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THE  
WHOLE WORKS

OF THE  
LATE REVEREND THOMAS BOSTON  
OF ETTRICK;

NOW FIRST COLLECTED, AND REPRINTED WITHOUT  
ABRIDGMENT;

INCLUDING  
HIS MEMOIRS, WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

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EDITED BY THE  
REV. SAMUEL M'MILLAN.

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VOL. II.

ABERDEEN:  
GEORGE AND ROBERT KING, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.  

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M.DCCC.XLVIII.





AN  
ILLUSTRATION  
OF THE  
DOCTRINES  
OF THE  
CHRISTIAN RELIGION,  
WITH RESPECT TO  
FAITH AND PRACTICE,  
UPON THE PLAN OF THE ASSEMBLY'S  
SHORTER CATECHISM;  
COMPREHENDING  
A COMPLETE BODY OF DIVINITY.

BY THE  
REV. THOMAS BOSTON,  
OF ETRICK.

WITHOUT ABRIDGMENT.

~~~~~  
IN TWO VOLUMES.  
VOL. II.  
~~~~~

Hold fast the form of sound words.—2 TIM. i. 13.

ABERDEEN :  
GEORGE AND ROBERT KING, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.  

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1848.



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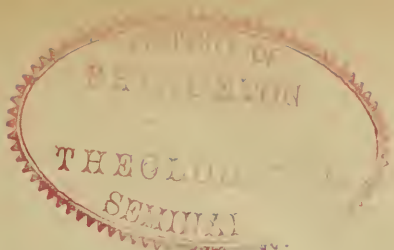
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# AN ILLUSTRATION

OF

## THE DOCTRINES

OF

# THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

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UNION WITH CHRIST THE ONLY WAY TO SANCTIFICATION.

1 Cor. i. 30.—*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who is made unto us  
—sanctification.*

THE world in its greatest darkness was not insensible that man's nature was corrupted, that they needed something wherewith they might please God, attain to happiness, and repair the wound which they understood their nature had got. And although that Jews and Gentiles had different devices whereby they thought this might be obtained, yet all agreed in that it behoved them to go into themselves for it, and to draw something out of the ruins of their natural powers wherewith to help themselves, thereby discovering they did not sufficiently understand the depth of the corruption of human nature. And this principle is so agreeable to corrupt reason, that God's device to bring about man's salvation from sin and misery in and by another, to wit, Christ, was to 'the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness,' ver. 23. And if we sound to the bottom, it is the same at this day to the unregenerate part of the Christian world.

In the text we have the sum of God's device for the salvation of sinners, and it centres in Jesus Christ who was crucified. We may take up the text and it in these two things.

1. That the whole of man's salvation shall be from Christ. God has made or constituted him the fountain of all salvation, from

whom it must be conveyed to all that shall partake of it. As Pharaoh made Joseph ruler over Egypt; and when the famished people cried to him for bread, he bade them go to Joseph, Gen. xli. 55. so God has dealt with the Mediator, and tells us by the gospel, Psal. lxxxix. 24. 'My faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.' If we look into the ruins of the fall we may take them up under four heads, answerable to which there are remedies in Christ.

(1.) Man is ignorant naturally of the way to true happiness: he has lost God, and knows not how to find him again.—Falling into the hands of Satan, he has lost his two eyes, like Samson; gropes for the way of happiness, but cannot find it, like the Sodomites at Lot's door. Some remains of knowledge found in the ruins of the fall were improved in the world, by study, observation of the works of God, and in some by external revelation, which yet the natural darkness of the mind did pervert. And these notions, thus improved, they called wisdom. But the way of happiness by works, the only way naturally known by Adam, being blocked up by his fall, it was impossible for them by their wisdom to fall on the other way, unless we should say, that fallen man's natural knowledge could reach farther than his natural knowledge when it was whole and entire before the fall. So man's wisdom is his folly.

For remedy of this, Christ is made 'wisdom.' The treasures of wisdom and knowledge were lodged in him, Col. ii. 3. and he is constituted the grand Teacher of all that seek for eternal happiness. Therefore the philosophers and Rabbi's must lay by their books, as insufficient to point them the way to happiness, and study that body of divinity, Jesus Christ, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily. The wise men of the world must renounce confidence in their natural abilities, draw a black score over all their attainments in their Christless state, and sit down at Christ's feet, as knowing nothing, and learn of him: and those of the shallowest capacities, giving up themselves to him, shall get 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,' 2 Cor. iv. 6.

(2.) Man is unrighteous, and cannot stand before a righteous God. His guilt binds him over to wrath, and makes him miserable before a just God, a revenger of sin. And this is so impressed on the hearts of men, that even a natural conscience sometimes makes terrible heart-quakes within him, knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death.' Now, the natural man, for remedy of this, goes about to work out a righteousness of his own, to spin a righteousness out of his own bowels, and to appease the anger of God, and gain his favour, by his obedience.

But when it appears in the light of the holy law, it is nothing but as a filthy, rotten, moth-eaten garment, that cannot cover the soul before the Lord, Isa. lxiv. 7. Let them stretch it as they will, the bed is shorter than a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than he can wrap himself in it.

For remedy of this, Christ is made *righteousness*. He, by his obedience to the law's commands and suffering the wrath it threatened, hath brought in everlasting righteousness, which is a large garment, able to cover all that betake themselves to it, for it is 'the righteousness of God ; a beautiful garment, sound in every part, for it is white raiment, without the least stain, being the righteousness of the Son of God, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. Therefore the most refined moralists may lay aside, in point of confidence, their highest attainments in morality, as filthy rags before the Lord ; and the strictest professors and livers on earth, who follow after the law of righteousness, must renounce their inherent righteousness, and sit down naked before the Lord, to receive the imputed righteousness of Christ. And the vilest of men coming to him, shall find a righteousness in him to be communicated to them ; so that they that are far from righteousness shall be wrapt up in a perfect righteousness, if they will take Christ to them as God has made him.

(3.) Man is unholy, unfit for communion with a holy God here or hereafter. His soul is dead in sin, his lusts live and are vigorous in him ; so that he is no more meet for heaven than a sow for a palace. The natural man, to help himself in this point, calls together his natural powers as in a solemn day, and endeavours to set about his duty, and turn the stream of his life and conversation into the channel of the law. Some prevail this way to the reformation of their outward conversation ; but there is as much difference betwixt true holiness and their attainment, as between a living body and an embalmed corpse. Others find all their endeavours to no purpose, and so they come to despair of sanctification, and therefore even lay the reins on the necks of their lusts, Jer. ii. 25. And how can it be otherwise in either of them ? for, like fools or madmen, they go into the mire to wash themselves clean ; the house that must be razed from the foundation, they go to patch up and repair ; for in their attempts for holiness, they act as if they had need of nothing but activity to use and improve their natural abilities for sanctification ; which is as opposite to the doctrine of the gospel, as to say, the cripple needs but to set himself to rise and walk, and he will be cured, is contrary to common sense : for our natural abilities will serve us no more for sanctification, than the cripple's legs will serve

him to walk. Let men learn from Job, that where the whole body is all full of boils and sores, their hands are not fit to scrape the sores on the rest of their body, being as ill themselves as any other part: therefore he took a potsherd, and scraped himself. And while to the unbelieving there is nothing pure; their very natural powers being defiled, can never purify the man.

But for remedy in this, Christ is made *sanctification*. There is a fulness of the spirit of holiness lodged in him, to be communicated to the unholy; and to him God sends the unholy sinner, that out of his fulness he may receive, and grace for grace. Therefore the most sober natural man and strictest professor, who has hammered out of his mere natural abilities, assisted by external revelation, a life blameless before the world, being estranged still to the life of faith, must know that he has but put a new face on the old man, which Christ never intended to repair, but to destroy, Rom. vi. 6; and must begin anew to attain true holiness, from and by him whom the Father has made sanctification to us. And the most polluted sinner, whose lusts are most raging, may confidently try this grand method of sanctification, which can no more fail him than God's device can fail to reach the end he designed for it.

(4.) Man by the fall is become mortal, liable to many bodily infirmities and miseries, and at length must go to the grave, the house appointed for all living. Nature could find no remedy for this. The learned Athenians mocked at the resurrection of the dead, Acts vii. 32; the Sadducees among the Jews denied it, Matth. xxii. 23. The unrenewed part of the world, who, by the benefit of external revelation, have embraced the doctrine of the resurrection, and particularly of the happy resurrection, have no other way to attain it, but what they follow to attain righteousness and sanctification; and that being insufficient to attain them, must be so also in this respect; for all their Christless endeavours leave them still under guilt and corruption; these bonds of death, wherewith the second death will draw them down into the pit, when they are raised out of their graves at the last day still hold them fast.

But man's salvation cannot be complete without a remedy for this; therefore Christ is made 'redemption,' who will give in due time deliverance to his people from misery and death, which is called 'the redemption of the body,' Rom. viii. 23. And in this sense he calls himself 'the resurrection and the life,' John xi. 25. So redemption is in him, in so far as he has got above death and the power of the grave by his resurrection, and that as a public person, thereby ensuring the happy resurrection of all that are in him. Therefore, if ever we would get our heads above these waters, we must come to him.



2. That all who partake of this salvation, must partake of it in him, by virtue of union with him : *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus*, &c. As the stock is stay, strength, and sap to the branches ; so is Christ wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, to them that are in him, or unto sinners united to him. The sap of the stock is not conveyed to branches that are not in it : neither is Christ wisdom, &c. to any but those that are in him. He is the Saviour of his body ; and we must partake of his salvation as members of his body. In the old world when the deluge came on, some without the ark getting up on the tops of trees or mountains, might be safe for a while ; but none but those who were in the ark were safe to the end ; so men that are out of Christ may get common temporal favours from the Lord ; but none but those in him receive that wisdom, &c. which is the great salvation. The lost world is the first Adam, and the natural branches of that stock. The saved world are such branches as are taken out of that dead and killing stock, and ingrafted into Christ the true vine.

This then is the grand device of salvation, that Christ shall be all to sinners, and that they must partake of all in him ; which is quite opposite to our natural imaginations, and exalts the free grace of God, depressing nature. (1.) They do not help themselves, their help is in another : He is made *wisdom*, &c. (2.) They do not so much as help themselves to their helper ; for it is of God, by the power of his grace, that they are brought to be in him. It is not the branch itself, but the husbandman that ingrafts it.

The doctrine I observe from the words is,

Doct. 'God's device for the sanctification of an unholy world is, that sinners unite with Christ, and derive holiness from him, whom the Father has constituted the head of sanctifying influences. Union with Christ is the only way to sanctification.'

For proof of this doctrine, consider the following scriptures, Rom. vii. 4. John xv. 5. Gal. ii. 20.

In handling this doctrine, I shall,

I. Drop a word concerning holiness derived from Christ.

II. Shew how it is derived from him.

III. Apply.

1. As to holiness, it is that disposition of heart and course of life which is conformable to God's holy law, and pleases him. In this life it is imperfect, but in the life to come it will be perfected. I shall only offer these few things concerning it.

1. True holiness is universal in respect of the commands of God, Psal. cxix. 6. 'I have respect unto all thy commandments ;' the holy man making conscience of the duties of both tables of the law,

his duty to God, his neighbour, and himself, Tit. ii. 12. Whoso divide these, declare themselves to be unholy persons, who cannot see God. A profane life is a sure evidence of a profane heart, Gal. v. 19. &c.

2. True holiness is not only in external duties, but necessarily includes internal obedience of the soul to the will of God, Psal. xxiv. 3. The outward works of piety and charity will never denominate a man holy, without holy thoughts, affections, and imaginations. The heart must be a temple consecrated to God, wherein love, fear, delight in God, submission, patience, and all other parts of unseen religion, are exercised. The heart of the holy man is no more the devil's common, where thoughts go free, and lusts range at their ease, Psal. cxix. 113. 'I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love:' but it is God's inclosure, hedged about as a garden for the Lord. And though not without weeds of corruption, it is the holy man's constant work to be labouring to root them up.

3. In true holiness there is a bent, inclination, and propensity of heart, to the acts of obedience to God. The spirit, that is, the new nature, has its lustings, as well as the flesh, Gal. v. 17. By Adam's fall the hearts of men got a wrong set, a bent and propensity to evil, Rom. viii. 7. Hos. xi. 7. Now, in sanctification it is bent the other way, towards God and godliness, 2 Thess. iii. 5. that as the needle in the compass, touched with a good loadstone, turns towards the north, so the heart, touched by sanctifying grace, inclines Godward and Christward. Whatever actions are done without this, are not holy actions, nor can they please God; for he that sees the heart, will never be pleased with those duties to which the man's heart does not kindly incline; for in effect it is but forced obedience, and he hates robbery for burnt-offering.

4. As the love of God is the great comprehensive duty of holiness, love is the fulfilling of the law; so love runs through all the duties of religion, to give them the tincture of holiness, Heb. vi. 10. And without this, should a man give all his goods to the poor, it profiteth nothing. Where self-love is the domineering principle, their duties are in God's account serving themselves, and not him. Holy duties are the obedience of a child who loves his father, and therefore serves him; not the obedience of a servant, who loves himself, and therefore serves for his wages.

5. True holiness is influenced by the command of God. The will of God is not only the rule, but the reason, of a holy life, John v. 39. Sanctification binds over the soul to the will of God, that it may follow duty, because it is his will. Though a man receive a scripture-truth, if he receive it not because God has said it, but

upon principles of reason, his receiving it is not faith, for that is an assent upon the divine testimony. So if a man do a good thing, but not because God has commanded it, the action is no holy action, Psal. cxix. 115.

6. True holiness has for its chief end the glory of God, 1 Cor. x. 31. He that is the first cause of all goodness, must needs be the last end of it. And God being the chief good, loves himself above all, and acts for himself. Hence holy persons, being partakers of the divine nature, as they are holy, they will love God above all, and act for him and his glory; for the divine nature, wherever it is, will still move to exalt God above all. So that Sanctification makes a man's actions still centre in God, so far as it does prevail. The want of this mars a man's life and actions, so far as they are not holy, but selfish, Zech. vii. 6.

7. *Lastly*, True holiness is universal. Sanctifying grace seeks through the whole man, and the whole of his course.

(1.) Mortification is universal, Gal. v. 24. 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.' The law of God is a chain of many links, and he that draws one to him draws all. He that kills a serpent, not out of any particular quarrel against it, but against the whole kind of them, will set himself to kill all of them that he discovers and can reach; so he that is truly sanctified is set against and endeavours to mortify and kill all sin, as sin, and because it is sin; and every lust and corruption, even the most darling, that he can discover in himself, he will bring forth to execution, and put them all to death. It is no true mortification where one lust is spared. A man in some sickness may lose the power of a leg or an arm: but had it been death, he would have lost the power of all together.

(2.) Vivification is universal, 2 Cor. v. 17. As when the body of Christ was raised, there was life put into every member; so when the soul is raised to live the life of holiness, the image of God is repaired in all its parts, and the soul embraces the whole yoke of Christ, so far as it knows the same. So that sanctification sets a man on every known duty. The holy man is holy in his dealings with God and with men; not a pretender to piety, and a renouncer of honesty. He is holy alone, and holy in company: for though a man can put on or lay by a wooden leg, and carve it as he will, he cannot do so with a limb of his body.

II. I shall shew how this holiness is derived from Christ, according to the grand device of infinite wisdom for the sanctifying of an unholy world. For clearing which, consider these few things.

1. God made the first Adam holy, and all mankind was so in him,

Eecl. vii. 29. He gave him a holy nature, endued with a propensity to good, love to the Lord, and ability to keep all the commands. Thus mankind was set up in Adam; the stock was put into his hand for himself and for his posterity, which was to be conveyed to them by natural generation; for no reason can be given why we should not have derived a holy nature from Adam had he stood, seeing we derive a corrupt nature from him having fallen.

2. Adam, sinning lost the image of God, that holiness in which he was created, and turned altogether corrupt and averse to good. For by his sin he turned off from God as his chief end, and set up himself for his chief end, which could not but infer a total apostasy. He was laid under the curse by his sin, and God the life of his soul departed from him; and so he was left dead in sin, having sinned away his life in the favour of God, and holy influences. So that all mankind are naturally dead in sin, seeing corrupt Adam could convey no nature to us but a corrupt nature, Gen. v. 3. together with the guilt of it, and the curse attending it.

3. Man's sanctification by himself thus being hopeless, for his nature being corrupted wholly, he could never sanctify his own heart or life, seeing no effect can exceed the virtue of its cause; it pleased God to constitute a Mediator, his own Son, to be the head of sanctifying influences to all that should partake of them. And again, he set up the human nature holy, harmless, and undefiled, which was united to the divine nature in the person of the Son. So Christ, God-man, was filled with the Spirit of holiness, and received a holy nature, to be conveyed from him to those that are his by spiritual generation, Eph. ii. 10. And the Mediator being God as well as man, and the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily, there can never be wanting sanctifying influences in him who is a full fountain.

4. Jesus Christ took on him the guilt of all the elect's sins, and the curse due unto them; and these sins of theirs did hang about him till they brought him to the dust of death. But the sufferings of Christ being satisfactory, as he died for sin, so he died to sin, Rom. vi. 10. that is, he was absolutely freed from those sins of the elect wherewith he had burdened himself. This he did and suffered as a public person; and therefore the apostle tells us, Rom. vi. 6. that 'our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.' For the guilt of sin and the curse being taken away, sanctification follows of course; that being removed which prevented sanctifying influences, and a communication opened betwixt heaven and the soul again, upon its reconciliation with God.



5. Though by the death and resurrection of Christ, the sanctification of his people is infallibly insured, as the corruption of all mankind was by the fall of Adam; yet we cannot actually partake of Christ's holiness till we have a spiritual being in him, even as we partake not of Adam's corruption till we have a natural being from him. And for the effecting of this union with Christ, he in the time of love sends his quickening Spirit into the soul, whereby he apprehends us; and thus there is a passive reception of Christ. And the soul being quickened, believes, and so apprehends Christ. Thus that union with Christ is made up by the Spirit on Christ's part, and faith on ours. So the soul being united to him, lives by the same spirit of holiness which is in him, and takes of his, and gives to his members for their sanctification.

6. *Lastly*, As Jesus Christ is the prime receptacle of the Spirit of holiness, as the head of all the saints; so the continual supplies of that Spirit are to be derived from him for the saints' progress in holiness, till they come to perfection. And faith is the great mean of communication betwixt Christ and us, Acts xv. 9. And thus it does, as it empties the soul of all confidence in itself for sanctification, and relies upon him for it according to his word: putting on the saints to use the means of sanctification appointed by him, yet taking their confidence off the means, and setting it on himself, Phil. iii. 3. And for the ground of this confidence it has his word, so that his honour and faithfulness are engaged for the supply of the Spirit of sanctification this way, being the way in which he has commanded us to look for it.

USE I. Of information. This lets us see,

1. The absolute necessity of holiness. When God, in the depth of infinite wisdom, laid his measures for the salvation of sinners, he had their sanctification in his eye, to bring it about by the death of his own Son. A certain evidence that there is no salvation without it. Nay, it is a principal part of our salvation, Matth. i. 21. There is more evil in sin than suffering, more in man's sin than the wrath of God. Nay, suppose a man saved from wrath, but not from sin, he is a miserable man, because of his unlikeness to God; for as happiness lies in assimilation to God, it must needs be a miserable case to be so unlike him as sin makes us.

2. In vain do men attempt sanctification without coming to Christ for it. Those that knew not Christ may attain to a shadow of holiness, but can never be truly sanctified. And those that hear the gospel, but neglect the great duty of believing and uniting with Christ, can do no duty aright, their obedience at best is but a hypocritical obedience, Tit. i. 15, 16.

3. Unholiness ought not to stop a sinner from coming to Christ, more than a disease ought to hinder a man to take the physician's help, or cold from taking the benefit of the fire. And they that will have men to attain to holiness before they believe, are as absurd as one who would have the cripple to walk before he use the cure for his lameness.

4. True faith is the soul's coming to Christ for sanctification as well as justification. For faith must receive Christ as God offers him, and he offers him with all his salvation. Now, he is made sanctification: Wherefore the soul, being willing to take Christ with all his salvation, to be sanctified, comes to him for it.

USE II. Of Exhortation. Come then to Christ for sanctification. To press this, I offer the following motives.

*Mot.* 1. If ye be not holy, ye will never see heaven.—Heaven's door is bolted on the unholy, Heb. xii. 14.—There is another place provided for the unholy impure goats.

*Mot.* 2. Ye will never attain holiness, if ye come not to Christ for it. How can ye think to thrive following another device than God's for your end? Ye may do what ye can to reform, ye may bind yourselves with vows to be holy, watch against sin, and press your hearts with the most affecting considerations of heaven, hell, &c. but ye shall as soon bring water out of the flinty rock, as holiness out of all these, till ye believe and unite with Christ. Consider,

1. While ye are out of Christ, ye are under the curse; and is it possible for the cursed tree to bring forth the fruit of holiness?

2. Can ye be holy without sanctifying influences, or can ye expect that these shall be conveyed to you otherwise than through a Mediator, by his Spirit?

3. Ye have nothing wherewith to produce holiness. The most skilful musician cannot play unless his instrument be in tune. The lame man, if he were ever so willing, cannot run till he be cured. Ye are under an utter impotency, by reason of the corruption of your nature.

*Lastly,* If ye will come to Christ, ye shall be made holy. There is a fulness of merit and spirit in him for sanctification. Come then to the fountain of holiness. The worst of sinners may be sanctified this way, 1 Cor. vi. 11.

Wherefore be persuaded of your utter inability to sanctify yourselves, and receive Christ for sanctification, as he is offered to you; and thus alone shall you attain to holiness both in heart and life.

OF THE BENEFITS FLOWING FROM JUSTIFICATION, ADOPTION,  
AND SANCTIFICATION.

ROM. v. 1, 2.—*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this 'grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

THERE are three sorts of benefits belonging to the justified, adopted, and sanctified. (1.) Some in this life they partake of. (2.) Some at death. (3.) Some at the resurrection. As for those in this life, we are told what they are in that question, ‘What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification? *Ans.* Assurance of God’s love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.’ These are divided into two sorts. (1.) Some that flow from the sense of our justification, &c. (2.) Some from the being of it. Of the former, the Catechism takes notice of three, viz. assurance, peace, joy. All which are held out in the text as benefits coming through justification. Here observe,

1. Justification as a spring of other benefits. It is a leading mercy, it brings many others along with it. In it guilt is removed; and that being removed, a stream of mercies flows from heaven into the soul.

2. The benefits flowing from it.

(1.) Peace with God, or towards God; i. e. not only reconciliation with God, the cause of the quarrel being taken away; but peace of conscience, peace within, when we look towards God, arising from the sense of our justification and reconciliation. But all this is owing to Christ, who brought us into the state of reconciliation, called *this grace wherein we stand*.

(2.) Assurance of eternal happiness: *Rejoice in hope of the glory of God*; i. e. in the glory of God we hope for. They are so sure of that happiness, that they rejoice in the view of it, as if they were actually carried into it. And *assurance of God’s love*, ver. 5.

(3.) Spiritual joy: *We rejoice in hope of the glory of God*; that is, We glory or joy in the Lord, upon this hope.

The text evidently affords this doctrine, viz.

DOCT. ‘Assurance, spiritual peace, and joy, are benefits flowing from a state of justification.’

## I. OF ASSURANCE.

In speaking to the first, namely, assurance, I will shew,

I. The kinds of it.

II. That a child of God may have this assurance.

III. The nature of it, and how a saint comes to be assured.

IV. The fruits of it, whereby it may be discerned from presumption.

V. The necessity of it.

VI. Deduce an inference or two.

I. I am to shew the kinds of assurance. They are two.

1. Objective assurance, whereby the special love of God to a saint, and his eternal salvation, are sure in themselves, 2 Tim. ii. 19. 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.'—This is never wanting, whether the child of God know it or not. Though they raze foundations of hope at some times, yet God never razes his.

2. Subjective assurance, whereby a child of God is assured that God loves him with a special love, and that he shall certainly partake of eternal glory, Gal. ii. 20. 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me,' says Paul. This is not a wavering hope, or conjecture, but an infallible certainty. This is the assurance we treat of.

II. I shall shew that a child of God may have this assurance.

1. A believer may know that he has relative grace, that he is justified and therefore shall never come into condemnation, Rom. v. 1, &c. Though he cannot ascend to heaven, and at first read his name in the book of God's decrees; yet by comparing the book of God and the book of his own soul, he may know that he is called and elected, 2 Pet. i. 10. and therefore shall certainly be saved.

2. He may be assured that he has inherent grace, that he believes as sure as he breathes, 2 Tim. i. 12. that he has love to the Lord unfeigned, and can appeal to Omniscience on the head, John xxi. 15. as Peter did when he said, 'Thou who knowest all things, knowest that I love thee.' And believing that such are loved of God, and shall certainly persevere, for which he has the testimony of the word, he may be assured that he is the happy man.

3. It is the office of the Spirit of God to assure believers of this. He has given us the word for this end: He is given to lead his people into all truth, particularly to discover the grace of God to them, and in them, 1 Cor. ii. 12. to witness with their spirits to their adoption, Rom. viii. 16. to be a seal, which is properly to ensure an evidence, Eph. iv. 30. and an earnest, a part of the price and pledge of the whole, 2 Cor. v. 5.



*Lastly*, Many of the saints have attained it; as Job, chap. xix. 25. 'For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth,' Psal. xxiii. ult. 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever,' 2 Tim. iv. 8. 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.' And others too, besides scripture-saints.

III. I shall shew the nature of this assurance, and how a saint comes to be assured. By what is said, ye may perceive that this is a work of the Spirit, in the hearts of the saints, without whose efficacy no man can attain it. We may take it up in these three things.

1. The Spirit shining on his own word, particularly the promises, in the Bible, the child of God firmly believes them, Heb. vi. 11, 12. The Lord has testified in his word, that such and such persons, for instance, that love him, Prov. viii. 17. are universal in obedience; are poor in spirit, Matt. v. 3. are beloved of him, and shall certainly be saved. The Spirit says in effect, by the light he gives the believer into the divine authority of that word, This is my word. And as such the child of God is firmly persuaded of the certainty of it, as if a voice from the throne of God would make these promises and declarations. This is the ground-work of assurance.

2. The Spirit shining on his own work of grace in the believer's heart, the believer discerns it, 1 Cor. ii. 12. The Spirit of God clears up to the man the truth of grace in him; lets him see that he, for instance, loves God, &c. and so says in effect, This is my work. Hence he is enabled to conclude assuredly, that the Lord loves him, he shall not be ashamed, and that the kingdom of God is his. This assurance is stronger or weaker according to the degree of light that shines upon the work of grace in the heart to discover it.

3. *Lastly*, The Spirit of the Lord sometimes gives a joint testimony with the spirits of the saints, to the truth of that conclusion, Rom. viii. 16. that they are the children of God. The testimony of the believer's own spirit is weak in itself, and Satan can find many ways to invalidate it; therefore the Spirit witnesses to them the truth of the conclusion, whereby they are raised to a full persuasion of it.

IV. I shall shew the fruit of this assurance, whereby it may be discerned from presumption.

1. It inflames the soul with love to the Lord. As one flame begets another, so the assurance of God's love to us will add new

vigour to our love to the Lord, 1 John iv. 19. Luke vii. 47. He sits in the warm sunshine, that cannot fail to melt the heart, who sits under evidence of the Lord's love.

2. It is humbling, Gal. ii. 20. None so vile in their own eyes as those who are lifted up in the manifestations of the Lord's love to them, Gen. xviii. 27. 2 Sam. vii. 18. 2 Cor. xii. 4 and 11 compared. Delusion puffs up, but true assurance humbles.

3. It makes one tender in heart and life, and is a most powerful motive to sanctification, 2 Cor. vii. 1. It is followed with great care to please God in all things, and watchfulness against every sin. While the empty traveller walks at random, fearing nothing, because he has nothing to lose, he that has precious things about him looks well to himself, Cant. iii. 5. One may be persuaded, that the confidence which makes not one tender in his duty to God and man, is presumption.

4. Establishment in the good ways of the Lord, 2 Pet. i. 10. Faith is the provisor of all other graces, it brings in oil into the lamp; and the more evidence it has, it can do its office the better. A doubting Christian will be a staggering and weak Christian; as the soldier who has little hope of the victory will readily be faint-hearted, while he that is assured is strengthened and established.

5. *Lastly*, It fills a man with contempt of the world, Gal. vi. 14. If ye gaze on the shining sun, for a while after ye will scarcely discern the beauty of the earth. And one's solacing himself in contemplation of heaven as his, will sink the value of the world with him.

#### V. I shall shew the necessity of assurance.

1. It is not necessary to the being of a Christian. One may have true faith, and yet want full assurance, Isa. l. 10. One may go to heaven in a mist, not knowing whither he is going. We read of some, Heb. ii. 15, 'who through fear of death are all their life time subject to bondage.' Our salvation depends on our state, not our knowledge of it.

2. It is necessary to the well-being of a Christian, and therefore we are commanded to seek it, 2 Pet. i. 10, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.' There are none who can live so comfortably for themselves, as the assured Christian, and none are so useful for God as they. It fits a man either to live or die; while others are unfit to live, because of the weakness of grace in a throng of trials and temptations, and unfit to die for want of evidence of grace.

Hence it follows, that assurance may be lost; and they that sometimes have this light, may fall into darkness. And it is care-

less walking that puts it out, especially sinning against the light, whereby the Spirit is grieved, and withdraws his light, Eph. iv. 29, 30. But if it be lost that way, and darkness come on, it will readily be dreadful darkness; the higher they have been lifted up, the lower readily they are laid, Psal. li. 8.

*Inf. 1.* Unjustified and unsanctified persons can have no true assurance of the Lord's love to them. They may have a false confidence, a delusive hope of heaven; but no assurance, for that is peculiar to the justified.

*Inf. 2.* Doubts and fears are no friends to holiness of heart and life. It is little faith that breeds them in the hearts of the people of God, Matth. xiv. 31. And little faith will always make little holiness.

*Inf. 3. Lastly,* Christians may thank themselves for the uncomfortable lives they lead. What sovereignty may do, we know not: but surely it is sloth and unbelief that the want of assurance is ordinarily owing to. Stir up yourselves then to seek it. Be frequent in self-examination, cry to the Lord for the witness of his spirit. Believe the word, and be habitually tender in your walk, if ever ye would have assurance, Psal. v. ult.

## II. OF PEACE OF CONSCIENCE.

‘PEACE of conscience is a benefit flowing from justification.’

Here I shall shew,

I. What peace of conscience is.

II. The excellency of it.

III. How it is obtained.

IV. How it is maintained.

V. How it is distinguished from false peace.

VI. *Lastly,* Deduce an inference or two.

I. I am to shew what peace of conscience is. It is a blessed inward calmness and consolation arising from the purging of the conscience from guilt before the Lord, in which description, observe these two things.

1. The subject of this peace. It is a purged conscience, Heb. ix. 14. Peace and purity go together, and make a good conscience, 1 Tim. i. 5. That peace which is joined with impurity, in an unpurged conscience, is but carnal security, peace in a dream, which will end in a fearful surprise. Now, there are two things necessary to the purging of conscience.

(1.) Removal of guilt, in pardon thereof, which brings the sinner

into a state of peace with God, Psalm xxxii. 1. Guilt, felt or unfelt, is a band on the soul binding it over to God's wrath; it is a disease in the conscience, which will make it a sick conscience at length. But a pardon takes away guilt, looses the band, removes the deadly force of the disease, and lays a foundation for carrying off the sickness, Isa. xxxiii. ult.

(2.) Removal of the conscience of guilt, in the sense of pardon, Heb. x. 2. Though a malefactor's pardon be passed the seals, and he is secured from death, yet till he know it he cannot have peace. So the pardoned sinner, who knows not his mercy, though he has peace with God, yet wants peace of conscience. Psalm li. 8. So the conscience is purged, when the sting of felt guilt is drawn out of it.

2. The parts of this peace. These are two.

(1.) An inward calm of the soul, and quietness of the mind, wherein it is not disturbed with the fears of God's wrath, nor frightened with the judgments which its sins do in themselves deserve, Prov. i. 33. A troubled conscience is full of fears, of terrible forebodings, and of torments, 1 John iv. 18. When peace enters the conscience, the mists clear up, the fears are scattered, and conscience has a serenity and quiet within itself.

(2.) Consolation and comfort of heart, 2 Cor. i. 12; Isa. lvii. 19. Peace of conscience is not a mere negative, or indisturbance, which sloth and negligence of soul-matters may procure to the unpardoned: but it is an active cheerfulness of spirit, in the soul's looking up towards God, and reflecting how matters stand betwixt heaven and it, Col. iii. 15.

Conceive the whole thus: Sin entering into the soul, casts the conscience into a fever, and guilt makes it rage. The great Physician gives the proper remedy: and so the conscience gets a cool, the sickness is removed, and the man gathers health, strength, and soundness, Job xxxiii. 22—26; Heb. ix. 14.

II. I shall shew the excellency of it. It is Abraham's bosom on this side of heaven, the lower paradise; it is like the shore to the shipwrecked soul; and life from the dead. I will only say three things of it.

1. It is the wine-press of the grapes of heaven, that squeezeth out into the man's mouth the sap of the covenant, Psal. cxix. 102, 103. It was a sad tale of the good Asaph's, Psal. lxxvii. 3. 'I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.' Peace of conscience makes a man remember God, and be comforted; to suck the sap of promises, and all the declarations of God's love and favour in his word, as the same Asaph did, Psalm lxxiii. 24, 25, 26.



2. It is sap and poison to all earthly comforts, Prov. xv. 15. A sick man can take no pleasure in the comforts of life, as a healthy man does. An uneasy conscience sucks the sap out of all. But peace there, makes coarse fare, and little of it, very sweet, Prov. xvii. 1. And whatever a man has, it puts an additional sweetness into it.

3. It is sweet sauce to all afflictions, 2 Cor. i. 12. John xvi. 23. When there is no peace within, little things make people fretful: even a scratch of a pin is a wound with a sword. But this makes a man easy in the midst of the little annoyances of the world, though they be great in themselves, Col. iii. 15. Phil. iv. 7. Compare Heb. x. 34. When a man meets with disquietments and vexations abroad, he is helped to bear all, when he is comforted and cheered coming into his own house. But heavy is their case, who come from bitterness abroad, and are met with bitterness at home. The former is an emblem of peace of conscience, the latter an emblem of the soul in afflictions.

III. I am to shew how this peace of conscience is obtained. This peace is peculiar to the saints. Others may have false peace, Luke xi. 21. but they only have, or can have, true peace, Rom. v. 1.

1. It is obtained for them by Jesus Christ dying and suffering to procure it, Isa. liii. 5. Eph. ii. 4. There can be none of this peace without reconciliation with God, and there can be no reconciliation without his blood. The convinced sinners could have no more inward peace than devils have, if Christ had not died to procure it; but their wound had been incurable, and stood open and gaping for ever.

2. It is obtained by them, by these two methods.

(1). By a believing application of the blood of Christ, Rom. xv. 13. Job xxxiii. 23, &c. This is the only medicine that can draw the thorn of guilt out of the conscience, and heal its wounds, 1 John i. 7. Medicines prepared by men may cure bodily distempers, and a vitiated fancy, or disordered imagination, among other things. Confessing, mourning, reforming, watching, &c. may give a palliative cure even to the conscience, scurfing over its sores. But nothing but a believing application of Christ's blood will give true peace of conscience; and do what ye will, if ye do not that, ye will never get true peace, Isa. vii. 9.

(2.) By God's speaking peace thereupon to the soul, Isa. lvii. 19. The soul resting on Christ by faith, brings it into a state of peace with God; but for peace of conscience, more is required, namely, a sense of that peace. And this none but God can give, Psal. li. 8. He speaks peace in the word; but a work of the Spirit on the con-

science is necessary to make the application, as appears from 2 Sam. xii. 13. compared with Psal. li. And this is a light struck up in the soul, discovering the soul to be at peace with God, an overpowering light that silences doubts and fears, and creates a blessed calm. This also is obtained in the way of believing, in the reflex act of faith.

IV. I shall shew how this peace is maintained. The apostle tells us it was his exercise to maintain it, Acts xxiv. 16. And if we be not exercised in it, it will soon be lost. Now, it is maintained by,

1. Keeping up a firm and settled purpose of heart to follow the way of duty, and to stand aloof from sin, cost what it will, Acts xi. 23. David kept up his peace that way, Psalm xvii. 3. This is the breast-plate of righteousness, Eph. vi. 14. the which if it fall by, one may quickly be wounded to the heart. Unsettledness of heart, one's being at every turn unresolved what to do, cannot miss to leave him in the mire.

2. Living a life of dependence on the Lord, for light of life, direction and through-bearing, Prov. iii. 6. Gal. ii. 20. And this will keep a man from presumption, and doing any thing with a doubting conscience, which will soon mar one's peace.

3. Watchfulness against sin, suares and temptations, 1 Cor. x. 12. One that would maintain his peace, must be upon his guard, otherwise it will soon be disturbed, in this evil world.

4. A strict, holy, gospel-walk, in all known duties, towards God and towards man, Gal. vi. 16. He that will adventure to balk any of them, shall soon lose it.

5. *Lastly*, Frequent renewing our faith and repentance, for purging away the sins we fall into, 1 Pet. ii. 4.

V. I proceed to shew how peace of conscience is distinguished from false peace. A godly man may have a false peace. Cant. v. 2. Such had David before Nathan came to him after his fall. An unregenerate man can have no peace but what is false, Isa. lvii. ult.

1. True peace, built on the ground of God's word, is established by the word, however searching; the other is weakened by it. For God's word is a friend to God's peace, but an enemy to delusion, 1 John iii. 20, 21. But this is meant of God's word rightly understood, (if we misunderstand it, it is not his word, but our own mistake); and such mistakes may have the quite contrary effect.

2. True peace cannot be maintained but by a holy tenderness, and constant struggle against sin: but false peace is maintained without it, 1 John iii. 3.

*Inf.* 1. The unconverted sinner, and the untender Christian too, are in a very unfit case for the time of calamity, Isa. lvii. 20, 21.

Matth. xxv. 5. Only the man that has peace of conscience is prepared, Isa. xxxiii. 14, 15.

2. Let all who would have their consciences to be their friends, flee to the blood of Christ, and to lead a holy life.

3. *Lastly*, Let all those who want it, labour to get it; and they that have it, be exercised to keep it.

### III. OF JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST.

‘Spiritual joy, or joy in the Holy Ghost, is a benefit flowing from justification.’

Now, to shew first of all what spiritual joy is: Joy in general is a pleasing passion, arising from the enjoyment, or hope of the enjoyment of a desired object. Spiritual joy is a joy arising from the enjoyment, and hope of the enjoyment of spiritual blessings.

Here I shall shew,

I. The subjects of this joy, who they are that partake of it.

II. The objects of it, or what they joy in.

III. The grounds of it.

IV. The Author of it.

V. The means the Spirit makes use of to convey it into the hearts of the saints.

VI. The difference betwixt it and the hypocrite’s joy.

VII. *Lastly*, Apply.

I. I shall consider the subjects of this joy, who they are that partake of it.

1. It is peculiar to the saints: for they only are blessed with spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, and no others can have true spiritual joy, Phil. iii. 3. Any may have a sensitive joy, viz. in things grateful to their senses, Acts xiv. 17. Profane men may have a sinful joy, a joy in sin, Prov. xv. 21. Hypocrites may have a delusive joy, which is a carnal joy in spiritual things, Matth. xiii. 20. But saints only have the true spiritual joy, or joy in the Holy Ghost; for it is peculiar to the subjects of Christ’s kingdom, Rom. xiv. 17.

2. Yet the saints have it not at all times, Psal. li. 8. A child of God may be walking in darkness, going mourning without the sun, having no evidence of his interest in Christ: in such a case he cannot have this joy. It is true, there is a seed of joy, in the most bitter sorrows of a spirit, which will spring up in due time, Psalm xcvii. 11. But it seems it may be the case with some of the saints, never to have that joy till they get it in heaven, though I judge it is

very rare, especially under the New Testament dispensation, Heb. ii. 15.

II. I shall shew the objects of this joy, what they joy in.

1. The principal object is God in Christ, Phil. iii. 3. Rom. v. 11. They look to and remember God in Christ, and joy in him. God out of Christ is a most terrible object, Heb. xii. ult. 'Our God is a consuming fire.' And a sinner can never truly rejoice in an absolute God. But God in Christ, reconciled to the soul, breathing out peace and love to the sinner through a crucified Redeemer, is the chief and fundamental, the comprehensive object of his joy.

2. The less principal, or secondary object, is twofold.

(1.) The precious spiritual privileges they have in hand, which they enjoy for the present in this life, as justification, adoption, sanctification, peace with God, peace of conscience, access to God and communion with him, &c. In these they justly joy, Isa. lxi. 10. Will a man rejoice in the favour of his prince? Surely then a saint may well rejoice in the favour of his God.

(2.) The precious privileges they have in hope, Rom. v. 2. 'Rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' They have heaven and the eternal weight of glory in view: and this hope makes them sing the triumph before the victory. Yet are they not rash and foolish; for it is a sure hope, and will never make one ashamed. One counts his riches, not only by what he has in hand, but what he has in bills and bonds, and joys in the latter as well as the former.

III. I shall consider the grounds of this joy in these things. They are twofold.

1. A suitableness of the objects to the heart and mind of the child of God. These objects are the great desire of a believer, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. So the receiving of them in hand, or in hope, makes him to joy, Psal. iv. 6, 7. Without this there can be no joy, Prov. xiii. 12. 'When the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.' If ye would make a starving man rejoice, you must give him meat; if a condemned man, a pardon. Holiness and communion with God are sapless to the unrenewed man. God himself is not the object of his desire: neither is the holiness of heaven suited to his mind: therefore he cannot rejoice in these. But it is otherwise with the saints; so strangers intermeddle not with their joy.

2. A sense of an interest in these objects, John xx. 28. 'My Lord, and my God.' One has more joy in his own cottage, than in another's palace, because he can say, It is my cottage. Hagar could not rejoice in the well of water, till the Lord opened her eyes to see it. Though a pardon were slipt unawares into a man's pocket, he cannot joy in it till he knows he has it. So a sense of our interest is necessary to spiritual joy.



IV. I shall next consider the Author of this joy. The Holy Spirit of God is the author of it, and therefore it is called 'joy in the Holy Ghost,' Rom. xiv. 17. i. e. wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, shedding abroad the love of God, in the sense thereof, like a sweet-smelling ointment in the heart of the saint. It is he that administers the reviving cordial to the fainting soul, draws off the saints' sackcloth, and girds him with this gladness.

V. I come now to consider the means which the Spirit makes use of to convey this joy into the hearts of the saints. These are two-fold.

1. External means are the word and sacraments. These are the wells of salvation to the people of God, Isa. xii. 3.

(1.) The word of God which brings the glad tidings of salvation from heaven to poor sinners; it discovers the enriching treasure to the soul, Psal. cxix. 162. 'I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.' And no earthly treasure will raise such a joy in one's heart, as a word of promise will do, when the Spirit of the Lord shines on it unto a soul.

(2.) The sacraments, which seal and confirm the word of grace to the soul. This is plain from the exercise of the eunuch, Acts viii. 39. who, when he was baptised, went on his way rejoicing; and of thousands who have met with that joy at sealing ordinances, which they never could find in all earthly things; and no wonder, for then is the great seal of heaven set unto the covenant betwixt the Lord and his people.

2. The internal mean is faith, Rom. xv. 13. 'The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.' 1 Pet. i. 8.—'Believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' Faith receives and applies the glad tidings brought by the word, and confirmed by the sacraments. The Spirit of the Lord works faith at first and excites and strengthens it: and so the peace which the Lord speaks to his people is firmly believed by the saint, and thus his heart is filled with joy.

VI. I come now to shew the difference betwixt this joy and the joy of the hypocrite. That a hypocrite may have a joy in spiritual things, is evident from Matth. xiii. 20. and it is confirmed by the case of many deluded souls, who may have their joys, as well as sorrows which are unsonnd as well as themselves.

1. True spiritual joy riseth in the heart, ordinarily after the word has had a precedent effect on the heart, to rend it for sin, and from it, Psal. cxxvi. 5. 'They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.' Matth. v. 4. 'Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.' But delusive joy springs up more quickly, while yet the

heart is not rent for sin, at least not from it, Matth. xiii. 20. Compare Jer. iv. 3. Much pains the husbandman is at ere he can expect a crop; but weeds will grow up without pain or labour for them.

2. True spiritual joy comes by the word, and that rightly understood; but delusive joy comes either without the word, or by misunderstanding of the word. The channel of divine communications is the word of God, Isa. lix. 21. That joy which comes by pretended revelation, dreams, or impressions, without the word, and regard to it, is most likely to be the effect of a heated fancy; and people had need to beware of being beguiled with these things. The written word is particularly the channel of spiritual joy, 1 John i. 4. 'These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.' And if an angel from heaven would speak joy to one whom the written word does not give ground of joy to, it would be but a deceit, Isa. viii. 20. 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.'

3. True spiritual joy is lasting; but delusive joy vanishes away, and comes to nothing, as wanting a root, Matth. xiii. 20, 21. It has a season, and when that is over it is extinguished, John v. 35. 'Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.' I own a child of God may lose his joy too; but here lies the difference. The ground of the believer's joy, sense of interest, is sometimes removed out of his sight, and so he must needs lose his joy. But though the ground of the hypocrite's joy continue, namely his fancied interest in the favour of God, and privileges of the gospel, yet the joy goes: those things grow stale and sapless with him, which mightily affected him when they were new to him.

4. True spiritual joy humbles the soul, and fills it with high and honourable thoughts of God; but delusion never ceases to puff up, Gen. xxviii. 17. 'How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' Exod. xxxiv. 8. 'Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.' 2 Cor. xii. 11. Compare Col. ii. 18. For all the divine communications tend to empty men of themselves, to make Christ and his free grace all to a man; and holy familiarity with God impresses an awe on one's spirit, in so far as the more one sees of God, the more he must admire and adore him. But nature will always build up nature.

5. *Lastly*, True spiritual joy is sanctifying, makes one the more tender and holy, the more he has of it. But delusion will never sanctify, Phil. iii. 3. Delusion is a cover to and nourisher of inward lusts, which get a peaceable shelter under it: but true spiri-

tual joy makes one forward in the duties of universal obedience, Psal. cxix. 32. 'I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.' And it makes one tender in moral duties towards God, and towards man.

*Inf.* 1. Unjustified persons cannot intermeddle with this joy, for it is a benefit that flows from justification. It is a privilege peculiar to the saints; children's bread that is not cast to the dogs. Ye may rejoice in the worldly comforts ye have, saying, This clothing, this money is mine; but you cannot say, This God is mine.

2. When created streams are dried up, the joy of the ungodly is quite gone: but it is not so with the godly, Job vi. 13. 'Is not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me?' Hab. iii. 17, 18. The great ground of the saints' joy, and the objects of it, are beyond the reach of men, so that they cannot take them from them.

3. Most groundless is the prejudice against religion, that it is a melancholy thing, Prov. iii. 17. 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' None have such reason to rejoice as the believer has. If the poor wretched and condemned creature has more ground to rejoice than he that is pardoned and enriched with his prince's favour, then the wicked has as much ground to rejoice as the believer who is justified by grace. O! if the ungodly saw their state, they would never rejoice; and if the godly saw theirs, they would never despond.

4. It is not God's allowance for his children to harden themselves in sorrow, and refuse to be comforted, Phil. iv. 4. 'Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.' As it is uncomfortable to themselves, it is dishonouring to God, and is the fruit of unbelief.

5. O, unconverted sinners, let the joy of religion draw you to it. Come to Christ, in a way of believing on him, that ye may be justified. Close with the way of holiness, in renouncing all known sin, and complying with all known duty, that ye may have this spiritual joy, 2 Cor. i. 12.

6. *Lastly*, Let the godly strive to attain this spiritual joy, and to maintain it for God's honour, and their own comfort and usefulness.

## OF INCREASE OF GRACE, AND PERSEVERANCE THEREIN TO THE END.

PROV. iv. 18.—*But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

HITHERTO we have spoken of the benefits flowing from or accompanying the sense of justification. I come now to speak of those that accompany or flow from the being of it, namely, increase of grace, and perseverance. In the text there is an elegant comparison of two things like to one another. Wherein we have,

1. The subjects of comparison, *the path of the just*, and *the shining light*.

(1.) The subject compared, *the path of the just*. The just, in the language of the Old Testament, are those who are justified by faith, Hab. ii. 4. 'The just shall live by his faith.' They are a travelling company going towards Canaan; they have a path or way wherein they go, and they make progress in it. The word here used signifies, (1.) The progress itself, or course in the way, as Job vi. 18. 'The paths of the way are turned aside.' Isa. xxvi. 8. 'In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee.' (2.) The place or way through which one goes. The thing meant is the gracious and holy life of the just.

(2.) The subject it is compared to, *the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day*. It is compared to light, both because it is comfortable to themselves, and instructing, exciting to others, and honourable. It is not like the light of a meteor, that shines a while, and then disappears quickly, nor that of a candle, which burns and burns down till it wastes itself; but like the light of the sun, and not the evening-sun, that declineth, but the morning-sun, that with increasing brightness and heat advances to the meridian.

2. The points of the comparison. (1.) As that light is a growing light shining more and more; so is the grace of God in a soul, going from one degree to another. (2.) As it does not go out, but grows on to the perfect day; so grace never dies out, but goes on till it be perfected in glory.

DOCT. 'Increase of grace, and perseverance, are benefits flowing from or accompanying justification.'

I. Of Increase or growth of Grace.

Here I shall shew,

1. That real grace doth increase or grow.

2. How a Christian grows in grace.



3. The causes of this growth.
4. The difference betwixt true and false growth.
5. Whether true grace grows always.
6. Apply.

FIRST, I am to shew that real grace doth increase or grow. This is evident from three things.

1. Scripture-testimony. Grace is a holy seed that springs and grows, Mark iv. 27: however little at first, like a grain of mustard seed, Matth. xiii. 31, 32; like leaven, ver. 33. God has promised it, Psal. xcii. 12. Mal. iv. 2. 'But unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall.'

2. God has appointed a certain stature that his children shall grow to, Eph. iv. 13. This is the perfection of grace. Hence the Christian is first a little child, then a young man, then a father, 1 John ii. 13. They walk, they run, they fly, they mount like eagles, Isa. xl. ult.

3. This is the end of divine influences, Isa. xxvii. 3. and xlv. 3, 4. It is also the effect of divine ordinances, Eph. iv. 11, 12. It is the end of all the pains of the heavenly Husbandman on the plants of his vineyard.

SECONDLY, I shall shew how a Christian grows in grace. He grows four ways.

1. Inward, into Christ, as the branch doth into the stock, Eph. iv. 15. Cleaving to him, and knitting with him more firmly, his faith grows stronger, 2 Thess. i. 9; his love more vigorous, his hope firmer, his dependence closer, &c. This is the spring of all other Christian increase in grace.

2. Outward, in good works, in all the parts of a holy life, piety towards God, and righteousness towards men, Gen. xlix. 22. The growing Christian advances in the work of his salvation, Phil. ii. 12; in the work of his regeneration, Acts xiii. 36. He goes on in the fruits of a holy life, for God's honour, his own good, and for the good and advantage of his fellow Christians, knowing that he is not born for himself.

3. Upward, in a heavenly disposition, Phil. iii. 20. The end of his journey that he is aiming at is the upper world; and as he is coming out of this world, in action so is he coming out of it in affection, Cant. viii. 5. He grows more heavenly in his desires, joys, delights, griefs, sorrows, &c.

4. *Lastly*, Downward in humility, self-denial, self-loathing, resignation to the will of the Lord, &c. The more religion prevails, there are always more of these graces, Job xlii. 5, 6. Psal. xxii. 6.

2 Cor. xii. 11. For the more grace there is, there is the more knowledge of God and of one's self; which are two boundless depths, the one of glory, the other of sin.

THIRDLY, I shall shew the causes of this growth.

1. Union with Christ. John xv. 4. 'As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me.' He that is not united to Christ can never grow in grace, more than a branch that does not knit with the stock. But where the Lord takes hold of the soul by his Spirit, and the soul takes hold of Christ by faith, there is an union whereby they become members of Christ, and their growth is secured.

2. Communion with Christ, John vi. 57. 'He that eateth me, even he shall live by me.' He is the fountain of the saints life, who gives it them, and more abundantly. He is the head of influences, by which they are made to increase in grace, as the sap from the root and stock makes the branches to grow. And this communion they have with him.

(1.) In ordinances, public, private, and secret, so that they are made to grow by the fatness of his house, Psal. xcii. 13. 'Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God.' The word edifies them, Isa. lv. 10, 11. The sacraments strengthen and confirm them, as they did the eunuch, who went on his way rejoicing, Acts viii. 39. Prayer and other holy exercises profit them, to their spiritual increase. But all by the influences of his Spirit in them, Isa. xlv. 3, 4.

(2.) In providences. Mercies are blessed to them for this end, Isa. lxvi. 11, 12. crosses, John xv. 2. 'Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.' And often have the people of God grown most under the weight of afflictions. But this also is by communion with Christ in them, Phil. i. 19. I know that this shall turn to my salvation—through the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.'

FOURTHLY, I proceed to shew the difference betwixt true and false growth. As hypocrites may have seeming grace, though not real, so that seeming grace may grow, Mat. xiii. 5. There is a two-fold difference.

1. True Christian growth is universal, Eph. iv. 15. False growth is only in some particular things. The true Christian grows in all the parts of spiritual life proportionably; for all the graces of the Spirit are linked together, so that when one grows, they all grow. Such a difference there is betwixt them as betwixt a well thriving child and a rickety one. The former grows proportionably in all the parts, the body, legs, arms, &c. The other grows too, but grows

not so; the head grows big, but the body grows not. So the hypocrite may get more knowledge, but no more tenderness, holiness, &c. He is not outwardly, but inwardly cold, as to the life of religion.

2. The hypocrite soon comes to a stand, the Christian goes on to perfection, Luke viii. 14. Phil. iii. 13, 14. They have their measure; and when they have come to that, they stand like the door on the hinges; but the true Christian is going on, labouring to be holy as God is holy, 1 John iii. 3. 'Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.'

FIFTHLY, I am to shew, whether true grace grows always.

1. It does not always grow, nor at every particular season. It has its winters and decays, as well as its spring and growing times, Rev. ii. 4. 'I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.' Yet,

2. It never decays utterly, 1 John iii. 9. 'Whosoever is born of God, his seed remaineth in him.' The flame of it may go out, but there is always a live-coal left, though under the ashes, which the influences of the Spirit will blow up again. It will not always be winter, Hos. xiv. 7. 'They that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.'

3. A Christian may be growing, and yet not be sensible of it. If one judge of his case by present feeling, he may be mistaken, Mark iv. 27. If one fix his eyes on the sun, or a tree, he cannot perceive the one moving, or the other growing. But compare the tree with what it was some years ago, the place where the sun now is, with where it was in the morning; so shall ye know the remarkable difference. And the very same difference may be observed in the growth of a Christian.

Again, the growth is not to be measured only by the top, but by the root too. If a tree be taking with the ground, and spreading its roots there, it is surely growing. And though Christians may want the consolations and flashes of affections they sometimes had; yet if they be growing in tenderness, humility, self-denial, &c. it is true Christian growth.

*Inf.* 1. This may cause fear and trembling to,

1. Apostates, who instead of growing are gone back to their former courses of profaneness and impiety. Fallen stars were never stars but in appearance, and fearful will be their doom, Heb. x. 38. 'If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.'

3. Those who are at a stand in the way of religion. They have come up to a form of godliness, and they are like the door on the hinges. They are not striving to be forward in mortification.

3. Those who are growing worse instead of growing better. They

are like dead trees ; summer and winter is alike to them ; they are never the better for all the warnings from the Lord's word or providence : but whatever God says by providences or ordinances, they go on their own way, adding one sinful step to another.

*Inf.* 2. Improve ordinances for spiritual growth. O ! it is sad to be sitting under means of grace, but never growing. This is the ready way to provoke the Lord to remove ordinances.

*Inf.* 3. Let the least spark of true grace be nourished, for it will grow, Isa. xlii. 3.

*Inf.* 4. *Lastly*, Labour to be growing Christians.

## II. OF PERSEVERANCE IN GRACE.

‘Perseverance in grace is another benefit flowing from, or accompanying justification.’

Here I shall shew,

1. What this perseverance is.
2. How it is to be understood.
3. That the saints shall persevere to the end.
4. What are those things which make hypocrites fall away, but over the belly of which saints persevere.
5. The grounds of the perseverance of the saints.
6. The means of perseverance.
7. *Lastly*, Apply.

FIRST, I shall shew what this perseverance is. To persevere is, to continue and abide in a state into which one is brought. And this perseverance is a firm and constant continuance in the state of grace, even to the end of one's life, Matth. x. 22. Col. i. 23. It is opposed to total apostasy, and utter falling away from grace. It is continuing and holding on, joined to a good beginning.

SECONDLY, I am to shew how this perseverance is to be understood.

1. It is not to be understood of all who profess Christ. Hypocrites may be seeming saints, and may have seeming grace, which may blaze for a while, and afterwards be quite extinguished, totally and finally lost, John vi. 66. There are temporary believers, who continue for a while, but having no root, do wither quite away, Matth. xiii. 21. Mere out side Christians, and Christians in the letter, may so apostatise, as to lose all, and never recover.

2. It is to be understood of all real saints, those who are endowed with saving grace. Those who, by virtue of regeneration, may call God their Father, as well as the church their mother, shall abide in



his family, and never fall out of it, John viii. 35. Though the counterfeit of grace may be utterly lost, yet real grace cannot. We own,

(1.) Saints may lose the evidence of grace, so that they cannot discern it in themselves. Thus it may suffer an eclipse, Isa. l. 10. Sometimes a child of God not only believes, loves, &c. but knows he does so: but at other times it may be out of his sight, so as he may apprehend he has none. The jewel may fall by, though it cannot fall away; and the spiritual husband may lock up himself in his chamber from his spouse, though he never quite leaves the house.

(2.) Saints may lose the exercise of grace, Cant. v. 9. Though the holy fire be not quite put out, yet it may cease to flame for a while; though they have spiritual armour lying by them, they may be so benumbed with the prevailing of corruption, that they cannot wield it. Wise virgins may slumber and sleep as well as the foolish.

(3.) They may lose much of the measure of grace they have had. True grace, though it cannot die out, yet is subject to languishing and decays in the strength thereof, Rev. iii. 2. They may lose much of their love to God and one another, Rev. ii. 4. much of their former tenderness, as David's heart smote him when he cut off the lap of Saul's garment, but afterwards was guilty of murder and adultery; much of their liveliness in duties, Rev. iii. 2. and so of other graces. But,

(2.) Saints can never lose grace finally, so as never to recover it, 1 Pet. i. 5. John vi. 39. No doubt a child of God may stray away from the Lord as well as another? but though a servant may go, and never return to the house, yet a son will be sought out and brought back again, Psal. cxix. ult. John xiii. 35. 'And the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the son abideth ever.' So however far the saints may go wrong, the Lord will recover them.

(2.) Saints never lose grace totally neither; they never lose it altogether, though for ever so short a while, 1 John iii. 9. Their lamp may burn dim, but it is never quite put out; they may fall back, fall very low, so as themselves and others may have little hope of their recovery, but they never fall off, never fall away, Psal. xxxvii. 24. 'Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.'

Both these hold true of relative grace; that is, there is no falling out of the state of justification, adoption, union with Christ, peace with God, the love of God, &c. and of inherent grace, faith, love, the fear of God, &c.

THIRDLY, I proceed to shew that the saints shall persevere to the end. This is evident from,

1. The Lord's own promises. He has said it, and will he not do it? John x. 28, 29. Psalm cxxv. 1. 'They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.' It is true they have many enemies that watch to do them mischief, but the Lord has promised to guard them, Isa. xxvii. 3. 'I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.' They may fall into sin, and provoke the Lord to anger against them; but he has promised, that though he lay his hand on them, he will not lift his love off them, Psal. lxxxix. 31,—34. Though they may be forsaken, yet it shall neither be total nor final, Isa. liv. 7,—10.

2. From the saints' confidence of perseverance and eternal life. How confident was Asaph, Psal. lxxiii. 24. 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory?' If the saints could fall away from grace, how could they 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God?' Rom. v. 2. How could Paul triumph over 'death, life, angels, principalities, powers; things present and to come, height, depth,' &c? Rom. viii. 38, 39. Confidence in their own management, is not the way of the godly. Prov. xxviii. 26. 'He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.'

3. *Lastly*, According to the scripture, perseverance is a discriminating mark betwixt the elect and non-elected, Matt. xxiv. 24. as also betwixt real saints and hypocrites, Luke viii. 13, 14, 15. 1 John ii. 19. From whence we may gather, that the utter apostasy of the elect saints is impossible in respect of the decree of God; that those who get true grace, keep it to the end, while others lose theirs; and that they who utterly apostatise, never were true saints.

FOURTHLY, I shall shew what are those things which make hypocrites fall away, but over the belly of which saints persevere. In the general, there are three things.

1. Satan's temptations, 1 Pet. v. 8. He is a subtle, powerful and malicious enemy, a liar and murderer from the beginning. Whatever hopeful signs are found about any, he sets himself to rob them of them, for their ruin. He seeks to set the hypocrite and the sincere through the wind, and prevails to blow away the one, but not the other. By a miracle of grace, the saints are preserved amidst his fiery darts, Luke xxii. 32.

2. The world's snares. While professors are in the world, there are snares to catch them, and carry them off the way. (1.) The world's prosperity is a great snare, and makes many apostates, Prov. i. 32. and xxx. 9. But true grace will hold out against it, Cant. viii. 7. (2.) Its adversity. Tribulation and persecution offends the temporary believer, and makes a scattering among Christ's

summer-friends, Matth. xiii. 20, 21. But the true Christian will weather out the storm, Job xvii. 9. 'The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger.' Poverty strips many of their religion, but not a true saint, Rev. xiv. 4. (3.) The example of the world; the torrent of an ungodly generation strips many of their form of godliness, Matth. xxiv. 12. 'Because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold.' But the saints shall not be carried away with the stream, Psal. xii. 7. 'Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

3. *Lastly*, The corruptions and lusts of the heart. These betray the hypocrite into apostasy, Jer. iv. 3. Compare Luke viii. 14. Lusts lulled asleep for a while, but not mortified, rise up and make shipwreck of many souls. But true grace is never quite expelled by the flesh's lustings against it; but by the power of God is preserved, like a spark of fire in the midst of an ocean.

FIFTHLY, I proceed to shew the grounds of the perseverance of the saints.

1. The unchangeable decree of God's election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of the Father to them. Electing love is free love, and also unchangeable, Jer. xxxi. 3. 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.' And God's purpose of grace and salvation cannot be disappointed, 2 Tim. ii. 29. 'The purpose of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.'

2. The merit and intercession of Christ the Son. He redeemed them by paying a full price, which must be lost, if they be lost, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. And 'he ever liveth to make intercession for them,' Heb. vii. 25.

3. The perpetual abiding of the Spirit in and with them, John xiv. 16. which secures their union with Christ, and the preservation of the seed of grace, 1 John iii. 9.

4. *Lastly*, The nature of the covenant of grace, which is furnished with such pillars as the first covenant had not, namely, the promises of perpetual conservation in the state of grace, Jer. xxxii. 40. 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good: but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.'

SIXTHLY, I shall shew the means of preseverance. Let none think that they may live carelessly, having once got grace, because it cannot be lost: for besides, that one's giving himself quite up to such an opinion and course is inconsistent with saving grace, God has joined together the ends and means, and none shall separate

them, Acts xxvii. 22. 'And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.'—Compare ver. 31. 'Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.' Now, in the general, these are,

1. God's ordinances and providences. He makes use of both to keep the feet of his saints, John xv. 2.

2. The duties of religion, and exercise of the graces, faith, fear, watchfulness, &c. 1 Cor. x. 12. 'Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.'

I shall conclude with a few inferences.

*Inf.* 1. Would ye have a treasure which ye cannot lose? then get grace. Ye may lose your worldly treasures, comforts, and enjoyments; the world's good things may go.—But grace is durable.

2. Take heed to yourselves and beware of apostasy; for it is not the beginning well, but holding on to the end, that will secure your salvation, Matth. x. 22. 'He that endureth to the end shall be saved.' Beware lest Satan, the world, and your lusts, beguile you, and ye lose all ye have wrought, 2 John 8.

3. As ever ye would persevere, look well to the foundation of your religion; for sincerity will last, but hypocrisy is a disease in the vitals that will end in death. The builders endeavour to lay the foundation fast and securely, and then they are sure the superstructure they raise upon it shall stand firm. Therefore lay the foundation well, and ye may be assured that the building shall weather all storms.

4. *Lastly*, Let those whose care it is to be found in Christ, and to live to him in all the duties of piety and righteousness, be comforted amidst all their temptations, snares, and corruptions, in that God who has begun the good work, and will perfect it, Phil. i. 6.



## OF THE BENEFITS WHICH BELIEVERS RECEIVE AT DEATH.

PHIL. I. 21.—*To me—to die is gain.*

ALL must die; but as men's lives are very different, so their account in death also. To an ungodly man death is a loss, the greatest loss: but to a believer it is gain, the greatest gain.

Paul was now a prisoner in Rome, and his case in itself was doubtful whether it would terminate in life or death, (though he was assured it would not be death at that time, ver. 25.) But having taken a view of both, he does in the text, in his own person, give us, (1.) The sum of a believers life, that is, Christ. As all the lines drawn from the circumference meet in the centre, so the whole of a believer's life in Christ, his honour being the scope of all. (2.) His estimate of a believer's death; he will not be a loser, but a gainer by it: it brings him in many benefits, and so is a gainful exchange.

The doctrine of the text is,

Doct. 'Death is gain to a believer.'

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. In what respect death is gain to believers.

II. How it comes to be gain to them.

III. Deduce an inference or two.

I. I am to shew in what respects death is gain to believers. It is so in respect of their souls and their bodies.

FIRST, In respect of their souls. It separates their souls from their bodies, but not to their loss, but to their gain.—It is with the souls of believers at death, as with Paul and his company in their voyage, Acts xxvii. The ship broke in many pieces, but the passengers came all safe to land. So when the eye-strings break, the speech is laid, the last pulse beats, the last breath is drawn, the soul escapes, and gets safe away out of the troublesome sea of this world, into Immanuel's land. Now, there is a twofold gain or benefit which the souls of believers receive at death, namely perfection in holiness, and immediate entering into glory.

First, Perfection in holiness, Heb. xii. 23.—'The spirits of just men made perfect.' In regeneration the elect get a new nature, which is a holy nature, 2 Pet. i. 4; but much of the old nature still remains. Then grace is planted in them by the Spirit. It grows up in the gradual advances of sanctification; but at death it is perfected, they are made perfectly holy. This perfection consists in two things.

1. A perfect freedom from sin, Eph. v. 27. The spiritual enemies they see to-day, they shall never see more, when once death has closed their eyes. Many a groan and struggle there is now to be free of sin, but still it hangs about the believer. Sometimes he gets his feet on the neck of his lusts, but they rise up again upon him: therefore he is never in safety to let down his watch, or to lay by the sword of the Spirit. The spiritual bands are never quite off here; but then it will be said, 'Loose him and let him go.' At death the saints shall be free,

(1.) From all commission of sin, Rev. xxi. 27. In the earthly paradise, sin was found, there Adam broke the whole law; but into the heavenly paradise no sin can enter. Not a vain thought shall ever go through a believer's heart more; there shall be no more temptation to sin, nor the least inclination to it.

(2.) From the very inbeing of sin. The body of death shall go out with the death of the body, and then shall the desire be answered, 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Sin's reigning power is broken in sanctification: yet it still abides as a troublesome guest; but at death it is plucked up by the roots. It is like the house under the law infected with the leprosy, for the removal of which the stones were carried to an unclean place.

(3.) From a possibility of sinning, Rev. iii. 12. 'Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.' The first man in paradise, yea the angels in heaven till they were confirmed, were but as reeds liable to be shaken with the wind of temptations as the doleful event made appear. But by death putting an end to the believer's probationary life, he becomes a pillar in the temple of God, which can never more be moved.

2. In the arrival of their holiness at the highest pitch they are capable of, Eph. iv. 13. Now every sincere soul has a perfection of holiness in respect of the parts thereof; they are like little children who have all the parts of a man, but none of them grown to their utmost pitch; but then they will have a perfection of degrees, answering to the holy law in all points, like men who are come to their full growth. Sincerity shall then be turned to legal perfection.

(1.) Their understandings shall be perfectly illuminated, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. 'For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.' There shall then be no more complaints of weakness of knowledge in them who in their life were the weakest of all saints. There shall not be the least remains of darkness there, but a full sunshine shall be in them.

(2.) Their wills shall be perfectly upright, so that they shall will nothing but what is good, and that without the least bias to the other side, Rev. xxi. 27. A perfect conformity shall then be betwixt God's will and theirs, without the least possible jarring, 1 John iii. 2.

(3.) The executive faculty shall then perfectly answer their will, readily and with all imaginable ease and delight, Matth. vi. 10. Now the believer is often in the dark, he knows not what to do. Sometimes when he knows his duty, he has no will to it; there is a great aversion and backwardness that he has to strive with. Oft-times, when he would fain do it, he cannot, Matth. xxvi. 41. 'The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' But then there shall be no more such impotency; he will be able to do whatever he will, and will nothing but what is good.

*Secondly*, Immediate entering into glory. As Pharaoh's jailor opening the prison-door to the butler, let him out into the court; so death letting the soul out of the body it goes to glory. Christ said to the thief on the cross, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise,' Luke xxiii. 43. So death is to them the beginning of an immortal life; a strait entry by which they go out into the heavenly paradise; the ship by which they are transported into Immanuel's land. Here consider,

1. The glory they enter into. They pass after death into,

*1st*, A glorious place, namely, heaven, the seat of the blessed, 2 Cor. v. 1. It is Christ's Father's house, where their room is ready for them, when they have no more place on earth, John xiv. 2. 'In my Father's house,' says Christ, 'are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you.' The place which has no need of the sun and moon, but the glory of God lightens it, Rev. xxi. 23. Behold the outside bespangled with sun, moon, and stars; how glorious must it be within!

*2dly*, A glorious society, namely, the society of other saints gone before them, 'The general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven,' Heb. xii. 23. the society of the holy angels, ib. the society of the glorious Mediator, his Father, and Holy Spirit, even the blessed Trinity, John xvii. 24. Heb. xii. 23, 24. It is a glorious society they are admitted into.

*3dly*, A glorious state. This is 'the house in the heavens, eternal, not made with hands, 2 Cor. v. 1. It is a glorious state the soul enters into, a glory God puts on the souls of believers when out of the body. It is what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive; it is what we cannot make language of.—It is a state of rest and perfect blessedness.

2. That they immediately after death pass into it, and do not abide any where else, and sleep until the day of judgment, as some profane men would have it, is clear. For,

(1.) Scripture instances plead this. So to the thief upon the cross it was said, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise,' Luke xxiii. 43. So of Lazarus it is said, that 'he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom,' Luke xvi. 22. And if it be a parable, as most likely it is, it is the more full to the purpose. And there is the same reason for all the saints as for one, they being all as ready at death as ever they will be, working-time for preparation being then over, John ix. 4.

(2.) There is no middle state; but when the saints put off the body, they put on glory, 2 Cor. v. 1, 2. When they are 'absent from the body,' they are 'present with the Lord,' ver. 8. When they 'depart,' they are 'with Christ,' Phil. i. 23. When they die, they 'enter into peace' and rest, Isa. lvii. 1. the 'rest remaining for the people of God,' Heb. iv. 9.

(3.) *Lastly*, The contrary doctrine is utterly inconsistent with the blessed state the scriptures ascribe to believers after death, Rev. xiv. 13. 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours.' And it is inconsistent with believers their desire of death, that they may be with Christ in glory, 2 Cor. v. 1, 2. Phil. i. 23. What was to make Paul in that strait? if he could not be with Christ before the general judgment, he would have chose rather to have lived till then, that he might have been with him in some sort, than to have died.

SECONDLY, In respect of their bodies, death is gain.—They must lie down in a grave; but death,

1. Cannot harm them, nor bring them to any real loss to be lamented. For,

(1.) Their dead bodies are still united to Christ. Though death separate their souls from their bodies, it cannot separate them from Christ, even every part of their body from another, 1 Thess. iv. 14. They are members of Christ still, though in a grave, Rom. viii. 11. 'Our friend Lazarus is dead,' said Christ.

