider, that the heaviest thing in thy lot comes out of a friend's hand. It is good news to Zion in the worst of times, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that sayeth unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!' Isa. 52:7. Whoever be the instruments of our affliction, and whose hand soever be heavy on us, we meet with nothing but what comes through our Lord's fingers, John 5:22. 'The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son. And will we not venture our outward condition in his hand, on which we venture ourselves for eternity? A tongue, far less a hand, cannot move against us but by him, 2 Sam. 16:10.

2. Consider how unmeet you are to carve for yourselves; 'and should it be according to thy mind?' Job 34:33. How weak are ye to discern your true interest? Could ye venture to pilot yourselves through the rocks and shelves in the world? No, ye dare not, if ye know yourselves. Why will ye not then resign yourselves to wise Providence? But, say ye, it is only in some things we would have it so or so. Ay, but Christ will be steersman for thee through the whole, or not at all. He will not share the government with thee; and there is no reason he should, for thou art weak, and seest not far off. There is many a pleasant green path in the world that leads into the lion's den, and many a rugged way that leads into a paradise: thou seest the hithermost end of the way, but not the far end; he sees it.

3. Have ye not already lived to see your hopes and fears both baffled by the conduct of wise Providence? As for the hopes ye have conceived of the choice of your own wilful will, have ye not been sometimes made to let the knife drop with shame, after ye have cut your fingers in carving for yourself; like Lot, not daring to stay in all the plain, though sometime before he built his own nest in the heart

of it? And for your fears of the conduct of Providence, have ye not seen how God has drawn you to your good against your will, and that it was good ye were crossed in such a matter, and that such a project of yours was baffled? Seeing, then, we are such bunglers at the carving of our lot, it is reasonable we quit the knife, and give it over, as Jacob did in Joseph's case.

4. Consider, that there is much about the ordering of thy lot, infinitely more than thou art master of thyself. Believe it,

(1.) That the seven eyes of Infinite wisdom are about it, Zech. 3:9; Now in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. There is no chance-work in the world, no random work in thy condition; it is not a work huddled up in a haste. The scheme of it was drawn from eternity, and lay before the Lord, without any need of alteration. Every thing in thy condition, however late brought forth, was from eternity in the womb of the wise decree, Zech. 6:1.

(2.) That there is a soft hand of grace and goodness about it, Rom. 8:28. A gracious Providence brings it forth out of the womb of the decree: why should we not then embrace it, and welcome it into the world? There is a stream of grace that goes through all the dispensations of providence to the Lord's people. Now, when Infinite Wisdom, tempered with grace and good-will, orders our lot, is it not reasonable, that we be fully content with it? Hence I infer,

1. Thy condition, whatever it is, is for God's honour; for it is ordered by him who does all for that end, and cannot fail of his design. Though thou dost not see how it is so, thou mayest believe that it is so, upon this ground. Providence runs much under ground, so as weak man cannot see how the means answer the end: but God sees it, and that is enough. This is a contenting consideration to a

gracious soul, that will be pleased with that which may glorify God, Phil. 1:20.

2. Thy condition is good for thee, Rom. 8:28. That may be good that is not pleasant; it may bring profit that brings no pleasure. God loves to work by contraries, to bring health to the soul out of sickness of the body, to enrich his people by poverty, to do them good by crossing of them, and blow them to their harbour by teeth-winds.

3. Nay, it is best for thee. If thou be a child of God, thy present lot in the world is the best thou couldst have for the present. Infinite Wisdom sees it is so; and grace and good-will makes it so. All God's works are perfect in their kind, Deut. 32:4. Will vain man come after God, and tell him how to mend his work? If it were not fittest for his own holy ends, it were not perfect. Nay, if thou be not in Christ, those things in thy lot which thou art discontented with, thy crosses and afflictions, are best for thee; for if any thing in thy lot bring thee to God, it will be this. Which brings me to a fifth thing.

5. Consider that those things in thy lot which thou art so ready to be discontented with, are truly necessary for thee, Lam. 3:33. If thou couldst want them, thou wouldst not get them; for God takes no pleasure merely in making his creatures miserable. If thy lot be afflicted, know that strong diseases must have strong remedies: blame not the physician for that, but the disease. The wilful child would live without the rod, but the parent sees it necessary to chastise him. If God withdraw any thing from thee, it is but to starve a lust that would feed on it; if he lay on thee what thou wouldst not, it is but to bear down a lust, that otherwise would carry thee headlong. Give Providence a fair hearing, it will answer for itself. Why should people then cast out with their mercies, and be angry with their blessings?

6. Consider that great things in one's lot have a great burden with them. A man will get a softer bed in a palace than in a cottage, but the mean man will readily sleep sounder in his cottage than the king in his palace. People look to the great things which others have beyond them, but they do not consider the burden going along with them. They who want the one want the other too, and therefore have reason to be content.

(1.) Where there is a great trust, there is a great reckoning. Luke 12:48. Thou seest others have much that thou wantest, grudge it not; they have the more to reckon for. God keeps an account of all his mercies bestowed on all men, and they that have most now have most to account for when the Lord shall seek an account of his servants. Look well to thyself, and be content. I fear it be found, that for as little as thou hast, thou hast more than thou canst guide well.

(2.) Great things in the world are great snares, and bring great dangers along with them, Mark 10:23. They that walk low make not such a figure as those that walk on high; but the latter are most apt to fall. How fond are we of the world even when it frowns on us? what would become of us if it did nothing but smile? It is hard to carry a full cup even. Affliction is often seasonable ballast to a light heart, that prosperity would give too much sail to, till it should be sunk.

7. Consider, if thou be a child of God, that which thou hast, thou hast on free cost, Rom. 8:32. And therefore, though it be little, it is better to thee than the abundance of many others, which will bring a dear reckoning at length. The children of the family may fare more coarsely than strangers; but there is a great difference; the strangers have a reckoning for it when they go away; but the children have nothing to pay.

(1.) Remember thou forfeited all in Adam; it is a mercy that thou hast any thing at all. I know nothing but sin and death that we can lay claim to as our own property, Lam. 3:39. He that deserves hell has no reason to complain, while he is out of it.

(2.) Any thing which thou hast a covenant right to now, is through Christ; it is the purchase of his blood. So that makes it precious, as being the price of blood; and that should make us content with it, seeing we have it freely through him.

8. Consider the vanity of all things below the sun, Eccl. 1:2. A just estimation of worldly things would make us content with very little. But a blind judgment first sets an exorbitant price on earthly things, and raises the value of them; and then people think never to get enough of them. But low thoughts of them would clip the wings of our affections to them, and little of them would content us, Prov. 23:5. Riches make themselves wings, and fly away. There is a wing of chance, casualties, and losses: and though by thy wisdom thou could clip all these wings, yet there is a wing of death and mortality that will carry them away.

9. Consider the preciousness and excellency of heavenly things, Col. 3:2. More heavenly-mindedness would make us less anxious about these things. If we be in hazard of losing these, it is madness to be taken up about trifles, and concerned with earthly losses. Will he whose life is in hazard go up and down making moan for a sore finger? And if they be secured, it is horrid ingratitude to be discontent with our lot here. Would a man that has a ship loaded with goods coming ashore, vex himself for losing a pin out of his sleeve, or a penny out of his pocket? Heaven will make up all our losses; and hell will make men forget their greatest crosses in the world.

Lastly, Consider much of death and eternity. For as little as any of us have, we have perhaps as much as will serve our turn here. Our time is uncertain. It is folly to vex ourselves, though we have not all conveniences that we would desire in a house that we have no tack of, but may remove from it to-morrow.

I have insisted largely on this point, because it is so very necessary. Labour for a full contentment with your condition. This is the way to make a virtue of a necessity; for our discontent and uneasiness will not add a cubit to the stature of our lot. And that which God will make crooked in it, we will not get made straight, however uneasy we may be about it.

II. We are to consider the duty of this command, as it respects our neighbour. And that is a right and charitable or loving frame of spirit towards himself and all that is his. We may take up this in five things, which are here required.

1. Love to our neighbour's person, as to ourselves, Rom. 13:9. For seeing this command forbids us to wrong him so much as in thought, it plainly binds love to him upon us; not in word only, nor in deed only, by doing him good, but in heart, that our bowels move towards him, for the sake of God. For whatever be unholy in him, yet he is one of God's creatures, of the same nature with ourselves, and capable of enjoying the same God with us.

2. An upright respect to what is his, for his sake. As we are to love himself for God's sake, so what is his for his sake, Deut. 22:1. A careless disposition and unconcernedness about what is our neighbour's, can never be a right frame to what is his. So it is an argument of the world's corruption, that all men seek their own things, and are so little concerned for the things of others. That is not charitable walking, Phil. 2:4.

3. An hearty desire of his welfare and prosperity in all things, as of our own, his honour, life, chastity, wealth, good name, and whatever is his. This we owe to our very enemies, so far as it may be consistent with the honour of God, and their own spiritual good, which is the main thing we are to desire for all. I add this, because sometimes the loss of these may be more to the honour of God, and our neighbour's advantage, than the having of them, to wit, when they are abused to sin, Rom. 12:20. Matth. 5:44.

4. A real complacency in his welfare and the welfare of what is his, Rom. 12:15. If our hearts rejoice not in our neighbour's welfare, we covet what he has, and secretly in our hearts devour it. But as we are to be well content with our own condition, so we are to be well content with our neighbour's welfare.

5. Lastly, A cordial sympathy with him in any evil that befalls him, Rom. 12:20. For we are members one of another; and as every member shares in the grief of any one, so should we in one another's afflictions. A hard heart unconcerned with the afflictions of others, especially where people talk to the grief of those whom God has wounded, is a sign of a wretched temper and uncharitable frame of spirit, Psal. 69:26. and 35:13, 14, 15.

III. We must consider this command as it respects the root of sin. And so it requires original righteousness, a holy frame of the soul, whereby it is bent to all good, and averse to all evil; that holy frame of spirit that was in the first Adam when he was created, and all along in the second Adam. And thus this command carries the matter of holiness to the utmost point.

That this is here required, will appear, if ye consider that this command forbids the very first risings of original corruption, whose

very nature it is to be still coveting; and therefore original corruption itself is forbidden, and consequently original righteousness required.

Not only good actions are required by the holy law, but a holy temper of the spirit, consisting in the light of the mind taking up duty, a bent of the will inclining ever to good, and averse to every evil, and the orderliness of the affections, keeping precisely within the holy boundaries set to them by the law, not to look over the hedge in the least point.

This is certainly required somewhere in the law; for men are condemned for the want of it; and in none of the commands is it required, if it be not here. And thus ye may see the utter impossibility of keeping perfectly these commands; for whatever men pretend as to the rest, who of Adam's children do not stick here as soon as they are born?

This command reaches us as soon as we are born; nay as soon as we are living souls in the womb, requiring of us what we have not to produce, and that is an holy nature. But, alas! we are evil before we can do evil; and we want that holy nature naturally, and therefore have at length such unholy lives.

If it be inquired, How this command in this point is answered sincerely? Ans. It is by our being renewed in the spirit of our minds, our partaking of the new nature in regeneration, where old things being done away, and all things becoming new, we are made new creatures. This is that new nature which is the image of God repaired, with a perfection of parts, to be crowned in heaven with a perfection of degrees.

And it is worthy of our observation, that Jesus Christ being to fulfil all righteousness, was born holy, and so fulfilled this command for

us. In him the law has its due, he being a man, who from his birth had a holy pure nature, a holy frame of spirit, without the least irregularity or disorder.

To conclude, ye may see the command is pure, just, and holy, however impure we be; and requires of us the utmost parity of heart, life and nature.

