

S E R M O N I I .



SIN THE MOST FORMIDABLE EVIL.



GEN. XXXIX. 9.

How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ?



THE text is the record of Joseph's innocence and victory, consecrated in scripture for the honour and imitation of that excellent saint in succeeding ages. He had been tried by sharp afflictions, the conspiring envy of his brethren, and the cruel effects of it, banishment and servitude, "and possessed his soul in patience:" here he was encountered by a more dangerous temptation in another kind, and preserved his integrity. Adversity excites the spirit to serious recollection, arms it with resolution to endure the assaults, and stop the entrance of what is afflicting to nature: pleasure by gentle insinuation relaxes the mind to a loose security, softens and melts the heart, and makes it easily receptive of corrupt impressions.

Now to represent the grace of God, that preserved Joseph, in its radiance and efficacy, we must consider the several circumstances that increased the difficulty of the double victory, over the tempter, and himself.

1. The tempter, his mistress, who had divested the native modesty of the blushing sex, and by her caresses and blandish-

ments sought to draw him to compliance with her desires. Her superior quality might seem to make her request have the force of a command over him.

2. The solicitation, "lie with me." There are no sins to which there is a stronger inclination in our corrupted nature, than to acts of sensuality. The temptation was heightened by the lure of profit and advancement, that he might obtain by her favour, and interest in her husband, who was an eminent officer in the Egyptian court: and the denial would be extremely provoking, both in respect it seemed to be a contempt injurious to her dignity, and was a disappointment of her ardent expectation.* Hatred and revenge upon refusal, are equal to the lust of an imperious whorish woman. We read the effects of it, in this chapter: for upon his rejecting her desires, inflamed with rage, and to purge herself, she turned his accuser, wounded his reputation, deprived him of his liberty, and exposed his life to extreme peril. Joseph chose rather to lie in the dust, than to rise by sin.

3. The opportunity was ready, and the object present: it is said, "there was none of the men of the house within." She had the advantage of secrecy to fasten the temptation upon him. When a sin may be easily committed, and easily concealed, the restraints of fear and shame are taken off, and every breath of a temptation is strong enough to overthrow the carnally-minded. The purest and noblest chastity is from a principle of duty within, not constrained by the apprehension of discovery and severity.

4. The continuance of the temptation: "she spake to him day by day." Her complexion was lust and impudence, and his repeated denials were ineffectual to quench her incensed desires, the black fire that darkened her mind. "She caught him by the garment, saying, lie with me: she was ready to prostitute herself, and ravish him.

5. The person tempted, Joseph, in the flower of his age, the season of sensuality, when innumerable, by the force and swinge of their vicious appetites, are impelled to break the holy law of God.

* *Regeramus ipse crimen, atq; ultro impiam venerem arguamus: scelere velandum est scelus. Senec. Hippolitus.*

6. His repulse of the temptation was strong and peremptory: "how can I do this great wickedness?" He felt no sympathy, no sensual tenderness, but expressed an impossibility of consenting to her guilty desire. We have in Joseph exemplified that property of the regenerate, "he that is born of God, cannot sin:" 1 John 3. 9. by a sacred potent instinct in his breast, he is preserved not only from the consummate acts, but recoils from the first offers to it.

7. The reasons are specified of his rejecting her polluting motion. "Behold, my master knows not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hands: there is none greater in his house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" It was a complicated crime of injustice and uncleanness; a most injurious violation of the strongest ties of duty and gratitude to his master, and of the sacred marriage covenant to her husband, and the foulest blot to their persons: therefore "how can I commit a sin" so contrary to natural conscience, and supernatural grace, and provoke God? Thus I have briefly considered the narrative of Joseph's temptation; and that divine grace preserved him untouched from that contagious fire, may be resembled to the miraculous preserving the three Hebrew martyrs unsinged, in the midst of the flaming furnace. The patience of Job, and the chastity of Joseph, are transmitted by the secretaries of the Holy Ghost in scripture, to be in perpetual remembrance and admiration.

From this singular instance of Joseph, who was neither seduced by the allurements of his mistress, nor terrified by the rage of her despised affection, to sin against God, I shall observe two general points.