(2.) They cannot be held there for ever. It is but till the resurrection, Job xix. 26. The saints' dust is precious, locked up in the grave as a cabinet, till the Lord have further use for it. They are his precious fruit, that lie mellowing in the grave, and ripening for a glorious resurrection.

2. It is a real gain to them, in respect their graves are the places of their rest; not their prison, but their beds of rest, wherein they



are to rest till the morning of the resurrection. The soul is the man, and it enjoys the glory of heaven; mean while the body rests in the grave, where it will enjoy a profound and tranquil repose, till it be united to the soul at the time when the dead in Christ shall rise from their long sleep.

II. I come to shew how death comes to be gain to them. It is a rest.

1. From all the ordinary troubles and afflictions of this life, Rev. xiv. 13. forecited.

2. From all persecutions and hardships from men for the cause of Christ, Job viii. 17. 'There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.'

I shall conclude with a few inferences.

*Inf.* 1. That the saints may be encouraged and stirred up to press after perfection in holiness, since they shall certainly obtain it at length, Phil. iii. 13, 14.

2. The wicked shall come to a perfection, so to speak in their wickedness, and immediately pass into hell, Luke xvi. 22, 23.

3. There is no purgatory nor middle state betwixt heaven and hell.

4. The toils and troubles of the world, that find men in the way of the Lord, should not discourage them, or carry them off their way, since they will all soon have an end.\*

5. There is no reason to mourn for the death of godly relations, as those who have no hope, 1 Thess. iv. 13.

6. *Lastly*, A dying day is the best day for a believer that is in all his life, Eccl. vii. 1. It is their marriage, home-coming, and redemption day.

## OF BENEFITS AT THE RESURRECTION.

HEB. XI. 35.—*That they might obtain a better resurrection.*

IN this chapter the apostle brings in a cloud of witnesses to the truth and excellency of religion, and the power of faith, shewing the great things faith can do, and also can suffer. In this verse we have an instance of each kind. (1.) Faith got back the dead, in the case of Elijah and the widow of Serapta's dead son, 1 Kings xvii. 22, 23. and of Elisha and the Shunamite's son, 2 Kings iv. 35, 36. Herein the faith of the prophets, and the faith of the women too, was active, though the former was more strong than the latter. (2.) Faith made constant martyrs, helped them to bear most cruel tortures even to death, refusing deliverance on sinful terms; which seems to respect the martyrs of the Jewish church under Antiochus Epiphanes. What carried them up was the faith of a better resurrection. Hence two things they had the faith of.

2. Of a resurrection, that there would be a resurrection of the body; that they and their enemies, and all mankind, after death, would rise again.

2. Of a resurrection for themselves, better than that deliverance from death which their enemies offered them.—They saw by an eye of faith a glorious resurrection abiding them and all the people of God, attended with so many glorious benefits as might counterbalance their heaviest sufferings.

The text affords this doctrine, viz.

DOCT. 'Believers shall obtain a resurrection from the dead, attended with such glorious benefits, as the faith of the same may animate them to endure the most cruel sufferings for Christ.'

Here I shall,

I. Touch a little on the doctrine of the resurrection in general.

II. Consider the resurrection of believers, that better and glorious resurrection.

III. Apply.

I. I shall touch a little on the doctrine of the resurrection in general. And I shall shew,

1. That there shall be a resurrection of the dead.
2. Who shall be raised.
3. What shall be raised.
4. The Author of the resurrection.

*First*, I am to shew, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead. This is a fundamental article of the Christian faith, the denying

of which is subversive of the foundation of Christianity, 1 Cor. xv. 13, 14. 'But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.' It is a point of faith which we owe to revelation, that reason must assent to as highly reasonable when proposed, Acts xxvi. 3. Two things are the causes of men's disbelieving it, ignorance of the scriptures, and the power of God, Matt. xxii. 29. Accordingly there are two things that will clear it.

1. God is able to raise the dead ; the resurrection is within the compass of the almighty arm. Man dying, his soul does not die ; and though his body be dissolved, it is not reduced to nothing ; if it were, God could make it over again. But the particles which make up the body do remain. And,

(1.) Omniscience knows what they are, and where they are. If the dust of a thousand generations were jumbled together, Omniscience can separate them. An expert gardener having a hundred different seeds in his hand, can distinguish betwixt seed and seed ; and why not an omniscient God betwixt dust and dust ?

(2.) Infinite power can join them altogether which belong to one man's body, and so make it up what it was, and join the soul again to the body raised up, Luke i. 37. He made the world of nothing, and he can reform man's body of pre-existent matter. As the watchmaker takes down the watch, and sets every piece in its proper place, so can God man's body.

3. God has positively told us, that he will do it, John v. 28, 29. vii. 39.

*Secondly*, I proceed to shew, who shall be raised. Here two things are to be observed.

1. Those who shall be alive at the coming of Christ, as they shall not die, so they cannot rise from the dead. They shall undergo a sudden change, whereby the qualities of their bodies shall be altered, so as it shall be to them instead of death and resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.

2. All that ever had life and died, men and women, old and young, godly and ungodly, shall rise again, Acts xxiv. 15 ; Rev. xx. 12. If they once had a soul united to their body, though the belly was their grave, they shall partake of this resurrection. The sea and the earth are God's stewards, which shall then be called to give back what they got a-keeping.

*Thirdly*, I shall shew, what shall be raised. The self-same bodies for substance that died, shall be raised again, though with very different qualities ; yet it shall be the very same body that was laid in the grave, and not another. For,

1. The scripture is very plain for this. It is 'this corruptible *that* puts on incorruption, *and* this mortal *that* puts on immortality,' Cor. xv. 53. 'Though after my skin (says Job), worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God,' Job xix. 26.

2. The equity of the Judge requires it. An equitable judge does not suffer one to fight and another to get the reward; and therefore he will make those bodies which are the temples of grace, the temples of glory. Nay, they are Christ's members, and so cannot perish. Neither can it be that one body sin, and another suffer in hell.

3. The nature of resurrection requires it; for that would not be a rising again, but a new creation. Death is sleep to the godly, the resurrection an awaking, a change of the vile body, Phil. iii. 21.

*Fourthly*, I come now to shew, who is the author of the resurrection. It is the work of God alone, and above the power of any creature whatsoever. It is one of those works that are common to the Trinity. To the Father, 1 Cor. vi. 14. 'God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power;' The Son, John v. 28. 'The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his [*Christ's*] voice.' The Holy Spirit, Rom. viii. 11. 'If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.'

II. The second general head is, to consider the resurrection of believers, that better and glorious resurrection. And this I shall do, 1. In itself. 2. In its consequents.

FIRST, I shall consider the resurrection of believers in itself, and here I shall shew,

1. Some things that ensure the blessed resurrection of believers.
2. How they shall be raised.
3. In what case they shall rise.
4. The particular qualities of their bodies at the resurrection.

*First*, I shall take notice of some things that ensure the blessed resurrection of believers.

1. God's covenant with believers, which is with their whole man, comprehending their bodies as well as their souls, which by virtue thereof are temples of the Holy Ghost, Matth. xxii. 32. 'God is not the God of the dead but of the living.'

2. The end of Christ's death, which was to destroy death, Hos. xiii. 14. 'O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.' How else would be accomplished his swallowing up death in victory, if death kept those that are his for ever? No; this is the last enemy, 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26. And when the resurrection comes, and not till then, will that victory be complete, ver. 54.



3. The resurrection of Christ. He was the first-fruits from death. his people the harvest that must follow, 1 Cor. xv. 22, 23. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.' He rose as a public person, and so has got up above death in their name, Eph. ii. 6. 'Hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.'

4. Their union with Christ, Rom. viii. 11. forecited. He has redeemed their bodies as well as their souls, and therefore they expect the redemption of their bodies, Rom. viii. 23; and has united them to himself, Eph. v. 30. Now, since the head liveth, the members shall live too; as when the head gets above the waters, the members follow.

*Secondly*, I am to shew, how believers shall be raised. The wicked shall be raised by the power of Christ as a just Judge. The divine power that shut them up in the grave as in a prison, will bring them out, in order to their receiving the last sentence, to enter into the prison of hell.

But the godly shall be raised by virtue of the Spirit of Christ, that bond of union betwixt Christ and those blessed bodies; so that it shall be to them as a pleasant awakening out of sleep. As an awakening man draws his limbs to him, so will their raised head draw them to him out of their graves, Rom. viii. 11.

*Thirdly*, I shall shew, in what case they shall rise.

2. Happily, as rising to life, eternal life, when others rise to their eternal ruin, Dan. xii. 2. That will be the happiest day that ever their eyes saw. The day of their death was better than that of their birth; but they of their resurrection will be the best of all.

2. Joyfully, Isa. xxvi. 19. 'Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust.' That is the way wherein Christ's bride rises out of her bed for the marriage. Jonah had a joyful outgoing from the whale's belly, Daniel out of the den, and Pharaoh's butler out of the prison: but what are all these to the joys at the resurrection of believers? Their doubts and fears died, and lay down with them, but they shall not rise with them. When the soul comes out of heaven, and the body out of the grave, what a joyful meeting will there be of the blessed couple!

3. Gloriously, being made like unto Christ's glorious body, Phil. iii. 21. However mean they were while in the world, or ignominiously treated in life or in death, they shall have a glorious resurrection.

*Fourthly*, I shall shew, what shall be the particular qualities of

the bodies of believers at the resurrection. The bodies of the saints shall be raised.

1. *Incorruptible*, 1 Cor. xv. 42. Now the members of their living bodies, are liable to corruption, when they die all putrefying together; but then they will never more be liable to putrefaction; never more liable to sickness, death, nor the least pain, to wearing or wearying. There will then be no outward violence, no inward cause of uneasiness.

2. *Glorious*, ver. 43. The most hard favoured saint will outstrip the now greatest beauty. The seat of that beauty will not be the face but the whole body, Matt. xiii. 43. There shall be no defects nor deformities in those bodies; Isaac shall no more be blind, nor Jacob halt; Leah shall not be tender eyed, nor Mephibosheth lame of his legs.

As the artificer melts down the misshapen vessel, and casts it over again in a new mould; so doth the Lord with the bodies of the saints.

3. *Powerful and strong*, ib. There will be no more feebleness and weakness. The weak shall be as David, and the house of David, shall be as God. They shall be able to bear out in continual exercise without wearying, and to bear the weight of glory, for which the flesh and blood of a giant would now be too weak.

4. *Lastly, Spiritual*, ver. 44. That is, like spirits. (1.) In that they shall need none of the now necessary supplies of nature, meat, drink, &c, Matt. xxii. 30. full without meat warm without cloaths, healthful without physic. (2.) Active and nimble like spirits. So they shall meet the Lord in the air, and like so many eagles gather together, where the carcase is.

*Inf.* 1. Fearful will the doom of persecutors be. (2.) The saints may be encouragad to suffer for Christ. (3.) Faith and holiness is the best way to beauty. (4.) Let this allay the believer's fear of death, Gen. xlv. 3, 4. (5.) Let this comfort him against sickliness of body; (6.) and under the death of godly relations. (7.) Rise from sin, and glorify God with your bodies and souls.

SECONDLY, We are now to consider that better resurrection in the consequents thereof, or what shall follow thereupon, the which the martyrs in this case had in their view.

Here I shall shew,

1. The consequents thereof before the judgment.
2. At the judgment.
3. After the judgment.

*First*, I shall shew the consequents of this better resurrection before the judgment. There are two benefits which believers have



from Christ betwixt the resurrection and the judgment. We left them raised up out of their graves in glory. Now,

1. They shall be gathered together from all corners of the earth by the ministry of angels, Mat. xxiv. 31. By the glorious gospel having its efficacy on them, they were separated from the world in respect of their state and manner of life, but still abode among them as to their bodily presence, and some of them at a great distance from the rest: but then they shall not only be visibly distinguished from the reprobate by the shining glory upon them, while the faces of the rest are covered with blackness; but these fair ones shall all be gathered into one glorious company, out from among the wicked, by the ministry of the holy angels, Matth. xiii. 48, 49.

2. While the wicked are left on the earth, they shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, 1 Thess. iv. 17. Those who are found alive, and those who are raised out of their graves, shall ascend in one glorious body; by what means, the Lord himself knows; but he who made Peter walk on the water, can cause them make their way like eagles through the air. And they shall meet the Lord there to welcome him at his second coming, while others shall be filled with dread of the Judge and also to attend him for his honour, as the angels also do.

Who can sufficiently conceive the glory of these benefits, by which their happiness is so far carried on?

*Secondly.* We shall view the consequents of this resurrection at the judgment.

The throne being erected, and the glorious man, Christ, the Judge of the world, being set down upon it, and the parties sisted before him to be judged, the wicked as well as the godly.

1. The glorious company of believers, being separated from the black howling company of the wicked in that day, shall be set on the right hand of the Judge, while the wicked shall be set on his left hand, Matt. xxv, 32, 33. They shall then have the most honourable place; and then will there be a mighty turn; many of the right hand-men of the world will get the left hand, and contrariwise.

2. They shall be openly acknowledged by Jesus Christ, their Lord and Judge, Mat. x. 39. Consider,

1st, What it is for Christ to acknowledge them. It is to own them for his own, to acknowledge the relations they stand in to him, Mal. iii. 17. 'They shall be mine,' i. e. owned to be so. To the wicked he will say, he 'knows them not:' he will reject all their pretensions to him: but as for believers, he will own and acknowledge them in all the relations wherewith faith invested them; he

will acknowledge the fair company for his contracted spouse, his children, his members, even them, and every one of them.

*2dly*, How he will acknowledge them then. He will do it openly, most publicly and openly. Consider here,

(1.) Our Lord Jesus acknowledges all that are his, even now in this life, not only in his own breast, by looking on them as his; but before his Father, in whose presence he appears making intercession for them as his own, John xvii. 9, 10. He does it also by the testimony of his Spirit to their sonship, Rom. viii. 16; by the seal of his own image set upon them, and by many signal appearances of his providence for them.

(2.) He will then acknowledge them in a quite other and open manner, before many witnesses, so as men and devils shall be obliged to understand, that these are they whom the King on the throne delights to honour. He will do it before his Father, and the angels of heaven, Rev. iii. 5. in effect saying to his Father, ‘Behold me, and the children thou hast given me.’ He will acknowledge them in their own hearing, and the hearing of all the world, Matth xxv. 34.

3. They shall be openly acquitted by the Lord in that day, by the sentence solemnly passed in their favour, whereby also they are adjudged to life, Matth. xxv. 34. ‘Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ Consider here,

*1st*. What they shall be acquitted from. They shall be acquitted from all the guilt of all their sins, and for ever discharged from all punishment for them, Acts iii. 19. The mouths of all accusers shall be finally stopt, and the white stone shall then be given in a way of eminency.

*2dly*, Are they not acquitted now? Yes, they are in the first moment of believing acquitted of the guilt of eternal wrath for ever, Rom. viii. 1; and on their fresh application to the blood of Christ for their after sins, they likewise are blotted out, ‘Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.’ And at death they get their acquittance too, Heb. ix. 27. Yet at the general judgment they are acquitted likewise.

*3dly*, Wherein doth their acquittance now and at that day agree and differ.

(1.) They agree, [1.] In the substance of the acquittance, which is the same now and hereafter, from the guilt of sin, and punishment thereof. [2.] In the ground of it: it proceeds in both upon the merits of Christ, Eph. i. 7. and not on works, which are brought in at the last day as evidences of their faith, not as causes of their justification.

(2.) They differ, [1.] In respect of openness. Now they are acquitted in the world, Rom. viii. 1. where yet they have much ado to read it sometimes; in their own consciences, 1 John iii. 21. which they themselves only can understand; but then from the throne, in the presence of angels and men. [2.] In respect of assurance and comfort. Of the former a believer may doubt, but not of the latter. [3.] In respect of fulness. In the last day they are acquitted from all effects of sin whatsoever, their bodies being, never to die more: and joined to their souls, never to be separated more; but not so in the former.

*4thly*, Why shall they be openly acknowledged and acquitted at the last day? He will do it,

(2.) To wipe off, with his own fair hand, all the foul aspersions which the hypocrites and profane did cast upon them in this world, Isa. lxvi. 5. Many a time the Lord's dearest children are made to lie among the pots, blackened with ill names, reproaches, &c. But then they shall be 'like doves whose wings are covered with silver, and their feathers with yellow gold.'

(2.) To give them a reward of grace, for their confessing him before the world, cleaving to his truths and ways, in the midst of an adulterous generation, and their not denying him on whatever temptations, Matth. x. 32. 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.' Compare 2 Tim. ii. 12, 'If we deny him, he will also deny us.' The prospect of this made the martyrs cleave to him in the face of cruel deaths.

(3.) To seal the end of all their own doubts, jealousies, and fears, 1 Cor. iv. 4. Many a time it is a question with the believer, whether he belongs to Christ or not: even when he has in all sincerity embraced the covenant, yet these like so many ghosts haunt him. No doubt by that time they will all be gone, but by this acknowledgement their departure will be sealed.

(4.) For the increase of their joy, and the shame of their enemies, Isa. lxvi. v.

4. They shall be adjudged to everlasting life, and solemnly invited to enter into possession of the kingdom, Matth. xxv. 34. 'Come ye,' &c. in which every word has a weight of glory.

5. *Lastly*, They being themselves absolved, shall be honoured to be Christ's assessors in judging the wicked, 1 Cor. vi. 1. 'Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?' They shall judge them by way of communion with Christ their head, this work being a part of the Mediator's honour redounding to all his members: By way of approbation of the Judge's sentence against them, saying

Amen to the doom of the wicked, even the godly parent to that of the wicked child, the holy husband to that of the unholy wife, &c. Rev. xix. 1, 3. See Rev. iii. 21.

*Thirdly*, We shall consider the consequents of the resurrection after the judgment. Believers shall be made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity. Here I shall shew,

1. Wherein perfect blessedness lies.

2. What shall make believers perfectly blessed.

1. I am to shew wherein perfect blessedness lies. It lies in two things.

*1st*, Perfect freedom from all evil whatsoever, whether of sin or misery. Thus blessed shall believers be then, perfectly free from sin, Eph. v. 27. and free from suffering any manner of way, Rev. xxi. 4.

*2dly*, Full satisfaction to all the desires of the soul, Phil. xvi. 11. Their desires shall be fully satisfied; they shall have that beyond which they can crave no more. For where there is any want, there can be no perfect blessedness.

2. I am to shew what shall make them thus perfectly blessed. It is the enjoyment of God. They shall have his glorious presence with them, Rev. xxi. 3. They shall see him as he is, 1 John iii. 2. the man Christ with their bodily eyes, and the invisible God with the eyes of their minds, called the beatific vision, the most perfect knowledge of God which the creature is capable of. They shall be knit to him gloriously, Rev. xxi. 3. just quoted. Love then will be at its height. And they shall enjoy him to their full happiness.

(1.) Immediately; not in the use of means and ordinances, but there they sit down at the fountain-head, Rev. xxi. 22.

(2.) Fully; God will with-hold nothing of himself from them: they shall be stinted to no measure but what their own capacity makes; and in him they shall have what will satisfy all their desires.

3. *Lastly*, Eternally, 1 Thess. iv. 17. 'So shall we ever be with the Lord.'

I conclude this subject with a few inferences.

*Inf. 1.* Come out now from among the wicked world. A separation there will be betwixt the godly and the wicked. If it be in your favour, it will begin now. Leave them now, if ye would not be left with them after the resurrection.

2. Beware of rash judging those that have any lineaments of Christ's image upon them. Ye may judge and condemn the evil actions of the best of men, if ye be sure from the word that they are evil. But, O my soul! enter not into the secret of those who pre-



sumptuously take upon them to judge men's state, hearts, and consciences, upon slips of human infirmity and weakness.

3. Let none be ashamed to own Christ and his truths and ways before the world, remembering that the day cometh in which he will confess those that confess him, and deny those that deny him.

4. Though the day of judgment be an awful thought, it will be a happy day to believers, as they will then be for ever delivered from all moral and penal evils, and admitted into the greatest felicity in the enjoyment of their God and Redeemer for ever.

5. That there is no true happiness till we come to the enjoyment of God, nor full happiness till we arrive at the full enjoyment of him.

6. *Lastly*, Miserable is now, and at the resurrection will be, the state of the wicked, where the reverse of all the happiness of the saints will be found, and that in the most dreadful manner. Let us then all seek to be found among those who shall be partakers of the better and glorious resurrection.



#### OF THE DUTY WHICH GOD REQUIRETH OF MAN.

1 SAM. XV. 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 Law-giver, 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. xxix. 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 ii. 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. xviii. 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. vi. 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. xi. 17.; in that of the Israelites offering to go into the promised land, Num. xiv. 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. cxix. 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. v. 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. vi. 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 cautious 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 soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me,' Psal. xviii. 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. cxix. 60. We are not to dispute, but obey; 'not to confer with flesh and blood,' Gal. i. 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. xi. 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, Come? 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. cxix. 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. ii. 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. xi. 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. xxiii.

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 iv. 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. v. 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 vi. 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 bless-



sings, 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. i. 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. xxviii. 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 xxxviii. 33. All the creatures have a law imprinted on their beings, but rational creatures have divine statutes inscribed on their hearts, as Rom. ii. 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. iv. 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. ii. 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 xvi. 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. x. 15. The Bereans were commended for so doing, Acts xvii. 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 iv. 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. xxxvi. 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. II. 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 cxlviii. 6. 'He hath esta-

blished 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 xxxviii. 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 i. 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. vii. 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. i. 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. ii. 15. There are common notions thereof, such as, That there is a God, and that he is to be worshiped; that we should give every one his due, &c. Conscience has that law with which it accuses for the commission of great crimes, Rom. i. 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. viii. 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. ii. 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. xix. 7. 'The law of the Lord is perfect.'

3. It is indispensable and perpetual, Luke xvi. 17; 'It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail,' Matt. v. 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. viii. 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. vii. 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 vi. 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. xix. 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. iii. 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. iii. 20. 'By the law is the knowledge of sin,' Rom. vii. 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. iii. 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. iii. 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. i. 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. vii. 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. iii. 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. vi. 14. 'Ye are not under the law but under grace?' and Gal. v. 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. iii. 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. ii. 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 good-

ness, 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. xxii. 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. xix. 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. iii. 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. x. 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. xix. Dent. iv. 5. Heb. xii. 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. xxxi. ult.* These Moses brake, *chap. xxxii. 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. xxxiv. 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 thou-



sands 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. vii. 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. xii. 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 in-

ward 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. vii. 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 iii. 5. (6.) The law impressed upon the heart is designed to keep it even in sleep, Prov. vi. 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 xiv. 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 iv. 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, Dent. iv. 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. xx. 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 manservant, 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. xxii. 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 xii. 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. lxxiii. 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. viii. 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 iv. 19; ‘We love him, because he first loved us.’

4. High thoughts and a transcendent esteem of him, Cant. v. 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. x. 4. that ‘God is not in all his thoughts.’

5. Desire towards him, Psal. lxxiii. 25. Whatever other desires we have, the main stream of our desires must run towards the Lord, Psal. xxvii. 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. i. 23; 2 Thess. iii. 5.

6. *Lastly*, Complacency in him, Cant. i. 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. xxiii. 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. cxvi. 11. but we must love him also and mainly for those excellencies that are in him, Cant. i. 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 xiv. 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 xii. 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 iii. 18. Therefore says the apostle, Rom. xiii. 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. xiv. 7, 8. and makes him ready to forego what is dearest to him in the world for God, Acts xx. 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. xix. 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. xiii.

2. It is the comprehensive duty of all, Rom. xiii. 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 yon. 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 our-

selves; 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 x. 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 xvii. 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 cxxxix. 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. v. 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. ii. 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 i. 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 vi. 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. vii. 12. Gal. iv. 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. ii. 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. xvi. 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 neighbour: *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. v. 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. viii. 36. 'He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul.' We are to love ourselves in God, and for God; for he and not

\* This subject of loving our enemies may be seen well handled in a collection of this author's sermons, formerly published, entitled, *The distinguishing characters of true believers*, p. 248, 274.

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. xxiv. 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. ii. 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 worst 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 iv. 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. xii. 10. 'Let brotherly love continue,' Heb. xiii. 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. XX. 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 vii. 38. Heb. xii. 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. iii. 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. xi. 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. iii. 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. x. 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. c. 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 iv. 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. iv. 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. liv. 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. xvii. 7. and xv. 18. and by virtue of the covenant-promise to Abraham, it was, that they were delivered out of Egypt, Gen. xv. 13, 14, &c. That was not the covenant of works, for it is still opposed to the law, Rom. iv. 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. iv. 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. xxii. 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. viii. 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. viii. 5. Isa. xlv. 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 i. 74, 75. Such are regeneration, whereby a new nature is given, to be a principle of new life, 2 Cor. v. 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. iii. 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. xv. 13—16. And so he shews himself to be Jehovah by ocular demonstration, Exod. vi. 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 set 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. iv. 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. i. 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. ii. 15; and from the wrath that is to come, 1 Thess. i. 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. ii. 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. i. 13. 1 Cor. vi. 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 i. 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. xii. 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

\* See the Author's Notes on the Marrow of Modern Divinity.

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. xxviii. 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. XX. 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. xxviii. 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. xi. 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 xi. 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 xvii. 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. vi. 4; and Trinity of persons, 1 John v. 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. xxvi. 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. xi. 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 xvi. 2. ‘O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord.’ Psal. cxix. 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. xvi. 2, forecited. Is. xlv. 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. xxiv. 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 xiv. 28.

2. A breaking off the covenant with our lusts and idols, Matth. v. 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. xxii. 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 iii. 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. lxxiii. 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. iii. 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 iv. 24; and doing all things with godly simplicity, 1 Cor. i. 12.

(2.) His unchangeableness must be so acknowledged, as to influence us to a firm trust in him, Psal. lxxxix. 34; to constancy and

perseverance in the way of God, and not to be given to change, Prov. xxiv. 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 ii. 13.

(3.) His omnipresence must influence us to carry as ever under the eye of God wheresoever we are, Jer. xxiii. 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 ix. 4. and even the most secret thing.

(5.) His omnipotence must influence us to fear him, Job vi. 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. xxxix. ult. and trembling at his word, Isa. lxvi. 2. Psal. cxix. 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. xxxii. 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. viii. and cl. 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. xxxix. 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. xxxii. 10; and giving thanks for it to his name, 1 Thess. v. 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. iii. 3.

*2dly*, We must acknowledge God externally, in our words and actions, Dent. xxvi. 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. iii. 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. x. 9. 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, &c. thou shalt be saved.' The contrary is severely threatened, Mark viii. 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. i. 12.—14; and brings glory to God, Phil. i. 20. And the with-holding of it is an indignity done to God, as if religion were a shameful thing, Luke ix. 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. vii. 6; but in times of persecution we must especially maintain our profession, Heb. x. 23; and when called of God, even to profess before the enemy on whatever hazard, Matth. x. 18.

THIRDLY, This command requires us to worship and glorify God accordingly; that is, as God and our God, Rom. i. 21. Matth. iii. 10. For if we take him for our God, we must worship and glorify him as such, Mal. i. 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. iii. 16. That is a black character, Psal. x. 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. lxxiii. 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. xv. 11. Psal. lxxiii. 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. xiv. 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. xxiv. 15, 22. of which I spoke before. But this is not to be one single act, but frequently repeated, Psal. xvi. 2. and lxxiii. 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. x. 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. xiv. 8.

3. By self-denial, Matt. xvi. 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 xiv. 36.

*2dly*, Our natural self, even our own life, Luke xiv. 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 xvii. 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. vi. 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. xl. 6. 2 Cor. iii. 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. xv. 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. xxxvi. 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. cxxxi. 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 ix. 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. vi. 17; so that whithersoever the command draws, we must follow, though over the belly of our natural inclinations, Gen. xxii. (2.) To the providential will of God. We must lay our all at his feet, to be disposed of according to his pleasure, Luke xiv. 26; and as the shadow follows the body, so should our will follow the will of God, Psal. xlvii. 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. iv. 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. xxxix. 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. iii. 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, Dent. vi. 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. lxxiii. 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. xxvi. 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. i. 23. And this love and desire must be above all other loves and desires.

3. Delight in him above all persons and things, Psal. xxxvii. 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. iv. 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. xii. 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. iii. 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. lxxix. 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. viii. 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. xxxvi. 1. Fear of God is twofold; filial and servile. Filial fear is accompanied with love to God, Hos. iii. 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. x. 28. Psal. cxix. 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. cxxx. 7. This hope is a certain expectation of those good things which faith lays hold on, grounded on the word, Psal. cxix. 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. xxvi. 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. xx. 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. xxiii. 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. vi. 23. It will not excuse that we sin with an erring conscience, Isa. v. 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. viii. 20.

*Lastly*, To accuse or excuse according to that law, Rom. ii. 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. lxiii. 6. and keep off from forgetting him, Jude 17. We must remember his word, John ii. 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 xxxvi. 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. iv. 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. xiv. 15. There is also ejaculatory prayer, Neh. ii. 4. which may be profitably used amidst our daily employments.

2. Internal praise and thanksgiving, Psal. xlv. 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. vii. 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. cxix. 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. vii. 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. xix. 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. xxx. 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. xiv. 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. xi. 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 ii. 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. ii. 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 ii. 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. xxx. 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. iii. 14, 15. Psal. lxxiii. 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. i. 16. These have a language for or against God which he understands, yea, even men too sometimes, Psal. xxxvi. 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. xiv. 1, 2, 3. And may not that be a confounding question to us on that point, Mal. i. 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 wherever 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. xxix. 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. xxxvi. 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 off. 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 viii. 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. ii. 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. iv. 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. xxi. 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. iv. 6; and has a most terrible threatening annexed to it, Isa. xxvii. 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. i. 8.

But though we be not chargeable with that gross ignorance, we do not satisfy that command, Prov. xxx. 2. How many things are revealed that we ought to know, which we know not? How imperfect and unclear 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 xvii. 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. i. 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. x. 4. He is our first principle, last end, witness, and judge, so that we should set him always before us, Psal. xvi. 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. ii. 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. i. 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. liii. 3; and God contemned by the wicked, Psal. x. 13. Read the thoughts of your heart on the work of your hands in respect of duty, Mal. i. 7, 8.

*3dly*, Unworthy and wicked thoughts of God, Psal. l. 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. iv. 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 vii. 19. Deut. xxix. 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. xxvi. 9;—(4.) Heresy, which is a pertinacious defending of any error against a substantial point of truth, Gal. v. 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 iv. 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. iv. 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. i. 12. when, over the belly of all the threatenings 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. xliv. 3, 5. Eph. ii. 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. l. 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. viii. 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. l. 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. v. 6 ; or more deliberately, in obedience to authority, Hos. v. 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. xiii. 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. xviii. 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. i. 10. There is a holy man-pleasing which



we should all learn, if we would please God, Rom. xv. 2. 'Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.' Paul was dexterous at that holy art, 1 Cor. ix. 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. ii. 9. Compare Eph. vi. 6. Col. iii. 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. lxxxvi. 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. x. 31. Psalm lxxiii. 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. ii. 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. xxvii. 23. Eccl. ii. 24. and ix. 7, 8. Cant. i. 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. vii. 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. xxi. 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. xxiv. 38. Luke xvii. 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. xv. 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. iii. 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. xxii. 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 xiv. 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. xv. 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. iii. 5. and xxviii. 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. xvii. 5. There is much sin this way.

*5thly,* Self-conceit, Prov. xxvi. 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. lviii. 3. This is a subtle idol, venting itself many ways; as (1.) Reckoning more on the quantity than the quality of duties, Luke xviii. 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. v. 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. vi. 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. ii. 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. ii. 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. x. 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. vii. 1, 2, 3. Therefore the apostle recommends lenity and meekness upon this consideration, Gal. vi. 1.

*3dly*, Meddling with things without our sphere, Psal. cxxxi. 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. ii. 30.

5. Whereas resignation to the will of God is our 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. xlvii. 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 xxxiv. 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. xxxix. 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. xxxvii. 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. xlii. 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 perforce; 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. i. 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. i. 30. This vents itself, (1.) In secret wishes there were no God, Psal. xiv. 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. x. 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. vii. 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 xxi. 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. iv. 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. iii. 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 viii. 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. i. 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. iii. 4.

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

1st, Hardness of heart and impenitency, Rom. ii. 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. xxviii. 13. This is done, (1.) By denying guilt, Prov. xxx. 20. (2.) By extenuating it; whereas, if sorrow for it were deep enough, it would aggravate it, Luke xv. 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. x. 23. and xiv. 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. iii. 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. x. 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 ix. 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. xxiii. 23. (3.) When the heat strikes mostly outward against the sins of others, Matth. vii. 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. xii. 21.

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

*1st*, All rashness and irreverence in the service of God, Psal. lxxxix. 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 iii. 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 xxxvi. 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. viii. 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, psalmists, fortune-tellers, using any means whatsoever not appointed of God to know our fortune, as it is called, &c. Deut. xxiv. 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 freets, 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. xxix. 19. and over the belly of these, promises mercy.

*2dly*, Despair, Gen. iv. 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. i. 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. i. 24. Matth. xxiii. 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. v. 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. xix. 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. ii. 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. v. 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 iv. 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. viii. 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. i. 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. xxxii. 15. 2. Resisting and grieving his Spirit, stifling its motions, and refusing to hearken to its suggestions, Eph. iv. 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 xxxi. 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 Mari-

ans 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. iv. 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. xxii. 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. x. 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. iv. 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 x. 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. vii. 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. xxix. 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. xvii. 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. iii. 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 posseth 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. vii. 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. xxi. 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. xviii. 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.

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OF THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 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. xxvi. 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. ii. 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. i. 23. Exod. xxxii. 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. l. 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

\* 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 I. 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 afore-mentioned 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

with that hellish fury, 1 Kings xviii. 28. Psal. cvi. 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

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.

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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. lxxiv. 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

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

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. cxxxvii. 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.

1. 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. cxxiv. 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. xxii. 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. xxix. 3. This was a cruel beast,



apocryphal book of Wisdom, which to the Papists is canonical scripture, chap. xiv. 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.

that made the Lord's people groan long under the greatest bondage. A bloody beast ; see the bloody edict, Exod. i. 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. xv. 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. lxxviii. 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 Egytian beast, Psal. lxxiv. 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. vii. 4. Jer. xlix. 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. vii. 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. iii.

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. vii. 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 xi. 31.—34. Yet they survived that beast.

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

1<sup>st</sup>, The great red dragon, Rev. xii. 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.

2<sup>dly</sup>, The beast with the name of blasphemy, Rev. xiii. 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

And as the Pagans had their gods to be applied to by persons of several callings, countries, diseases, &c. so the Papists are well nigh even with them in that. The Pagans had their gods for the seamen, shepherds, husbandmen, &c.; so the Papists have St. Nicholas

the other beasts, Rev. xiii. 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. ix. 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

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 Ire-

to that threatening, Lev. xxvi. 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 inordinarily advances, especially since the union was set on foot; for having drank of the cup of Eoglish 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

land, 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?

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. lxxii. 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 drove 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.



*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

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 villanies 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.

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.

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 Duchess-dowager'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.

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. xxiii. 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 ordi-

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. xix. 17, 18, 19, 20.

nances; 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. xix. 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. xvi. 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. x. 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 ii. 42; private in lesser societies, particularly in families, Jer. x. ult; and secret, every one by himself, Mat. vi. 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. cxlix. 1. and privately, Jam. v. 13. This is to be done in all simplicity be-

coming the gospel, singing them with grace in the heart, Col. iii. 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 xv. 21. and privately, John v. 39; whereby we honour God, consulting his oracles.

4. The preaching of the word, and hearing it preached, 2 Tim. iv. 2. 2 Kings iv. 23. And consequently the ministry is an ordinance of God, Rom. x. 15. Eph. iv. 11, 12. and the maintenance thereof, 1 Cor. ix. 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. xxviii. 19. and the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. xi. 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 ii. 12, 13. and private too, as in families, 1 Cor. vii. 5. and secret, Matth. vi. 17, 18. See Zech. xii. 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. iii. 5, 6. 1 Cor. xii. 28. He has appointed his officers, which are pastors and doctors, Eph. iv. 11. ruling elders and deacons, 1 Cor. xii. 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. xviii. 17, 18. to rebuke scandalous offenders publicly, 1 Tim. vi. 20. to excommunicate the contumacious, 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. And amongst these officers of the same kind there is a parity by divine appointment, excluding both Pope and Prelate, Matth. xx. 26. There is also a subordination of judicatories, Acts xv. 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. xviii. 19. Deut. vi. 6, 7.

9. *Lastly*, Spiritual conference, Mal. iii. 16. Deut. vi. 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 iv. 5.

2. We must observe them in our practice, Matth. xviii. 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. xi. 2.

4. We must do our duty to keep them entire, that nothing be taken from them, Deut. xii. 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 xvii. 16, 17. Deut. vii. 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 xv. 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. viii. 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. iv. 24, 25. So in this command is forbidden,

1st, The neglect of prayer, Psal. xiv. 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. x. 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. vi. 6. and the neglect of it, as it will not readily be the sin of those exercised to godliness, Cant. vii. 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. vi. 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. iv. 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. xi. 7, 8. (2.) Their devolving this work upon their curates and parsons, who often devolve it again upon their hirelings. Ezek. xlv. 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. x. 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. xi. 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 vii. 30. unduly delaying the baptism of their children; and also in slighting the sacrament of the Lord's supper, 2 Chron. xxx. 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. vii. 21. Thus may the church, families, and particular persons, be guilty in the neglect of thanksgiving 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. ii. 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. v. 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.

\* Upon the author's settlement in the parish of Ettrick, he found the people, with respect to church-discipline, like bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke. And he repeatedly complains in his Diary, that when church-censure was inflicted, or a rebuke administered, the delinquent immediately deserted his ministry, and joined the Old Dissenters, who at that time infested that and adjacent parishes.

3. All curtailing and mincing of God's worship and ordinances, not keeping them entire, Deut. xii. 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 jumble 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. xxi. 5. Mal. i. 7. This is a crying sin of our day, that is like to fill up our cup to the brim, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 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. v. 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. i. 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 xx. 9.

*3dly*, An open and avowed contempt of God's ordinances, Job xxi. 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 condemn 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. xxviii. 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 viii. 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 Simoniackal 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. xxiii. 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 iv. 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. ii. 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. ii. 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. iii. 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. x. 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 xiii. 44, 45. So are guilty, (1.) Persecutors, Acts iv. 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 v. 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. xii. 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. xxvi. 1; and the art of cutting, carving, &c. is a gift of God, Exod. xxxi. 3,—5; and has had God's allowance for the exercise of it, 1 Kings vi. 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 xvii. 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. i. 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. xl. 18. Deut. iv. 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. ii. 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. vii. 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. xxxii. 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. xvi. 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. vii. 5; and destroyed, Exod. xxiii. 24. (2.) Hezekiah is commended for breaking the brazen serpent, because the children of Israel burnt incense to it, 2 Kings xviii. 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. xi. 4.

*2dly*, Worshipping the images themselves of God, Christ, and saints, which is contrary to the very letter of this command. See Lev. xxvi. 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. iv. 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 cast them off, and got new ones. But did they change their gods? No, Jer. ii. 11. Were not the Israelites abominable idolaters in the worship of the golden calf? Psal. cvi. 19, 20. Yet they did but worship Jehovah by it, Exod. xxxii. 5. So Jeroboam's golden calves were intended but as means whereby to worship the true God, 1 Kings xii. 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. xvii. 13. and xviii. 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 x. 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. i. As irreligion regards not God's ordi-

nances, 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. xv. 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. xxx. 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. xxx. 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. ii. 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 xii. ult. is devised of our own heart. But much more is it so when it justles out plain commanded duty, Matth. xv. 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,

1<sup>st</sup>, 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.

2<sup>dly</sup>, 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. xviii. 10.

3<sup>dly</sup>, 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, Dent. xii. 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. cvi. 39; and go about to impose them on others, under the pretence of their being delivered to them from great and good men, Matt. xv. 2, 9; their antiquity, 1 Pet. i. 18; custom, Jer. xlv. 17; devotion, Isa. lxxv. 5; good intent, 1 Sam. xv. 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. ii. 14.

2. By divising it, Numb. xv. 39.

3. By counselling to follow it, Deut. xiii. 6, 7, 8.

4. By commanding it, Hos. v. 11.

5. By using it, 1 Kings xi. 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\*.

\* In the author's manuscript the following paragraph is immediately subjoined, viz.

"Having spoke of the irreligious and false worship, idolatry, and superstition, forbidden in this command, the snares and dangers of our day oblige me to be a little more particular, (for the glory of God, the interest of your souls, and the exoneration of my own conscience, whatever these present confusions may end in), in making the native application of my text against the church of Rome, and the church of England, who have both of them, the one as the master, and the other as the scholar, signalized themselves in the art of making to themselves in the worship of God: A sinful art forbidden by this command. The inventions of both are already set up in our land, and many have gone a-whoring after them, and the purity of ordinances in this church is in hazard of being swallowed up by the one or the other at this day. And indeed the English service is so far Roman, that if our enemies find us not disposed to take on the blackness of Popery at first dash, it may serve to prepare us for it, as a dip in the



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. vii. 31.

blue vat prepares cloth to take on jet black. Therefore I shall, (1.) Consider the English liturgy. (2.) Popery, as it is particularly abjured in our national covenant; under which particulars of Popery we will find Prelacy and ceremonies also rejected and abjured."

The preparer of this work for the Press would have willingly inserted what the author said on both these subjects; but the manuscript, on examination, was found imperfect, especially in the article relating to the English liturgy; and quite illegible in several places relating to the other head. So that he has been obliged, though reluctantly, to drop both. He shall only subjoin what the author advanced after his explication of the national covenant, as follows.

"Now, upon the whole, I shall put you in mind of two things clearly following from what I said.

"I. That church in Scotland which owns and maintains the doctrine contained in the large confession of faith of the church of Scotland, detests and abhors the errors and corruptions abjured in the short confession, or national covenant, both with respect to doctrine and discipline, is the same government or discipline, to wit, Presbyterian government, which is sworn to therein, we ought by the covenant to join ourselves unto, and keep communion with, not only in hearing the word preached, but in the use of the holy sacraments. But such is the present established church in Scotland. And our separatists \* cannot, nor can the world shew, that our doctrine and discipline is any other. But they would impose upon us other terms of communion than what are contained in this our national covenant, which is the bond to knit together the members of the church of Scotland. And so withdrawing from the communion of this church is a palpable breach of this covenant. And if men will pretend that they are bound up from the duty of this covenant by any subsequent oaths, acts, or engagements whatsoever, that is the sin of covenant-breaking with a witness, taking one engagement to elude another prior solemn engagement, which cannot be loosed.

"2. Popery, Prelacy, ceremonies, and profaneness, as they are forbidden in the word of God, so they are by this covenant accursed things in this church, to be rejected and detested, as we would not bring the curse of the covenant upon us. The Lord has wonderfully owned this covenanted work of reformation, and it has been a burdensome stone that has crushed many, who have set themselves to roll it out of the way. The building up of those things cast down by it, has been to some as the rebuilding of Jericho to him that undertook that work, on whom a curse was entailed. It has been witnessed unto by the wrestlings of many, and resisting even unto blood by the Lord's witnesses in Scotland, who chose rather to lose their lives than to quit it. Now, the danger of a root-stroke is great. Ye see what is your duty, whatever the danger may be. Let us labour for grace to be faithful unto death, that we may receive the crown of life."

\* The author means the Old Dissenters, the followers of Mr. Macmillan.

2. His propriety in us, *Thy God*. Therefore we must 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. ix. 1. Because he is our God (I mean), we must neither be idolaters nor superstitious, 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. x. 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.

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#### OF THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. XX. 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 i. 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. viii. 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 severely, 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. vi. 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. xxxiii. 19. 'I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee.' Chap. xxxiv. 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 believably read this name.

4. The ordinances of God. These are his name by which he is known in the world, Micah iv. 5. with Luke i. 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. x. 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. xvi. 33. Acts i. 24, 26.

5. His word, which we have in the holy scriptures, Psal. cxxxviii. 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. xix. 1; and of providence, whether of mercy, Acts xiv. 17; or of judgment, Psal. ix. 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. xxiii. 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. vi. 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. xxx. 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 thereunto, &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. iii. 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. x. 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. xiv. 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. x. 31. Lev. x. 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. xxxii. 39. The name of God is good at all times, but especially in a time of trouble, Prov. xviii. 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 iv. 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 xvii. 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. xi. 6. Rom. xiv. 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. iv. 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. xxviii. 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. i. 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. v. 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. cxxx. 4. 2 Cor. v. 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. iv. 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. xv. 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. vii. 19; our neighbour satisfied, and controversy ended, Heb. vi. 16; our own innocency cleared, Exod. xxii. 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. xviii. 18. And the nature of them is not unlike, being an appeal to God's decision, Prov. xvi. 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 i. Acts i.

(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. i. 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. ii. 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. ii. 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 xviii. 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. xii. 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. iv. 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. xix. 13, 14.

*5thly,* In appeals to God. We find the saints using them reverently in matters of weight, as the apostle Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 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. iv. 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. iii. 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, Dent. x. 20. Swearing is an invocating 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. v. 7.

[2.] The dishonour redounds to God, because these things have a relation to God, Matt. v. 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. v. 22. (2.) That they are surely idle words, Matth. xii. 36. (3.) Are not the most serious Christians conscientious in this? Phil. iv. 9. (4.) That they are



offensive to the serious godly, Matth. xviii. 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. vii. 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. cix. 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 vows, 1 Sam. xxv. 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. v. 4. Mal. iii. 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 testi-

mony 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. ii. 24. Thus particularly, (1.) Oppressors and persecutors are guilty of blasphemy, Acts xxvi. 11. (2.) Professors of religion, by their scandalous walk, 2 Sam. xii. 14. (3.) Inferiors by their undutifulness to their superiors; as subjects, 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, 15; wives, Tit. ii. 5; and servants, 1 Tim. vi. 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. vi. 1. Tit. ii. 5. 2 Pet. ii. 2. 1 Cor. iv. 13. Mark iii. 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. xxxvi. 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 iii. 30. So do bitter spirits blaspheme God, saying, He 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. ii. 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. v. 2. 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? I know not the Lord.' So did he, mentioned 2 Kings vi. 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 x. 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. x. 13. Acts xii. 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. xii. 31, 32. John calls it 'the sin unto death,' 1 John v. 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. i. 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 vii. 2; and when they mind to lie securely in sin, fostering unbelief of his omniscience, Ezek. ix; of his justice, Zeph. i. 12; of his holiness, Psal. l. 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. lxxvii. 8, 9. Jer. xv. 18.

*2dly*, By the aversion of the heart unto them, and its rising against them, Rom. viii. 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. viii. 11. Rom. ii. 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. x. 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. xii. 3; and a renewed heart, 1 Tim. i. 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. v. 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. xxix. 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. xxvi. 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. xii. 12. (4.) When we do not pray in faith, but are lifted up with a conceit of our own worthiness, like the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11. have no confidence in the promises of what we ask, Jam. i. 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. v. 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. xiv. 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. v. 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. ii. 1, 2. (2.) When we do not strive to understand what we read or hear of the word, Acts viii. 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. xxxiii. 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. ii. 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. iv. 2. (7.) When we do not lay ourselves open to the word, to be taught our duty, to be re-proved 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 xvii. 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. v. 12. ' For an oath for confirmation is to men an end of all strife,' Heb. vi. 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 vi. 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 vain, (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. xvi. 23. and xviii. 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. v. Ezek. xiii. 19.

2dly, Jestings upon it, Jer. xxiii. 33.

3dly, Using it to the maintenance of erroneous principles, unprofitable questions, and vain janglings, 2 Tim. ii. 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. i. 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 xiii. 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 lay out 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. i. 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. xxviii. 22.

3. By reviling the truth, grace, and way of God, 1 Pet. iv. 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. iv. 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. iii. 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. i. 18. The candle of God is set up before them in their knowledge; but in vain it wasts, 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. xxxiii. 30. Hence their prayers are an abomination, their best works are but glistening 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 viii. 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. i. 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. v. 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. iv. 5.

*3dly*, By an unfruitful walk, Isa. v. 4. The fruitfulness of the vineyard is the honour of the husbandman, and the unfruitfulness thereof reflects dishonour on him, Rom. ii. 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. ii. 23, 24. The

scandals of professors are the stumbling-blocks whereon the blind would brake their necks, Matth. xviii. 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. iii. 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. iii. 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. xxxvi. 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. v. 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 untender 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. v. 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. vii. 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. iv. 1, 2. Jer. v. 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. xxiii. 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. v. 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. xxiii. 10.

3. It brings a curse upon particular persons, God punishes this sin,

(1.) By strokes upon the body, Deut. xxviii. 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 merey 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. i. 13.

[5.] *Lastly*, If he be not pardoned, the wrath of God in hell shall lie upon him, Rom. ii. 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. i. 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. lxxxiii. 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. cxxxix. 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 reprov'd and admonish'd, 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 law-



ful 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 Cain'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. Your duty ye have laid before you, Matt. xviii. 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,

\* Some pleas and pretences that sinners offer in apology for swearing, may be seen satisfyingly answered in the author's book, lately published, entitled, *The distinguishing characters of true believers*, title, *A caveat against profane swearing*, p. 197. &c.

are surely more offensive to God and good men, than those that are guilty of a single act of fornication, Lev. v. 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. xxviii. 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\*.

\* Advices to common swearers may be seen, and read with profit, in the author's *Caveat against profane swearing*, in his *distinguishing characters of true believers*, p. 202. &c.

## OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. XX. 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 man-servant, 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. iv. 3. (3.) Eternal, Heb. iv. 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. xliii. 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, 2 Kings xii. 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 shalt 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. v. 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. ii. 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. xxiv. 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 xi. 9. and a natural day of twenty-four hours, Gen. i. 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. xx. 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. xxviii. 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. ii. 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. xvi. 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. iv. 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. viii. 10, 12; and Laban with Jacob, Gen.



xix. 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. cxviii. 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 iv. 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. xliii. 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. xi. 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 Sun 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. i. 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. ii. 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 ii. 28.

(4.) It was the practice of the apostles and primitive Christians to observe the first day of the week for the Sabbath, John xx. 19. Acts xx. 1. On this day the collection for the poor was made, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. and you know the apostles had from Christ what they delivered to the churches as to ordinances, 1 Cor. xi. 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. xiii. 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. lviii. 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. xvi. 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. lvii. 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. xii. 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. iii. 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 iv. 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. xxxiv. 21; and that would have justified the sellers of fish, whom Nehemiah discharged, Neh. xiii. 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 mispend 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. lxvi. 23; as hearing sermons, Luke iv. 16; prayer, Acts xvi. 13, 14; receiving of the



sacraments, where there is occasion, Acts xx. 7; singing of Psalms, Psal. xcii. title.

2. Private exercises of worship, alone and in our families, Lev. xxiii. 3. Neither of these must jumble out the other. God has joined them; let us 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. lvii. 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. i. 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. xxii. 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, know-

ing 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 xxiii. 54.

(2.) Remember it when it is come; rise early on the Sabbath-morning, Psal. xcii. 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. xcii. 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. xci. 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. x. 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. xxiii. 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. xv. 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 dis-

tracting thoughts about worldly things, that the heart cannot be intent on the duty of the day, Amos viii. 5.

2. 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. i. 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. lviii. 13.

2. By following worldly employments on that day, working or going about ordinary business, except in cases of necessity and mercy, Matth. xxiv. 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. xii.

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. i. 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. xx. 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. iii. 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. v. 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. lvi. 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. xxv. 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 holily 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. lxxiii. 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.

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#### OF THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. XX. 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 vi. 6, 7, 8. Zech. viii. 16, 17. Matth. xix. 18, 19. Rom. xiii. 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. v. 1, 2; such as are superior to us in gifts or grace, Gen. iv. 20. and xlv. 8; but especially such as are by God's ordinance over us in authority, whether in the family, as husbands, 2 Sam. xii. 3; masters, 2 Kings v. 13; in the church, as ministers and other church-officers, 2 Kings ii. 12. or in the state, as magistrates, supreme or subordinate, Isa. xlix. 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, in-

feriors, or equals, 1 Pet. ii. 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. xxx. 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. xi. 12. (2.) To make inferiors the more cheerfully and willingly to give due honour to them, 1 Cor. iv. 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 hea-



ven, 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. v. 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. iv. 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. i. 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. i. 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. v. 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 ii. 6. He stood in various relations, and therein was a pattern to us. He is a loving husband to his church, Eph. v. 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 ii. 51.

4. It is necessary to make a useful Christian. Cumber-grounds must be cut down, Luke xiii. 7. And a useless Christian is like the vine, which if it bear not fruit, is good for nothing but the fire, Ezek. xv. 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. xxvi. 7. An unequal pulse shews a distempered body. How many such crooked professors are there, saints abroad, but devils at home? But see Psal. cxxv. 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. iii. 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. ii. 18, &c. It is the way to gain them to their duty, chap. iii. 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 vii. 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. xiii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 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. cxix. 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. iii. 1.

3. If ye make no conscience of these duties, it will discover the rottenness and unsoundness of your hearts, Psal. cxix. 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. vi. 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. xxii. 16, &c. But see our Lord's practice, Matth. xvii. 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. v. 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. xviii. 17, 19; and of Sarah, 1 Pet. iii. 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 iii. 17, 18, 19. This dissolves the relation betwixt husband and wife, parents and children. Should we not then take that warning? Gal. vi. 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. xii. 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. iii. 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. v. 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. ii. 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. v. 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, 1 Pet. iii. 7. 1 Cor. vii. 10. This is such a necessary duty, that an obstinate refusal in either party to dwell together dissolves the marriage, 1 Cor. vii. 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. vii. 5. Gen. xii. 11.

3. Living together in peace, 1 Cor. vii. 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. iv. 25, 26. Certainly whoso first yields shews most respect to God, and stands fairest for the blessing, Matth. v. 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. vii. 34. watching against what is displeasing, and doing in things lawful what she knows is pleasing, Gen. xxvii. 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. ix. 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. xi. 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. iii. 4. So as he is her head, she becomes a crown to that head. 'A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband,' Prov. xii. 4. The husband must also honour his wife, 1 Pet. iii. 7. both in his words and actions, shewing his esteem of her virtues, praising her when she does well, Prov. xxxi. 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. xxxi. 11. This he must do when she is worthy; otherwise that must take place, Micah vii. 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. xvi. 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. i. 8. And they must bear with one another's infirmities, covering them with the mantle of love, Gal. vi. 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. vii. 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. iii. 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. vii. 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 iv. 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. vii. 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. iii. 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. i. 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. iii. 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 iv. 9, 10. They should warn one another of what appears sinful in their way, and so not suffer sin upon them, Eccl. iv. 9, 10. If men see a spot on their face, they will tell them of it; but spots in the conversation are most danger-

ous. 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. xxv. 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. v. 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. v. 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. v. 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. v. 33. 1 Pet. iii. 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. iii. 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 iii. 9. He is to protect her to the utmost of his power from the injuries of others, 1 Sam. xxx. 18. and particularly from the insults, whether of children or servants in the

family, as well as neighbours, Gen. xvi. 6. And if so, surely 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. v. 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. xxxi. 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. xiv. 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. ii. 5. Yet she may well go abroad when her business calls her, as Abigail did, 1 Sam. xxv.

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. ii. 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. iii. 7.

On the other hand, the wife should be pliable and teachable, 1 Tim. ii. 11. yea, and be ready to seek instruction from her husband, 1 Cor. xiv. 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. v. 24. Gen. iii. 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. v. 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. iii. 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. ii. 13. compare 1 Cor. xi. 9.

2. Because the woman was the first that sinned, 1 Tim. ii. 14. compare Gen. iii. 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. iii. 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 bear them. This is called natural affection, the want whereof is accounted among the most horrid abominations, Rom. i. 31. Such a natural affection did Joseph shew to his father, Gen. xlv. 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. xix. 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. i. 6; but they ought to speak respectfully to them, Gen. xxxi. 35; and carry respectfully to them, Prov. xxxi. 28. This was Solomon's practice even when a king, 1 Kings ii. 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. iii. 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. xxxvii. 13. Yea, Christ himself was a pattern to children in this regard to the parental authority, Luke ii. 51.

5. Submission. They are to submit to their instructions and directions, readily receiving them, and complying with them, Prov. i. 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. xiii. 1. Yea, they are to submit to their corrections, for the folly bound up in their hearts makes the rod necessary, Heb. xii. 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. xxiii. 22. Gen. ix. 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. vii. 3. Jer. xxix. 6. 1 Cor. vii. 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. xxii. 16, 17. (2.) The most approved examples of marriage in scripture go this way, Gen. xxiv. 3, 4. xxviii. 1, 2. and xxix. 19. Judg. xiv. 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. xxiv. 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. v. 4. It is a piece of that honour to parents which the fifth command enjoins, Matt. xv. 4, 5, 6. So did Joseph, Gen. xlvii. 12. This was a piece of duty which the Lord performed to his mother while he hung on the cross, John xix. 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.

(3.) 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. iii. 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. xiii. 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. xxv. 21, 22. If Hannah could devote her child to God before it was conceived, 1 Sam. i. 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 i. 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. iv. 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. xlix. 15. And here it is the duty of the mother to nurse the child herself, if she be able, Hos. ix. 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. v. 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. xii. 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. ii. 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. xxxi. 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. iii. 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. iii. 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. xxxi. 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. xiv. 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 iii. 11. Sons should be brought up to some honest employment, whereby they may be worth their room in the world, Gen. iv. 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. vi. 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. ii. 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. vi. 6, 7. Such early religious education is a blessed mean of grace, 1 Kings xviii. 12. compare ver. 3. Not only is this the duty of fathers, who should teach their children. Prov. iv. 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. xxxi. 1. See chap. i. 8.

(2.) They should labour for that end to acquaint them with the scriptures. 2 Tim. iii. 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. vi. 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. iii. 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. iv. 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. vi. 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. vi. 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. xxix. 15. They must not only be corrected by reproof, but, when need is, with stripes, Prov. xix. 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. xiii. 24. As ever ye would keep them out of hell, correct them, Prov. xxiii. 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 kail-seed. 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. xxii. 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. ci. 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. xxviii. 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 iii. 1. 1 Cor. vii. 36. So did Abraham with his son Isaac, Gen. xxiv.; and Isaac with his son Jacob, Gen. xxviii.; 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 ever 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 i. 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. xlix. 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. xlix. 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. xlviii. 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. xxxviii. 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. li. 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. xxix. 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 xviii. 12; and so it was to Timothy, 2 Tim. iii. 15; compare chap. i. 5; Why, because it is a mean appointed of God for that end, and therefore may be followed in faith of the promise, Prov. xxii. 6; 'Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.' Chap. xxiii. 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. lxxviii. 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. iii. 22. and iv. 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. vii. 23; and to 'call no man master,' Matth. xxiii. 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. iv. 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. cxxiii. 2. [2.] Fellow-servants, or others deputed by, and having power from the principal master to oversee others, Gen. xxiv. 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. ii. 18. Mal. i. 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. vi. 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. vi. 5.

2. Honour, Mal. i. 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. vi. 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 vi. 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. vii. 6. It is a Judas-like 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. xxx. 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. xxxi. 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. ii. 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. iii. 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. xvi. 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. ii. 9. Though the service required may be painful and hard yet they ought not to refuse it. Thus Jacob served Laban, Gen. xxxi. 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. cxxiii. 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. iii. 23. Such a servant was Jacob to his uncle Laban, Gen. xxix. 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. xxiv. 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. ii. 10. They must be faithful in their accounts, and not give up false accounts, as the unjust steward did, Luke xvi. 6; nor allege false commissions from their master, as Gehazi did, 2 Kings v. 22. Jacob's faithfulness was his comfort, that though he had his master's flocks among his hands, he was free of them, Gen. xxxi. 38.

6. Diligence and carefulness about their master's business, Prov.

xxii. ult. Negligence and carelessness is a piece of injustice, whereby servants defraud their masters, Prov. xviii. 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. x. 26. Such a one, quick and ready, was Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv. 33. 56. It is an apostolical precept, Rom. xii. 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. xxxi. 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. ci. 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. xxxix. 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 i. 8.

2. They should look to their fitness and ability for their service, Psal. cxii. 5. So Laban had knowledge of what Jacob could do before he engaged with him; for he staid with him a month, Gen. xxix. 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. xxvii. 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. v. 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. xxxi. 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 viii. 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. xxiv. 14, 15.

(3.) They should require no more of them than they are able to do. Servants should not be kept idle, Prov. xxix. 21; neither should they be rigorously pressed above their power, but allowed convenient time for rest and refreshment, Lev. xxv. 43. It is just not only because they are fellow-creatures, but fellow Christians.

(4.) Oversight and direction in what they should do, Prov. xxxi. 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. vi. 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. xxv. 17. Job declares himself to have been of another temper, Job xxxi. 13. The advice of a servant modestly proposed, is not to be slighted, 2 Kings v. 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. xxix. 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. viii. 6. It is noted as a piece of the cruelty of an Amalekite, that he left his servant when sickness overtook him, 1 Sam. xxx. 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. xiv. 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. xviii. 19. They should daily pray with them and for them, by keeping up religious duties in their family, Jer. x. 25. And they should labour to bring them to the public ordinances, Josh. xxiv. 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. ci. 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. iii. 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 ii. 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, undutifulness 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. xvii. 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. iii. 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 xvi. 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 v. 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 all 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 xix. 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. iv. 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 xxxi. 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. iv. 1. 2 Cor. v. 20. This founds that debt of reverence, Rom. x. 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. i. 20. compare chap. ii. 4, 14, 20, &c.

2. Endeared love to them for their work’s sake, 1 Thess. v. 13. Gal. iv. 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 get 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 be-

gat 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. x. 25. Luke x. 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 iv. 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. xiii. 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. i. 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. v. 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. x. 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 vii.

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. v. 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. ix. 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. ii. 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. iv. 2; 1 Thess. ii. 3, 4.

3. Behaving so as they may be examples of holiness and tenderness, Tit. ii. 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. xiii. 7.

5. *Lastly*, Praying for them, Eph. i. 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,

1 TIM. v. 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. ii. 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 elder 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 vi. 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. v. 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. iv. 24. '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,

Doctr. '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. xii. 8. 1 Cor. xii. 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. xviii. 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 xx. 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. iii. 2.—‘Apt to teach.’ There is a word pat to this purpose, 1 Thess. v. 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. vi. 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. iv. 4. ‘Thy words have upheld 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. xix. 17: 1 Thess. v. 14.

3. They are to visit the sick, and should be sent for, for that end, James v. 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. xviii. 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. iv. 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. xii. 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. lxxix. 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. xxiv. 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. vi. 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. v. 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. xiii. 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. v. 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. v. 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 xx. 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. lxxxiv. 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. v. 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. iv. 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. xiii. 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. xvi. 7. 'He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth him,' Prov. xxviii. 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. iii. 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. iii. 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 find 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. iv. 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. iv. 4. And hence it is, that it is so very hard to get men to under-

take 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 faithful, 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 x. 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. x. ? 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 xix. 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. ii. 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. xxvi. 16, 17. Prov. xxiv. 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. xiii : and subjects ought to walk in a conscientious re-



gard 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. lxxxii. 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. xxvi. 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. xxii. 28. Eccl. x. 20. 2 Pet. ii. 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. xiii. 5, 7. (2.) Our unacquaintedness with the springs of public business, secrets of government, and reasons of state, Prov. xxv. 3. And natural modesty, as well as religion, teaches men not to answer a matter before they hear it, Prov. xviii. 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. xiii. 5. This duty Papists exempt churchmen from; and no wonder, for it is a part of the character of Antichrist, 2 Thess. ii. 4; but the scripture subjects ministers to the magistrates, as having souls as well as others, Rom. xiii. 1. 'Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.'

4. The payment of their tribute, Rom. xiii. 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. xviii. 3. 1 Sam. xxvi. 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. ii. 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. ii. 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 at theists, 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. xxii. 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. viii. 16. 2 Chron. xix. 5, 6, 7.

2. To govern them with wisdom, justice, and clemency, 2 Chron. i. 10.

3. To punish evil-doers, and encourage them that do well, Rom. xiii. 3.

4. To protect them, and provide for their common safety, 1 Tim. ii. 2; to see to their prosperity, and not to oppress them, Prov. xxviii. 16.

5. *Lastly*, They ought to promote true religion, and advance the interest of Christ's kingdom among their subjects, Isa. xlix. 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 primitive, power in church-matters; and though he ought not to exercise a spiritual function, yet he can command and obligé 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. v. 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. v. 5.

(2.) They ought to honour them, and carry respectfully to them. The Ancient of days, commands us to honour old age, Lev. xix. 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. iii. 9. (2.) To give them the example of a virtuous and holy life, Tit. ii. 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. xlv. 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. xiv. 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. xv. 1.

*Lastly*, The duties of equals are, (1.) To regard the dignity and worth of each other, and carry respectfully to them, 1 Pet. ii. 17. (2.) To carry modestly towards one another, preferring in honour

each other, Rom. xii. 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. i. 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. xvi. 30. Eph. v. 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 furions or mad men, Eph. v. 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. i. 30. and are in a near way to ruin, Prov. xxx. 17. So do they by all irreverence to them, and slighting and dishonouring them in word and deed, Deut. xxvii. 16. and much more by cursing them, Exod. xxi. 17. Many, again, sin against God and their parents, being unteachable, and will not hearken to their instruction, Prov. v. 7. they will not take a sharp word from them, but their hearts rise against them and it too, Prov. xiii. 18. and others, though they will bear with words, yet they are stubborn, and will not submit to correction, Deut. xxi. 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. xix. 26. Finally, they sin by disposing of themselves to callings, or in marriage, without consent of their parents, Gen. xxvi. 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 coddling 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. xxv. 28. Some, on the other hand, are woefully 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. iii. 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. v. 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. vi. 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 pre-eminence 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. v. 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. iii. 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. iv. 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. iv. 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. xv. 15. And thus the apostle explains it, Eph. vi. 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. vi. 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. xix. 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. lxv. 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 xxi. 16. ‘An old disciple.’ And old godly men are most like God, Dan. vii. 9. Rev. i. 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. ii. 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 ix. 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 ii. 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. ix. 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. i. 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. xxiv. 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. i. 15; for 'man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,' Matth. iv. 4. Now, it has the promise, 1 Tim. iv. 8. It has the promise of health, wealth, and long life, Prov. iii. 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. iv. 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. xxxv. 19. And so the contrary is threatened, Prov. xxx. 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. v. 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. xxi. 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. i. 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. cxix. 71. Isa. lvii. 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. xcix. 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. vi. 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 ho-



nour and command of God, yet God allows us 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 disjoined the world, and so no wonder it be miserable; a relative holiness would set the disjoined world right again.

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OF THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. XX. 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 to-

gether, 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 xiv. 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. iii. 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 xiv. 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. x. 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. x. 39. 'He that findeth his life, shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it,' Mark viii. 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. xi. 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. viii. ult.

2. The careful using of all means of grace and holy exercises, for the begetting, preserving, and promoting spiritual life, 1 Pet. ii. 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 xxii. 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. xxii. 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 vi. 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. ii. 2, 31.

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. v. 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. xvii. 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. v. 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. v. 16; and praying for them, Gen. xliii. 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. lxxxii. 3, 4. Prov. xxiv. 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. xiv. 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 necessities 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 ii. 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. iv. ult.

4. A peaceable, mild, and courteous conversation, Prov. xv. 1. in looks, speech, and behaviour.

5. *Lastly*, With respect to injuries, we ought to take all things in the best sense, 1 Cor. xiii. 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. iii. 12 13; to forbear and be ready to be reconciled, and forgive injuries, yea, to requite good for evil, Matth. v. 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. viii. 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. xxix. 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. xviii. 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 v. 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 iii. 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. iv. 3; all tampering with temptations of that sort, and not rejecting them with abhorrence, Job vii.

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. xxxvii. 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. xiii. 5; and that will set all our wrongs right, Prov. xv. 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. vii. 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. i. 18. and labour to please God and consult our own welfare by a holy and moderate cheerfulness, Prov. xvii. 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. vi. 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. iv. 6.

*5thly*, Neglecting our bodies, Col. ii. 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. x. 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. vi. 2. (3.) By means of inordinate passions, 1 Kings xxi. 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 necessities so far as we can: they are not ours, but God's.

6thly, Intemperance, when people keep no measure in satisfying the flesh, Luke xxi. 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. iii. 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. xxiii. 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. xxi. 20, 21. It is a beastly sin. A heathen calls the glutton's belly a swine's trough.

(2.) Drunkenness, intemperance in drinking, Luke xxi. 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 ebrüi*. 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. xxiii. 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. xxviii. 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 viii. 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. v. 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. vi. 12.

*7thly*, Immoderate labour and painfulness, Eccl. ii. 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. iv. 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. xviii. 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. xiv. 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. xiii. 5. Such counsel often has the force of a command. So drunkards murder one another's souls, Hab. ii. 15.

3dly, By joining with others in sin, Psal. l. 18. Going along with others in their sin, ruins not only ourselves, but them too.

4thly, By provoking others to sin, 1 Kings xxi. 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. vii. 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. v. 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 ix. 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. iii. 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. iii. 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 reproving it, Lev. xix. 17; compare 1 John iii. 15; or reproving 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. ix. 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. i. ult. Thus men are guilty,

(1.) By approving the sin of others, Psal. xlix. 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. xiv. 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. ix. 6. (2.) Of lawful war, Judg. v. 23. (3.) Of necessary self-defence, Exod. xxii. 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 iii. 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 xxi. 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. ii. 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. xii. 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. xvi. 32. Matth. v. 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. v. 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. iv. 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. iii. 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. xiv. 30; for he is like a serpent gnawing its own tail, Job v. 2; and the party envied, Prov. xxvii. 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. xii. 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 iii. 15. It is the sad character of persons estranged from God, that they are 'hateful, and hating one another,' Tit. iii. 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. xii. 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. iv. 15.

*5thly*, Rejoicing at the mischief that befalls others, Prov. xxiv. 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. xii. 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.

xviii. 21. and xxi. 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. iii. 6. It resembles also a sword, and so it is oft-times, lvii. 4. and Psal. lix. 7. The mouth and tongue resemble bow and arrow, and so they are, Psal. lxiv. 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. xxiii. 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. v. 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 lxiv. 3. 4. Their tongues are dipt in gall, and they pierce to the heart, and give a home-thrust like a sword, Prov. xii. 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. iv. 31.

*3dly*, By railing and scolding. This was Shimei's murdering deed, 2 Sam. xvi. 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. iii. 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. v. 22. They are the devil's bellows to blow up the fire of anger; which may make fearful havock ere it be quenched, Prov. xv. 1.

*5thly*, By mocking, scoffing, and deriding speeches. These are reckoned among the sufferings of the martyrs, Heb. xi. 36. 'Others had trial of cruel mockings.' The soldiers mocking Christ, John xix. 3. is compared to the baiting of dogs, Psal. xxii. 16. See how children paid for this usage to the prophet Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 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. cix. 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. vi. 17. The spirit of God takes notice of Cain's countenance, Gen. iv. 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. xii. gnashing with the teeth, and all such gestures of a person, denoting a heart boiling with wrath and revenge, Acts vii. 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. v. 2, 3. neglecting the sick, not visiting and helping them as need requires, Luke x. 31, 32. not affording means of life to the poor in want, Jam. ii. 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. xxxi. 16, &c. It is observable that the sentence against the wicked runs on unmercifulness to the poor members of Christ, Matt. xxv. 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. xxii. 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. iii. 14, 15. Micah iii. 3.

(2.) As they strike against the body and life itself, Thus men are guilty, by fighting, striking, and wounding others, Exod. xxi. 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. xxv. 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. i. 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. xxii. 9. Yea, the approving, or any way consenting to it, makes men guilty, Acts viii. 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.

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#### OF THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 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 x. 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. iv. 3, 4, 5.

Now, there is a threefold chastity required of us, and to be preserved by us.

*First*, Chastity in heart, 1 Thess. iv. 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. xxxi. 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. iv. 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. iii. 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 xxxi. 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. xi. 2. and to Joseph's mistress, Gen. xxxix. 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. vii. 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 xxi. 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 xxiv. 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. ix. 27.