I now proceed to consider the sins forbidden.

Quest. 'What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?'

Ans. 'The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbour, and all inordinate motions and affections to any thing that is his.'

This command is a curb and bridle to the distempered heart of man, which of all parts of man is the hardest to be commanded and kept within bounds. Men may be of a courteous obliging behaviour, keep in their hands from killing, or what tendeth thereunto, their bodies from uncleanness, their hands from stealing, and their tongues from lying; while, in the mean time, the heart in all these respects may be going within the breast like a troubled sea, unto which this command by divine authority saith, Peace, and be still.

The heart distempered by original sins runs out in the irascible faculty in tormenting passions, bearing an aversion of the heart to what the Lord in his wisdom lays before men. This great stream of the corruption of our nature divides itself into two branches; one running against our own condition, namely, a torrent of discontent; the other against our neighbour, namely, envying and grudging at his good. In the concupiscible faculty, in lusting affections and inordinate motions towards something which God has put out of our

way, at least with-held from our closest embraces. This also divides itself into two branches; one running towards what is our own, namely, a sinful eagerness, lost, or inordinate motion of the heart to what we possess; the other running towards what is our neighbour's, an inordinate affection to what is his. Thus the corrupt heart runs in a direct opposition to the will of God, refusing what he would have us to accept, and embracing closely what he would have us to stand at a distance from. The corrupt fountain with its several streams is all here forbidden. We shall speak to them all as laid before us, tracing the streams to the fountain-head.

FIRST, the streams in which the distemper of the heart runs are here forbidden expressly, because these are most exposed to our view. Let us view,

FIRST, The tormenting passions, in which the corruption of nature vents itself; for sin is in its own nature misery. We need but go in the paths of sin to make us miserable, and in the high road of duty to make us happy. We shall consider the tormenting passion,

First, Of discontent with our own estate or condition. This is plainly here forbidden; for discontentment is presupposed to coveting; and there could be no coveting of what we want without discontentment with what we have. The lusty gapings of the heart say, there is an uneasiness within. It is only the plague of discontentment that makes the heart cry, Give, give.

I. I will shew the evil of discontentment, and paint out this Sin in its black colours. It is the hue of hell all over.

1. Discontent is, in the nature of it, a compound of the blackest ingredients, the scum of the corrupt heart boiling up, and mixed to make up the hellish composition.

1st, Unsubjection to and rebellion against the will of God, Hos. 4:16. 'Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer;' backsliding or refractory, that will not admit the yoke farther than it is forced on. The discontented heart cannot submit, but sets its foot as par against the divine dispensation. Though God guides and governs the world, they are the malcontents, that are not pleased with the government, but mutiny against it. What pleases God, pleases not them; what is right in God's eyes, is evil in theirs. And nothing will please them, but to have the reins of government out of God's hands into their own; though, if their passion did not blind their judgment, they might see how they would quickly fire the little world of their own and other's condition, if they had the reins in their own hand.

2dly, Sorrow of heart under the divine dispensation towards them. It is not according to their mind, and so their heart sinks in sorrow, 1 Kings 21:4. God crosses their will, and they pierce their own hearts with many sorrows; as if a man, because he cannot stop the course of the sun in the firmament, would wrap up himself in darkness.

And this is a killing sorrow, a sword thrust into a man's heart by his own hands, 2 Cor. 7:10. It melts a man's heart within him; like a vulture, preys upon his natural spirits, tending to shorten his days. It makes him dumpish and heavy like Ahab, and is a heavy load above the burden of affliction. That is the black smoke of discontentment, which yet often breaks out into a fiery flame, as in the same case of Ahab, where Naboth fell a sacrifice to it.

3dly, Anger and wrath against their lot, Jude 16. Complainers. The word signifies such as are angry at their lot, and in the distributions Providence makes of the world, still complain that the least or worst part of it falls to their share. Thus the discontented do in their hearts bark at the mountains of brass, Zech. 6:1; as dogs do at the moon,

and with the same success. They are angry with God's dispensations, and their hearts rise against it, and snarl at it.

And this is a fretting anger, whereby men disquiet and vex themselves in vain, like men dashing their heads against the wall; the wall stands unmoved, but their heads are wounded. Like a wild bull in a net, the more he stirs, the faster is he held; so that still they return with the loss. Thus discontent is in the heart like a serpent gnawing the bowels, and makes a man as a moth to himself, consuming him, or a lion tearing himself, Job 18:4.

Lastly, There is a spice of heart-blasphemy in it; for it strikes very directly against God the Governor of the world, and accuses his administration; and for an evidence of this, it sometimes breaks out in words, Mal. 3:13, 14, 15; 'Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord: yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy: yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.' Discontent accuses him,

(1.) Of folly, as if he were not wise enough to govern the world. The peevish discontented person, in his false light, sees many flaws in the conduct of Providence, and pretends to tell God how he may correct his work, and how it would be better. If the work of Providence be wisely done, why are we discontent with it? or would we be discontent with it, if we did not think we saw how it should be otherwise, and how it might be mended?

(2.) Of injustice, as if he did us wrong. The judge of all the earth cannot but do right. He cannot be bribed nor biassed; yet the discontented heart rises against him, and blasphemes him as an

respector of persons. It looks on his distributive justice (if we may so call it, for indeed all is his own, not ours) with an evil eye, and accuses him of partiality in not giving them as good as others, complaining of their share. On his corrective justice, if they did not deserve what he lays on them. For if we do deserve the evil in our lot, there is no wrong done us; and why do we then complain? And to fill up the measure, it accuseth him,

(3.) Of cruelty. Job, in a fit of discontent, speaks it out, chap. 30:21; 'Thou art become cruel to me.' Thus goodness itself is blasphemed by the discontented, who behave as if they were under the hands of a merciless tyrant, who would sport himself with one's misery. Discontent fills the heart with black and hard thoughts of God, and represents him as a rigid master and cruel lord; otherwise people would lay their hand on their mouth, and be content.

Some will say, that their discontent is with themselves, not with God, having brought their cross on with their own hands. Ans. If it be the effect of your sin, ye may mourn for your sin, but ye should the rather be content with your lot. And as for mismanagements, there is a providence that reaches them, and so God is our party still: but nothing is more ordinary than that, Prov. 19:3; 'The foolishness of man perverteth his way; and his heart fretteth against the Lord.'

Others say, that it is with the instruments of their trouble they are discontented. Ans. But consider that they are but instruments in God's hand, in the hand of his providence, and therefore ye should not be discontent. Say as David did to the sons of Zeruiah, 'What have I to do with you? so let him curse because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?' 2 Sam. 16:10. No creature can be more to us than God makes it to be: if then God shall squeeze any creature dry of comfort

to us, and we thereupon prove discontented, whatever we pretend, our hearts fret against the Lord, Exod. 16:2; compare ver. 7.

Thus ye see the picture of discontentment; and does it not look very black? There are ounces and pounds of rebellion against the will of God, killing sorrow and fretting anger, and hideous heart-blasphemy in it, while there is not one grain of religion or reason that goes into this hellish composition. If one should take it for a description of hell, he would not be far out; for the truth is, discontent is a hell in the bosom, and a lively emblem of the pit of darkness.

2. If ye view discontentment in the rise of it, ye will see further into the evil of it. It takes its rise from,

1st, A blinded judgment which puts darkness for light, and light for darkness, and cannot see into the wisdom of the conduct of Providence, that does all things well. When our blind minds begin to refine on the management of holy Providence, they are apt to produce discontent, which in respect of Providence is always unreasonable. See how good Jacob bewrays his folly and ignorance of the methods of providence, Gen. 42:36; 'Ye have bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.' Compare with this the promise, Rom. 8:28; 'All these things shall work together for good to them that love the Lord, to those who are called according to his purpose;' and also compare the event; and ye will see that all these things were for the benefit of the good Patriarch, and that of his numerous family.

Yea, oft-times does it so readily rise out of darkness, that it springs up from mere suspicion, misapprehension, and mistake, so that a little cloud of that nature over the mind will in the end cover the mind with the blackness of discontent: as in the case of Ahab, 1 Kings

21:4; compare ver. 6. And indeed there is never a ground of discontent, but the blind mind does magnify it, and lays to it such heaps of rubbish, as the heart is not able to stand under it, as in the case of Rachel, Gen. 30:1; 'When Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.' Thus are our own dark minds the anvil on which our miseries are beat out into greater breadth and length than they are of, as they come out of the hand of God, to the end they may cover our hearts with discontent. Happy is the man that can take up his cross as God lays it down, without adding more to it.

2dly, A proud heart. Haman's pride discontented him for want of bows and cringes from Mordecai, which would never have troubled a humble man. A proud heart is a wide heart, Prov. 28:25. Heb. It is not little that will fill it; it is long ere it will say, it is enough: and so it natively produces discontent. The devil is the proudest creature, and withal the most discontented; for pride and discontent lodge always under one roof. And could we get blood let of the heart-vein of pride, we would see the swelling ulcer of discontent fall apace.

3. An unmortified affection to the creature, 1 Tim. 6:9, 10; Jonah had a gourd, and he was exceedingly glad of it, Jonah 4:6; it is taken away, and then he was exceedingly discontented, ver. 9. The heart takes such a hold of such and such a created comfort, that it becomes like a live limb of a man's body; so when it is rent away, what wonder one cry out, as if men were cutting a limb off him? No body cries out for the losing of a tree leg, because it has no communication with the members of the man's body, it is a dead thing. So, were our affection to the creature deadened to it, as it should be, discontent could have no access.

4. A spirit of unbelief. Want of faith marred the acceptance of Cain's offering, Heb. 11:4; and opened the sluice of discontent on him too, Gen. 4:5; 'Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.' Discontent feeds on wants, faith brings in the supply of wants, and can feed on it, while it is yet in the promise. Where unbelief is, then no wonder discontent prevail. A lively faith would kill discontent; whereas unbelief nourishes and cherishes it; for it puts an effectual bar in the way of the rest of the heart, which it can never attain but in God.

5. View it in the effect, and it will appear very black. The tree is known by its fruits.

1st, It mars communion with and access to God. Muddy and troubled water receives not the image of the sun, as a clear and standing water will do. So a discontented heart is unfit for communion with a holy God, 1 Tim. 2:8; 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?' If one would have communion with God, his heart must not be boiling with anger against his brother, Matth. 5:23, 24. How then can he have it, when he is angry with his God, as in discontent?

2dly, It quite unfits a man for holy duties, so that he cannot perform them rightly or acceptably, for speaking to God in prayer, or his speaking to them by his word. 1. It deadens one's heart within him as in Nabal's case, 1 Sam. 25:37 whose 'heart died within him, and he became as a stone.' 2. It takes away the relish of spiritual things, vitiates the taste, and turns them sapless to people, as it did to the Israelites in Egypt, Exod. 6:7–9:3. It carries the heart off the duty, to pore on the ground of discontent, and makes them drive heavily in God's worship, and serve him drooping and heartless, as it did the Jews in Malachi's time, Mal. 2:13, 14. Their unkindness to their wives made them discontented and fretful, so that when they came to the temple, they were quite out of humour.

3dly, Nay, it unfits people for the work of their ordinary calling. It is not only an enemy to grace, but to gifts too, and common prudence. The black fumes ascending from the discontented heart overcloud the judgment in ordinary matters, that the one hand knows not what the other is doing, as in Nabal's case, who should have gone and made his peace with David. So that it is a plague to people, not only as Christians, but as men.