I. That temptations to sin, how alluring soever, or terrifying, ought to be rejected with abhorrence.

II. That the fear of God is a sure defence and guard against the strongest temptation.

I will explain and prove the first, and only speak a little of the second in a branch of the application.

I. That temptations to sin, how alluring soever, or terrifying, are to be rejected with abhorrence.

There will be convincing proof of this, by considering two

things ;—That sin in its nature, prescinding from the train of woful effects, is the greatest evil ;—2. That, relatively to us, it is the most pernicious destructive evil.

i. That sin considered in itself is the greatest evil. This will be evident by considering the general nature of it, as directly opposite to God the supreme good. The definition of sin expresses its essential evil ; “ it is the transgression of the divine law,” and consequently opposes the rights of God’s throne, and obscures the glory of his attributes that are exercised in the moral government of the world. God, as Creator, “ is our King, our Lawgiver and Judge. From his propriety in us arises his just title to sovereign power over us : “ know ye that the Lord he is God ; it is he that made us, not we ourselves ; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” Psal. 100. The creatures of a lower order are incapable of distinguishing between moral good and evil, and are determined by the weight of nature to what is merely sensible, and therefore are incapable of a law to regulate their choice. But man, who is endowed with the powers of understanding and election, to conceive and choose what is good, and reject what is evil, is governed by a law, the declared will of his maker : accordingly a law, the rule of his obedience, was written in his heart.

Now sin, the transgression of this law, contains many great evils.

(1.) Sin is a rebellion against the sovereign majesty of God, that gives the life of authority to the law. Therefore divine precepts are enforced with the most proper and binding motive to obedience, “ I am the Lord.” He that with purpose and pleasure commits sin, implicitly renounces his dependance upon God, as his maker and governor, overrules the law, and arrogates an irresponsible license to do his own will. This is expressed by those atheistical designers, who said, “ with our tongue we will prevail, our lips are our own ; who is lord over us ?” Psal. 12.

4. The language of actions, that is more natural and convincing than of words, declares that sinful men despise the commands of God, as if they were not his creatures and subjects. What a dishonour, what a displeasure is it to the God of glory, that proud dust should fly in his face, and control his authority ? “ He has ten thousand times ten thousand angels that are high in dignity, and excel in strength, waiting in a posture of reverence

and observance about his throne, ready to do his will :” Dan. 7. 10. Psal. 103. 20. how provoking is it for a despicable worm to contravene his law, and lift his hand against him ? It will be no excuse to plead the commands of men for sin : for as much as God is more glorious than men, so much more are his commands to be respected and obeyed than men’s. When there is an evident opposition between the laws of men and of God, we must disobey our superiors, though we displease them, and obey our supreme ruler. He that does what is forbidden, or neglects to do what is commanded by the divine law, to please men, though invested with the highest sovereignty on earth, is guilty of double wickedness ; of impiety, in deposing God ; and idolatry, in deifying men.

It is an extreme aggravation of this evil, in that sin as it is a disclaiming our homage to God, so it is in true account a yielding subjection to the devil. For sin is in the strictest propriety his work. The original rebellion in paradise was by his temptation, and all the actual and habitual sins of men since the fall, are by his efficacious influence. “ He darkens the carnal mind,” and sways the polluted will ; he excites and inflames the vicious affections, and imperiously “ rules in the children of disobedience. 2 Cor. 4. 4. Ephes. 2. 2. He is therefore styled “ the prince and God of this world.” And what more contumelious indignity can there be, than the preferring to the glorious Creator of heaven and earth, a damned spirit, the most cursed part of the creation ? It is most reasonable, that the baseness of the competitor, should be a foil to reinforce the lustre of God’s authority : yet men reject God, and comply with the tempter. O prodigious perverseness !