3. Keeping of chaste and modest company. Hence Solomon exhorts, Prov. v. 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! Ill 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. xi. 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. xxxiv. 1.

5. Marriage, by those that have not the gift of continency. Hence says the apostle, 1 Cor. vii. 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. v. 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. v. 8. forecited. So did Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 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. x. 14. 2. Uncleaness, 1 Cor. vi. 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. xxxviii. 14, 15, 16. For this cause modest apparel is here required, 1 Tim. ii. 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. xi. 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. Sist 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 abbreviate 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. i. 24,—27; bestiality, Lev. xviii. 22; And to these we may add incest, which is betwixt persons within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity or affinity, Lev. xviii. 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. xx. 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. xiii. 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. iv. 10; 'They shall commit whoredom, and shall increase.'

3. Fornication, which is betwixt single persons, Col. iii. 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. v. 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. vi. 15.

4. Rape, or forcing a person to filthiness, Deut. xxii. 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. v. 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. iv. 3, 4. 1 Cor. vii. 5. Isa. lviii. 13. Ezek. xxii. 10. and xviii. 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. v. 28; 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' Chap. xv. 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. iv. 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. vii. 18,—21.

3. Uncleanness 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. ii. 14; 'wanton eyes,' Isa. iii. 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. iii. 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. xxiii. 14,—16.

(3.) Luxurious embraces and dalliances. These are as smoke going before the flame, and were practised by the adulterous whore, Prov. vii. 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. vii. 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. v. 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. xvi. 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. xxiii. 30, 31, 33. Notable to this purpose is that scripture, Jer. v. 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. xxiii. 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. xiii. 13; 'Let us walk—not in chambering and wantonness,' 1 Pet. iv. 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. vii. 7, 8, 9; for they that refuse the remedy, strengthen the disease.

(7.) Unjust divorce, Matth. v. 33; wilful desertion, 1 Cor. vii. 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. iv. 3; dispensing with unlawful marriages, Mark vi. 18; tolerating of stews or bawdy houses, Deut. xxiii. 17; and entangling vows of single life, Mark xix. 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. iv. 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. ii. 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. vi. 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. vii. 28. 'A woman among all those have I not found.' And observe what is said, Acts xxiv. 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. vi. 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. vi. 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. v. 10. and there is a secret curse of that nature that often accompanies it, Prov. vi. 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. vi. 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. xiii. 4. 1 Cor. vi. 9. Gal. v. 19, 21. Rev. xxi. 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. v. 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. cxix. 37. 'Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.'

## OF THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. XX. 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. viii. 18. and without his appointment our endeavours will not succeed, Psal. cxxvii. All the creatures depend on God's provision, as caged birds on those to whose care they are committed, Prov. xxx. 3. And so our Lord teaches us to pray every day, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' Matth. vi. 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. v. 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. ii. 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. iv. 2. But we must be sure it be a lawful calling, Eph. iv. 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. xiv. 8. and he allows men to look to himself for that end, Isa. xxviii. 26. and likewise that they be diligent and industrious in it, and not loiterers, Prov. x. 4. for laziness will make a thief, either directly or indirectly. And this is quite opposite to God's appointment, Gen. iii. 19.

4. We are to take the moderate comfortable use of the product of our diligence, using and disposing it for our necessity and convenience, according to our condition in the world, Eccl. x. 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. xxi. 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. lv. 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 vi. 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. xi. 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. vi. 1,—8. rash cautionry, Prov. xi. 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. iv. 5. (1.) We must moderate our judgment about them, that we put not too high a value and esteem on them, 1 Tim. vi. 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. vi. 25, 26. and be content with our lot, Heb. xiii. 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. xiii. 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. vii. 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. ii. 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. vi. 9. If people get to heaven in another way, they must step over all the law and the prophets, Matth. vii. 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. iv. 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. xxii. 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. xv. 2, 4; Zech. vii. 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, Dent. xxii. 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. vi. 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. xii. 3. [4.] In case of cheatery, 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. xxii. 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. xxxiii. 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 xix. 8. 'If I have taken any thing from any man by false 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 xx. 10; and that the thing itself, or the value of it, yea, and a reasonable acknowledgement for the loss of it, Lev. vi. 5. Luke xix. 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. v. 6, 7, 8. Luke xix. 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. v. 42; not only lending upon interest, which is lawful, so that it be moderate, Deut. xxiii. 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 vi. 35; 'Lend hoping for nothing again.'

(2.) Returning or paying again thankfully what is borrowed by us, Exod. xxii. 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. xxxi. 15: for no man has more that he can call his own, than what is over and above his debt, Psal. xxxvii. 21; If the incapacity flow from mere providence, it is their affliction, but not their sin, 2 Kings iv. 1.

*Lastly*, Giving unto the poor or those that are in need, according to their necessity and our ability, Luke xi. 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. xi. 25. What people give must be their own, 1 John iii. 17. it must be *thy* bread, Eccl. xi. 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. iv. 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. v. 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. vi. 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. iii. 9; not out of vain-glory, else the work is lost as to acceptance, Matth. vi. 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. xi. 22.

(3.) Cheerfully and freely, not grudgingly and as by constraint, 2 Cor. ix. 7.

(4.) According to the measure of what the Lord has given unto us, 1 Cor. xvi. 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. cxii. 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 xvi. 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. viii. 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 xx. 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 vi. 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. xxv. 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. xxviii. 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. xi. 1. 'Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.' Laying out for God is bet-

ter 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. xix. 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. iii. 9; 'Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of thine increase. Solomon observes the accomplishment of it, Prov. xi. 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. xli. 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. v. 7; always taking along what is said, ver. 3. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' See Luke xvi. 9. 1 Tim. vi. 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 shalt 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. iii. 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. iii. 19; And this is so although he have enough of his own, and needs not be burdensome to others, Ezek. xvi. 49; He makes himself a waif for Satan to pick up.

2. By carelessness, sloth, and mismanagement in our calling, Prov. xviii. 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. xiv. 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. xii. 11.

3. By not owning God in our business, and so slighting his blessing, who gives man power to get wealth, Deut. viii. 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. xxi. 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 contentions humours of some have made them like the ass in the fable, that seeking his horns, lost his ears, 1 Cor. vi. 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. xi. 15. and vi. 1, &c.

6. By distrustful and distracting care in getting and keeping worldly things, Matth. vi. 31. Can that man be wealthy indeed, who, have what he will, never has enough, and whose abundance suffereth him not to sleep? Eccl. iv. 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. x. 22.

7. *Lastly*, By sordidness, which is when a man has no power to enjoy the gift of God, Eccl. vi. 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. i. 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. ii. 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. vi. 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. v. 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. xiii. 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. iv. 28. 2 Thess. iii. 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. iii. 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. iv. 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 xix. 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. ii. 15. 'Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drink: that puttest 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 viii. 20. If it be of justice, it is bribery, Job xv. 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. x. 32. 2 Thess. iii. 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 quarrellings 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. iv. 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. iv. 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 conveniencies 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. v. 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. xxxi. 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. xxviii. 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. ii. 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. l. 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. xxix. 24.

*4thly*, This command is broken by injustice and cheatery in bargains and commerce, 1 Thess. iv. 6. What is gotten in that way is stolen in God's account, Lev. xxv. 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. xxv. 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.

(1.) 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. xx. 14. So no doubt the way of priggings so long before people come to the due worth, is an insuaring 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. vii. 12; and let conscience say if it be fair dealing or not, Lev. xix. 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 viii. 6.

(5.) By using false weights and measures, Micah vi. 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 viii. 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. xv. 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. xxiii. 16; or like Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. 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. iii. 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. vi. 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. xxii. 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 catched 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. v. 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. xxii. 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. xxii. 14. (2.) Refusing to help our neighbour, by lending where our own affairs will spare it, and he is in straits, Matth. v. 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 vi. 35. (3.) Not paying our just debts, if we are able, Psal. xxxvii. 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. iii. 30; And so is the involving people in law-suits for an unjust debt. (5.) *Lastly*, Extortion in compensation for loans, Ezek. xxii. 12; which we call usury or ocker, Psal. xv. ult. and the requiring of all our debts rigidly, without mercy or compassion, Isa. lviii. 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. v. 8. Micah ii. 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 not sell when people stand in need of them, Prov. xi. 26.

12<sup>thly</sup>, 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 iii. 2, 3. and of theft or robbery, condemned in the eighth, Ezek. xxii. 7.

13<sup>thly</sup>, It is broken by partaking with thieves or unjust persons, l. 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. xxix. 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. iv. 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. xxv. 40, 41.

[3.] It is perfidiousness in the stewardship which God has committed to us, Luke xvi. 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 iii. 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. xi. 24, 23. for what men thus hold together, God in his anger seatters. [2.] It is inconsistent with the love of God, 1 John iii. 17. and the want of bowels to the poor is the want of pure religion before God, Jam. i. ult. [3.] *Lastly*, As men deal with the poor unmercifully, so they may expect God will deal with them, Prov. xxi. 13. Jam. ii. 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 xxx. 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. vii. 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. v. 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. v. 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. vi. 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. xviii. 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. xxx. 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. xix. 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 xxx. 3,—5. It is true, Solomon says, that as his temptation is stronger, his guilt is less than others, Prov. vi. 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. iv. 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, but 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.

5. 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. xii. 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 ruined, 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. xviii. 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. vi. 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. xiii. 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. xv. 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. iv. 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 iv. 74, 75; and that can never be sincere, Psal cxix. 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. ii. 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. xi. ult. and all injustice is an abomination to him. He has set a particular mark of abhorrence on it, Micah vi. 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. xi. 1; 'A just weight is his delight.'

5. It brings a blasting curse along with it, Prov. xiii. 11; 'Wealth gotten by vanity, shall be diminished.' And although it may prosper for a while, it will have a foul hinder end, Prov. xx. 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. xvii. 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. vi. 9. The treasures of eternal glory are lost by unrighteous dealing in the world, Luke xvi. 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. iv. 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. iii. 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. iii. 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. iv. 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. xxviii. 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. ii. 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. iv. 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. xii. 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. xiii. 5. It cannot miss to pierce people through with many sorrows. Therefore 'love not the world,' 1 Johu iii. 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. xvi. 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 omnipo-



tent, 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 xxxi. 14.

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OF THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 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. iv. 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. xiv. 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 xviii. 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. xv. 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. ii. 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 be-

twixt 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. viii. 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. lix. 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. iv. 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. xiv. 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. xix. 4, 5. (3.) Clearly, not mineing, obscuring, and wrapping up the truth, so as they who hear it know not what to make of it, Josh. vii. 19. (4.) Sincerely, 2 Chron. xix. 9; without any influence of malice, or partial counsel, without fend 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. vi. 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. xxii. 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. xxv. 14. And they that would preserve their name, let them be careful of their word, to fulfil their lawful promises, Psal. xv. 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. xxv. 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. xxviii. 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 viii. 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. v. 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. iv. 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. xiii. 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. i. 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. xii. 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. iv. 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. i. 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 praise-worthy 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. xxii. 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. xiii. 6, 7. Psal. xv. 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, 'Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour,' says he, 'him will I cut off,' Psal. ci. 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. xix. 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. viii. 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. xvii. 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. v. 23. and x. 1.

2. By the complainer, while he falsely accuses or charges another, Luke xix. 8; forges writs, Psal. cxix. 69; or suborns false witnesses, Acts vi. 13.

3. By the defender, when he denies a just charge, being called to a free confession, Prov. xxviii. 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. v. 1. Prov. xix. 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 xxiv. 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. i. 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. iv. 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. v. 1. Dent. xiii. 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 viii. 38. It is most injurious to our neighbour, whom we think so to gratify, being a snare to his soul, Lev. xix. 17; and to ourselves, by involving us in their guilt, Eph. v. 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. iii. 7; 'A fool uttereth all his mind; but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards,' Prov. xxix. 11.

(2.) By speaking truth maliciously, as Doeg did. It was both unseasonable, while Saul was in a rage against David, 1 Sam. xxii. 8, 9; and malicious, Psal. lii. 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 xvi. 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. xxvi. 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. xxvi. 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. iii. 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 xxii. 6, 12.

5. *Lastly*, By lies, Eph. iv. 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 xv. 1. Of this sort are allegories and fables, such as Jotham's parable, Judg. ix. 8; parables, Luke xvi.; hyperbolic speeches, John xxii. ult; ironical speeches, Gen. iii. 22. 1 Kings xviii. 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 xxii. 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. xvi. 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. xix. 2, 3. 2 Cor. i. 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. lix. 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. Jestings 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. vii. 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 xiii. 7. 'Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him?' Rom. iii. 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. vi. 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. xiii. 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. xxi. 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. iv. 10,—14.* But the most dangerous extreme is thinking too highly of ourselves, *Rom. xii. 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. ii. 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. v. 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. xxv. 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. xxvii. 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. xxviii. 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 xviii. 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.*

xxv. 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 xviii. 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. iii. 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. vi. 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. vii. 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. xiii. 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. v. 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. xiv. 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 xxviii. 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. xiv. 4. 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?' 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. vi. 6. Rom. iii. 8. Psal. lxi. 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 condemn others for what is good in them, 2 Sam. vi. 16. We are even in our hearts to give every one their due; and so far as we withhold it, we are guilty, Luke xviii. 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. xxi. 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. xi. 29.

6. Rejoicing in the disgrace and infamy of others, Jer. xlviii. 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. iv. 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. vi. 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. xviii. 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. iii. 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. xiii. 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. xxxi. 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. ix. 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. vii. 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. xvii. 9. 2 Tim. iii. 4.

(5.) By detracting, or endeavouring any manner of way to impair the deserved credit of our neighbour, Ezek. iv. 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. xxiii. 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. vi. 6. See Psal. xv. 3.

(7.) By slandering, which is an ill report without all ground, Psal. l. 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. i. 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. xix. 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 grudges 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. xxix. 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 vii. 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. iv. 29. These viperous tongues work upon the miseries of others, as the soldiers did at Christ in his sufferings, Matth. xxvii. 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. iv. 29.

(13.) Reviling and railing, giving others reproachful and opprobrious names, piercing them with bitter words, and murdering them with their tongues, Matth. v. 22. 1 Cor. vi. 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 yon, Psal. lii. 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. v. 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. v. 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. xxxi. 26. Her mouth is not always open, but duly shut, and discreetly opened.

2. Idle speaking, Matth. xii. 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. v. 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. iii. 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 xviii. 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. xii. 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 smother

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. x. 5. Prov. vi. 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 viii. 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. iv. 24, 25. It is the way to which our corrupt natures do kindly and quickly incline, Psal. lviii. 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. lxiii. 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. xix. 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. xxi. 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. xxi. 8. and xxii. 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. x. 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. xii. 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. lvii. 9, 10. Shall we thus turn our glory into shame, and per-

vert 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. iii. 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 cuts off all pretences to true religion, Jam. i. 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. xii. 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 xvi.

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. XX. 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. vii. 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. xiii. 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. vii. 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. v. 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. cxxxi. 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 xiv. 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. iv. 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. lvii. 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. ii. 1. Psal. xviii. 46. The world's good things must not be thy good things, Luke xvi. 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. vii. 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. xxiv. 38. 1 Sam. xiv. 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. vii. 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. xlvii. 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. vi. 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. vi. 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 wil-

derness got. Psal. lxxviii. 29.—31. ‘So they did eat, and were well filled; for he gave them their own desire; they were not estranged from their lust: but while the meat was yet in their mouths, 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. xvi. 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. iii. 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. iv. 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 vii. 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, but 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 must 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. iii. 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 i. 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. iv. 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. iv. 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. iii. 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, accor-

ding 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. xxxix. 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 thornhedge of crosses, 2 Cor. xii. 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. i. 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. xv. 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. xx. 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 xxxiv. 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. x. 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. iii. 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 ii. 10.

4. All the evil that we meet with in our lot, we deserve it, we have ourselves to thank for it, Lam. iii. 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. vii. 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. xiii. 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. iii. 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. xxxvii. 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. xix. 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.



xxi. 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. viii. 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 v. 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 xxi. 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. lii. 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 v. 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. xvi. 10.

2. Consider how unmeet you are to carve for yourselves; 'and should it be according to thy mind?' Job xxxiv. 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. iii. 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. vi. 1.

(2.) That there is a soft hand of grace and goodness about it, Rom. viii. 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. i. 20.

2. Thy condition is good for thee, Rom. viii. 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. xxxii. 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. iii. 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 xii. 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 x. 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 foud 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. viii. 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. iii. 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. i. 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. xxiii. 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. iii. 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. xiii. 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. xxii. 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. ii. 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. xii. 20. Matth. v. 44.

4. A real complacency in his welfare and the welfare of what is his, Rom. xii. 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. xii. 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. lxxix. 26. and xxxv. 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 be-

fore 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 purity 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 lusty affections and inordinate motions towards something which God has put out of our way, at least withheld from our closest embraces. This also divides itself into two branches; one running towards what is our own, namely, a sinful eagerness, lust, 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<sup>e</sup> 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. iv. 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 xxi. 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. vii. 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. vi. 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 xviii. 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. iii. 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 respecter 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. xxx. 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. xix. 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. xvi. 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. xvi. 2; compare ver. 7.

Thus ye see the picture of discontent; 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 Pro-

vidence, 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. xlii. 36; 'Me have ye 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. viii. 28; 'All these things shall work together for good to them that love the Lord, to those who are the 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 xxi. 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. xxx. 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. xxviii. 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. vi. 9, 10; Jonah had a gourd, and he was exceedingly glad of it, Jonah iv. 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. xi. 4; and opened the sluice of discontent on him too, Gen. iv. 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.

3. 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. ii. 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. v. 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. xxv. 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. vi. 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. ii. 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. i. 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 xxi. 4. It wraps him up in darkness, feeds him with bitterness, and gives him gall and wormwood to drink, Prov. xv. 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. xvii. 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. v. 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 xxi. 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 con-

tentment 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 im-bitter 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 xxi. 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. iii. 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. iv. 5, 8. And, which is worst of all, self-murder is what always proceeds from it, as in the case of Ahithophel, 2 Sam. xvii. 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. xxviii. 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 vi. 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 i. ult. compare ver. 11. It is marked concerning Aaron, that he held his peace, Lev. x. 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. vi. 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 case.

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. iii. 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. xxxii. 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. v. 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. xxxix. 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 ease, 1 Sam. i. 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. lxxiii. 16, 17. and cxix. 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 xxi. 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. xiii. 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 iii. 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. xxxi. 1.

2dly, Fretting anger at their good, Psal. xxxvii. 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. xi. 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. v. 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. ii. 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. xx. 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. xxvii. 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. xxxvii. 11, &c.

3. It strikes, at one's self, Job v. 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. xiv. 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. vi. 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 envious 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. iii. 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. vi. 12. There is but one thing needful, Luke x. 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 xiv. 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. xiv. 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. iv. 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. vi. 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. x. 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. xiv. 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 dis-tempered, 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, ~~may~~ 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. xxiii. 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. xxi. 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, all 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 notes that appear where the beams of the sun are shining in a room. Besides the actual fulfilling of lusts, (Eph. ii. 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. i. 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. v. 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, (Ecel. vi. 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. vii. 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. vii. 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. iii. 5. These are they from which these cursed buds immediately sprout forth. Original sin has the lusts thereof, and these are they, Rom. vi. 12. We cannot enumerate them, more than we can count the dust. But in the general.

1st, There are fleshly lusts, 1 Pet. ii. 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. vii. 1. Eph. ii. 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. vi. 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. vi. 12. and vii. 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. iii. 3. It is not one or two that are in the heart, but many. Their name may be *legion*, for they are *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 ii. 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 viii. 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. iv. 1.

(1.) They war against the Spirit wherever it is, Gal. v. 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 barres from hell, choaking the word that would bring it in, Mark iv. 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. ii. 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. vi. 10; like a fire they burn it, Rom. i. 27; and like water they drown it, 1 Tim. vi. 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. iv. 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. iv. 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. vi. 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. xxi. 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. ii. 12. They have nothing of hea-

ven 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. lvii. 10. To feed them is but to enlarge their appetite, for they cry, Give, give, like the grave and the barren womb, Eccl. i. 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. i. 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. iii. 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. i. 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 iii. 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. xxvii. 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 xxvi. 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 xiv. 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. xxviii. 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. i. 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. v. 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. iii. 5; yea, darkness is over all that region, Eph. v. 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. ii. 13. Nay, it is averse to it as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. It is prone and bent to evil, Hos. xi. 7; but lies cross and contrary to God and goodness, Rom. viii. 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. vi. 12. and vii. 17. It is the flesh that lusteth against the Spirit, Gal. v. 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. v. 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 Unelean, unclean.

\* See Fourfold State.

1. It is the fountain of all actual transgressions, Mark vii. 21. Look to all disorders of thy heart and life; they flow natively from hence, as the poisonous streams from the poisoned 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. li. 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 rule 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. vii. 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 im-

\* As some readers may be apt to think, in regard several of the following discourses are very short, that they are not so full as they were delivered, it is necessary to inform them, that, besides what the author has here said of his intended brevity, he was generally a short preacher, seldom, on ordinary occasions, exceeding half an hour, and that his delivery was somewhat slow. Besides, we have the testimony of his dear friends Messrs. Wilson, Davidson, and Colden, that he generally wrote his sermons as full as he delivered them. See the preface to his sermons on afflictions. And it is believed, that the attentive reader, upon a careful perusal of this last part of the work, will find the several subjects sufficiently, though briefly, illustrated, for promoting his best and most essential interests.

perfection 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. cxliii. 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. xxii. 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. iii. 10. If one



be wanting, all is wanting, all is marred. Hence says James, chap. ii. 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. xxii. 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. iii. 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. vii. 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. vii. 26. being holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; in the parts, Matth. iii. 15. 'It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness;' in the degrees, John xv. 13. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;' and in continuance, Phil. ii. 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. xii. 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. iii. 2. This inability is owing to the remains of corruption that cleaves to every one of them in this mortal state, Rom. vii. 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. iii. 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. xiv. 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. iii. 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. iv. 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. v. 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. v. 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. v. 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. iii. 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 viii. 46; 'For there is no man that sinneth not:' and that 'in many things we offend all,' Jam. iii. 2. If any man set up for it in himself, the Spirit of God says he deceives himself, 1 John i. 8. See an unanswerable question, Prov. xx. 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. v. 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 shews, 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. vi. 9; \* Job perfect, Job i. 8.

\* In order to illustrate the character of Noah as a righteous and perfect man, and to shew the signification of these epithets, it will not be improper to subjoin the following note, taken from a manuscript work of the author's, which he left prepared for the press, and has been esteemed by proper judges, both at home and abroad, a work of very great learning and merit, but has not yet been printed, entitled "A new translation of the first twenty-three chapters of Genesis, with notes explanatory and critical," according to the principles of the Hebrew accentuation as delivered in his treatise entitled, *Tractatus stigmologicus Hebræo-Biblicus*, printed at Amsterdam in 1738.

Gen. vi. 9. "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations." "As for Noah; [being] a righteous man. he was sound in his generations:" q. d. sound; [sound] in his generations. A sound man is a man of integrity and Godly simplicity, wholly for God, entire in his obedience, keeping himself uncorrupted and unspotted from the world, in which he lives. Such a man was Noah; and such he was, in both the generations wherein he lived, before and after the flood. Thus his character consists of two parts: he was a sound man, and preserved to the end in his soundness. And both these are traced to their common spring-head, namely, his righteous state. Being righteous by faith, a justified man; he was a sound man, in true holiness of heart and life; and a preserving man: Agreeable to which is that of the prophet, Hab. ii. 4. "The righteous (i. e. by) his faith, shall live." *Tzaddik*, an adjective righteous, a substantive a righteous one, is derived from the root *Tzadak*, in the form *Pihel*, (*Tziddek*), as appears by the *Dagesch forte* in it. *Tzadak* (*Kal*) is not to be reputed righteous; that agrees not to it, chap. xxxviii. 26; nor to do righteously; that agrees not to it, Job ix. 20. Psal. xix. 10: but to be righteous; which agrees to it every where. Only it is to be observed, that being righteous is sometimes understood simply of existing righteous, as Gen. xxxviii. 26. Psal. xix. 10. sometimes of appearing righteous, as Job ix. 20. xiii. 18. and xl. 3. Psal. li. 6-4; and this agreeable to the scripture-style in other cases, as Matth. v. 45. "That ye may be (i. e. appear to be) the children of your Father." To state the formal notion of righteousness signified by this root, it is to be observed, that it is used of men, as Gen. xxxviii. 26. Job ix. 20. of God himself, Psal. li. 6-4th; of his laws, Psal. xix. 10; and once it occurs in *Niphal*, *Nitzdak*, which, as a neuter verb of being (as Gen. i. 15.) is to become righteous, and is used of God's sanctuary, viz. Dan. viii. 14. "And it shall become righteous, the sanctuary," i. e. in such a state or condition as, by God's appointment, it ought to be in. From all which it appears, that the notion of righteousness is conformity to the law given concerning the subject, as concerning men, or the sanctuary or to the eternal idea of righteousness, in the mind of God, as in the case of God himself and his laws. *Tziddek* (*Pih.*) *Hitzdik* (*Hiph*) are both active, and sound to justify or make righteous, the action in *Kal* being the complement of both, as chap. viii. 14. But the difference lies here. In no form whatsoever doth this verb import a moral or real change: but in *Pihel* it signifies manifestatively, *Hiphil*, declaratively. In *Pihel* it occurs five times, and accordingly signifies to shew one



*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?

righteous, or to make appear righteous, Job xxxiii. 32. "I have desired to shew thee righteous," viz. as one shews a thing that is hid, by taking away the cover. Thus Jerusalem shewed Sodom and Samaria righteous, Ezek. xvi. 51, 52; namely, comparatively righteous, the holiness of Jerusalem being gone, which, while it lasted, quite darkened them. And so the backsliding Israel, Jer. iii. 11. "shewed her soul righteous: from the treacherous Judah," namely, as a servant running away from a master whom he hath served but a short while, shews his deserting of him just, by an old servant's running away from the same master at length. Thus understand the ground of Elihu's anger against Job, chap. xxxii. 2. His shewing his soul righteous; from God, i. e. his justifying himself in his grievous complaints, from the way and manner of the Lord's dealing with him. Hereto agrees *Hitzaddek* (Hithp. the relative of Pih.), which is to shew one's self righteous, occurring only, Gen. xlv. 16. What (i. e. how) how shall we shew ourselves righteous? Comp. Luke xvi. 15. and xx. 20. Thus expound, Rev. xxii. 11. And the righteous, let him shew himself righteous still, viz. by continuing in the practice of good works. And this is the justification the apostle James writes of, to his own countrymen, (Jam. i. 1.) who, knowing the manner of their own language, were in no hazard of mistaking his meaning. Now *Tzaddik*, being immediately derived from *Tziddek*, formally denotes one appearing righteous; the holy language hereby teaching, that whether righteousness be imputed or inherent, it must needs shine forth, not only from the divine appointment, but from the nature of the thing, as a light must needs give light. And to carry along this notion of the word, I write it righteous. Mean while, since there is a false as well as a true appearance of righteousness, one may see how Solomon might forbid a man to be righteous over much, Eccl. vii. 16. meaning it of the mere appearance or shew of righteousness, from the notation of the word. Accordingly he adds, *ibid.* And do not (*Tithh-hac-cam*) make thyself wise; for which compare Luke xx. 20. Should feign themselves just men, which in Hebrew would be expressed *Hitzaddek*, to shew or make one's self to appear righteous; But since no false appearance can take place before the Lord, in all cases wherein God testifies of one righteous, the appearance must be understood to be true, as the thing really is: and so it is in the case of Noah. *Hitzdik* (Hiph.) is once used intransitively, viz. Dan. xii. 3. every where else transitively. The object of it, in its intransitive use, is the conjugate noun *Tz'dakah* understood as Gen. iii. 6. and it is q. d. to righteous righteousness, i. e. to do righteously. So the formal signification of it, agreeing thereto in its twofold use, is, to make righteous. The sense whereof in the intransitive use, is, according to what is already remarked to do righteously, Dan. xii. 3. They that make righteous, of the many, i. e. Those who do righteously, of the many, ver. 2. comprehending all, and divided into two sorts, those that do righteously, and those that do not so. But in the transitive use, the sense of it is not, to make righteous, by infusing righteousness into a person, making a moral real change on him, as is manifest from Exod. xxiii. 7. I will not make righteous, an unrighteous one, Prov. xvii. 15. Isa. v. 23. This word is never

But is it not said, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin?' 1 John iii. 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 v. 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 so used. On the contrary, the only proper personal object of it is *Tzaddik*, a righteous one, righteous, and appearing righteous, antecedently to the action thereby signified, Deut. xxv. 1. They shall make righteous even the righteous one. So 1 Kings viii. 32. 2 Chron. vi. 23. "And for to make righteous a righteous one. So the true sense of it is legally to make righteous, to declare or pronounce righteous;" which natively follows on the back of the action signified by *Pihel*, viz. shewing righteous, and occupies the first and primary signification of *Kal*. And this is the justification Paul treats of. This phrase of making righteous the righteous, is used in the matter of the justification of a sinner before the Lord, Isa. liii. 11. In his knowing; make righteous a righteous one, shall my servant; to the many. The construction and sense of which words is, q. d. "In his being known to the many; my servant shall justify any righteous one to them." In which few words, there is, (1.) The author or efficient cause of justification, viz. Jesus Christ the Father's servant, sitting Judge. Comp. John v. 22. Matth. ix. 6. Acts v. 31. (2.) The object, the elect, all the elect, the many for whom Christ died, ver. 12. (3.) The character in which they stand before him, one by one, to be justified, viz. righteous and appearing righteous. This is no wise inconsistent with the justifying of the ungodly, Rom. iv. 5. if one considers, (4.) How they come to be righteous before him, viz. in his knowing, i. e. by the faith of him, whereby the soul is united to Christ and thereby hath communion with him in his righteousness, and so appears righteous in the borrowed garments before the throne. And for this faith they are debtors to free grace, as well as for the righteousness: for the word knowing, though active in its form; is passive in its sense; as is clear from the construction of the words, *In his knowing to the many*, shewing the faith to be the faith of God's elect, Tit. i. 1. The infinitive active or gerund, is used for the passive frequently, which phraseology our own language bears; as Gen. iv. 13. Psal. xlii. 4. iii. and cxix. 4. (5.) The time of their justification? not from eternity, but in the very instant of their believing in his knowing. (6.) The nature of justification, viz. "a declaring or pronouncing righteous, according to what is really found, and judicially imputed or reckoned, (*Jatzdik tzaddik*,) He shall make righteous a righteous one. (7.) The free access which all have to this privilege: For the words are not in vain ranged in this order; In his knowing; my servant shall make righteous a righteous one, &c. This is a general truth, whosoever will know Christ shall be righteous, and legally made righteous, before the Lord: though in the mean time, it is the many only who will know him eventually, *Tamim*, sound. The import of this word is whole and entire, all of a piece, unblemished: So by it is expressed a whole day, Josh. x. 13. and the quality of a sacrifice as without blemish, in the ordinary style of the law, as Lev. i. 3. and so is applied to God's work, Deut. xxxii. 4. and his way, 2 Sam. xxii. 31.

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 be 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. ii. 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. cxix. 128.

*Inf.* 1. There is no justification, favour, and peace with God, by our own works, Psal. cxliii. 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 prond 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. viii. 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 his Spirit, Jer. xlv. 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. iii. 16. it is said, 'I will spue

thee out of my mouth.' 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. lxy. 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. v. 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. i. 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. xxxiv. 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. i. 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. iv. 10; oppression, Hab. ii. 11; which are noted to be crying sins; blasphemy and contempt of God, Exod. v. 2; idolatry, Ezek. viii.; unbelief, rejecting of Christ, and disobeying the gospel, Matth. xxii. John iii. 19. 2 Thess. i. 8. But of all sins the most heinous is the sin against the Holy Ghost, Matth. xii. 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. ii. 21. 'Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preacheest a man should not steal, doest thou steal?' And so do the greater gifts and profession that one hath, Luke xii. 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 xi. 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. ii. 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. ii. 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 v. 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. li. 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. xii. 8. Hence it is that disobedience to parents is so heinous a sin, Prov. xxx. 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. lv. 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. xviii. 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. xiv. 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. xxii. 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. i. 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. xi. 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. xvii. 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 v. 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. xxvi. 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 defiled, 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. xi. 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. iii. 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. xxvii. 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. v. 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. xc. 11. 'Who knoweth the power of thine anger?'

2. God's dealing with sinners as his enemies, whom he is incensed against, Neh. i. 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. i. 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. xxix. 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.\*

\* See a more particular account of the curse, in the author's *View of the Covenant of Works*, part 4, published in 1772.

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. vi. 23. that is, eternal death, as is clear from the opposition to eternal life, Rom. v. 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 xxiv. 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. ii. 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. iii. 18. 1 John i. 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. v. 19; even idle words, Matth. xii. 36, 37; and all must be forgiven graciously, Psal. ciii. 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. v. 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 ever 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. ii. 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 v. 39.

(2.) It wrongs his infinite goodness, Exod. xx. 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. i. 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 iii. 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. xv. 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. v. 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. xxxii. 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. viii. 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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#### OF THE MEANS OF SALVATION IN GENERAL.

HEB. ii. 3.—*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ?*

A SINNER having heard that sin deserves God's wrath and curse, the question that natively follows is, What way one may escape them ? This is answered by the weighty question in the text, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ?* Which we may take up in these two things. (1.) There is no escaping for sinners, if they neglect the great salvation ; they perish without remedy. (2.) They that do not neglect it, shall surely escape. Here let us consider,

1. The danger sinners are in by their sin. They are in hazard of

perishing under God's wrath and curse; for that is the just recompense of every sin, Heb. ii. 2; of God's wrath consuming them, and his curse binding them down under it for ever. He intimates, that all are liable to God's wrath and curse, while he says, *How shall we escape, &c.*

2. The way how they may escape; namely, by not neglecting, but falling in with the great salvation. The words intimate, (1.) That there is a possibility of escaping; sinners are not shut up hopeless under the curse. (2.) The way of escape is not by fleeing from the Judge, and the execution of his sentence: nay, he is omniscient and omnipresent; one cannot outwit him, or get away from his sight, or out of his reach. Nor is it by resisting for he is omnipotent, and none can outbrave him, nor make head against him. But he may escape by falling in with the means of escape appointed by himself, and required by him to be made use of by us. He has provided us with a salvation, a great one; i. e. the gospel, which teaches the way of eternal salvation. He requires us, not to neglect it, but to improve it for our escape. It is neglected by unbelief, impenitency, and not using the means prescribed. On the contrary, then, he requires of us faith and repentance, which are the substance of the gospel, Acts xx. 21; 'testifying to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ;' and he requires of us the use of the means by which the salvation held forth in the gospel is obtained, Prov. viii. 34; 'Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors:' for surely they neglect and slight the gospel, who do not believe, repent, or use the ordinary means of obtaining the salvation.

The text affords the following doctrine.

Doctr. 'Whoso would escape God's wrath and curse must not neglect, but fall in with the great salvation,' or, 'To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.'

For explaining this, I shall shew,

I. The necessity of faith in Jesus Christ, in order to one's escaping the wrath and curse of God.

II. The necessity of repentance, in order to the same end.

III. Answer the question, Are faith and repentance in men's power, since God requires them of them?

IV. Shew the connexion betwixt faith and repentance, and escaping the wrath and curse of God.

V. The necessity of the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption.

VI. Deduce an inference or two.

I. I shall shew the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ, in order to one's escaping the wrath and curse of God due to him for sin. It is absolutely necessary; no man can escape God's wrath and curse without it. For,

1. There is no pleasing God without it, Heb. xi. 6. The reason is, because he is only pleased with Jesus Christ, and those who are in him or united to him, Matth. xvii. 5. If one should weep for his sins till no moisture were left in his body, fast his flesh to a skeleton, and watch ever so carefully against his sin, if he have not faith, he is a lost man; he cannot please God, but must lie for ever under his displeasure.

2. It is the great duty of the gospel, whereby one is made partaker of the remedy provided, and without which neither your persons nor performances can be accepted. 'It is the work of God,' John vi. 29; 'the command of God,' 1 John iii. 23. Your persons will ever be under condemnation without it, John iii. 18. And all your other duties will be but ciphers in God's account, multiply them as ye will, if faith be not at the head of them.

3. It is that which enters one into the covenant of peace; unites him with Christ, and by which he comes to partake of all saving benefits. If ye would escape God's wrath, ye must be within the covenant; ye must believe, that is, consent to the marriage-covenant, John vi. 35. There is no escaping wrath without being in Christ, and united to him, Rom. viii. 1. That union is by faith, Eph. iii. 17. We must be justified, and that is by faith, Rom. v. 1; and sanctified, which is also by faith, Acts xv. 9.

4. Salvation and damnation turn upon this very point. Here is the decision of the case, Mark xvi. 16; 'He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.' Unbelief will undoubtedly ruin you, Psal. ii. ult. 'Kiss ye the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.' Unbelief is a rejecting of Christ; and they cannot escape who refuse the remedy of sin, Luke xix. 27; 'Those mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.'

II. I proceed to shew the necessity of repentance, in order to one's escaping this wrath and curse. No adult person can be saved without it. As for infants dying in their tender years, and such others who are not capable of actual faith and repentance, in so far as the Spirit dwells in them, they have the seed of those graces, and shall undoubtedly be saved.



1. The word of God certifies us, that whosoever does not repent shall perish, Luke xiii. 5. Your souls, then, lie at stake. The sinner is gone away from God, and so is come under the curse. His soul is left in pawn that he shall return; so if he do not return the pawn is lost, and lost for ever.

2. Heaven's door is bolted against all impenitent sinners; it is not so wide as to let in a sinner with a burden of unrepented-of guilt upon his back, Rev. xxi. 27; 'There shall in nowise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.' So heaven ye cannot see, and hell ye cannot escape, if ye repent not. It is the call of the gospel to you; which, if it be not obeyed, see the effect, 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. 'The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.' To this narrow point the matter is brought, Repent or perish, Ezek. xviii. 30, 31; 'Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?'

3. Repentance is the other duty of the gospel; thereby signifying, that without repentance there is no possibility but we must perish under God's wrath and curse. John the Baptist preached repentance, so did Christ himself, the apostles, &c. How can one think then to escape without it?

4. True faith does always bring along with it true repentance, Zech. xii. 10. 'I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.' It is the great gift which Christ is exalted to give, Acts v. 31; as he is a Saviour. So impenitent sinners have no part in Christ, nor in his salvation, Matth. i. 21; and therefore they must perish.

III. I proceed to consider the question, Are faith and repentance in men's power, since God requires them of them? *Ans.* They are not. For God's demands of us are the measure of our duty, but not of our strength, which reaches not to these. For,

1. They are the gifts of God, and the operations of his special grace, Eph. i. 19. Acts v. 31. And where sovereign pleasure does not determine to give and work them, the party lies under the power of unbelief and impenitency. Hence it is God's grace and good-will which makes one differ from another; not man's free-will. Hence

says our Lord, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight,' Matt. xi. 25, 26.

2. Sinners by nature, and in themselves, can do nothing which is good, and therefore cannot believe nor repent, John xv. 5. 'Without me ye can do nothing,' 2 Cor. iii. 5. 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God.' In particular they cannot believe, John vi. 44. 'No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.' They cannot repent, Jer. xiii. 23. 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.' They are dead in sin, and must be quickened, yea, created in Christ Jesus to good works. They are in bondage to sin and Satan, 2 Tim. ii. 26; therefore cannot come to Christ, nor turn to God, till effectual grace bring them forward, Acts xxvi. 18. 'Open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.'

*Object.* How then can God require them of us?

*Ans.* 1. God gave man this power, and he has lost it by his own fault, Eccl. vii. 29. 'God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.' If a debtor squander away his substance, the creditor has still a right to require what he owes him: so, though man has lost his power to perform, God has not lost his right to require the duty.

2. Men will not believe their own impotency. They will promise, resolve, and delay to believe and repent, as if these duties were in their own power; they will slight the motions of God's Spirit; yea, they are throwing away the remains of natural light and strength, that have escaped out of the ruins of the fall. So that God may very justly require these of them, to convince them, and stir them up to seek grace.

IV. I proceed to shew the connection betwixt faith and repentance, and escaping the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin. Those who believe and repent shall certainly escape. God has said it, that they shall, John v. 24. 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life,' Ezek. xviii. 30. 'Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.' Nay, they are got beyond it already, Rom. viii. 1. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' In the moment the sinner comes into Christ, he is no more liable to eternal wrath, nor to the

curse; for he is not under the law, but under grace: and the utmost he is liable to, is fatherly chastisements, Psal. lxxxix. 30,—33. Thus faith and repentance have the connection of appointed means prescribed by God himself, which, by his blessing, are rendered subservient to this great end, of obtaining salvation. Faith is the hand that receives Christ and his righteousness, as the all of salvation, John i. 12; and repentance unto life consists in that godly sorrow for sin, flowing from faith, which is the exercise of all who are concerned about the salvation of their souls, Jer. l. 4. 2 Cor. vii. 11.

V. I shall now shew the necessity of using all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to his people the benefits of redemption.

1. God has peremptorily required this, Luke xiii. 24. ‘Strive to enter in at the strait gate,’ namely, that we strive in the appointed means of grace and salvation. And so he has particularly enjoined us the conscientious performance of each of them.

2. We have no ground to expect grace or salvation but in the use of the means, Prov. viii. 34. ‘Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors,’ Prov. ii. 3.—5. ‘If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding: if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as hid treasures: then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.’ ‘Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,’ Rom. x. 17.

3. The neglect of the means is a contempt of the thing. If we would be healed, we would lie at the pool. If not, we say we care not for cure.

And there is required here, not a careless or merely superficial use of the outward means, but a diligent one; that is an embracing of every opportunity that God in his providence gives us for attending upon them, a careful improvement of them, and a looking earnestly to him for his blessing upon them, without which they will not contribute to our spiritual advantage, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

*Quest.* What is our ability in this point? *Ans.* The use of outward means is not beyond our reach. One may without saving grace, read, hear, pray, and consider his case. And by these one may attain the highest pitch of preparation for the grace of God, in legal convictions, fears, sorrows for sin, and natural (though not saving) desires of grace. Therefore do what ye can; it may be, while ye are doing what ye can, God will do for you what ye cannot do for yourselves, Acts viii. 22.

*Quest.* Has God promised to save and convert those who do what

is in their power in the use of means? *Ans.* We dare not say it. But, 1. It is possible. 2. It is probable.\*

I shall conclude with two inferences.

*Inf.* 1. Then as ever ye would escape God's wrath and curse due to us for sin, repent and believe. Come to Christ; turn from your sins unto God. There is no safety otherwise, but this way ye shall be safe. No sin of your's will ruin you, if you believe and repent; and nothing will save you if you do not.

2. Be diligent in the use of the means of salvation. They are laid before you, while they are by the sovereign disposal of Providence, kept from others. Neglect them not, as ye would be found to reject the counsel of God against yourselves. And satisfy not yourselves in the bare use of them, but seek grace and salvation in them from Jesus Christ, they being the appointed means of grace.

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#### OF FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

JOHN i. 12.—*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name.*

FAITH in Jesus Christ being the main thing required for one's escaping the wrath and curse of God, we come now to speak of it particularly, from these words. In which we have, (1.) The nature, (2.) The fruit of faith, viz. the privilege and dignity of adoption into God's family. Passing the latter, [See vol. i.]

We may take notice of the former, viz. the nature of faith, *As many as received*, &c. Wherein consider,

1. What it is in the general. It is a saving grace, for by it one becomes a child of God, and so an heir of heaven.

2. What it is in particular, (1.) The object of it is Christ, he, his name, his person, with his benefits. The acts of it, saving the sinner, are, [1.] *Receiving* him; this is explained to be *believing*. Now, *receiving* implies an offer of him made to the receiver, which is done in the gospel. [2.] *Resting* on him; for it is not a mere believing him, by an historical assent to his word, but a believing on his name, which imports a fiducial recumbency or relying on him, as one who believes another is said to rest on his word. (2.) The subjects of it are many; not all, but some, namely, the elect of God, quickened

\* See all this illustrated in *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*, State ii. head 3. under the title, *Objections answered*.



by the spirit of regeneration, compare ver. 13. 'Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' These receive Christ for salvation; for he offers himself as a Saviour, and the fruit of it in the text is saving.

The doctrine founded on the text is,

Doctr. 'Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace whereby we receive, and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.'

Here we will consider,

I. How faith in Christ is a saving grace.

II. Whence it proceeds.

III. The subject of faith.

IV. The object of it.

V. The saving and justifying acts of it.

VI. The end of these acts of faith.

VII. The ground and warrant of it.

VIII. *Lastly*, Draw an inference or two.

I. I shall shew, how faith in Christ is a saving grace. There are four sorts of faith spoken of in scripture. (1.) Historical faith, which is a bare assent to the truths of God, Jam. ii. 19. 'Thou believest that there is one God; thou dost well. The devils also believe and tremble.' (2.) A temporary faith, which is such an assent, joined with some affection to the truths of God, though unsanctified, like that of the stoney ground hearers, Luke viii. 13. 'who when they hear, receive the word with joy; but these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.'

(3.) The faith of miracles, which is a belief of the Lord's working some miraculous effect by us, or in us, upon some intimation of his word concerning it, 1 Cor. xiii. 2.—'Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains.' All of these may be in reprobates, and none of them are saving. (4.) Saving faith, already described from the text.

It is called saving faith, because all that have it shall certainly be saved for ever, from sin and God's wrath; yea, as soon as one has it, salvation is his, it is in his possession as to the beginnings of it, Acts xvi. 31. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'

It saves us, not as an act or work, fulfilling the condition of a new law; for so it is excluded, with all other works, from the causing of our salvation, Rom. iii. 27, 28. 'Where is boasting then? it is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.' But it saves us as an instrument,

apprehending Christ and his salvation, Rom. iii. 22. 'Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all, them that believe; for there is no difference.' It is as the looking to the brazen serpent, which saved the stung Israelites; or as the hyssop dipped in blood, and sprinkling the leper, that cleansed him.

II. I come to shew, whence this faith proceeds.

1. It is not from our natural powers, the power of man's free-will. 'No man can come to me,' says Christ 'except the Father which hath sent me, draw him,' John vi. 44. It is not a flower of nature's garden; otherwise one should make himself to differ from others.

2. It is a special gift of God. Hence says the apostle to the Philippians, chap. i. 29. 'Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ,—to believe on him.' It is wrought in the heart by his divine power, 'through the faith of the operation of God, Col. ii. 12. No less power can produce it, Eph. i. 19. It is ascribed, as to the working of it, to the Father, John vi. 44. forecited; to the Son, Cant. i. 4. 'Draw me;' but in a special manner to the Spirit, Gal. v. 22. 'The fruit of the Spirit is—faith; therefore he is called 'the Spirit of faith,' 2 Cor. iv. 13.

The outward means which the Lord usually makes use of to beget faith in one's heart, is the word, the word of the gospel, preached, heard, or read, Rom. x. 17. 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.' This is the incorruptible seed which the new creature is framed of, 1 Pet. i. 23. the vehicle of saving influences, Gal. iii. 2.

III. I proceed to consider the subject of faith. It is not all men, 2 Thess. iii. 2. 'For all men have not faith.' They are rare ones who get it, Luke xviii. 8. 'When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? But they are,

1. Elect sinners; they only obtain it, Tit. i. 1. And they all do obtain it sooner or later, before they go off the world, Act xiii. 48. 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.' The subjects of it are those of the O'd Testament as well as those under the New. Hence the apostle to the Hebrews, speaking of the former, says, chap. xi. 13. 'These all died in faith.' The subjects of it also are elect infants dying in infancy, though they have not actual faith; who, though they knew nothing of the matter, like the Israelitish infants, Dent. i. 29. have the seed or spirit of faith. This is the general character of the subject. But,

2. More particularly, elect convinced sinners are the subjects of it, John xvi. 8, 9. 'When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they be-

lied not on me.' The plough of the law goes through the heart, in some measure, before this seed be cast into it, Gal. iii. 23, 24. 'Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.' So that an unconvinced, insensible sinner, is an unbeliever. But,

3. Yet more particularly, elect, convinced, quickened sinners, are the subject thereof, as appears from the text and the following verse. Regeneration in the order of nature goes before believing, and faith is the first vital motion of the regenerated soul. There is first a passive reception of Christ into the soul, whereby Christ comes into the dead soul, and quickens it, and then actual believing, or active receiving of Christ, is the first motion of the new creature. But most particularly,

4. *Lastly*, Not only the understanding, but the heart and will of such a one, is the subject of faith, where it has its seat; the understanding knowing and assenting, and the will embracing and consenting, Isa. liii. 11. 'By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many,' Rom. x. 10. 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.'

IV. I proceed to consider the object of faith.

1. The real object in general is the whole word of God, and therefore no falsehood can be under faith, Tit. i. 2. But the special real object of it is the promise of the gospel, Acts xvi. 31. 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,' &c. for therein Christ the Saviour is held forth to a poor sinner. Faith looks to the whole word; it is persuaded of a divine authority in the commands, and an immovable truth in the threatenings and promises. Every promise of the word it looks to, and comes wrong to none, while the believer lives in this world, and it lasts: it is a bee that roves through all these flowers in the garden of God's word. But as it is saving and justifying, it settles upon the promise or offer of Christ in the gospel. And,

(1.) The testimony of the word, concerning Christ's ability to save, is a special object of faith in this case, Mark ix. 33. 'If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.' Sin is a dead weight, which the soul findeth itself unable utterly to hoist up; but the gospel holds out Christ to be able to remove it, Heb. vii. 25. 'He is able to save unto the uttermost.' Faith assents to this too, Ps. lxxv. 3. 'Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.'

This assent in both cases may be mixed with doubting, yet true, Mark ix. 24. 'I believe; help thou mine unbelief.' If the soul have

as much faith of both, as to venture itself on Christ, though the bride sign the contract with a trembling heart, though the doubting will never be commended, the subscription will be sustained.

2. The personal object of faith is,

(1.) General: God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as we profess in the creed, John xiv. 1. 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.'

(2.) Special; Jesus Christ, as in the text. He is the object of faith, as it saves and justifies the sinner, typified by the brazen serpent in the wilderness, to which the wounded Israelites were to look, and the look was healing, John iii. 14, 15. And Christ's person is the primary object of justifying faith, Isa. xlv. 22. 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.' And his benefits, merits, righteousness, &c. are the secondary objects thereof, Phil. iii. 8, 9. 'Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.'

V. I proceed to consider the saving and justifying acts of faith. These are,

1. Receiving him as he is offered in the gospel, as in the text; cordially closing with him, and heartily consenting to take him as he is offered. Hereby the spiritual marriage-tie betwixt Christ and the soul is made. Christ gives his consent in the gospel offer, and the sinner gives his by faith closing with the offer. Now, he is offered in the gospel in all his offices. So faith is a receiving of Christ,

(1.) As a Prophet to be our Teacher, Guide, and Leader, renouncing our own wisdom, Matth. xvii. 5.

(2.) As a Priest, renouncing all merit and confidence in one's self, duties, and sufferings, and betaking one's self to Christ, his obedience and death, for all, Isa. xlv. 24. 'Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.'

(3.) As a King, renouncing all strange lords, and receiving him for absolute Governor in the soul, and over the whole man, yielding to bear the yoke of his commands, and the yoke of his cross. Isa. xxvi. 13. 'O Lord our God, (says the church), other lords besides thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.'

2. Resting on him as he is offered in all his offices too, Isa. xxvi. 3, 4. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.' 2 Chron.



xvi. 8. 'Thou didst rely on the Lord.' The soul has a burden of weakness and ignorance, and therefore rests on him as a Prophet; a burden of guilt, but rests on him as a Priest, laying the weight on his blood; a burden of strong lusts and temptations, but rests on him as a King.

This receiving and resting has a most special eye to the priestly office of Christ, faith in his blood. It is a looking to him as lifted up on the cross, Isa. xlv. 22; eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood, John vi. 53; and submitting to his righteousness, Rom. x. 3.\* This receiving and resting upon Christ for salvation is in many places called believing in, or trusting on, Christ as our Saviour.†

\* See the nature and acts of faith more largely opened and illustrated in the author's View of the Covenant of Grace, head 6. The way of instating sinners personally and savingly in the Covenant of Grace.

† Now, in order to illustrate the nature of faith, considered as believing in or trusting on God, and the way of a sinner's justification in his sight, it may not be improper to insert here the two following notes on Gen. xv. 6. 'And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness,' taken from the author's manuscript work on the first twenty-three chapters of Genesis, above referred to, p. 232.

'Now he trusted in Jehovah, i. e. Now Abram trusted in Jehovah, (who was the Lord promising, as well as the Lord promised), not only believing his word spoken to him at this and other times, but also resting in him, and relying upon him, for all contained in the promise, and especially the salvation of the Messiah, which was the chief thing in it. The whole verse is a parenthesis, in which Moses occasionally shews how Abram entertained the promise, from the first time it was made to him. Now, saith he, Abram trusted in Jehovah, viz. all along and so at this time, Rom. iv. 3. Gr. For, what saith the scripture? Now Abraham believed God. Jam. ii. 2. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Now Abraham believed God. Comp. the preceding and following verse of this chapter. This is the first place wherein faith is expressly spoken of. *V'he'min*, and he trusted. The formal signification of *H'min*, is to trust: for so it may be rendered every where; and so our translators do render it, Judg. xi. 20. Job iv. 18. xv. 15, 31, and xxiv. 32. marg. Mic. vii. 5. All believing is trusting; but all trusting is not believing, as will appear anon. Accordingly *H'min* is more extensive than believing; for the object of it is a thing; as well as a rational agent, the only proper object of believing. Thus, wonderful works, Psal. lxxviii. 32. one's life, Deut. xxviii. 66. and Job xxiv. 32. and a beast, Job xxxix. 12. are, by this word, said to be trusted in, which cannot well be said to be believed in. The construction of the word natively leads to this notion of it. It is ordinarily constructed with to, as Gen. xlv. 26. He trusted not to them, or in, as here. He trusted in Jehovah: sometimes with a noun simply, and an infinitive, as Judg. xi. 20. 'Sihon trusted not even Israel to pass in his bounds.' And finally, as *H'min*, *Emeth*, *Omnah*, *Emun*, &c. are akin, as branches of one root; so are the words, he trusted, truth, a truth, trueness, &c.; answering unto them in our language. The Greek *pisteuo*, in the New-Testament use of it, is of the same import, signifying to trust: for so it may be rendered every where; and so it must be rendered in several texts, as John ii. 24. Jesus did not trust himself to them. Rom. iii. 2. They were trusted the oracles of

VI. I am to shew, what is the end of these acts of faith. It is for salvation, Christ's whole salvation. (1.) Salvation from sin, Matth. i. 21. 'He shall save his people from their sins.' (2.) From wrath, 1 Thess. i. ult. 'Which delivereth us from the wrath to

God, i. e. trusted with them. So 1 Cor. ix. 17. 1 Thess. ii. 4. 1 Tim. i. 11. How *H'min*, being in *Hiphel*, comes to signify to trust, is best accounted for by allowing the phraseology to be elliptical, the conjugate noun being understood. So it is q. d. *H'min emunah*, He trusted a trust, or trusting: and the sense of that is, He exercised trust or faith; as to plant forth plaut, and to seed seed, Gen. i. 11; is to bring forth plant, and seed, or to yield them. The *ellipsis* of the conjugate noun is usual, as in *Hizriang*, *Hiskil*, &c. chap. iii. 6; and of it there is a double indication in this text. One is the pointing of this word with a distinctive. Comp. 1 Kings xxi. 14; They sent forth (sup. a messenger) unto Jezebel. Isa. i. 17; Plead (sup. the plea) of the widow. The other is the pronoun it, in the latter hemistich, which relates to trust or faith. Now, to trust to is to believe: and accordingly the object of it is always a person, as chap. xlv. 26. forecited; or else a word, as 1 Kings x. 7; I trusted not to the speeches, Isa. liii. 1; Who hath trusted to our hearing, i. e. word heard: the which comes all to one; the word or speech being always pronounced by a person, and the person believed in respect of his word. To trust in, is not only to believe a competent object; but to rest in and rely upon, the person, word, or thing trusted, firm and sure, for the effect for which he or it is trusted. Thus Achish trusted in David, 1 Sam. xxvii. 12; not only believing his word, ver. 10; but resting and relying on him, as one trusteth on a friend, (Mic. vii. 5.) "saying he hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him, therefore he shall be my servant for ever." So the people brought through the Red Sea, trusted in Moses, Exod. xiv. ult. relying on, and committing themselves to, his conduct: And on the same occasion, they trusted in God's speeches, Psal. cvi. 12; relying on them with confidence. And this the unicorn cannot be trusted in (i. e. relied upon) for bringing home one's seed, Job xxxix. 12. That the apostles Paul and James, in the passages above cited, retain the Seventy's reading of this text, Now Abraham trusted to God, will not evince a perfect identity of the phrases trusting to, and trusting in God; since it is undeniable, that the inspired penmen, in many passages of the Old Testament, adduced by them in the New, do not act the part of rigid translators: but it will evince them to be one in effect. From what is said, it appears, that according to the scripture phraseology, or language of the Holy Ghost, (1.) The nature of faith in general lies, in trusting, trusting a person, word, or thing. (2.) The nature of saving faith, lies in trusting, that is, resting in, and relying upon the person, word, and thing, (proposed to it in the promise,) as firm and sure, for the effect for which it is trusted. (3.) Trusting in the Lord is by the appointment of God, and the nature of the thing, necessarily connected with trusting to him; comp. Isa. liii. 1. John iii. ult. (4.) It is not by the habit, but by an act of faith, a sinner is justified.

And he reckoned it to him, righteousness, i. e. And God, even Jehovah the Son, see the note above, p. 379 sig. (1.) in whom Abram trusted, (hem. 1.) did treat that act of faith or trust in him, which Abram exerted, as if it had been fulfilling of the law, in which one could stand righteous before him, reputing and counting it to him for that effect, and justifying him, thereupon, in his sight. *Vajjahh'sch'bheha*, And he reckoned it. Of *Hhaschab*, to reckon. Accordingly *Hhischschab* (Pih.) is fully to reckon, as Lev. xxv. 50. Psal. cxliv. 3. John i. 4. and *Hithhaschschab* (Hithp.)

come;' from the guilt, defilement, dominion, and indwelling of sin. So it is for justification and sanctification. And faith receives and rests on him alone for all these, Gal. ii. 16. 'Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus

only once occurring, doth manifestly signify to reckon one's self, Num. xxiii. 9; behold a people \* \* \* in (i. e. among) the nations shall not reckon itself; i. e. a people which, &c. This word is used, (1.) For counting and reckoning, as in matters of money, 2 Kings xxii. 7; it would not have been reckoned with them; the silver, Lev. xxv. 50; and he shall fully reckon with his acquirer. (2.) For reputing or counting, as the Latin *Habeo, duco*, as Neh. xiii. 13; they were reckoned faithful. (3.) For regarding, prizing, making a valuable account of a person or thing. So it is used, Isa. ii. 22. xiii. 17. xxxiii. 8. and liii. 3. Thus, reckoners of his name, Mal. iii. 16; are those who valued and made a becoming account of it. (4.) For judging, thinking, or accounting so and so of a thing, as Isa. x. 7; his heart will not so reckon, viz. that he is the rod, staff, and sent, of God, ver. 5, 6; concluding concerning it, as John. i. 4; it fully reckoned; for to be broken, i. e. fully laid its account therewith. All these agree in the common notion of reckoning, which speaks a view of a thing in several particulars, and a practical judgment formed thereupon. And hence, I think, it is that the word is used, (5.) For contriving or devising, as artists do a piece of work, as Amos vi. 5; they have reckoned (i. e. devised) to them instruments of song. *Tz'dakah*, righteousness, *Tzedek* and *Tz'dakah* are both immediately derived from *Tzadak* (*Kal*), of which see the note above, p. 379. and accordingly signify righteousness: but with this difference, that *Tz'dakah* founds an acting, as if one might say, righteousness; *Tzedek*, a quality, the principle or result of the former. Hence expound, Dent. xxiv. 13; to thee it shall be righteousness, (*Tz'dakah*), i. e. a doing or acting righteously, a righteous action, a good work, a conforming to the law. An evidence of this difference is, that *Tz'dakah* is often used in the plural number; but *Tzedek* is never. For the former points at a thing, under the notion of a righteous action, or good work, of which kind there are many; but the latter, at a thing, under the notion of a quality, viz. righteousness, which is but one, whatever be the number of the actions which it results from, or is productive of. Thus, Judg. v. 11; the righteousnesses of Jehovah, are his righteous acts or works, Isa. lxiv. 5; all our righteousnesses are filthy rags, i. e. our good have been as filthy rags. So Isa. xlv. 24; only in Jehovah, to me he said, [are] righteousnesses and strength, i. e. only in Jesus Christ are good works, that will answer the demands of the law. Howbeit, the word is thus taken objectively, acting for an action or work. On the other side, balances of (*Tzedek*) righteousness, stones of righteousness. Lev. xix. 36; are balances and weights conform to the standard. Thus these two words, frequently occurring, howbeit their signification may come to one in effect, yet they do, in their formal notion, represent the thing under different *schemes*. Accordingly the righteousness of Christ imputed to believers, is expressed by each of them. His righteousness (*Tzidkatho*) is declared and preached, Psal. xxii. ult.: and he is Jehovah (*Tzidkenu*) our righteousness, Jer. xxiii. 6; the former proposing his righteousness, as the fulfilling of the law; the latter, as conformity to the law, arising therefrom. As the word *Ihaschabh* is used for devising, chap. vi. 5. it is sometimes constructed, as here, with *L'* to or for, denoting the party for whom the thing is devised, as Amos vi. 5; or the end for which, as Gen. i. 20. But since faith cannot be said to be devised righteousness, that sense of the word, which at best is but

Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ; that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.' So it is a going out of one's self to Christ for all.

secondary, can have no place here. But for clearing the import of this weighty expression used in the text, according to the scripture-phraseology, it will be worth the while to inquire into the several phrases, formed with the word *Hhaschabh*, in the notion of reckoning which is the formal notion of it. I. A person is said to be reckoned with others, i. e. classed with them, and the same account made of him as of them. Thus, Psal. lxxxviii. 5. the Psalmist was reckoned with them that go down to the pit, his case accounted hopeless, even as theirs. II. To reckon one person or thing as another, is to make a like account of them as of the other, and so treat them after the like manner. Thus Job's friends thought they were reckoned as beasts, Job xviii. 3; and he himself thought, he was reckoned as an enemy of God, chap. xix. 11. and darts are reckoned as stubble by the leviathan, chap. xli. 21-29ths. So Num. xviii. 27. Psal. xliv. 23. Is. v. 28. and xl. 15. Hos. viii. 12. III. To reckon one thing for another, is to account it to be that thing: Job xxxv. 2. Hast thou reckoned this for judgment, i. e. reckoned this to be judgment. So Judah reckoned Tamar for an harlot, Gen. xxxviii. 15. Eli, Hannah for a drunken woman, 1 Sam. i. 13. Job according to Elihu, reckoned God for his enemy, i. e. to be his enemy, Job xxxiii. 10. Thus to be reckoned for righteousness, Psal. cvi. 31. is to be reckoned to be righteousness. So this third phrase falls in with, and is equivalent to the IV. here used by Moses. That is, two terms being proposed, the one is said to be reckoned the other, as faith reckoned righteousness. Concerning this phraseology, *Obs.* 1. It is used of reckoning a thing, which in reality and in very deed it is, antecedently to the reckoning. Thus the treasures were reckoned faithful, Neh. xiii. 13. as indeed they were; and for that cause Nehemiah put them into that office: the houses in unwall'd villages were to be reckoned upon the field of the land, Lev. xxv. 31. as they were indeed, not being separated from the field by a town-wall: a fool holding his peace is reckoned wise, Prov. xvii. 28. and so he is in that point; the fruitful field shall be reckoned for a forest, Is. xxix. 17. and so it really is now, and is truly so reckoned; namely, the Jews, sometime God's people, but now rejected. The land of the Ammonites, saith the text, Dent. ii. 20. would have been reckoned a land of giants, i. e. formerly it used to be so reckoned: and justly, for the giants, adds the text, dwelt therein in old time; however, it neither was so, nor was it so reckoned in Moses' time. The Emims would have been reckoned giants, ver. 11: and justly so; for they were tall as the Anakims, ver. 10. The scope of the two last passages is, to confirm the Israelites in the faith of their conquest of Canaan, notwithstanding of the Anakims there. For this cause Moses shews them, that the Zamzummims were driven out before the Ammonites, and the Emims before the Moabites, though both the one and the other were reckoned giants. But if they were not really what they were reckoned to be, these instances were nothing to the purpose they are adduced for. And thus the fact of Phinehas was reckoned for righteousness, Psal. cvi. 31; i. e. reckoned a righteous action, pleasing to God; which it really was, hereby done in faith: and hereby it is declared to be so, for an obvious reason, viz. that otherwise men would have been apt to have condemned it. It is without cause alleged, that the text says, It was reckoned, righteousness for generation and generation; which it was not, being his own personal deed, and not the deed of any of his posterity. For the text stands thus; And it was



VII. I come now to consider the ground and warrant of faith. This is the gospel-offer, (1.) The sinner has his invitation, Isa. lv. 1. 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.' (2.) The declaration of God's

reckoned to him for righteousness: for generation and generation; even to perpetuity; i. e. it was reckoned to him righteousness: [it was reckoned so] for generation and generation; even to perpetuity: a token of which was the priesthood's being continued in his family, from generation to generation. *Obs.* 2. This phrase is used of reckoning a thing what in very deed it is not, neither prior to the reckoning, nor posterior to it. And in this case, it either, 1. Bears a mistake, which takes place only where the reckoner is capable to form a judgment, but withal is fallible. Thus did Judah's reckoning of Tamar bear a mistaken judgment, Gen. xxxviii. 15; Eli's of Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 13; the Jews of Christ, while they reckoned him stricken, smitten of God, Isa. liii. 4; i. e. an object of God's peculiar hatred, while he was indeed his beloved Son. And such would be the judgment of one, who would reckon the deep hoar hairs, Job xli. 24-32ds. which without question it is not. Or else, 2. The meaning is no more, but that the reckoner treats the thing as if it were that other thing. And thus it is always in three cases. (1.) In the case of agents incapable of forming a judgment. So the leviathan reckons iron for straw, Job xli. 19-27ths. which doubtless it is not; but he treats it as if it were straw. (2.) In the case of fallible judges, in points not liable to mistake. Thus Laban's own daughters were by him reckoned strangers, Gen. xxxi. 15; and Job a stranger by his own domestics, Job xix. 15; and Zion's sons, earthen pitchers, by the enemies, Lam. iv. 2; in all which cases, there could be no mistaking of the persons reckoned for such persons and things; but these persons were so treated as if they had been taken for such persons and things. (3.) In the case of the infallible Judge. So Isa. xl. 17. the nations are reckoned of him less than (Tohu, Gen. i. 2.) emptiness; not that they are so in very deed; for they are creatures made the sixth day, after (Tohu) emptiness was no more: but that he can so treat them, and annihilate them as easily. Thus Job says, God reckoned him for his enemy, Job xiii. 24: not that he thought God judged him to be his enemy indeed; on the contrary, he was resolved to maintain his way, as to the main of it, before the Lord, ver. 15; and says expressly, chap. x. 7. Thou knowest that I am not wicked; but his meaning is, that God treated him as if he had been an enemy; and Elihu found fault with him, even for that, chap. xxxiii. 10. *Obs.* 3. This phrase is used of reckoning a thing what it is not indeed considered in its own nature, but yet in effect is; which last bears the ground of the reckoning. Thus he who gives a flattering blessing to his neighbour, hath a curse reckoned to him, Prov. xxvii. 14. The blessing is not in itself a curse; yet it is a curse in effect, as having the same effect, as if he had cursed his neighbour: and so, on that ground it is reckoned to the flatterer a curse. V. and lastly, To reckon a thing to a person is to set it down on his score, to put it down on his account, as really his, antecedent to the reckoning; if ill, to answer for it, if good, that he may claim, or have the benefit of it. Examples of the former, Lev. xvii. 4. Blood shall be reckoned to that man; i. e. the guilt of blood shall be put on that man's account, as really his, and he shall answer for it: he hath shed blood, saith the text, and that man shall be cut off Psal. xli. 8-7ths. Upon me they would reckon, evil to me, i. e. charge it on me as my fact and deed, and make me answer for it. So a curse is reckoned to the flatterer, Prov. xxvii. 14. Thus Shemei says to David, Let not my lord reckon iniquity to me, 2 Sam. xix. 20-19ths;

good pleasure in their so doing, John vi. 29. 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' And, lastly, his peremptory command, 1 John iii. 23. 'And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.'

I shall conclude with a very few inferences.

he owns his crime, and do not remember that which thy servant did perversely, *ibid.* but he begs that the king would not put it on his account, and make him answer for it. And thus David describes the blessedness of the justified man, that the Lord will not reckon iniquity to him, *Psal. xxxii. 2.* i. e. that he will not put his iniquity on his own account, and make him answer for it; the putting it on the Surety, and his answering already for it, being already sustained at God's bar. Examples of the latter: 2 Sam. iv. 2. *Beeroth*: it would have been reckoned upon Benjamin; viz. as truly theirs, to have the benefit of it, for indeed it did belong to Benjamin, *Josh. xviii. 25*; though the Philistines violently possessed it, 1 Sam. xxxi. 7. So it is said of another plot of ground, It would have been reckoned to the Canaanites, *Josh. xiii. 3.* namely, as really theirs; and therefore it remained to be possessed by Israel, *ver. 1.* And thus, *Num. xviii. 27.* Your heave-offerings shall be reckoned to you; i. e. put on your account, as your own offerings, and you to receive the benefit of the same. On the other hand, He that offereth a peace-offering, and eateth of it on the third day, it was not to be reckoned to him, *Lev. vii. 18.* i. e. put on the account of his service to God. *Psal. xl. 18-17ths.* I [am] poor and needy, my LORD will reckon to me; i. e. The Father would put the poverty of the Mediator on his account, and reward him for it. And thus the deed of Phinehas was reckoned to him, put on his account of acceptable service, and graciously rewarded, for the sake of the Mediator. Thus far of the phrases formed with *Hhaschabh* to reckon. Now, the scope and design of Moses in the text, is to shew to all, and particularly to the Jews, the way how a sinner is justified before the Lord, namely, by faith in the Messias without the works of the law. Having given an account, how Abram entertained the promise, viz. that he trusted in Jehovah, he discovers on that occasion, how he became righteous before God, namely, by that trust: that every one may see in him, as in an exemplar, how a sinner is justified in God's sight. That this is the scope of the words, is put beyond question by the apostle, *Rom. iv.* From what is said, it appears, that, according to the phraseology of the Holy Ghost, and the scope of this passage, the following positions are established. *Pos. I.* The only righteousness wherein a man can stand before the Lord, is the fulfilling of the law, or a conformity to the law refuting therefrom. For such is the scripture-notion of righteousness in the case of men. *Pos. II.* The sense of this passage is not, That God reckoned Abram's trusting, or believing for a righteous and worthy action, as he did the fact of Phinehas, *Psal. cvi. 31.* For it is the righteousness of Abram's person, not the righteousness of an action, of his that is here aimed at. The deed of Phinehas was what could not have missed, by some at least, to have been reckoned a rash and sinful action, if God himself had not declared his approbation of it: but Abram's trusting in Jehovah was what could never be liable to any such misconstruction, among those who believe Jehovah to be God. But the sense is, His faith was accounted righteousness for his person in the sight of God. *Pos. III.* Faith's being reckoned or accounted for righteousness, which is the phrase of the *Septuagint*, retained by the apostle Paul. *Rom. iv. 3.* is equivalent to, and of the same sense with, Moses' phrase in the text, viz. faith's being reckoned righteousness. This is clear from what is said on the third and fourth phrases compared.

*Inf.* 1. Faith is a precious thing, 2 Pet. i. 1. Not to be sworn by, but sought of the Lord. It saves the precious soul, and wraps it up in precious promises.