4thly, It mars the comfort of society, and makes people uneasy to those that are about them. When Elkanah went up to Shiloh with his family to rejoice before the Lord, fretting Hannah is out of tune, and mars the harmony, 1 Sam. 1:7, 8. Peninnah provokes Hannah, Hannah is angry with her, and Elkanah with both. So it is the pest of society, and makes an evil world ten times worse. It makes people a burden to others, because it gives them a cloudy day while it lasts.

5thly, It is a torment to one's self, and makes a man his own tormentor, 1 Kings 21:4. It wraps him up in darkness, feeds him with bitterness, and gives him gall and wormwood to drink, Prov. 15:16 for his ordinary. It robs him of the best worldly thing he can possess, i. e. his peace and tranquillity of mind; and makes his mind within him as the troubled sea that cannot rest. So the discontented person is on a continual rack, and he himself is executioner. All sins are displeasing to God, yet in many there is some pleasure to men, both the actors and others; but corrupt nature cannot strain any pleasure out of this in one's self, nor in others either, unless, like the devil, they have a pleasure in seeing others miserable.

6thly, It is not only tormenting to one's mind, but is ruinous to the body, Prov. 17:22. 'A broken spirit drieth the bones.' It is a degree of self-murder. It wastes the natural spirits, and has a native tendency to cut short one's days. The soul and body are so knit, that they

mutually affect one another; and the mind disordered by fretting passions, will fret the body, and consume it like a moth.

7thly, It sucks the sap out of all one's enjoyments. As a few drops of gall will imbitter a cup of wine, and a few drops of ink will blacken a cup of the clearest liquor; so discontent upon one ground will imbitter and blacken all other enjoyments. See it in Haman, Esth. 5:11–13. 'And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman said, moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet which she had prepared, but myself; and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king. Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.' See it also in Ahab, 1 Kings 21:4. 'And Ahab came into his house, heavy and displeased, because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers: and he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.' As contentment turns all metals into gold, so discontentment turns them into iron. What taste is there in the white of an egg without salt? There is as much as in any enjoyment under the sun without contentment. If we have not that for seasoning to our comforts, they are tasteless and sapless as ashes. And therefore let a man have what he will he enjoys no more than what he has contentment in.

8thly, Hence it always makes one unthankful. Let Providence set the discontented man in a paradise, the fruit of that one tree which is forbidden him, and which he is so uneasy about, will so imbitter him, that he will not give God thanks for all the variety of other delights which the garden is furnished with. For all these avail him nothing

while that is kept out of his reach. It will make him pore so on his cross, that he will not look over his shoulder to all his comforts. Ingratitude is a sin of a black die: how much more must that be so which is the cause of it?

Lastly, It is a fruitful womb of other sins, it brings forth a great brood of other lusts. When once it entered into Adam's heart, it made him at one stroke break through all the ten commandments. It were an endless labour to recount the viporous brood that comes forth of this cockatrice-egg, that fry of enormous lusts that are bred by it. But for a swatch of this, I will instance in three of the grossest sins that man can readily fall into, which are the natural product of discontentment.

(1.) Murder, the grossest sin of the second table, a sin which a peculiar vengeance pursues, and which a natural conscience so startles at, that it is a continual lash to the murderer. This is the product of discontent; for when once the heart smoking with discontent, breaks out into a flame, it breathes out blood and slaughter. So Ahab's discontent was the cause of the murder of Naboth, with all the mocking of God, the perjury and robbery that attended it, 1 Kings 21. Nay, not content with the murder of a single person, it gaped in Haman to devour a righteous nation for one man's cause, Esth. 3:6. Nay, the worst sort of murder proceeds from it; the murder of nearest relations, as in the case of Cain's murdering Abel, Gen. 4:5, 8. And, which is worst of all, self-murder is what always proceeds from it, as in the case of Ahithophel, 2 Sam. 17:23. People grow discontented with their lot, their proud hearts are not able to bear it; so they turn desperate, seeing they cannot help it, and make away with themselves.

(2.) Dealing with the devil. The discontented being angry with God, they are in a fair way to be a prey to Satan. Thus Saul, in a fit of discontent, went to the witch at Endor, 1 Sam. 28. The discontented heart is a drumly heart, and it is in such waters that Satan loves to fish. And here is his hook wherewith he catches them; he proffers to do that for them, or give that to them, which God will not. And they being intent upon it, so that they cannot be easy without it, are easily ensnared. Whereof the world has afforded many miserable instances.

(3.) Blasphemy against God, the grossest sin of the first table, for of that kind is the unpardonable sin. Discontent is in its own nature a practical blasphemy, and therefore when it comes to a height, it breaks out in open blasphemy, as in that abominable mouth, 2 Kings 6 ult. 'This evil is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?' For being angry with God, people begin to quarrel with him, and murmur against him; and if they do not hold in time, they are in a fair way to blaspheme. Therefore it is marked concerning Job, how by his sitting down contented under all his losses the devil missed the mark he aimed at in them, Job 1 ult. compare ver. 11. It is marked concerning Aaron, that he held his peace, Lev. 10:3 for it is hard to speak, and speak right, under great pressures. These effects may convince us of the exceeding evil of this root of bitterness.

Lastly, View it in the qualities that agree to it, which are not in many other sins. I will name the following.

1st, It is the noted rebel in the kingdom of providence. God who has created the world, vindicates the government of it to himself alone. But the discontented go about to wrest the reins of government out of his hand. It wages war with the Governor of the world, and strives with him, as if the clay should strive with the potter, and say, 'Why hast thou made me thus?'

2. It is a peculiar despiser of the kingdom of grace. There is a particular malignity in it against the grace of the gospel. For it throws contempt on God, heaven, and all the purchase of Christ, which is offered in the gospel to fill up the room of what the discontented wants, Exod. 6:7, 9. It is true, other lusts do so too, as covetousness, sensuality, and profaneness. But here lies the difference; these lusts have a bait of profit or pleasure with them, and have something to put in the room of spiritual things; discontent has no bait with it, nor any thing to put in the room of them. If one should reject your converse, who has another less worthy to converse with, it is a slight: but if one that has none, if they take not you, do reject you, that is a greater contempt by far. So the discontented will rather pine away without any comfort, than take it from the gospel. Again, in these lusts there is a folly and simplicity; but in discontent there is a kind of gravity and devilish seriousness. To be contemned by a simple one or a roving fool, is not easy; but it is worse by far to be contemned in a way of gravity and deliberation. This is most cutting.

Lastly, It follows men to, and will continue with them, in the kingdom of darkness for ever. There are some lusts which men have no use for beyond the line of time; the covetous will despise their gold, money and wealth in hell, the unclean person his filthy companions, &c. But when the discontented die without repentance, their works will follow them to the pit. In hell they will be discontented for ever without the least intermission; they will never give one smile more, but an eternal cloud of darkness will be on their countenance, and they will fret, murmur, and rage against God and themselves and blaspheme for evermore.

Let us see the evil of this, then, and guard against it.

Secondly, I will offer some remedies against it, and advices in the ease.

1. Practise the directions for contentment; particularly take God for your God in Christ, and labour to believe he is so. Take him in the room of whatever ye want, or lies on you, which discontents you. Without this all else will be in vain. The greatest hole in your heart, the enjoyment of God is able to make up. And God often makes such in the hearts of men and women, that there may be room for himself, who otherwise is not missed, Zeph. 3:17. 'The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.'

2. Labour to be humble. Humility lets us see our true worth that it is nothing, and so fences the heart against discontent, Gen. 32:10. It makes one wonder he has any thing at all left him, and so lets him into the mystery of that text, 1 Thess. 5:18. 'In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.' He that is convinced that he deserves death, will not be discontent with banishment. And he that believes that he deserves to lose the presence of God for ever, will lay his hand on his mouth under temporal losses.

3. Believe that there is nothing in the world in which either your happiness or misery is bound up. I know there are things of which we wont to speak so; but the world's happiness or misery is but a shadow of these things. That is happiness where a man wants no more than he can desire, and that is only in the enjoyment of God. And that is misery where one has nothing desirable left him, and none see that till they be in hell.

4. Do not pore upon your crosses, for that does but breed and feed discontent, Psal. 39:3. It is observable, that Jacob would not call his

son Benoni, lest that should at every naming of the child ruffle his wound. But you may dwell upon your affliction as from the hand of God, to consider wherefore the Lord has contended, that so you may get the good of it. But turn your eyes on your mercies which you enjoy and be thankful.

5. Be much exercised in religious duties. Go often to your knees, and pour out your hearts before the Lord, and tell him all your wants. This gave Hannah a sweet case, 1 Sam. 1:18. Go often to your Bibles, and hear the good news there from the far country, that is above the clouds, where there is neither cloud nor rain, Psal. 73:16, 17 and 119:92. There are springs of consolation there, which a person never tastes of, till he be brought into the condition for which they were placed there.

6. Be always exercised in some honest business. Idleness is dangerous many ways, particularly in the point of discontent. It is a nurse and fosterer of it. It is the standing pool that gathers mud; and in those that are idle Satan will be busy, and will not miss the opportunity.

7. Curb it as soon as it begins to set out its head, nip it in the bud, for it is a fire that gathers force by continuing and spreading. The water which at the head might be easily passed, comes afterwards to be so big as may easily drown. Discontent is a striving with God, and so is like the letting out of waters, which however small at the beginning, grows to a monstrous bigness, if not timely remedied.

Lastly, Live by faith; that is the best preservative against discontent. Faith stays the soul in all events on the promises; gives a favourable view of all crosses and afflictions, as tending to the good of the party; lays hold upon things unseen as the great portion; and so lessens the

care about things of the world; and, in a word, finds all it wants in God. Thus much of discontent.

II. The branch that runs against our neighbour's condition is envying and grudging. The object of this sin is the good of our neighbour; and the better the object is, the worse is the sin. It runs through the objects of all the other commands of the second table; for the heart is apt to envy our neighbour's honour, life, &c. It is near of kin to discontent which always accompanies it, as we may see in the case of Ahab, 1 Kings 21:4 for it goes always on a comparison of our neighbour's condition with one's own, the grudge being that they have more or as much as we.

I shall shew the evil of it, and the remedies thereof.

First, I shall shew the evil of it briefly.

1. View it in the ingredients thereof, whereof it is made up.

1st, Sorrow and grief for the good of our neighbour, 1 Cor. 13:4. (So opposite is it to charity); for envy makes the heart like the moon that shines full and clear in the night, as long as itself is the topping light, but grows pale and wan as soon as the sun riseth, John 3:26. The prosperity and welfare of others is a weight on the envious heart, a thorn in the evil eye, and a prick in that weak side, Gen. 31:1.

2dly, Fretting anger at their good, Psal. 37:1. What makes others easy, makes the envious uneasy; and the more fresh and green others are by the providence of God, the more withered and fretted are they, Num. 11:28, 29. So it was with Joseph's brethren. The sun shining on others burns them up; and the more it warms their neighbour, the more it scorches them, and makes the black fume of envy and grudge to ascend.

2. View it in the springs and rise thereof.

1st, Covetousness of what is their neighbour's. Had not Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard he had not grudged him the possession of it. The envious would draw all to themselves; and what they are sorry others should keep, they themselves would fain possess. A heart knit to the world, and carnal self-interest cannot miss to be envious.

2dly, Discontent. The envious are always discontented that they have not more than others, or that they want what others do enjoy, Discontent makes an empty room with them, and envy frets that it is not filled up with what belongs to their neighbour.

3dly, Pride and selfishness, Gal. 5 ult. Pride so exalts one's self, and depresses others, that nothing is too much for the proud man, and nothing too little for his neighbour. Selfishness cares only for what is one's own, and has no regard to the interest of our neighbour; quite contrary to the spirit of the gospel, that teaches, that every man should not look on his own things, but also on the things of others, Phil. 2:4. Hence the man cannot endure to see others like him, far less above him.