(2). Sin villifies the ruling wisdom of God, that prescribed the law to men. Although the dominion of God over us be supreme and absolute, yet it is exercised according “ to the counsel of his will,” by the best means, for the best ends ; he is accordingly styled by the apostle, “ the eternal King, and only wise God.” 1 Tim. 1. It is the glorious prerogative of his sovereignty and deity, that he can do no wrong : for he necessarily acts according to the excellencies of his nature. Particularly, his wisdom is so reluctant in his laws, that the serious contemplation of it, will ravish the sincere minds of men into a compliance with them. They are framed with exact congruity to the nature of God, and

his relation to us, and to the faculties of man before he was corrupted. From hence the divine law being the transcript not only of God's will, but his wisdom, binds the understanding and will, our leading faculties, to esteem and approve, to consent and choose all his precepts as best. Now sin vilifies the infinite understanding of God with respect both to the precepts of the law, the rule of our duty, and the sanction annexed to confirm its obligation. It does constructively tax the precepts as unequal, too rigid and severe a confinement to our wills and actions. Thus the impious rebels complain, "the ways of the Lord are not equal," as injurious to their liberty, and not worthy of observance. What St. James saith, to correct the uncharitable, censorious humour of some in his time, "he that speaks evil of his brother, and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law, and judges the law," Jam. 4. 11. as an imperfect and rash rule, is applicable to sinners in any other kind. As an unskilful hand by straining too high, breaks the strings of an instrument, and spoils the music; so the strictness and the severity of the precepts, break the harmonious agreement between the wills of men and the law, and cast an imputation of imprudence upon the lawgiver. This is the implicit blasphemy in sin.

Besides, the law has rewards and punishments, to secure our respects and obedience to it. The wise God knows the frame of the reasonable creature, what are the inward springs of our actions; and has accordingly propounded such motives to our hope and fear, the most active passions, as may engage us to perform our duty. He promises his "favour that is better than life," to the obedient, and threatens "his wrath, that is worse than death, to the rebellious." Now sin makes it evident, that these motives are not effectual in the minds of men: and this reflects upon the wisdom of the lawgiver, as if defective in not binding his subjects firmly to their duty; for if the advantage or pleasure that may be gained by sin, be greater than the reward that is promised to obedience, and the punishment that is threatened against the transgression, the law is unable to restrain from sin, and the ends of government are not obtained. Thus sinners in venturing upon forbidden things, reproach the understanding of the divine lawgiver.

(3.) Sin is a contrariety to the unspotted holiness of God. Of all the glorious and benign constellations of the divine attributes

that shine in the law of God, his holiness has the brightest lustre. God is holy in all his works, but the most venerable and precious monument of his holiness is the law. For the holiness of God consists in the correspondence of his will and actions with his moral perfections, wisdom, goodness and justice; and the law is the perfect copy of his nature and will. The psalmist who had a purged eye, saw and admired its purity and perfection. "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." Psal. 19. "The word is very near, therefore thy servant loves it." Psal. 119. 140. It is the perspicuous rule of our duty without blemish or imperfection; "the commandment is holy, just and good." It enjoins nothing but what is absolutely good, without the least tincture of evil. The sum of it is set down by the apostle, to "live soberly," that is, to abstain from any thing that may stain the excellence of an understanding creature: to "live righteously," which respects the state and situation wherein God has disposed men for his glory: it comprehends all the respective duties to others, to whom we are united by the bands of nature, or of civil society, or of spiritual communion: "and to live godly," which includes all the internal and outward duties we owe to God, who is the sovereign of our spirits, whose will must be the rule, and his glory the end of our actions. In short, the law is so formed, that prescinding from the authority of the lawgiver, its holiness and goodness lays an eternal obligation on us to obey it. Now sin is not only by interpretation, a reproach to the wisdom and other perfections of God, but directly and formally a contrariety to his infinite sanctity and purity; for it consists in a not doing what the law commands, or doing what it forbids. It is therefore said, "that the carnal mind is enmity against God:" Rom. 11. an active, immediate and irreconcilable contrariety to his holy nature and will: from hence there is a reciprocal hatred between God and sinners: "God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," Rom. 1. without an infinite displicence, the effects of which will fall upon sinners; and though it is an impiety hardly conceivable, yet the scripture tells us, that "they are haters of God." It is true, God by the transcendent excellence of his nature is incapable of suffering any evil, and there are few in the present state arrived to such malice, as to declare open enmity and war against God. In the damned this hatred is explicit and direct, the fever is heightened to a frenzy,