*Pos.* IV. The righteousness of Christ, though righteousness in the strictest propriety, greatest reality and perfection, antecedently to the imputation or reckoning of it, may, according to the scripture, be imputed for righteousness to us : for, in the phraseology of the Holy Ghost, a thing is said to be reckoned or imputed for what it is really, as well as for what it is not ; as appears from the instances adduced, *obs.* 1. on the fourth phrase. *Pos.* V. Since faith, or the act of believing, is not in itself righteousness for a person, before God, antecedently to the imputation of it, for that righteousness : which is manifest from that it doth not, in itself, exactly answer or fulfil the law, the eternal rule of righteousness : and since God, the infallible Judge, whose judgment is always according to truth, is the party imputing it for righteousness ; therefore faith, or the act of believing, imputed to sinners for righteousness, neither is at any time, nor is made by the imputation, nor by any gratuitous acception, the very formal righteousness for which a sinner is justified in the sight of GOD. It is no more so than Laban's daughters were really strangers to him, Gen. xxxi. 15 ; or Zion's sons earthen pitchers, Lam. iv. 2 ; or the nations really less than emptiness, Isa. xl. 17 ; though they were so reckoned. *Pos.* VI. Upon the same grounds, faith is therefore said to be imputed for righteousness ; not that God judgeth it to be the righteousness of a person before him, but because he treats faith as it were that righteousness ; namely, justifying the person who hath it, pardoning all his sins, and accepting him as righteous in his sight, immediately upon his act of believing. Even as the leviathan treats iron as straw, Job xli. 24. though he does not judge it to be straw ; and Lahan treated his own daughters, Gen. xxxi. 15 ; and Job's servants their master, Job xix. 15 ; as if they had been strangers ; and Zion's enemies, her sons as earthen pitchers, Lam. iv. 2 ; though surely they did not judge them to be so. And even as God treats the nations as if they were less than emptiness : Isa. xl. 17. though he infallibly knows they are more than emptiness ; and as Job thought himself treated of God, as if he had been his enemy, Job xiii. 24 ; while in the mean time he knew, that God did not judge him to be an enemy to him. *Pos.* VII. Though faith is not really and in itself the righteousness of a guilty man before the Lord : yet being so in effect, to wit, relatively and instrumentally ; for as much as it lays hold on, presents, and pleads the righteousness of Christ, it is on good grounds, said to be imputed for righteousness ; even as the flatterer's blessing is reckoned a curse, Prov. xxvii. 14 ; as being so in effect. *Pos.* VIII. and last. The righteousness which is the relative and object of faith, viz. the righteousness of Christ, is reckoned or imputed to believers, as really theirs, as well as their faith ; theirs, I say, antecedently to the imputation of it at God's bar ; though the former is not indeed inherent in them, as the latter is. This is evident from the true sense of the fifth phrase, reckoning a thing to a person, established by the instances of it above adduced. Christ's righteousness becomes ours, by faith uniting us to him : from which union immediately results a communion with him in his righteousness ; which being legally found at the bar of heaven, that perfect righteousness is reckoned or imputed to us, set down on our score, put on our account, as really ours : even as the guilt of blood is reckoned to the man, Lev. xvii. 4 ; as really his guilt ; and as the plot of ground, Josh. xiii. 3 ; was reckoned to the Canaanites, as really theirs, or belonging to them, &c. And thereupon we are justified on the account of that righteousness truly being and reckoned to be ours.

2. It is a most necessary grace ; for it is that which brings Christ and the soul together. And without it, it is impossible to please God, Heb. xi. 6.

3. It is of perpetual use while here ; it is an eye, hand, and foot to the soul, Psal. xxvii. 3 ; and at death it does the last office to the man, supports him when all other comforts fail, Heb. xi. 13.

4. *Lastly*, Seek faith to have it wrought, actuated, and strengthened in you ; and for that cause, diligently attend ordinances, the preaching of the word particularly ; for ‘faith cometh by hearing,’ Rom. x. 17.



#### OF REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE.

ACTS xi. 18.—*Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*

REPENTANCE is an inseparable companion of faith, so that the soul blessed with faith in Christ will be also endowed with repentance towards God.

This is a conclusion drawn by the believing Jews from the account Peter had given them of what passed with respect to his receiving the Gentiles into Christian fellowship, with which they rest satisfied, namely, *That God had given repentance to the Gentiles.* Where consider,

1. A blessing granted ; *repentance unto life* ; so called, to distinguish it from legal repentance, and the sorrow that is unto death. This true repentance is unto life ; for, by God’s appointment, it must go before eternal life ; and whoso have it shall be sure of that.

2. The parties to whom it was granted ; *the Gentiles*, those who were once without hope and without God in the world.

3. The author of it, *God*. It is his gift, as well as faith is. He works it in the heart.

The doctrine of the text is,

DOCT. ‘To those whom God designs for life, he gives repentance unto life. They come all through this strait gate who enter into life.’

Or, ‘Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience.’

Here I shall show,

1. What are the kinds of repentance.



II. The general nature of repentance unto life.

III. Who is the author of this repentance.

IV. The springs of it.

V. The parts thereof.

VI. Deduce an inference or two for application.

I am to shew, what are the kinds of repentance. They are two.

1. Legal repentance, such as was in Judas, and may be in other reprobates, and so is not saving, Matth. xxvii. 3. being produced by law terrors, without gospel-grace changing the heart.

2. Evangelical repentance, peculiar to the elect, which is that in the text, and is the only true and saving repentance, of which we speak. The general difference betwixt them lies here, that in this last, one repents of his sin as it is sin, or offensive to God, as David did, Psal. li. 4. saying, 'Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight;' in the other, only as it brings wrath on him, Gen. iv. 13.

II. I proceed to shew, the general nature of repentance unto life. It is a saving grace, 2 Tim. iii. 25. disposing the soul unto all the acts of turning from sin unto God.

1. It is not a transient action, a sigh for sin, a pang of sorrow for it, which goes away again; but it is an abiding grace, a new frame and disposition, fixed in the heart, disposing one to turn from sin to God on all occasions, Zech. xii. 10. 'I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.'

2. Nor yet a passing work of the first days of one's religion; but a grace in the heart, setting one to an answerable working all their days. The heart being smitten with repentance at conversion, the wound is never bound up to bleed no more, till the band of glory be put about it.

3. It is not a common grace, as legal repentance is, but a saving one; distinguishing one from a hypocrite, and having a necessary connexion with eternal life.

III. I shall shew, who is the author of this repentance.

1. Not men themselves; it is not owing to one's natural powers, Jer. xxii. 23. 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.' The stony heart is beyond man's power to remove.

2. It is God's free gift, and wrought by the power of his Spirit in the heart, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. 'A new heart also will I give you,

and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them,' Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.' Sometimes notorious sinners become penitents, as Manasseh, Paul, &c. Where he is the matter, the knottiest timber is as easy for the Spirit to work as any other, Zech. xii. 10. forecited.

The means the Spirit makes use of is the word; hence we read of preaching repentance. And (1.) The law serves to break the hard heart, Jer. xxiii. 29. 'Is not my word like a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?' It is like the Baptist preparing the way for the Messiah's coming. Hence it is called 'The Spirit of bondage,' Rom. viii. 15. (2.) The gospel serves to melt the hard heart, like a fire, Jer. xxiii. 29. forecited; and so bow and bend it from sin unto God. The soul is driven by the law, but drawn by the gospel. The Lord comes in the still small voice.

IV. I proceed to show, the springs of this repentance. There are two opened in the heart by the Holy Spirit.

1. A true sense of sin. And in this there are two things.

(1.) A sight of it, Psal. li. 3. 'My sin is ever before me.' The man's eyes are opened, and he sees his sinfulness of nature, heart, lip, and life; the evil of his sin, in the misery and danger of it to himself, and the dishonour it does to God.

(1.) A painful feeling of it, Acts ii. 37. The sin which sat light on them before, becomes a burden which they are not able to bear; for now they are roused out of their lethargy and feel their sores: it is a burden on their spirits, backs, and heads. They are filled with terror, anguish, and remorse, at the sight, as was the Philippian jailor, xvi. 30. This is necessary for repentance, because otherwise the sinner will never part with his sin, nor prize Christ and his grace, Rev. iii. 17. He will reign as king without Christ, till he feel his lost estate, as did the prodigal, Luke xv.

2. An apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, Joel ii. 12, 13. 'Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. And rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of

the evil.' The eye of faith is opened to see and believe, that there is forgiveness and mercy to a poor sinner, that though the sinner has destroyed himself, yet in God is his help; there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. This can only be apprehended aright through Jesus Christ, Zech. xii. 10. forecited. Not mercy for mercy's sake, but Christ's sake: 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,' &c. This is necessary. For without it, one will either, (1.) Go on in secret despair, casting off the thoughts of his case, and making the best of it he can, Jer. ii. 25. 'Thou saidst There is no hope. No: for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.' Or, (2.) Lie down in tormenting despair, like Judas. Both which will fix sin in the heart, and bar out repentance. And since God is a consuming fire to the workers of iniquity, and without satisfaction there can be no remission, there is no apprehending of mercy but through Christ.

V. I proceed to shew, the parts of repentance. These are two, humiliation and conversion, Joel ii. 12, 13. above quoted.

1. Humiliation. The sinner goes from God by the high-way of pride and self-conceit; but always comes back the low way of humiliation. Grace pulls him down from the seat of the scorner, and lays him at the Lord's feet, 1 Pet. v. 6. 'Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.' It makes him like Benhadad's servants, who came to the king of Israel girded with sackcloth, and ropes on their heads, in the most humiliating posture. In it there is,

(1.) Sorrow for sin, a kindly sorrow for the offence and dishonour done to a holy gracious God, Zech. xii. 10. formerly cited, defacing his image, transgressing his law, grieving his Spirit, and furnishing spear and nails to pierce a Saviour.

(2.) Shame, a holy shame for sin, Rom. vi. 21. 'What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?' They see now their spiritual nakedness, pollution, disappointed expectations from sin, and reproach discovered, which fill the soul with blushing.

(3.) Self-loathing, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. 'Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loath yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.' They see a fulness of sin in them, and the complicated aggravations of their sin, which make them to smite on their breast, as the publican did, Luke xviii. 13. as deserving to be pierced through the heart it bred in; to smite on the thigh, as Ephraim did, Jer. xxxi. 19. as if he desired to break the legs that carried him out of God's way.

(4.) Penitent confession, Jer. iii. 13. accusing and condemning themselves.

2. Conversion, or returning. Of which there are two parts.

1st, Turning away from sin, 2 Tim. ii. 19. To repent of sin, and continue in the habitual practice of it, is a contradiction. They turn from it,

(1.) In heart, by a hearty and sincere hatred of it. Psal. cxix. 104. 'I hate every false way.' They hate it as an evil, the worst of evils, worse than sufferings. They hate it sincerely as sin, universally and irreconcilably. They look on it as God does, as that abominable thing which he hates.

(2.) In their life and conversation; they get clean hands.

[1.] They turn from the gross pollutions of the outward man, in the habitual practice of these, Psal. xxiv. 3, 4. 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lift up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.' A profane life is the mark of an impenitent state, Gal. v. 21. 'They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' The true godly may make gross slips; but if they be habitually gross in their lives, there is no difference betwixt Christ's sheep and the devil's goats. [2.] They are tender with respect to sins of common infirmity, making conscience of words and action, as Paul did, Acts xxiv. 16. 'Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.' What others count light, they will count great: even these as burdens to them, which they groan under, and as iron fetters they would fain be freed of, Rom. vii. 24. 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'

2dly, Turning to God. By faith man returns to God as a portion, by repentance as a Lord and Master, like a runaway servant. And he returns,

(1.) To God himself. Sinners departing from God, dislike not only their service, but their Master, Luke xix. 14. But returning they are disposed to love him and like him as a Master.

(2.) To his duty to God, Acts ix. 6. to the practice of every known duty, and spirituality in duty. This is new obedience, which a penitent turns to, [1.] In full purpose, Psal. cxix. 106. no more doubting whether to fall in with it or not, or delaying or putting it off any more. [2.] In sincere endeavours, Acts xxiv. 6.\*

*Inf.* 1. An impenitent heart is a sad sign of a lost state, Rom. ii. 5. While thou livest so, thou art far from God; and if thou die so, thou art lost for ever.

\* A large and particular account of the nature, author, necessity, &c. of repentance, may be seen in several discourses in a volume of the author's sermons, first published in 1756, which were preached only two or three years before he delivered this discourse; which may partly account for the brevity of it.



2. That repentance which is not evangelical and true is little worth. You must have more than Judah's repentance, if ever you see heaven.

3. To pretend to repentance, and never forsake sin, is vain.

4. To leave sin, and not take up the contrary duties, is not repentance.

5. Go to the Lord by faith for the grace of repentance.

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#### OF CHRIST'S ORDINANCES IN GENERAL.

ISA. xii. 3.—*Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.*

THIS song looks to the days of the gospel, wherein Christ having come and purchased salvation, the tidings of it are carried through the world in the gospel, and it is communicated to Jews and Gentiles through the means of grace. Here we have,

1. A benefit to be had in the church, *water*, i. e. gospel grace, the benefits of Christ's redemption, as suitable to needy, fainting souls, as water to the thirsty. See John iv. 14. and vii. 37.

2. The way of its communication to poor sinners. It is to be *drawn out of the wells of salvation*. These are gospel-ordinances, the wells in this valley of Baca for the life of souls, and refreshment of spiritual travellers. All the elect capable to draw, do draw out of them. This is the sense, whether the allusion be to the wells in the wilderness for the Israelites, or to the Jews fetching water out of the spring of Siloam at the feast of tabernacles in the night, with mirth and music, to the temple, and pouring it on the altar.

The text furnishes this doctrine.

DOCT. 'The Lord's ordinances are the wells of salvation to the elect.' Or, 'The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption, are, his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.'

Here I shall shew,

I. What is understood by a means of salvation.

II. What are these means of salvation.

III. What makes any ordinance a mean of grace.

IV. To whom are the Lord's ordinances made effectual.

V. Whence their efficacy proceeds.

VI. Deduce an inference or two.

I. I am to shew, what is understood by a means of salvation. It is that by and through which the Lord Jesus doth by his Spirit convey grace and salvation into a soul. That is a mean or mids betwixt the Lord and the soul, which he uses for communication of grace from himself to the soul, 1 Cor. i. 21. 'For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' Chap. iii. 5. 'Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?' The which may be used with expectation of good thereby. These means are some of them outward, some inward; some ordinary, others extraordinary.

II. I come now to shew, what these means of salvation are.

1. The inward means is faith, Heb. iv. 2. 'Unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.' This ordinarily requires an outward means to work it by. But being wrought, it is the great inward means of communication betwixt Christ and the soul. This is the mean of entering us into the covenant, of repentance, justification, reconciliation, sanctification, &c. It is the bucket whereby one draws the water out of the wells of salvation; and the want of it in most that come to them, makes them go away without water.

2. Extraordinary means are whatsoever the Lord in his sovereign wisdom is pleased to make use of extraordinarily for conveying grace into the hearts of his elect, as he did a voice from heaven for the conversion of Paul, Acts ix. 4, 5. None can limit sovereignty. He may use what means he will, and bring about his purposes of grace by means unknown to us. What means the Lord makes use of in the case of elect idiots, such as are deaf or blind, and so incapable of reading or hearing the word, and yet may get grace and be saved, who can determine? Or perhaps he does it without means altogether. But,

3. The outward and ordinary means are the Lord's own ordinances, Rom. x. 14, 15. 'How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!' They are called outward, because they are something without ourselves; ordinary, because though ordinarily the Lord makes use of them for these holy ends, yet he has not tied himself to them, but may work without them, as seems good in his sight, Acts ix. 4, 5. Now these are,

1st, In the general, all the ordinances of God without exception, which he has set up in his church for that end, namely, the word, sacraments, prayer, church-communion or fellowship, Acts ii. 42; which being managed by mutual instruction, admonition, consolation, and watching over one another, are of great use to promote the salvation of souls; church-government, discipline, and censures, Matth. xviii. 17; religious fasting, 1 Cor. vii. 5; singing of psalms, Eph. v. 19; swearing by the name of God, when duly called thereto, Dent. vi. 13; and whatsoever are God's institutions in his church.

2dly, The most special means of grace and salvation are the first three, the word, sacraments, and prayer, Acts ii. 42.

(1.) The word preached or read. This has been a well of salvation to many, and a means of grace, Acts ii. 41. About three thousand souls together drank of this well, and lived. It is the seed which the new creature is formed of; and though a despised ordinance, yet the great means of God's appointment for bringing sinners into a state of grace, 1 Cor. i. 21. forecited.

(2.) The sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper. In both, the people of God have drank to the salvation of their souls, though they are not converting ordinances, but sealing ones, supposing the efficacy of the word to precede; as is evident in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts viii. 39. 1 Cor. x. 16.

(3.) Prayer, public, private, and secret. This is a very special means of grace, and a most ordinary way of communion betwixt Christ and a soul. So that one no sooner grows concerned about his soul, but he uses this means, as Saul did, of whom it is said, Acts ix. 11. 'Behold, he prayeth.' It is a means by which divine influences have flowed plentifully to many a soul, and none of the Lord's people can live without it.

III. I shall now shew, what makes any ordinance a mean of grace, a well of salvation, out of which one may in faith look to draw water for his soul, or get spiritual good by. The Papists and church of England think human institution sufficient, else they had never made so many significant ceremonies and actions in religion, for which there is no divine warrant, as crossing in baptism, kissing the book in swearing, &c. In the use of which they think one has ground to expect good to his soul; but all these, being but human ordinances and inventions of men, are not means of grace, but of sinning; not wells of salvation, but broken cisterns, that can hold no water; nay, they are rather puddles, that defile the soul, instead of nourishing it. For,

1. No ordinance whatsoever can avail without a particular blessing; for the efficacy of ordinances is not natural, or from them-

selves. Now, men cannot annex a blessing to their ordinances and institutions, to make them effectual for the good of souls, though both church and state join for it. And we have no ground to expect the Spirit's working with tools that are not of his own making. Therefore their institution is vain, and their use too, Matth. xv. 9. 'In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.'

2. Men's institutions or ordinances, in respect of God, are forbidden, and condemned by the Lord's word, namely, in the second commandment. The want of a divine warrant is sufficient to condemn any thing of this sort, if it be never so likely in the eyes of human wisdom, Matth. xv. 9. just quoted. See Jer. xxxii. 35. 'And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech, which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination to cause Judah to sin.' And they must needs be blasted institutions, since the institution is an invading of Christ's royal prerogative, Matth. xxviii. 20; who has directed his servants to teach his people to 'observe all things whatsoever he hath commanded.'

3. Men's use of them is not only useless, but worse, not only to no good purpose, but to ill purpose; for the using of them is will-worship, which is sinning against the Lord, Col. ii. 20—23. 'Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not, taste not, handle not: which are all to perish with the using), after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.' It provokes God, and brings on wrath on the users of them, Hos. v. 11, 12. 'Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment; because he willingly walked after the commandment. Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth: and to the house of Judah as rottenness.'

That which makes any ordinance a means of grace or salvation, what one may justly look for good of to his soul, is divine institution only, Matth. xxviii. 20. forecited: therefore the first question in all ordinances ought to be, 'Whose is this image and superscription?' That appointment is to be found in the Lord's word, Isa. viii. 20. 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' That is 'sufficient to make the man of God perfect,' 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17; and therefore contains the whole ordinances he is to meddle with



for the salvation of himself or others. The institution of some ordinances is more clear in the word than others; but whatever ordinance has divine warrant, express or by good consequence, is a divine ordinance and means of grace. And to these his own ordinances the Lord has confined us, Deut. iv. 2. 'Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.'

IV. I proceed to consider, to whom the Lord's ordinances are made effectual.

1. Not to all who partake of them, Isa. liii. 1. 'Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' Many come to these wells who never taste of the water. I think it an unwarrantable expression, that all God's ordinances do attain their end, in the salvation or damnation of all that come under them; for damnation is not the end of any of God's ordinances, but salvation. And the scriptures adduced to prove it, viz. Isa. lv. 10, 11. 'For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it;' 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. 'For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one we are the savour of death unto death; to the other the savour of life unto life: and who is sufficient for these things?' will not prove it; for the former respects only God's end in sending his word, the other the event, but neither of them the end of the ordinance. Damnation is the effect or consequence of the contempt or misimprovement of ordinances, but by no means the end thereof.

2. But to all the elect they are effectual, unto whom they come, Acts xiii. 48. 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.' John x. 26. 'Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.' To the elect only they are effectual for their salvation, which is their end.

V. I am to shew, whence the efficacy of ordinances proceeds. It does not proceed from any virtue in themselves, or in him that administers them, but from the Spirit of the Lord working in them and by them, 1 Cor. iii. 7. But this I shall speak to more largely in a posterior discourse.

I conclude with a few inferences.

*Inf.* 1. Sad is the case of those who are in such a wilderness, as

there are no wells in, nor any of God's ordinances. 'Where no vision is, the people perish.' This is the dismal case of the Pagan world. Which should move us to pray that the Lord may send the light of the gospel to these dark places of the earth.

2. The filling up of the wells in a land, by removing ordinances from a people, is a sad stroke. Where the word and sacraments are not, there is no church there; and consequently God has no people to save there. O let us cry to the Lord, that this may never be our unhappy case.

3. The defiling of the wells is a sad matter for those who drink of them, whether it be by error in doctrine, superstition in worship, or uninstituted government of the church: but worst of all, where they are poisoned with damnable heresies and idolatry, as in the apostate church of Rome. Let us pray for, and strive to maintain, purity of doctrine, worship, and government.

4. Heinous is the sin of the neglect or contempt of the wells of salvation, which God has opened unto them. Let despisers and neglecters of ordinances consider this, and what they will answer when God rises up to call them to an account. Alas! this is one of the great grounds of the Lord's controversy with the present generation, which loudly calls to deep humiliation before him.

5. Great is the sin and loss of those who come to the wells, but never draw of the water nor taste it: who are never bettered by ordinances, but remain as dead and unconcerned about their souls as if the means of salvation were not vouchsafed to them.

6. *Lastly*, Prize the ordinances. Prepare for them, and duly improve them; remember they are the ordinary means of salvation: therefore seek to enjoy God, and to have communion with him, in them, otherwise they will be in vain as to you.

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#### HOW THE WORD IS MADE EFFECTUAL TO SALVATION.

EPH. vi. 17.—*The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

IN these words we have, (1.) A particular piece of the Christian armour recommended, *the word of God*, the revelation of his mind communicated to us in the scriptures, with which every one who minds for heaven should be familiarly acquainted. (2.) A particular piece of its commendation; it is *the sword of the Spirit*; i. e. it is that which the Spirit of the Lord uses in fighting the battles of the Lord, and conquering an elect world to Christ, and bringing them, through

all opposition from the devil, the world, and the flesh, into the heavenly Canaan. And therefore it cannot but be of singular use to a Christian in the spiritual warfare. It is but the sword, but the Spirit cuts with it.

The doctrine of the text is,

Doct. 'The word of God is the sword the Spirit makes use of for raising up a kingdom to Christ.' This more fully in the words of the Catechism, runs thus: 'The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation.'

In handling this subject, I shall shew,

I. In what respects the word is an ordinance of God, and mean of salvation.

II. What are the ends for which the Lord has appointed these means and ordinances of reading and preaching the word.

III. Consider the efficacy of the word.

IV. Improve the subject in some inferences.

I. I am to shew, in what respects the word is an ordinance of God and mean of salvation.

*First*, The reading of the word is an ordinance of God, and mean of salvation, of God's own appointment. The Bible is this word, and God has given it to us, and appointed it to be read.

1. The public reading of it in the congregation is God's ordinance, and a mean of salvation. And we find it in scripture performed by the teachers of the people, Neh. viii. 8; 'So they read in the book, in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.' Ver. 2, 3. 'And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation, both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that is before the water-gate, from the morning until mid-day, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law.' And so the reading of the word claims a place among public ordinances. Hence reading and expounding a passage of scripture every Lord's day in the church, is a laudable and well-warranted practice in this church.

2. The private reading of it in families, Deut. vi. 6, 7, 8, 9; 'These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine, heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and

they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates,' Psal. lxxviii. 5; 'For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children.' Every family ought to be a church; and as they are to speak to God by prayer, so they are to hear God speak to them, by reading his word. And this they ought to do every morning and evening, as well as command their children and servants to read it by themselves.

3. Secret reading of it by one's self, Deut. xvii. 19; 'It [the law or word of God] shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life,' John v. 39; 'Search the scriptures.' By this means the soul converses with God in his word. And those who do not make a practice of daily reading the scripture, are none of the Lord's people, whatever otherwise they may profess.

Hence it is evident, that the people not only may, but ought to read the Bible, and therefore it ought to be translated into the vulgar languages. Which highly condemns the Antichristian church of Rome, which takes away the key of knowledge from the people, by prohibiting them to read the word of God.

*Secondly*, The preaching of the word is an ordinance of God, and mean of grace, 1 Cor. i. 21; 'It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' But though all may read the word, yet none ought to preach it, but those who, being qualified for it, are duly called thereto, 2 Cor. iii. 6; 'Who hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit, Rom. x. 15; 'How shall they preach except they be sent?' 1 Tim. iv. 14; 'Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.' Though the reading of the word, as well as the preaching, is a mean of salvation, yet the preaching of it is the special means, though a despised ordinance in the world; therefore called *foolishness*, 1 Cor. i. 21. It is the most ancient of the two. Noah was a preacher, before the Bible was to take his text from, 2 Pet. ii. 5; and so was Enoch before him, Jude, 14. In this work Christ himself spent the time of his making public appearance in the world, viz. preaching the kingdom of God. It is the mercy of the church of God, that they have the word of God as a lamp always burning: but the preaching of it is the snuffing of the lamp, by which it gives the greater light. And for this reason the preaching of the word should be attended to by all, if ever they expect to be saved.

II. I proceed to shew what are the ends for which the Lord has



appointed these means and ordinances of reading and preaching the word.

*First*, For sinners out of Christ they are appointed means of two great and necessary purposes.

1. Of their conviction, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. 'But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.' The sinner naturally is asleep in sin, and the word awakens him; he is bold and daring, and will not consider his sin, nor duty either; but the word brings him to the bar, judges him, convicts him, and condemns him. And,

(1.) It discovers his sin to him. [1.] What are his sins. It comes home so close to him, as if it said, 'Thou art the man.' It goes out through and in through him, and opens up his very heart, tells him of himself what none in the world were privy to, but only God and his own conscience, 1 Cor. iv. 25. This is what the spouse means by the watchmen's finding her,' Cant. iii. 3. Who has told the minister? say many, when the minister drawing his bow at a venture knows not whom it hits, till the party touched cries out, but the minister directs the arrow, Heb. iv. 12. And many a time have we seen the reproof laid in seasonably for the sin, that one could not miss it, if but going on straight in the ordinary.

[2.] What the heinous nature of sin is, Heb. iv. 12. God's word pulls off the paint and varnishing from the man's sin, and discovers it in its loathsome nature, and killing aggravations. It makes him see the evil in it, that he never saw before, Acts xxvi. 18.

(2.) It discovers his misery out of Christ, Acts ii. 37. The sinner sees in the word, as in a glass, his lost state without a Saviour; perceives himself bound over to death with cords of guilt, which fills him with fear, terror, anxiety, and remorse.

2. Of their conversion, Psal. xix. 7; 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.' The word is the means which God hath chosen for bringing sinners to himself, Acts xxvi. 18; for raising the dead soul to life, for regeneration, and the working of faith and repentance. This effect of the word we take up in these two particulars.

(1.) The word is the mean of driving the sinner out of himself to Jesus Christ by faith, as it did Peter's hearers, Acts ii. 37, 38; 'Faith cometh by hearing.' The law goes before and condemns the sinner, and discovers him a lost man. The gospel follows with the glad tidings of salvation, and the soul is persuaded to embrace them.

(2.) It is the mean of driving the sinner out of his sins unto God, Acts xx. 21; it sets fire to his nest in sin, and brings him to the Lord as a Master, and to a compliance with his will as his duty.

*Secondly*, For saints they are means appointed for their edification or building up, Acts xx. 32. The church of Christ in this world is but a building, and not yet finished; and every particular saint's state in this world is but an unfinished building: and therefore they must have the word continued with them, as the scaffolding is with the house till it get on the topstone, Eph. iv. 11,—13. And the reading and preaching of the word are,

1. Means of building them up in holiness, the foundation of which is laid in them at conversion, Acts xx. 32. As they are born again of the incorruptible seed of the word, so they are nourished by these breasts; by the same means they had their spiritual life, they get it more abundantly, 1 Pet. ii. 2. It does so by,

(1.) Establishing them in the good they have attained, setting them to hold it fast over the belly of temptations, Eph. iv. 14. By the reading and preaching of the word, the truth according to godliness is rivetted in them, that the longer they live under the means, they are more confirmed in the Lord's way.

(2.) Cleansing them from remaining evils in their heart and life, Psal. xix. 9. Coming to this glass, they get their spots discovered to them, that they may wipe them off. So the word is the pruning-hook of the great Husbandman, John xv. 2, 3; and the engine for demolishing the remaining strong holds of the rebels, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

(3.) Pressing and helping them forward to the good thing lacking, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17; and so the effect is, that they 'all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord,' 2 Cor. iii. 18. It helps them still to add a cubit to their stature, shewing them more of the truth and the duties of holiness.

2. A means of building them up in comfort, Rom. xv. 4. They are liable to many griefs in the world; but it is appointed to be their great cordial, and sovereign remedy against all their griefs. And this it does, (1.) By setting their case in a true light, Psal. lxxiii. 17. (2.) By affording suitable remedies for their case, from the precious promises and doctrines of it suited to every case, Isa. xl. 1, 2. 'Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.'

III. I shall consider the efficacy of the word. Concerning which observe,

1. The parties to whom it is effectual. Its convincing efficacy it may have on the reprobate, as Felix, Acts xxiv. 25. Its converting efficacy it has on the elect only, Acts xiii. 48. 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.' Its edifying efficacy, both in holiness and comfort, it has on the saints.

2. The spring of its efficacy is not from itself, nor the preacher, but from the Spirit's operation by and with it, 1 Cor. iii. 5, 6. 'Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the increase.

3. The inward mean which the Spirit makes use of to render it efficacious, is the faith or belief of it, resting upon God's faithful word for the efficacy, Heb. iv. 2.

I shall conclude with a few inferences.

*Inf.* 1. Prize your Bibles, and read them diligently in your families, and by yourselves, and look on that exercise as a mean appointed of God for your souls' good, John v. 39. 'Search the scriptures.' Alas! the dust of many people's Bibles will be a heavy witness against them at the great day: which should excite us all to the careful perusal of them.

2. Prize the preaching of the word, and attend it conscientiously; and remember that the neglecting and deserting it is not such a light thing as many look on it to be; since it is the spiritual means which the Lord makes use of in converting sinners, and edifying saints; and is necessarily productive of the most terrible consequences to those who condemn it.

3. Let not the one jostle out the other. God has joined them; do not ye then put them asunder. Think not that because ye hear the preaching, therefore ye may neglect reading the Bible; nor to sit at home without necessity on the Lord's day, thinking to do as well with your Bibles, as attending the dispensation of the word. For as the preaching sends you to your Bible, your Bible would send you to the preaching, if ye would hearken to it, 1 Cor. i. 21. And the Bible is read in vain, if it do not inspire you with a sincere love to the preaching of the word.

4. The word is necessary, for saints as well as sinners. It is false growth by which people grow beyond it, either in preaching or reading, before they get to heaven. Nay, all such growth and progress is an arrant delusion.

5. *Lastly*, Look to the Lord himself for the efficacy of the word; and labour to believe the word, that it may profit your souls. For without faith the word will be unprofitable to you; and without the influence of the Spirit, ye will reap no benefit by it.

## HOW THE WORD IS TO BE READ AND HEARD.

LUKE viii. 18.—*Take heed therefore how ye hear.*

THIS is an admonition inferred by our Lord from the parable of the sower in the preceding part of the chapter, in which he had shewn the very different events of people's hearing the word. To some it is effectual, to more it is not: *Take heed therefore how ye hear*, says he. Much depends on the right manner of hearing the word; and the case is the same as to the reading of it, for therein we are to hear God speak by his word. Men may hear what is very good, yet get no good by it, unless they hear in the due manner.

The doctrine of the text is,

DOCT. 'As the hearers of the word would profit by it, they should take heed how they hear it.'

Here I shall consider that one point, How we should hear? or 'How the word is to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?' *Ans.* 'That the word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer; receive it with faith and love; lay it up in our hearts; and practise it in our lives.'

There are three things necessary to be heeded and practised, if we would so manage these ordinances, as they may become effectual for our salvation.

I. Some things are to go before hearing.

II. Some things are to go along with it.

III. Some things are to follow after it.

I. Some things are to go before hearing; namely, preparation and prayer.

*First, Preparation.* We should prepare ourselves for the ordinances, as Jacob said, Gen. xxxv. 2, 3. 'Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments. And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.' It is true, God may by his sovereign grace catch the unprepared heart by his word, as he says, Is. lxxv. 1. 'I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not:' and there are not wanting instances of such a surprising dispensation of grace. But it is the way of preparation in which we have ground to look for good by it, Is. lxiv. 5. 'Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness; those that



remember thee in thy ways;' otherwise we are not in the way of getting good by it.

This preparation lies in these five things.

1. Getting the heart impressed with an awful sense of the majesty and holiness of that God into whose presence we are going, and whose word we are to hear, Psal. lxxxix. 6. Though the voice is on earth, the speaker is in heaven, and we should consider it so as to come to hear what God says to us, Acts. x. 33. And the more this be on our spirits, we may expect the more good by the word, Isa. lxvi. 2.

2. Banishing out of the heart worldly cares that are lawful at other times, Matth. xiii. 7. We should say to all these as Abraham did to his young men, 'Abide ye here,—and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, Gen. xxii. 5. The heart going after the world at such a time, renders the word ineffectual: but a contrary disposition is a token for good.

3. Application of the blood of Christ to the soul for removing guilt, and doing away any controversy betwixt God and the soul, Amos iii. 3. 'How can two walk together, except they be agreed?' Psal. xxvi. 6. 'I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord.' The laver stood before the entrance into the temple, that they might wash there who were to go in: so spiritually, 'before the throne there is a sea of glass like unto crystal,' in which filthy polluted souls are to wash, ere they be admitted to the throne, Rev. iv. 6. And happy they who come thus washed to hear the word; for they may expect to hold communion with Christ therein.

4. Purging the heart of carnal and corrupt lusts and affections, 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2. This is to put off one's shoes when coming on the holy ground, laying by the earthly frame, and putting on a heavenly one. For what good effect can be expected on the heart, filled with corrupt lusts, passions, and prejudices, nourished and not striven against; surely none at all. Whereas, if the heart be purged from these, the happiest effects may be looked for. It is impossible to profit by the word, where the heart is full of vain and carnal thoughts and projects.

5. *Lastly*, Stirring up in the heart spiritual desires, 1 Pet. ii. 2. 'As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, longing for communion with God, seeing his glory in the sanctuary, the supply of soul wants, and particularly for something suitable to our case. And therefore a deep consideration of our own case is a necessary part of preparation, 1 Kings viii. 38. and, if properly attended to, would be attended with great blessings.

This preparation for the ordinances is necessary, considering two things especially. (1.) The greatness of him with whom we have to do, Heb. xii. 28, 29. 'Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire. One would not rush without consideration into the presence of his prince: why then should one rush thoughtlessly into the presence of his God? (2.) The weight of the work. To hear God's mind declared to us is a business of the greatest importance; eternity depends on it to us; life and death hang upon our improving or not improving it, 2 Cor. ii. 16. 'To the one (says the apostle) we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life.' And were this duly considered, it would stir us all up to the most diligent preparation.

*Secondly, Prayer.* We should be much in prayer before we go to ordinances, family prayer and secret prayer, and therefore ought not to spend the Lord's day morning so as not to have time for these. If ye would have good of the word read or preached, pray, and pray earnestly before it. Pray,

1. For assistance to the minister. Hence the apostle says, 'Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified,' 2 Thess. iii. 1. Pray that the Lord himself would come out with him, directing him, instructing him, and exciting him, what to speak, and how to speak. It is rare to see a lively people under a dead ministry; and therefore people's own interest should engage them in concern for ministers.

2. For a meal to yourselves, Psal. cxix. 18. 'Open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of thy law.' Pray that God would direct the word to your case, and send it home on your hearts with his blessing, that ye may be enlightened, sanctified, strengthened, humbled, or raised up by it, as your case requires. And in order to attain this, pray and wrestle earnestly,

3. For an outpouring of the Spirit in his own ordinances, agreeably to the Lord's own promises, Prov. i. 23. 'Behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you; that yourselves and others may be bettered by the word.' Every one should be concerned for the success of the gospel, not to themselves only, but to others also. Love to God and our neighbours' souls should engage to this, 2 Thess. iii. 1. above cited.

Now, both this preparation and prayer beforehand being done, beware ye lean not on them, but remember that all depends on the Spirit's influences, and that he is debtor to none, Cant. iv. 16. 'Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.' John iii. 8. 'The wind blow-

eth where it listeth.' Cry therefore that the Spirit may render the word effectual.

II. Some things are to go along with hearing.

*First*, Attending unto the word diligently. This implies,

1. Waiting diligently upon the ordinances, so as people make it their business to catch opportunities of the word, and let none slip which Providence will allow them to overtake. That they hang on about the Lord's hands in the galleries of ordinances, labouring to keep the tryst which God makes with sinners there, 1 Tim. iv. 13. They that are only chance-customers to ordinances, whose attendance is ruled by their own conveniences, without conscience of duty, causing them to take them only now and then as their fancy takes them, cannot expect good of them. 'Blessed is the man (says the personal Wisdom of God) that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors,' Prov. viii. 34.

3. Diligent attention to the word, Isa. lv. 2. 'Hearken diligently unto me;' listening carefully to it, as a matter of the greatest weight, keeping the mind off other things in the time, and bending it wholly unto the word. In this there are four things comprehended.

(1.) Outward gravity and composure, without which attention is marred, Luke iv. 20. If men do believe it to be God's word which they are hearing, this is as little respect to it, as they can shew, namely, outward gravity; and therefore they are not to lay down their heads and sleep, nor to gaze hither and thither, far less to laugh, or to go out and in, here and there, in the time. This kind of behaviour, is not without contempt of God, who speaks to men by his word.

(2.) A fixing and bending of the ear and mind to what is spoken. Hence is that counsel of the wise man, Prov. ii. 1, 2. 'My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding.'—People must take care that they be not wandering in their heart while the Lord's words sound before them. If the heart wander, and be thinking on other things, how can the word do them good, while Satan has thus stolen away the heart?

(3.) A discerning of what they hear, so as to distinguish betwixt truth and error, the corn and the chaff, Mark iv. 24. 'Take heed what ye hear;' and therefore to mark always the agreement betwixt what is preached and the written word, for which the Bereans are highly commended, Acts xvii. 11. For they attend not rightly to the word who do not thus endeavour to discern what they hear.

(4.) An endeavouring to know the mind of God in his word, to

hear with understanding. This is to attend not only to the words, but to the things wrapt up in these words; as Lydia did, 'whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul,' Acts xvi. 14. It is not enough to hear the words, but the message from the Lord is to be weighed and seriously considered, and the mind of God taken up therein.

There is great need of attending unto the word with diligence, and making serious work of it. For,

(1.) The matter in hand is of the greatest weight; it concerns eternity; it is a treaty of peace betwixt God and our souls; the proposal of a method to preserve our souls from ruin, Luke xvi. 29. 'They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them;' and this proposal is not to be carelessly managed. And God himself is the Speaker; and what he speaks should be diligently attended to, for his sake; to prevent the breaking out of his wrath, which is threatened against those who do not hearken to him.

(2.) Because at best we will have much ado to hear well as we ought. We are naturally dull of hearing the Lord's word, Isa. lviii. 4, 5. 'They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear, which will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, charming never so wisely.' And oft-times there is a locked door between him and us. Hence he is represented thus, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock,' &c. Rev. iii. 20. And there is a thick wall of separation also betwixt him and us, Isa. lxix. 2. 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.' And there is always much noise about us as long-as the tempter is to the fore. Therefore the highest attention is requisite.

3. *Lastly*, If we do not thus attend, we lose, and our loss is great. Thomas missed one occasion of meeting with Christ, and unbelief got in upon him. And that word which we miss may be the most suitable to our case, which therefore Satan watches to carry off from us. Therefore we should never miss one occasion of hearing the word.

*Secondly*, Receiving the word rightly. This lies in two things.

1. Receiving it with faith, Heb. iv. 2. It is the mouth of the soul, by which one receives the sincere milk of the word, and drinks water out of the wells of salvation, and without which one gets no good of it to his salvation; but it is as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. It must be received,

(1.) With a faith of assent, believing it to be true and right, assenting to the truth and righteousness of the precepts, promises, and threatenings of it, Psal. cxix. 123, 160. 'I esteem all thy precepts



concerning all things to be right. Thy word is true from the beginning.' It has a divine authority; itself is God's testimony, which therefore for itself is to be believed; and where the power of it comes, it captivates the soul into the belief of it, 2 Cor. x. 5. This is to receive the kingdom of God as a little child, Luke xviii. 17.

(2.) With a faith of application, applying it to ourselves, Job v. ult. 'Hear it, and know thou it for thy good.' The Lord's word is compared to the falling rain or dew, Dent. xxxii. 2. The soul in receiving it should be as the dry and gaping ground swallowing it up as it falls, Psal. cxliii. 6. 'My soul thirsteth after thee as a thirsty land.' But most people are like the smooth stones, which send it off themselves to those about them. Now, this application is that which makes the plaister stick, and nothing else will do it. If the word be not applied, it can do no more good, than a plaister unapplied can heal the wound.

Now, the word is to be applied by us, for all the ends for which it is appointed, namely, for our conviction, Acts ii. 37. our conversion, John iv. 45. our edification in holiness, 1 Pet. ii. 2. and comfort, Rom. xv. 4. for the informing our judgments, and rectifying our will and affections; in short, for all the purposes of our salvation; otherwise we receive it in vain.

2. Receiving it with love, 2 Thess. ii. 10. Faith receives the word as true, love receives it as good, and good for us, Isa. xxxix. ult. 'Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken,' said Hezekiah to the prophet. It is good for us in all the parts of it, for we need them all; the threatenings as well as the promises; its reproofs as well as its consolations. And there is a threefold love which we owe to the word of God.

(1.) A love of esteem, highly prizing it, Job xxiii. 12. 'I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.' Psal. cxix. 72, 'The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.' (2.) A love of desire after it, 1 Pet. ii. 2. 'As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby;' a longing for it. (3.) A love of complacency in it, Psal. cxix. 162. 'I rejoice at thy word as one that findeth great spoil.'

We owe this love to the word for the author's sake, Psal. cxix. 159. 'Consider how I love thy precepts;' for its intrinsic excellency, Psal. cxix. 140. 'Thy word is very pure; therefore doth thy servant love it;' and for the necessity and usefulness of it to us, as 'light that shineth in a dark place,' 2 Pet. i. 19; as our food, Job xxiii. 12. forecited; nay, as our very life and breath. Dent. xxxii. 47.

*Thirdly*, Laying it up in our hearts, Our hearts and memories

are to be storehouses for the word, and there we are to lay it up, as it comes to our hands, Psal. cxix. 11. 'Thy word have I hid in mine heart, (says the Psalmist), that I might not sin against thee.' How can those expect good of the word who let it go just as it comes? But we should catch hold of it, retain it and not forget it.

We should lay it up as a precious and enriching treasure, Col. iii. 16 'Let the word of God dwell in you richly:' As a thing that we are in hazard of losing, and being robbed of, Matth. xiii. 4; and as what we will have use for afterwards, Isa. xlii. 23. 'Who will hearken and hear for the time to come?' Suppose it reach not your present case, it may be useful for what will be your case. You are travelling through the wilderness: lay up the word as the traveller does his directions for the way.

The best way to lay it up is, to let it have deep impression on your spirits while you hear it, and to lift up your eyes to the Lord, that he may fix it in your heart, Psal. cxix. 93. 'I will never forget thy precepts,' 2 Tim. i. 12. 'I know in whom I have believed.'

III. Some things are to follow after hearing the word.

1. Meditation on it in your hearts, Psal. i. 2. The Psalmist thus describes the good man: 'In his law doth he meditate day and night.' This is the harrowing of the seed sown, and the mean to sink it down in the soul, to keep it fast, Luke ix. 44. 'Let these sayings sink down into your ears.' This is the way to guard the word, that it may not slip away, Heb. ii. 4; and a sovereign help to a leaking memory. Ensure yourselves to meditation on the word, and ye will find your memories surprisingly strengthened: one particular will bring on another, and one truth meditated on will recal another to your remembrance, and afford you vast delight and pleasure.

2. Conferring of it on your discourse. This was enjoined to the Israelites by Moses, Deut. vi. 6, 7. 'The words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.' Luke xxiv. 14. 'And they talked together of all those things which had happened.' The repeating over again of the Lord's word, has sometimes had a relish with it, more taking than at its first coming to the man. Hence says the spouse, Can. ii. 10. 'My beloved spake and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.' Talking of it thus on your way from the church, and in your own houses, will be most beneficial to you.

3. *Lastly*, The main thing is practising it in your lives, Luke viii. 15. 'That on the good ground are they which in an honest and good

heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience :’ wiping off your spots, and adorning yourselves in holiness of life, by the glass of the word, Jam. i. 25. ‘ Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word,’ &c. The word heard, but not practised, will sink men deeper in damnation ; but heard and practised too, will bring them into eternal salvation. O then be careful to practise what you hear, otherwise it will do you no good.

I shall conclude with an inference or two.

*Inf.* 1. No wonder most of the hearers of the gospel get no good of it. They are at no pains to prepare for hearing it, wrestle not in prayer for the Lord’s blessing upon it, receive it neither with faith nor love, are not solicitous to lay it up in their hearts, and as little to practise it in their lives. How then can they reap benefit by it, when they use not these commanded means ?

2. Here is the way to get good of the word, however little good is done by it this day. Prepare for hearing it ; pray earnestly for the blessing of God to accompany it : receive it with faith and love ; lay it up in your hearts : and reduce it to practice in your lives.



#### THE DUTY OF ATTENDING ORDINANCES ENFORCED.

ACTS x. 33.—*Immediately before I sent to thee : and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.*

As attendance upon the public ordinances is one of the special means whereby Christ communicates the benefits of redemption to us, I have chosen this text in order to enforce, farther upon you, the duty of a diligent attendance upon them.

Our Lord Jesus, the only King and Head of his church, hath appointed ministers his ambassadors to declare his mind unto his people ; and though he could teach his people without them, yet the ministry is his ordinance, and by the foolishness of preaching he saves them that believe. Here we have,

1. A call to Peter related. The person calling is Cornelius, a soldier. A Gentile he was, yet a proselyte : a good man, but one who as yet knew not the doctrine of Christ crucified. The person called was Peter ; him God honoured to break the ice for the calling of the Gentiles, and to take down the first stone in the partition

wall betwixt Jews and Gentiles. The call itself is in these words, *I sent*. He had sent three men to invite Peter to his house, ver. 7. The reason of the call is thus expressed, *Therefore*, because he had the command of God for that effect. He made quick dispatch in the call; it was done immediately after the mind of God was discovered to him.

2. Peter's compliance with the call commended, *Thou hast well done that thou art come*. It is acceptable to God and to us. Peter had no great inclination to this work; he had his scruples about the lawfulness of it: but God condescends to solve his doubts, and clear his way. It was very offensive to the Christian Jews, which necessitated him to make an apology for his practice, Acts xi. after all it was well done to come, because he came in obedience to the call of God.

3. An address made to Peter when he was come, by Cornelius the caller, in name of himself and those who were with him. In which take notice, (1.) Of a congregation, though small, yet well convened. What the congregation was, see ver. 24. 'his kinsmen and near friends.' These, with his family, and those that came with Peter, made up the assembly. The good man made it his business to get not only his own family, but his friends, to wait on the ordinances. (2.) An acknowledgment of God's presence in a special manner in religious assemblies, *We are all here present before God*. (3.) The great end of their meeting was their soul's edification, *to hear*, that is, to hear and obey. And here is what the minister is to preach and the people to receive; it is *what is commanded of God*. The minister has a commission from God, and he must preach, not what men would have him to preach, but what God commands; and the people are to receive nothing that is beyond his commission. The extent of both is *all things*; the minister is to preach, and the people to receive, *all things commanded of God*.

*Obs.* 1. When God discovers his mind in any particular to a person or people, it is their duty presently to comply with it without delay. There could be no disputing after the discovery of the Lord's mind, Gal. i. 15,—17. The contrary was the fault of Balaam, and of the Jews in Egypt, Jer. xlv.

2. It is a blessed thing for a people to call that minister to whom God himself directs and inclines them. It is like Cornelius, who did not so much as know Peter by name, Acts x. 5. but he goes to God, and God directs him.

3. It is a commendable thing in a minister of Christ to comply with the call of God and his people, though it should be offensive to some, and not very agreeable to his own inclinations. Ministers are to go, not where they will and others would wish them, but where



God wills. It was Levi's commendation, 'Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him, neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant.' Deut. xxxiii. 9.

The doctrine arising from the text is,

Doctr. 'It is the duty of a people to attend on the ordinances, to be all present there before God, where pure ordinances are set up among them, to hear all things commanded of God to the minister whom the Lord hath sent them.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Give reasons why people should attend on and be present at ordinances, where God has set them up among them.

II. Shew in what respects people are before the Lord in public ordinances.

III. Consider the disposition of soul wherewith people should come to them.

IV. Make some practical improvement.

I. I am to give reasons why people should attend on and be present at ordinances, where God has set them up among them.

1. Because God has commanded it, Heb. x. 15. The Lord calls his people to be present there, wherever it is. Thus there was the tabernacle of the congregation in the wilderness, whither the people resorted to the public worship; and afterwards the temple. And for ordinary the synagogues under the Old Testament were the places of public worship, the ruins of which the church complains of, Psal. lxxiv. 8. It was the practice of Christ himself to attend these places, as we find, Luke iv. 16. He sends ministers to preach, and therefore commands people to hear.

2. Because the public assemblies are for the honour of Christ in the world. They are that place where his honour dwells, where his people meet together to profess their subjection to his laws, to receive his orders, to seek his help to pay him the tribute of praise, the calves of their lips. And forasmuch as all are obliged to these things, all are obliged to be present and attend, and to cast in their mite into this treasury. And therefore the people of God look on Christ's standard in the world as fallen, when these assemblies are gone, as Elijah did, 1 Kings xix. 10.

3. Because these assemblies are the ordinary place where Christ makes his conquest of souls, Rom. x. 14. The gospel is Christ's net wherein souls are caught. And it is always good to be in Christ's way. Who knows when that good word may come that may take hold of the man's heart, and make him Christ's prisoner, bound with the cords of love? A great number were caught at the first sermon

preached after Christ's ascension, and cried out, 'What shall we do?' Acts ii. 37. So Lydia hearing the apostle Paul, her heart was opened, Acts xvi. 14. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Happy are they that get the deepest wounds in this field. 'For the weapons of *this* warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,' 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

4. They are Christ's trysting-place with his people, the galleries wherein our Lord walks, Exod. xx. 24; the mountains of myrrh, where he will be till the day break. Those that desire communion with God, should seek him there, and wait on him where he has promised to be found. What a disadvantage had Thomas by his absence from one meeting where Christ met with the rest of the disciples!

5. The delights of Christ and his people meet there; for ordinances are the heaven on earth. Christ delights to be there with his people, Psal. lxxxvi. 2. 'The Lord loveth the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob,' Luke xxii. 15. 'With desire,' said our Lord, 'I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.' And they delight to be there with him, and for him. How passionately does David desire the ordinances! Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2. 'How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' He prefers a day in God's courts to a thousand: 'I had rather,' says he, 'be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. And again, 'One thing,' says he, 'have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple,' Psal. xxvii. 4. What good news was it to him to hear of an opportunity of waiting on God there! Psal. cxxii. 1. 'I was glad,' says he, 'when they said unto me, Let us go up into the house of the Lord.'

*Lastly*, The necessities of all that mind for heaven require it. Had the ordinances not been necessary, God would never have appointed them. And sure they are not more necessary for any than those that least see their need of them. These are the blind souls that have need to come to the market of free grace, for that eyesalve that opens the eyes of those that see not. Have not Christ's soldiers need of them to clear their rusty armour? do not dead souls need them to quicken them? sleepy souls, to awaken them? They

are the pools in the way to Zion, which the travellers to Zion have much need of to quench their thirst in their weary journey.

Surely the due consideration of these things may engage us all to make conscience of being all there present, as God gives opportunity.

II. I come to shew, in what respects people are before the Lord at public ordinances. The Lord is every where present; we can be no where but he is there, Psal. cxxxix. 7. But we are before him in a special manner in the public assemblies. He holds the stars in his right hand, and walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks. Our Lord has a special concern there; the main part of his business on earth lies there; and must he not be about his Father's business! This consideration should engage us to be there. Satan will not miss to be there: where Christ has a church, the devil will endeavour to have a chapel. The fowls will be where there is seed sowing. So some understand that, 1 Cor. xi. 10. 'For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels.' Now Christ is in the assemblies of his people,

1. Representatively. He has his agents there, his ministers, who are the Lord's proxies to court a wife for their Master's Son, 2 Cor. xi. 2. his ambassadors to negotiate a peace betwixt God and sinners, 2 Cor. v. 20. Matth. x. 40. Christ's ministers are but as John was 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness.' The Speaker is in heaven. Hence the Lord is said to speak in or by the prophets. It is the Lord's goodness that the treasure is lodged in earthen, not in heavenly vessels, lest their splendour should darken his glory in men's eyes, and so dazzle their eyes. And for the now glorified, God 'holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it,' Job xxvi. 9.

2. Efficaciously. His power is there, he works there, *et nihil agit in distans*, Psal. lxxv. 1. 'For that thy name is near,' says the Psalmist, 'thy wondrous works declare.' The word of the Lord is a powerful word. The ministers of Christ drive not an empty chariot, Psal. xlv. 4. 'In thy majesty ride prosperously.' Christ is there giving life to some, strength to others, and death's wounds to others, Mic. ii. 7. Psal. xlv. 5. Hos. vi. 5. The Lord's word returns not empty; it does always something. Every preaching will either harden or soften you; it will drive you a step nearer heaven or hell. Now, are we before him in his ordinances,

1. As our witness. They had need to carry warily that have many eyes on them. While we are at ordinances, men's eyes and the devils' eyes are upon us; but what should affect us most is, that God's eye is on us in a special manner, noticing how we behave, with what tenderness we handle holy things: and though our out-

ward carriage be never so promising, God is witness to the heart-wanderings, Ezek. xxxiii. 31.

2. As our Judge. God has a tribunal as well as a throne in the public ordinances, to reward or punish his worshippers according to their works. This has made the blood of some to be mingled with their sacrifices, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu, Lev. x. 3. God is jealous of his honour. A curious look into the ark cost the Bethshemites dear; and a wrong touch of it cost Uzzah his life. And we would make the same use of that which David did, 1 Chron. xv. 12, 13. 'Sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel, unto the place that I have appointed for it. For because ye did it not at first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.' It is true the gospel-dispensation is more spiritual; and therefore spiritual plagues are more usual now: but these ordinances cure the worst of plagues.

(3.) As our Lawgiver, Isa. xxxiii. 22. We are his creatures, and therefore his will must be our law. We are his upon many accounts; we know not our duty. He has set up the ministry in his church to declare to people what is their duty, Mal. ii. 7. But, alas! many, by their despising the messengers of the Lord and their message, say, as Psal. xii. 4. 'Who is lord over us?' But God will lord it over such in spite of their hearts, Hos. xiii. 10. 'I will be thy King.' But the heralds must proclaim the subjects' duty, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

(4.) As the Lord and master of the family, who has provided liberally for all of his house. Ministers are the stewards of the house; but he is the Master, that has made the provision in the gospel, Isa. xxv. 6. He sends out his servants, saying, 'Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled,' Prov. ix. 5. Look then how obedient children will stand and wait for supply of their necessities from an affectionate parent; so ought we to stand and wait on in ordinances for the supply of our spiritual wants from our heavenly Father.

(5.) *Lastly*, As our God, which should strike us with reverence, Psal. lxxxix. 7. 'God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints; and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.' Psal. xcv. 6. 'O come let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.' And this challenges the most serious disposition of our hearts to worship him.

III. I proceed to consider the disposition of soul wherewith people should come to the public ordinances. It is with a spirit ready to



hear all things commanded ministers of God. It implies the following things.

1. That ministers are to preach nothing to the people but what is the mind and will of God. Lawyers must not speak without authority of the law; and ministers must not speak but with a *Thus saith the Lord*; otherwise they go beyond their commission. The scriptures contain what is to be believed and practised by us. To coin new articles of faith is the work of Antichrist, not of the ministers of Christ. To impose and teach significant rites and ceremonies in the worship of God, is a piece of Popish dregs in the church of England; concerning which our Lord says, 'In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men,' Matth. xv. 9.

2. That it is the duty of ministers to labour to know the mind of God, as to particular messages which they are to carry to their people. Ministers are not to preach hand over head, whatever truths they can get to say to spend a half-hour in a sermon to the people. A word in season is very precious, Prov. xxv. 11; and xv. 23. And ministers had need of the tongue of the learned.

3. Whatever message the Lord gives them to a people, they are to deliver it impartially, *All things commanded them*. It was Paul's comfort that he had done so, Acts xx. 20. 'I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you,' says he to the elders of Ephesus.

4. *Lastly*, People ought to receive these messages from ministers as from the mouth of the Lord, and comply with them; for it is not bare hearing, but hearing with obedience, that is the hearing pointed at in the text. And with this disposition of soul should people come to ordinances.

Now, this hearing of the word has these properties.

(1.) We should hear reverentially. God speaks by ministers' mouths; and seeing God speaks at all, we must hear so, Psal. lxxxix. 7; forecited. See how Eglon behaved, when he was accosted by Ehud, Judg. iii. 20, 21. 'I have a message from God unto thee,' said Ehud. It is added, 'And he [Eglon] arose out of his seat;' denoting the reverence with which he was to receive the message. And so should we.

(2.) Diligently and attentively, Isa. lv. 2. 'Hearken diligently unto me,' says the Lord. God sends no message to us but what is of great concernment for us to hear; he does not take up our time with trifles; and when God speaks, it becomes us to be attentive.

(3.) Understandingly, so as to know the mind of God in what is preached, Matth. xiii. 11. We must endeavour to see heavenly things in their divine lustre, and to understand the things as well as

the words. We should 'look into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein, being not forgetful hearers, but doers of the word.' And were this the way of hearing, ministers would get more soul-cases to resolve than they do.

(4.) Believingly, John ix. 27. He that hears as out of the mouth of God must needs believe what is said. If the word be not believed, it is all one as if it were not heard, Heb. iv. 2. The soul rightly disposed to hear, is ready to yield itself the captive of divine revelation, and receive the kingdom of God as a little child to hear with application. The Lord's word is compared to rain, Amos vii. 16; and the soul should be as the dry and gaping ground, ready to drink it in, Psal. cxliii. 6; though, alas! most are like the rock, upon which the rain makes no impression. Ministers make the plaister, but faith of application makes it stick.

5. *Lastly*, So as to practise what we hear. Though the ear hear, if the feet be not set on God's way, it is not acceptable to God, Jam. i. 22. That hearing that fills the head with knowledge, but not the heart with holiness, will serve only to let people see the way to hell more clearly.

I come now to the improvement of this doctrine.

USE I. For reproof. It reproves,

1. Those who absent themselves from ordinances, and will not come to hear what is commanded us of God. A very small matter will prevail with many to sit at home, and loiter away the Lord's day in many places. When ministers are at pains to seek something that might edify their souls, they will not be at the pains to hear. O what contempt is poured on the gospel at this day by the pride of some, and the laziness of others! Whatever temptations any of you may have this way, I advise such, when they meet any thing that may seem to hinder them from the public ordinances, that they do in the first place, weigh the matter before the Lord, and see if it will bear weight there. If it do, they may look to God for the upmaking of their loss; if not, they cannot. For it is a most deceitful principle of some, that they can spend the Sabbath-day as well at home. It reflects on the wisdom of God in appointing public ordinances, and is most unlike the practice of the saints, to whom it was a great burden to be deprived of them. As for those who separate from our communion, I wish they would consider that Christ keeps communion with us, as many of the children of God can testify; and then say, as Zech. viii. 23. 'We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you.'

2. It reproves those who come to ordinances, but hear not the

word as becomes those who are to hear what is commanded of God. Such are,

(1.) Irreverent hearers. Many behave so as it appears there is no fear of God before their eyes. Some are sleeping, others gazing hither and thither, altogether careless and inattentive, to whom the word is as the seed presently picked up by the fowls. Their bodies are present, but their hearts are gone; they are the idols that have eyes, but see not; that have ears, but hear not.

(2.) Supercilious nice hearers, who sit as Judges of the word, and not as they that are to be judged by it. Hence such will be ready to commend the preacher, not to loath themselves; or else to reproach the preacher, and endeavour to expose him: like the riddle that lets through the good grain, and keeps the chaff; or like flies that fasten on festering sores.

(3.) Ignorant and stupid hearers, who hear the word, but neither know nor endeavour to know God's mind in it. A good voice and good word please them. These are not concerned to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

(4.) Unbelieving hearers, Isa. liii. 1. Unbelief is a defence against the power of the word, Matth. xiii. 58; and an unbelieving heart is a proud heart, ready to sterm at the word, like Ahab. And if the word hit them, their passion ariseth, the minister meant them, and wanted to expose them, and so they are filled with prejudice.

5. *Lastly*, Such as make no application of the word to themselves, but are ready to give it away to others. It is the weakness of godly souls, sometimes to give ear to nothing but what may tend to their discouragement; and it is the neckbreak of others to give away threats from themselves.

3. It reproves those who do not set themselves to hear what God commands ministers to preach, but will command ministers to preach so and so. Thus bands have been laid on the gospel in our land in the late persecuting times, when the exercise of the ministry was allowed by the magistrate with limitations, which could neither be imposed nor accepted without sin. And as little power have the people to limit them, or give orders concerning what we should preach: but every faithful minister will say as Micaiah, 1 Kings xxii. 14. 'As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak.'

USE II. Of exhortation. Attend on ordinances, and come with a design reverently, diligently, attentively, understandingly, believingly, and so to practise, to hear what is commanded us of God. We desire you to take nothing as matter of faith on our authority, but to do as the Bereans, who searched the scriptures daily, whether

those things were so, Acts xvii. 11. I offer the following motives to press this exhortation.

1. Consider the way how the word came to the world. It was by the Mediator, John i. 18. When Adam fell, death stared him in the face; and he ran away from God, till the word of reconciliation came forth, Gen. iii. 15; which disappointed the expectation of devils, surprised angels, and revived the self-murdering creature.

2. Consider, it is the word of life, Deut. xxxii. 46, 47. Nothing concerns us so nearly as this. If ye do not prize the word, and hear what is commanded us of God, there can be no comfort on a death-bed. It will make us table complaints against you before the Lord; and we will have a sad meeting at the great day. But if ye will hear, ye will be our joy and crown; your souls shall be saved in the day of the Lord, and we will bless the day that ever we met. Come to ordinances with a keen appetite after the bread of life; and pray for us, that the Lord may deal kindly with us, and furnish us with proper nourishment for your souls.



#### A CAVEAT AGAINST RECEIVING THE GOSPEL IN VAIN.

2 Cor. vi. 1.—*We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.*

I HAVE been calling you to a diligent attendance upon the ordinances, and now I come to beseech you not to receive the grace of God in vain: for if you should attend the means of grace ever so carefully, yet if you receive the grace of God in vain, all your labour is lost, and ye must perish in your sins at last.

The words I have read are a pathetic exhortation, in which,

1. The party exhorting is the apostle, in his own name, and that of all faithful ministers, who are called *workers together with God*. Compare 1 Cor. iii. 9. In the purchase of salvation Christ had none with him; but in the application of it he makes use of gospel-ministers, working with him, as instrumental causes, in exhorting, &c. and bringing the word to the ears of people.

2. The manner of the exhortation, *beseeching*; which denotes mildness and gentleness in dealing with souls, and withal earnestness and fervency of address.

3. The matter of it. *The grace of God* here denotes the gospel, as it is expressly called, Tit. ii. 11. It is so denominated, (1.) In respect of its rise, which was mere grace. (2.) Of its subject, being



the doctrine of grace, offering the free favour of God to sinners in Christ. (3.) In respect of its end, which is grace. (4.) Of its revelation to particular places. To *receive it in vain*, is to have the gospel among them, but not to be the better of it to salvation, as the seed is in vain received by the ground, which grows not up, but is lost. The doctrine is,

Doct. 'That people to whom the gospel is sent, had need to take heed that they receive it not in vain.'

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. How the gospel may be received in vain.

II. Make improvement.

I. I am to shew, how the gospel may be received in vain. And here it will be necessary to shew,

1. In what respects the gospel cannot be in vain.

2. In what respects it may be received in vain.

*First*, I am to shew, in what respects the gospel cannot be in vain. And it cannot be in vain,

1. In respect of God; he cannot fall short of what he purposeth to bring to pass by it, Isa. xlv. 10. 'My counsel shall stand, (says he), and I will do all my pleasure.' That looking for fruit, mentioned, Isa. v. 4; is ascribed to God after the manner of men; but an omniscient omnipotent Being cannot properly be disappointed, Isa. lv. 10, 11. 'For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.'

(1.) All his elect will be brought in by it. Hence, when the apostles Barnabas and Paul preached at Antioch in Pisidia, and met with much opposition, it is observed, however, that 'as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed,' Acts xiii. 48. The sound of the gospel-trumpet will gather the elect, however vain the sound be to others; for Christ's people shall be made willing in the day of his power, Psal. cx. 3. Though the rain fall in vain on the rocks, yet it does not so on the good ground. And that glorious instrument will be honourably laid by at the great day, having done its work.

(2.) His mercy and justice will be cleared by it, so as that gospel-despisers shall appear most justly condemned, Acts xiii. 46; while men have rejected the counsel of God against themselves. The offer of reconciliation will justify God's procedure abundantly against gospel-despisers.

2. It cannot be in vain, in respect of faithful ministers, who, according to the grace given them, pursue the great end of their office, viz. their acting as ambassadors for God, and praying sinners in Christ's stead, to be reconciled unto God, 2 Cor. v. 20.

(1.) In respect of their acceptance with God. Though their labours do no good, God will accept of their sincere endeavours to serve him in his work, Gal. iv. 11; compare 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. Preaching the gospel faithfully, and warning every man, is our duty; converting souls is God's work. If ministers faithfully discharge their duty, and yet success answer not, God will accept their work, Ezek. xxxiii. 8, 9. Isa. vi.

(2.) In respect of their reward of grace. Some ministers God sets to tread out the corn, while they freely eat of their labours, and have the satisfaction to see the pleasure of the Lord prospering in their Master's hand. The mouths of others are muzzled; and they have nothing but weary work, like that of the disciples, when they said to their Lord, 'We have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing,' Luke v. 5. But it shall not be in vain: God does not proportion his faithful servants' reward to their success, but to their pains and faithfulness. For as it was with the Master, so it is with the servants, Isa. xlix. 4. 'I have laboured in vain, (says he), I have spent my strength for nought; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.'

3. It cannot be altogether in vain in respect of honest-hearted hearers, Micah ii. 7. 'Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?' When the word falls on good ground, it will bring forth fruit, though not always alike. It is hard to say, that ever God sends his gospel to any place, but there are some to be bettered by it, even then when he is taking his farewell of a people, as in the case of the Jews. There were seven thousand in Israel that had not bowed the knee to Baal in the time of Elijah, even when that prophet thought there had not been one.

4. It cannot be utterly in vain as to any that hear it, Is. lv. 11. forecited. It will have some effect following it. Even those who most of all receive it in vain as to good success, yet it is not in vain.

(1.) As to a testimony for God against them, to be produced at the last day, Rev. iii. 20. 'Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' Behold angels and men, be ye witnesses, that here is an offer of me to sinners. Though they should refuse to hear the message with their bodily ears, yet if it come where they are, it will be a witness against them, Matth. x. 14, 15. The dust of their feet will witness they were there with

Christ's message, and that salvation was in their offer. The servants of Christ must set up the standard, whether any will gather to it or not, Ezek. ii. 7. See ver. 5.

(2.) As to the manifestation of unsoundness, Eph. v. 13. As the light of the sun will discover things in their own colours, though we wink never so hard; so the gospel will hang the sign of folly at every man's door out of Christ. The gospel was in vain to none more than the greatest pretenders to religion in Christ's time; but see the effect of it, Mal. iii. 2. 'But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like the refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap.' Matth. iii. 12. 'His fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.' The wind will discover chaff by corn, though impotency must be at the work to change it into good grain. Hence the gospel oft-times draws the pillow from under people's heads, that never thoroughly awaken, tormenting them that dwell on the earth. Hence we read of some that 'say to the sêers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits; get out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the holy One of Israel to cease from before us,' Isa. xxx. 10, 11. There is much noise at this day about faithful preaching; and I do not doubt unfaithful preachers are wanting; but I greatly doubt if Christ's thoughts and men's thoughts will agree about what it is. Concerning this I would ask you,

*Quest. 1.* Whether that preaching which crosses the heart-corruptions of the hearers, even the best of them, or that which is suited and most agreeable to the humours of the hearers, and tickles them most, is the most faithful preaching? See Gal. i. 10; 'Do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.' Where I shall only observe, that Paul makes no difference of men, professors or others.

2. Whether can a soul, ignorant of Christ and its own natural state, a profane man and a formal hypocrite, sit softest under that preaching, whose main scope is to level at people's particular case, on which the balance will turn at the great day, or that which lies further off from the vitals of practical godliness, and rubs on none so little as the hearers? 2 Tim. ii. 15.

3. Whether the great stress of faithful preaching lies in insisting chiefly on such sins of the time as may be reformed, and yet we go to hell at the hinder end, or on those things that have been, are, and will be, the bloody sins of all times, which if they could be got

reformed, Christ would get heart-friends, and we should certainly see his face for ever in heaven ?

4. *ult.* Whether is it the most faithful preaching that fills the hearers with convictions of guilt, self-loathing, and deep humiliation before the Lord, or that which sends them away commending the preacher, and puffed up with self-conceit ? If faithful preaching were weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, the hearts of most hearers would say, that they have more of it than they can bear. I do profess, I have had less difficulty to preach things relating to the public, when I knew those were hearing me whose hearts would have been galled with it, than amongst you, where there appears more zeal for these things than for true holiness of heart and life, lest my deceitful heart should be led aside to preach to please men. And not without grief of heart have I often seen the snare, when, upon my beginning to speak of such things, an unusual attention and liveliness has suddenly run through among us, which has presently died out with that particular, and become as flat and dead as before at the most weighty points of practical godliness. But I must discharge my conscience according to my small measure, both as to the case of the public and private, whatsoever use men make of it.

(3.) As to execution on souls, if not on lusts. Christ's sword is two-edged, and with one of the two it will wound, Psal. xlv. 5; if it miss a man's lusts, it will not miss his soul, Hos. vi. 5; 'If it open not the blind eye, it will put it out: if it soften not the hard heart, it will make it harder, Isa. vi. 10. The gospel never left a nation, parish, or person, as it found them, but either better or worse. 'If I had not come,' says Christ, 'and spoken to them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin,' John xv. 22. The ministers of the gospel in its most unsuccessful times, drive not an empty chariot; Christ is in it, and his arrows are flying about him, either to kill or make alive.

(4.) *Lastly*, As to the aggravation of men's condemnation, Matth. xi. 22, 24. The more the light of the gospel is despised on earth, the more violent is the flame in hell. Where the ladder to heaven is set up and not used, there will be more deep sinking into the pit. There is no sin like the despising of the remedy of sin. Refused grace will burn like coals of juniper, Heb. x. 29.

*Secondly*, I come to shew, in what respects the gospel may be received in vain. A thing is received in vain when it falls short of its native effects and ends, as physic does when it purgeth not, Gal. iv. 11. Now, in the general, the gospel is received in vain,

1. When it profits not men to salvation, which is the great end of the contrivance of the gospel, Phil. ii. 16. When men die eternally



with the meat of their souls in their mouths, and starve while the manna rains about their tent-doors; while the soul remains and dies in the prison, though Christ comes and proclaims liberty to it; thus it is often received in vain, Luke xiv.

2. When the fruits of it are not brought forth in people's lives, Matth. iii. 8. When the gospel has its native effect on men, it changes their hearts and lives. It is the rain of heaven that will have meet fruits following it, if it be not received in vain. The fruits of the gospel are two, faith and holiness.