3. View it in the effects thereof. It has almost the same as those of discontent, which may be well applied thereto. I will only say, that envy is a sword, and wounds three at once.

1st, It strikes against God, being highly offensive and dishonourable to him. It quarrels his government of the world, and accuses him of folly, partiality, and injustice, Matth. 20:15. It cannot rest in the disposals of holy providence, but is ever picking quarrels with its management. Some have too much, others too little, the world is ill dealt; though had they the dealing of it, where there is one complaint

now, there would be ten in that case, for they would heap it up to themselves, come of others what would.

2dly, It strikes against our neighbour. It is a bitter disposition of spirit, wishing his ill-fare, and grudging his good; and not only binds up men's hands from doing him good, but natively tends to loose them to his hurt. It will be at him one way or other in word or deed, and there is no escaping the evil of it, Prov. 27:4. 'Who is able to stand before envy?' Oft-times it drives on men to the greatest extravagancies, as it did Joseph's brethren to murder him; which being stopt, they sold him for a slave, Gen. 37:11, &c.

3. It strikes, at one's self, Job 5:2. 'Envy slayeth the silly man.' Though it be so weak as to do no execution on others, yet be sure it never misses a man's self; and it wounds one's self the deeper, that it cannot do much hurt to the party envied. It frets the mind, and keeps it always uneasy as upon tenter-hooks; nay, it ruins the body, and silently murders it, Prov. 14:30. 'Envy is the rottenness of the bones,' making a man to pine away, because others thrive.

Secondly, I shall give the remedies of this sin.

1. Taking and cleaving to God himself as our portion, Matth. 6:21. God is a full portion, and in him there is enough for all; and if our souls rest in him, they will easily bear others having other things that we want. But the world can never satisfy; and therefore when people look for their portion in it, it is no wonder they be always complaining, and think others have more and better than they, because if they had it all alone, they would not have enough.

2. Loving God for his own sake, and our neighbour for his sake. Did we thus love, we would rejoice in God's honour, and our neighbour's welfare. This guarded Moses and John against envy, and made them

joy in what others grieved at and grudged. An onvious spirit is a narrow spirit, that is never concerned for the one nor the other, but for sweet self, to which all must be sacrificed by them.

3. Humility, which would make us low in our own eyes, and make others high. He that is in his own eyes nothing, will not grudge though his part be less than others; the chief of sinners will never think the highest seat among the favourites of providence belongs to him. And whoso have a due regard for others, will not grudge that it is well with them.

I come next to consider how the corruption of nature runs in concupiscence, lust, or inordinate affection. The two branches into which it divides itself are,

1. A lust after what is our own.

2. A lust after what is our neighbour's, or not ours.

First, A lust after what is our own. What God has given us, we may like and desire for the ends he has given it. But when that desire is inordinate, it is sinful, it is lust and inordinate affection, Col. 3:5. Now the desire of, or love to, or liking of what is ours, is inordinate in these several cases following, all which are here forbidden.

1. The heart's being so glued to them, that it cannot want them, cannot part with them, 1 Cor. 6:12. There is but one thing needful, Luke 10 ult. the enjoyment of God. So God has made it, and therefore he would have us sit loose to all other things. When instead of that the heart cleaves to other things, so that it cannot part with them, that is a lust to them, that must be killed by weaning therefrom, Luke 14:26. There the heart grips too hard, and must have it.

2. A too great eagerness in the using of them, when the heart casts off the band of religion and reason, and runs loose after them. Thus a man may have a lust to his own meat or drink, 1 Sam. 14:32. For our affections even to lawful things need a curb, because they are ready to be violent; and the violent pulse of the affections to them is a symptom of a feverish soul distempered by original sin.

3. The desire of them for other ends than God has allowed and appointed; for then it is carried without the rule set by the Lord, and cannot miss to be inordinate. Thus oft-times God's good creatures are desired to be fuel to lusts, Jam. 4:3, 4. To desire meat for our necessity, is not evil; but for our lusts, is not good. Whatever God has made ours, is not absolutely, but with a reserve, to wit, for such uses as he has allowed; if we go beyond that with them, it is a sinful lusting after the same, as if it were not ours at all. But, alas! in these things men are often like a tenant, who having taken a house to dwell in, would make bold to pull it down, and burn it for fuel.

4. The being led to the use of them, without reason, necessity, or expediency. Then we are under the power of them, and not they under our power, 1 Cor. 6:12. It is lawful to eat, but to be a slave to unreasonable appetite is a sin, and so in other cases. For so the soul is degraded, and made to serve a lust, instead of commanding and regulating the desire, which ought always to be subject to right reason. And however common this is, and but little regarded, it is the native effect of original sin, which has disturbed the order and beautiful harmony of the faculties of the soul; the affections like an unruly horse, refusing to be held in by the curb of reason.

5. The using of them to the hurt either of soul or body; in that case the desire cannot but be inordinate. Our souls and bodies are the Lord's, and he says as of his own, 'Do thyself no harm.' It must needs

be a lust that carries a man over the belly of this command. Yet, alas! how many such motions and affections have people to what is even their own, that to satisfy them they sacrifice both their spiritual and temporal interests! Hence it is a good rule in the use of lawful things, That then people do exceed, when by the use of them they are unfitted, either for the service of God, or their own interest.

6. The using of them without any regard to the honour of God, 1 Cor. 10:31. The glory of God should regulate us in all things, determine us to the use of what is ours, and determine us against it; all being to be cut and carved as may best suit that end.

Secondly, A lust after what is our neighbour's or not ours. Every desire of what is our neighbour's is not sinful, otherwise there could be no trading, buying, selling, exchanging, bargaining, &c. amongst men. There are holy boundaries set to these desires by the law of God; and as long as they abide within these, they are lawful; but when they exceed, they are inordinate, lustings, and coveting, and here forbidden. Now they are inordinate,

1. When the very having of them is unlawful, the desire of them is a lust, and inordinate motion. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife; for as John said to Herod, 'It is not lawful for thee to have her,' viz. his brother's wife, Matth. 14:4. What is absolutely forbidden us, we may no way desire, otherwise we do but re-act Adam's sin, in lusting after the forbidden fruit. The heart joins with those things which God has put out of its embrace, and requires it to stand at a distance from.

2. Though the having of them may be lawful, as of our neighbour's house, servant, ox, &c. yet the desire of them may be a lust, and is so in several cases; as,

1st, When they are desired for unlawful ends, to feed some lust, as when a man desires his neighbour's drink, not for strength, but drunkenness, this is a sinful coveting, an inordinate motion to what is his, though he pay for it. O how much sin is contracted this way, that is never noticed: how many things are desired and purchased too from others, even in a lawful way, which are for no other end desired but to feed some lust? If our desires be not regulated by reason, necessity, or expediency, they are but sinful lustings. This sinful humour in the hearts of men and women, has produced many trades and inventions in the world, which had never been known if man's nature had not been corrupted. And these are maintained and encouraged, by people's care to gratify their lusts, their vanity, pride, sensuality, &c. Whereas, if they walked strictly by necessity and expediency, according to religion and reason, there would be no more use for them than there is of a third wheel to a cart. From the beginning it was not so. Therefore surely the heart is distempered, and these the disorderly motions.

2dly, When the desire sets people on unlawful means to procure them, it is a lust. Though it be lawful to have one's neighbour's servant, his ox, &c. they may be thine lawfully; yet, if thy desire set thee on underhand dealing to rob him of his servant, to cheat or wheedle him out of his ox, &c. it is coveting them with a witness. And thus lust of covetousness thus acting keeps the world in a continual ferment, so that no man is sure of another. For hardly is there a bargain made, but both buyer and seller labours to get something for this lust, as well as for his necessity and expediency. And what wonder is it, that one who has running sores in his hand, leaves some marks of them on every thing he touches? Such is our case by natural corruption.

3dly, When the desire, though it sets not an unlawful means, yet is too eager after what is another's. This sinful eagerness discovers itself several ways, all here forbidden; as,

(1.) When people cannot wait with ease the time they are to get the thing; but the feverish desire makes them uneasy, as Rachel was with the desire of children.

(2.) When they are overjoyed with the enjoyment of it, as Jonah was with his gourd. And indeed it is hard to joy, and not overjoy, in any thing that is not God or grace.

(3.) When they are fretted and discontented at the missing of it, as Ahab was, who, for ought appears, had no mind to seek Naboth's vineyard but for money, till his wicked wife put it into his head; but he was fretted for the want of it.

(4.) When they cannot be satisfied without it, but must have it, though not truly necessary, cost what it will, as Esau was set for the red pottage that his brother had. This makes a price that they call the price of affection, which often is nothing else but the price of unreasonable fancy, which must be gratified at any rate.

4thly, When the desire singly goes out after something that Providence has put out of one's reach, though the man has no mind to seek it, nay, would not have it if it were offered him. This seems to have been David's sin, when he longed, and said, 'O that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!' 2 Sam. 23:15. Some think this was a gallant soldier's wish, as if he had said, O that we could drive the Philistines' garrison out of Bethlehem! Some of the old Rabbi's think it was a pious wish, and that David longed for the Messiah that was to break out there. But it seems to be a sinful wish, as both the word which is used, Prov.

21:26; 'He coveteth greedily all the day long,' and the pointing in the original, seem to carry it. The weather was hot, and he was thirsty, and a violent fancy took him to have a drink out of the well of Bethlehem, where he had often drank in his young days. But I cannot think that ever he meant, that any body should go fetch it at that time, ver. 17; but his men seeing the humour he was in, ventured. Thus lust breaks out, and guilt is contracted, many ways. The eyes see something that is not ours, and the heart says, O that it were mine! without any design about it. Something that God has locked up from us in providence, and the heart yearns after it, saying, O that I had it! Something we hear others have got, a good gift, bargain, or match, and the heart says, O that it had fallen to my share! and many such things, ail without any design. They are inordinate desires and lustings, for they still imply a coveting, and a dissatisfaction in some sort with our lot, which the holy law can never allow.

In all these cases the desire of what is not ours is a lust, a sinful, inordinate motion, to what is our neighbour's.

Further, to trace this lust and lusting of the heart forbidden in this command, though it is as impossible for me to follow it in its several turnings and windings, as to tell the motes that appear where the beams of the sun are shining in a room. Besides the actual fulfilling of lusts, (Eph. 2:3.) in deeds which they drive to, which belongs to other commands, there are other things forbidden here, viz.

1. Lust in the fruit fully ripe, though not fallen off in the act; that is, when the lust is not only consented to and resolved upon, but all the measures are laid for bringing it forth into action. As Haman's lust of revenge, when he had got the king's sealed letters for the destruction of the Jews; Joseph's mistress' lust, when she caught him, and said, Lie with me. This sometimes Providence blasts when come to all this

ripeness, as in those cases, against the person's will. That is before God much alike as the sinful action itself. Sometimes conscience blasts it, so that the person suddenly retires as from the brink of a precipice, which he was going to throw himself over. That is before God as wanting but a very little of the sin completed. And, according to the nature of the thing, it will be very bitter in penitent reflections on it.

2. Lust in the fruit unripe; that is, when it is consented to for action, but the means of fulfilling it are not deliberated upon. Thus people, in the hurry of a temptation, are carried so far, that their hearts say within them, they will do it. Then lust hath conceived, Jam. 1:15; when it is brought this length, a little more will bring it to the birth. But though it never come farther, it leaves as much guilt on the soul, as will make a sick conscience.