the blessed God is the object of their curses and eternal aversation : if their rage could extend to him, and their power were equal to their desires, they would dethrone the Most High. And the seeds of this are in the breasts of sinners here. As the fearful expectation of irresistible and fiery vengeance increases, their aversation increases. They endeavour to raze out the inscription of God in their souls, and to extinguish the thoughts and sense of their inspector and judge. They wish he were not all-seeing and almighty, but blind and impotent, incapable to vindicate the honour of his despised Deity. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." The heart is the fountain of desires, and actions interpret the thoughts and affections, from whence the inference is direct and conclusive, that habitual sinners, "who live without God in the world," have secret desires; there was no sovereign being, to observe and require an account of all their actions. The radical cause of this hatred is from the opposition of the sinful polluted wills of men, to the holiness of God; for that attribute excites his justice, and power, and wrath, to punish sinners. Therefore the apostle saith, "they are enemies to God in their minds through wicked works." The naked representing of this impiety, that a reasonable creature should hate the blessed Creator for his most divine perfections, cannot but strike with horror. O the sinfulness of sin!

4. Sin is the contempt and abuse of his excellent goodness. This argument is as vast as God's innumerable mercies, whereby he allures and obliges us to obedience: I shall restrain my discourse of it, to three things wherein the divine goodness is very conspicuous, and most ungratefully despised by sinners.

1st. His creating goodness. It is clear, without the least shadow of doubt, that nothing can give the first being to itself; for this were to be before it was, which is a direct contradiction; and it is evident that God is the sole author of our beings. Our parents afforded the gross matter of our compounded nature, but the variety and union, the beauty and usefulness of the several parts, which is so wonderful, that the body is composed of as many miracles as members, was the design of his wisdom, and the work of his hands. The lively idea and perfect exemplar of that regular fabric, was modelled in the divine mind. This affected the psalmist with admiration: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works, and that my soul

knows right well. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Psal. 139. 14, 15, 16. And Job observes, "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me round about." Job. 10. 8. The soul, or principal part, is of a celestial original, inspired from "the Father of spirits." The faculties of understanding and election, are the indelible characters of our dignity above the brutes, and make us capable to please, and glorify, and enjoy him. This first and fundamental benefit, upon which all other favours and benefits are the superstructure, was the effect from an eternal cause, his most free decree, that ordained our birth in the spaces of time. The fountain was his pure goodness; there was no necessity determining his will, he did not want external declarative glory, being infinitely happy in himself, and there could be no superior power to constrain him. And that which renders our Maker's goodness more free and obliging, is the consideration he might have created millions of men, and left us in our native nothing, and, as I may so speak, lost and buried in perpetual darkness. Now, what was God's end in making us? Certainly it was becoming his infinite understanding, that is, to communicate of his own divine fulness, and to be actively glorified by intelligent creatures. Accordingly it is solemn acknowledgment of the representative church. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they were created." Rev. 4. 11. Who is so void of rational sentiments, as not to acknowledge it is our indispensable duty, "Our reasonable service, to offer up ourselves an entire living sacrifice to his glory?" What is more natural, according to the laws of uncorrupt nature, (I might say, and of corrupt nature, for the heathens practised it) than that love should correspond with love; as the one descends in benefits, the other should ascend in thankfulness. As a polished looking-glass of steel, strongly reverberates the beams of the sun shining upon it, without losing a spark of light, thus the understanding soul should reflect the affection of love upon our blessed Maker, in reverence, and praise, and thankfulness. Now sin breaks all those sacred bands of grace and gratitude, that engage us to love and obey God. He is the just Lord of all our faculties intellectual and sensitive, and the sinner employs them

as weapons of unrighteousness against him. He preserves us by his powerful gracious providence, which is a renewed creation every moment, and the goodness he uses to us, the sinner abuses against him. This is the most unworthy, shameful and monstrous ingratitude. This makes forgetful and unthankful men, more brutish than the dull ox, and stupid ass, who serve those that feed them; nay, sinks them below the insensible part of the creation, that invariably observes the law and order prescribed by the Creator. Astonishing degeneracy! "Hear O heavens, give ear, O earth! I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me," was the complaint of God himself. The considerate review of this, will melt us into tears of confusion.