(1.) Faith, Rom. x. 17; 'Faith cometh<sup>r</sup> by hearing.' The gospel is that which holds forth the mean of the soul's reunion with God by faith in Christ, the only way to bring sinners back to God again. Now, when this is not effected, the gospel is received in vain. Hence the prophet complains, Isa. liii. 1; 'Who hath believed our report?'

(2.) Holiness, Tit. ii. 11. When this seed of the word is sown in the heart, it will sanctify it, John xv. 3; Eph. v. 26. It is that word by which the elect are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, having a converting and sanctifying power when impregnated by the Spirit. Now, according as these things fail, the gospel is received in vain. More particularly, the gospel is received in vain,

1. When the doctrine of it is corrupted, Gal. iv. 11; as in vain does that stomach receive meat, that corrupts it instead of digesting it. And thus is the gospel entertained in the land at this day, while error and delusions abound, and the Confession of Faith, that excellent standard of pure doctrine, is attacked and vilified on every hand; and more particularly when the doctrine of grace is corrupted, against which almost all sects do bend their force, and in opposition to which they do usually meet. Two things here deserve tears of blood.

(1.) Much legal preaching, where duty is indeed pressed, and sin reproved, but the evangelic nature of duties is little cleared up, and men are driven into themselves to spin their own ruin out of their own bowels, and Christ and his grace are not preached, because not understood. And, which is most lamentable, there is little sense among professors to discern this legal strain that reigns in the sermons of many, *bona vox et bona verba*.

(2.) Much legal practice among professors. Their duties, like Dagon, are set in the room of Christ. There is little experience of turning out of ourselves, but a constant turning in to ourselves for what we do. And no small weight is laid on duties, nay, upon a very opinion in the matter of God's favour. The reason is, they have never had the work of humiliation deep enough on their spirits.

2. When the simplicity of gospel-worship is forsaken, and is adulterated with men's inventions, Matth. xv. 2. 2 Cor. xi. 3. And even thus the idolatry of the mass, and the superstitious service of the church of England, have dared to set up their face, with the countenance of not a few, in a land of light. England once had the simplicity of gospel-worship established among them. Had it not been so far received in vain, they had not sit down again on their old dregs; and had our rulers had a due regard to the simplicity of the gospel, they had not in their union with them, consented to their fixing themselves on these dregs of theirs, contrary to moral duty forbidding to consent to sin, and to the supperadded obligation of the covenant. And it may be, were the temptation laid to our doors, it would appear that we have received the gospel in vain too. For when once people decline from God's institutions, and obtrude their fancies for Bible duties, it is hard to say how far they may go. But beware of this. Let us be spiritual in our walk with God; it is the best preservative that I know against it.

3. When they are ashamed to appear for it, and have not a brow to keep and hold fast what the Lord has given. In vain is it received, that people have no confidence to hold fast when they have it, Rev. iii. 11. How many are ashamed of gospel truths and ways! they will be giped out of them. We must contend for the faith; and this is a day wherein the Lord seems to be calling this church to contend for those privileges which he has given her, and none have power to take from her, particularly that of appointing fasts and thanksgivings; though we should manage our contendings in such a way as becomes the matters of the God of order. Prayers, tears, and the word of their testimony, are the most proper arms of the church.

4. When the gospel cannot look gross immoralities out of countenance among people. Surely in vain is it there received where the devil reigns at ease notwithstanding, Luke xix. 8, 9. Truly much in vain is the gospel received among us this way. Ah! Sirs, is it not so when profane swearing is so frequent, Sabbath-breaking, contempt of gospel ordinances, uncleanness, every one devouring another, lying, cheating, abound, and common honesty is rare to be found? &c. Truly it is a sign that there is little power with ministers' preaching, and little room it gets in people's hearts.

5. When it leaves professors upon their dregs of formality, as well as the profane in their profanity. It is but cold entertainment the gospel gets when it gets room once or twice a-day in people's houses, but has no access to their hearts, to raise up there the power of godliness; truly it will never set them the length of heaven, 2 Tim. iii.

5. Ah for the deep lethargy that this generation is fallen into ! conversion-work is much at a stand, soul-exercise is grown a stranger to the most part ; there is no growth but in naughtiness and self-conceit.

6. When gospel-ordinances and gospel ministers are contemned. Were not the gospel received in vain, the house where his honour dwells, and the galleries where he walks, would be prized ; and the feet of them that bear the glad tidings would be precious. But, alas ! all is contrary here. His ordinances are trampled upon, his servants are discouraged, and broken on every hand. Few want brow enough to break over the awful hedge that God has set about them : ‘He that despiseth you, despiseth me.’ We are as little troubled with the scrupulous in coming to us for information from the word concerning different practices, as with cases of soul-exercise.

7. When they are not thankful for it. The Lord hath done great things for us ; but the generation is waxed wanton, so as there seems to be a sort of fondness to see the church in confusion again. Well, come when it will, it is like we will cool of that heat, and learn to prize what is now lightly let of.

8. *Lastly*, Most of all when Christ is not received by faith into the soul, Matth. xxii. Were there never so much strictness of life, mortification, reeling amongst the affections, and this be wanting, all is to no purpose. Unbelief, or rejecting of Christ, is the great quarrel that God pursues in time and eternity against the hearers of the gospel. But, ah ! is not the preaching of Christ sapless at this day ? are not our eyes held, that we cannot behold his glory ? he is despised and rejected of men still.

I shall conclude with an improvement of this subject.

Take heed ye receive not the grace of God, the gospel, in vain. Two things ye would especially take heed to in this matter.

1. Take heed the gospel leave you not still out of Christ. It is certain, (1.) That the gospel finds people growing upon the old stock, and out of Christ, Ezek. xvi. (2.) That without Christ men are without hope : let them profess or be what they will, if they be not ingrafted into Christ, they are nothing, Eph. ii. 12. John xv. 6. (3.) That the gospel is the great mean appointed of God to bring sinners to Christ, the ministry of reconciliation, 2 Cor. v. 18. It is by this that sinners are brought to the marriage of the King’s Son, Matth. xxii. O take heed ye receive not the gospel in vain. The cry, Can. iii. 2. ult. ‘Go forth, ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart,’ is come to your ears ; beware ye sit not still. These invitations,

Psal. xxiv. 7. 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in;' and Rev. iii. 20. 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me;' beware they leave you not so. There is a treasure in this field, one pearl of great price in this market, and it is in your offer.

2. Take heed it leave you not without a saving change in your hearts and lives. It is impossible you can be saved without this, John iii. 3. 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Heb. xi. 14. And this gospel is the mean of it, 1 Pet. i. 23, 24, 25. Faithful ministers will be in pain till Christ be formed in people, Gal. iv. 19. What is their preaching, beseeching, exhorting, &c. but pains to bring forth? But, alas! we may sit down with that, Isa. xxvi. 18. 'We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind, we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth, neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.' O for that day when that promise shall be accomplished, ver. 19. 'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.' And this is a change that must be carrying on while here, Eph. iv. 21. and that by the same means it was begun, unless ye receive the grace of God in vain, John xv. 2. O! Sirs, what branches of the old man is this knife snedding off; what hellish weeds is the gospel in its ordinary preaching to you plucking up? Sure they are not wanting in our hearts and lives, and sure there will be some execution doing on them, if ye receive not the gospel in vain.

Dear friends, God has sent you the gospel, and has set up his ordinances among you; despise not the treasure, because it is in such an earthen vessel. I would fain see the gospel doing good, a day of God's power to Ettrick again. I dare not think I have been altogether useless here: but truly, when I look upon the case of this parish in general, and on the success of my ministry in it, my heart sinks, being afraid that I have bestowed labour in vain, yea, worse than merely in vain, and God, though most justly, has dealt bitterly with me, and put a heavy, heavy piece of work in my hand. But O that the doleful effects of this reached no farther than to me! O that it were well with you, though my eyes were held not to see it for my comfort! But the works of the flesh are manifest, and continue and grow under a preached gospel, to which the appetite is lost, while the beauty and glory of practical godliness is under a dreadful vail amongst us. I would not willingly stand in the way



of your mercy ; but if I be indeed the stumbling-block that lies between you and Christ and the power of godliness, I pray the Lord may remove that block out of your way, what way he thinks best, that another face for Christ, for the gospel and true godliness, might be put upon the parish of Ettrick. But stand I must in my post, till he that sent me in it call me off ; and I desire to be doing while it is to-day, ere the night come on when there shall be no more working. Wonder not that this matter is laid out with this weight : We are workers together with God, and therefore have need to blush and be humbled, that we cannot be more deeply concerned that ye receive not the grace of God in vain\*. Consider,

1. We are workers with God. It is not our own but our Lord's work that we are about. God has made our Lord and Master heir of all things, and he has sent us forth to court a spouse for him. There is none that can say so much to the commendation of their Lord as we may : for he is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand, yea, he is altogether lovely : and there is no bride so unworthy as the daughter of Zion. And shall our Lord get the nay-say off the hands of ugly, hell-hued, beggarly souls, and the prince of darkness be preferred to the Prince of Peace ? Our Lord has got the gift of the kingdom from his Father, and of this land among others, Psal. ii. 8. and he has sent us out to beseech you and command you in his name to submit to our royal Master : and must we tell him, that ye will not have this man to reign over you ? Luke xix. 14.

2. God works with us. We are but the voice of one crying ; the Speaker is in heaven, and speaks from heaven, though by men, Heb. xii. 25. Therefore the slighting of our message is a slighting of the Lord himself. See Matth. xxviii. 20. 'Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world.' Have ye never had the secrets of your hearts made manifest by the preaching of the word ? why then fall ye not down before our Lord ? why say ye not, We will go with you, for the Lord is with you ? O fight not against God.

3. The message we bring you is the grace of God ; and shall it be received in vain ? This gospel,

(1.) Is most necessary grace. What a dismal darkness overclouded the world by Adam's fall, more terrible than if the sun, moon, and stars, had been for ever wrapt up in the blackness of darkness, in which we should for ever have lain, had not this grace

\* The author here plainly alludes to the distracted state of the parish, and the sea of trouble he was tossed in, on account of the unmanageable spirit of the parishioners, fed by the malignant leaven which the Old Dissenters spread through it, and of which he repeatedly and heavily complains in his Memoirs.

appeared as a shining sun to dispel it, Tit. ii. 11. So the word rendered *appeared* properly signifies. And shall we now like night-owls flee from the face of the rising sun, and like wild beasts get into our hellish dens, when this sun is up? Are we struck blind with its light, and such creatures of darkness, that we will love darkness rather than light?

(2.) It is an uncommon grace. This sun enlightens but a small part of the world. The most part are yet without the gospel; and this land had it not always. Nothing but grace brought it to, and has kept it with us. And shall we receive it in vain? Ah! will not the wild Americans think us unworthy of a place in the same hell with them.

(3.) It is the greatest grace that God ever bestowed on the world. God has given some nations gold mines, precious stones, spices, plenty of corns, &c. and he has given some the gospel without these; so that we may say of them, 'Israel then shall dwell in safety alone; the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places,' Deut. xxxiii. 28, 29. Barley-bread and the gospel is good cheer, if people receive it not in vain, Isa. xxx. 20, 21. There is a treasure in the gospel, Christ in it is the greatest of all mercies, Matth. xiii. 44. Ah! shall such a price be put in the hands of fools, that have no heart to it.

(4.) It is God's last grace to the world, Heb. i. 1. No other dispensation of grace shall ever the world see more. Now, Sirs, the last ship for Immanuel's land is making ready to go; therefore now or never, Heb. x. 26, 27. 'For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.' This gospel is the Lord's farewell sermon to the world. The Lord has made a feast for the world these five thousand years, and the last dish is served up now. O then receive it not in vain!

(5.) *Lastly*, It is grace that may be lost, Matth. xxiii. 37, 38. The sun of the gospel has gone down in some places, where it shined as clearly as ever it did in Scotland, and God knows if ever it rise again there. That we have received it much in vain, is plain from the heavy hand of God on us at this day in temporal calamities, Hos. ii. 9. yea, and his threatening us with the removal of the gospel, ver. 11. O then receive it not in vain; but, while ye have

the light, be walking in it: for to look no farther than the entertainment the gospel is getting at this day, it is a sad sign there is a black night abiding us: so that I think ministers and people should set themselves about it as a way-going commodity.



#### THE DANGER OF NOT COMPLYING WITH THE GOSPEL-CALL.

Prov. ix. 12.—*If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.*

THIS verse is the epilogue or conclusion of the gospel-treaty with sinners, carried on with them by the messengers of Christ in his name. It is a solemn declaration or protestation that it is shut up with. The entertainment the gospel meets with, is twofold, and there are two sorts (and but two) of gospel-hearers. (1.) Compliers with the gospel-call; these are called the *wise*. (2.) Refusers; these are styled *scorners*. The declaration looks to both, and is carried as it were, after the offer is made, to every individual man and woman's door that hears the gospel. It is not, *They that are wise, shall be wise for themselves*; but hereby the Lord speaks to every one in particular, *If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself, &c.* Which class soever one puts himself into, here is his case declared. (1.) *If thou be wise*, and comply, the gain shall be thine own; it is not the Lord's, but the fruit shall drop into thine own lap. (2.) *If thou scornest*, and refusest, the loss shall be thine, it will lie chiefly at least on thine own head. So the exclusive particle is taken, Psal. li. 4. 'Against thee, thee only have I sinned.'

I design not to insist on these words, but only with them to shut up the call to the improvement of the gospel and religion which I have been giving you. Thus the great duty is laid before you: and now I would apply the words of the text unto you on this occasion, and to every one of you. Ye have heard the nature of faith and repentance, the utility of public ordinances for salvation, and the necessity of not receiving the gospel in vain. Now, sinner, what wilt thou do? wilt thou comply with the gospel-offer or not? Well, I protest and declare in the terms of the text, *If thou be wise thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.* I shall branch out this protestation in three particulars.

*First*, If thou be no complier with the gospel-call, thou art a scorner of it: there is no mids. This is evident from the text, which divides all gospel-hearers into these two sorts. Now, thou art not a complier with the gospel-call, as long as,

1. Thou entertainest any prejudice against religion, and wilt not come to Christ, John v. 40. Thou art a refuser in that case, thou wilt not be obedient but turnest away thine ear and shoulder. Men may receive and comply with a form of religion and a profession, who are yet under reigning prejudice against the power of godliness, 2 Tim. iii. 5. Now, since religion lies inwardly, and consists not in word, but in power, these are not compliers, for they say they will not come into the inner court.

2. Thou art in a doubt whether to come or not, or delayest and puttest off. Halts between two opinions are not compliers with the gospel-call. Nor will the call admit of a delay, like that of the sluggard, 'Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep,' Prov. vi. 10. For see the effect of such a sluggish delay, ver. 11. 'So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.' It is, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart.' If thou delay then till to-morrow, thou rejectest the call, thou art a scorner of the offer.

3. If in any case thou dost come, dost not turn from thy sins unto God in Christ, sincerely, thoroughly, and universally, thou dost not comply, Jer. iii. 10. The hypocrite, that satisfies himself with his partial turning, is a non-complier, a rebel against King Christ, as well as the profane, and shall bear the weight of it, Psal. cxxv. 5. As for such as turn aside into their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.' Now, in this case of thy not complying with the gospel-call, our God looks on thee as the scorner of it, Psal. i. 1. Prov. i. 22, 26. What king proclaiming an indemnity to rebels, would not look on those that refused to take the benefit of it, as scornors of his clemency? Is it possible for him to look on them as neutrals with respect to his interest? nay, he must look on them as engrained enemies to his person and government. So is the case here. And that thou art guilty of scorning in this, will be evident, if you consider, that, by your not complying with the gospel-call,

(1.) Thou abusest the mercy, goodness, and patience of God. God offers thee mercy and grace in his own way, upon thy coming to him in Christ, leaving thy sins. But thou graspest at his mercy in thy sins, as if thou wouldst offer violence to the mercy of God, saying, as Deut. xxix. 19. 'I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.' Thou snatchest peace out of his hand, and by thy grasping of gospel-privileges, making no conscience of gospel-duties, scornest the call.

(2.) Thou slightest, making no account of the gospel-call, but indeed lookest on it as a trifling, inconsiderable thing, Job xli. 20.



Is not this the treatment the gospel meets with from the most part? 'They make light of it,' Matth. xxii. 5. The great offer of the gospel is despised, the good things it offers are undervalued, and any the least worldly pleasure or profit is preferred; and for the threatenings wherewith it is backed, they are in effect looked upon but as bugbears and scarecrows, the sounding again of the mountains: and thus they are scorned.

(3.) Thou exposest it to shame and dishonour; and is not that scorning, Prov. xx. 1. A generous spirit knows how far a man is out, when his offered kindness and good-will is neglected. And thus thou treatest the God that made thee. He offers thee his friendship before the world, angels, and men, and thou regardest it not; the Son of God courts thee by his ambassadors to a marriage with himself, but thou slightest the proposal. And is not that to scorn and affront him, before all that are witnesses to the neglect thou puttest upon him?

(4.) Thou failest of thy fair promises, and so defeatest and frustratest good expectations concerning thee. And is not that scorning? Matth. ii. 16. Heathens do not scorn the royal Bridegroom; for as he was never in their offer, so they never said they would not take him: but as thou wast baptized in his name, thou didst engage to be his, and yet thou ruest again, and sayest, Thou wilt have none of him. How many times hast thou broken thy word to him, after thou hadst given consent, yea, sealed the contract before many witnesses as at a sacrament? How often hast thou scorned thy God, as the son did his father, saying, 'I go, but went not?' Matth. xxi. 30.

(5.) *Lastly*, Thou makest thyself merry with thy disobedience to this call, Prov. xiv. 9. Is not that scorning? How many are they that expressly mock at religion and seriousness, and look on many of the duties of religion as below them? But besides, whatever joy thou hast in any thing, especially in sinful practices, while thou slightest the call of the gospel, it is in effect a scorning of that call. Even as the condemned malefactor, who being offered a reprieve or pardon, refuses it, and yet is jovial, does scorn the pardon, the king's mercy.

Hence ye may conclude, that God will deal with you as scorers. A king finding himself mocked and scorned, falls into rage, as Herod did, Matth. ii. 16. And God's anger will burn hot against he scorers of his grace, Prov. i. 22, 26. Those that will have none of his grace, will drink deep of his cup of vengeance, Luke xix. 27.

*Secondly*, If thou comply with the gospel-call, thou shalt therein

act wisely for thyself: the gain shall be thine own, the fruit shall fall into thine own bosom. Two things are imported in this.

1. Men, by their complying with the gospel call to faith, and holiness, and repentance, do not bring any profit or gain to God. There is a great profit by it, but it descends to themselves, ascends not to God, Job xxii. 2. and xxxv. 7. Psal. xvi. 2.

To confirm this, consider,

(1.) God is infinite in perfections, self-sufficient, and therefore the creatures can add nothing to him; for nothing can be added to what is infinite; and nothing given unto him who possesseth all things.

(2.) All the goodness and profitableness of men or angels, or any creatures, comes from God. He that gives all things to all, needs nothing from any, Acts xvii. 25. We received all from God: where is that, then, we have to give him, whereby he may be profited?

*Inf.* 1. Then let no man be scared from coming to God in Christ, because of his unworthiness, that he is an useless and a fruitless creature, that can do nothing for God. For the best and holiest of men cannot profit him. He will never turn his back, because we bring nothing with us, Isa. lv. 2.

2. Mistake not the reason of our Lord's earnestness with you to bring you to repentance. It is not that he expects any advantage by your return; it is for your own good, not for his. He is not dealing with you, as one that hires a servant, because he needs one, and cannot want one; but like a compassionate person that is dealing with a frantic one, that will needs destroy himself in the water. God may say to the greatest men, the richest, aye, and the most penitent sinners, and the holiest alive, I have no need of you.

3. Ye can do God no real hurt by your continuing impenitent in your sins, Job xxxv. 6, 8. Your sins can reach him as little to his loss, as your obedience to his profit. All sin is against the mind of God, but there is no sin against the happiness of God. If it were possible, and all the angels in heaven, and all the men upon earth, should conspire with the devils against him, it could not diminish one jot of his happiness, nor create him the least real uneasiness thereby. All is but like a dog's barking at the moon, or one's rushing his head against a rock, which stands unmoved, but he is wounded.

4. *Lastly*, By thy compliance with the call of God, and the duties of religion, while others slight them, do not thou think thou obligest God, or that he is more indebted to thee than to others, Luke xvii. 10. Thou actest indeed more for thy own interest than they; but as he suffers no damage by their folly, so he reaps no advantage by thy duties.

2. If thou compliest with the call of the gospel, the profit shall be thine own; though God do not and cannot gain by it, thou shalt. *Thou shalt be wise for thyself.* The phrase imports two things.

1st, Thou shalt gain by it, thou shalt advance thy own interest thereby. Men praise them that do good to themselves; they that hearken to the gospel-call do so. When the rest of the world are misspending their time and talents like a parcel of fools, thou art acting a wise part, consulting thy own true interest. Briefly, this gain lies in two things.

(1.) In saving, or preventing loss. Thou shalt prevent the loss of God's favour, thy own soul, happiness, &c. A penny saved is a penny gained. And is not a soul saved from the pit a noble gain? Well, if thou be wise for thyself, thou shalt save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.

(2.) In getting what we want. If thou be wise for thyself thou shalt not only save, but get, make a purchase. Thou shalt gain for time, and gain for eternity, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Whatever drops out of the promise, or is wrung out of the everlasting covenant, they drop all into the lap of the penitent sinner. And there is all in them for time and eternity. The earth is in them, and the heavens are in them. So shalt thou be wise for thyself in gaining these.

2dly, Nobody shall go between thee and thy gain, in the enjoyment of it. How often is that verified quickly, 'One soweth, and another reapeth;' one has the pains, and another gets the fruit? Matth. vi. 20. 'Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.' Many a wise man of the world is a fool for himself, and wise for others. He gathers, and others enjoy the treasure. And death makes it so at length; and therefore the world's good things are called another man's, only those of another world are our own, which no man shall leave to his heirs, Luke xvi. 12. Now, if *thou be wise for thyself*, thou shalt carry thy gain into another world with thee, and it shall be thine own, and not another's.

Thirdly, If by not complying with the gospel-call, thou scornest it, thou shalt get the weight of that to bear thyself: *Thou alone shalt bear it.* And it is heavier than mountains of brass, and of everlasting continuance, even everlasting judgment without mercy, Prov. i. 26. And,

1. Thou shalt bear the blame of it. It is a heavy blame, a weighty guilt; but thou shalt not get another's back in all the creation to lay it on; and shift it off thy own. They that comply may bless God; they that do not may thank themselves. The cause is from themselves.

2. Thou shalt bear the loss of it, the loss of what thou scornest, the loss of grace, the favour of God, the loss of heaven. Thy blood shall be on thine own head. The scorning of the call brings a heavy load of wrath; but thou alone shalt bear it: that is,

(1.) God that called thee shall not bear it, either blame or loss. A man's heart perverts his way now, and his heart fretteth against the Lord; and I cannot think that the hearts of the reprobates in hell will be more reconciled to this dispensation, Matth. xxv. 24, 25. But the Lord will throw the weight of it back on thee, and thou alone shalt bear it! for though he was not obliged to give thee grace, yet he offered it to thee, and thou refused it.

(2.) His faithful servants that warned thee, and called thee to comply with the call of God, shall not bear it, Ezek. xxxiii. 9. Nay, every call of theirs, every sermon, exhortation, reproof, and warning, in public or private, shall turn it back on thyself. Every sigh, groan, waste of their strength, for warning thee, shall turn it upon thee with a witness: And *thou alone shalt bear it.* Nay,

(3.) They that had a hand in thy not complying shall not bear it, They that tempted thee to sin, thy graceless neighbours and companions, whose face thou shalt curse the day that ever thou sawest it, they shall not bear it. Even unfaithful ministers, who either shall not warn thee, or by their unholy life harden thee, they shall not bear it, and thou wilt not find shelter under their wings. Nay, the devil himself, who goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, and does what he can to hinder thee, even he shall not bear it. For they do not force thee, but entice and tempt thee to sin; they lay the bait, but it is thy own fault that thou embracest it: they lay the stumbling-block, the occasion of sinning, in thy way; but thou art obliged to go by it, and hold off from it.

It is true they shall bear the weight of the hand they had in thy ruin; but alas! what is that to thee? what good will it do to thy poor soul? It is in this case as when one draws another into the water, and both are drowned together! alas! what is it to the man whom the other drew, that his companion is drowned himself too? that does not save his life, Ezek. xxxiii. 8. So they shall not bear it, but thou alone shalt bear it.

[1.] None shall bear it for thee, nor take the burden off thy back. The soul that sinneth, it dies. The sinner shall be the sufferer. They that refuse the surety of the Father's choosing, to bear the burden in their stead, shall not get another surety nor burden-bearer for them among angels or men. Nay, thou alone, and not another for thee, shalt bear it.

[2.] None shall bear it with thee, to ease thee of a part of the



weight, Gal. vi. 5. There will be no relieving out of the flames, so there will be none that will be so kind as to bring a drop of water to cool the tongue in it, Ezek. xvi. 24. The whole weight shall lie upon thyself. Thou alone, and not another with thee, shalt bear it.

Wherefore consider what ye do. Be wise, sinners, and repent: For except ye repent, ye shall perish. The sound of the Lord's word goes away, and dies out as other sounds: but it liveth and abideth for ever in its efficacy, for the salvation or condemnation of those that hear it. So death and life are set before you, the blessing and the curse. *If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.*

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#### HOW THE SACRAMENTS BECOME EFFECTUAL MEANS OF SALVATION.

1 COR. xii. 13.—*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

I COME now to handle the questions in the Catechism concerning the sacraments. And the first of these is that touching the efficacy of these holy ordinances, which is one of the doctrines of this text, in which the apostle explains and confirms the doctrine of the mystical union betwixt Christ and his people from the two sacraments.

I explained this text at large, when speaking of the mystical union from it\*. I shall only consider it now, in so far as it relates to the sacraments. And so there is,

1. The number of the sacraments of the new Testament. These are two, viz. baptism, 'we are all baptized,' &c. and the Lord's Supper, called here *drinking*; the denomination being taken from the cup, as it is called *breaking of bread*, the name being taken from the bread therein used, Acts ii. 42. The former is the sacrament of our initiation into Christ, and union with him; the other, of our nourishment in, and communion with him.

2. The efficacy of these sacraments. They are effectual to salvation in those in whom they have their effect, they being united to Christ into one body, and partaking more and more of his Spirit, in those ordinances respectively which so secures their salvation from sin, and wrath too.

\* See vol. i. page 544.

3. To whom they are effectual. Not to all, but to believers only, *We all*, viz. who are members of Christ, ver. 11.

4. How they become effectual. Their efficacy is not from themselves, nor from the administrator, but from the Spirit of Christ. *By one Spirit are we all baptized*, &c. So their efficacy depends on the operation of the Holy Ghost in and by them; and to this is pre-supposed the blessing of Christ, since the Holy Spirit does not work with means unblessed by Jesus Christ.

The purport of the text may be summed up in the following doctrine, viz.

DOCT. 'The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.'

Here let us consider,

I. That the sacraments are means of salvation.

II. Wherein lies the efficacy of the sacraments, or when may it be said that the sacraments are effectual means of salvation.

III. To whom are they effectual? or in whom have they their efficacy?

IV. Whence is their efficacy?

V. Conclude with some inferences.

I. I shall shew, that the sacraments are means of salvation. For clearing of this, we shall enquire,

1. What is that salvation which the sacraments are said to be means of? It is the whole salvation purchased by Jesus Christ for the elect; which consists of two parts. (1.) Salvation from sin, Matth. i. 21. 'He shall save his people from their sins.' Sensible sinners look on sin as the mortal disease of the soul; and to be saved from it in the guilt and power thereof, they will account the great salvation, as indeed it is. (2.) Salvation from wrath, under which all must perish that partake not of Christ's salvation, 1 Thess. i. 10.—'Jesus which delivereth from the wrath to come.' This is the warding off the blow of justice, the stroke of death eternal, from the neck of a poor creature. Both these parts make it a great salvation, the greatest that a poor sinner is capable of, Heb. ii. 3. And this salvation is so absolutely necessary, that it is no wonder to see a sinner inquiring after the means of it.

2. What a mean of salvation is? A mean has a relation to an end, and is that which is used to bring about the end. And a mean of salvation is any thing appointed of God, in the use of which he carries on the salvation of his people. Thus all divine institutions in the church are means of salvation, that being the common end of

them all, Matth. xxviii. 20. Among these the most eminent are, the word, sacraments, and prayer. Prayer has a relation to both, and is to be mixed with them. The difference betwixt the two former is,

That the word is the mean of conversion, and the sacraments the means of confirmation: so the word is the leading, and the sacraments are the subsequent means of salvation. The word is first to have its effect, then the sacraments have theirs on the soul, 1 Cor. iii. 5. with Rom. iv. 11.

Now, that the sacraments are such means of salvation appears,

1. From the Lord's appointing them for that end to be used, Acts iii. 37, 38. 'Now, when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' 1 Cor. x. 16. 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?' And in that communion lies the safety of our souls for time and eternity.

2. From the saving effects which they have on the souls of God's people rightly using them. This is a sufficient testimony to their being such means, and proper means, Acts viii. 39. and ii. 42. &c.

II. *Quest.* Wherein lies the efficacy of the sacraments, or when may it be said, that the sacraments are effectual means of salvation?

The efficacy of a mean is its reaching the end for which it is appointed. If it fall short of that, it is ineffectual. The efficacy of a reproof lies in its reforming the party, and of meat in its nourishing the body. Now, the end of the sacraments being to represent, seal, and apply, Christ and his benefits to the soul, the efficacy of the sacraments lies in their reaching these ends; and then are they effectual, when they not only represent, but seal and apply, Christ and his benefits to the receiver, Rom. iv. 11. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 1 Pet. iii. 21. In a word, it lies in effectual oblation and application of Christ and his benefits. And when they reach not these ends, they are not effectual.

Now, sometimes these effects of the sacraments are so lively and evident, that the soul perceives them, as the eunuch did, Acts viii. 38. when he went on his way rejoicing. Sometimes they are not discerned by the believer, though really they are wrought in him, as it was with the two disciples going to Emmaus, in another case, Luke xxiv. The following are signs of this efficacy.

*Sign* 1. The soul's cleaving more closely to the hope of the co-

venant than before, going out of itself more to Jesus Christ and his righteousness. This being the consequent of the sacraments, is an evidence of the obsignation, Phil. iii. 3.

*Sign 2.* More solid tenderness with respect to sin and duty, and longing to be rid of the body of sin and death. This is a sign of the application, Rom. vi. 4. and viii. 23. For nearness to Christ is the cause of distance from sin.

III. *Quest.* To whom are the sacraments effectual? or in whom they have their efficacy?

1. Not to all who partake of them. Simon was baptized, but continued in the gall of bitterness and the bond iniquity, Acts viii. 13, 23. Men may partake of the Lord's supper unworthily. The apostle tells us how highly some were advanced in respect of sacramental privileges, with whom God was not well pleased, 1 Cor. x. 1,—5. And sad experience bears witness to this truth.

2. It is effectual to believing receivers, as to the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts viii. 37, 39. Mark xvi. 16. 'He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.' It is with the sacraments as with the word, Heb. iv. 2. 'The word did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.' But this is not to exclude infants from the efficacy of baptism, since they are not capable of actual believing; but they having the spirit of faith abiding in them, baptism has its effect on them.

IV. *Quest.* Whence is the efficacy of the sacraments?

Negatively, 1. It is not from any virtue in themselves that these blessed effects are produced. God has put a power of nourishment in our meat, and of warming in our clothes; but no power of working grace either in the water of baptism, or bread and wine in the Lord's supper. So the work wrought will never confer grace. The scriptures deny this power to the sacraments themselves, 1 Pet. ii. 21. 'Baptism doth now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.' And many thousands are partakers of the sacraments, who yet never partake of the grace of God, as Simon. These pools will never prove healing, if there be not a moving of the waters from a superior cause.

2. It is not from the piety nor intention of the administrator neither. The holiness and best qualifications that ever were in a minister cannot make them effectual; let them burn and shine with light and life in the administration, they cannot make them effectual to one soul, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7. 'I have planted (says Paul,) Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth



the increase.' The efficacy of God's ordinances depends not on men, the administrators, either as to the making or marring their efficacy, Phil. i. 16, 17, 18. 'The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and therein do I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.' They may be employed in saving others, who are castaways themselves.

Positively, 1. The efficacy of the sacraments depends on the blessing of Christ, as the cause without which they could have no efficacy, for as much as the Spirit of Christ will not work by means unblessed, Matth. xv. 9. 'In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.' But Christ has blessed these ordinances, first, and then the Spirit works in them and by them. Now, this blessing of Christ is contained in the institution of the sacraments; which comprehends two things, here called Christ's blessing.

(1.) A command authorising the use of these ordinances. (2.) A promise of benefit by them to the worthy receivers, Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. and xxvi. 26, &c.

2. It depends on the working of the Spirit in them and by them on the souls of the receivers, as the efficient cause, 1 Cor. xii. 13. The Spirit comes along with them, and renders them effectual to his own.

I shall shut up all with a few inferences.

*Inf.* 1. Hence learn to prize the sacraments, and behold the dreadful nature of the sin of slighting them. They are means of salvation, and therefore ought to be dear to all who would partake of salvation. Those who slight the means, undervalue the end, the great salvation. Did many amongst us consider this, they durst not so easily live without the word or sacraments, as they do, Luke vii. 30.

2. Rest not on the sacraments. They are but means, which are not effectual to every one that receives them. Many receive them both who never receive Christ; but for all that they wear Christ's badge, they work the devil's work. And it is not your receiving them, but receiving benefit by them, that will be a good plea in the end, Luke xiii. 26, 27.

3. Look more to Christ's institution, and promise accompanying it, with respect to the sacraments, and less to men who have a commission to administer them, if ye would not mar your benefit by the ordinances. It is lamentable to think, that where the minister's

commission cannot be quarrelled, and Christ's institution is observed, many nevertheless are so weak, as to be frightened from God's ordinance with scruples about the administrators, as if the Spirit of God could not be expected to work with Christ's institutions, unless they be in the hands of such and such ministers. This absurd and sinful practice prevails too much at this day, as if the efficacy of the sacraments depended on the administrators.

4. *Lastly*, Be concerned for the working of the Spirit in all ordinances, and particularly in the sacraments; for without that they can have no effect. When ye bring your children to baptism, and when ye come to the Lord's table, be concerned, and earnestly wrestle and pray for it. Let it be at these seasons the matter of your exercise, that the Lord may accompany these solemn ordinances with divine life and power unto you, and may excite your graces unto a vigorous and lively exercise, without which they will be utterly ineffectual to you.



#### THE NATURE OF THE SACRAMENTS.

ROM. iv. 11.—*And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had yet being uncircumcised.*

THIS text discovers the nature of a sacrament, in the description the apostle gives us of circumcision, which Abraham received. In which consider,

1. The sacrament itself which the apostle treats of, circumcision, which was the initiating seal of the covenant under the Old Testament, and has been succeeded by baptism under the New.

2. The author of it. Abraham invented it not, but received it from the Lord, whose institution it was, Gen. xvii. 10; 'This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee; every man child among you shall be circumcised;'<sup>\*</sup> even as the apostle says, 1 Cor. xi. 23; 'I have received of the Lord, that, which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, &c.

<sup>\*</sup> On this passage the author in his Critical Essay on Genesis, from which some extracts have been given above, pp. 379, 404, thus comments: "This [is the design of] my covenant, which ye shall observe; between me, and you, and thy seed after thee:" That is, this is the sign between me and you, and thy seed, even the sign of the covenant. Between you; q. d. Between you, between you, i. e. you and every one of you, Abraham and his whole family, male and female, without exception, then

3. The parts of it; an external sign, the cutting off of the fore-skin; an invisible grace, the righteousness of faith.

4. The uses and ends of it: it was appointed to be a sign and a seal too, no nakedly signifying, but exhibiting and applying spiritual blessings.

*Lastly*, The subject of it: a believer, one to whom the righteousness of faith belonged. Such a person was Abraham, and such are all who truly believe in Christ.

The doctrine of this text is,

Doct. 'A sacrament is an holy ordinance, instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.'

Here we are to consider,

I. The word *sacrament*.

II. The author of the sacrament.

III. The parts of a sacrament.

IV. Shew what is the sacramental union of these parts, or wherein it lies.

V. Who are the subjects of the sacraments, for whom they are appointed of God.

VI. What are the general uses and ends of the sacraments.

VII. Deduce some inferences.

I. Let us consider the word *sacrament*. Of which two things are to be noted. (1.) That it properly signifies a military oath, an oath taken by soldiers, whereby they bound themselves solemnly to their prince or general, to obey orders, and not to desert their colours. And some say this oath was mutual. (2.) That it is not a scripture word; not being used in any of the two languages in which the scripture was written, but a Latin word originally. But the church

in being; opposed to his seed after him. Thus all his are taken with him into the covenant, so far as to have a right to the seal of it.—That every male be circumcised for you. The construction and sense of these words is, To be circumcised is the covenant (i. e. the sign thereof) which ye shall observe. Thus the great duty of the covenant is made to be, believing and depending on the promise of the covenant; wholly trusting on, and cleaving to, the righteousness of faith, whereof circumcision was the seal, Rom. iv. 11; the which is productive of all other duties. Further, these words bear this meaning, viz. That every male of you be circumcised for you: that is, in the name of the whole family, consisting of women as well as of men: that so you may be altogether one people in the bond of the covenant; compare Gen. xxxiv. 15, 22. And thus there appears a twofold reason, why our Lord Jesus Christ was circumcised: (1.) That it might be to him a seal of the promises mentioned, Gen. xvii. 4,—8; (2.) Because he was the head, and so the most noble part, of that one people embodied with him, in the covenant of grace, for whom he received the promises.

has made use of it to signify those ordinances which are the signs and seals of the covenant of grace; and that warrantably, because the things thereby signified are found in scripture, though not the word itself. For by the sacraments we are obliged to the spiritual warfare under the conduct of Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation, to whom we engage ourselves by them, and he also engages himself to us for our salvation.

II. The author of the sacraments is the Lord Jesus Christ, as King and head of his church. Man neither made, nor can make a sacrament, but the Lord only. For, (1.) He only is the author of the word of promise, and of the covenant: who then but he can make the seals thereof? (2.) The sacraments are a part of religious worship, which belongs only to God to appoint, Matth. xv. 8; the Lord Jesus is the Author them, by his instituting of them. They are instituted by himself, Matth. xxviii. 19, 20; 'Go ye and teach all nations (says he to his disciples), baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you,' 1 Cor. xi. 23; 'I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread,' &c. It is the word of institution that makes the sacrament, which consists of a command to use the rite, and a promise of grace annexed to the right use of it.

III. Let us consider the parts of a sacrament. These are two.

1. An outward and sensible sign used according to Christ's own appointment, which is something that we can see with our eyes, or perceive by our bodily senses. These are of two sorts. (1.) Signifying things. Such are the water in baptism, and the bread and wine in the Lord's supper. (2.) Signifying actions; for the sacramental actions, being significant, as well as the things, are signs, and sensible signs, which we may see with our eyes. Such are the sprinkling of the water in baptism, and the breaking, giving, and receiving, of the bread and wine in the Lord's supper.

I say, used according to Christ's appointment; and therefore these same things and actions are not sacramental when otherwise used, as when water is sprinkled, or bread broken, without those other circumstances appointed by Jesus Christ in these ordinances. For where there is no divine institution, there is no sacrament.

2. An inward and spiritual grace thereby signified, Matth. iii. 11; 'I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire,' 1 Pet. iii. 21; 'The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also



now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,' Rom. ii. 28, 29; 'For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.' The signs are earthly, to be perceived with the bodily eyes; the thing signified heavenly, to be perceived only by faith. The former tends to the body, the latter to the soul. The one is received corporeally, the other spiritually.

The thing signified by the sacramental signs is Jesus Christ himself with all his saving benefits, Rom. vi. 3; 1 Cor. xi. 24; 'This is my body,' &c. Not Christ's benefits without himself; for as there is no washing with water, without application of the water itself, and no nourishment by bread and wine, without eating and drinking of it; so there is no partaking of Christ's benefits without partaking of himself, Heb. iii. 14. Rom. viii. 32. So unbelievers can have no saving benefit by the sacraments; for Christ himself is the kernal of the sacraments; and wherever he comes, he brings all saving benefits along with him, Rom. viii. 32. even the purchase of his death.

The sum of these saving benefits ye have in that word, 1 Cor. i. 30. 'Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; which comprehends all that is necessary for the cure of the case of any poor sinner.

IV. I proceed to shew, what is the sacramental union of these parts, or wherein it doth lie. There is an union of the parts of the sacraments, and without it they could not be accounted parts of the sacraments. It is by virtue of the union betwixt the signs and the thing signified, that the one gets the name of the other, Gen. xvii. 10. 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. 'This is my body, This cup is the new testament in my blood:' yea, and the effects of the one are ascribed to the other, Tit. iii. 5. 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' Now, this is not a natural or local union; for in respect of place they are as far distant as heaven and earth: but it is a relative union, consisting in that spiritual relation that is between the sign and the thing signified, made by virtue of Christ's institution, whereby the signs signify or represent, seal, and exhibit to the worthy receivers the thing signified.

V. I come to shew, who are the subjects of the sacraments for

whom they are appointed of God. They are those, and those only, who are within the covenant, Rom. xv. 8. 'Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.' Exod. xii. 48. 'When a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.' For the seals of the covenant can belong to none but those who are in it. So they have a right to them before God who are savingly within the covenant, and those a right before the church who are in it by a credible profession. Believers and their seed have a right to baptism; but only Christians come to years have a right to the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. xi. 28. But let a man examine himself,' &c.

VI. *Lastly*, I come to shew, what are the general uses and ends of the sacraments. The principal uses and ends are threefold.

1. To be holy signs to signify and represent Christ and his benefits to the believer, to be discerned by faith, Rom. iv. 11. There is a fitness in them for this end, there being a plain resemblance betwixt the signs and the thing signified; whereby the signs do bring into their minds, and do clearly represent to a spiritual discerner the thing signified. And thus they strengthen faith, and all other graces in a believer; as seeing helps believing.

2. To be heaven's public seals to seal the covenant, Rom. iv. 11. It is by them that God solemnly ratifies and confirms the covenant with believers. The covenant is held out in the word to be embraced by all to whom it comes: by believing we enter into the covenant; by the sacraments God declares it to be a bargain, as one does by subscribing a contract, and sealing it. And thus also they strengthen faith and all other graces; and oblige the believer to obedience, as one in covenant with God, Rom. vi. 3.

3. To be means of applying and exhibiting Christ and his benefits to the believer, 1 Cor. xi. 24. So that with the sacramental signs, in the right use of them, is joined the possession and actual enjoyment of the thing signified: 'This is my body, take eat.' As one is put in possession of houses or land, by earth or stone given them, according to law, upon a disposition: so is the believer made partaker of Christ, and solemnly put in possession of all his saving benefits, by these means. The less principal end of the sacraments is to be badges of our Christian profession, to distinguish men from those that are without the church, Eph. ii. 11, 12. 'Wherefore remember that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision, by that which is called the circumcision in

the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.'

I shall conclude this discourse with some inferences.

*Inf.* 1. Great is the privilege of the covenant, and the benefits thereof, which God has thus appointed to be sealed. Seals are not used in small matters, but in those of great importance; how great then must those be which heaven seals?

2. Our gracious God has shewn great kindness to, and concern for the welfare and comfort of poor sinners coming to him through his Son. Though his word be firmer than heaven and earth, he remembers our frame, that we are guilty, and therefore fearful and suspicious creatures; and, for our ease, that we may the better trust him, has appointed seals of his benefits promised in his covenant.

3. Great is the sin of slighting the sacraments, and neglecting to partake of them. God appended seals to the covenant of works, viz. the tree of life, and that of the knowledge of good and evil. He also appointed seals to the covenant of grace, under the old dispensation, and under the new too. So divine wisdom has seen them always necessary. What an affront to the wisdom and kindness of God, and his covenant, must the slighting of them then be?

4. *Lastly*, Great is the sin of abusing and profaning the sacraments, 1 Cor. xi. 27, 'Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.' The unconverted profane the seals of heaven by setting them to a blank, where there is no covenant. The saints in a dead and sleepy frame do also profane them, while they are in no capacity to discern what they are appointed to represent, seal, and apply. O then use the sacraments in faith, according to Christ's institution, and seek his blessing upon them, that the benefits thereby sealed may become effectually yours.

## THE NUMBER OF THE SACRAMENTS, AND THE NATURE OF BAPTISM.

1 COR. xii. 13.—*For by one Spirit we are all baptised—and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

MATTH. xxviii. 19.—*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

THE first of these texts, as before explained, holds out the number of the sacraments of the New Testament; and from thence we may draw this doctrine, viz.

DOCT. 'The sacraments of the New Testament are, baptism, and the Lord's supper.'

That this, and only this, is the number of the sacraments, we have the following evidences.

1. These were instituted by the Lord Jesus, and no more, Matth. xxviii. 19. and xxvi. 26—28. No other bear the stamp of divine institution. And none can shew any other holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

2. These two fully answer the necessities of the saints in the case of sacraments. Two witnesses are sufficient to one deed, and the great deed and grant of the covenant are sufficiently witnessed unto by these. What more is there for God's elect to expect in this world, but these two things, that they receive life and nourishment, that they be taken into the covenant, and kept in it? Baptism is the sign of the one, and the Lord's supper of the other. The one is the sacrament of our ingrafting into Christ, and the other of our nourishment in him. And there is no special grace whatsoever, but what is signified and sealed by them.

3. The same was the number and nature of the ordinary sacraments of the Old Testament. They were no more but circumcision and the passover. And plain it is, that the New Testament dispensation is not more full of external rites and ceremonies than the Old one was. So that the Papists' seven sacraments compared with the two Jewish ones, must needs shew Popery to be vastly distant from the simplicity of the gospel. Circumcision was the initiating sacrament then, as baptism is now, signifying the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh, Col. ii. 11; as baptism the washing of them away, Acts xxii. 16; the passover signifying Christ crucified,



1 Cor. v. 7; as the sacrament of the supper also, Matth. xxvi. 26. First they were to be circumcised, and afterwards to keep the passover; and so first to be baptised, and afterwards to communicate in the Lord's supper, but no otherwise. Circumcision was never reiterated, but the passover frequently.

4. *Lastly*, As the apostle, in our text, makes these two the bonds of Christian communion, and no more; so he reduces the extraordinary Jewish sacraments, in their uses and ends, to those of our two sacraments. The being under the cloud, and passing through the Red Sea, he calls their being baptised, 1 Cor. x. 2. Their eating of the manna, and drinking the water of the rock, he calls their eating of the same spiritual meat, and drinking the same spiritual drink, as we do in the Lord's supper, ver. 3, 4.

From this point I shall draw a few inferences,

*Inf.* 1. Good and gracious is our God to his church and people, under the gospel in a special manner, who has instituted two, and but two sacraments, and these easy and clear. Here we have enough for the confirmation of our faith of the promises; and we have no reason to say we are under a heavy yoke. Here none of our blood is to be shed, but Christ's blood is most clearly represented as shed for us.

2. The five sacraments which the Papists have added to our Lord's two, are but bastard sacraments, not the badges of Christ, but of Antichrist. These are, confirmation, penance, orders, marriage, and extreme unction.

*Confirmation* is the bishop's anointing of the baptised with chrism in the forehead, in the form of a cross, with this form of words, 'I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' This has no manner of divine institution, nor is it at all to be found in the scriptures; and derogates from the sacrament of baptism.

*Penance* is repentance, discovering itself by external evidences. The matter of this pretended sacrament, they say, lies in contrition of heart, auricular confession, and satisfaction; the form of it in absolution by the priest, as a judge, pardoning their sin, not ministerially, only declaring it. But here is no visible sign at all, necessary to contradistinguish the sacramental signs from the word. No sign at all is administered to the penitent; no promise annexed to a sensible sign here: therefore no sacrament. Besides auricular confession is not instituted at all by the Lord. And judicial pardon is blasphemous, ministerial declaration of pardon being only competent to ministers, John xx. 23.

*Orders* is the ordination of church-officers; which is instituted,

but not to be a sacrament, it having no promise of saving grace annexed to it. 1 Tim. iv. 14. speaks not of saving grace, but of the official gift, viz. authority to preach.

*Matrimony* has nothing of a sacrament in it, since it has no visible sign appointed by Christ, no promise of saving grace annexed to it, and is common to all the world as well as the church. It is mis-grounded on Eph. v. 32. where their corrupt translation reads *a great sacrament*.

*Extreme unction* is the priest's anointing the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, hands, reins, and feet of a person thought to be at the point of death, with olive-oil, consecrated by a bishop, using these words, 'By this holy oil, and his tender mercy, God forgive thee all thy sins.' It is built on Jam. v. 14. where the miraculous cure of diseases is spoken of.

3. See the bent of corrupt nature in meddling with God's institutions, the abominations of Popery, and the great mercy of our deliverance from it. We can never be enough thankful to God for the reformation from that grand apostasy, idolatry, and superstition. We ought to hold firmly what we have attained, and stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, that we be not again entangled with any yoke of bondage. Let us steadfastly adhere to all the ordinances and institutions of our Lord Jesus Christ, and vigorously oppose, in our respective stations and places, all deviations from the same, from whatever quarter they may come, or under whatever specious pretexts they may be introduced or recommended. To the law and to the testimony let us bring them; and receive and practise nothing in the worship and service of God, but what is enforced with a *Thus saith the Lord*. And let us ever remember the extreme danger of all usages and innovations not contained in or authorised by the written word; and therefore let us from the heart abhor them.

In the second text we have the institution of baptism. And herein consider,

1. The ordinance itself; baptising in the name of the holy blessed Trinity. This is expressly instituted by Jesus Christ: *Go ye therefore, and baptise, &c.*

2. The administrators of baptism; ye apostles, and your successors, in 'teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded. And lo I am with you alway even to the end of the world.'

3. The subjects of baptism; all nations which are *taught* Gr. *discipled*, made disciples of Christ. First, they are to be discipled, and then baptised.

The doctrine of the the text is,

Doct. 'The sacrament of baptism is instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ.'

To open the nature of this sacrament, let us consider,

I. The signifying thing in it.

II. The signifying action.

III. The particular uses and ends of baptism.

IV. The subjects of baptism, or those to whom it is to be administered.

V. The efficacy of it.

VI. The necessity of it.

VII. Deduce a few inferences.

I. Let us consider the signifying thing in this sacrament. There is a fourfold baptism spoke of in scripture. (1.) The baptism of light, which is taken for the doctrine, Acts xviii. 25. (2.) The baptism of blood, which is martyrdom, Matth. xx. 22, 23. (3.) The baptism of the Spirit, which is the pouring out of the Spirit, Matth. iii. 11. (4.) The baptism of water, which is baptism properly so called. So,

The signifying thing in baptism is water, Acts viii. 38, 39. Eph. v. 26. And there is no matter as to the water, whether it be fountain water, or river-water, providing only it be pure clean water, Heb. x. 22. And it is an abominable practice of the Papists to add oil, salt, and spittle, to the water in baptism.

Here I shall shew,

1. What is signified by the water in baptism.

2. What is the resemblance betwixt water and the thing signified by it.

*First*, What is signified by the water in baptism?

1. The blood of Jesus Christ, Rev. i. 5.

2. The Spirit of Jesus Christ, Tit. iii. 5. Isa. xlv. 3.

*Secondly*, What is the resemblance betwixt these? There is a sweet resemblance betwixt water, and the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ; the due consideration whereof shews the excellency of the grace exhibited in baptism.

1. Water is a common thing, to be had freely by all those who take it: it is what the poor as well as the rich have access to. So the blood and Spirit of Christ are free to all who will receive the same offered in the gospel, Isa. lv. 1. Christ is not a sealed and closed, but an open fountain, for souls to wash in, Zech. xiii. 1. Cant. ii. 1. And however nucleon one be, he is welcome to this water, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.

2. Water is a cleansing thing, taking out spots, stains, and de-

filement. The blood of Christ cleanses the defiled conscience, Heb. ix. 14. The Spirit of Christ purifies the soul, removing filthy lusts that defile the soul, and so renewing and sanctifying it, Tit. iii. 5. And unless we be thus washed, we have no part in Christ.

3. Water is a refreshing thing, when one is thirsty, or scorched with heat. So is the blood of Christ, and the out-pouring of his Spirit, to the thirsty soul, scorched under the flames of wrath, John vi. 35.

4. Water is a fructifying virtue. So is Christ's blood and Spirit, making the barren soul fruitful in the fruits of holiness, Isa. xlv. 3, 4. The soul lies naturally, under the curse, and so can bring forth nothing but the briers and thorns of wickedness. But the blood of Christ sprinkled on the soul, changes the nature of the soul. The soul is naturally dead, and therefore must wither: the Spirit of Christ brings life, and makes the wilderness to blossom as the rose.

5. Water is most necessary, so necessary that we cannot live without it: so the blood and Spirit of Christ are absolutely necessary for our salvation, Heb. ix. 23. John xiii. 8.

6. *Lastly*, Water must be applied ere it can have its effect: so we must partake of Christ's blood and Spirit, ere our souls can be changed thereby, 1 Cor. i. 30.

II. Let us consider the signifying action in baptism. It is washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Here I shall shew,

1. How this washing with water is to be performed.
2. By whom it is to be performed, according to Christ's institution.
3. What is the meaning of the form of words used in baptism?

*First*, I am to shew how this washing of water is to be performed. The dipping of the person into the water is not necessary: but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person. The unlawfulness of dipping is not to be pretended, since it is not improbable that it was used by John, Matth. iii. 6. and Philip, Acts viii. 38; but seems to have been used in the ancient church, and in some places is used to this day. But baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water, as we do.

(1.) Because the apostles, at least sometimes, seem to have baptised that way; as when three thousand were baptised in one day, Acts ii. 41; which can hardly be imagined to be done in so short a space of time by dipping; and when some were baptised in the night, as in the case of the Philippian jailor and his family, Acts xvi. 33.

(2.) Because baptising in scripture is used for washing by infusion or sprinkling, as well as immersion, Mark vii. 4. Luke xi. 38.



(3.) Because the thing signified by baptism is called *sprinkling*, and is represented thereby sufficiently, Heb. xii. 24. 1 Pet. i. 2. It is true, we are said to be buried in baptism, Rom. vi. 4; but even the sprinkling of the water, as well as dipping, represents that, according to the ancient way of burying, wherein they were not sunk into the earth, but laid on the ground, and the mould cast over them. Besides that in some cases dipping might endanger the life of the baptised, especially in our cold countries.

*Secondly*, I shall show by whom baptism is to be performed, according to Christ's institution. By a minister of the gospel lawfully called thereto. For to them only belongs the administration of baptism, to whom it belongs to preach the word, our Lord Jesus having knit these together in the institution, Matth. xxviii. 19. They are the stewards of the mysteries of God, 1 Cor. iv. 1; into which office none can thrust himself with a good conscience, who is not called thereto. And it is the perverse opinion of the absolute necessity of baptism, that makes the Papists and others admit others, even women to baptise in case of necessity.

*Thirdly*, I shall next show what is the meaning of the form of words used in baptism. It denotes baptism to be administrated by virtue of the authority of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but especially that one is baptised into the profession, faith, and obedience of the holy Trinity, for the Greek *en* signifies *into the name*, not *names*, to shew the Unity of the Godhead in the Trinity of persons.

III. I proceed to shew what are the peculiar uses and ends of baptism. Besides the general uses and ends of the sacraments, which are common to baptism and the Lord's supper, the particular uses and ends of baptism are these,

1. To be a rite of solemn admission into the visible church. Matth. xxviii. 19. 1 Cor. xii. 13; and so to the visible church privileges, Rom. xi. 17. It supposes the party to have a right to these privileges before, and does not make them members of the visible church, but admits them solemnly thereto. And therefore it is neither to be called nor accounted christening, i. e. making them Christians: for the infants of believing parents are born within the covenant, and so are Christians and visible church members; and by baptism this right of theirs is acknowledged, and they are solemnly admitted to the privileges of church-membership.

2. To signify and seal to the party saving privileges and benefits for his eternal salvation, which it actually doth in all those to whom it is effectual, though it is not effectual to all. These benefits are,

(1.) Ingrafting into Christ, or union with him. Gal. iii. 27. We

are naturally branches of the old Adam, from whom we can derive nothing but sin and the curse. Christ the second Adam is the true vine into which we are ingrafted, or to whom we are united, John xv. 5. The Spirit is the ingrafter, who, by the knife of the law cuts us off from the old stock, Gal. ii. 19. and puts us into Christ, winding us up with the band of the covenant of grace, and causing us to knit with him by faith, Eph. iii. 17. This is signified and sealed by baptism, while so Christ does solemnly take possession of us, being baptised in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(2.) Partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace. These benefits signified and sealed by baptism are,

[1.] Remission of sins by virtue of the blood of Christ, Mark i. 4. That as the water washes away the stains of the body, so the blood of Christ washeth off guilt; and God, for the sake of his Son, forgives sin. So the apostle prescribes it for the ease of the troubled souls who were pricked and awakened by his sermon, Acts ii. 37, 38. 'Repent and be baptised every one of you (says he), in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins,' that so they might be assured of pardon.

[2.] Adoption into the family of God, Gal. iii. 26, 27. We are by nature out of God's family: but here God's name is called upon us, and we are visibly taken into the visible family of God; and having his Spirit dwelling in us, we are really taken into the family; which is signified and sealed by baptism.

[3.] Regeneration by the Spirit of Christ, signified by water, Tit. iii. 5. The Spirit of Christ in regeneration worketh like water, John iii. 5. cleansing the soul from its impurities and making it holy. This is necessary to our salvation, since no unclean thing can enter the New Jerusalem; and is signified and sealed by baptism.

(4.) Resurrection unto life eternal out of the grave by the same Spirit, Rom. viii. 11. That baptism has an eye to this, appears from 1 Cor. xv. 29. 'Else what shall they do which are baptised for the dead, if the dead rise not?' And it is represented by the water's going off the baptised, though more lively by the coming up out of it in dipping.

3. To signify and seal our engagement to be the Lord's, to be his only, wholly and for ever, Rom. vi. 4. It is a dedicating ordinance, wherein the party baptised is solemnly given up to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. His ear is bored, that he may be the Lord's servant for ever. He is listed under Christ's banner, to fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh. He renounces sin and Satan, these his old masters, as being dead to sin, that he may live in newness of life. And, in a word, it is a declared acceptance of God's covenant offered in the gospel.

IV. I come to shew, who are the subjects of baptism, those to whom baptism is to be administered. 'Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him'; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptised.'

Negatively, (1.) Not any inanimate things, as bells, which the Papists do thereby horribly profaning the seal of God's covenant. (2.) Nor yet infidels, who are without the visible church, and so strangers from the covenants of promise, who therefore can have no right to the seals, while they continue so, Eph. ii. 12.

Positively, All those, and those only, who are within the covenant, without distinction of nation, sex, or age. This is clear from the institution, of discipling all nations, and then baptising them. So whosoever they are who come into Christ's school, and are members of his visible church, are to be baptised, and none other. So,

1. Those who are of age, whatever they have been before, are to be baptised, upon their making a credible profession of their faith in Christ, and obedience to him: because in that case the church is to look upon them as within the covenant. It is true, if they be not sincere believers, they have not a right to it before God; but their credible profession gives them a right to it before the church. Both of these are plain in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts viii. 37, 38; and Peter's hearers, Acts ii. 38.

2. The infants of believing parents, or visible church-members, one or both, are to be baptised: because they are to be looked upon as within the covenant, since it runs so, 'I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed,' &c. Gen. xvii. 7; Acts ii. 38, 39; and the benefits of the covenant belong to them, Matth. xix. 14; who then can forbid them the seal of the covenant? They were circumcised under the Old Testament, and the grace of God is not narrower now than it was then. They are comprehended under the institution, as making a part of nations, and are reckoned disciples, Acts xv. 10; and so the apostles baptised whole families, as Paul and Silas that of the gaoler, Acts xvi. 15, 33; and Paul that of Stephanas, 1 Cor. i. 16. And it is sufficient if one of the parents be a church-member, though the other be not, 1 Cor. vii. 14.

V. As to the efficacy of baptism, we may observe three things.

1. It consists in effectual sealing and applying Christ and his benefits to the baptised party, 1 Pet. iii. 21.

2. It is not effectual to all that receive it, as appears from the case of Simon, who after baptism remained in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, Acts viii. 13, 23; and this the unholy lives of many baptised in their infancy do testify.

3. It is not tied to the moment of administration, but though not effectual in the time it is administered, may afterwards be effectual, through the working of the Spirit, John iii. 5, 8.

VI. As to the necessity of baptism, two things are to be observed.

1. It is not of absolute necessity to salvation, as if the simple want thereof could hinder salvation; for God has not made baptism and faith equally necessary, Mark xvi. 16. And circumcision was not to be administered before the eighth day, Gen. xvii. 12;\* though there is no reason to doubt but some Jewish infants died before that time.

2. It is necessary by divine precept, as an instituted means of salvation. So that the contempt of it is a sin, and a great one, that will damn men, unless it be pardoned through the blood of Christ, Luke vii. 30; but this contempt cannot be ascribed to the child, before he comes to the years of discretion, and so cannot involve him in guilt; but unto the parents. So that Gen. xvii. 14; is to be understood of the child come to years.†

A few inferences shall conclude this subject.

\* The words are, "And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations." The author, in his manuscript on Genesis, renders the words thus: "And one going on eight days; he shall be circumcised for you; [even] every male, throughout your generations." That is, should one once be going on eight days, then he is bound by this law. Before he is of that age, he is not obliged to be circumcised: but on the eighth day he falls under the obligation to it, which still abides on him thereafter, during his uncircumcision. Compare ver. 14. And every male was to be circumcised for the family of Abraham, or in their name; see the note above, p. 465; and this throughout their generations successively, during the whole time of the being of circumcision as a divine ordinance. By this constitution there would be almost a continual renewing of the seal of the covenant among them; and that respecting not only the party circumcised at the time, but the whole body of the people, men and women. Hence it appears, what ground there is for Christians improving the administration of baptism to infants, time after time, for the confirming of their own faith of the covenant. Compare with this phrase, circumcised for you, 1 Cor. xv. 29; baptised for the dead. Baptism, as often as it is administered according to Christ's institution, doth by his appointment seal the whole benefits of the covenant of grace, not only to the party receiver, but the whole of the body, within the covenant: the resurrection of the dead saints is a special benefit of the covenant, in virtue of it secured to them, even as remission of sin to the living, Mat. xxii. 31, 32; and the church militant and triumphant are but one body, all of them together being embodied in one covenant, Eph. iv. 4 1 Cor. xii. 13; therefore baptism being administered to the faithful for this end, is vain, if there is no resurrection of the dead.

† The words are, "And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." The author, in the aforementioned work, thus translates and comments on the words: "And as for an uncircumcised one a male; who shall not crop, even the flesh



*Inf.* 1. Baptism is not to be administered to any person oftener than once. This is plain from the nature of the ordinance, Tit. iii. 5; we being but once ingrafted and regenerated.

2. Improve your baptism agreeable to the nature of it, and the ends of its institution. It is a gross neglect, that we are not often putting the question to ourselves, Into what was I baptised? Alas! many make no more use of their baptism rightly, than if they had never been baptised. Though ye were but once baptised, ye should be improving it all your life long, and particularly when you see others baptised.

(1.) Improve it for raising your hearts in thankfulness to God, that ever ye were sealed with the seal of God's covenant, and had his name called on you, while many in the world are utter strangers to the covenants of promise.

(2.) Improve it for your strengthening against temptation, considering that you are the Lord's, not your own, and are under the most solemn and awful engagement to God, to resist the devil, the world, and the flesh; and also drawing strength from the death, and resurrection of Christ, into whom they were baptised, Rom. vi. 4.

(3.) Improve it for your humiliation under your sins and miscarriages, considering them as sins against the grace of baptism, and your engagements to God therein; remembering that sins after solemn engagements to the contrary, are highly offensive to God, and attended with more aggravating circumstances, than if they had never been baptised, and such solemn engagements entered into by

of his foreskin;" i. e. a male, whether of Abraham's own seed, or born in the house, or acquired by money; who being come to the years of discretion (the Jews say the thirteenth year of his age), his circumcision having been neglected by his parents or master, shall not then see to his own circumcision, effectually, he shall be liable as follows:—"Than in that case that person, even that, shall be cut off from his people whatsoever," i. e. Such a one is guilty, and of whatsoever people he be, he shall be cut off from his people, by death; which he shall be put to, for his contempt, whether by the hand of the magistrate, or otherwise.—Even my covenant he hath made void, i. e. He hath thrown it away, or trampled it under foot, as refuse. The punishment to be inflicted is not more severe than the crime is atrocious. The criminal had free access to the covenant of grace, with the righteousness of faith, and all the other benefits of it; whether he was of Abraham's seed or not; being incorporated with Abraham's family: he was under the obligation of a law to receive the covenant personally to enter into it; and in token thereof, to receive the seal of it, ver. 11, 12, 13; he is come to years, and capable of judging for himself; and the hazard of refusing is told him. But he contemns the seal; he will not circumcise himself. Thus he makes void the covenant; making the device of heaven for salvation useless and of none effect to himself by his obstinacy: he contemptuously throws it away from him as empty husks, dregs, and refuse, in which there is no force nor energy, no sap, no savour; and treads it under foot. Compare Heb. x. 28, 29.

you. The vows of God are upon you; break them not, and go not about after vows to make inquiry.

(4.) Improve your baptism to the strengthening of your faith and confidence in Jesus Christ, especially in downcastings under a sense of guilt; for it is a sign and seal of remission, adoption, &c. and so may answer the question to an exercised soul, How can I be put among the children?

(5.) Improve it to the vigorous exercise of, and growth in holiness, since thereby ye are engaged to newness of life, as ye are raised from the dead, Rom. vi. 4. Were ye dedicated unto God, does not that say ye should be holy in heart, lip, and life? As God is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of life and conversation; remembering that without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

(6.) *Lastly*, Improve it to the increase of brotherly love, even love to all the saints, who are all baptised into one body, 1 Cor. xii. 13. It is as unnatural for saints not to love one another, or to quarrel with one another, as it is for the members of the natural body to be at war with each other. Then love one another, as Christ hath loved you.\*

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#### OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1 COR. xi. 23, 24, 25.—*I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner, also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*

THESE words afford us the answer to that question, 'What is the sacrament of the Lord's supper?' and declare to us the nature of that holy ordinance which we are now in expectation of, and now falls to be explained? For which we shall consider,

I. The author of it.

II. The signifying things in it.

III. The signifying actions.

IV. The uses and ends of it.

\* See more of this subject in the author's sermons on church-communion, first printed in 1737.

All these particulars are contained in the text and deserve a special consideration.

1. The author of this ordinance is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. It is not founded on man's authority, but on his own authority, who is the only King and Head of his church, ver. 23. *I have received of the Lord Jesus*, &c. which points out a twofold excellency in it. (1.) A character of divine authority upon it. The elements and actions, though they be mean in themselves, yet have a majesty in them to a spiritual eye, as bearing Christ's stamp on them, and being heaven's broad seal to the covenant. (2.) A holiness in it; it is a holy ordinance, as appointed by the holy Jesus. The elements, though in themselves common things, are relatively holy, as appointed to represent, seal, and apply Christ and his benefits.

Here I shall shew,

1. When Christ instituted this sacrament.
2. For what time it is to continue.
3. What the words of institution contain.

*First*, When did Christ institute this sacrament? *The same night in which he was betrayed*, ver. 23. Yet this does not bind us to that time rather than to another, because that was an accidental circumstance, arising from something peculiar to the first institution and administration. For it could not be sooner, in regard it behoved to be after the passover, which was to be killed in the evening, Exod. xii. 6. and eaten that night, ver. 8. which was to be abrogated by this new institution. It could not be later, because quickly after he fell into his enemies' hands. The time of its institution teaches us four things.

1. The most tender care and concern our Lord had and has for his people's welfare and comfort, providing for these just while he was to launch forth into the sea of wrath. Admirable love and tenderness indeed!

2. That it is Christ's dying love-token to his friends, and therefore to be highly prized, and duly improved.

3. That it is of special use to fit the Lord's people for a time of trouble and trial. Now, the disciples were to meet with a storm which they had never seen the like of; and he reserves therefore the best wine till now.

4. That it is of special use to fit his people for grappling with death; the which we may learn from his example.

*Secondly*, For what time is this sacrament to continue? I answer, Till he come again, and so it is to last to the end of the world. While he is absent, we must make use of it, as a memorial, ver. 25, 26.

*Thirdly*, What do the words of institution contain? They con-

tain Christ's blessing; which comprehends two things. (1.) A command for the use of this sacrament. (2.) A promise of spiritual benefit by it to the worthy receivers, viz. that they shall partake of Christ's body and blood in the right use of it, ver. 24, 25. *Take, eat: This is my body.—This cup is the new Testament in my blood.*

II. I proceed to consider the signifying things, or outward elements. These are bread and wine. The bread, ordinary bread, without any determination of what grain it is made, nor whether leavened or unleavened. Our Lord took such bread as came to hand, and so may we without scruple, though decency is to be observed. The wine, as to the colour of it, is also indifferent; and whether a little mixed with water, or unmixed is so too. Necessity and decency must regulate these things, the church being no otherwise tied by divine institution.

Here Let us consider,

1. What is signified by the bread and wine.

2. The resemblance betwixt the signs and the things signified.

*First,* What is signified by the bread and wine? The body and blood of Christ, ver. 24, 25. even a whole Christ, with all his benefits, forasmuch as the divine nature after the incarnation was never separated from the human, though the soul was separated from the body, and his precious blood from his flesh.

*Secondly,* The resemblance betwixt the signs and the things signified.

1. Consider the bread and wine separately.

1st, There is a resemblance betwixt the bread and Christ's body.

(1.) Bread is for nourishing natural life: so is Christ's body for nourishment to the soul, John vi. 56. 'For (says he), my flesh is meat indeed.' There the hungry may feed, and be nourished and strengthened, to grow up unto eternal life.

(2.) Bread must be prepared ere it can be bread, or fit nourishment for us, the grain ground and baked with the fire. So Christ was grinded betwixt the upper millstone of the Father's wrath, and the nether millstone of the malice of men and devils, and cast into the fiery furnace of justice, that he might be bread to our souls, Psal. xxii. 14.

(3.) Bread is a common and cheap provision; it is for the poor as well as the rich. Christ's salvation is the common salvation, Jude, 3; free to all who will receive the same, Rev. xxii. 17.

(4.) Of all provision it is the most necessary. Nothing is so necessary for us as Christ; without him we die, we perish, we all perish, John vi. 53. 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.'



(5.) *Lastly*, It is a sort of food which healthy people will never loath. So is Christ ever sweet to the soul that feeds on him, though distempered souls loath the bread of life.

*2dly*, There is a resemblance betwixt wine and Christ's blood.

(1.) The wine is squeezed out of the grapes forcibly by the wine-press. Thus was Christ's blood squeezed out of his body, by the wine-press of the Father's wrath, that it might be drunk to our souls.

(2.) Wine has a medicinal virtue, Luke x. 34. Christ's blood is the great medicine for the wounds of the soul. There are no wounds so deep, or so hopeless, but an application of Christ's blood will cleanse them, and heal them too.

(3.) Wine is refreshing and strengthening to the body, 1 Tim. v. 23. A draught of this spiritual drink, exhibited to us in the sacrament, and to be received by faith, would make the soul pressed with guilt, and a sense of wrath, to stir as a giant refreshed with wine, John vi. 55. 'My blood is drink indeed.'

(4.) *Lastly*, It is of a cheering virtue, Prov. xxxi. 6. The blood of Christ is that whereof those who are of sorrowful spirits, by reason of guilt, may drink by faith, and forget their sorrow, 1 Pet. i. 8.

2. Consider the bread and wine conjunctly, set before us in the sacrament. There is a threefold resemblance.

1st, There is both meat and drink, bread and wine, in the sacrament. In Jesus Christ we have a full feast for our souls, John vi. 55. 'My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.' There is a fulness in him for all our wants, a fulness of merit and of Spirit.