3. Lust in the blossom; that is, when though it is not consented to for action, yet it is consented to in itself, and spreads in morose delectation, as they call it, or abiding delight in the lust. That seems to be the lust especially meant, Matth. 5:28; 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery already with her in his heart.' O what guilt is contracted this way even by the wandering of the desire, (Eccl. 6:9;) which the person has no mind to gratify by action! Thus the covetous man lusteth, and heaps up riches and wealth to himself in imagination; the proud man lusts, and heaps up honour, &c. the revengeful, &c. And all that the lust feeds on here is but mere fancy, airy nothings, which perhaps never had, nor does the man really expect will ever have, a being. This is lust dreaming, for which a conscience will get a fearful awakening; though stupid souls please themselves in it, that it does ill to no body, nor minds ill to them.

4. Lust in the bud; that is, the first risings of lust, even before the consent of the will to them; the first openings of particular lusts, sometimes not regarded nor noticed, and so neither approved nor disapproved; and sometimes checked in their very rising, Rom. 7:15. But however it be, they are sins here forbidden, though the Papists will not allow them to be so, more than Paul in his unconverted state: 'I had not known lust, except that the law had said, Thou shalt not covet,' Rom. 7:7. Who can number those that are still setting up their heads in the corrupt heart, as naturally rising from it as stench from a dunghill, or weeds and thistles from the cursed ground? These are lustings in embryo, whereof some are formed, others not. They are happiest in this world that crush them in the bud; but happiest of all when they do not so much as bud; but it is so in heaven only.

Lastly, Lust in the seed. The seed itself is the corrupt nature, original sin, of which afterwards. But here I understand particular lusts, as pride, covetousness, &c. which are the spawn of the corruption of nature, the members of the old man, which the apostle calls us to mortify, Col. 3:5. These are they from which these cursed buds immediately sprout forth. Original sin has the lusts thereof, and these are they, Rom. 6:12. We cannot enumerate them, more than we can count the dust. But in the general.

1st, There are fleshly lusts, 1 Pet. 2:11; lust conversant about the body, and gratifying to the flesh, such as covetousness, uncleanness, sensuality, &c. In these the body drags the soul after it, and the soul goes out in these to gratify the body.

2dly, There are spiritual lusts, 2 Cor. 7:1. Eph. 2:3. There is a filthiness of the spirit as well as of the flesh, which lies more inwardly, in the mind and will, having nothing ado with the sensitive appetite, as pride, selfishness, &c. These are the two bands of lusts

which the old man sends forth to maintain and advance the government of hell in the soul; but both sorts are under a sentence of condemnation from the law of God; declared rebels to heaven, and intercommuned, not to be conversed with, harboured, or entertained, but resisted, fought against, and brought to the cross. They are in good and bad; but,

(1.) In natural men they are reigning lusts, Rom. 6:12. They have the throne in the heart, and amongst them command all. But there is readily one among them, like Beelzebub, that is the prince of these devils, called the predominant sin, to which other lusts will bow, though they will not bow to God. As where pride is the predominant, it will make covetousness bow; and where covetousness predominates, it will make pride bow. These do not always continue their rule; but the old man can pull down one, and set up another, as lust in youth may be succeeded by covetousness in old age.

(2.) In the regenerate they are but indwelling lusts, Rom. 6:12 and 7:24. They are cast down from the throne in conversion, pursued and hunted in progressive sanctification, and weakened, and utterly extirpated out of the kingdom at death. But their very being there is against the law, though they be not on the throne.

Now, these lusts are 'divers lusts,' Tit. 3:3. It is not one or two that are in the heart, but many. Their name may be legion, for they as many. The flesh, or corrupt nature is a monster with many heads; but there is one law for them all, they must die. Though they be all the birth of one belly, they are very diverse; for our natural corruption turns itself into a thousand shapes. But,

The qualities common to them all, whereby ye may see more into their nature, are these. They are,

1. Ungodly lusts, Jude. 18. There is nothing of God in them, no not so much as in the devil, who is God's creature; but they are none of God's creatures, he disowns them, 1 John 2:16. They are the creatures of a corrupt heart, generated of it, as vermin of a rotten body, by influence from hell.

2. Hellish lusts, devilish lusts, John 8:44. They were the devil's before they were our's, and so it is a sorry copy we have to write after. They are eminently in him; and those in whom they are grown to the greatest perfection, are but bunglers at the trade, to the perfection of which he has arrived. They came from him, they are pleasing to him wherever they are, and they like to be with him for evermore.

3. They are warring and fighting lusts, Jam. 4:1.

(1.) They war against the Spirit wherever it is, Gal. 5:17. They are enemies to grace and the Spirit of grace; and the more they prevail, the kingdom of grace is the lower in the heart. They war against the entrance of grace, and often prevail to keep it out; like so many burrows from hell, choaking the word that would bring it in, Mark 4:19. They war against the actings and exercise of it, till it is often laid by as in a swoon. And they war against the very being of it, which they would destroy if God had not said against it.

(2.) They war against the soul, 1 Pet. 2:11 and will ruin it, if they be not ruined. They are no other to the soul than vermin and worms to a dead corpse, that feed on it till it be destroyed. Like a sword they pierce the soul, 1 Tim. 6:10; like a fire they burn it, Rom. 1:27; and like water they drown it, 1 Tim. 6:9; for they are in the heart like the devil in the swine, that will not let the soul rest till it destroy itself.

(3.) They war amongst themselves, Jam. 4:1. For though there is a sweet harmony amongst all the graces, yet lusts may be most

contrary one to another. This makes the heart often like a troubled sea, and puts a man on the rack, one lust drawing him one way, and another another way. Pride will put one forward to that which covetousness draws him back from. And the service of lusts must needs be difficult, in that they that serve them serve contrary masters.

4. They are deceitful lusts, Eph. 4:22. They are the deceivers of the soul, which, by pleasing the corrupt heart, destroy the soul; like Ezekiel's roll, sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly. They are a hook to the soul, covered with a taking bait; the silken cords wherewith Satan draws men into destruction.

5. They are hurtful lusts, 1 Tim. 6:9. They are hurtful to the soul and to the body, to ourselves and others. Being the brood of hell from a corrupt nature, they cannot be harmless; and therefore where no hurt can be done, they cannot enter, Rev. 21 ult. The softest of them is as a brier, and sharper than a thorn hedge, and always at length pierce the soul with many sorrows. They never fail to leave a sting behind them in the soul.

6. They are worldly lusts, Tit. 2:12. They have nothing of heaven in them. They range through the world, and feed on that which it does afford; and nothing but what is carnal can please them. They partake of the nature of the serpent, for dust is their meat, and on their belly do they go.

7. They are unsatiable lusts, 'greedy dogs that can never have enough,' Isa. 57:10. To feed them is but to enlarge their appetite, for they cry, Give, give, like the grave and the barren womb, Eccl. 1:8. Surfeited they may be, satisfied they can never be. They have a heavy task of it, that have them to provide for; no wonder they can get no

other thing minded, as a poor woman that has a company of hungry babes ever hanging about her hand, and crying out of hunger.

Lastly, They are former lusts, 1 Pet. 1:14. Their reign is in the black state of nature. And indeed in all they are foremost on the throne, they have the start of grace always, being born with us, in the virtue of their cause, the corruption of nature. And the power of them must be broken by grace coming in on them, or we perish.

A view of these lusts in the glass of this holy law must needs be very humbling, and stain the pride of all glory. Though the outside be never so clean, they make a foul inside. For consider,

1. They are the members of the old man, Col. 3:5. The corruption of nature is the old man, they are his members, which together make up the body of sin. Now, this old man being entire in all the unregenerate, these lusts are all in them; nay, even in the regenerate, so far as the corruption of nature still dwells in them, though the power of them be broken, yet they still remain, and afford work to them for daily mortification. So that there is none who may not proportionally take that character to themselves, 'Being filled with all unrighteousness,' Rom. 1:29 that is to say, all manner of lusts whatsoever are in the heart of every man, though they do not all break forth in their lives. Consider,

- (1.) The same corruption of nature is in all men whatsoever; all are originally and universally corrupt, John 3:6. There must then be a disposition in all to every evil thing habitually, though not actually. Dost thou see the most abominable lusts breaking forth in the lives of the worst; smite on thy breast, and say, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' and read thy own heart in their profligate lives, Prov. 27:19. 'As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.' When thou readest the law of God against these abominations which

are not so much as to be named, conclude that these lusts are in thy heart, for God gives no laws in vain.

(2.) What is it man will not do, when grace restrains not, and temptation draws forward? Who would have thought the lust of adultery had been in David's heart, of idolatry in Solomon's after the Lord had appeared to him twice, blasphemy in the saints mentioned by Paul, Acts 26:11; or incest in Lot's daughters? But in such a case they broke forth, which they had not done if they had not been within before.

(3.) They are the tinder answering the sparks of Satan's temptations in the world. It was the peculiar privilege of the man Christ since Adam fell, that the prince of this world had nothing in him, John 14:30. There is never a temptation goes abroad in the world, but there is a lust in the heart akin to it, so that no wonder they embrace one another as friends when they meet. Satan by this means, be his temptation what it will, has always something to work upon, a fire to blow up. So that in every case whatsoever, that holds true, 'He that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool,' Prov. 28:26.

(4.) They are the filthy matter ready to gather together in a boil in the heart, which being ripened, may break forth in the life, Jam. 1:14. They make way for gross sins, as the seed grows up into a tree that brings forth its natural fruit at length.

(5.) They are the fit opposers of every good motion, Gal. 5:17. So that there is never a good impression made upon, nor motion in the heart, but among these lusts it finds a peculiar opposite to it, one fit to engage against it, by a peculiar malignity in it. And so it is found in the godly, that as they have grace for grace in Christ, so they have corruption for grace in the unrenewed part; still some one lineament of Satan's image to set against another of God's image.

And now these lusts have their lustings and stirrings, a view of which must be very humbling. For consider,

1st, The innumerable occasions of them; at every blink of the eye, opening of the ear, or imagination of the heart, we are in hazard of them. The sparks of temptation are continually flying about us; how can we be safe, while we have these as gunpowder about us?

2dly, How suddenly they will flee through the heart like a stitch in the side, or an arrow out of a bow? A thought, a wish, is soon brought forth.

3dly, How frequent are they? when are we free of them? when is it that the crooked leg can move, and not halt?

Lastly, How little are these things noticed? That hellish steam arising from a corrupt nature, being so much within doors, is little regarded, but extremely blackens the soul.

Thus much of the bitter streams; we come now to the fountain and spring-head, from whence they have their rise; and that is, the corruption of nature. For as there is a poisonous nature in the serpent, besides its throwing out of its venom; so, besides the sinful lustings of the heart, there is an habitual corruption of the nature, which is the root of these lustings, loathings, and inordinate motions. The reason why the clock or dial points the hour wrong is, because it is wrong set; and till that set be altered, it will never point right. So man's nature has a wrong set, which we call the corruption of nature, whereby it comes to pass that he can never act right till that set be cured by regeneration. It is a corrupt disposition of the soul, whereby it is unapt for any thing truly good, and prone to evil.

The understanding is deprived of its primitive light and ability, unable to think a good thought, 2 Cor. 3:5; yea, darkness is over all that region, Eph. 5:8. As for the will, it is free to evil, but not to good, utterly unable so much as rightly to will any thing truly good, Phil. 2:13. Nay, it is averse to it as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. It is prone and bent to evil, Hos. 11:7; but lies cross and contrary to God and goodness, Rom. 8:7. The affections are quite disordered, misplaced as to their objects, loving what they should hate, and hating what they should love; or if right as to the objects, they can keep no bounds. But of this I have spoken largely elsewhere.*

This corruption of nature is here forbidden, for it is truly and properly sin, Rom. 6:12 and 7:17. It is the flesh that lusteth against the Spirit, Gal. 5:18; and if sin, it must be contrary to and forbidden by the law. And as sinful anger is forbidden in the sixth commandment, as the immediate fountain of murder, Matth. 5:21, 22; so, by a parity of reason, the corruption of nature is forbidden here, as the immediate fountain of that coveting or lusting, expressed therein.