2dly. It was the invaluable goodness of God to give his law to man, for his rule, both in respect of the matter of the law, and his end in giving it.

1. The matter of the law, this, as is forecited from the apostle, "is holy, just, and good. It contains all things that are honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report, whatsoever are virtuous and praise-worthy." In obedience to it the innocence and perfection of the reasonable creature consists. This I do but glance upon, having been considered before.

2. The end of giving the law. God was pleased upon man's creation, by an illustrious revelation to show him his duty, to "write his law in his heart," that he might not take one step out of the circle of its precepts, and immediately sin and perish. His gracious design was to keep man in his love; that from the obedience of the reasonable creature, the divine goodness might take its rise to reward him. This unfeigned and excellent goodness, the sinner outrageously despises: for what greater contempt can be expressed against a written law, than the tearing it in pieces, and trampling it under foot? And this constructively the sinner does to the law of God, which contempt extends to the gracious giver of it. "Thus the commandment that was ordained unto life, by sin was found unto death." Rom. 7. 10.

3. Sin is an extreme vilifying of God's goodness, in preferring carnal pleasures to his favour, and communion with him, wherein the life, the felicity, the heaven of the reasonable creature consists. God is infinite in all possible perfections, all-sufficient to make us completely and eternally happy: he disdains to have

any competitor, and requires to be supreme in our esteem and affections: the reason of this is so evident by divine and natural light, that it is needless to spend many words about it. It is an observation of St. Austin, * 'That it was a rule amongst the heathens, that a wise man should worship all their deities.' The Romans were so insatiable in idolatry, that they sent to foreign countries to bring the gods of several nations: an unpolished stone, a tame serpent, that were reputed deities, they received with great solemnity and reverence. But the true God had no temple, no worship in Rome, where there was a Pantheon dedicated to the honour of all the false gods. The reason he gives of it is, that the true God, who alone has divine excellencies, and divine empire, will be worshipped alone, and strictly forbids the assumption of any into his throne. To adore any besides him is infinitely debasing, and provoking to his dread majesty. Now sin in its nature is a conversion from God to the creature; and whatever the temptation be, in yielding to it, there is signified, that we choose something before his favour. Sin is founded *in bono jucundo*, something that is delectable to the carnal nature: it is the universal character of carnal men, "They are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." To some, riches are the most alluring object. The young man in the gospel, when our Saviour commanded "him to give his estate to the poor, and he should have treasure in heaven, went away sorrowful," as if he had been offered to his loss. To others, the pleasures that in strict propriety are sensual, are most charming. Love is the weight of the soul that turns it, not like a dead weight of the scales, but with election freely to its object: in the carnal balance the present things of the world are of conspicuous moment, and outweigh spiritual and eternal blessings. Although the favour of God be eminently all that can be desired, under the notion of riches, or honour, or pleasure, and every atom of our affection is due to him; yet carnal men think it a cheap purchase to obtain the good things of this world, by sinful means, with the loss of his favour. This their actions declare. Prodigious folly! as if a few sparks struck out of a flint, that can neither afford light or warmth, were more desirable than the sun

* Omnes deos colendos esse sapienti. Cur ergo a numero ceterorum ille rejectus est? nihil restat ut dicant, hujus dei sacra recipere noluerint, nisi quia solum se coli voluerit. *Aug. de Consens. Evang. c. 17.*

in its brightness. And how contumelious and provoking it is to God, he declares in the most moving expressions: "Be astonished, O ye heavens at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people hath committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out broken cisterns that can hold no water." Jer. 2. 12, 13. This immediately was charged upon the Jews, who set up idols of jealousy, and adored them, rather than the glorious Jehovah: and in proportion it is true of all sinners; for every vicious affection prefers some vain object before his love, and the enjoyment of his glorious presence, that is the reward of obedience.