2. The bread and wine are separate in the sacrament. So was Christ's blood separated from his body on the cross for us. Many vents were made in that blessed body by the nails and spear, through which that blood might gush out, for the redemption of an elect world.

3. The bread must be eaten, and the wine drunk, or they will not nourish. So Christ's body and blood must be by faith eaten and drunk, or it will not profit us to our salvation. It is union with him by faith that makes us partakers of his benefits.

III. Let us consider the signifying actions in this sacrament.

*First*, There are some signifying actions of the administrator about these elements, according to Christ's institution, which, being sacramental, are also significant.

1. Taking the bread, and the cup into which the wine has been poured out, taking them into his hand, ver. 23, 24, 25. Nothing is

more distinctly mentioned than this, Matth. xxvi. 26, 27. 'Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.' Whence it is evident, that it is taken to be consecrated. And this represents the Father's chusing and designing the Son to be Mediator, Psal. lxxxix. 19. 'I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.' So in this action we may see, (1.) Man perishing for want of spiritual food, Adam and all his posterity starving in their souls, and so their case crying for bread. (2.) God in his eternal love destinating bread for a starving world. (3.) The Son of God, as the party on whom the lot fell, to be bread for them. Behold the bread the Father took, Isaiah xlii. 1. 'Behold my servant whom I uphold.' He was God's choice, and shall he not be ours?

2. Consecrating of the elements, ver. 24, 25. The consecrating of the bread and wine apart is reckoned to be an accidental circumstance in the first administration, agreeable to the custom of the country where it was done, not obliging us, whose custom it is to bless all together, more than unleavened bread, &c. Nor does there appear any mystery further in the former than the latter.

Here consider,

(1.) How the elements are consecrated. By the word of institution, thanksgiving and prayer, they are consecrated, or set apart from common use, ver. 23, 24, 25. Our Lord Christ had power of himself to institute the ordinance, and did so, and blessed it, and solemnly gave thanks over it. The institution stands in the word, which therefore we read on that occasion, and, according to his example, pray over it with thanksgiving. The Popish consecration, by muttering over these words, *This is my body*, hit not the mark; for these words, *This is my body*, were uttered by our Lord after the consecration.

(2.) What is the effect of the consecration on the elements? Not a real change of them into the body and blood of Christ. This destroys the nature of a sacrament, leaving no sensible sign. It is contrary to the institution, where Christ's body was sitting at the table, and reached the disciples bread and wine. It is contrary to the doctrine of Christ's suffering once, his ascension, sitting at God's right hand, and coming again not till the last day. And so it is contrary to sense and reason.

Christ said indeed, *This is my body*, i. e. signifies my body, as the lamb is called the Lord's passover, Exod. xii. 11. It is by these words the Papists will have the bread changed into the real natural

body of Christ. But these words suppose it to be Christ's body before, since a thing cannot be truly said to be what it is not. So it is no otherwise Christ's body, but sacramentally.

The true effect is a relative change on the elements, so that they are no more to be looked upon as common bread and wine, but the sacred symbols of Christ's body and blood. So they are changed in respect of their use, being set apart for this holy use.

(3.) The signification of this sacramental action. It represents the Father's setting apart and consecrating his own Son to, and investing him in, the Mediatory office. So Christ is said to be sealed, John vi. 27; sanctified and sent, chap. x. 36; and anointed to his office, Isa. lxi. 1. So in this a believer may see these three things. (1.) The Father calling Christ to the Mediatory office, Heb. v. 4, 5; to do and to die for the perishing elect. (2.) The Son's accepting of the call, though he knew how hard the work was, Psal. xl. 7. (3.) Christ completely furnished for all the ends of his mediation, actually entered on the office. The Father blessed him, and sent him on the work, and he goes about it, Isa. lxi. 1.

3. Breaking of the bread, ver. 24. This is an essential rite of this sacrament, it being sometimes called by this very name, Acts xx. 7. It signifies the breaking of Christ's body for us, and consequently the shedding of the blood. In the sacrament there is not a word of pouring out the wine, though no doubt it was done: for the shedding of Christ's blood is sufficiently represented by breaking of his body. His body was broken to the shedding of his blood in his circumcision, in his soul-sufferings to the sweating of blood, in the plucking off his hair, Isa. l. 6. in his scourging, John xix. 1. crowning with thorns, and being smitten on the so crowned head, and in his crucifixion. And these his sufferings point to all the rest.

4. Giving of the bread, and then the wine, to the communicants, ver. 24, 25. This signifies Christ's giving himself, with all his benefits, to the worthy receiver, which is really done in the right use of this sacrament. This is plain from the words, *Take eat, &c.*

*Secondly,* There are signifying actions of the communicants.

1. Taking of the bread and wine with the hand, *ib.* This signifies their receiving a whole Christ, as offered in the word, and exhibited in the sacrament, closing with him by faith.

Eating and drinking. The Papists destroy this last as to the people, with-holding the cup from them, contrary to Christ's express command, Matth. xxvi. 27. 'Drink ye all of it.' These actions signify their feeding spiritually on Christ's body and blood, and uniting with him by faith.

These solemn sacramental actions not being accompanied with the

things signified, namely, the duties, make them a solemn mocking of God, which makes unworthy communicating so great a sin.

IV. I proceed to consider the particular uses and ends of this sacrament. Besides the general ends of this sacrament, common to the other also, to wit, (1.) To be a signifying sign, (2.) A sealing sign, (3.) An exhibiting sign, of Christ, and his benefits to believers; the particular ends of it are,

1. To be a memorial of the death of Christ till he come again, ver. 24. And this is to be considered two ways, (1.) As a memorial of it before the world, 1 Cor. xi. 26. as Joshua set up the twelve stones. Hereby we keep up a standard for Christ, and openly avouch his dying, and our faith of it. (2.) As a memorial before our own eyes, to revive, quicken, and preserve the affectionate remembrance of his death in our hearts. This respects Christ's honour and our duty.

2. To be a badge of and confirm our union and communion with Jesus Christ himself, 1 Cor. x. 16. What nearer union do we know on earth, than that betwixt us and our food, which incorporates with our substance? So this sacrament signifies, seals, and confirms our union and communion with Christ, as eating his flesh and drinking his blood. This respects our privilege.

To be a spiritual feast for our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. *Take eat, &c.* For therein believers are made partakers of his body and blood, since they are really exhibited in this ordinance to the faith of the believer. They partake of it not after a corporal and carnal manner, eating and drinking of that blessed body and blood with the mouths of their bodies, but spiritually and most really by faith. This respects our benefit.

4. *Lastly*, To be a public testimony of our communion with all saints, members of the same body, 1 Cor. x. 17. This respects the whole church of Christ, and the duties they owe to one another as members of the same body.

I shall now conclude this subject with an inference or two.

*Inf.* 1. Hence we may see the unparalleled goodness and bounty of a gracious God to his people, in covering a rich table for them in this wilderness, stored with the best meat and drink for their refreshment and nourishment in their pilgrimage-state, till they arrive at their father's house in the heavenly Canaan. With what an enlarged appetite ought they to come to and partake of this royal feast, designed only for those who are the King's friend's! They should feed upon it in the exercise of faith, love, desire, wonder, and joy. They should welcome every opportunity that presents itself, to feast



with their Redeemer, and give suitable reception to the entertainer, and the entertainment he provides.

2. This holy sacrament is children's bread. For none but gracious souls are capable of managing it to their own advantage. How shall they remember him who never knew him? declare their union with him, who are not divorced from their lusts and idols? eat his flesh and drink his blood, who have no appetite for spiritual meat and drink? honour him whom they are daily dishonouring by their profane lives and conversations? None but those who believe in Christ are fit guests for his table. Let all unbelievers be exhorted to receive and embrace Christ as their Saviour, to be clothed with the wedding-garment of his righteousness, and then they will be fit to sit at the King's table.

3. Prepare for this solemn ordinance, if God shall allow us the opportunity. Delay not a moment to give yourselves to the Lord, by receiving and embracing the Lord Jesus as your Saviour and Redeemer, and vouching him as such in his holy sacrament. Let the mortality\* and sickness that so generally prevails, excite you to be more vigorous than ever in preparing for this solemn occasion, as perhaps it may be the last many of us may partake of. O then let us prepare to keep the feast in due manner!

\* This discourse was preached in April, 1720, in which season a distemper as mortal as epidemical raged in the parish of Ettrick. All the author's family, himself only excepted, were seized with it: but, through the goodness of God, happily recovered. It is to this distemper that the author here alludes. And as a careful observance of the course of providence in general, with a singular dexterity in connecting particular providences, was one of the most distinguishing traits in this great man's character; so it was his invariable practice, to adapt his public preaching to the course of providence, and to make use of God's dispensations towards his own parish in particular, to back and enforce his exhortations to his flock. Add to this, that it was a practice of his, not unusual, to observe a congregational fast when any thing appeared uncommon in the course of providence, that his parishioners might be led to improve it properly; which, from his diary and the sermons then preached, still preserved, it appears, he did on the occasion alluded to in the inference. This fast was observed on the 27th of April, 1720. And as the sermons then delivered may be useful on like occasions, which are not unfrequent, they shall be inserted at the end of this volume. And the propriety of giving them a place in this work will appear from this consideration, That while the serious reader is employed in perusing a discourse treating of the nature of the Lord's supper, in which there is a lively representation of the death of Christ, our passover sacrificed for us, it will be profitable exercise for him at the same time to be thinking of his own death, and to be so numbering his days, that he may apply his heart unto wisdom.

## OF THE WORTHY RECEIVING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1 COR. xi. 28.—*But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

THESE words contain a mean for preventing the great evil which men are apt to fall into with respect to the Lord's supper; and so for our purpose they offer two things to be considered.

1. An evil, a great evil, a heinous evil, which men must use means to prevent; that is, unworthy communicating. *But let a man examine himself, &c.* This looks back to the preceding verse, wherein the apostle had declared unworthy communicants to be 'guilty of Christ's body and blood.' *But* (says he, to prevent this, and that ye may worthily partake) *let a man examine himself, &c.*

2. The way to be taken to prevent unworthy communicating: *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, &c.* A man, every man to whom the gospel comes, and who has access to this ordinance, must examine himself, as a judge does a matter of fact, or goldsmiths metals by the touch-stone, to discern what is true and what counterfeit. *And so let him eat;* not, *And then let him eat,* whatever case his soul be in; but let him follow out this duty till he find his soul in some fitness for that ordinance, *And so eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

The text affords this doctrine, viz.

Doctr. 'It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience, lest coming unworthily they eat and drink judgment to themselves.'

Here let us consider,

I. What worthiness to partake is.

II. The duty of self-examination necessary for worthy receiving of the Lord's supper.

III. The necessity of this self-examination.

IV. Deduce an inference or two.

I. Let us consider what worthiness to partake is. And,

1. What is meant by it.

2. Wherein it consists.

*First,* Let us consider what is meant by worthiness to partake.

1. Not a legal worthiness, as if we could deserve it at the hands of God; for 'when we have done all those things which are commanded us, we must say, We are unprofitable servants, we have

done that which was our duty to do,' Luke xvii. 10. Those who are that way worthy in their own eyes, are altogether unworthy: for building their acceptance with the Lord in that ordinance upon their own good qualifications, they shall meet with Simon's entertainment, Acts. viii. 20. 'Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money;' for they run quite cross to the end of that ordinance, declaring in effect the death of Christ to be in vain as to them, Gal. ii. ult. 'For if righteousness come by the law, then is Christ dead in vain.'

2. But it is a gospel-meetness and fitness for that ordinance as we are to 'bring forth fruits meet for repentance,' Matth. iii. 8. so one communicates worthily, when he is fit for receiving that sacrament according to the rules of the gospel, comes to it in such a manner as Christ bids and welcomes his guests. And much of that lies in coming with a deep sense of our utter vileness and emptiness, Isa. lv. 1.

*Secondly,* Wherein does this worthiness to partake consist? I answer, In two things.

1. In habitual meetness for it, in respect of a gracious state. The soul in the black state of nature is utterly unfit for this ordinance, Psal. v. 5. 'The foolish shall not stand in thy sight, thou hatest all workers of iniquity.' Such a soul is a dead soul, 'dead in trespasses and sins,' Eph. ii. 1. And a dead man is not fit for a feast nor a dead soul for the Lord's table, but rather to be buried out of his sight. And from the Lord's table such a one may be expected to come away twice dead.

2. In actual meetness, in respect of a gracious frame. In our addresses to God not only life, but liveliness is requisite, Psal. lxxx. 18. A sleeping man is not fit for a feast neither; and therefore even a true believer may communicate unworthily, as some in the church of Corinth did, 1 Cor. xi. 30, 32. So it is necessary that we not only have oil in our vessels, but have our lamps burning if we would be fit, Cant. i. 12.

II. Let us consider the duty of self-examination necessary for worthy receiving of the Lord's supper. And here,

1. The rule or touchstone by which we must examine.

2. The matter we are to examine ourselves about.

*First,* Let us consider the rule or touchstone by which we must examine.

1. Beware of false ones. (1.) The common guise of the world. It is not enough that ye are like neighbour and other, aye and better than many, like the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11. Though an ape be liker a man than a dog is, yet the one is no more a man than the

other. Though mere moralists and formalists are liker true Christians than openly profane ones are, yet the former are no more true Christians than the latter. (2.) One's being better than sometime before, 2 Cor. x. 12. One may be like Saul, who got another heart, but not the new heart, 1 Sam. x. 9. (3.) The letter of the law. So did the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11; and Paul before his conversion, Rom. vii. 9. (4.) The seen practice of the godly, which is but their outside, and so is but an unsafe rule, because you cannot see the principle, motives, and ends of their actions, which are great characteristics, whereby the sincere are distinguished from hypocrites.

2. The only true rule or touchstone in this case is the word of God, Isa. viii. 20. 'To the law and to the testimony,' &c. The Spirit of the Lord speaking in the scriptures is the supreme Judge of all questions in religion, whether relating to faith or practice; and the word itself is the rule by which the decision is made. God hath given us marks in the word, by which one may know whether he be in Christ or not, 2 Cor. v. 17; whether born of God or not, 1 John iii. 9; and the like.

*Secondly*, Let us consider the matter about which we are to examine ourselves. The great thing to be inquired into and examined here, is the state of our souls before the Lord, whether we be in Christ or not, regenerate or not, have true grace or not, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. This we should examine at all times with respect to death and eternity, because our eternal state depends on our being in a state of grace here. And this is to be examined in respect of the sacrament.

The reason is, This sacrament is not a converting, but a confirming ordinance, as baptism also is, Rom. iv. 11. It is a seal of the covenant, and so supposes the covenant entered into before by the party. It is appointed for nourishment, which presupposes life. And if it were not so, what need of self-examination? so let him come, not otherwise. It is the word that is the converting ordinance, not the sacrament, Rom. x. 17; and the nature of excommunication evinces this, 1 Cor. v. 13.

But more particularly, because there are some graces, namely, knowledge, faith, repentance, love, and new obedience, which in a particular manner are sacramental graces, these are to be examined. And,

First, Our knowledge is to be examined, 1 Cor. xi. 29.

And here let us consider,

1. What is to be examined concerning our knowledge.
2. How this may be known.
3. The necessity of this.

*First*, What is to be examined concerning our knowledge.



1. The measure of it, whether competent or not, Hos. iv. 6. The nature of this ordinance is such, that it cannot be managed to spiritual advantage, but loss, without a competent measure of knowledge. And this not only ministers should inquire into, but people themselves, after all examination by ministers.

2. The quality of it, whether saving or not, 1 Cor. xiii. 1. There is a notional, idle, inefficacious knowledge of spiritual things, which leaves men still in their natural darkness, as to any saving up-taking of spiritual things: and therefore it cannot be sufficient to fit men for this ordinance.

*Secondly*, How may this be known?

1. Competency of knowledge. There may be an ignorance of several not fundamental points of religion, where yet there is a competency of knowledge for this ordinance. But there are two things necessary to it. (1.) An understanding in some measure of the fundamentals of religion, the nature of God, the persons of the Trinity, the fall of man, with the sinfulness and misery of our natural state, the natures and person of Christ, and the way of redemption and salvation by him, our need of him, and of faith as the way how we come to be interested in him. There must be some sensible knowledge of these things, that men be not like parrots, who may be taught to say the creed, without understanding a word of what they say. (2.) An understanding of the nature, use, and ends of this ordinance in particular. Without such a knowledge, there can be no discerning of the Lord's body; for what spiritual thing can one perceive in the ordinance, the nature of which he is ignorant of?

2. Saving knowledge may be discerned by these two marks. (1.) When, by an inward teaching, one is made to see the truth of man's lost state, and his absolute need of Christ, as to be brought out of himself to Jesus Christ wholly for his whole salvation, John vi. 45. 'It is written in the prophets, And they shall be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.' Here are two things, in one of which, if not both, the knowledge of the most refined hypocrite fails. (2.) When it is influential on the life for sanctification, Matth. xi. 29. While notional knowledge leaves always the heart unhumbled, and the life unhallowed, saving knowledge humbles the heart, as it did in the case of Job, chap. xlii. 5, 6. 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes;' and it sanctifies the conversation, Jer. xxii. 15, 16. 'Did not my Father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him? He judged the cause of the poor and needy: then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the Lord.'

*Thirdly*, Let us consider the necessity of this knowledge.

1. Ignorant persons are utterly unfit to come to this ordinance, and have no right either before God or before the church. They are unconverted, unbelieving sinners, Acts xxvi. 18; ever under the power of some lusts, 1 Pet. i. 14. They are incapable of self-examination, and cannot discern the Lord's body in the ordinance, being ignorant of the mystery of Christ. Therefore a competency of knowledge is necessary.

2. Those destitute of saving knowledge are unfit for this ordinance; and however they may have a right to it before the church, they have none before God. For they are without faith, Isa. liii. 11; without repentance, Luke xv. 17. And they cannot rightly discern the Lord's body neither in that ordinance, for it must be spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. ii. 14. To discern the Lord's body in this ordinance is, in the looking-glass of the elements, to behold with a spiritual eye the body of the Son of God, by death making atonement for sin, and peace with God; which draws the heart to a resting in and on him, as overcome with his glory discerned. They who are void of saving knowledge may imagine it, but cannot spiritually discern it, 1 Cor. ii. 8.

SECONDLY, Our faith must be examined. And here let us consider,

1. The necessity of faith in this ordinance.

2. The marks of true faith.

*First*, Let us consider the necessity of faith in this ordinance.

1. Without true faith one has no right to this ordinance. For unbelievers are not within the covenant of grace, faith being that by which one enters into it, and therefore they have no right to the seal, they are not of the family of heaven, and therefore have no right to the children's bread, John i. 12, 13. Nay, they can please God in nothing they do, Heb. xi. 6.

2. Without faith there can be no feeding on Christ. *Take, eat*, implies a spiritual action, a spiritual feeding. Faith is the hand and mouth of the soul. An unbeliever may feed on the bread of the Lord, as the beasts drank of the water of the rock in the wilderness; but they cannot feed on that bread which is the Lord.

*Secondly*, Let us consider the marks of true faith.

1. A superlative desire of Christ and his grace, i. e. above all persons and things, Isa. xxvi. 9. Matth. v. 6. for himself as well as his benefits, and not for his benefits only, Psal. lxxiii. 25. A desire of a whole Christ, not only for justification, but sanctification too, and that not only as sanctification is the way to make the soul happy, but to conform it to the image of God. It is absolute, without any reserve, condition or exception, Acts ix. 6.

2. A receiving and use-making of Jesus Christ in all his offices, John i. 12. Col. ii. 6. If sensible of thy absolute need of Christ, and thy own inability to help thyself, thou fleest out of thyself unto the Lord Jesus, renouncing thy own wisdom, righteousness, and will, to be guided by his Spirit, saved by his righteousness alone, and ruled by his law; and if in the course of thy life thou lookest to him for direction, acceptance with God, and strength in the battle against corruption, then undoubtedly thou believest.

*Thirdly*, Our repentance must be examined.

Here let us consider,

1. The necessity of repentance in this ordinance.
2. The marks of it.

*First*, Let us consider the necessity of repentance in this ordinance.

4. Without it there can be no suitable remembrance of a crucified Christ. He is represented there as broken and dying for our sins: and communicating impenitently with a hard heart, looks liker a triumph over Christ's death, than an affectionate remembrance of it. And so it brings upon the person the guilt of the body and blood of the Lord.

2. Without it one cannot expect a sealed pardon, which is the end of the sacrament. God will not seal a pardon to an impenitent soul, nor give Heaven's comforts to insensible sinners, Acts ii. 38. As the sun refreshes the earth when softened by rain, but otherwise parches and scorches it; so God revives the spirit of the contrite at a sacrament, while he is full of wrath against impenitent sinners there.

For this cause it is necessary to examine your sins, search them out, and search them thoroughly.

*Secondly*, Let us view the marks of true repentance.

Ye may know it by this, that the heart is thereby turned from all sin unto God, Psal. cxix. 59. 'I thought on my former ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.' Ask,

1. Have I turned from sin unto God, or am I yet living in my sins? Acts xxvi. 18.

2. Have I turned from all sin, Ezek. xiv. 6. from all gross sins in my practice, and from all sin simply, in my heart and affections? Is my heart loosed from sin? and do I hate all sin? Psal. cxix. 104.

3. If so, why have I done it? Is it only for the wrath annexed to it, or is it not, because of the contrariety in it to God's nature and will? Ezek. xxxvi. 31.

*Lastly*, And are the remains of corruption a burden to my spirit, as they are to God's Spirit?

FOURTHLY, Our love must be examined.

And here let us view,

1. The necessity of it in this ordinance.
2. The marks of it.

*First,* Let us consider the necessity of love to God in this ordinance.

1. Love to God is necessary in it, because therein is held forth the greatest display of God's love in giving his own Son to the death for us. Here is that which of all things may warm the heart most, and make it burn with love to God and Christ.

2. Love to our neighbour is necessary, because God's love, herein represented to us, doth require it, Eph. iv. ult. And if any man love not his neighbour, he does not, he cannot love God. And they that love God, will love his image wherever it is: they will 'love the brethren,' 1 John iii. 14. not only the rich, but the poor, even though they may have several faults, and possibly esteem them not so highly; and this not for their being of the same opinion, but precisely because of the grace of God appearing in them, and not because they are like themselves. And they that truly love Christ will love their brethren of mankind, by using proper endeavours to convince them of sin: to persuade them to believe in Christ, if they are yet strangers to him, or to walk worthy of the gospel, if they have been made partakers of the grace thereof; by associating with the saints, and avoiding all unnecessary commerce with the wicked; and by forgiving personal injuries, and doing good to all men, especially those of the household of faith.

*Secondly,* Let us view the marks of love to God,

1. True love to God is supreme love. As Moses' rod, when turned into a serpent, swallowed up the rods of the Egyptian magicians; so the love of God will swallow up all affections to the creature, whether lawful or unlawful enjoyments, Luke xiv. 27; and ever sit exalted above them all.

2. Love to our neighbour will make us wish well to all men, 1 Cor. v. 8; forgive those that have done us wrong, as we desire to be forgiven of God, Matth. v. 23, 24; and love the people of God of whatever denomination, because of the image of Christ appearing in them, 1 John iii. 14.

*FIFTHLY,* Our new obedience must be examined. Without new obedience we cannot pretend to be Christ's disciples, Matth. xi. 29. I shall give a few marks of it.

(1.) It is new in respect of the principle it proceeds from, the love of God, Heb. vi. 10. (2.) In respect of the end of it, which is God's glory, 1 Cor. x. 31. (3.) It is universal, Psal. cxix. 6. 'I have a respect unto all thy commandments.' (4.) It is constant, Matth. xxiv. 13. And wherein the believer fails, it is his burden, and it



sends him always to the blood of Christ, because of the sinfulness that attends it.

III. I proceed to shew, the necessity of self-examination. It is necessary in two respects.

1. To prevent the sin of coming unworthily to the Lord's table. If we rush on this ordinance without previous examining ourselves, how can we miss of communicating unworthily?

2. To prevent the danger of coming so, which is eating and drinking damnation to one's self. The danger is great, (1.) To the soul, 1 Cor. xi. 29. 'For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.' (2.) To the body, ver. 30. 'For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.'

*Inf.* Examine yourselves, then, as to the state and case of yourselves, in order to prepare for this ordinance. And let none venture upon it without this antecedent exercise, for the danger is very great. And,

1. Be resolute in your self-examination. Resolve to set about this important duty, and resolute to follow it out: because ye will find no small difficulty in it, arising from several causes. 1st, From yourselves, even your own corrupt hearts; and that on several heads. (1.) The ignorance of many makes it difficult. They have not the knowledge necessary to discern the nature or marks of grace. Ye must, then, endeavour the rather to discern these, or any one of them that is given. (2.) A secret respect to some bosom-idol which they would fain keep quiet, John iii. 20. There are stolen goods, which they have no will to restore, and therefore have no inclination to search them out. But, O consider that 'one thing thou lackest.' (3.) A secret fear that all is wrong with them. Perhaps it is not so. But if it be really so, ye have the more need to get matters set to rights. 2dly, From Satan. He has a singular pique at this duty, and therefore will be ready to muster up all his forces to keep men from venturing on it, or to desist from it; and that [1.] By suggesting unto men the insuperable difficulty of the duty: There is a lion in the way, a lion in the streets. [2.] By telling them, they will mar their own peace with it, but can never come to see the truth of grace, or to assurance by it. [3.] By setting them on to some other duty, which, though good in itself, is then unseasonable, to jostle out that which is then proper and necessary. Satan knows it to be an eminently useful duty, and therefore sets himself in opposition to it, that where matters are not right, they may be kept so; and where persons are in a good state, he may rob them of the comfort of it. On these considerations, ye

must be resolute and active in this exercise. The exhortation to it is doubled, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. 'Examine your own selves, prove your own selves.'

2. Ye must be impartial in this inquiry. Ye are in this matter judges in your own cause, and under a strong bias to partiality. But the best way is, to take the matter to the highest Judge, with a resolution to know the worst of your case, 1 Cor. xi. 31. Be not as Saul, when sent to destroy the Amalekites, who spared Agag and the fattest of the cattle. Overlook not right eyes and right hands. What Solomon says of flocks, may we say concerning your souls, Prov. xxvii. 23. 'Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.' However partial ye may be, God will not be so to you; so that your foolish partiality can do you no good, but a great deal of ill, as it will make you ignorant of your own case, which it is your greatest wisdom and interest to know.

*Quest.* May one who doubts of his being in the state of grace approach to the table of the Lord? *Ans.* They whose consciences bear witness, that they do unfeignedly desire Christ and his grace, and to depart from all iniquity, may come notwithstanding of their doubts, which are their weakness, and which they are to struggle against. But if one's conscience witness to him, that he is not clear for Christ as he is offered in the gospel, he cannot come safely, Mat. v. 6. and xi. 6. 1 John iii. 20, 21.

Let every one therefore, carefully examine himself as to his spiritual state, before he approach to this holy ordinance of the Lord's supper, lest he contract the horrid guilt of trampling on the body and blood of Christ, to which he has a right at the Lord's table.

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#### THE NECESSITY OF SELF-EXAMINATION CONSIDERED.\*

2 Cor. xiii. 5.—*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.*

THE dispensations of providence begin to be alarming to this secure generation, and look like the beginning of sorrows, in the great

\* Though this discourse, consisting of two short sermons, was not delivered as any part of this catechetical work, yet it is here inserted on account of its affinity to the preceding discourse, and from a persuasion that it may, through the divine blessing, be useful to the reader, as the subject is of no small importance both to saints and sinners; and were the design of it properly attended to, might prove a happy means

mortality prevailing in several places. And the language of such a dispensation is, as is expressed in the text bidding every one *examine themselves, whether they be in the faith, &c.* In which words we have two things.

1. A necessary duty proposed; and that is, the trial of their state. It is proposed under a double notion, *Examine* and *prove*, the call being doubled, because of the weight of the matter. And,

1st, Of self-examination. And here, (1.) Consider the point the apostle would have them put to the trial, *Whether ye be in the faith.* He knew very well that they professed faith in Christ; but all is not gold that glisters. None but believers, true believers, whose faith worketh by love, being a spiritual vital principle within them, will see heaven: but many take themselves, and others take them, for believers, who yet are not so. (2.) The trial he would have them to make of that point, *Examine yourselves.* The church of Corinth was a divided church. There was a censorious party among them, conceited of themselves, and despisers of this eminent and highly distinguished apostle. For all the clear demonstrations there were of the Lord's being with him, they sought a proof of *Christ's speaking in him*, ver. 3. Now, says he, ye are very much abroad, busy examining me, and make much ado for a proof of Christ speaking in me: I would advise you to be more at home, and examine yourselves. Put yourselves to the trial, whether ye are in faith or not. The original word signifies to make such a trial as one does of a thing by piercing through it, whereby he may know what is within, and whether it be sound or not.

2dly, Of self-probation: *Prove your own selves*, to wit, by trial, as in courts offenders are tried, or they who stand for an office are put on trials to prove whether they be fit for it or not; or rather as goldsmith's try metals, whether by the fire or by the touchstone, whereby they discern the true metal from counterfeit. This is near akin to the former expression, *Examine*, but is not quite the same. This last speaks the bringing the matter to a point, the pursuing

of retrieving the decayed interests of religion amongst us. And it is thought, this discourse will be the more acceptable to the reader, when he is told, that it was the last the author ever wrote, after he was confined to his house by the illness of which he died; and that these two short sermons were preached from a window in the manse to the people standing without, on the 2d and 9th of April, 1732; after which he preached no more, the God whom he had served in the work of the gospel, from the latter end of the year 1669, having called him home on the 20th of May, 1732, to inherit the crown of righteousness laid up for him. But by it and his other valuable writings, he yet speaketh; and his name and memory will be revered, as long as a taste for pure and undefiled religion subsists amongst us.

the trial till it should end in a full proof of their state, good or bad. Ye, q. d. seek a proof of Christ speaking in me; pray rest not till ye get a proof of your own state.

2. The weighty ground that makes this duty necessary, most necessary: *Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.* Wherein we have,

(1.) The ground itself, *Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.* Now, Christ dwells in the heart by faith, Eph. iii. 17. Where there is not a vital union with Christ the person is *reprobate*. There is no union with him but by faith: therefore ye have great need to examine whether ye be in faith or not. *Reprobate* here is not opposed to *elect*: for certainly the apostle did not mean to drive them to absolute despair, in case they found themselves naught in the trial; or to persuade them, that if Christ was not in them already, he would never be in them. But it is opposed to *upright* and *genuine*, and so denotes a person, or thing, that being tried is found unsound or counterfeit, as Jer. vi. ult. and so useless, absolutely unfit for the ends desired, Tit. i. ult. and so rejected, Jer. vi. ult.

(2.) The necessity of the knowledge of one's self in this point, *Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, &c.* Knowledge of one's self is far preferable to the knowledge of other men. Alas! what will it avail men to be raking into the state and case of others, while in the mean time they are strangers to themselves? They do not advert to this great point, how Christ is in them, else they are all wrong for time and eternity.

*Observe* from the connection, That self-judging is a proper mean to bring people off from rash judging of others. It was not rash judging in Peter, when he pronounced Simon Magus to be in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity, who had offered money for the extraordinary power of conferring the Holy Ghost. Neither is it rash judging, to pronounce profane men, scandalous in the habitual course of their lives, to be going in the way to destruction; for the spirit of God by Paul says the same thing, Gal. v. 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 have also told you in time past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' But it was rash judging in these Corinthians, to question Christ's speaking in Paul, because in some things he was not so acceptable to them as some others. So it is rash judging, to reject men who conscientiously appear to adhere to the uncontroverted points of practical godliness, because they



differ from them in some points controverted among good and holy men. Self-judging would call men home to their own case, so that they would not be at so much leisure to ramble abroad. It would let them see so much evil in themselves, and so much they have need to be forgiven of God, that they would not dare be severe on their brethren, and rigorous on their behaviour, lest the measure they mete to others should be measured to them again. Therefore I cannot but most earnestly recommend this practice of self-judging, which will happily tend to make you low in your own eyes, and preserve you from many miscarriages to and misconstructions of others.

Having thus explained the words, and considered their connection with the preceding context, I shall at this time only observe from them the following doctrine, viz.

DOCT. 'It is a most necessary duty lying on men professing the name of Christ, to examine themselves, whether they are in the faith or not; and to pursue that examination and trial, till bringing the matter to a proof, they come to a point with reference to that great concern.'

In discoursing from this important doctrine I shall consider,

I. The point to be tried.

II. The trial of the point.

III. Make some improvement.

I. I shall consider the point to be tried. The point concerning which every one is to try himself is, Whether he is in the faith. And here let us consider,

1. What it is to be in the faith.

2. The weight and importance of this point.

*First*, I am to shew, what it is to be in the faith. To have the true faith, or to be true believers, and to be in the faith, is all one as to the matter; even as to be in Christ, and Christ's being in us, is the same thing in effect. The man that is endowed with the grace of faith, enriched with precious faith, is in the faith: and the faithless, the unbelieving, in whom the grace of saving faith has never been wrought by the Holy Spirit, is not in the faith. But I conceive the expression aims at these three things.

1. The elect's peculiarity of this heavenly gift; hence called 'the faith of God's elect,' Tit. i. 1. It is the peculiar treasure of these happy objects of everlasting love; it is given to none but them; it remains among that blessed party, as a peculiarity of their community. Hence the apostle Peter addressed himself to those to whom he writes, under this character, 'to them that have obtained like precious faith with us,' 2 Pet. i. 1. There is a fourfold faith mentioned in scripture: An historical faith, that devils partake of, Jam.

ii. 19; a faith of miracles, which one may have, yet want charity, or true saving grace, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. a temporary faith, which apostates in the end may have had, like the stony-ground hearers, Matth. xiii. 20, 21. But the faith here to be tried, is the faith that unites to Christ, which none have but those 'ordained to eternal life,' Acts xiii. 48. It is that whereby a sinner receives and embraces Jesus Christ as a Saviour, and relies upon and trusts in him as his Saviour in particular, for the whole of his salvation, and in virtue of which he lives to God. Now, it is every one's concern to try whether he be in this faith or not.

2. The life of faith. The Christian life is indeed the life of faith. Hence Paul says, 'The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God,' Gal. ii. 20. By Adam's eating the forbidden fruit, mankind were led off from the heavenly life into the life of sense, living to gratify their senses, follow their passions, please the vanity of their minds, and the vileness of their affections. Now, God has by Jesus Christ brought in a new way of heavenly life as the road to happiness; and that is the life of faith. Ye should try whether ye are in that road or not. The life of sense is indeed a spiritual death; see whether ye are *in the faith*, as in the life, the true life of the soul.

3. The operativeness or efficacy of faith; for 'faith worketh by love,' Gal. v. 6. Faith lies inwardly, undiscernible to all the world, but to God and the believer himself. But then it is not a dormant or inactive principle, but spreads its effects outwardly through the whole man. Sound faith works the whole conversation, in every part thereof, into true holiness, brings in an universal respect to the commands of God, and sanctifies the whole man throughout. In vain do they pretend to be possessed of faith, who do not live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. For they to whom God has *shewn the good*, Christ himself, and have by faith rolled the burden of their salvation upon him, will do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God, as the genuine and never failing fruits of true faith. So ye would consider whether ye be in the faith, which is the way to all other good things.

*Secondly*, I come to shew the weight and importance of this point. There is nothing about you that can possibly be of greater importance for you to know, and to be clear about. It is the head point, on which all that concerns your eternal salvation depends; and that is a matter of the last consequence to every sinner. We must not stay to enumerate the several particulars. But the weight of it will sufficiently appear, if ye consider, that on it depends,

1. Your union with Christ, and saving interest in him. If Christ

dwells in you, it is by faith, Eph. iii. 17. This is supposed in the text. We remain branches of the first Adam, without Christ, till we by faith come into him as the true vine. If ye are not in the faith, if ye are not of that household, ye are none of Christ's; ye have no saving interest in him, and so none in his purchase. Ye are yet far from God, strangers to his covenant, and without any special relation to him.

2. Your deliverance from the curse of the law, and your absolution from the sentence of the condemnation ye are born under. Hence the apostle says, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ,' Rom. v. 1. If you have received remission of sin, it has been by faith. Hence the apostle says, 'Be it known unto you, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses,' Acts xiii. 38, 39. If ye are not in the faith, there is not one of all your sins, from the womb to this day, but is sealed up among God's treasures, and will be brought out against you in due time. The curse of the broken law stakes you down under wrath: For 'he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him,' John iii. 36.

3. Your doing any thing acceptable in God's sight: for 'without faith it is impossible to please him,' Heb. xi. 6; if ye be not in the faith, ye are reprobate to every good work. Ye can no more serve the true ends of Christianity, than dross can go for gold, or counterfeits pass for current money. For without saving faith, ye are without Christ; and without Christ ye can do nothing, John xv. 5; so that however your works may be in the world's view, some good, some bad; yet there are none of them, however good in themselves, good in God's sight, as they do not proceed from a principle of faith in the heart, and are not directed to the glory of God as their ultimate scope and end.

4. *Lastly*, Your eternal salvation. It is the stated ordinance of heaven, Mark xvi. 16; 'He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.' So the clearing of that point, is the clearing whether ye be in a state of salvation or not. This is a point than which there is none more weighty and important. How then can that miss to be a point of the greatest moment, on which it depends? Were men more concerned as to their lot and place in the other world, they would be less concerned about the vain pleasures, amusements, and profits of this world; and bend all their endeavours and attention to gain a blessed and happy eternity.

Upon this, I hope, some may be ready to say, Seeing so much de-

pend upon being in the faith, and since we must eternally perish without it, what shall we do to get faith, that we may not underlie the wrath of God for ever? I answer, Faith is the gift of God, and to him you must apply for it; Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of faith, and to him ye must betake yourselves, that he may work it in you; and the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of faith, and it is the effect of his operation: so that you must have recourse to him, that he may 'fulfil in you the work of faith with power. More particularly, if you would have this precious grace of faith,

1. Be diligent in reading and hearing the word. This is a mean that God hath appointed for begetting faith in the hearts of sinners. Hence the apostle tells us, Rom. x. 17; that 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.' Such as would have faith without hearing, would have it out of God's way. See that ye diligently attend the preaching of the word, and miss no opportunity of hearing it. The ordinances are the organ through which the Spirit breathes, when he conveys quickening influences into the souls of men. They are the conduit-pipes through which the water of life runs. They are Christ's road in which he comes to bless sinners. See then that ye be not out of the way when he passeth by. The pool of Bethesda was a figure of the ordinances, to which the diseased repaired, to wait the descent of the angel to trouble the waters: and whosoever stepped into the pool after the moving of the waters; was immediately healed. But if any absented themselves, they could receive no benefit thereby. So if ye would be healed of your spiritual diseases, especially unbelief, that deadly malady, that fixes the guilt of all your sins upon you, make conscience of attending the preaching of the word, and cry for the Spirit of faith.

2. Pray earnestly to God, that he would teach you to believe. Remember faith is his gift, and he bestows it on whomsoever he will. Pray diligently for it; and redeem time for that end. And pray importunately, besieging heaven with your cries for that effect, as resolved to get what ye want. Seek faith from God as a condemned man would seek a pardon: seek this, as a man that sees death before him would sue for his life. Remember, O sinner, that there is no life for you without it: for 'he that believeth not, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' Fall down then before God, and cry for it as for life, saying, 'O give me faith, or else I die. I may live, and be happy for ever, without friends or relations, wealth, honours, or pleasures; but I cannot live happily and comfortably without faith. Without it I can do nothing ac-



ceptable in thy sight. Vouchsafe me this precious blessing, that I may glorify thy name for ever.'

II. I now proceed to consider the trial of this point. This the text takes up in these two things, self-examination, and self-probation.

*First*, Self-examination. We must carefully, examine whether we be in the faith or not. And this speaks the following things.

1. The necessity of the knowledge of the faith, both of the doctrine of faith in fundamentals, and the grace of faith as to the nature of it, though it be not an experimental knowledge. None can examine themselves on a point they have no notion of: so that those who are grossly ignorant of the nature of faith, are quite incapable of self-examination in this point, but just walk on in darkness and confusion to their own ruin, 1 John ii. 11. How much then does it concern all to cultivate the knowledge both of the doctrine and grace of faith?

2. Men professing faith may yet be void of it. They may seem to be in the faith, in a gracious state, who are yet in unbelief, and in the gall of bitterness; otherwise there would be no need of self-examination on that head. There is no need of it in heaven or hell; for there are no false colours worn there; nor do any there seem to be any more but what really they are. But here, in the visible church, are foolish virgins as well as wise, and foolish builders as well as those who are not so. Great is the need, then, of self-examination.

3. The certain knowledge of our estate, whether we be in the faith or not, gracious or graceless, may be attained in the use of ordinary means, without extraordinary revelation. Self-examination and probation are that means; 2 Pet. i. 10. 'Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.' Many complain they can never get to a point in that matter: but let them inform their judgment as to the nature and evidences of faith; let them lay aside their laziness and their untender walking, shewing a precise regard to the duties of morality; and it will not be so hard. But when people remain in confusion as to the nature and evidences of faith, cannot bring themselves to the bar, and continue untender in their walk, what can be expected? Hence our Lord says, Matth. vi. 23. 'If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!' And says the wise man, Prov. x. 4. 'He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand.' Whereas diligence in the Christian walk, and tender walking in the way of the Lord, are happy means of getting marks of faith. Hence Christ says, John xiv. 21.

‘He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me : and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.’

4. There is a rule of trial and self-examination given. That we are commanded to examine ourselves, implies there is a rule given we are to examine ourselves by. Hence the beloved disciple says, 1 John v. 13. ‘These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God ; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.’ God’s word is a looking-glass, wherein good and bad may see their true image, if they will. It is a fire that separates the good metal and dross ; it is our way-mark, shewing where we are for the present, whither we are going, and pointing to the right way. This frightens many at the Bible ; and few make this proper use of it, but skim it over. O ! Sirs, regard God’s word, and try your state by it, for it is a sure and infallible rule, nay the only rule for it.

5. There is a faculty of self-judging in man, otherwise he were incapable of examining himself. Hence the wise man says, Prov. xx. 27. ‘The Spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.’ This candle, whether shining with the light of reason only, or with the light of grace also, is capable to make the discovery. Even the foolish virgins saw at length that their lamps were gone out. And all are made to see they are not in the faith, before they are brought into it. So then you may, if ye will, erect this court of examination within your own breast, your own soul and conscience being both judge and party ; but it is only a subordinate judge, whose sentence, if wrong, will not stand, but be overthrown by the supreme Judge, by whose law the decision must be made.

6. *Lastly*, A close applying of that self-judging faculty for the trial of that point. Hence the Psalmist saith this was his practice, Psal. lxxvii. 6. ‘I commune with mine own heart, and my spirit made diligent search.’ The man must rouse up himself, as peremptory to know his state ; must inform himself of the rule he is to be judged by, set it before him, and apply his own case impartially to it, that he may see how they agree, and how the decision is to be made. Say not ye cannot do this. Ye can examine whether ye be in a wealthy or straitened condition ; when something is laid to your charge, whether ye be guilty or not ; and whether ye be in such a one’s favour or not. Only ye cannot, because ye will not, examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith. O ! Sirs, rouse up yourselves to this important exercise, shake off all lazy delays, and set about it vigorously.

*Secondly, Self-probation.* Ye must *prove yourselves*. This speaks,

1. Ye must not take the matter of your state upon trust, hoping the best without due evidence, and stopping there, like the person of whom it is said, Isa. xlv. 20. 'He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?' That is an easy way indeed, but very unsafe; as was the case of Laodicea, Rev. iii. 17. unto whom our Lord says, 'Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' Men entering on self-examination find it difficult and thorny, and they shrink back, contenting themselves to hope well, on they know not what grounds: so the examination is broken off ere the matter is brought to a proof. If the examination before the tribunal of God could be shifted that way, and the decision made in men's favour as superficially, the matter were the less. But there the examination must go through, and the decision must be made, according to, not men's groundless hopes, but the reality of things; according to what Bildad says, Job viii. 13, 14. 'So are the paths of all that forget God, and the hypocrite's hope shall perish: whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web.'

2. The matter may, through a close examination, be brought to a decisive proof, however dark and intricate it may seem to be; otherwise we would not be bid prove ourselves. Men may, by close examination of themselves, and thoroughly sifting their own hearts, discover that in and about them, which, according to the word, is decisive of their state, good or bad. Which will leave men inexcusable, in not pursuing for it, but contentedly walking on in darkness. Closely ply the duty according to scripture rules, and ye will find out how matters stand.

3. We must not stop, but pursue our self-examination, till we come to that proof, and so come to a point in the matter on trial. Thrust forward resolutely, looking to the Lord for light, and his help in the search: he will roll away stones of difficulty, and make darkness light before you; remembering what Christ says, Matth. xiii. 12. 'Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.' And suppose ye should not reach that proof at one time, ye must carry on the examination at another time, and so from time to time, till ye reach the proof. This is your duty; and if ye steadfastly persist therein, ye will bring matters to a crisis.

4. *Lastly*, Having reached the proof of your state, whether ye be in the faith or not, pronounce judgment thereon, whether it be good or bad. This is the end for which the self-examination is gone

through, and the proof was searched out, that you may thereon form a certain conclusion, whether ye be in the faith or not. And it is necessary so to do, that if ye find ye are not in the faith, ye may give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eye-lids, till ye be brought into that happy state; and that if ye find you are in the faith, ye may give God the glory of it, and improve your blessed condition to his honour.

I shall conclude with a use of exhortation. O! Sirs, examine ye yourselves, whether ye be in the faith, and cease not till ye bring the matter to a proof, a decisive point.

Before I press this exhortation, with motives, I will take notice of some impediments in the way that keep men back from self-examination.

1. Their being carried away with the things of this world, as with a flood, that they can mind nothing else, and have a heart for no other business. Some are so overwhelmed with worldly cares and secular business, that any solid care and concern about their salvation is quite warded off, and there is no access for the same. Hence our Lord cautions his disciples, Luke xxi. 34. 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.' Some are so drenched in the vanity and pleasures of the world, that they have neither mind of it, nor heart or hand for it. Madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead, and are at their place, before ever they have put this matter to a trial. O! Sirs, guard against this excessive attachment to the world, which will prove ruinous in the end.

2. Love to carnal ease predominant. Spiritual sloth is so masterly over those that give up themselves to it, that, in the midst of warnings from heaven, from without and from within, they must have their ease, and keep undisturbed, cost what it will. Hence says Solomon, Prov. vi. 9, 10, 11. 'How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy wants as an armed man.' But O what a risk is that, foreboding a fearful wakening! if ye love your own souls, strive against this sluggish disposition.

3. A false notion of the easiness of the way to heaven. Many in their thoughts of their getting to heaven, the necessity of their being in the faith, regeneration, universal and unlimited obedience to God in the way of duty, and sparing no known sin, never comes into their head: only they believe God is a merciful God; and when the time



comes, they must apply for his mercy. Hence our Lord exhorts, Luke xiii. 24. 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

4. A secret fear that all is wrong. This frightens them from self-examination: and they chuse rather to patch up their present case the best way they can, than fairly to open the wound that it may be healed. What is this but to chuse to die of the disease, rather than to lay it open for cure? But the eyes most closely shut now will be opened in the other world, as the rich man's were, Luke xvi. 23. Be not discouraged with fears, but be willing to know the worst as well as the best of your case; for that is your safest course.

5. A general hopefulness as to one's state, got by some passing reflections on some good things they imagine they have, without examining to the bottom. This men come at easily, as it were in passing: and being easy in this course, they never set themselves to go to the ground of the cause, like the church of Laodicea, Rev. iii. 17. forecited. This is a very dangerous state, and proves the ruin of many.

6. *Lastly*, Satan has a mighty influence to the hinderance of it, both in saints and sinners. In the former he mars the comfort of the clear view of their state: in the latter he keeps them from waking out of their natural security, and so holds them back from Christ. And I know no duty he sets himself more against. For being an accomplished master in hellish subtlety, he well knows, that if sinners were at due pains in examining themselves, and discovered the damnable state they were in by nature, they would hasten an escape to the gospel city of refuge; and therefore he lulls them into a sleep of profound security that they may not feel their misery, and the worse than Egyptian bondage they are in to sin and Satan. Awake then, ye that sleep, that Christ may give you light.

I shall now press the exhortation by some motives; and O that the Lord may carry it home with power on your hearts, as your eternal welfare is deeply concerned therein!

*Mot. 1.* God has given thee a faculty of examining thyself. He has set up a twofold candle for thee; one within thee, conscience, Prov. xx. 27. forecited; and another without thee, the written word, Psal. cxix. 105. And will ye venture to walk on in darkness as to your state, while ye have these lights to let you into it? Sirs, if ye will not bring in that light, and use it for this purpose, a light will be let in, whether ye will or not, that will set the matter in due light, either in mercy, as in the case of the prodigal, Luke xv. 17. or in wrath, as in that of the rich man, chap. xvi. 23.

*Mot. 2.* To be bound up from this duty still, is next door to a des-

perate case, Isa. xliv. 20. above quoted. While a person is inquiring about his state, there is some hope: but while men are unconcerned about it whether good or bad, that is like the case of men sleeping to death in their bleeding wounds. Publicans and harlots entered into the kingdom of heaven before self-righteous Pharisees, because the former were more ready by far to admit the conviction of the badness of their state, than the latter, who were blinded with delusive ideas of their own righteousness.

*Mot. 3.* It is certain ye were once not in the faith, not in a gracious state, as the Ephesians were, Eph. ii. 3, 12. Now, dare ye pawn your eternal salvation on it, that ye are now in the faith, in a state of grace? No; but ye hope the best, and are easy. But one would think, that in all reason, according to the weight of the matter, one should labour for a proportional certainty. And to leave a matter of the utmost importance at an uncertainty, and make a leap in the dark into the other world, is a most miserable affair, and argues the greatest instability. Surely then this requires a most solemn and deliberate trial; and if ye were wise for yourselves, ye would bring it to a point.

*Mot. 4.* There are many false pretenders to religion, from off whose faces Christ will draw the mask. Hence he says, Matth. vii. 22, 23. 'Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity,' Luke xiii. 25, 26, 27. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not, whence you are; then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.' Many have Jacob's voice, but Esau's hands; like Judas, they kiss Christ, and betray him. Such pretenders were the Laodiceans, when they fancied they were 'rich, and increased with goods, and stood in need of nothing,' Rev. iii. 17. Men may go a great length, in legal humiliation with Ahab, in repentance with Pharaoh, in reformation with Herod, in zeal for religion with Jehu, and in strictness of life as to the outward man with Paul before his conversion; and yet be strangers to the life of religion and godliness. And should not these instances alarm all who profess Christ, to bring the matter to a trial, whether they are in the faith or not? as a mistake here is of the most dangerous consequence.

*Mot. 5.* This would be a matter of the greatest utility, if followed through, both to believers and unbelievers. To the former it brings the comfort of their faith, clears up their gracious state, and gives them so many evidences for heaven as they have proofs of their faith. To the other it may be the beginning of good; it will give them the knowledge of their disease, which is the first step to the cure; and if once they be thoroughly convinced of their sinful and damnable estate, they may be induced to leave no stone unturned till they be rescued therefrom, by application by faith to the blood and spirit of Jesus Christ, who saves from sin, and delivers from the wrath to come.

*Mot. 6.* Try now your state, for God will try one and all of you, and no wrong judgment will pass before him. O! to what purpose should we shift a trial, which we know we will certainly undergo, from an infallible hand? We cannot by any sleight or artifice cast a blind before his eyes, Gal. vi. 7. 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. All things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do,' Heb. iv. 13. Not the least thing in or about us can escape his all-piercing eye; for he says, 'I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees,' Zeph. i. 12. God has trying times for lands, and for particular persons, wherein he sets them. And such a trying time we have just now. O! let us regard the operation of his hands, lest he proceed against us by terrible things in righteousness. However, should we pass untried in this world, we will most certainly be tried in the other, and there will be no altering of the decision then made. Should we not then be stirred up to try ourselves now, and see how matters stand betwixt God and us, that we may not be condemned in the great day of decision and judgment?

*Mot. last.* It is the express command of God, that ye should try yourselves, whether ye be in the faith or not. God has not only warned you to try this important point, both by his word and providence, but has expressly interposed his authority, binding it as an indispensable duty upon you to try yourselves, as ye will answer it on your highest peril. I say then, Try yourselves as to this weighty affair, lest ye be found to be fighters against God, to spurn at his yoke, and to throw his cords from off you. Try yourselves then, I say, whether ye be in the faith or not, as ye would regard the authority of the great Lord of heaven and earth, and would not fall into the hands of the living God, from which there is no deliverance.

## THE DANGER OF UNWORTHY COMMUNICATING.\*

1 COR. xi. 29.—*For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*

It is a seasonable advice which Solomon gives, Prov. xxiii. 1. 'When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee.' We expect the great Ruler of heaven and earth is to cover a table for us in this place; but at it some may get their *viaticum* for heaven, others theirs for hell. The Jews say of the manna in the wilderness, that it tasted according as every one desired. This I may say of the sacrament, it will be different according to the different palates and constitution of the communicants, like the word; to some the savour of life unto life, and to others the savour of death unto death. The apostle compares baptism to the passing through the Red Sea, which to the Israelites gave a passage to Canaan, but it was a grave to the Egyptians, to swallow them up. The Lord's supper is an open pit for destruction to some, and a chariot to carry others on in their way to heaven. The apostle tells us here the danger of unworthy communicating, notwithstanding which people mostly need rather a bridle than a spur to it.

1. The connection, in the particle *for*; which shews the words to be a reason of that exhortation, ver. 28, 'But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup,' viz. in the right manner for the hazard is great if we do otherwise.

2. A duty supposed, *eating and drinking*; which looks sternly on the sacrilege of the Papists in taking the cup from the people, and putting in only wafers into their mouths, contrary to Christ's express command, 'Drink ye all of it.' It is the people, as well as the minister, that eat and drink judgment to themselves, ver. 30.

3. The way that many mar this duty: They do it *unworthily*, that is unsuitably, unmeetly; they mar it in the making, not going about it in the right way and manner. They are guests, but not meet guests, for the holy table. They come to the marriage-feast, but not with wedding-garments.

\* Though this discourse was not delivered in the course of this work, but many years before, when the author was minister at Simprin, it was judged advisable to insert it here, as a proper addition to, and in further illustration of the preceding discourses on the Lord's supper. And as unworthy communicating is in itself a great sin, and one of the epidemical evils of the present time, a discourse on such a subject must be deemed extremely seasonable in the present juncture; and the reader will do well to peruse it with that seriousness and attention the matter of it requires.



4. What comes of it. The consequences are dreadful. They *eat and drink damnation* [*Gr.* judgment] *to themselves*. This judgment to some is temporal, to others eternal. This they are said to eat and drink to themselves; it becomes poison to them, and so they take their death with their own hands. While the meat is in their mouth, wrath goes down with it, as the devil did with Judas' sop.

5. A particular sin lying on them, which provokes God so to treat them: They do *not discern the body* of the Lord Christ; they do not duly consider the relation betwixt the elements and Christ, and so they rush in upon these creatures of bread and wine, that are of so deep a sanctification as to be the symbols of the body and blood of the Son of God; they sit down at that table, as to their ordinary meals, without that reverence and devotion that ought to be in those who sit down at such a holy table.

Two doctrines may be observed, viz.

DOCT. I. 'Though the right way and manner of communicating be the main thing to be studied in that solemn action, yet many content themselves with the bare doing of the thing, neglecting the doing of it suitably or in a right manner.'

DOCT. II. 'He that communicates unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself, while he eats the sacramental bread, and drinks the wine.'

I shall prosecute each doctrine in order.

DOCT. I. 'Though the right way and manner of communicating be the main thing to be studied in that solemn action, yet many content themselves with the bare doing of the thing, neglecting the doing of it suitably, and in a right manner.'

Here I shall shew,

I. The necessity of communicating suitably and in a right manner.

II. Why it is, that though the right way and manner of communicating be the main thing to be studied in that solemn action, yet many content themselves with the bare doing of it, neglecting the doing of it suitably, and in a right manner.

III. Make some improvement.

I. I am to shew the necessity of communicating suitably, and in a right manner.

1. God commands it, ver. 28. 'So let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.' The particle is emphatical, as John iv. 6. 'Jesus therefore being wearied with his journey, sat thus [or so] on the well.' Acts vii. 8. 'So Abraham begat Isaac.' The matter and manner of all duties are linked together in the command of God. What God hath joined, let no man put asunder. He will have his

service well done, as well as done, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. 'And thou Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all imaginations of the thoughts.' Masters on earth challenge to themselves a power to cause their servants to do their work as they would have it; but though they leave the way of doing it sometimes to the discretion of the servants, yet the Lord never does so, but always commands not only what, but how to do, 1 Thess. iv. 1.

2. No duty is pleasing to God, unless it be done in a right manner, *ib.* Unless it be so done, it is not done to his mind. It gives not content to the heart of Christ, though it may give content to men's own blinded hearts. God's will is the supreme law; for we are his own, and what we do, we ought to study to do it to his mind: otherwise we cannot please him, do what we will.

3. Because nothing is a work theologically good, but what is done in a right manner, Heb. xi. 6. 'Without faith it is impossible to please him.' There was a vast difference betwixt Cain and Abel's offering, Gen. iv. 4, 5. 'The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering: but to Cain and to his offering he had not respect.' See the reason, Heb. xi. 4. 'By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.' *Bonum non, nisi ex integra causa oritur, bonum est.* Hence the good works of the heathens were but splendid sins; and those of the unregenerate are so; for they may do much, but not with a perfect heart. One sins and damns his soul at the Lord's table, another communicates worthily. What makes the difference, but the manner of doing? Hence praying is accounted but howling; eating and drinking is not to eat the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. xi. 20. Common eating and drinking are sins, Matth. xxiv. 37. Cloth may be good, and yet the coat base, if it be marred in the making.

4. Though the work be in itself good, yet if it be done unsuitably, not in a right manner, it provokes God to inflict heavy strokes on the doer. Is not a master often at that, he would rather men had not done the work, than that it should be so done? 1 Chron. xv. 13. 'For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.' So Jehu did something for God, but not in a right manner; hence the Lord says, Hos. i. 4. 'I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu.' And the Corinthians having communicated unworthily, or not in the right manner, the apostle observes concerning them, 1 Cor. xi. 31. 'For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.' In the mean, little is accepted, if it

is rightly done: hence it is said of Asa, 1 Kings xv. 14. 'The high places were not removed; nevertheless Asa, his heart was perfect with the Lord all his days.'

5. Only the duty done in a right manner does prosper, and get the blessing. Mark that so, Matth. xxiv. 46. 'Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. A man may pray ten thousand times, and never be heard; and go from one communion to another, and never be sealed to the day of redemption. A groan from the heart will do more than all these, Rom. viii. 16. Our meat can do us no good, and our clothes cannot warm us, if we do not use them in the right manner. No wonder that many are never the better of all the sacraments they get, for they communicate not aright.

6. If we communicate not in a right manner, we do no more than others, than hypocrites actually do, and Pagans may do. Hypocrites eat and drink, who shall drink eternally of the wine of the wrath of God, Luke xiii. 26, 27. Pagans can eat bread and drink wine; nay, the very beasts may do it. And shall a Christian think that he does enough when he does no more?

7. *Lastly*, God gets no glory otherwise from us in our duty, Matt. v. 16. He gets much dishonour by the way that many of us partake of his table. The means must be suited to the end; and therefore our duty must be rightly done, if we would glorify God.

II. I proceed to shew, why it is, that though the right way and manner of communicating be the main thing in that solemn action, yet many content themselves with the bare doing of the thing, neglecting the doing of it suitably, and in a right manner.

1. Because to communicate is easy, but to communicate in a right manner is very difficult. It is easy to wait on several days and hear sermons, to get a token, and eat the bread and drink the wine: but it is a hard task to plough up the fallow-ground, to mourn for sin, to get the heart in case for communion with Christ, and by faith to feed upon him. It is easy to say, we resolve to be for Christ; but it is hard to pluck out right-eyes, and cut off right hands; it is hard to set idols to the door, and give the whole heart to a Saviour.

2. Because they obtain their end by the bare performance of the duty. As, (1.) Peace of mind. Many consciences are half-awakened; though they be not so far awakened as to give men no rest without doing duty in a right manner, yet they will not hold their peace should a man neglect duties altogether. (2.) It gains a man credit in the world, and that is a strong cord to draw a man to the outside of duties, Matth. vi. 2. It is no small matter to have a name, and to seem good; and to be called godly, is affected by those who

are at no pains to be what they would seem. These are the mean and low ends they purpose to themselves, and they get them by that way. But the high and noble ends of the Christian communion with God, strength against corruption, &c. call for other sort of work.

3. Men may get duties done, and their lust kept too: they may go to a communion table, and to the table of devils too: but to do duties in the right manner is inconsistent with peace with our lusts, Psal. lxxvi. 18. If they would have a calm sea, Jonah must be thrown overboard. Hence they take so little pains in self-examination before a communion. There are some secret lusts which the man has no will to disturb; therefore he will not light the candle and search, lest he should be obliged to cast out the old leaven.

4. Because men mostly have low and mean thoughts of God and his service, Mal. i. 6, 7, 8. It is not every one that knows the Lord. Many worship they know not what, and therefore they give him they care not what. If men had suitable thoughts of that God whom they serve, they would be careful how they serve him, Psal. lxxxix. 6, 7. Wherefore the apostle, to put men out of their sloth, and engage them to the right performance of duties, tells what a one God is, Heb. xii. 28, 29. 'Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.'

5. Because men mostly are unacquainted with communion and fellowship with God to be had in duties; they know not the necessity of it, nor the excellency of it. Hence they are not at pains about it. He that minds to entertain his prince, will be at pains to provide all things necessary for that effect, while he is not so taken up who is expecting no guests.

*Use.* Of lamentation. O how sad is it that there are so many who content themselves with the bare work of communicating, neglecting the right manner! That there are many such, take these evidences.

1. Many approach very rashly and inconsiderately to the Lord's table. It would make a tender heart to tremble, how forward many are for going to the communion-table, though it be fenced by the severe threatenings of God. They are like the horse, Job xxix. 22, 23, 24. who 'mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.' And they are as the leviathan, by whom 'darts are accounted as stubble,' and who laugheth at the shaking of a spear,' Job xli. 29. They snatch up the holy things of God, and with pol-



luted fingers do they handle them. How few are there that find any notable difficulty in their way to it? Truly it is lamentable to think of this rashness.

2. The little pains that many are at beforehand to get their hearts prepared for this work. Any thing thy do, lies mostly in hearing in public; few wrestling with God, that he would prepare them as a bride adorned for her husband.

3. The licentious lives of communicants. Many, when the work is over, turn just back to their old ways, clearly discovering that it has made no great impression on their hearts while they were at it. Many are a shame to religion, harden the profane, and grieve the hearts of the godly by their courses.

We may justly wonder that the Lord does not sometimes make a breach among us, and mingle our blood with our sacrifices. Under the law, the Lord made some sad instances of his anger; as in the case of Uzzah, 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7. of the men of Bethshemesh, 1 Sam. vi. 19. and of Nadab and Abihu, Lev. x. 1, 2. Is not the Lord as angry still with the abuse of Gospel holy things? Yes, surely; but now the dispensation is more spiritual, and the strokes of anger are more spiritual also; such as hardness of heart, and blindness of mind. Some souls may get their death's wounds at the table, though their bodies come away whole and sound.

*Use,* Of exhortation. Be exhorted to get your hearts in a case for performing this duty in a right manner. It may be some have communicated often, and never to this day communicated once right. O strive to begin now! The advantage of it is great. Ye may find that in a communion, that ye never found yet, if ye be worthy partakers; if not, the hazard is great. Which take in

DOCT. II. 'He that communicates unworthily, eats and drink judgment to himself, while he eats the sacramental bread, and drinks the sacramental wine.'

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What communicating unworthily is.

II. What judgments unworthy communicating exposes people to.

III. Make application.

1. I am to shew, what communicating unworthily is. A man communicates worthily, not when he merits the sacrament, but when he is meet for it. So a man communicates unworthily, when he is unmeet for this holy ordinance, when he wants a gospel-fitness for it. To find out this then, we must enquire into the nature of this ordinance. Consider, then,

*First,* The author of this ordinance. It is Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 23. He appointed it. It belongs to him only to appoint the several

parts of worship, who was faithful in his own house as a Son; and worship commanded by men is but vain worship. Now, if Christ be the author of this ordinance, then it is meet, 1. That we have an honourable respect for it as a divine ordinance. 2. That we go about it out of respect to the command of Christ. 3. That we expect the blessing and the advantage by it from him.

1. People communicate unworthily when they have not an honourable respect for, and a due reverence to, this ordinance, when they partake of it, Mal. i. 6, 7. If it bear the stamp of divine authority, is it meet that persons should despise it, and not be touched with reverence of it? When the angel of the covenant appeared to Moses in the bush, he said to him, 'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground,' Exod. iii. 5. But, behold in this sacrament there are bread and wine of deeper sanctification than that holy ground, they being the symbols of Christ's body and blood.

2. When people do not go about it out of respect to the command of Christ, may he not justly astonish such at his table with that question, 'If I be a master, where is my fear?' Mal. i. 6. Is it meet that people should communicate out of custom, vain-glory, &c.? If the sense of his command do not bring thee there, thou canst not expect the sense of his love, but rather to feel the weight of his hand, when there. As we must believe the truth because God has said it, otherwise our assent is not divine faith; so we must do our duty because God has commanded it, otherwise our obedience is not acceptable to him.

3. When people look to any other quarter than to Christ for the good of the sacrament. Some look no farther than the elements. This is to put them in Christ's stead: but be not deceived, bread and wine cannot nourish thy soul. Some are apt to look to ministers: and if such a one as they affect serve the table they are at, they think they are sure of advantage. If they knew your hearts so led aside, they would, with a sad heart and angry countenance, say to you, as Jacob did to Rachel, 'Am I in God's stead?' Gen. xxx. 2. The spouse went a little further than the watchmen before she found her beloved, Cant. iii. 4. Many smart by this respecting particular ministers, and overlooking the Master of this ordinance.

*Secondly*, Consider the time of the institution; 'The same night in which he was betrayed by Judas, when the hour and power of darkness was approaching.' If so, then it appears that this sacrament was left us as a token by our dying friend. He was now to go out of the world to the Father; but before he goes, he will leave his people a feast and token of love. Did he not know what was

abiding him? Yes, verily he knew all. O then might not the prospect of the agony and bloody drops in the garden, the racking of his body, and the load of wrath under which his soul was to wrestle, have made him mind himself and forget us? Nay, in the night in which he was betrayed, he instituted this sacrament. Surely then it is most suitable, 1. That we prize it highly as the love-token of a dying friend. 2. That we be at pains to prepare to keep the tryst which he was so concerned to set. 3. That at such a time we avenge the treachery upon our lusts. So they partake unworthily,

1. Who partake of this ordinance without a due valuing of it as the love-token of a dying Lord. A token from a friend, though it be small in itself, yet ought to be prized; a token from a dying friend more; but a token from a friend dying for us most of all; and he would be reckoned a monster of men, that would not highly value it. Not to value this ordinance highly, and so desire and delight in it, as many communicants do, who, if they could get their credit kept, could well live without it, and in their unconcernedness of heart for it and about it, say practically, The table of the Lord is contemptible, is to trample upon our dying Lord's love-token, and to say in effect, He should have been otherwise taken up that night in which he was betrayed.

2. Those communicants who are not at pains to prepare to keep the tryst our Lord set at that time. I may say, he forgot to eat his own bread, that he might provide for us. He did not so mind the cup of wrath which he was to get himself, as to forget the sacramental cup for our comfort. When he was on the cross, he trusts to meet the believing thief in heaven; and when the clouds of wrath were gathering, and ready to pour down upon him, he trusts to meet believers on earth. And shall we forget the tryst set in that remarkable night? But, ah! how many are there that will not be at pains to prepare for this ordinance, to examine themselves as to their state, frame, &c.? They have built up mountains and walls of separation betwixt Christ and them, but are at no pains to remove them, nor to employ Christ to level them. Do not these communicate unworthily?

3. Who do not avenge the treachery. How came Judas to betray him? Was it not the sins of his own people that were the spring of the unhappy action? Your sins were the chief traitors. Then surely Christ instituting this sacrament at this time, says in effect concerning our lusts, as Psal. cxxxvii. 7, 8, 9, 'Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom, in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof. O daughter of Ba-

bylon, who art to be destroyed: happy shall he be that rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.' Can a worthy communicant partake of this ordinance, and mind the treachery his Lord met with, and not break his covenant with his lusts, and renounce his old master? No, surely. They communicate unworthily who come to this ordinance at peace with any lust; they react Judas' sin-kiss of Christ, and betray him.

*Thirdly*, Consider what is represented by the sacred symbols in this ordinance. The broken bread and wine represents Christ's broken body, and his shed blood, Christ suffering for sinners. He is sacramentally crucified before our eyes in that ordinance. Now, if the bread and wine represents to us Christ's body broken for us, and his blood shed for us, it is meet that, in communicating, 1. We meditate believingly on these sufferings. 2. That our hearts be inflamed with love to him. 3. That they be filled with sorrow for and hatred of sin. Then,

1. They communicate unworthily, who do not in their partaking meditate believingly on the sufferings of Christ. Christ will ask that question at communicants, Matth. xvi. 15. 'Whom say ye that I am?' And I would ask beforehand, Do ye believe that Jesus the Son of Mary, who was crucified betwixt two thieves without the gates of Jerusalem, was the Son of God, the only Saviour of the world, and that Christ? Do ye believe that Christ suffered? If ye do indeed believe it aright, I say, as Matth. xvi. 17. 'Blessed art thou: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but *Christ's* Father which is in heaven.' And sure I am, if ye do believe, ye cannot shun to meditate on it at the sacrament. This wonderful sight will dazzle your eyes; a sight of God suffering will blind your eyes as to other objects, and make you retire into yourself, to see and wonder, and with admiration to think on this terrible sight. Do they not act most unworthily here who are not thus taken up? What would ye have said of Moses, had he not turned aside to see that great sight, the bush burning, yet not consumed? Exod. iii. Had ye been on Mount Calvary, within hearing of Christ's dying groans, within sight of his pierced, mangled, and racked body, and had unconcernedly turned your back, and passed all without notice, would ye not say, he had been just had he turned you off that place quick into hell? Here ye have the same sight; and if ye behold it unconcernedly, ye act a most unworthy part, and oppose yourselves to the most direful effects of his vengeance.

2. Who communicate without love to Christ in exercise. He is represented a king's son in love with a beggar, loving her, and



dying for her. O miserable miscreant! does not this affect thy heart, who art this beggar? Can there be greater love? John xv. 13. What hellish cold has frozen thy affections, that this fire cannot warm, nay, melt them! What a heart of a devil hast thou, that Christ, in his glorious apparel, his red garments, cannot captivate? Be astonished, O heavens, be horribly afraid; tremble, O earth; rend, O rocks; be struck blind, O glorious sun in the firmament, when ye see the communicants sitting without love to Christ, when he is sacramentally lying before them, broken, wounded, and pierced with the envenomed arrows of God's curse, and all for them!

3. Who communicate impenitently. Have ye pierced him? How unworthy will ye be, if ye do not 'look upon him whom ye have pierced, and mourn for him, as one mourneth for an only son, and be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born,' Zech. xii. 10. Will ye come to the table without the tear in your eye? O! unworthy communicants, what has petrified your hearts, turned you into stones harder than the adamant, which the blood of the goat will dissolve? Christ's dying groans rent the rocks, and raised and alarmed the dead; and wilt thou sit stupid? Where sorrow for sin and hatred of it is wanting at a communion-table, there is eating and drinking judgment, which, when it begins to work within you, will make you mourn bitterly, either here or in hell.

*Fourthly*, Consider the bread and the wine is offered and given to you at the table of the Lord, in token of Christ's offering himself to you, with all his benefits, 1 Cor. x. 16; and your taking both, eating and drinking, declares your acceptance of the offer and application of Christ to your souls. Surely then it is meet, 1. That ye believe that Christ is willing to be yours. 2. That ye do sincerely and cordially accept of the offer.