And though it is impossible for us to prevent this sin, being born with it, it would be considered, that this law was originally given to Adam in innocency, requiring him to keep his nature pure and uncorrupted, and so discharging all corruption of it; which law, after his sin, remains in as full force as ever. And that the second Adam might answer the demands of the law in this point, he was born without this corruption and continued ever free from it. And those that are his, being regenerated are freed from the reigning power of it, and partake of a new nature.

If we look to this sin, we have a humbling view of ourselves, and must cry Unclean, unclean.

1. It is the fountain of all actual transgressions, Mark 7:21. Look to all disorders of thy heart and life; they flow natively from hence, as the poisonous streams from the impoisoned fountain. Look to the disorders appearing in the lives of others, the fountain from whence they proceed is in thee. And if the cause be there, and the effect follow not, thank God and not thyself.

2. All particular lusts are in it, as in the seed. It is the seed-plot of all particular sins. It is the cursed ground, where, let the gardener weed as he will, new ones will still spring up. It is the cage of unclean birds, the mystery of iniquity, which we will never get to the ground of till the foundations be overturned at death.

3. We never were without it, Psal. 51:5. It is a natural and hereditary disease that cannot be cured without a miracle. We dread the serpent that is naturally poisonous, more than any thing that is accidentally so. So may we dread this beyond all things else. When we were not capable of actually sinning, this made us guilty creatures.

4. We never are free of it, while awake or asleep. It is a permanent and abiding sin. Actual sins are transient, though not as to the guilt of them, yet as to the being of them; but whether the guilt of this be removed or not, it abides as fixed with bands of iron and brass.

Lastly, We never will be free of it while we live. If we die out of Christ it will never be cured. But even though we be in him, yet it abides till death, and will never be totally removed till then.

Thus I have now gone through the ten commands, labouring to lay before you the commandment in its exceeding breadth. And though I have been far from reaching all particular duties commanded, and sins forbidden; yet, from the whole of what has been said, ye may see,

1. What a holy God we have to do with. We see his holiness in this law as in a glass. He can endure no evil thing; and there are many things which the world reckons not upon, which he abhors, and will punish.

2. What a holy law this law is, requiring all purity of nature, heart, lip, and life; a perfection both of parts and degrees; discharging all manner of impurity and moral imperfection, not only in the substance, but in the manner of action.

3. That by the works of the law no flesh can be justified. Who can come up to the perfection this law requires? what one line is there of this law that does not condemn us? where is that one point to the perfection of which we attain.

4. The preciousness and excellency of Christ, who has fulfilled this law in all its parts, has brought in everlasting righteousness, and furnishes all that believe in him with an answer to all its demands.

5. The role of righteousness, by which ye are to examine yourselves, to see your sins and shortcomings, the mark ye are to aim at if ye would be holy in all manner of conversation, which is nothing the easier to be hit that it is so broad, and the evidence of your sincerity in a perfection of those parts, though ye cannot attain to the degrees.

Lastly, Your absolute need of Christ, of his blood to sprinkle you from guilt, and of his Spirit to sanctify you, that ye may be complete in him. And therefore let this holy law be your schoolmaster to bring you to Christ for all.

OF MAN'S INABILITY TO KEEP THE LAW PERFECTLY

ECCLES. 7:20.—For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

HAVING at considerable length endeavoured to open up and explain the law of God, as abridged in the ten commandments, in some measure in its spirituality and extent, by describing the several duties required, and sins forbidden therein; and shewn the absolute impossibility of yielding a perfect obedience thereto, in order to give a title to eternal life; and directed you to come to Christ by faith, as the end of the law for righteousness, that your guilt may be removed by the application of his blood to your consciences, and that ye may be sanctified by his Spirit: I now proceed to the exposition of the remaining questions in the Catechism, which I shall mostly discuss in a very short discourse on each, as I have been so long on the former part of this excellent composition.*

Here is the undoubted character of all the human race, fixing imperfection and sinfulness on the best of the kind in this world, and so concluding all to be liable to sin, and under it. In the words there are two things.

1. A position, There is not a just man upon earth. By the just man in this text is not meant an evangelically just man, or one just in respect of parts, though not of degrees; but one who is legally so, just in the eye of the law, as having yielded perfect obedience to all its commands; this is plain from the original pointing. Compare Psal. 143:2. 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' By this time the man Christ had not appeared on the earth: so it is meant of mere men. On the earth; to

denote that in heaven they are just in that sense, arrived to legal perfection.

2. The explication of it; There is none who doeth good, and sinneth not. There are some who do good, as all the godly; but they sin withal, and that daily, for so the word is to be understood of their using to sin.

The doctrine arising from the words is.

DOCT. 'Legal perfection is not attainable in this life, but the best sin daily.' Or, 'No mere man, since the fall, is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God; but doth daily break them, in thought, word, and deed.' In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Shew what is legal perfection, or perfect keeping of the commands.

II. Consider the attainableness of this perfection.

III. Shew how the saints sin daily, and break the commands.

IV. Confirm the point, That perfection is not attainable in this life.

V. Give the reason of this dispensation.

VI. Apply.

I. I shall shew what is legal perfection, or perfect keeping of the commands. It is a perfect conformity of heart and life to the commands of God; and implies,

1. A perfection of the principle of action, Matth. 22:37. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.' For if the heart and soul be not sinless and pure, as in innocent Adam and Christ, but be polluted

as our nature is, there can be no perfect keeping of the commands of God. That pollution will stain all.

2. A perfection of the parts of obedience. No part must be lacking, every command of whatsoever nature must be kept: 'For it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them,' Gal. 3:10. If one be wanting, all is wanting, all is marred. Hence says James, chap. 2:10, 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point he is guilty of all.'

3. A perfection of degrees in every part, Matth. 22:37. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.' Sincerity is not enough in the eye of the law. In every thing one must come to the highest pitch, or there is no perfection.

4. A perfection of duration or continuance, Gal. 3:10 forecited; without apostasy or defection, continuing to the end; for one bad trip after a course of obedience will mar all.

II. Let us consider the attainableness of this perfection.

1. Adam before the fall was able to have kept the commands perfectly; he might have attained it; for 'God made him upright,' Eccl. 7:29. That law was the rule of Adam's covenant-obedience; and perfect obedience to it was the condition of the covenant, which God could not have proposed to him, if he had not given him strength sufficient to perform it.

2. The man Christ, who was not a mere man, but God-man, who was not only able to keep the law perfectly, but actually did so. He made out what the first Adam failed in, to the salvation of the elect, and in their stead; and this in the whole extent of legal perfection. His

obedience was perfect in the principle, Heb. 7:26 being holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners;' in the parts, Matth. 3:15. 'It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness;' in the degrees, John 15:13. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;' and in continuance, Phil. 2:8. 'He became obedient unto death.'

3. The saints in heaven are able, and do actually perfectly obey whatever God's will to them is: so that though in this life they do not attain it, yet in the life to come all the children of God shall attain perfection, Heb. 12:23 where mention is made of 'the spirits of just men made perfect;' and there they shall be fully freed from sin, and all possibility of sinning.

4. But since Adam fell, no mere man is able, while in this life, either of himself, or by virtue of any grace now given, to keep the commands perfectly. Of himself he cannot do it; neither is there any measure of grace given to any in this life, whereby they may be enabled to do it: for 'in many things we offend all,' Jam. 3:2. This inability is owing to the remains of corruption that cleaves to every one of them in this mortal state, Rom. 7:23; and from which they ardently long to be delivered, ver. 24. And there is no promise of grace given in the word, whereby believers may be enabled to keep the commands of God perfectly; nor would it be consistent with the nature of spiritual growth, which is manifestly, like the natural, gradual; and it is certain that the saints do not arrive at their full stature till they come to the mansions of bliss, 1 Thess. 3:13.

III. I shall shew how the saints sin daily, and break the commands. And here I shall consider,

1. How many ways the commands may be broken.

2. In what respect the saints sin daily.

3. How these failures of theirs break the commands.

First, I am to shew how many ways the commands may be broken. They may be broken three ways, in deeds, words, and thoughts.

1. In deeds, done contrary to the command of God, or not done, though required. God's commands are the rule of men's outward life and conversation; and whatever we do or commit contrary to the law, is our sin, whether it be public, private, or secret, Psal. 14:2, 3.

2. In words, either speaking what we ought not, or not speaking what we ought, or speaking what we ought, but not in the manner commanded. (The same is to be said of actions or deeds.) God's commands are a rule to our tongues, and tell us what to speak, how to speak, and what not to speak; and by regardlessness of the rule, the tongue is 'a fire, a world of iniquity,' Jam. 3:6.

3. In thoughts. Here God's law goes beyond men's laws as to the whole kind; for our thoughts are open to God, who is omniscient, as words or actions are equally open to him, Heb. 4:13 and liable to his law. For says Christ, 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart, Matth. 5:28. And so one may sin by thinking what he ought not, by omitting of good thoughts, and by not managing good thoughts, in the manner required by the law.

Secondly, I shall shew in what respect the saints sin daily, in thought, word, and deed.

1. Negatively: not that the saints fall into gross sins daily, against the letter of the law, either in thought, word, or deed. God will disown

those for saints who entertain vile thoughts daily, swear daily, lie daily, do unjust things, or neglect his worship daily, Gal. 5:19–21; 'Now, the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I also have told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' Such spots are not the spots of God's people. Christ's dwelling by his spirit in them, the breaking of the reign of sin in them by the power of divine grace, and their habitual tenderness and watchfulness, hold them off that way of life. But,

2. Positively. Besides that saints may be surprised into gross sins in thought, word, and deed, sometimes by inadvertency, weakness, and violence of temptation, which is the burden of their souls, they sin every day in thought, word, and deed, when they keep the strictest watch, and have most of the divine assistance. What day passes, if without vile thoughts, yet without vain ones; without idle words, if without mischievous words; when there is not something done or undone, which God's law condemns, though perhaps the world cannot quarrel them? Besides, what good thought is thought, good word spoken, or good deed done by them, which the holy law will not spy a flaw in, as to the manner of its performance?

Thirdly, I am to shew how these failures of theirs break the commands, while they sincerely endeavour to obey them. Why, the moral law is the eternal rule of righteousness, and in whatever state the creature be, he is bound to obey his Creator, whether in a state of nature or grace, glory or damnation. And though perfection be not attainable in this life, yet it is the saints' duty, as well as that of others, Matth. 5 ult. 'Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in

heaven is perfect.' So every coming short of that perfection is their sin, needing to be taken away by Christ's blood.

And thus men daily break the commands of God in thought, word, and deed; which is the only possible way of transgressing the divine law; and our doing so in these respects shews the equity of that charge which the Lord has against every man, 'Behold thou hast done evil, as thou couldst,' Jer. 3:5.

IV. I shall now confirm the point, That perfection is not attainable in this life.

1. The scripture attests, that there is no man without sin, 1 Kings 8:46; 'For there is no man that sinneth not:' and that 'in many things we offend all,' Jam. 3:2. If any man set up for it in himself, the Spirit of God Bays he deceives himself, 1 John 1:8. See an unanswerable question, Prov. 20:9; 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?'