(5.) The sinner disparages the impartial justice of God. In the divine law there is a connexion between sin and punishment; the evil of doing and the evil of suffering. This is not a mere arbitrary constitution, but founded on the inseparable desert of sin, and the rectitude of God's nature, which unchangeably loves holiness, and hates sin. Although the threatening does not lay a strict necessity upon the Lawgiver always to inflict the punishment; yet God having declared his equal laws as the rule of our duty, and of his judgment, if they should be usually without effect upon offenders, the bands of government would be dissolved, and consequently the honour of his justice stained both with respect to his nature and office: for as an essential attribute it is the correspondence of his will and actions with his moral perfections; and as sovereign ruler, he is to preserve equity and order in his kingdom. Now those who voluntarily break his law, presume upon impunity. The first rebellious sin was committed upon this presumption: God threatened, "If you eat the forbidden fruit, you shall die: the serpent says, eat, and you shall not die;" and assenting to the temptation, Adam fell to disobedience. And ever since men are fearless to sin upon the same motive. God chargeth the wicked, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself;" Psal. 50. not concerned to punish the violation of his sacred laws. The sinner commits the divine attributes to fight against one another, presuming that mercy will disarm justice, and stop its terrible effects upon impetent obstinate sinners: from hence they become bold and hardened in the continuance of their sins. "There is a root that beareth gall and wormwood:." Deut. 29. 17, 19, 20. and when

the curse of the law is declared and denounced against sin, "the wicked blesseth himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst." This casts such a foul blemish upon the justice of God, that he threatens the severest vengeance for it. "The Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses written in this book shall be upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. Consider this ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." Psal. 50.

6. The sinner implicitly denies God's omniscience. There is such a turpitude adhering to sin, that it cannot endure the light of the sun, or the light of conscience, but seeks to be concealed under a mask of virtue, or a veil of darkness. There are very few on this side hell, so transformed into the likeness of the devil, as to be impenetrable by shame. What is said of the adulterer and thief, sinners of greater guilt, and deeper dye, is true in proportion of every sinner: "If a man sees them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death." Job. Now from whence is it that many, who if they were surprised in the actings of their sins by a child or a stranger, would blush and tremble, yet although the holy God sees all their sins in order to judge them, and will judge in order to punish them, are secure without any fearful or shameful apprehensions of his presence? Did they steadfastly believe that their foul villainies were open to his piercing, pure and severe eye, they must be struck with terrors, and covered with confusion. "Will he force the queen before my face?" Was the speech of the king inflamed with wrath, and the prologue of death against the fallen favourite. Would men dare to affront God's authority, and outrageously break his laws before his face, if they duly considered his omnipresence and observance of them? it were impossible. And infidelity is the radical cause of their inconsideration. It was a false imputation against Job, but justly applied to the wicked, "Thou sayest, how does God know? can he judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he sees not." Job 22. 13, 14. And such are introduced by the psalmist declaring their inward sentiments: "The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it."

Lastly. The sinner slights the power of God. This attribute renders God a dreadful Judge. He has a right to punish, and power to revenge every transgression of his law. His judicial power is supreme, his executive is irresistible. He can with one stroke dispatch the body to the grave, and the soul to hell, and make men as miserable as they are sinful. Yet sinners as boldly provoke him, as if there were no danger. We read of the infatuated Syrians, that they thought that God, the protector of Israel, had only power on the hills, and not in the vallies, and renewed the war to their destruction. Thus sinners enter into the lists with God, and range an army of lusts against the armies of heaven, and blindly bold, run upon their own destruction. They neither believe his all-seeing eye, nor all-mighty hand. They change the glory of the living God into a dead idol, that has eyes and sees not, and hands and handles not; and accordingly his threatenings make no impression upon them.

Thus I have presented a true view of the evil of sin considered in itself: but as Job saith of God, "How little a portion of him is known?" may be said of the evil of sin, how little of it is known? For in proportion as our apprehensions are defective and below the greatness of God, so are they of the evil of sin, that contradicts his sovereign will, and dishonours his excellent perfections.