1. They are unworthy communicants who partake doubting of Christ's willingness to be theirs, with all his saving benefits. Will ye not believe him when he gives you a sealed declaration of his mind? To doubt of this, is to say he is but mocking and solemnly cheating you; so that no wonder we say 'He that doubteth is damned if he eat.' What though ye be most unworthy? he stands not on that. Though your sins be many, the sea of his blood can drain them all, Isa. i. 18. Mic. vii. 18. If the devil get in thus far on you, it will be an error in the first concoction; and till ye get over it, it is impossible to communicate aright, or get good of the sacrament.

2. Who taking the elements, yet do not take Christ by faith. Then it may be said, as John i. 11. 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not.' Is the bread or cup offered to you, then?

by that Christ says, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in, Psal. xxiv. 7. Therefore we ought to set our hearts wide open, clasp him in the arms of faith, embrace and welcome him into our souls. To take the bread in your mouths, and yet to hold Christ out of your hearts, is to put a solemn cheat upon the King of glory, which will bring upon you the curse of the deceiver, Mal. i. 14. 'Which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing;' and the cheat will be discovered, if ye repent not, before the whole assembled world at the great day, to your everlasting confusion. This is to betray Christ, with a witness. Either, then, meddle not with these sacramental symbols, or take him by faith, And if ye take him, ye must let your lusts go.

*Fifthly*, Consider this ordinance is a seal of the new covenant, 1 Cor. xi. 25. 'This cup is the new testament in my blood.' Christ has covenanted and left in his testament to his people all things necessary for them. His word in itself is sufficient security; but guilt is a fountain of fears; and we are guilty, and therefore fearful souls. And therefore, that it may be more sure to us, he has appended this seal. It is meet then, 1. That they be in the covenant who partake. 2. That we take the sacrament as a seal of God's covenant to us. 3. That we believe more firmly.

1. They are unworthy communicants who are not in covenant with God, and yet come to his table. It is a profaning of God's seal to set it to a blank. It is a feast for friends, not for enemies, Cant. v. 1; and if ye come in a state of enmity, ye can expect no kind entertainment; 'For can two walk together except they be agreed?' Amos iii. 3; yea, ye will get a sad welcome such as the man got who wanted the wedding-garment, Matth. xxii. 11, 12. If there be not a mutual consent, it is no marriage: and if there be no marriage, ye have nothing ado with the marriage-feast.

2. They that use it as a seal of their covenant with God, and not of God's covenant with them. Surely the sacrament is an obligatory ordinance to obedience; but this is not the principal end of it, but rather to be a seal of God's covenant with us. The reason why so many afterwards appear to have been unworthy communicants, is, that they go to that ordinance rather to oblige themselves to obedience, than to get a full covenant sealed to them for obedience. All our strength lies in Christ; and worthy communicants go to Christ in the sacrament to get influences of grace secured to them under his own seal, that they may in time of need afterwards know what quarter to betake themselves to for supply.

3. They whose faith of the benefits of the covenant is not more

confirmed. This is to sit down at the table, but not to taste of the meat that is set thereon. Why does the Lord give us such encouragement, and yet we grow never a whit stronger in faith; and though he give us new confirmations, yet we have never a whit more confidence in him? Would not a man think himself affronted to be thus treated?

*Sixthly*, Consider this ordinance is appointed for strengthening our souls, for the nourishing of the Lord's people, and their growth in grace. It is a supper, a feast where Christ is both maker and matter, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed. The Lord's people must needs have food to nourish the new man, and grace will decay unless it be recruited. If this be so, then it is meet, 1. That communicants be spiritually alive. 2. That they actually feed spiritually at this holy table.

1. Graceless souls must needs communicate unworthily. Where there is no grace there can be no strengthening of it. There can be no communion betwixt a holy God and an unholy sinner, Prov. xv. 8. God will not make Nebuchadnezzar's image of mystical Christ. We must be born from above ere we can be capable to feed on Heaven's dainties. It was the custom of Egypt, not of Canaan, to bring dead men to feasts. They are rather to be buried out of God's sight. An unregenerate soul at the Lord's table is a monster that hath not a hand to take his meat, nor a mouth to eat it, nor a stomach to digest it, Heb. xi. 6; and all that can be expected, is, that he will come away twice dead. Therefore, 'examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?' 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

2. They that do not actually feed at this table; for which cause grace in exercise is necessary. He is an unworthy guest that does not eat his meat. It is dangerous to be in a spiritual sleep at the Lord's table; therefore the church prays, Psal. lxxx. 18. 'Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.' Now, the food set before us there is Christ's body and blood, John vi. 55; that is, Christ himself as crucified for our sins. By faith we feed upon him; faith realiseth the sufferings of Christ; it looks upon Christ as the common treasury of all grace, as the principle of life, and root of holiness. It eyes the promise for the conveyance of grace into our souls; looks on the sacrament as the golden pipes conveying the golden oil; and thus applies Christ, his merits and benefits to the soul, getting into his wounds, the clefts of that rock that was smitten to give nourishment.

*Seventhly*, It is appointed for the remembrance of Christ. Christ

is gone to heaven; and his people are apt to forget him. This ordinance is a memorial of his death, and herein he is to be remembered. If so, then it is meet, 1. That they who sit down at his table know him; for there can be no remembering without knowledge of and acquaintance with him. 2. That he be remembered gratefully.

1. Those partake unworthily who are ignorant persons, and are unacquainted with Christ. Those that have been always blind, cannot remember the light. Ignorant souls will, as blind men, deal blows at the Lord's table, making themselves guilty of the body and blood of Christ. It is not only necessary that we have the knowledge of the principles of religion, but that we be taught the same by the Spirit, and in conversion be acquainted with the Master of this feast. Ignorant people cannot discern the Lord's body.

2. Who do not remember him affectionately. To remember his dying love is our great work; to remember how seasonably he undertook the work of saving sinners, Psal. xl. 7; how faithfully he performed all, how willingly and constantly he obeyed and suffered. What do men sit down at the Lord's table for, if they neglect this? And this cannot be done aright, but the soul will be suitably affected.

*Lastly*, It is appointed to be a sign and token of the communion of saints, to signify, not only our communion with Christ, but with one another; not only our union with Christ, by faith, but with one another by love, 1 Cor. x. 17. It is meet, then, that we sit down at this table in love.

They partake, then, unworthily who sit down at this table with malice and envy in their hearts against others, Matth. v. 24, 25. If we forgive not others their injuries to us, God will not forgive us. This heaven must be purged out, if ye would be a holy lump. Some will make a fashion of reconciliation before the sacrament; and when that is over, they are just as they were before: but God will not be mocked.

II. The next general head is to shew, what judgments unworthy communicating exposes people to. It exposes them,

1. To bodily strokes, as the Corinthians felt, 1 Cor. xi. 30. 'For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. One falls into a decay of strength, another takes sickness after a communion, another slips off the stage. Some give one reason for it, and some another. But, O! unworthy communicating is often the procuring cause of all. What a dreadful distemper seized Belshazzar when he was abusing the vessels of the temple! Dan. v.; but the sin of unworthy communicating is more dreadful.

2. To spiritual strokes, strokes upon the soul, blindness of mind,



hardness of heart, searedness of conscience, &c. The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain; he will let guilt lie on him. Hence some after communions are let fall into scandalous sins; some meet with greater darkness and deadness than ever before, and some with sharp desertions.

3. To eternal strokes. As to such as are out of Christ, unworthy communicating will damn them, as well as gross sins in the life and outward conversation, and no doubt will make a hotter hell than that of Pagans. Murder is a crying sin, but the murder of the Son of God is most dreadful, and the Mediator's vengeance is most terrible.

And they are said to *eat and drink judgment to themselves*; which I conceive, imports,

1. That the hurt which comes by unworthy communicating comes upon the person himself, not on Christ, whose body and blood he is guilty of; for *themselves* has a relation not to others, but to Christ. They may eat judgment to ministers and fellow communicants, if they have a sinful hand in bringing them to the table. Only, though the slight is given to Christ, yet it rebounds upon the man himself, and lies heavy on him with its consequences. They do interpretatively murder Christ, in so far as they abuse the symbols of his broken body and shed blood; but they can do him no harm; they kick against the pricks, which run into their bodies and souls.

2. That they themselves are the authors of their own ruin. They take their death with their own hand, like a man that wilfully drinks of a cup of poison, and so murder their own souls. And O what a dreadful thing is this for a man to perish by his own hands!

3. That they shall be as sure of judgment upon them for their sin, if repentance prevent it not, and cut the thread, as they are of the sacramental bread they eat, and the wine they drink. Death is in the cup to them, and it will go down with the elements into their bowels.

USE. Beware then of unworthy communicating. Profane not the holy things of God by your rash approaches to this ordinance. If the love of the Lord Jesus will not allure you to a conscientious performance of this duty in a holy manner, let the terror of God affright you. Behold life and death are set before you. Venture not on the swordpoint of vengeance, even the vengeance of his temple. O sinner! hold thy hand. Do not wound the Lord of glory, and bring innocent blood on thy head. O wound not your own souls with the wound of an enemy! Provoke not God to give you blood to drink.

*Object.* 1. We had better refrain than run such a risk. *Ans.*

If you cannot think on parting with your lusts, but you must either communicate keeping them still, or not at all, then assure yourselves, God will avenge this contempt of himself and his Son upon you, and ye shall fall into the hands of the living God through eternity, Luke xix. 27. If ye think of being better disposed afterwards, ye deceive yourselves; for the longer ye keep your sins, it will be the harder to part with them. And who knows if ever your eyes may see another such occasion? But if ye mind to part with your sins now, and be in earnest for communion with God in that ordinance, then ye will make conscience of, and sincerely endeavour worthy communicating, which will be accepted; for it is a gospel, not a legal fitness, that we urge.

*Object.* 2. But that terror confounds me when I think of approaching the Lord's table, lest he be provoked to strike me dead on the spot, or I get my damnation sealed. *Ans.* Satan labours either to make us feed without fear, or else to fear so as we cannot feed. But look ye to God through the vail of the flesh of Christ, and so you will see an atoned and pacified God. If such fear seize thee, then acknowledge God is just if he should do to you as you fear: but because you need a Saviour, and he has commanded you to accept of him, take him, though with a trembling hand; and having nothing to bring with you, come to get all. Say, Lord, if thou shouldst confound me before all the people, thou art just; but I plead mercy through Christ; and if thou wilt give me thy grace, I am content to be a monument of grace. I have nothing, but I am content to be thy debtor for all. And so you will find a reviving.

I shall only say, 1. Examine yourselves as to your state, your frame, your graces, your wants, &c. and know how matters stand with you. Take a look of your former ways, and turn to the Lord with your whole heart.

2. Put away the strange gods that are among you. Look what sin has been indulged, and let this be the parting time; for one leak will sink the ship, Psal. lxvi. 18.

3. Employ Christ for suitable preparation. Use the means, but look to him alone for the blessing.

4. *Lastly*, Do this work that ye would do if ye were to die on the communion-sabbath. *Sacramentum et articulus mortis æquiparantur.* In death we go to Christ, in the sacrament he comes to us: and who knows but some of us may get our provision there for another world, either in mercy or in wrath? But happy they who set themselves for dying furniture.

## THE NATURE OF PRAYER.

EPH. vi. 18.—*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints.*

PRAYER is a duty of natural religion, and by God's appointment is one of the chief means by which Christ communicates the benefits of redemption to sinners; and this important duty is enjoined in these words. In which we have,

1. The duty itself, *praying*. This is recommended and enjoined to all, as ever they would stand, and not be ruined by their spiritual enemies.

2. The amplification of this weighty subject; where notice,

(1.) The time of it, *always*, or at every season. We must always be in a praying frame, and miss no season wherein God calls for it, but in every season of prayer be praying, 2 Sam. ix. 7.

(2.) The kinds of prayer, *all prayer*, i. e. all sorts of prayer, public, private, secret, ordinary, extraordinary, &c. petitioning prayer, for good things, here called *prayer* in a strict sense; supplicatory prayer, deprecating evils, called *supplication*.

(3.) The manner of prayer. [1.] It must be *in the Spirit*; not with the lip, tongue, and memory only, but with the heart or inward man, or rather by the Spirit of God, with his assistance. [2.] With *watchfulness*, keeping the soul in a wakerife disposition for it, and in it, that the heart wander not. [3.] *With all perseverance*, continuing instant in it, whatever may occur to discourage us.

4. Those we are to pray for, *all saints*; not only for ourselves, but others, especially, though not only, for the children of God.

The text affords the following doctrine.

DOCT. 'Prayer is a duty always necessary to be performed in the several kinds of it, and in the right manner, and in which we are to be concerned, not only for ourselves, but for others.'

To discover the nature of prayer, which in our Catechism is said to be 'an offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies,' I will consider the parts of prayer in general, and in particular,

I. Prayer, generally considered, consists of three parts.

1. Petition, or prayer strictly and properly so called, whereby one desires of God the supply of one's wants, begs the good necessary for himself or others, and deprecates evil inflicted or feared. *Praying always with all prayer, &c.*

2. Confession of sin, Dan. ix. 4. It is so very natural that sinners coming to God to ask mercies should make confession, that it is a very necessary part of the sinner's prayer; and prayer is so called, Neh. ix. 3. And the deeper one is in confession, he readily speeds the better in prayer.

3. Thanksgiving for mercies, Phil. iv. 6. God prevents us with his benefits, we are deep in his debt, ere we come to ask of him; and therefore it is necessary that thanksgiving have a place in our prayers. And it also is called 'praying,' Luke xviii. 11.

II. Let us consider the parts of prayer in particular. These are,

1. Prayer properly so called, or petition.

2. Confession of our sins.

3. Thanksgiving for mercies.

FIRST, Prayer properly so called, or petition.

Here I shall shew,

1. Wherein the formal nature of prayer consists.

2. To whom we are to pray.

3. In whose name we are to pray.

4. By whose assistance acceptable prayer is performed.

5. For whom we must pray.

6. For what we are to pray.

7. How we are to pray, if we would pray rightly and acceptably.

8. Whether all such prayers are accepted, heard, &c.

FIRST, Wherein does the formal nature of prayer consist? It lies precisely in offering up our desires to God, for things that we need. It is a motion of our hearts towards God, to move him as it were to look favourably on us, Psal. lxii. 8. a pouring out our heart before the Lord; a lifting our soul to him, Psal. xxv. 1. a presenting our supplications to him, as petitioners, Dan. ix. 18.

We command our inferiors, we demand of our equals; we may by some deed of our own lay an obligation on, and some way excite an inclination in, any man, even our superior, to help us; but none of these ways can work with God. What then remains but a religious and submissive offering of our desires to God, for his help, who knows our hearts? And this is what we call prayer. Hence,

1. There may be prayer made to God without words. The desires of the heart offered to God though not clothed with words, is prayer, truly and properly so called, Exod. xiv. 15. Words are not necessary from the nature of prayer, but on the account of ourselves, to affect us the more, and to honour God with our bodies as well as our souls.

2. There can be no prayer, properly so called, without the desires of the heart going out to God. Prayer without intention, say the



Jews, is like a body without a soul. A flourish of the best chosen words, without suitable affection going along with them, is not prayer before the Lord, but the carcase of prayer, wanting the soul and life.

SECONDLY, To whom we are to pray? We are to pray to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and to God only; not to saints, angels, nor any creature whatsoever. For,

1. Prayer is an eminent part of religious worship, Joel ii. 32. and religious worship is only to be given to God, Matth. iv. 10. 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.' The holy angels refuse it, Rev. xxii. 8, 9. and the saints also, as in the case of Peter, Acts x. 25, 26.

2. The object of prayer and of faith are the very same, Rom. x. 14. For the ground of prayer is faith. Therefore, since we are to believe in God, and not in the creature, we must pray to him only. So our Lord directs us, 'Our Father, which art in heaven.'

3. Because God only is qualified (if I may so speak) for hearing prayer. He only is able to search the heart and know it, 1 Kings viii. 39. He only is omnipresent to hear every where, Psal. lxxv. 2. He only can pardon the sins and fulfil the desires of his people, Psal. cxlv. 18, 19.

THIRDLY, In whose name are we to pray? In the name of Jesus Christ, and of no other, neither saint nor angel, John xiv. 13. 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, *says he*, that will I do.' \* We must go to the Father, not in the name of any of the courtiers, Col. ii. 18. but in the name of his Son, the only Mediator, 1 Tim. ii. 5. Here consider,

1. What it is to pray in the name of Christ.

2. Why we must pray in his name.

*First*, Let us consider what it is to pray in the name of Christ.

1. Negatively. It is not a bare faithless mentioning of his name in our prayers, nor concluding our prayers therewith, Matth. vii. 21. The saints use the words, 'through Jesus Christ our Lord,' 1 Cor. xv. 57. but often is that scabbard produced, while the sword of the Spirit is not in it. The words are said, but the faith is not exercised.

2. Positively. To pray in the name of Christ is to pray,

1st, At his command, to go to God by his order, John xvi. 24. 'Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name, *says he*: ask, and ye shall receive.' Christ as God commands all men to pray, to offer that piece of natural duty to God; but that is not the command meant. But Christ as Mediator sends his own to his Father to ask supply of their wants, and allows them to tell that he sent them, as

one recommends a poor man to a friend, John xvi. 24. just cited. So to pray in the name of Christ is to go to God as sent by the poor man's friend. So it imports,

(1.) The soul's being come to Christ in the first place, John xv. 7. 'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' He that would pray aright, must do as those who make Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend first, and then made their suite to their king, Acts xii. 20.

(2.) The soul's taking its encouragement to pray from Jesus Christ, Heb. iv. 14.—16. 'Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' The way to the throne in heaven is blocked up by our sins. And sinners have no confidence to seek the Lord. Jesus Christ came down from heaven, died for the criminals, and gathers them to himself by effectual calling. He, as having all interest with his Father, bids them go to his Father in his name, and ask what they need, assuring them of acceptance. And from thence they take their encouragement, viz. from his promises in the word. And he gives them his token with them, which the Father will own, and that is his own Spirit, Rom. viii. 26, 27. 'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.'

2dly, It is to direct our prayers to God through Jesus Christ, Heb. vii. 25. 'Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' Chap. xiii. 15. 'By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name;' depending wholly on Christ's merit and intercession for access, acceptance, and a gracious return.

(1.) Depending on Christ for access to God, Eph. iii. 12. 'In whom we have boldness, and access with confidence by the faith of him.' There is no access to God but through him, John xiv. 6. 'No man cometh unto the Father but by me.' They that attempt otherwise to come unto God, will get the door thrown in their face. But we must take hold of the Mediator, and come in at his back, who is the Secretary of heaven.

(2.) Depending on him for acceptance of our prayers, Eph. i. 6. 'He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.' Our Lord Christ is the only altar that can sanctify our gift. If one lay the stress of the acceptance of his prayers on his frame, enlargement, tenderness, &c. the prayer will not be accepted. A crucified Christ only can bear the weight of the acceptance of either our persons or performances.

(3.) Depending on him for a gracious return, 1 John v. 14. 'And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.' No prayers are heard and answered but for the Mediator's sake; and whatever petitions agreeable to God's will are put up to God, in this dependence, are heard.

*Secondly*, Why must we pray in the name of Christ? The reason of this may be taken up in these two things.

1. There is no access for a sinful creature to God without a Mediator, Isa. lix. 2. John xiv. 6. Sin has set us at a distance from God, and has bolted the door of our access to him, that it is beyond our power, or that of any creature, to open it for us. His justice staves off the criminal, his holiness the unclean creature, without there be an acceptable person to go betwixt him and us. Our God is a consuming fire: and so there is no immediate access for a sinner to him.

2. And there is none appointed nor fit for that work but Christ, 1 Tim. ii. 5. It is he alone who is our great High Priest. None but he has satisfied justice for our sins. And as he is the only Mediator of redemption, so he is the only Mediator of intercession, 1 John ii. 1. 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' The sweet savour of his merit alone is capable to procure acceptance to our prayers, in themselves unsavoury, Rev. viii. 3, 4.

FOURTHLY, By whose assistance is acceptable prayer performed? By the help of the Holy Spirit, Gal. iv. 6. Rom. viii. 26. There are two sorts of prayers. (1.) A prayer wrought out by virtue of a gift of knowledge and utterance. This is bestowed on many reprobates, and that gift may be useful to others, and to the church. But as it is merely of that sort, it is not accepted, nor does Christ put it in before the Father for acceptance. For, (2.) There is a prayer wrought in men by virtue of the Holy Spirit, Zech. xii. 10. 'I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications:' and that is the only acceptable prayer to God, Jam. v. 16. *effectual*, Gr. *inwrought*. The right praying is praying in the Spirit. It is a gale blowing from heaven, the breathing of the Spirit in the saints, that carries them

out in the prayer, which comes the length of the throne. Now, the Spirit helps to pray,

1. As a teaching and instructing Spirit, affording proper matter of prayer, causing us to know what we pray for, Rom. viii. 26. fore-cited; enlightening the mind in the knowledge of our needs, and those of others; bringing into our remembrance these things, suggesting them to us according to the word, together with the promises of God, on which prayer is grounded, John xiv. 26. 'The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost,—shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.' Hence it is that the saints are sometimes carried out in prayer for things which they had no view of before, and carried by some things they had.

2. As a quickening, exciting Spirit, Rom. viii. 26; the Spirit qualifying the soul with praying graces and affections, working in the praying person sense of needs, faith, fervency, humility, &c. Psal. x. 17. 'Thou wilt prepare their heart.' The man may go to his knees in a very unprepared frame for prayer, yet the Spirit blowing, he is helped. It is for this reason the Spirit is said to *make intercession* for us, namely, in so far as he teaches and quickens, puts us in a praying frame, and draws our petitions, as it were, which the Mediator presents.

This praying with the help of the Spirit is peculiar to the saints, James v. 16; yet they have not that help at all times, nor always in the same measure; for sometimes the Spirit, being provoked, departs, and they are left in a withered condition. So there is great need to look for a breathing, and pant for it, when we are to go to duty: for if there be not a gale, we will tug at the oars but heartlessly.

Let no man think that a readiness and volubility of expression in prayer, is always the effect of the Spirit's assistance. For that may be the product of a gift, and of the common operations of the Spirit, removing the impediment of the exercise of it. And it is evident one may be scarce of words, and have groans instead of them, while the Spirit helps him to pray, Rom. viii. 26. Neither is every flood of affections in prayer, the effect of the Spirit of prayer. There are of those which puff up a man, but make him never a whit more holy, tender in his walk, &c. But the influences of the Spirit never miss to be humbling but sanctifying. Hence says David, 'Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee,' 1 Chron. xxix. 14; and says the apostle, 'We have no confidence in the flesh,' Phil. iii. 3.



FIFTHLY, For whom must we pray ?

*First, Negatively.*

1. Not for the dead. David ceased praying for his child when once dead, 2 Sam. xii. 21—23. It is vain and useless; for as the tree falls, it must lie. We have neither precept nor promise about it; and it was raised upon the false opinion of purgatory. But the dead are in an unalterable state, Heb. ix. 27. ‘It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.’

2. Nor for those who are known to have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, 1 John v. 16. for God has declared that sin to be unpardonable. This is very rare, and therefore one would beware of rashness in this matter.

*Secondly, Positively.*

1. In general, we are to pray for all sorts of men living, ‘for kings, and all that are in authority,’ 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. for Christians, Jews, Mahometans, Pagans, noble and ignoble, &c. They are capable of God’s grace and favour, and we are to desire it for them. But we are not to pray for every particular person whatsoever, 1 John v. 16. ‘There is a sin unto death; I do not say he shall pray for it.’ So that it is an unwarrantable petition, that God would have mercy on, and save all mankind, for the contrary of that is revealed. Yea, we should pray for all sorts of men who shall live hereafter, as our Lord did, John xvii. 20. ‘Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.’ But,

2. In particular, we are to pray, not only for ourselves, as Jacob did for deliverance from the hand of his brother Esau, Gen. xxxii. 11. but for,

(1.) The whole church of Christ upon earth. Hence says the text, *Praying always with all prayer,—and supplication for all saints.* To no party must we confine the communion of prayers, to whom God has not confined his grace. All the members of the mystical body must share particularly in our prayers, because they are the members of Christ, whatever difference be betwixt us and them in lesser things. The sympathy betwixt the members of the same body of our Lord requires this. And it is a sad sign not to be so affected, Amos vi. 6. ‘They are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.’

(2.) Magistrates: ‘Kings, and all that are in authority,’ 1 Tim. ii. 2. It was about 300 years after Christ ere the magistrates were Christians, nevertheless the apostle bids pray for them; because the quiet and peace of the commonwealth and kingdom depends much on their management; and infidelity, or indifference in religion, does not make void the magistrate’s just and legal authority, nor free

the people from their due obedience to him. Their hearts are in the Lord's hand, Prov. xxi. 1. Their influence is great, so is their work, and so are their temptations; and if they be evil men, there is the more need to be earnest with God on their behalf. Let us bless God that we have a Protestant King on the throne, remembering how seasonably the Lord sent him, and how much depends on his safety, and the safety of his royal family.

(3.) Ministers, Col. iv. 3. Psal. cxxxii. 9. There is a near relation betwixt the people of God and their ministers. They have a weighty work in their hands, which, if it misgive, will not only be their own loss, but the people's. People may have a minister so straitened, as to do them no good, Col. iv. 3. Though he be not so, yet he may be useless to them: therefore says the apostle, 1 Thess. v. 25. 'Brethren, pray for us.' I leave it with that, Rom. xv. 30. 'Now I beseech you, brethren for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.'

(4.) Our Christian acquaintance, Jam. v. 16. 'Pray one for another.' Communion of prayers is a special benefit of Christian friendship and acquaintance. And it is no small mercy and encouragement to have interest in their prayers, who have interest at the throne of grace.

(5.) The place and congregation we live in, and are members of. The captives at Babylon were to pray for the place they lived in, Jer. xxix. 7. how much more should we pray for a Christian congregation whereof we are members? The better it be with them, it will be the better with you; so contrariwise.

(6.) Our families and relations. The nearer any stand related to us, we have the more need to be concerned for them at the throne of grace. We find Job sacrificing for his family, Job i. 5. a master praying for his servant, 2 Kings vi. 17. and a servant for his master, Gen. xxix. 12.

(7.) *Lastly*, We must pray for our enemies, Matth. v. 44. This is hardest to bring men to. But we have the express command of Christ for it, and his example, Luke xxiii. 34. followed by the martyr Stephen, Acts vii. 60. Nay, forgiving them is necessary to our forgiveness: 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' There may be much selfishness in praying for those that love us; but that kindly concern for our enemies makes us liker God, Matth. v. 45.

SIXTHLY, For what we are to pray?

We are to pray for things agreeable to God's revealed will, and for such things only, 1 John v. 14. 'And this is the confidence that

we have in him, that if we seek any thing according to his will, he heareth us.' We may not present unto God unlawful desires, nor petitions in favour of our lust, Jam. iv. 3. These must needs be an abomination, and a daring affront to a holy God. And indeed wicked things are so much the more wicked, as they are brought into our addresses to a holy God.

The matter of our prayers must be regulated by the word of God, wherein he has shewn what is pleasing to him, and what is not so. The signification of God's will and good pleasure as to the good to be bestowed on men, and our prayers, are to be of equal extent. Wherefore, let us see that whatever we pray for be within the compass of the command or the promise.

Such are all things tending to the glory of God, Matth. vi. 9. or to the welfare of the church, Psal. cxxii. 6; to our own good, temporal, spiritual, or eternal, Matth. vii. 11; or that of others, Psal. cxxv. 4.

SEVENTHLY, How are we to pray, if we would pray rightly and acceptably?

1. Understandingly, understanding what we say, 1 Cor. xiv. 15. Therefore they must be in a known tongue. And to repeat words before God, while we know not what they mean, can never be prayer indeed.

2. Reverently, Eccl. v. 1. We must maintain an outward reverence in expression, voice, and gesture; since in prayer we are before the great God: an inward reverence especially, having an awful apprehension of the majesty of God before whom we appear, Psal. lxxxix. 7. Heb. xii. 28. Fear and trembling becomes a creature, much more a guilty creature, before a holy God. And fearless presumptuous addresses to God are the produce of a hard heart.

3. Humbly, Psal. x. 17. with a deep sense of our own unworthiness and sinfulness on our spirits. In prayer we come to beg, not to buy or demand our right, and therefore should be sensible of unworthiness, Gen. xxxii. 10; and the more grace, the more unworthy will we be in our own eyes, Gen. xviii. 27. And going to God, we must turn our eyes inward, with the Publican (Luke xviii. 14), on our own evils of heart and life.

4. Feelingly, being deeply affected with a sense of our needs, like the prodigal, Luke xv. 17, 18, 19. Alas! what does it avail to go to God with an insensible heart; to sit down at his table without spiritual hunger; to come to his door rich and increased with goods, in our own conceit! Such are sent empty away. Therefore it is a piece of very necessary preparation for prayer, to look over our wants, ere we go to prayer.

5. Believingly, Matth. xxi. 22. 'All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.' He who prays acceptably must be endued with saving faith, Heb. xi. 6. An unbeliever cannot pray acceptably, Rom. x. 14. Hence the prayers of the unrenewed man are all lost in respect of gracious acceptance. Moreover, the believer must be in the exercise of faith in prayer, which must be mixed with faith.

One must have a faith of particular confidence in prayer, as to the things prayed for, Mark xi. 24. 'What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall receive them.' For where that is altogether wanting, the prayer can never be accepted, Jam. i. 6. 'Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.' Since it must needs be highly dishonouring to God, to come to him to ask, without any expectation from, or trust in him, as to what is asked.

*Quest.* How may one have that faith? *Ans.* By applying the promises, and believing them. If the things be absolutely necessary, the promise makes these very things sure to them who come to God through Christ for them, as peace, pardon, &c. If they be not, then the promise secures God's doing the best, that either he will give the very thing desired, or what is as good. And we are to believe accordingly.

6. Sincerely, Psal. cxlv. 18. Hypocrisy and dissimulation in prayer, when the heart goes not along with the lips, mars the acceptance of prayers. There are feigned lips, Psal. xvii. 1. when the affections do not keep pace with the words in prayer: when sin is confessed, but the heart not humbled under it; petitions are put up, but no serious desire of the things asked. See Jer. xxix. 13.

7. Fervently, Jam. v. 16. Cold, lifeless, and formal prayers, are not of the right stamp. We should, as in a most weighty matter, be boiling hot, Rom. xii. 11. Importunity in prayer is most pleasing to God. It consists not in a multitude of words, Matth. vi. 7; but in a holy earnestness of heart to be heard, Psal. cxliii. 7; and pleading with the Lord, by allowable arguments, as one who is in deep earnest, Job xxiii. 4. A heart warmed by a live-coal from God's altar will produce this.

8. Watchfully, *watching unto prayer*, as in the text; taking heed to our spirits, that they do not wander. Wandering thoughts in prayer mar many prayers. They come on like the fowls on the carcase, and will devour it, if not driven away. A carnal frame of heart is the mother of them, and rash indeliberate approaches to God help them forward.

In that case one should be like the builders of the wall, having



the trowel in the one hand, and the sword in the other, resolutely to resist vain thoughts, and refuse to harbour them. Nay, turn the cannon on the enemy, consider them as affording new matter of humiliation, and a clamant occasion of plying the throne of grace more closely. If they be striven against, they will not mar your acceptance; but if not they will.

9. Perseveringly; *watching thereunto with all perseverance*, as in the text. When we have tabled our suit before the throne, we must not let it fall, but insist upon it, Luke xviii. 1. Hold on, with one petition, one prayer, on the back of another, till it be granted, Isa. lxii. 1. 'In due time ye shall reap, if ye faint not.'

*Lastly*, Dependingly, waiting upon the Lord with humble submission to his holy will, and looking for an answer, Micah vii. 7. We must come away in a waiting depending frame. No wonder those prayers be not regarded, which we never look after, and are not concerned for the answer of.

EIGHTHLY, Are all such prayers accepted, heard, and answered?

1. An unrenewed man cannot thus pray, neither are such a one's prayers at any time accepted, Prov. xv. 8. 'The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord,' John ix. 31. 'God heareth not sinners.'

2. God's own people do not always thus pray, neither are all their prayers accepted. For, says the Psalmist, Psal. lxvi. 18. 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.'

3. But all such prayers, being the produce of God's Spirit in the saints, are presented by the Mediator; and are accepted, heard, and answered by the Father, though not presently answered, Psal. xxii. 2. yet they shall be answered in due time, either by granting the very thing desired, 1 John v. 15. or something as good, Gen. xvii. 18, 19. 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

SECONDLY, The second part of prayer is confession of our sins. Here we shall show,

1. What sins we are to confess.
2. The necessity of confession.
3. How we are to confess sin.

*First*, The sins we are to confess are, original and actual sins, sins of omission, commission, heart, lip, and life, Psal. li. 4, 5. In a word, all our sins, so far as we are capable, (for 'who can understand his errors?' Psal. xix. 12.) but especially those which most wound the conscience, we are to be particular in, with their aggravations.

*Secondly*, Let us consider the necessity of confession. (1.) It is necessary to clear the Lord's justice in proceeding against us, Psal.

li. 4. 'Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.' (2.) The nature of the thing requires it, in order to obtain pardoning mercy, Prov. xxviii. 13. 'Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy.'

*Thirdly*, How are we to confess sin?

1. Fully, without hiding any thing wilfully, Prov. xxviii. 13. 'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper.' God knows all our sins, and all the circumstances of them! so that it is in vain to mince our confession, and it speaks a heart not duly humbled.

2. Freely and voluntarily, pouring out the heart like water, and not merely making the confession as extorted. Whenever grace touches the heart, it will make it come freely.

3. Sincerely, confessing it with shame, sorrow, hatred of it, and a real purpose of reformation; otherwise it is but a mock confession.

**THIRDLY**, The third part of prayer is thanksgiving for mercies. Here I shall shortly shew,

1. What is the matter of this thanksgiving.

2. The necessity of it.

3. How we should give thanks.

*First*, The matter of it is,

1. Spiritual mercies, Eph. i. 3. These are mercies for our souls, and lead to everlasting happiness; and therefore are most to be prized. They challenge the warmest and the most grateful acknowledgments from all who have received them.

2. Temporal mercies from the womb till now, Psal. cxxxix. 14. These call for the most thankful acknowledgments every day, for they are new every morning. And we ought to be thankful for mercies conferred, not only on ourselves, but also on others, particular persons or societies. So did the apostle, as to Philemon, Phil. ver. 4. 'I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers.' And so he did as to the Philippians, chap. i. 3. 'I thank my God, upon every remembrance of you.'

*Secondly*, Let us consider the necessity of thanksgiving.

1. It is all that we can render to God for good or benefits received, Hos. xiv. 2. namely, to acknowledge debt, and be thankful. Ingratitude among men is reckoned a great sin and scandal, and fixes an odious character on the person: but how much greater a sin and scandalous offence is it to be unthankful to God for the mercies which we enjoy, and that we never deserved at his bountiful hand! It is the character of heathens, Rom. i. 21. O let it not be that of Christians!

2. It is the way to get more. Unthankfulness mars the course of

divine communications; but to the thankful it is opened, Phil. iv. 6. Ingratitude among men provokes the liberal person to withhold his hand; and so does it provoke the holy God, the giver of all good, to restrain his favours. Alas! it is more natural to us to ask than to give thanks. Among ten seekers (the lepers), whom Christ cured of a very inveterate disease, there was but one thanker; and he is specially noticed in the gospel-history. We should never beg a mercy from the Lord, without heartily thanking him for all we have formerly received, as this is the ready way to procure more.

*Thirdly*, How should we give thanks? With enlarged hearts, wondering at undeserved goodness; with deep humility for mercies conferred on such mean and unworthy creatures; with hearty resolutions to improve them for God's glory and honour; and with warm desires to receive more favours from the hands of God, our bountiful benefactor.

I shall conclude with a few inferences.

1. To live without prayer is a godless and graceless life. It is no better than the life of beasts, unsuitable to the rational nature of man, contrary to the design and end of his creation, and highly unbecoming one who is a candidate for immortality. It exposes the sinner to the severest strokes of God's justice; and, persisted in, will land him in hell. O let us all be excited to a life of prayer, remembering that we cannot be Christians without it. To pretend to be a Christian, and not to live a life of prayer, is a palpable contradiction.

2. The missing of the answers of prayer is our own fault, we pray amiss. If we always prayed in faith, and in the manner formerly observed, we would not be disappointed. Let us then be induced to pray in a right manner, and wait particularly on the Lord for gracious acceptance, and a favourable answer.

3. It is through Jesus Christ that the communication with heaven is opened and obtained. Let us then pray in his name, depend upon his intercession, and present all our petitions to God through him; for him the Father heareth always.

4. We need the Spirit of prayer, in order to our praying aright. Let us then cry incessantly for the Holy Spirit, and his influences; for we know not what to pray for as we ought. Let us look for his quickening influences to quicken our dead hearts, and warm our frozen affections, that we may send up our hearts unto God, and wing our desires to heaven.

5. Be exhorted to give yourselves unto prayer in all the sorts of it. Be men of prayer, as David was, Psal. cxix. 164. 'Seven times a-day do I praise thee.' How may this shame many Christians who

pray but twice a-day? And how does it condemn all who restrain prayer before the Lord? O let us be induced to make conscience of this important and delightful duty; without the exercise of which, we behave no better than the beasts that perish, and are a company of ungrateful monsters, that shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God. Pray evening and morning, and at all convenient seasons. Be always in a praying frame, and be devout and lively in all your applications to the throne of grace. Omit no season of it, not even amidst your daily employments; for even then ye may send forth pious thoughts towards heaven, and maintain communion with God while you are engaged in your daily labours: 'Pray without ceasing.'

I might have spoken of occasional and stated prayer; of public, private, and secret prayer; and of ordinary and extraordinary; but I shall drop all these, and only give you next a discourse on secret prayer.

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#### A DISCOURSE ON SECRET PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 6.—*But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.*

HAVING opened unto you the nature of prayer in general, before I proceed to the explanation of the Lord's prayer, it will not be improper to discourse a little of that too much neglected duty, secret prayer; concerning which our blessed Lord gives directions in this passage of scripture. And this he does negatively, ver. 5. cautioning against performing that important duty with vanity and ostentation, to gain the applause of men. (2.) Positively, in the text. Wherein consider,

1. The duty itself urged by the Lord. And in it we may observe, (1.) The duty supposed: *When thou prayest.* That this is to be understood only of secret prayer, is manifest from the text, and the preceding verse. Public prayer cannot be meant; for where else is that to be performed but in the congregation? Not family-prayer, which is not performed in a closet, and which must be done by more than one. Not ejaculatory prayer, which may be done any where, in any company, and whatever one be doing, as in the case of Nehemiah, chap. ii. 4. Therefore we must understand here solemn secret prayer; which, in the text, the Lord takes it for granted that his disciples made conscience of.



(2.) The place to be chosen for it: *Enter into thy closet*; that is, a secret place, where you may be out of the view of others; for secret prayers are not to be restrained to secret chambers, as Christ's praying on a mountain does evidence.

(3.) The care that we should take lest our secret place become public: *Shut thy door*, so as others may not see thee, and so thou fall a sacrifice to hypocrisy, vanity and ostentation.

(4.) The duty itself commanded: *Pray to thy Father which is in secret*. Where we have, [1.] The object of prayer, *thy Father*, namely in Christ; intimating to us, that when we go to God, we should go to him as he is our Father in Christ, able and ready to help us, and reconciled to us in him. [2.] A designation which the Father gets, *which is in secret*; who knows as well what thou sayest in a secret place as what thou sayest in public; for he is omniscient and omnipresent.

2. The motive whereby he presseth secret prayer, viz. God's reward, who will openly reward service done in secret, which the world knows not of. And those who make conscience of this duty in faith and fervency, are no strangers to those rewards and advantages that are to be met with in this heavenly traffic.

The text affords the following doctrine.

Doct. 'Secret prayer is a necessary duty incumbent on all.'

In discoursing from this subject, I shall,

I. Confirm the doctrine.

II. Shew the necessity of secret prayer.

III. Answer some cases relating to this duty, in order to clear it further to you.

IV. Make some practical improvement.

I. I am to confirm the doctrine, or shew that secret prayer is a necessary duty incumbent on all. This will be clear, if ye consider,

1. Christ's express command in the text, which is to us instead of all reasons. His will is a sufficient ground of our duty. He commands nothing but what is just and right in itself, good for us, and conducive to his glory. And the command of God should be a prevalent motive with all to practise constantly this duty, which is attended with so much pleasure and profit.

2. The Spirit of God, by the apostle, Eph. vi. 18. calls for it, 'Pray with all praying,' viz. all sorts of prayer, of which secret prayer is one. There are many exhortations to this duty in holy scripture, which manifestly shew the importance and necessity of it; such as that, 1 Thess. v. 17. 'Pray without ceasing;' which must denote secret prayer, as well as other kinds of that exercise.

3. The practice of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath set a fair and

striking example of this duty to all his followers. He was in strict propriety a man of prayer, and spent much time in this delightful exercise; as we may see from Matth. xiv. 23. 'And when he had sent the multitude away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.' Mark i. 35. 'And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.' Thus he retired from his public labours to converse in secret with his heavenly Father, and prevented the dawning of the day to hold communion with heaven. Compare 1 John ii. 6. 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.' The neglect of secret prayer is an incontestible evidence of one's being a stranger to Christ.

4. The practice of the saints of God, who were all diligent in the performance of this excellent duty. Thus the Psalmist says, Psal. v. 3. 'My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.' And how often this holy man was employed in this exercise, he tells us, Psal. lv. 17. 'Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.' Which practice of his may make even the best of us blush, who usually confine our secret devotions to the morning and evening, and perhaps on very slight occasions, intermit sometimes one of these seasons. But this pious man, though a crowned head, and involved in much business, was yet oftener at the throne of grace; for he says, Psal. cxix. 164. 'Seven times a-day I will praise thee.' O that we could imitate so noble an example of sequestration and retirement from the world! Thus also Daniel 'kneeled upon his knees three times a-day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God,' chap. vi. 10. and that at a time when prayer to God was made a capital crime. Thus also we find that Cornelius the Roman centurion, a proselyte to the Jewish religion, was one that 'prayed to God always,' Acts x. 2; and that it was secret, and not family-prayer in which he was employed, when the angel appeared to him, is evident from ver. 7; for on the departure of the heavenly messenger from him, who certainly spoke to him in a retired chamber, he called some of his domestics, to dispatch them for Peter to come to him, as the angel had directed. Thus likewise we find, that good king Hezekiah was no stranger to this delightful exercise; for when the prophet Isaiah was sent with a heavy message to him, announcing his death, 'he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord,' Isa. xxxviii. 1, 2. Compare Cant. i. 7. And indeed to which of the saints can we turn in any age who neglected this duty? Habitual neglect of prayer is

not the spot of God's children. No sooner does grace take possession of the soul of any person, but behold that person will pray, as Saul did at Damascus, after the extraordinary appearance of the Lord Jesus to him on his journey to that city, Acts ix. 11.

Thus we have express divine precepts, apostolical injunctions, and the approved practice of our Lord Jesus, and of all the saints, to recommend this duty to us; and wo unto us if we neglect it.

II. I proceed to shew the necessity of secret prayer. It is not necessary in regard of merit, as if we could procure heaven by it. The only ground of eternal life in the mansions of bliss is the righteousness of a crucified Redeemer. Beggars pay no debts, but confess insufficiency, saying with the prophet, Dan. ix. 5. 'We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments.' But it is necessary,

1. In regard of the command of God. He by a plain and express command requires it; and that command binds it as a necessary duty upon us. To neglect it, therefore, is a direct violation of the command of the great God and Lawgiver; and to make conscience of it is a necessary and proper act of obedience to the divine will.

2. To give God the glory of his omniscience and omnipresence. When we pray to *our Father which is in secret*, we plainly declare, that we believe he knows and sees all things, that the darkness and the light are alike unto him; and that he is the witness and inspector of all our actions, and will call us to an account for all our thoughts, words, and actions, which are well known to him.

3. To evidence our sincerity, that it is not to be seen of men that we pray; that we are not actuated from motives of ostentation and vain-glory, but from regard to the divine command, and a sincere desire to serve God; though indeed it will not hold that all such as pray in secret are sincere; for, alas! men may be very assiduous in this duty, and yet be far from being sincere Christians, or accepted of God therein.

4. In regard that none know our case so well as ourselves: and therefore, though the master of the family pray in the family, yet we ought to pray by ourselves, in order to make known our particular case and wants unto God, which none other can know, and to ask such blessings and mercies of him as we stand in need of, and are suitable to our circumstances.

5. In regard that, if we know our own hearts, we cannot but have somewhat to say unto the Lord, that we cannot, nor would it be at all proper to say before others, respecting both confession of

sins and supplication for mercies. Hence the spouse says, Cant. vii. 11, 12. 'Come, my Beloved, let us go forth unto the field: let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.'

6. In regard of our wants continually recurring on our hands, and daily and hourly temptations, that may call for this exercise, when family-prayer cannot be had. What man is so well supplied, both as to temporal and spiritual blessings, as to have no occasion for asking supplies from above? Man is a needy and indigent creature in all respects; as a creature he lives on the bounties of providence, and as a Christian on the grace which is in Christ Jesus; and therefore he must daily apply to the throne of grace for necessary supplies in both. And as we are daily surrounded with temptations, and have no strength to resist or repel them, we must fetch in strength from God in Christ by prayer, lest we fall and be overcome by the temptations in our way.

Thus it appears from these considerations, that prayer is a necessary duty incumbent on all. And surely all who have tasted that the Lord is gracious will make conscience of this important and useful exercise.

III. I proceed to answer some cases concerning this duty, which will tend to clear it further unto you.

*Quest.* 1. What is the proper season of this duty of secret prayer? or when are we called to this exercise?

*Ans.* 1. We are doubtless to be very frequent in this duty. Thus we are called to 'pray always,' Eph. vi. 18. and 'without ceasing,' 1 Thess. v. 17. that is, at all proper times, and to be continually in a praying frame, or to pray inwardly, though we utter not a word with our lips.

2. Whenever God calls us to it, putting an opportunity in our hands, and moving and inciting us to it, then we are to go about it. Thus, when the Lord Jesus says, 'Seek ye my face;' our hearts should say unto him, 'Thy face, Lord, will we seek,' Psal. xxvii. 8. And thus we have daily calls and invitations to this duty, which we should carefully regard, and conscientiously embrace, lest we quench the Spirit, and provoke the Lord to harden our hearts from his fear.

3. The saints in scripture have sometimes been more, sometimes less frequent in this exercise. Thus David was sometimes employed thrice, sometimes seven times a-day in prayer, Psal. lv. 17, and cxix. 164. and Daniel three times, even at a very perilous juncture, Dan. vi. 10. From whose practice the frequency of performing this duty evidently appears.



4. Morning and evening at least we should pray, and not neglect this duty. This appears from our Lord's practice, Mark i. 35. Matth. xiv. 23. both cited above; from the practice of the saints in scripture, Psal. lv. 2. and v. 2. formerly quoted; and from the morning and evening sacrifice under the legal dispensation, which were daily offered, and should excite us to offer up unto God daily the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and praise. And the very light of nature teaches us so much; that when we are preserved through the silent watches of the dark night, and from the perils we may be exposed unto in that gloomy season, we should acknowledge the goodness and kindness of God therein; and that when we are preserved through the day, from the many snares and temptations we are liable to amidst the cares and distractions of our business, we should bless God for his preserving and protecting mercy, and commit ourselves, and all our concerns, into the hand of God, when we are going to take necessary rest, that we may fall asleep under a sense of his love, and may rise again to resume the business of our callings with his blessing and favour.

*Quest. 2.* What is the proper place for secret prayer?

*Ans.* A secret place is the most proper for this exercise; and though every body has not a closet, or retired apartment, into which he may go and shut the door, yet any place where he may be retired from the view and observation of others, answers the purpose; though in other respects it be a public place, yet if it be dark, and the voice kept low, it is justly a secret place. And to a place of that sort did our Lord retire for secret prayer, Matth. xiv. 23. perhaps not having proper conveniency in the place where he lodged all night. And indeed there is not a person but may meet with such a secret place every day, if he have a disposition for this exercise.

*Quest. 3.* What gesture are we to use in secret prayer?

*Ans. 1.* Holy scripture does not bind us to any gesture particularly: but we find these four gestures of the body in prayer spoken of there, viz. standing, Mark xi. 25; lying along on the face, Matth. xxvi. 39: kneeling, Dan. vi. 10. Eph. iii. 14: and sitting, 2 Sam. vii. 18.

2. Whatever the gesture be, let it be a reverent one, that may express a humble and reverent frame of spirit. Hence we are commanded to 'glorify God in our bodies.' 1 Cor. vi. 20.

3. I shall say these two things for the further determination of this question. (1.) Let it be such a gesture as is conformable unto, or flows natively from, the present disposition of the heart. Thus in extraordinary cases we find the saints were wont to fall on their

faces, 2 Sam. xii. 16. And so likewise did the Lord Jesus in the garden, on the eve of his sufferings, Matth. xxvi. 39. (2.) Yet let it be always to edification; and let that gesture be chosen which is most conducive to devotion, and occasions least distraction in the duty: as if kneeling be dangerous for the body, and so may tend to disturb the mind, let another gesture be chosen that is not attended with these inconveniences: though kneeling is certainly the most eligible gesture, and expressive of that humility which must ever accompany this exercise. And the same thing we may say of closing the eyes, or keeping them open; though praying with the eyes shut is certainly to be preferred.

*Quest. 4.* What are we to say of the voice in secret prayer?

*Ans. 1.* The duty may be performed without using the voice, as was done by Moses in the strait the children of Israel were reduced to, after their escape from Egypt, when high and inaccessible mountains were on each side of them, the Red Sea before them, and the Egyptian host at their heels ready to cut them off. In this dilemma we find that great man crying to the Lord, though not with an audible voice, Exod. xiv. 15. Thus the voice is not to be used when people cannot do so without being heard, or when through weakness of body, or disquiet of mind, they are unfit for speaking with the tongue.

2. Yet where the voice may be used, and that with convenience and propriety, it should be made use of; and that, (1.) Because we are to glorify God with our bodies; and particularly our tongue is given to be an instrument of glorifying God; ‘Awake, my glory,’ says David, Psal. lvii. 8. (2.) Because the voice is of good use in secret prayer, to stir up the affections, and to stay the mind from wandering. Yet an affected loudness of the voice, whereby the secret prayer is made public, is a sad sign of great hypocrisy, which every serious Christian will guard against.

*Quest. 5.* Is secret prayer a sure mark of sincerity? or can one pray in secret, and yet be an hypocrite?

*Ans.* This is not out of the reach of the hypocrite? A hypocrite may come this length, and much farther. Judas was among the rest whom our Lord taught to pray in secret, and ye all know what was his fate. But though a hypocrite may continue a long time, nay, many years, in the practice of secret prayer; yet it is scarcely to be thought that he will always do so, if he live a long life: For, says Job, ‘Will he [the hypocrite] always call upon God?’ chap. xxvii. 10. It is not to be thought that he will, as he has no communion with God in the duty. And therefore adds the same holy man, ‘Will he always delight himself in the Almighty?’ It is com-

munion with God that is to be enjoyed in secret prayer, and the delight the soul has in it, that inclines a person to persevere in that exercise.

*Inst.* But if one pray not to be seen of men, can he be an hypocrite?

*Ans.* Yes, he may. For the terrors of God scalding the conscience, and a desire to lay the ferment thereby brought into the mind, may excite one to the duty, and put the applause of men entirely out of the mind. But secret prayer, conscientiously practised, and attended with manifestations of the Lord's love and favour, smiles of his face, returns of what was asked, continued faith and fervency, are undoubted signs of sincerity.

I come now to the improvement of this subject.

USE 1. Of information. It shews us,

1. That they have great reason to suspect themselves, who are strangers to this duty of secret prayer; and that on the following grounds.

(1.) Because they come not the length of many hypocrites, who shall never come the length of heaven. There are many such who will not, for any consideration, omit their secret prayers every day: which is a thing good in itself, but they make them the ground of their acceptance with God, and so will perish notwithstanding. How much more must those perish who live in the habitual neglect of this duty!

(2.) Because they look not like the saints, whose disposition has been to seek communion with God in secret, as in the case of the spouse, Cant. vii. 11. and many others. What, can ye pretend to be saints, and yet live so very unlike them?

(3.) Because it seems they are very unacquainted with themselves, that knowing nothing to confess to, or ask of God, but what they can do before any. Did men know their misery and their wants, and had a suitable sense thereof, they would not be strangers to secret prayer.

(4.) Because it looks too hypocritical-like to have others to be witnesses to all our duties.

2. Then there is much hidden work in religion. True religion is not all exposed to the view of others. Attending on public ordinances in the church, and going the round of family-worship, is not that in which the whole of religion consists: for many may be diligent enough in these exercises, and yet strangers to vital heart-religion. But they that are truly religious in the eye of God, are such who not only perform outward duties, but worship God in spirit, and hold communion and intercourse with him in secret

prayer, without which they can no more live, than without bread and water.

USE II. Of exhortation. Be exhorted then, all of you, to set about this duty of secret prayer. And this exhortation I address to you who never yet began this exercise, and to you who, though ye have perhaps formerly done something this way, yet now have left it off. To press this, I offer the following motives,

1. It is a piece of worship expressly commanded of God, in the text, and it is directly required by him, Eph. vi. 18. Will ye then counteract God's express command? If ye do, it will be at your peril.

2. Are ye not engaged to this duty? Are not the vows of God upon you for the performance of it? Were ye not baptised in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to worship them, and that in all parts of worship, of which prayer is a principal one? Have not some of you been admitted to the Lord's table, when ye professed to renew your baptismal engagements? And perhaps some of you have sick-bed vows on you to that purpose.

3. Have ye not secret sins, secret wants, and secret temptations? and shall ye not have secret prayers adapted to each, requesting of the Lord the pardon of your secret sins, the supply of your secret wants, and grace to resist and overcome your secret temptations?

4. *Lastly*, This is your known duty; and therefore remember, that 'the servant that knew his master's will, but did it not, shall be beaten with double stripes.' Wherefore I charge you, as ye will answer to God at death and at judgment, and as you love your own souls, and would not eternally perish, to set about this necessary and important duty.

But some are ready to muster up a variety of objections against this duty, the chief of which I shall endeavour to obviate.

*Object.* 1. I have no time for secret prayer, for my work and business. *Ans.* 1. This is thy greatest work, even the salvation of thy soul, in comparison of which all thy other work is a mere trifle: and wilt thou take time for thy other work, and not for this work, that challenges thy utmost care and attention? 2. Fools' haste is no speed. To rise out of bed, and to go immediately to secular work, is foolish cursed haste. How canst thou look for a blessing on thy work without prayer? 3. Rise the sooner every morning, that you may not be scrimped as to time for this exercise, as our blessed Lord did, Mark i. 35. How wilt thou answer to God at the great day, for spending that time in sleep, which thou shouldst have spent in secret prayer? Daniel would not omit this exercise, though at the hazard of his life.



*Object.* 2. We are so wearied with our work through the day, that we are not able to pray in the evening. *Ans.* 1. What difference is there betwixt you and the beasts that take their ease when their work is done, without any more ado? 2. You will take your meat for your bodies, though ever so weary; and why will ye not think of and provide meat for your perishing souls? John iv. 6, 32. 3. Notwithstanding ye may be tired, do what ye are able. We are not commanded to tell you to make your prayers short or long; but by no means to neglect secret prayer altogether, which is very dangerous. But I suppose, that when you say your body is not able to subsist with secret prayer, that yet if ye could gain a sixpence at that very time, you would spend twice as much more time for that paltry gain; and yet slight the concerns of your souls, under this frivolous pretence.

*Object.* 3. We have no convenient place for secret prayer. *Ans.* Find out once a willing heart for this exercise, and I shall engage you for it you shall find a place. Are there not barns, byres, out-houses, and fields, for you to retire to? Will not these rise up and witness against thee that neglectest this duty, at the great day? For my part, I would rather go to prayer, even within a dwelling-house, in the place where the beasts stand, or behind a bed, or at the back of a house, ere I should neglect it. God requires all men to pray, but he does not require all men to have chambers and closets.

*Object.* 4. But there are prayers in our family, and I join therein; what needs more! *Ans.* Poor soul! hast thou no more to say of thyself to God, but what the master of the family says? Alas! thou knowest not thyself, and the dreadful case thou art in by nature; which if thou didst, thou wouldst not think joining in prayer with others enough. Thou thinkest it sufficient that the master of the family pray for thee, and the other members of his family, and thou liest by without concerning thyself about duty for thyself; wilt thou think it enough, that he go to heaven for thee, and thou be shut out for ever?

*Object.* 5. But (says the master of the family) I pray with my family, and I hope that is enough for me. *Ans.* In this command in the text, Christ has not excepted thee, neither dare I. Again, dost thou so well discharge family prayer, that thou hast no escapes or failures to be matter of secret prayer? I tell you plainly, that God will not have his worship halved: He will have either the whole or nothing. Being conscientious in family-prayer is good, but can never excuse the neglect of secret prayer, which is as much thy duty. Yea, the more thou art helped to discharge family-duty, the more

wilt thou be inclined to the practice of secret duty. The false mother was for dividing the child, not the true one.

*Object. 6.* Some women that have children to nurse and wait on, think that frees them from this duty. *Ans.* It is a sad observation of many women, who, while they are unmarried, and are not involved in the cares and troubles of a family, have some profession and practice of religion; but as soon as they get a house to manage, and have the care of young children especially, they cast off all religion, as if they had no more concern therein. But surely the very sight of the child whom thou hast conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity, should remind thee of thy original guilt and corruption, and incite thee to apply to the blood and Spirit of Christ for pardon and cleansing, and be a powerful spur to thee to set about this great duty of secret prayer. And remember, that the welfare of thy own soul, and that of the child, is more than that of the child's bodily welfare, which deserves but the second care in comparison of the other. I would not have you by any means to cast off the care of the young one's temporal welfare; but thou mayst so observe times and seasons, as thou mayst take time for this duty morning and evening, though it be not immediately after thou risest, or before thou liest down. Thou mayst even do it when thou art rocking the cradle, or suckling the child. Alas! it had been telling many, that they had had the womb that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck.

*Object. 7.* God knows the heart, and what needs so much ado about praying in secret, as if God knew not what we wanted, or what we would be at, till we sit down on our knees, and tell him? *Ans.* God knows the heart of such an objector to be a graceless heart, and his end to be destruction, Matth. vii. 15, 20; and his heart to be a foolish atheistical heart, that will not call upon God, Psal. xiv. 1. Again, what is this but to argue God's command to be foolish? He bids us pray, and you say it is needless. O daring presumption! Though the Lord not only knows your heart, but has a mind to give blessings to poor sinners, he will have you seek them by prayer: 'For these things,' says he, 'will I be inquired of by the house of Israel, that I may do it for them,' Ezek. xxxvi. 37. God never confers signal mercies on his people, without first pouring out on them the Spirit of faith and prayer, and determines them to seek ardently the very thing he has a mind to grant them. And this method is for the glory of his name, and for our real benefit.

*Object. 8.* Age and infirmity will not suffer me to go about that duty. *Ans.* Will it suffer you to do your business in the world, and will it not suffer you to manage your soul's business, which is

of infinitely greater importance? It would seem, that the nearer we draw to the grave, the more active we should be in preparing for it. It were good, that old people would mind heaven more, and the world less, as they have so short a time to stay here. The concerns of the other world should mainly ingross their care and attention, and they should then redouble their diligence in improving their span of time, and doing that which perhaps they too much neglected in the days of health and vigour. 'The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness,' Prov. xvi. 31. 'But the sinner being an hundred years old, shall be accursed,' Isa. lxv. 20. Let this sound an alarm to all the old sinners among you, that ye may yet apply to the merciful Redeemer, who sets even some to work in the vineyard at the eleventh hour. It is sad to be tottering under the miseries and infirmities of old age, and to have no prospect of a happy landing. Fly then to Christ, thou old decrepit sinner, while his call reaches thee, lest thou speedily perish without remedy.

*Object.* 9. I am too young to mind secret prayer. *Ans.* You are too old never to have entered on God's service. Remember that Josiah, when he was but eight years old, began to seek the Lord God of his father David. Obadiah, Ahab's steward, feared the Lord greatly from his youth. John Baptist was sanctified from the womb; and so was the prophet Jeremiah. Timothy knew the holy scriptures from a child. You can never begin to be religious too soon. None ever repented that they sought the Lord; but all have repented that they did not begin to seek him sooner. You are as liable to death as the oldest person here, have a soul as precious as theirs, and as much need to mind your best and eternal interests as they. Up then and be doing, without putting off a moment longer.

*Object. ult.* I cannot pray. *Ans.* The truth is thou wilt not pray, Psal. x. 4. If thou hadst a will to the duty, thou wouldst soon learn. But if thou wouldst learn to pray, go to God that he may teach thee, as Christ taught the disciples; and consider the absolute need thou hast of divine instruction in this matter. Use the one talent, and God will increase it. Wherefore set about this weighty duty, and neglect it not. Think seriously with yourselves, whether those who are now in hell, and when they lived neglected secret prayer like you, would do so still if they were in the world again. I scarcely think they would. Pray now, therefore, lest ye repent your neglect, when it will be too late, and ye are tormented in the lake of fire and brimstone. Again, think with yourselves how you will get this criminal neglect digested on a death-bed, when ye are ready to leap into eternity, without having once prayed for God's

mercy through Christ to your souls; and how you will get it digested before the awful tribunal of God, when he will drive you from his blessed presence for ever. Think with yourselves how precious time is, and what a sad business it is to spend it in pursuing the world and lying vanities, and neglecting communion with God, wherein lies the life of the soul. What! will ye delay it yet a while? O do it not! for delays are dangerous. Will ye be so foolish as to venture all to two or three words on a sick-bed or death-bed? Perhaps you will not get one, but may be hurried away in a moment. Consider that awful passage, Prov, i. 24—28. ‘Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded: but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.’

*Exhort.* 2. Be frequent in this duty, morning and evening at least, and at other times, when your conveniency will allow, and go not only to it now and then. Consider,

1. God’s express command, which ties you to *pray always, continually, and without ceasing*. This does not mean, that you should do nothing but pray, or spend your whole time in this exercise. No; but denotes frequency, and embracing every opportunity that offers for so delightful and profitable a duty. It says you should be always in a praying frame, never having your minds so much ingrossed in worldly concerns, as to be indisposed to call upon God in prayer.

2. Frequency in this duty is a good sign of a good frame and an excellent mean to maintain and preserve it. They who are not frequent in this exercise, do thereby shew that their frame and disposition is not spiritual, but carnal, much under the conduct of sense, and attachment to sensible things. Whereas, if a person were frequent in this duty, it would be a token of a heart weaned from the world, and much conversant in the things of God.

3. *Lastly*, It is dangerous to grow slack and remiss in this duty, as mournful experience has testified in the case of many. They who having been for years frequently employed in this heavenly exercise do at last turn careless, restrain prayer before the Lord, or but now and then bow a knee before him, do thereby declare they have lost the life and relish of the power of religion, and are in the high road to apostasy. There are not wanting instances of such having returned with the dog to his vomit, and with the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. Others have been made signal monu-



ments of judgment, and set up as beacons to backsliders. And some who have had the root of the matter in them, have had such a storm raised in their consciences, as has made them a terror to themselves, and all around them; and it has cost them much and sore wrestling with God ere they recovered the light of his countenance. For the Lord's sake, then, and your own soul's sake, be frequent in this exercise, and grow not remiss therein, lest ye feel the vengeance of God's temple.

*Exhort.* 3. To parents and masters of families. I beseech and intreat you by the mercies of God, by the love ye bear to the Lord Jesus, and the regard ye have to the souls of your children and servants, not only to pray in secret yourselves, but by all the means that are competent to you, by command, advice, exhortation, &c. to stir them up to this duty of secret prayer. For motives consider,

1. It was the practice of John the Baptist, yea, and of Christ himself, the great Prophet of the church, Luke xi. 1. Thus this duty comes recommended by the best authority, and the most excellent approved patterns. Christ taught and urged his disciples to pray, and for that end gave them an excellent directory, suited to their then state; and which ye would do well to make your rule in instructing your children and servants.

2. God expressly commands it, Deut. vi. 7. 'Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.' Thus they were to be daily employed in this duty, not only to let their children know what they were bound to do, but to press them to the performance of it. And this command being of moral obligation, is equally incumbent upon you that are Christian parents and masters of families; and ye have far superior advantages for this exercise than the Israelites had, a small part of the Bible having been then written; whereas ye have the whole of it among your hands.

3. God commends the practice in Abraham, Gen. xviii. 19. 'I know him,' says Jehovah, '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.' Thus, if thou make conscience of this duty, thou wilt tread in the steps of the father of the faithful, and receive tokens of the divine approbation, by the Lord's blessing thy family, and prospering thy outward concerns, and be an example to others to excite them to their duty. This will be the ready way to have dutiful and affectionate children, and obedient and careful servants.

4. Consider the engagements which thou tookest on thee at the

baptism of thy children, to train them up in the good and holy ways of the Lord; to inform them of their natural depravity, impotency, and aversion to what is good, of the method of salvation by the obedience and death of Christ; and to press them to yield themselves to the Lord, by taking hold of his covenant by faith. Thou became then engaged to instruct them in the principles of our holy religion, to shew them their duty to God and man, and to observe his ordinances and commandments. And canst thou fulfil these thy engagements, unless thou be at pains to instruct them, and especially to stir them up to the practice of secret prayer.

5. *Lastly*, Their souls are committed to thy charge; and if they perish through thy neglect, their blood will be required at thy hand. Ah! my friends, Papists and others will rise up in judgment against you, who take more pains on their children, to breed them up in their false and corrupt doctrines, and their idolatrous and superstitious courses, than ye to instruct them in the pure doctrines and precepts of religion. If thou now neglect their religious education and instruction, thy lost children and servants shall curse the day that ever they saw thy face, who tookest no more care of them than of thy beasts. Oh! let this melancholy consideration excite and stir thee up to thy duty now, lest thy children and servants rise up in judgment against thee, and be a dreadful addition to thy condemnation.

What shall we do then? may ye say.

1. As soon as they can speak perfectly, give them a few words to speak to God upon their knees every morning and evening, and see that they do so. Let these words consist of a short confession of sin, an acknowledgement of God's goodness in preservation, and an application for pardon through the blood of Jesus.

2. When they advance farther in years, give them the help of a form, composed chiefly in scripture-words, and particularly that which Christ taught his disciples. And be sure to vary and enlarge any form you give them, from time to time; and in a little time, by reading the Bible, and duly considering their own case and wants, they will be able to pray without a set form; for it is often observed, that where young ones make conscience of practising the helps that are given them, and take pleasure in the duty, the Holy Spirit strikes in with his assistance, and lays suitable matter of prayer before them; so that even some very young persons have been found to pray with great fluency and fervour, to the admiration of those who happened to overhear them.

3. Pray frequently with your children; which will be an excellent means to instruct them both as to the matter and manner of

the duty, and have a powerful influence upon them to induce them to pray for themselves. And indeed I must say, if parents made more conscience of this practice, in praying with their children, the young ones would not discover such aversion to the duty as many do; nor would there be such a numerous fry of young prayerless sinners among us, who, though they have not learned to pray, yet are great proficients in speaking vain and idle words, and in cursing and swearing.

4. Furnish them daily with proper materials of prayer, which ye can extract from the Lord's word, your own observation of the state and temper of your souls, the disposition and inclination of your children, the sins and vanities they are most addicted to, your knowledge of their peculiar wants and desires, and what appears to be suitable to their circumstances and situation.

5. *Lastly*, Carefully observe, whether they perform this duty or not; that you may encourage them when they do well, and check and rebuke them when they neglect it. Shew them that you are influenced by a regard to the command and authority of God, and are actuated with a hearty zeal and concern for the salvation of their souls in all you do in this matter, whether respecting the encouragements and advices you give them, or the rebukes and chastisements you administer to them, in case of non-compliance, neglect, or careless performance of the duty enjoined. This will have no small influence upon them to comply with your instructions and directions, and by degrees conquer their aversion to the exercise; and you may come, through the divine blessing, to see the happy fruit of your labours and endeavours.

Thus I have endeavoured, as briefly as I could, to lay before you the nature, importance, and necessity, of this excellent duty of secret prayer, and have removed the most material objections that can be made against it. If any of you, then, shall continue in the habitual neglect of this exercise, and so perish, your blood will be upon your own head, for I have delivered my own soul. But I hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though I thus speak: and I hope there will no more henceforth be a prayerless person among us. Which God of his infinite mercy, grant.

## OF THE RULE OF DIRECTION IN PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 9.—*After this manner, therefore, pray ye, Our Father, &c.*

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, in his sermon on the mount, whereof this chapter is a part, retrieves religion from the false doctrines, and the corrupt and hypocritical practices, which the Scribes and Pharisees brought into it. They were not wanting in the matter of external duties, but they were far from the right manner of performing them. Wherefore, in the first four verses, he teaches them the right manner of doing alms. In the next place, he teaches them the right manner of praying. He taxes two faults in the manner of praying: (1.) Hypocritical ostentation, ver. 5. and points them to the right manner in this. (2.) Idle multiplying of words, ver. 7, 8. In the text, for remedy of this fault, and others about prayer, the Lord, being to give us a prayer to serve for a pattern, and to direct us in praying, bids us ‘pray after this manner;’ *i. e.* in the manner following in the form of prayer here set down; not binding us to the very words, but to the manner of it, that we must pray after this manner, and to this purpose.

The right manner of performing the duty of prayer, is what God requires, and we should be concerned for. The Lord knows his people’s weakness, and how ready they are to go wrong in this, and how much they need direction; and therefore gives this form and pattern of prayer, for their direction in that weighty duty: After this manner address yourselves to God in prayer. He had not left them without direction altogether before; they had the word formerly written, but this is added as a special rule of direction.

The text affords this doctrine:

Doct. ‘Though the whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer, yet the special rule of direction is that form of prayer, which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called *the Lord’s prayer.*’

Here I shall shew,

I. That we need direction in prayer.

II. What rule God hath given for our direction therein.

III. Whether these rules are sufficient to enable us to pray acceptably.

IV. Deduce some inferences.

I am to shew, that we need direction in prayer. This is evident from,

1. God’s greatness. It is to him who dwells in heaven that we



must address ourselves in prayer : therefore, ‘be not rash with thy mouth (says Solomon), nor let thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God : for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth : therefore let thy words be few,’ Eccl. v. 2. Rash and fearless approaches speak unbecoming thoughts of God, and low thoughts of the throne in heaven, which one presents himself before. And to such may be said, ‘These things hast thou done, and I kept silence ; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself : but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes,’ Psal. l. 21. Who of us, approaching the presence of our prince, to present our petition before him, would not seek direction as to the right and acceptable manner of doing it ? How much more should we, who have petitions to present to him who is God of gods, and King of kings, ask direction as to the right manner of presenting our petitions ?

2. Our own guiltiness, Luke xviii. 13. Whoever would be rash or careless in approaching his prince’s presence, one would think that a rebel, a traitor, and a criminal, would see well to the manner of his address, and would be very cautious. This is our case, and therefore that should be our way. Therefore the prodigal thinks before-hand what he will say to his offended father, Luke xv. 18, 19.

3. The weight of the matter we go upon. Our errand to the throne is, to worship God, who ‘will be sanctified in them that come nigh him, and before all the people will he be glorified,’ Lev. x. 3. which is awful and solemn work, and gives ground for that question, ‘Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God,’ Micah vi. 6. It is to present our supplications for our needs for time and for eternity. And if he help us not, all the world cannot do it. Our souls lie at stake, eternity is before us ; and to entreat with God on the business of eternity, is business that needs direction.

4. Our weakness and aptness to mistake and miscarry in the approach, Job xxxvii. 19. ‘Teach us what we shall pray unto him : for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.’ We have no skill to manage the weighty matter ; and we will be persuaded of it, if we know ourselves. We are ready to go wrong in the matter of prayer, Rom. viii. 26. to ask of God things not agreeable to his revealed will, being blinded with our own passions and prejudices, Luke ix. 54. And we are apt to go wrong in the manner of prayer, by insincerity, formality, and carnality, Jam. iv. 3. Isa. lxiv. 7.

5. *Lastly*, The danger of mistaking and miscarrying in prayer, either of the ways. It may provoke the Lord against us, and bring down a curse instead of a blessing upon us, Mal. i. ult. ‘Cursed be

the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing : for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen,' Exod. xx. 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.' At least it will frustrate our prayers, so that they will be rejected and not heard, Jam. iv. 3. our petitions cast over the bar. Or what we seek not agreeable to his will, may be given us with a vengeance, Psal. cvi. 15.