2. The best have a corrupt as well as a gracious principle, making the spiritual combat, never ending till death give the separating stroke, Gal. 5:17. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.'

3. We are taught always to pray for pardon, 'Forgive us our debts:' but sinless creatures need no pardons. This clearly shows, that all sin, and so come short of perfect obedience.

4. Lastly, Consider the spirituality of the law, and its extent, with human weakness, and you will see this clearly. And hence it is that perfectionists are strangers to the spirituality of the law: for if they

rightly viewed it, they would be far from dreaming of having attained to perfection, which never a mere man did in this life.

Object. Noah was perfect, Gen. 6:9;* Job perfect, Job 1:8 Ans. They, and all saints, have a gospel-perfection, which is a perfection of parts. They had a comparative perfection; that is, they were more holy and circumspect than many others. But that they were not legally and absolutely perfect, is clear from Noah's drunkenness and Job's impatience. And where is the saint whose history we have at any length in scripture, but we see their imperfections recorded, to stain the pride of all glory?

But is it not said, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin?' 1 John 3:9. Ans. The meaning is not, that the saints do not sin at all; but that they do not commit sin with the full consent of the will; do not take pleasure and delight in it; do not make a trade of it, as unregenerate persons do; and do not commit the sin unto death, 1 John 5:17, 18.

Object. But seeing it is impossible to yield perfect obedience to the law, how is it consistent with the justice and wisdom of God to require of us that which we are not able to perform.

Ans. The laws of God are both possible and just; and there is no duty now required of us which he did not endow us with strength in our creation to perform. Yet in our fallen and corrupted estate, perfect obedience is become impracticable through our weakness and aversion to duty. And there can be no injustice in God to require what is impossible for us to perform, when the impossibility solely arises from our own fault. It is not God, but we ourselves, that have made the perfect observation of his laws impossible; and though we have wasted our stock, and are become bankrupts, yet he may in

righteousness exact from us that debt of obedience which we justly owe him.

Object. But are not believers delivered both from the commanding and condemning power of the law, and how are they then bound to yield any obedience to it?

Ans. Believers are certainly delivered as well from the commanding as condemning power of the law, considered only as it is the covenant of works, which requires obedience to it in order to justification; but they are by no means delivered from it as it is the law of Christ, or a rule of duty. For the moral law is the eternal rule of righteousness, a transcript of the divine perfections, which every believer is bound to copy after, and to apply to the blood of Jesus for pardon so far as he falls short of obeying it: for without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Personal holiness is as necessary to the possession of glory, or to a state of perfect holiness and happiness, as is the morning-light to the noon-day warmth and brightness; as is a reasonable soul to a wise, healthy, strong, and full-grown man; as an antecedent is to a consequent; as a part is to the whole; and as motion is necessary to evidence life. And the ten commandments, being the substance of the law of nature, a representation of God's image, and a beam of his holiness, behoved, for ever, unalterably to be a rule of life to mankind, in all possible states, conditions, and circumstances. Nothing but the utter destruction of human nature, and its ceasing to be, could divest them of that office; since God is unchangeable in his image and holiness. Hence there being a rule of life to Adam and his posterity, had no dependence on their becoming the covenant of work: but they would have been that rule, though there never had been any such covenant: yea, whatever covenant was introduced, whether of works or of grace, and whatever form might he put upon them, they behoved still to remain the rule of life. No

covenant, no form whatsoever, could ever prejudice this their royal dignity.

V. I shall give the reason of this dispensation. God could make the saints perfect in the moment of conversion. He does it not. So it seems good in his sight. Many things are said to account for this; but what is most satisfying is, that it doth exalt the freedom of grace and the power of it most, Eph. 2:4, 7; 'But God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us—that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.' The more sins are pardoned to a sinner, he is the deeper in Christ's debt. The faster the root of sin appears in one's nature, the more appears the power of grace in rooting it up. It is surely the glory of our great Pilot, that he brings the broken ship to land, through so many hazards.

Caution. Abuse not this doctrine, to think light of sin because of it. It is the worst of diseases which most men die in, and no man is perfectly cured of until death. Make not your way to hell the easier, because of the difficulties in the way to heaven: for they that strive towards perfection here will get it at death, when ye sitting still at your ease will be carried down the stream to destruction.

Keep not ye some particular lust, because none are perfect: for all the saints are perfect in parts, though not in degrees; so far perfect, as to 'hate every known sin,' Psal. 119:128.

Inf. 1. There is no justification, favour, and peace with God, by our own works, Psal. 143:2. 'In thy sight shall no man living be justified.' Far less can there be works of supererogation. We must be justified by the righteousness of Christ received by faith, or not at all.

2. Whatever your attainments be, be not proud of them; your wants and defects may always keep you humble. The barren branches are towering ones, while the fruitful boughs hang down their heads.

3. Inexpressibly miserable is the case of unbelievers. They are without Christ; they must stand or fall by the law, and it is quite beyond their power to keep it.

4. Bear one another's burdens; for every man offends. We are in an hospital where most are dying of their disease, and the best but in the way of recovery.

Lastly, Let the struggling saints long for heaven, for there the perfection they would fain be at shall be attained, and not till then. And this may comfort them under all their failures, which they mourn over, that in the other world they shall arrive at full perfection in holiness.

OF SIN IN ITS AGGRAVATIONS

EZEK. 8:15.—Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.

IF we look on sin absolutely, and in itself, as it is a transgression of the divine law, no sin is small, but a great evil, greater than any evil of suffering, which men can be exposed to: but if we look on sin comparatively, one sin compared with another, all are not alike, but some greater than others, as we see from these words. Wherein may be observed,

1. Great sins which the prophet had seen, shewn to him in vision by the Lord himself, who knows the sins of all men, with their nature and qualities, ver. 5, 11, 14.

2. Greater sins he was yet to see. He had seen the image of jealousy, namely, the image of Baal, set up at the gate of the altar, ver. 5; the chambers of imagery in some of the courts, and the ancients of Israel, at their idolatrous service, ver. 10, 11; the women weeping for Tammuz in the court of the women, or of the priests, by which the Lord's courts were turned into stews. These were great abominations, and yet greater than any of these was their worshipping of the sun, ver. 16 and that in God's account: for it was done in a more sacred place, at the very door of the temple; it was more public, and had greater contempt of God in it, than the rest.

The text affords this doctrine:

DOCT. 'All sins are not alike;' but 'some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.'

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What is understood by the heinousness of sin.

II. In what respect some sins are more heinous than others.

III. Apply.

I. I am to shew what is understood by the heinousness of sin. Its great offensiveness is hereby understood. Sin may be offensive unto men; but we consider it here as sin, and offensive to God. So for sin to be heinous in the sight of God, implies,

1. That it is offensive to God, displeasing to him, and grieving to to his Spirit, Jer. 44:4. 'Oh! do not this abominable thing that I hate.' He cannot away with it, he cannot endure it before his eyes, but shews his indignation against it. It is an abominable thing before the Lord; hence it is called filthiness, uncleanness, vomit, &c all which provoke loathing; so Rev. 3:16 it is said, 'I will spue thee out of my month.' It is contrary to his nature and will, and gives him displeasure and offence; and, if it were possible it would disturb his repose, as smoke doth to the eyes, Isa. 65:5. 'These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.'

2. It is greatly offensive to God; for that also is implied in the notion of heinousness; every fault is offensive, but some faults are heinous offences. Such an offence is sin to God. It gives him great offence, Psal. 5:4, 5. 'Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all workers of iniquity.' Hab. 1:13. 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity. There is no sin that God is indifferent about, none that he can pass without a mark of his indignation on it: He 'will by no means clear the guilty,' Exod. 34:7.

Now here mark well two things.

1. That all sin is heinous in the sight of God, viz. greatly offensive. There are no small sins before God, though some are greater than others; but the least of them is great in itself, and great in his sight, Hab. 1:13 forecited. This is plainly implied, while it is said, 'Some sins are more heinous than others.'

2. That there are degrees of heinousness. Though the sin which the blinded soul accounts but a mote, is a mountain in the eyes of God

and of an enlightened conscience, yet all are not alike for all that; but as some mountains, so some sins are greater than others.

II. I shall shew in what respects some sins are more heinous than others.

First, Some sins are in themselves, and in their own nature, more heinous than others. There are some capital offences, as it were, which God's wrath does in a special manner burn against, and which are most provoking to the eyes of his glory: such as murder, Gen. 4:10; oppression, Hab. 2:11; which are noted to be crying sins; blasphemy and contempt of God, Exod. 5:2; idolatry, Ezek. 8; unbelief, rejecting of Christ, and disobeying the gospel, Matth. 22. John 3:19. 2 Thess. 1:8. But of all sins the most heinous is the sin against the Holy Ghost, Matth. 12:31.

Secondly, Some sins are more heinous than others by their aggravations; and the greater and more numerous the aggravating circumstances be that attend any sin, it is the more heinous. Now, sins are aggravated, or made greater or more heinous than others,

1. From the persons offending; the more notable they are, the more heinous are their sins; as the greater the fire is, the more mischief will it do, if it go out of its place; the greater the tree is, the more mischief will it do by its fall. Thus one and the same sin is greater in magistrates, ministers, parents, and the aged, than in subjects, people, children and the younger sort. For men's places and offices, which respect the government of others in the way of holiness and justice, aggravate their sins, Rom. 2:21. 'Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, doest thou steal?' And so do the greater gifts and profession that one hath, Luke 12:47, 48. 'That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself neither did according to his will, shall

be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom men have committed much, of him will they ask the more.' And so doth the greater experience of God's goodness which they have had, as in the case of Solomon, of whom it is said, 1 Kings 11:9. 'The Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice.' For such advantages make their sins more pernicious, in respect of the influence of their example on others, as in the effect of Peter's dissimulation at Antioch, Gal. 2:13 of whom it is said, 'And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. And these advantages carry them over greater obligations they are under to the Lord.

2. From the parties offended. Let men consider whom their sins strike against, if they would see how heinous they are. For as a thrust in a leg or arm is not so much grievous as one at the heart, so is it in this case.

1st, Sins immediately against God, his Son, and his Spirit, are more heinous than such sins against man, any man whatsoever, 1 Sam. 2:25. 'If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? Thus lying and dissembling to God, is more heinous than lying to men, as appears in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:4 because of the infinite distance of the immediate objects of the sin. Thus, whereas in all sins of the second table, there is a fault against God, and against man too; yet the fault against God, and the injury done to his glory, is the bitterest ingredient in it. Thus David's sin in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah was a great sin in respect of these persons; but

See how he confesses it, Psal. 51:4. 'Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.'

2dly, Sins against superiors in the church, state, and family, are more heinous than the same sins are, if done against persons of their own rank and condition. The reason is, because superiority given of God is such a divine impress on a man, that it makes his character in some sort sacred, as in the case of Moses, Num. 12:8. Hence it is that disobedience to parents is so heinous a sin, Prov. 30:17. 'The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.'

3dly, Sins against those whom we are under special engagements and obligations to, are more heinous than such sins against others we have no such concern in. Religion teaches gratitude, and Sets a black mark on ingratitude, Psal. 55:12. 'For it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have born it; neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me, then I would have hid myself from him.'

4thly, Sins against the saints and people of God are more heinous than against others, because of their relation to God, as being those in all the world dearest to him, Matth. 18:6. 'Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.' Such are sins against weak saints, as being more liable to get harm by them than those who are strong, Rom. 14:15. 'If thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.'

Lastly, Sins against the common good of all, or of many; for the wider the effects of one sin go, it is still the worse, Josh. 22:20. 'Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing,

and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity.' 'One sinner,' says Solomon, 'destroyeth much good;' and the more the greater is his sin.

3. From the quality of the offence. A Sin may be vested with such qualities as will make it much more heinous than when divested of them. These evil qualities are many; I will reduce them to two Heads.

(1.) Intrinsic qualities. Thus sins against the letter of the law are more heinous than others; mother-sins, which are big and bring forth many others, besides simple ones; sins consummated by action, as well as while merely in the heart, Jam. 1:15; sins that are scandalous, as well as others not so; sins the injury in which to men admits of no reparation, more than that of others in which it does. This was the reason why death was the punishment of adultery, not of fornication because in this last case the man was obliged to marry the woman.

(2.) Extrinsic qualities; which again are of two sorts.

[1.] Being done against means whereby one might be with-held from sin, Matth. 11:21, 22. 'Wo unto thee, Chorazin, wo unto thee, Bethsaida: for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you.' Thus one's sinning against mercies drawing them from their sin, judgments and rebukes from the word or providence, from God or men, sinning against the light of one's own conscience, do all of them aggravate sin.

[2.] Being done against bonds one has taken on him against the sin, when men sin against purposes and resolutions of amendment,

against their covenants and engagements to the Lord, whereby they are bound to stand off from such courses, Ezek. 17:19.

4. From the manner of committing it. Who can imagine, but sin done deliberately, and wilfully, and presumptuously, is more heinous than sin committed through inadvertency and weakness? If one be impudent in his sin, delight in it, and boast of it; if he go on in it obstinately, fall into it frequently, and relapse into it after convictions and humblings for it; every one of these aggravates the guilt.

5. From the time of it, as in the case of Gehazi, 2 Kings 5:26 where Elisha says to him, 'Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive yards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid servants?' Thus sins committed on the Lord's day, immediately before or after divine worship, are more heinous than at other times. And so is sinning just after reproofs, warnings, engagements; or in a time when the anger of the Lord is going out against the land, family, or person, as Ahaz in his distress.

Lastly, From the place of it. Thus in a place where the gospel is preached, sin is more heinous than elsewhere, Isa. 26:10. 'Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.' Sins done in public before others, are more heinous than those in secret; for in the former many may be denied, as in the case of Absalom, lying with his father's concubine on the house top.

A few inferences shall conclude this subject.

Inf. 1. Never think light of sin, nor slightly of Christ, and your need of him, since all sin is heinous in God's sight, and exposes the sinner to his just vengeance.

2. There will be degrees of torment in hell, though the least degree will be dreadful, Matth. 11:21 since there are degrees of sinning.

3. No wonder God's anger go out against us, and the land wherein, and the generation amongst whom we live: For heinous are our sins beyond those of many, and a frightful look may we get of them in this glass. Magistrates, ministers, parents, the aged, professors, sons and daughters of the Lord, have corrupted their ways, as well as others. Our sins have struck immediately against God, and against those who are vested with his authority in the state, in the church, and in families, against his people, and the common good. Sins against the letter of the law, scandalous offences abound, over the belly of light, mercies, and judgments, covenants national, sacramental, and personal; and these continued in obstinately, in a time when the Lord's hand has oft been stretched out and drawn in again, in a land of light.

4. Repent, and flee to the blood of Christ for pardon, if so be our heinous sins may not be our ruin.

5. The means of grace which we enjoy will either promote our salvation, or they will aggravate our damnation.

6. When ye examine yourselves, and think on your sins, consider the several aggravations of them; and lie deep in the dust before the Lord on account thereof; and, through the grace of God, abstain from every sin, and all appearance of evil.

OF THE DESERT OF SIN

GAL. 3:10.—It is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

THOUGH some sins be greater than others, yet there is no sin but deserves damnation, which we can no where better learn than from the voice of the law, which is the verdict of a just God upon the demerit of sin. This verdict in the text is found written, Deut. 27 ult. 'Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.' And herein consider,

1. The party condemned by the law; every sinner. The law condemns him for omissions as well as commissions, for breaking off from obedience as well as never entering upon it; for every sin, even the least sin, the least breach of the law; as well as the greatest: Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, &c.

2. The doom pronounced in all these cases, is God's wrath and curse; Cursed is he that continueth not in all things, &c. This curse binds over to wrath in this life and that which is to come. It is God's own voice in his law, whose justice will not allow him to fix a punishment on sin greater than it deserves. Hence the doctrine is,

DOCT. 'Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come.'

Here I shall shew,

I. What is God's wrath and curse, which every sin deserves.

II. What this wrath and curse is.

III. That there is no sin which does not deserve God's wrath and curse.

IV. Deduce some inferences.

I. I shall shew, what is God's wrath and curse which every sin deserves.

First, God's wrath is no passion nor is there any perturbation in God, though an angry God. His wrath is a fire without smoke, and may be taken up in these two things.

1. God's displeasure against the sinner, Psal. 5:4, 5. 'For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.' Sin makes the soul loathsome and hateful in God's sight, kindles a holy fire in his heart against the sinner. Were the sun continually under a cloud, and the heavens always covered with blackness, none of these would be comparable to the state of a sinner under wrath, Psal. 90:11. 'Who knoweth the power of thine anger?'

2. God's dealing with sinners as his enemies, whom he is incensed against, Neh. 1:2. 'God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth, the Lord revengeth and is furious, the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries: and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.' Isa. 1:24. 'Ah! I will ease me of my adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies.' The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion; what then must the wrath of God be, an enemy, whom we can neither fight nor flee from, neither outwit nor outbrave? Of this wrath it is said, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'

Secondly, His curse is his separating one to evil, Deut. 29:21. 'And the Lord shall separate him unto evil, out of all the tribes of Israel,

according to all the curses that are written in this book of the law.' It is a devoting the sinner to destruction, to all the direful effects of the divine wrath. It is the tying of the sinner to the stake, setting him up for the mark of God's vengeance, that a broken law and offended justice may disburden all their arrows into him, and that on him may meet together all miseries and plagues, flowing from the wrath of God.*

II. I shall shew, what is God's wrath and curse in this life and that which is to come.

1. In this life they comprehend all the miseries of this world which one meets with on this side of time, miseries on the body, relations, name, estate, employment; miseries on the soul, as blindness, hardness, vile affections, horrors of conscience, &c. and, finally, death in the separation of soul and body. Thus they make a flood of miseries in this life.

2. In the life to come, they comprehend eternal death and damnation, and an eternal being under the punishment of loss and sense in hell. So they make a shoreless sea of miseries in the life to come. But of both these I spoke largely in a former part of this work. [Vol. i.]

III. I proceed to shew, that there is no sin which does not deserve these, but that every sin deserves this wrath and curse.

1. The wages of every sin is death, Rom. 6:23 that is, eternal death, as is clear from the opposition to eternal life, Rom. 5:12. 'As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.' Job 24:19. 'The grave consumes those which have sinned.'

2. Every sin is a breach of the law; and he who breaks it in one point, is guilty of all, Jam. 2:10. He who is guilty of all deserves the wrath of God both in this life and that which is to come. The commands of the law have all one author, whose majesty is offended by whatsoever breach; they all meet in one command, viz. love, and every sin is against that; the law requires universal obedience.

3. Christ died for all the sins of all his elect, 1 Pet. 3:18. 1 John 1:7. Wherefore, since he suffered God's wrath and curse for them, they certainly deserve it.

4. The least sin will condemn a man, if it be not forgiven, Matth. 5:19; even idle words, Matth. 12:36, 37; and all must be forgiven graciously, Psal. 103:2; wherefore God might in justice not forgive them; and if never forgiven, they may be ever punished.

IV. I come to shew, why every sin deserves so much. The reason is, it is a kind of infinite evil; and therefore, since the punishment is deservedly proportioned to the offence, it deserves infinite punishment. Sin is an infinite evil in two respects.

1. In respect that the guilt and defilement of it is never taken away, but endures for ever, unless the Lord himself in mercy do remove it. The party offended is the eternal God, whose being never comes to an end; The sinner never being able to expiate and put away his offence, Rom. 5:6 it ever remains, unless the Lord himself do remove it, as in the elect by his Son's blood; wherefore the party offended, and the offence over remaining, the punishment must needs be eternal; for no unclean thing can ever enter heaven, therefore the sinner must be for ever excluded and punished.

2. In respect it wrongs an infinite God. It is evident among men, that the demerit of a crime rises and falls according to the quality of the

person against whom it is committed; so that a crime against one's prince is punished with death, that would not be so, if against a person of meaner condition. Since God, then, is of infinite dignity and majesty, the offence against him deserves infinite punishment. And because the creature, being finite, is not capable of punishment infinite in value, therefore it is necessarily infinite in duration. There is a manifold wrong to God in the least sin.

(1.) It wrongs his infinite sovereignty, Jam. 2:10, 11. He is Sovereign Ruler of his creatures; his will must be their law, since by his will they were created. But every sin casts off the natural yoke of his sovereign authority, and sets up the sinner's will against it. So that it is accounted a fighting against God, Acts 5:39.

(2.) It wrongs his infinite goodness, Exod. 20:1, 2. All the good natural, moral, or spiritual, which the creature has, it has it from God, who is the fountain of all good. So that sin is a doing ill for good, the worst of ills for all the good one ever at any time enjoyed. Yea, it is a turning of the good received from God against him; as if one advanced from the dunghill by his prince, should use all his favours in rebellion against him.

(3.) It wrongs his holiness, Hab. 1:13. He cannot endure unholiness. He is omniscient and omnipresent; so sin brings into the presence of the great King, that which by all things he cannot endure to look at. It sets up the worst of defilement before his spotless holiness; and does in its own nature tend to deface the glory of it.

(4.) Lastly, It breaks his law, the eternal rule of righteousness, 1 John 3:4. It is all right, and of perpetual equity, and is the hedge which God has set about his rational creatures: but sin breaks down that hedge, and breaks over it. And the sinner is a rebel against the King's

law, 1 Sam. 15:23; and in effect sets God at defiance, inasmuch as it breaks the law, to which such a penalty is annexed.

I shall now deduce some inferences.

Inf. 1. Let this commend the love of Christ in dying for sinners, Rom. 5:8. O matchless love, which made him willing to be made a curse for us, that we might be delivered from the curse of the law! Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse. What a flood of wrath behoved then to come on him, when he stood in the stead of a whole elect world!

2. Let this convince you of the ill that is in sin. There is more ill in the least sin than the greatest sufferings. Therefore never say, in compliance with a temptation, It is but a little one; for the least sin will make you eternally miserable in hell: and can ye account that a little evil which exposes to God's curse here and hereafter?

3. Inexpressibly terrible is the deserving of many sins, and gross sins, when the least of them deserve God's wrath. If one do so, how great must that wrath be, which thousands and millions deserve? If an idle word deserves God's wrath and curse, what must deliberate lying words deserve, but a deep footing in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

4. Let believers admire free grace, pardoning mercy, and atoning blood, Psal. 32:1; that secures them from bearing the desert of their sin. Let them live to the Lord, by whom they live. Think not little of your sins, O believer, though there be now no condemnation for you, being in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8:1; for every one of your sins deserves, though they cannot bring on, God's wrath and curse. Yet tremble at the thoughts of sin; for ye are like the three children in the fiery furnace, compassed with a fire of sin that would burn you up, but the effect of it is stopped by the mediation of Christ.

Lastly, Sinners, be convinced of your absolute need of Christ. Ye must be in him, else ye are ruined for ever. Can ye bear that wrath which incensed justice will inflict on all that are out of Christ? Can ye get free of it without him? Wherefore be alarmed, and exhorted to flee from the wrath that is to come, by fleeing to the Lord Jesus who delivereth all his people from it.

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