II. The second head is, What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer ? Our gracious God has not left us without direction in that matter. We have from himself the rule which we are to walk by in our addresses to the throne : and how else could he know it ? who else could teach us how guilty creatures should present their supplications to the most high God ? And,

*First*, There is a general rule given us for that end ; and that is the whole word of God, the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, in which God's will is revealed, as to all things to be believed and done by us, 1 John v. 14. By our Bible we may learn to pray ; for there we are furnished with all sorts of helps and directions for this duty, as to matter, manner, and words ; and therefore it is a complete directory for prayer.

1. It furnishes us abundantly with matter of prayer, in all the parts of it, petition, confession, &c. Psal. li. 4, 5. Phil. iv. 6. And whoso has the word of God dwelling richly in him, will not want matter for prayer, for himself or for others. There is a storehouse of it there, of great variety ; and we are welcome to the use of it, agreeable to our own case.

2. It fully directs us as to the manner of prayer : as, for instance, that we must pray with sincerity, Heb. x. 22. with humility, Psal. x. 17. in faith, Jam. i. 6. and with fervency, Jam. v. 16. And there is no qualification necessary in prayer, but what we may learn from the holy word.

3. It furnishes us with the most fit words to be used in prayer. Do ye want words to express your desires before the Lord ? He has given us his own words in the Bible, that we may use them according to our needs, Hos. xiv. 2.

*Secondly*, There is a special rule given us by Jesus Christ for that end, namely, that form of words which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called 'the Lord's prayer,' that excellent pattern and example of prayer, composed by Jesus Christ himself for our direction in the text, which every Christian is obliged to receive with the utmost reverence, as the Lord's own word. But it was never imposed

by Jesus Christ, or his apostles, as a set form to which his church is bound to pray in *these very* words, and no other. It is true, in the year 618, the Council of Toledo imposed it on the Clergy, under the pain of deposition; but then Antichrist had mounted the throne, and the Papists since have superstitiously abused it to this day. I would all Protestants could plead, Not guilty. To clear this matter,

1. The Lord's prayer is given us as a directory for prayer, a pattern and an example, by which we are to regulate our petitions, and make other prayers. This is clear from the text, *After this manner pray ye*, &c. And it is a most ample directory in few words, to be eyed by all praying persons, if studied and understood. There we are taught to pray in a known tongue, and without vain repetitions, to God only, and for things allowed; to have chief respect to the glory of God and our own advantage.

2. It may also be used as a prayer, so that it be done with understanding, faith, reverence, and other praying graces. So we own the very words may lawfully be used, Matth. vi. 9. compared with Luke xi. 2. See Larger Catechism, quest. 137. and the Directory for Public Worship, under the title, *Of prayer after Sermon*, parag. 5. Who can refuse this, since it is a piece of holy scripture, of the Lord's own word? And they who are so weak, as that they cannot conceive prayer, do well to use this holy form; though they should endeavour to make further progress in prayer. And sometimes knowing Christians, under great desertions, not able to conceive prayer, have used it with good success. But,

3. Our Lord hath not tied us to this very form of words when we pray to God. This is evident,

(1.) Because the prayers afterwards recorded in the scripture, were neither this form of words, nor yet concluded with it. Christ himself used it not in his prayer at Lazarus's grave, John xi. 41; nor in his last prayer, John xvii. Nor did his apostles, Acts i. 24; nor the church, Acts iv. 24, &c.

(2.) This prayer is diversely set down by Matthew and Luke, the only two evangelists that make mention of it. And though it is obvious, that there is an entire harmony between them as to the matter and sense of the words; yet it is equally obvious, to all who compare them together, that there is some difference as to mode or manner of expression, particularly as to the fourth and fifth petitions; which certainly there would not have been, had it been designed for a form of prayer. In Luke, the fourth petition runs thus, 'Give us day by day our daily bread;' but in Matthew, it is thus expressed, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' The latter contains a petition for the supply of present wants; and the former for

the supply of wants as they daily recur upon us : so that both accounts being compared together, we are directed to pray for those temporal blessings which we want at present, and for a supply of those we stand in need of as they daily recur : which shews a considerable difference in the expressions. In Luke, the fifth petition is, 'Forgive us our sins ; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us ;' whereas, in Matthew the expression is very different, viz. 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' Again, Luke leaves out the doxology, 'For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen ;' which Matthew adds. From whence it may be justly inferred, that our Lord's design in furnishing his disciples with this prayer, was not that they should confine themselves solely to the manner of expression used therein, without the least variation ; for then undoubtedly the two evangelists would have recorded it in the very same words ; but he rather intended it as a directory respecting the matter of prayer. So that it is impossible to keep by the form of words precisely, since it is not one. It is said, Luke xi. 2. 'When ye pray say, &c. Here we are tied to the form of words, say our adversaries. *Ans.* By this phrase is to be understood the manner, viz. Say this on the matter, pray after this manner. Compare Matth. vi. 9. If it is to be understood otherwise, then, (1.) According to Matth. x. 7. 'Go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand ;' the disciples' preaching was confined to these very words, which we are sure it was not. (2.) It would be unlawful to pray in any other words, which no Christian dare assert. (3.) Neither Papists nor Episcopalians stick to these words in Luke, but use the words in Matthew ; by which they give up the cause.

Further, it may be observed, that our Saviour chiefly intended this prayer as a directory, respecting the matter of our petitions, rather than a form ; because it does not explicitly contain all the parts of prayer, particularly confession of sin, and thankful acknowledgement of mercies. Again, there is no explicit or direct mention of the Mediator, in whose name we are to pray ; nor of his obedience, sufferings, and intercession, on which the efficacy of our prayers is founded, and their success depends : which things are to be supplied from other parts of scripture ; all which, taken together, give us a complete directory for prayer.

From the whole, I think it is evident, that a prayer formed upon the model of this excellent pattern, having the substance of the several petitions interspersed through it, though expressed in other words, is a true scriptural prayer ; and that there is no necessity to conclude with the Lord's prayer. And therefore, I cannot but



think, that Papists, and many Protestants, who conclude their prayers with the very words of the Lord's prayer, make a very superstitious use of it; causing people imagine, that the bare recital of the words of the Lord's prayer sanctifies their other prayers; and that no prayer can be accepted of God where this, I cannot but call it vain, repetition is omitted.

III. Whether are these rules sufficient to enable us to pray acceptably? *Ans.* They are sufficient in their kind, i. e. as external directions and helps. But besides, the inward grace and assistance of the Spirit are necessary for that end, Rom. viii. 26.\*

I shall conclude with a few inferences.

*Inf.* 1. How gracious and ready to hear prayer is our God, who has been pleased himself to direct us how to pray to him! We ought to be duly thankful to him for his great goodness in this matter, and diligently attend to the excellent rules he has given us on this head.

2. Let us acquaint ourselves with the blessed word, that contains such a full rule of practice as well as faith; and study the holy scriptures, that we may be the better instructed to pray. The bible is a noble guide for prayer, both for the matter and manner thereof; and if we diligently study it, we will not be in hazard of uttering any thing contrary to or inconsistent with it, or of using the words he has given us without knowledge or understanding.

3. Those who neglect prayer on any pretence, and particularly on that pretence that they cannot pray, or those who stick by a mere form, without endeavouring to improve in the duty, are highly culpable and inexcusable, as they have so many and such excellent helps scattered throughout the whole word of God. Herein they sin against God, and wrong their own souls.

*Lastly,* See the absolute necessity of prayer in the Christian life. Be convinced, that ye cannot be without that which the Lord is at so much pains to bring you to, by not only teaching you what to pray, but promising his Holy Spirit to assist you therein. Apply yourselves diligently to this duty, that you may be often with God, guiding yourselves therein by the direction of the word; and plead importunately for the quickening power and influence of the Holy Spirit, for his help and assistance. He will shew thee thy wants, to give thee matter of petition; thy sins, to give thee matter of confession; the mercies and blessings of God, to yield thee matter of thanksgiving; and the church's miseries and necessities, to furnish thee with matter of intercession.

\* The author afterwards preached a course of excellent sermons on this subject, from the text here quoted, which since has been published, and forms a very proper appendix to this and the subsequent discourses.

## THE PREFACE OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 9.—*Our Father which art in heaven.*

THE Lord's prayer consists of three parts, the preface, petitions, and conclusion. The preface is in the words which I have read, designing the object of worship, and particularly of prayer, namely, God himself. And we are directed to address ourselves in prayer to him, (1.) As a *Father*; (2.) As *our Father*; and (3.) As *our Father in heaven*.

The words afford this doctrine.

DOCT. 'If we would pray acceptably, we must address ourselves to the Lord in prayer, as our Father which is in heaven.'

Here I shall shew,

I. What our being directed to call God *Father* in prayer doth teach us.

II. What our being directed to call God *our Father* teaches us.

III. What we are taught by our being directed to address ourselves to God as *our Father in heaven*.

IV. Deduce some inferences.

I. I am to shew, what our being directed to call God *Father* in prayer does teach us. It teaches,

1. The children of God to be those who only can or are capable to pray acceptably: for they only can indeed call God *Father*. We cannot pray acceptably unless he be our Father, and we his children, namely, by regeneration and adoption, John ix. 31. How can one plead the privileges of the family, if he be none of the members thereof, but of his father the devil, a stranger to the covenant of promise? Therefore, if we would pray aright, our state must first be changed, Jam. v. 16.

*Quest.* May none pray, then, who cannot call God, *Father*? *Ans.* There are two sorts of these.

(1.) Unregenerate persons, who are yet in the state of black nature, who have no ground to plead this saving relation to God. They may, yea, ought to pray, though they cannot pray acceptably; because prayer is the natural duty of all, which all are bound to, and the neglect of which God will punish them for, Jer. x. ult. And prayer is not a sin, but a duty, though, as it is by them managed, it is turned into sin, as all other duties are. But the neglect of it is a greater sin.

*Object.* But it is needless for them to pray, since they cannot pray acceptably. *Ans.* No: for it is a mean of grace, and an ordinance

of God; and though God have no respect to it as it is their performance, yet he may have respect to it as it is his own ordinance, and do good to them by it. The matter lies here; they are neither to continue in their sinful state, nor to satisfy themselves with their praying in that condition, but come out of it, and join themselves to God's family, and so they will come to pray acceptably.

(2.) The children of God who cannot discern their relation to him. These not only may pray, but pray acceptably, Psal. ciii. 13. 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' But it is their duty to endeavour to assure their hearts before him, to advance their hunger and thirst after him to an actual acceptance of God to be their Father in Christ, and thereupon to believe he is their Father.

2. That it is through Jesus Christ we have access to God in prayer, Eph. ii. 18, because it is through him alone that God becomes our Father; by him, for his sake, we are adopted into the family of heaven, John i. 12. When we hear that a company of guilty creatures, who stood before God as their terrible Judge, trembling for fear of his sentence of condemnation, change their note, and call him by the kindly name of *Father*, and confidently apply to him as children, we must own this to be owing to the mediation, obedience, and death of his Son, John xx. 17. And therefore,

3. That coming to God in prayer, we must come in the name of his Son, as the alone foundation of all our confidence in and expectation from God, John xiv. 13. Being married to the Son, we call God Father, and make bold in his house, by virtue of our relation to him, through our Lord and Husband. And on the continuance of this relation to Christ depends the continuance of this relation to his Father; and blessed be our immortal Husband, that the marriage with him can never be dissolved.

4. That the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit of Christ in his people, is the principle of all acceptable praying to God; for by him it is that we are enabled to call God Father, Gal. iv. 6. and therefore it is called 'inwrought prayer,' Jam. v. 16. He it is who excites his people to pray, moves them to go to God with their whole case, Psal. xxvii. 8. He furnishes them with acceptable matter of prayer, Rom. viii. 26. and with praying graces and affections, ib. And without the Spirit dwelling and acting in us, we cannot pray acceptably; and the more we have of the Spirit, we will pray the better.

5. That we should draw near to God in prayer with child-like dispositions and affections towards him.

(1.) Though he be very kind and admit us into familiarity with him, yet we must come with a holy reverence, Mal. i. 6. 'If I be a

Father, where is mine honour?" Familiarity must not breed contempt. The character of a Father bears not only kindness, but reverence and fear in it. It is a mixture of love and awful authority; and the ingenuous child will regard both. Slavish fear is to be laid aside, but child-like reverence is necessary, Heb. xii. 18.

(2.) Though we have offended God, and be under the marks of his displeasure, we must come with confidence, whatever we want, whatever we need, Eph. iii. 12. While he bids us call him *Father*, he requires of us confidence in him for the supply of all our wants. For fatherly affection is tender; the child's trouble touches the father nearly, and his interest is the father's interest, which is ground of confidence, Psal. ciii. 13. forecited, Isa. lxiii. 9. 'Surely they are my children,' Zech. ii. 8. 'He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.'

(3.) That God is ready and willing to help us, and we should come to him in that confidence, Matth. vii. 11. 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?' We should pour out our hearts into his bosom, in full confidence of his pity. Whom can a child expect help of, if not of a father? But no father has the bowels of compassion that God has towards his own. If the mother's tenderness towards the child be ordinarily greater than that of the father's, yet the Lord is still more, Isa. xlix. 15, 16. 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me.' And there is no such present help as he is.

*Object.* But is not the heavenly Father often far from helping his children? *Ans.* The children of God often think so, when their trouble is continued, and the deliverance comes not quickly. But he is their Father: therefore, (1.) He designs their good by all the hardships they meet with, Rom. viii. 28. 'All things shall work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.' (2.) He pities them under their hardships. (3.) He is a God of judgment, knows best when to remove them, and will do it in due time. The child cries, 'Father, remove this affliction, or this trial, for it pains me.' The Father pities, but his judgment leaves it till it be good for the child that it be removed.

II. I proceed to shew, what our being directed to call God *our Father* teaches us.

Negatively, Not that we may not pray, saying, *My Father*, or



that we are always to speak plurally, saying, *We pray*. For we have scripture-examples for praying in the singular number, Ezra ix. 6. Luke xv. 18, 19. But,

1. That we are not only to pray secretly by ourselves alone, but with others, joining with them in public and private. And hence may be brought no inconsiderable argument for that too much neglected duty of family-prayer; which the guilty would do well seriously to consider.

2. That we are to pray, not only for ourselves, but for others also, according to scripture example and precept, Acts xii. 5. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

Praying with and for others is a piece of the communion of saints. And it is one of the privileges of God's family on earth, that they have the prayers of all the family there. God is a rich Father, who has blessings for all.

III. I come now to shew, what we are taught by our being directed to address ourselves to God as *our Father in heaven*.

1. That we are to eye his sovereign power and dominion over all, in our addresses to him, believing that he is able to help us in our greatest straits, that nothing is too hard for him but he can do whatsoever he will, Psal. cxv. 3. This is a noble ground for faith. Our fathers on earth may be unable to help; but our Father in heaven is almighty, and has power to help in every case.

2. That we should be filled with heavenly affections in prayer, Psal. cxxiii. 1. And that God's glorious greatness above us should strike an awe upon us in our approaches to him, Eccl. v. 2.

3. God's glorious and wonderful condescension, who vouchsafes to look from his throne in heaven unto us poor worms on earth, Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.

4. *Lastly*, That we go to God as those who are strangers on this earth, and to whom heaven is home, because it is our Father's house, 1 Pet. i. 17. looking on this world as the place of our pilgrimage, and the men and manners of it as those we desire to leave, that we may be admitted into the society of angels, and consort with the spirits of just men made perfect.

I shall conclude with a few inferences.

*Inf.* 1. Let us see here the miserable condition of those who have no ground to call God Father. They were never adopted into the family of heaven, but are of their father the devil, still members of the family of hell; and if they be not delivered from that hellish society, they must perish for ever. They have never yet prayed aright; for none can pray in a proper manner but those who have the Spirit of adoption. O cry to God, that he may be graciously

pleased to translate you from the family of Satan into the family of God, and invest you with the privileges of the children of his family.

2. There is no right praying without faith. For without faith it is impossible to please God; and whatever is not of faith is sin. We cannot call God *Father*, nor love or reverence him without faith: nor can we have any fellowship or communion with him, but by faith in him as our Father in Christ.

3. Hence see the happiness of the saints in the love of the Father, who is their Father; of the Son, who has made them the children of God; and of the Holy Spirit, who teaches them to call God their Father. How happy must those be who are so nearly related to all the three persons of the adorable Trinity, and are loved by, and have communion with each of them! O seek above all things to become the children of God, and ye shall be thus happy!

4. In no case a child of God is much to be pitied in the world, as long as he has a Father in heaven, to whom he can have access by prayer, at all times and in all cases, whether it be in life or in death, Micah vii. 7. The believer's Father is a very present help in trouble; and when all help fails, he will never fail his own children; but will sanctify their troubles, be present with them in their greatest straits and afflictions, support them under them, and deliver them, as he sees it will be for his own glory, and their good. O! then, let us plead our interest in him as our Father, and engage his Spirit and presence to be ever with us, in every circumstance of life, and in the awful scenes of death and the grave, which we should view, not with terror, but with joy, as the messenger sent to convey us to the house of our Father which is in heaven.

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THE FIRST PETITION.

MATTH. vi. 9.—*Hallowed be thy name.*

IN the Lord's prayer are six petitions, whereof three are for God's honour, and the other three for our own good. Those which concern the honour of God take the lead of what concerns our good; for it is highly reasonable that the creature's interest vail to God's interest. The first of these petitions relates to the name of God, and the *hallowing* of it, or *sanctifying* of it, that is, the glorifying of it. So the first petition is for the glory of God's name. This is the first of all put into our mouths, because of all things it should lie nearest our hearts.

\* In discoursing further from this subject, I shall shew,

I. What is meant by the name of God.

II. In what sense God's name is to be *hallowed* or sanctified.

III. Why *hallowed* or sanctified, rather than glorified, since it is evident, that it is the glorifying of his name that is intended.

IV. What is the import of this petition.

V. Why this is the first petition that is put by our Saviour into our mouths.

VI. Deduce some inferences.

I. I shall shew, what is meant by the name of God.

1. God himself. So names are put for persons, Rev. iii. 4. 'Thou hast a few names in Sardis;' that is, a few persons. And the name of God is put for God himself, Deut. xxviii. 58.—'that thou mayst fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD.' Accordingly, as we pray here that God's name may be hallowed, or sanctified, so he tells us 'he will be sanctified,' Lev. x. 3.

2. Every thing whereby he makes himself known to his creatures, Psal. viii. 1. 'O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!' These are his names, Jehovah, I am, &c. though there is no word sufficient fully to express what he is; therefore his name is secret, wonderful, or incomprehensible, Jud. xiii. 18. His titles; Old Testament titles, as 'Hearer of prayer;' New Testament ones, as, 'The God of peace, the God of patience and consolation,' Rom. xv. 33, 5. His attributes or perfections, Exod. xxxiv. 5. His word and ordinances, Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. and his works, Job xxxvi. 14. In a special manner, Jesus Christ, by whom, and through whom, and in whom God manifests himself to us, John i. 18. And God's name is in him. But of the various senses in which the name of God is taken, I spoke more largely in the exposition of the third commandment.

II. I am to shew in what sense God's name is to be *hallowed*, or sanctified.

1. Not effectively, by making holy. 'Holy is his name.' He is infinitely holy, and cannot be made more holy. Whatever he is, whatever he says, whatever he does, is perfectly holy, and cannot be made more so, 1 John i. 5. Indeed he sanctifies his creatures by making them holy; but himself is originally and eternally holy, incapable of any addition.

2. But manifestly and declaratively, viz. when the holiness of his name is manifested, declared, shewn, and acknowledged, Isa. xxix. 23. 'They shall sanctify my name.' The holy name, in the dark parts of the earth, and in the dark men of the earth, is a candle under a bushel; it has a glorious light, but it is not seen: the

bushel being removed, and the splendour breaking forth to open view, it is hallowed: men then shew, declare, and acknowledge it.

III. I come to shew, why God's name is said to be *hallowed*, or sanctified, rather than glorified, since it is evident that it is the glorifying his name that is intended.

1. Because God's holiness is his glory in a peculiar manner, Exod. xv. 11.—'Glorious in holiness.' It is the glory of all his other attributes; it is the beauty of them all, and of every one of them. It is an universal attribute which runs through all the other. It is that vein of infinite purity, that goes through the several letters of his name, and makes them shine in glory. Wherein lies the glory of God's wisdom, power, mercy, &c. Why, it is in this, that his infinite wisdom is holy wisdom, his infinite power is holy power, &c. It is observed, that above thirty times in scripture God is called *The holy One*. And when the angels would pick out an attribute to glorify God most by, it is that of his holiness, Isa. vi. 3.

2. Because it is the manifesting of his holiness, in the communicating of it to the creature, that brings in the greatest revenue of glory from the creature to God. The truth is, none are fit to glorify him but those who are holy, 1 Pet. ii. 9. God stamps the image of his power and sovereign dominion upon one man, and sets him upon a throne; hence the phrase, *Ye are gods*. He stamps the image of his holiness on another, and sets him on a dunghill. I say, God's name is more glorified by the holy poor man, than by the unholy monarch. The unholy man may glorify God passively, but the holy man glorifies him actively. And in no other way can God be actively glorified, but by the creature's first receiving a stamp and impression of his holiness on the heart.

IV. I proceed to shew, what is the import of this petition.

To clear this, consider that God's name is hallowed two ways.

1. By himself, manifesting the glory of his own holy name. And this he doth in all the discoveries which he makes of himself to his creatures.

2. By his creatures, they contributing to his glory, by shewing forth his praise, and declaring the glory of his name. So we pray in this petition,

1st. That God would, by his over-ruling providence, hallow his own name, and glorify himself, John xii. 28. The sins of men and devils are opposite to the honour of his name; the children of God in this petition put it into his own hands, to cause it shine forth notwithstanding, to dispose all things to his glory. Which may be taken up in three things.

(1.) That he would make the honour of his name to break



through all impediments in the way of it, laid by men or devils, Psal. lxxix. 9. 'Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name,' says the church; that he would drive his triumphal chariot over all the opposition made to it in the world, and appear unto men in his majesty and glory.

(2.) That he would make the honour of his name break forth from these impediments themselves, over-ruling the dishonour done to his name, to his honour, so bringing meat out of the eater, and sweetness out of the strong. This he will do, Psal. lxxvi. 10. 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee.' And this his people pray for, Psal. lxxxiii. 17, 18. 'Let them be confounded and troubled for ever, yea, let them be put to shame and perish: that men may know, that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth.'

(3.) That God would remove all these impediments, and shove off all the rubbish which the sins of men and devils have cast upon the honour of his name, that it may shine forth for ever without let or hinderance. And so it looks as far as the accomplishment of that passage, Rev. xx. 14. 'And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.'

2dly, That God would, by his powerful grace, cause the sons of men, ourselves and others, to glorify him and hallow his name: q. d. Let thy name be hallowed by us. This supposes,

(1.) That it is our duty to glorify God, 1 Cor. x. 31.—'Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' It is our main duty, and the chief work we have to do in the world. And whoso neglect it, are useless in the world: for their main work is neglected. They answer not the end of their creation.

(2.) That we cannot of ourselves do it, 2 Cor. iii. 5.—'We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.' We are weak and powerless, and so unfit for it; we are perverse and selfish, and so unwilling to it. Our strength for it is in God himself.

(3.) That God can fit and dispose us for it, Phil. iv. 13. 'I can do all things,' says the apostle, 'through Christ which strengtheneth me.' Grace can make us both able and willing. There is no person in any station whatsoever, but free grace can make of them happy instruments for honouring his name; which should be a powerful motive to induce us to pray fervently for it, otherwise we will never actively glorify him.

Therefore we pray here, that grace may be bestowed on ourselves and others, whereby we and they may glorify him, which is the leading duty we have to mind in this world and that,

[1.] Internally, by knowing, acknowledging, and highly esteeming him, his names, titles, attributes, ordinances, words, and works, and so every thing whereby he makes himself known, Psal. lxxvii. 2, 3. This is to hallow that name in our hearts.

[2.] Externally, in our words and actions, speaking and living to his praise, Phil. i. 11. 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.'

V. Why is this petition put by our Saviour first into our mouths? The reason is, because the glory of God or honour of his name, is the chief end of our being, and of all others. And therefore it should lie nearest our hearts, Rom. xi. 36. 'For of him, and through him and to him are all things. To whom be glory for ever.' God's glory is his own end in all his works, and it ought to be ours. We can no other way approve ourselves to him.

I shall conclude with some inferences.

*Inf.* 1. The dishonour done to God, by one's own sin and the sins of others, must needs go near the heart of a saint, Psal. li. 4. 'Against thee, thee only have I sinned,' says David, 'and done this evil in thy sight.' And again, Psal. cxix. 136. 'Rivers of waters run down mine eyes; because they kept not thy law.' And to be grieved for our own loss of sins, and not for the dishonour done to God thereby; and to be unconcerned at the dishonour of God in the world by others, does not look like the disposition of a child of the family of heaven.

2. Habitual profaners of that holy name are none of the children of God, whose main care is to get that name hallowed. And how many such profaners of the sacred name of God are to be found in our day! They are so far from making conscience of hallowing that dreadful and fearful name, that they are daily employed in dishonouring it by the most horrid oaths and imprecations, and pouring upon it all the contempt they can, in open violation of the third commandment. How many do profane it by Atheism, Sabbath-breaking, uncleanness, perjury, intemperance, injustice, oppression, lying, stealing, backbiting, and other gross abominations, as if they had sold themselves to commit open hostilities against the King of heaven and run desperately upon the thick bosses of his buckler! They wear the devil's mark on their foreheads, and openly declare to the world, that they are none of God's children.

3. Holiness is the creature's glory, and its greatest glory, for it is God's glory; and therefore unholiness is its disgrace and dishonour. Ah! unholy sinners, ye have lost your glory; sin has disgraced you, and made you contemptible to God and all his holy family. O seek to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit of Christ, that so you may

recover your forfeited glory, and no more lie under disgrace. It is only the saints that are the most excellent in the earth. Seek ye to be like them, by having the image of God drawn on your hearts, and walking holily as God is holy.

4. It is not the language of a child of God to say, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' as wicked Cain did: what is my business how such an one live or die? Why truly, if thou belongest to God, it will be matter of thy hearty concern and prayer, that God may be honoured by others as well as by thyself. Without this concern a man cannot be a Christian; he is not a child of God; for every true believer ardently wishes and prays that God may be glorified; and as far as his power, authority, influence, and example, can reach, he will use his utmost endeavours to induce others to glorify the name of his God. Were it in his power, he would leave no means unessayed to engage the whole world in this delightful work, that 'songs might be heard from the uttermost parts of the earth, even glory to the righteous.'

5. It is the disposition of a child of God, to submit his lot and condition in the world to the Lord, to be cut and carved as may serve his glory. Without this one cannot be a child of God. For it is inseparable from the character of such an one, in whatever state he is, therewith to be content. Hence the apostle Paul could say, 'As alway, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death,' Phil. i. 20.

6. It is the duty of all men to sanctify the holy name of God, to reverence, adore and honour it, in their hearts, lips, and lives. O! let us then be excited to the practice of this duty, considering that it is the end for which God gave us a being; that if we do not hallow it, we contradict this very petition, praying for a thing we have no mind to comply with; that if we live in the neglect of this duty, God will get honour to himself by inflicting heavy judgments upon us in this life, and by making us eternal monuments of his vengeance in the next; that when we come to encounter with the king of terrors, it will tend to sweeten the awful prospect, that we have made it our business to glorify the name of God; that we will loose nothing, but be great gainers, by honouring the name of the Lord; for they that do so shall be reckoned among his jewels, and be a royal diadem in the Lord's hand; they shall be happy in death, and be safely conveyed to Immanuel's land where glory dwells. Let us then make it the principal business of our lives to glorify God, that so we may come to enjoy him for ever.

## THE SECOND PETITION.

MATTH. vi. 10.—*Thy Kingdom come.*

As the first petition relates to the *name* of God, this second relates to the *kingdom* of God, the kingdom of our Father which is in heaven; the *coming* of which, that is the advancement thereof, is desired by all the children of God. And that is the great mean of glorifying his name; for then is his name hallowed, when his kingdom comes, is advanced and carried on till it come to perfection.

In discoursing further from this subject, I shall shew,

I. What is meant by *the kingdom of God*.

II. What is the import of this petition, for its *coming*.

III. The reasons of the concerns of the children of God for the *coming of his kingdom*.

IV. Apply.

1. I am to shew, what is meant by *the kingdom of God*. There is a fourfold kingdom of God mentioned in scripture.

1. The kingdom of his power, which reaches over all the world. The subjects of this kingdom are all creatures whatsoever, Psal. ciii. 19. 'His kingdom ruleth over all.' It reaches from the highest angel to the meanest worm that creeps on the earth. It is a vast dominion, comprehending earth, seas, and hell, and all that in them is. He made them all, and therefore has dominion over them all: and to him they must all submit themselves willing or unwilling, Rom. xiv. 11. 'As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' Compare Phil. ii. 10, 11.—'At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' In this respect God is universal Monarch, and all the kings and emperors of the world are but his vassals.

2. The kingdom of his gospel, Matth. xxi. 43. 'The kingdom of God shall be taken from you,' says Christ to the Jews. This is not so large as the former. It is erected within it, but comprehends the whole visible church, in which God has set up the light of the gospel and Christ's name is known, and men profess subjection to him.

(1.) The subjects of it are all members of the visible church, whether godly or ungodly, sincere or hypocrites, (Matth. xiii. 47), with their children. Even the worst of them are privileged persons, in comparison of those of the world without the church, Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. 'He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judg-



ments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation : and as for his judgments, they have not known them.'

(2.) The King of it is Jesus Christ, Psal. ii. 6. 'Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.' He is the alone Head of it, and only supreme in it. And neither Pope nor King can pretend to the supremacy over it, without invading his royal prerogative to their own cost, Eph. i. 22, 23. 'God hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.' And his glory he will not give to another.

(3.) The laws of it are the word of God. The Bible is the book of the laws of the kingdom, which great and small within the kingdom are equally bound to walk by, Isa. viii. 20. 'To the law and to the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' These laws are attended with the most weighty sanction ; and as they have the promise of eternal life of free grace to those who obey him, so they have the threatening of eternal wrath to the disobedient, suitable to the majesty of the King, Mark xvi. 16. 'He that believeth shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.'

(4.) The ordinances of it are gospel-ordinances, instituted by the King himself, bearing his own signature, Matth. xxviii. 20. 'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' And for men to pretend to add or alter, as if they were not bound up to the divine institution, is the product of their own blindness, and enmity against Zion's King, a saying in effect, 'We will not have this man to reign over us,' Luke xix. 27. 'For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, Isa. xxxiii. 22.

*Lastly*, The officers of it (ordinary) are, pastors and teachers, for the work of the ministry, Eph. iv. 11, 12 ; ruling elders for government, 1 Tim. v. 17 ; and deacons for the care of the poor, Acts vi. As for prelates or bishops, archbishops, metropolitans, &c. whatever is to be said of their persons, their offices belong not to the kingdom of Christ, but of Antichrist, as well as priests, cardinals, and popes, there being no institution of them in the book of the manner of Christ's kingdom.

3. The kingdom of his grace, Matth. vi. 33. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God,' &c. This is yet narrower than any of the former, and comprehends only the invisible church ; for it is not an external, but an internal kingdom, in which grace, saving grace, reigns in the hearts of those who belong to it ; for, says Christ to his disciples, 'behold the kingdom of God is within you,' Luke xvii. 21.

(1.) The subjects of it are believers, true saints, and they only ; and they commence subjects of this kingdom in the day of Christ's power on their hearts, their new birth-day, Psal. cx. 3. Well may it be called a kingdom, for it is a kingdom of Kings, Rev. i. 6. as all the subjects of it are 'made kings unto God.' Out of prison (their natural state) they come to reign over their spiritual enemies.

(2.) The King of it is Christ, dwelling in their hearts, Eph. iii. 17; sitting in their hearts as on his throne, and all things else made his footstool, Luke xiv. 26. The gospel comes with power to the elect souls, Psal. xxiv. 8. The everlasting doors are lifted up, and the King makes his triumphant entry, and receives the crown at his entrance, Cant. iii. ult.

(3.) The laws of it are the laws of the Bible, but written over in their hearts, Heb. viii. 10. What others have in their book only, they have in their book and heart too; that is, inclinations of soul suited to the word are framed in them, which is a new nature, naturally disposing them to obedience without force. This is the law of their mind, Rom. vii. 23.

(4.) The ordinances of it are the same gospel ordinances, but observed in a spiritual manner, in spirit and in truth, John iv. 24. Phil. iii. 3. For this kingdom consists not in outward observances, but inward graces, Rom. xiv. 17. whereby the soul is conformed to the image of Christ, and the inner man serves the Lord Christ, as well as the outward man: it is 'not in word, but in power.'

*Lastly*, The Administrator of it is the Holy Spirit of Christ, John xiv. 16, 17. He teaches the subjects the laws of the kingdom. So they are taught of God. He enlivens, excites, and strengthens them to obedience. He leads them out to the war against their spiritual enemies, inspires them with courage and resolution in the conflict, and crowns them with victory. He makes use of the word for all this, and brings every thought into obedience, 2 Cor. x. 5.

4. The kingdom of his glory, 1 Cor. xv. 50. This is the blessed state of eternal happiness in the other world. This kingdom is now a-gathering, but shall fully come at the second coming of Christ.

(1.) The subjects of it are all the elect, being prepared for it by conversion, regeneration, justification, sanctification, and perseverance. This is the end of the golden chain, Rom. viii. 29, 30. (And the elect angels make up a part of this kingdom too). However long any of them lie among the pots, there shall none of them be left there, nor missing in that kingdom. There they shall be in body and soul too. For Christ will summon death to deliver him his own, and then he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and present them spotless.

(2.) The King of it is God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, reigning most gloriously over all the kingdom, without the least degree of rebellion or uneasiness under the government among all the subjects, and without any mixture of enemies or malcontents among them, Luke xx. 36. This, then, is the kingdom by way of eminency, where the Lord reigns for ever and ever. The kingdom of his power has many malcontents in it, ready to quarrel with their Maker and his administration. The kingdom of the gospel has many adversaries, without and within men, and is held out of many nations. The kingdom of grace has no access to the hearts of many who hear the gospel; and where it is set up, ill neighbours, corrupt lusts, mar the progress. But in the kingdom of glory there are no such things.

(3.) The laws of it are the eternal laws of righteousness, indelibly engraven on their hearts, without the least blot. There is no Bible needed there; for the rule of conduct is written on the mind, and the writing neither waxes old, nor can be erased.

(4.) The ordinances of it are perpetual praises and hallelujahs, never-ceasing songs to God and the Lamb. There is no temple there, for God and the Lamb are the temple thereof. There is no need of preaching or prayer; for perfect knowledge takes place, and every saint is made perfect and full, so as to seek no more. Faith is swallowed up in vision, and hope in fruition.

*Lastly*, The administrator of this heavenly kingdom is the Holy Spirit, but without any external means. He trained up the saints while in the world for this royal state, and at once, by his internal agency and invisible operations, disposed, fitted them for, and ever presides over them, in the delightful employments of the kingdom of glory, John xiv. 16. From what has been said,

USE. 1. Submit yourselves contentedly to the disposals of Providence. If God be King over all, is there any fault in the administration; nay, is not all well done, yea, best done? Let his sovereignty silence us; should it be according to thy mind? His infinite wisdom should satisfy us, who knows better than we do what is best for us, and can over-rule all things for his glory and our good.

2. Submit yourselves to the good sceptre. Are ye subjects of the gospel-kingdom? Then it becomes you to be subject to the laws, to observe the ordinances, and to be submissive to the officers of the kingdom. The contempt poured on these falls on the Prince of the kingdom. Beware then of transgressing or offending in this matter, lest ye incur the guilt of high treason against the majesty of Heaven, and the stone cut out of the mountain without hands fall upon you,

and crush you to pieces. Answer the gospel-call, and let it have its due effect upon you, in submitting to the sceptre of Jesus Christ as King of Zion, and resigning yourselves wholly to him, as your Prophet, Priest, and Sovereign to be taught his will for your salvation, to be redeemed by his blood, sanctified by his Spirit, and to be ruled and governed by his laws as in the hand of the Mediator.

3. Let our royal Master have your hearts for his throne, and set up his kingdom of grace there. Let him sit enthroned there, without any rivals or competitors, and without any squint looks to any other sovereigns that may have had dominion over you, whether the devil, the world, or the flesh. Lie no more to him with your lips, nor offend him with any sinful or corrupt practices. Give him your hearts, and let them be his for ever, to meditate on his word and delight in his laws. There is no getting to the kingdom of glory without this. For all the loyal subjects of this kingdom are absolute nonconformists to the world, and are conformable to Christ their King in righteousness and holiness: and it is their study to be conformed to him more and more; and they are grieved that they are not so perfectly.

*Lastly*, Labour and be restless till ye get your interest in the kingdom of glory secured. And this is done by closing with Christ for all the ends for which he is given of God. It is dangerous to delay this. Therefore kiss the Son, lest he be angry. Now is the time, now or never.

II. I proceed to shew, what is the import of this petition for the *coming* of the kingdom of God. Here it is to be observed concerning this fourfold kingdom, that they are sweetly linked together, and stand in a line of subordination, the end of which is the kingdom of glory, the kingdom of grace being subordinated to it, the gospel-kingdom to that of grace, and the kingdom of power to the kingdom of the gospel. Therefore I must begin with the kingdom of glory.

*First*, What is the import of this petition with reference to the kingdom of glory? It imports,

1. That the kingdom of glory is not come yet, 1 John iii. 2. 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be.' The King has not yet erected that kingdom. The King's coronation-day for that kingdom, 2 Thess. i. 10. is not yet come. That is a kingdom of perfect light and uninterrupted day. But the king's glory is yet under a vail in this world, through which only some rays are darted forth. It is night still, and till the day break, and the shadows flee away, the King has betaken himself to the mountains of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense, Cant. vi. 6. And many of the designed subjects are yet lying among the pots, some of them yet in the devil's



kingdom, some of them in their pilgrimage, some of them are got home indeed, but only half-home, having their souls in heaven, but their bodies in the grave.

2. That it will come. The King really designs it. From eternity he decreed it, John xvii. 24. 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.' He is gone to heaven, but he will surely come back again, and he will set up this kingdom, Acts i. 11. There are two things one may say with full assurance about it, though it is not come yet.

(1.) It shall certainly come. It is impossible it can fail to be erected. The Father's truth, the Son's blood, and the Spirit's seal, are pledges of its erection. The Father has promised it, the Son purchased it, and the Spirit sealed it on the souls of all the saints. The King shall receive that crown, and the subjects theirs too, however low as some of them sit at this day, Matth. xxv. 31, 34.

(2.) It shall never come down, but last for ever. Many, sometimes famous, kingdoms in the world are now no more. The Assyrian, Chaldean, Persian, and Roman monarchies, as they came from below out of the sea, so they are all come to ruin. But this kingdom, as it is from above, so it shall never be destroyed, never swallowed up, nor succeeded by another, Dan. vii. 27. 'His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.'

3. That it is the duty and disposition of the saints and children of God, to desire the coming of this kingdom, and that themselves and others may be brought into it, 2 Tim. iv. 8. And this their desire comprehends these four things.

(1.) The King's coming to receive his kingdom at the last day, Rev. xxii. 20. 'He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly.' The Spirit in the hearts of the saints, that cries, 'Abba, Father,' cries also, (as Judg. v. 28.) 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots?' They would have swift time that runs like a post, and never halts, to put wings to its feet, to hasten their King's coming.

(2.) The destruction of the last enemy, death, 1 Cor. xv. 26. It is the last that will stand in the way of the erection of this kingdom of glory. But the King's summons, by the sound of the last trumpet, put in the hands of the grim tyrant, will give him one conquering stroke, cause the doors of the grave fly open, and loose his grips for ever of the bodies of his saints. And this they long for, and joy in the faith of it, 1 Cor. xv. 57.

(3.) The everlasting complete happiness of themselves and others

in that kingdom, Psal. xiv. ult. Col. iii. 2, 3, 4. Every thing desires its own perfection, and therefore grace is natively carried out in desire after glory. If it were at the saint's choice, he would not live always, Job vii. 16. and therefore is coming up out of the world in affection or desires, Cant. viii. 5.

*Lastly*, The coming of the kingdom of grace, in order to all this. Which brings me to the second thing. But before I enter on that, I must answer a

*Case*. If this be the disposition of the saints, I am none: for Christ's coming is a terror to me, and how can I desire it? *Ans.* (1.) If this temper of spirit rise in thee from an habitual tastelessness and unsavouriness of holy, spiritual, and heavenly things, and from a reigning relish of the things of this present world, no wonder that Christ's coming be a terror to thee, and thou canst not desire it, more than any thing can desire to be out of its element, as fish to be dragged out of the sea. And while it is so with thee, I can speak no comfort to thee, Phil. iii. 18,—20. 'For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly; and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.'

(2.) But if holy, spiritual, and heavenly things have the predominant relish habitually in thy heart, and that sin and the world's vanities are unsavoury, in comparison of these; then, though it is often a terror to thee when thou thinkest on it, yet thou dost really desire it, though not expressly, yet interpretatively, ver. 20. And this I prove to thee by two arguments.

1. Dost thou not desire to be perfectly freed from, and set beyond the reach of sin and death? And dost thou not know, that that will never be till that day? Wherefore that desire to be freed from sin and death, has the desire of Christ's coming in the bosom of it, as the desire to have the festered member cut off, for the safety of the life, implies a desire of the surgeon's coming, who is to perform the operation, though it be a terror to the person.

2. Dost thou not desire communion with God, and full and complete communion with him in his glory, in soul and body? Thou knowest that that cannot be till he come, that all sin and sorrow will not be taken away, and this absolutely perfect happiness obtained till then. Wherefore this desire implies, that

Your terror may arise either from natural causes, or want of evidence of interest in Christ, or both together. Wherefore labour to assure your hearts before him by believing, Isa. xxxv. 4.

*Secondly*, What is the import of this petition with reference to the kingdom of grace? There is no getting into the kingdom of glory but by coming through that of grace. So that desiring the coming of the former, is desiring the coming of the latter too. It imports,

1. That all men naturally are without this kingdom, under the dominion of Satan, Eph. ii. 2, 3. 'In time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. Among whom also we had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.' These other lords have dominion over them. And as they are not subjects of, so they have nothing to do with the privileges of the kingdom of grace.

2. That we cannot bring ourselves or others into it, John vi. 44. 'No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.' God alone can do it, Col. i. 13. It is he who translates us into the kingdom of his dear Son. One will lie under the iron yoke for any thing he can do, till the power of grace break it. When one is brought into it himself, he cannot bring his nearest relations along with him. He may use the means, exhort, excite, &c. but can do no more.

3. That we cannot, where it is set up, maintain and advance it, against the enemies of it, 2 Cor. iii. 5. 'We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves.'—Satan, the world, and corrupt lusts, are the enemies of this kingdom, fighting against it continually, to extinguish it, and to retard its progress, Gal. v. 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. And if there be not another power than our own to balance the opposition, it will give way before them.

4. *Lastly*, That it is the duty and disposition of the children of God to desire, that the Lord himself may bring forward his kingdom, as Paul said to King Agrippa, 'I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am,' Acts xxvi. 29. This extends to,

(1.) The destruction of the power of sin and Satan over the hearts and lives of men, Psal. lxxviii. 1, 18. 'Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men: yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord

God might dwell among them.' Every saint grudges the sway which these enemies bear in the world, and prays it down.

(2.) The conversion of sinners to God, 2 Thess. iii. 1. 'Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified.' Converts are the church's children, for which she travails in birth, in her ministers and members, as naturally longing for the conversion of souls, as a travailing woman to see the fruit of her womb.

(3.) The preserving and advancing to perfection the state of those who are in it already, ourselves or others, 1 Pet. v. 10. 'The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. It is the joint desire of all who are brought into this kingdom, to be carried on and through, till they come to the kingdom of glory, both themselves and others.

*Lastly*, In order thereto, the coming of the kingdom of the gospel. This brings me to the

*Third* thing, What is the import of this petition with reference to the kingdom of the gospel? It is by the kingdom of the gospel that one is brought into the kingdom of grace. So desiring the coming of the one, we desire also the coming of the other. It imports,

1. That there are many impediments in the way of the propagation and efficacy of the gospel, which we cannot remove. The devil is the main agent against it, 1 Thess. ii. 18. 'Satan hindered us,' says Paul. Under him, the chief agents are the Turk and Antichrist; and every wicked man that has access to put hand to that work, all the world over; corrupt lusts in every man's heart, Luke xix. 14. and even the untenderness and unwatchfulness of good men.

2. That the Lord himself can remove all the impediments out of the way, and make the gospel triumph over them all, persons or things, sins or troubles, that are laid in the way to hinder it, Isa. lvii. 14. 'Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people.'

3. That it is the duty and disposition of the children of God to desire the advancement of the kingdom of the gospel. It extends to,

(1.) The removal of the impediments out of its way in the world, 2 Thess. iii. 1. It is the desire of the saints, that Satan's power in the world may be broken. And they should all pray for the downfall of the Turk and Antichrist, for the purging of the church of corruptions, scandals, and divisions, and whatsoever hinders the progress of the gospel; and that peace and truth may be maintained.

(2.) The propagation of the gospel through the world, that it may



be carried through all nations; that the Jews may be brought in, Rom. x. 1. and the fulness of the Gentiles, Psal. lxxvii. and that Christ may be King in all the earth.

(3.) The efficacy of it, to set up the kingdom of grace in men's hearts, 2 Thess. iii. 1. and that all things may be ordered to the advantage of it; the Spirit poured out from on high, the church furnished with gospel officers and ordinances, countenanced and protected by the magistrate, ministers made powerful and lively in their work, and the people tender and orderly in their walk, &c. all these things contributing to the success of the gospel.

*Lastly*, That God would exert his power for all this; which brings me to the

*Fourth thing*, What is the import of this petition with reference to the coming of God's kingdom of power? It is by the power of God that all these great things must be brought about. So the desiring of the coming of the gospel, is the desiring of the coming of this kingdom too. It imports,

1. That these things will not be done unless Omnipotency interpose. The work is great, the hands employed in it are feeble and there is great opposition. It will stick, if heaven put not to a helping hand.

2. That it is the duty and disposition of the children of God, to desire that God would exercise the kingdom of his power in the world, as may best conduce to these ends, Isa. lxiv. 1, 2. 'Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence. As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence.'

. *USE*. Shew yourselves of the family of heaven, by your concern that the Lord's kingdom may come, even that of glory, grace, the gospel, and power. For this is the language of those who cry unto God, 'Abba, Father.' Let this be a petition in every one of your prayers, private or secret. And contribute ye your best endeavours for promoting this glorious end. And let your life and practice shew to the world, that ye have the interests of God's kingdom at heart.

III. I proceed to shew, the reasons of the concern of the children of God for the coming of his kingdom.

1. The new nature in them moves that way, Isa. xliii. 21. 'This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.' It is from heaven, and aspires to heaven, and is heavenly in its motions, Phil. iii. 20. 'Our conversation is in heaven,' Rom. viii. 5.

'They that are after the Spirit, do mind the things of the Spirit:' As by our first birth we join and addict ourselves to the interests of hell, Psal. lviii. 3. 'The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies;' so one by the new birth joins interests with heaven. So that the meanest saint has a natural concern for the kingdom of Christ's thriving, the Spirit put in them being a public Spirit.

2. It is their Father's kingdom. How then can the children not be concerned for it? Matth. vi. 9, 10. Their Father's honour must be dear to them, Mal. i. 6. 'If I be a Father, where is mine honour?' The further on his kingdom goes, the more his glory is advanced; and they have the more satisfaction as children, in their father's honour.

3. Their own interest lies in it. They are willing subjects of the kingdom of his power. They are subjects, not only of the kingdom of the gospel, but of the kingdom of grace, and designed subjects of the kingdom of glory. So in its good their own is wrapt up. See Jer. xxix. 7. Their all is in this ship. No wonder, then, that they be concerned that it come safe to land. When it does, they are made up for ever: if it were possible that it could be cast away, they are ruined.

4. Their brethren's interest lies in it too, Psal. cxxii. 8. All the saints are born brethren. The more the kingdom is advanced, it is the better with them; and the more it is retarded, it is the worse, Psal. ciii. 16, 17. For be it foul or fair, their lot is in it, and it fares with them as with it. Their brethren yet unborn, all the elect not yet converted, some of them come, some but coming into the world, Cant. viii. 8. Should the kingdom of God be taken away what should become of perishing souls? If the net of the gospel be folded up, how should the fish be caught? If the Lord leave our mother, how shall children be brought forth into God?

5. *Lastly*, The ruin of the enemies' interest lies in it too. Every kingdom has its enemies. There is an irreconcilable war betwixt the devil's kingdom and Christ's. It was proclaimed in paradise, Gen. iii. 15. 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.' It never was, nor will be, taken up by a peace; it must end in the ruin of one of the two. As the one goes up, the other goes down; and the perfection of Christ's kingdom will be the destruction of the other. No wonder, then, that all the King's children cry, *Thy kingdom come*.

I shall now make some practical improvement of this subject, in uses of information, trial, and exhortation.

USE I. Of information. From what is said, learn,

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1. The excellency, usefulness, and necessity of the glorious gospel. It is the kingdom of God.

(1.) It is a most excellent thing, precious in itself, and in the eyes of all saints, 2 Pet. i. 4. It is more excellent than all the kingdoms of the earth; for it is the kingdom of God, Matth. xxi. 43. It is a field wherein a treasure lies, which, whoso discover, will part with all, if it were crowns and kingdoms, to gain it, Matth. xiii. 44. And a thousand times happy the man, who can call the field his own.

(2.) It is most useful; for it is the way by which one is brought into the kingdom of grace, and so to glory, Acts xxvi. 18. It is the sword of the Spirit, by which sinners are subdued to Christ, the devil's nest is rifled, his power over sinners broken, and his kingdom brought down. It is the sinner's life, the saint's health, and the instrument of all spiritual good to them.

(3.) It is most necessary, as the kingdom of God among men, without which they are in a miserable plight, the devil ruling among them at his will, Psal. lxxiv. 20. 'The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.' It is the key of the kingdom of grace, and opens the door of access to heaven. The world might better want the sun in the firmament, than want the gospel. It is the 'light shining in a dark place,' 2 Pet. i. 19. to guide our feet in the way to eternal happiness.

2. That the cry for the ruin of the kingdom of God, can be no other but the cry of the family of hell. Yet many join in it, saying, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us,' Psal. ii. 3. 'We will not have this man to reign over us,' Luke xix. 14. The gospel-kingdom is the great eye-sore to the devil; and if he could reach it, he would destroy it. Sometimes his chain is lengthened, and his forces are raised to raze the temple of God among men. And then multitudes of great and small list themselves in his service, in the unholy war against the church. And then they 'roar in the midst of the congregations; they set up their ensigns for signs:' and 'they break down the carved work thereof at once, with axes and hammers,' Psal. lxxiv. 4, 6. But their cry is the cry of hell.

3. That the kingdom of our Lord will triumph over all its enemies, and drive over all opposition. For if what two agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, Matth. xviii. 19. shall be done for them, much more what all the saints on earth make their joint request. The devil's kingdom, and Antichrist's kingdom, though malignants lend their hand to carry it on, shall fall before the prayers of all the saints, and they in the ruins of it,

if they quit not the Antichristian interest. If Christ's kingdom were ever so low, the joint prayers of the saints will raise it up.

4. No wonder that most men's prayers be not heard, for their hearts and lives contradict them quite, Prov. xxviii. 9. 'He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.' They pray, that God's kingdom may come; yet they will not submit to it themselves. They cannot be bound with the laws of the kingdom of the gospel, they are strangers to that of grace, and the kingdom of glory is not their choice, if they could do otherwise. Christ says to such, 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' Luke vi. 46. Remember, Sirs, that 'the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power,' 1 Cor. iv. 20. The devil's kindly subjects may pretend a great concern for the kingdom of God. But what of that? It is but a pretence, while the kingdom of God is not within them, but sin reigns in their hearts.

5. *Lastly*, It is sad work to be employed in hindering the advancement of the kingdom of God, whether men pursue it openly or covertly. For it is driving contrary to the prayers of all saints. Persecution is a sad piece of work, but the devil is known there by his cloven foot. But scandalous practices, and fiery divisions, in the church, are apt to do more mischief to the kingdom of Christ. For whatever zeal for it the authors of them do pretend, one thing is evident, that the way to the getting good of the gospel is filled full of stumbling-blocks, and the poor blind graceless world is thereby taught to despise the means of grace. It must needs be fearful opposition to the kingdom of Christ, that is thus written in the blood of perishing souls.

USE. II. Of trial. Try by this whether ye be of the family of God or not. Have ye a kindly concern for the coming of his kingdom? Do your hearts say within you, *Thy kingdom come*? If it be not so, God is not your Father; but if so, he is. How shall that kindly concern be known? If it be of the right sort,

1. It will be a judicious deliberate concern, on a fair view of the nature of the kingdom, Matth. xiii. 45, 46. Many have a concern for the kingdom of Christ, who indeed know not what it is. The Jews had a mighty zeal for it, upon a mistake: and when it came to them, not answering the notion they had formed of it, they opposed it with all their might. But if ye be concerned for it, on a right view of it from the Lord's word, as a kingdom of true holiness, it is well.

2. A universal concern for it, for the kingdom of power, the gospel, grace, and glory. Ye will be concerned that God would ex-



ercise his power, for the advancing of the gospel; that the gospel may have its due effect on yourselves and others; that Christ may sway his sceptre in your hearts; and that holiness may be perfected in glory.—You will not only be concerned for the kingdom without you, but for the kingdom within you; not for the kingdom within you only, but without you too.

3. An active concern for it, not in wishing and woulding only, but putting to your hand to get it forward, 1 Cor. iv. 20. ‘For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power; and this ye will do, as ye have access in the world, and particularly in your own hearts and lives. It will set you to keep up a constant war with the enemies, the devil, the world, and your own lusts.

4. *Lastly*, A superlative concern for it, mastering and swallowing up all other concerns. You will say as the captives in Babylon did, ‘If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy,’ Psal. cxxxvii. 6. For if ye belong to God, your chief interest is in that kingdom; and where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

USE. III. and last, Of exhortation. I exhort you to join issue this day with Zion’s King, to have common friends and enemies with him, come what will. Set yourselves against the kingdom of sin and Satan in the world and your own hearts; Psal. ii. ult. ‘Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.’ And do ye exert heart and hand, that his kingdom may come. In this matter ye cannot be neutral: ‘For he that is not with me,’ says Christ, ‘is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad,’ Matth. xii. 30. Therefore, if ye be not with heart and hand set for the advancement of this kingdom, I declare you enemies to it. Come then,

*First*, Be concerned that the kingdom of God’s power may come; that he may stretch out his almighty arm, and gain ground to himself in the world.

1. It is a universal kingdom. All is in his hand. He can reach to the ends of the earth. It extends over all persons and things; and he can make all things subserve his purposes. He can display his glorious arm in bringing in shoals of volunteers into the kingdom of grace, and utterly root out all the legions of hell that are in combination against him.

2. It is an uncontrollable kingdom. None can resist him more than the clay can resist the potter, Dan. iv. 35. ‘He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?’ He will work, and who can let it? It is in vain to contend

with this almighty Sovereign; for he can easily conquer all his enemies, as easily as he caused the Red Sea swallow up Pharaoh and all his host. He can baffle all the machinations and plots of his adversaries, disconcert their best-laid projects, and make them retreat with shame and confusion. These are great encouragements for this concern.

*Secondly*, Be concerned that the kingdom of the gospel may come. For motives, consider,

1. That it is not a universal kingdom, but a narrow one, and that it is to be enlarged. For Christ has declared, 'that this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations,' Matth. xxiv. 14. Though now this kingdom be confined within narrow bounds, yet it shall, according to Christ's promise, have a more diffusive spread: and the time will come when the Jews shall be brought in with the fulness of the Gentiles, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ.

2. It is a moveable kingdom. It may be taken from them that have it. Christ may remove his throne, as he did from the Jews, Matth. xxi. 43. and as he has done in many once famous churches. Where are now the seven churches in the Lesser Asia? and where are many of those churches that were planted by the apostle of the Gentiles? Alas! their candlestick has been long ago removed out of its place, and the delusions of Mahomet prevail in those places where once the pure doctrines of the gospel were preached. Though Christ will always have a church on earth, yet it is confined to no particular country or place. And therefore, we in this land should earnestly pray, that the kingdom of the gospel may come more illustriously among us, and that it may continue with us to the end of time, that we may still see many days of the Son of man, and that the candle of gospel-light may ever shine brightly among us. These considerations should influence us always to pray, that Christ's gospel-kingdom may come among us, and be spread through the world.

*Thirdly*, Be concerned, that the kingdom of grace may come. Consider,

1. It is a kingdom that easily gets a back-set, Cant. ii. 15. It may be thriving in a soul this moment, and the next going to decay. There is need of much faith and watchfulness for preserving and maintaining it. A multitude of formidable foes are still opposing it, and all the subjects of it have no power to resist them. They must look to their Captain-General, and be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. It is only through him that they can do valiantly: for it is he alone who treads down their enemies under

their feet. And through him they shall be more than conquerors. Trust ye then in the Lord for ever; for with the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Be sober, then, and watch unto prayer, lest ye fall into temptation. Cry unto your King, for he will save you, and gradually overcome all your enemies.

2. Yet this is a kingdom that can never be overturned, never removed, Heb. xii. 8. It is a spark of fire in the midst of an ocean, that can never be quite drowned or extinguished. The bruised reed shall not be broken, and the smoking flax shall never be quenched. All the combinations of adversaries, however formidable, shall never overturn this kingdom; for the gates of hell shall never prevail against it. It is built on the Rock Christ, and all the surges and waves of the dragon's flood shall never overturn the edifice. The name of the city is, 'The Lord is there.' Of this kingdom of grace, it may well be said, 'Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us,' Isa. viii. 9, 10. 'These are powerful considerations for inducing you to a hearty concern for the coming of this kingdom of grace.

*Fourthly,* Be concerned that the kingdom of glory may come. Consider,

1. Sin and trouble will have an end put to them there. The stage of sin and vanity will then be put down for ever, and none of the scenes that have so much vexed the righteous here, will ever be exhibited again. All corruptions, temptations, and backslidings from God, will then come to a final period. All bodily trouble and spiritual distress shall cease, and never more be heard of.

2. Grace and happiness will then arrive at their full perfection. The mystery of God will then be finished. Then will God's kingdom of power, of the gospel, and of grace, fully obtain their end; and all the subjects of Christ shall be completely blessed in the full enjoyment of him for evermore. Let us all then say, Let the kingdom of glory be hastened. Amen.

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#### THE THIRD PETITION.

MATTH. vi. 10.—*Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.*

THIS third petition relates to the *will of God*, the *doing* of which is desired by all the children of God. And as by the coming of his

kingdom his name is hallowed, so by doing his will his kingdom comes, or is advanced, and we own him to be King, Heb. xiii. 21. So all these three petitions meet in one great desirable point, viz. the glory of God. This is the scope of them all.

Observe here, by the by, that we are directed to speak to God in prayer as to one. Hallowed be *thy name*, not *your name*: *Thy will* be done, not *your will*. Wherefore then, should any forsake such a form of sound words, for such a harsh one, as speaks to God by *ye* and *your*, *your Majesty*, *ye know all things*, &c. ? I will not insist on what may be said to defend it, from the plurality of persons in the Godhead, the manner of speaking to kings, and from common conversation, (those who use it, I suppose, doing it rather from custom than judgment.) But it is not the scripture-way of speaking to God; it is not the way of this pattern of prayer; it is offensive to, and grating in the ears of the most part of Christians, as savouring of the opinion of the plurality of Gods, and therefore ought to be forsaken. I may well say in this case, 'But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God,' 1 Cor. xi. 16.

In discoursing from this petition, I shall shew,

I. What is meant by the *will of God*.

II. By whom is *God's will done in heaven*.

III. What is the import of this petition.

IV. The reasons why the saints have such a concern, that the *will of God may be done in earth as it is in heaven*.

V. Apply.

1. I am to shew what is meant by *the will of God*. By it we are to understand the will of his commands, and the will of his providence.

*First*, The will of God's commands, Heb. xiii. 24. 'Make you perfect in every good work to do his will.' Matth. vii. 21. 'He that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' His is the kingdom over all creatures; he sits on the throne of his power, and gives out his will to all the rational world, which they are bound to obey, as the King's law, and laws of his kingdom, determining what they ought to do, and what to forbear. The church has that will of the King in all points in the Bible. In heaven, all do it; in hell, none do it; in earth, some do it, others not; and those who do it, do it but imperfectly. So we pray, *Thy will be done*.

The will of God's commands, is exceedingly comprehensive, Psal. cxix. 96. 'Thy commandment is exceeding broad.' It is but one will of God; but the objects of it, the things willed are many: but as many as they are, sincere Christians do sincerely fulfil them,



though not perfectly, Acts xiii. 22. 'I have found David,—a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will,' Gr. 'all my wills.' This whole will of God, however, may be reduced to two heads, viz. faith, and holiness.

1. Faith, 1 John iii. 23. 'This is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.' And this is comprehended in that, Matth. vii. 21. 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' Ye are to look on it as the Father's will, the will of God, that ye believe in his Son, 2 Cor. viii. 5. 'They gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.' It is the great thing which he wills you to do, John vi. 29. 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' His dinner is prepared, he wills you to come to the marriage, Matth. xxii. 2. This answers all the objections, I may not, I dare not, I will not be welcome. It is God's will that ye come forward. And ye have the prayers of all the saints to help you forward, *Thy will be done*. And the crossing of this will of God will ensure your ruin, more than any thing else, John iii. 18. 'He that believeth not is condemned already.' Mark xvi. 16. 'He that believeth not shall be damned.'

(1.) Faith is the first leading will of God, 1 John iii. 23. fore-cited. If ye would do any part of the will of God, believe: for ye can do none of it, if ye do not this, Heb. xi. 6. 'For without faith it is impossible to please God.' John xv. 5. 'Without me ye can do nothing.' If ye do not begin with believing, all that ye do is nothing. As in arithmetic, if a thousand cyphers be set in a line, they are nothing, but if begun with a figure, they are all something; so believe, and the rest will be the obedience of faith.

(2.) Faith is the last will of God. It is the Lord's last will, that ye believe in Christ, Mark xvi. 16. 'He that believeth shall be saved.' John iii. 16. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' The Lord's will to man at first was, 'Do this and live.' Now he cannot do that: but that he may not perish, his will now in the second covenant is, 'Believe, and ye shall be saved.' The first not being complied with, the second came for man's help: but this second is the last. If ye do not believe, there is no third to be looked for, but fiery indignation, Heb. x. 26, 27.

2. Holiness, 1 Thess. iv. 3. 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification.' God is a holy God, and cannot will unholiness. It is Satan's will and your own corrupt will, that ye be unholy. But

therein ye contradict the will of God, Rom. viii. 7. 'Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Every unholy thought, word, or action, is a going cross to the will of God, and therefore sinners are said to 'vex his holy spirit,' Isa. lxiii. 10. as men are vexed when their will is still contradicted and crossed. Holiness is,

(1.) The will of God's nature, 1 Pet. i. 16. 'Be ye holy, as I am holy.' God has willed man to be holy; and it was inconsistent with his nature to have willed them to be unholy. Faith in a crucified Redeemer is God's will of free choice. He did not will innocent Adam to believe in a Mediator. He might, if he had pleased, never have provided that object of faith, and so there might never have been such a thing as faith in a Redeemer. But having once made man, he could not but will him to be a holy man. And fire and water may sooner agree than God's will and unholiness.

(2.) The will of his whole law. It is all pure, Psal. xix. 8. A vein of holiness runs through the whole of it, and through every part. All the ten commandments are so many laws of holiness; all the enlargements on them in the Bible are so many directions and instructions for holiness of heart and life. There the Lord has parcelled out his will in so many particulars, but holiness is the scope of them all.

(3.) The will of God to all men, yea, all the rational creatures. That reason, 'Be ye holy, as I am holy,' 1 Pet. i. 16. reaches all. The devils will not be condemned because they do not believe in Christ; they have no warrant to believe in him, the gospel-offer is not made to them, Heb. ii. 16. Prov. viii. 4. but because they are unholy. The pagans will not be condemned neither for their unbelief, Rom. ii. 12. for the gospel is not revealed to them, but because they are unholy, Rom. i. 8. 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.'

*Secondly*, The will of God's providence, Psal. cxxxv. 6. 'Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.' He sits in heaven universal monarch of the world, and has the disposal of all his creatures, and all that concern them in his hand, and is accountable to none for his disposals, Dan. iv. 35. forecited. They are all his own, as being created by him, and for him; and so he may do with them as the potter with his own clay, Matth. xx. 15. Now this will of God's providence may be considered two ways.

1. As directing to duty, Psal. xxxii. 8. 'I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go.' God speaks by his works as well as by his word. The whole world have this sort of speech

made from heaven to them, Psal. xix. 1.—3. ‘The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech, nor language, where their voice is not heard.’ Providence serves to point men to particular pieces of service, Gal. vi. 10. ‘As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.’ And therefore we must not be idle spectators of Providence, Psal. cvii. ult. ‘Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.’ But we must observe the language and meaning thereof, proving what is the good and acceptable will of God to us in it.

2. As ordering and disposing of events about ourselves and others, Matth. x. 29, 30. ‘Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.’ The world is a great family, under the conduct and management of an infinitely wise Master. And, for as broad and wide as it lies, his eye is in every part of it, and his hand too. And there is no person or thing but is under his providence; and whatever befalls them is their portion or lot appointed by the great Master.

This all-disposing will of Providence reaches particulars, with respect to men, to us innumerable, even all that concerns them. But they may be reduced to two heads.

(1.) Smiling providences, in favourable dispensations, Rom. ii. 4. The unthankful world is filled with these, for he doth good even to the unthankful and the unholy. Every day his table is spread, and he loads men with his benefits; though the mess of some may be double to that of others, yet all feed at his cost.

(2.) Frowning providences, Micah vi. 9. ‘The Lord’s voice crieth unto the city.—Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it;’ and this in afflicting dispensations. It is the same God who draws the white lines in one’s lot, that draws the black ones too. It is the same hand that puts on the crown of prosperity, that pulls it off again. The same God who gives the fair weather, also sends the foul, and after the blink the shower, and the clouds after the rain. If it go ill with a land, with a congregation, or with one’s house, it is the will of the Lord that it should be so.

And to all we are to say, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

II. I proceed to shew, by whom is God’s will done in heaven.

1. By the bodies of heaven, the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, and stars. God their Creator, when he made them, appointed their

ends, motions, and courses; and these they have steadily observed from the time of their creation, Ps. cxix. 89, 91. 'For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants.' The scoffers observe this, 2 Pet. iii. 4. 'All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation,' though they make a very bad use of it. Though in the heavenly fabric, these bodies are hugely great, and there are so many of them that men cannot number them, yet have they all, from the beginning to this day, observed and kept their motions and courses, without any breach of order, or any deviation whatsoever. In the mean time it is notorious, that engines made by men, and consisting of many wheels, with a variety of motions, are very hard to be long kept right, without going out of their course. But these do the will of God steadily, evenly, and unweariably, Psal. xix. 5, 6. 'The sun is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.' The sun and moon's standing still in Joshna's time, was no faltering nor disorder in their course, but it was in obedience to a particular will of God. And thus they give us a fair copy of doing the will of God on earth.

2. By the angels of heaven. These glorious spirits, attendants of the great King, are obedient to the nod of their Maker, and fall in with every the least intimation of his will, Psal. ciii. 21. They 'do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.' Though they 'excel in strength,' they entertain not the least thought of disputing his orders, ver. 20. They never put in an exception against the meanest piece of service that God puts into their hands, but are well content to minister unto worm man, Heb. i. ult. 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' They never use any shifts or offputs in the doing of his will; but when he speaks the word, it is done by them; the orders are readily and cheerfully complied with. Thus they also give us a fair copy of doing the will of God, a copy of rational obedience. The saints in heaven do his will also after the same manner, Rev. vii. 5. having got a full answer of this petition as to themselves.

III. I shall now shew, what is the import of this petition, both with respect to the will of God's command, and his will of providence.

FIRST, I am to shew, the import of this petition with reference to the will of God's command. It imports something confessed, professed, and desired.



*First*, Something confessed. The children of God coming to him with this petition, confess, that,

1. The will of God is not done on earth as it is in heaven. There is no question but that all men on earth are obliged to do it with the same perfection as those in heaven do it, Matth. v. ult. 'Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' But, alas! it is not done. God has given men on earth his commands, and notified his will to them; but it is not complied with. Though the higher world abides to this day in obedience to its Maker, yet the frame of the lower rational world is quite marred and unhinged. Though above there is a perfect calm, yet below a most unnatural rebellion is raised and continued, so that it is a region of disorder and confusion.

*1st*, Most men make their own will, and not God's, their law, and the rule of their actions, Rom. viii. 7: 'The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' All unregenerate men have shaken off the yoke of subjection to God, and instead of serving God, 'serve divers lusts and pleasures,' Tit. iii. 3. If at any time they fall in with what is materially the will of God they do it, not because it is God's will, but because it is their own, and serves their own ends, as the Pharisees did in their almsgiving and prayers, &c. Matth. vi. 1.

*2dly*, The best men carry the yoke of subjection to the will of God very unevenly, Gal. v. 17. Though they are sincere, they are far from being perfect in doing the will of God. Their own will carries them aside in many things: though they sincerely design the shore for Immanuel's land, and keep not a straight course. The wind of temptations, and their own unruly passions, oft-times blow them aside, so that they are in danger of splitting on the rocks.

2. There is in all men naturally an utter indisposition and unfitness for the will of God's command. There was a sweet harmony betwixt the will of God and the powers of man's soul at first, Eccl. vii. 29. but that is gone. Sin has broken the concord, and marred the harmony; so that there is a sad jarring betwixt the two now. They are indisposed,

*1st*, For knowing it, for discerning what the will of God is, 1 Cor. ii. 14. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned.' Sin hath raised a mist, so that the travellers cannot know the way, but are apt to chuse by-paths of destruction, instead of the King's high-way; to call evil good, and good evil: to put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.

*2dly*, For doing it, Psal. xiv. 3. 'There is none that doeth good,

no not one.' They are imperfect in that work, at best, they have lost the holy art of going by that rule. They have no skill of steering their course to the shore of Immanuel's land. Man naturally is under a threefold indisposition to it.

(1.) An inability to know or do the will of God. He has no head for it, 1 Cor. ii. 14. just above quoted. Like Samson, we have lost our two eyes in that point. The gospel is a doctrine of mysteries, that requires a saving illumination to understand it, Eph. i. 17. Even the law itself in its spirituality is not discerned without a new light from the Lord, Rom. vii. 9. And we have no hands for it neither, John xv. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 5. It is above our natural reach.

(2.) An unwillingness to know or do it. As we have neither head nor hand for it, so we have no heart for it neither, till a day of power change our hearts, Psal. cx. 3. And hence it is that the truths of God which are practical are neglected, as not desired, Job xxi. 14. And when they force their entry into the head, they are held prisoners there, that they may not exert their efficacy in the heart, Rom. i. 18. And much more unwilling are we to doubt it, Hos. iv. 16. 'Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer.'

(3.) A bias in the will to the wrong side, a bent and propensity to follow our own will, and the lusts of our own heart, Psal. xiv. 1. 'There is no God,' is the languish of every man's heart by nature. They would set up themselves for their own rule and their own end, and contend with their Maker for the sovereignty, that it should be according to their will with them, and not according to his. Again, it imports,

*Secondly*, Something professed. The children of God, coming to their Father with this profession, profess, that,

1. It is the grief of their hearts, that God's will is not done by themselves or others, as it is done in heaven, Matth. xxi. 29. Psal. cxix. 136. A gracious person has the law written in his heart. He knows it, and esteems it to be righteous in all things, the doing of it to be both one's duty and interest, Psal. cxix. 128. The heart inclines to the doing of it, though corruption and temptation drive him by it, Gal. v. 17. Hence proceeds sorrow of heart, that it is not done.

2. That God by the power of his grace, is able to reform this, and to frame the souls of men on earth to the doing his will, as in heaven, Prov. xxi. 1. He can new-frame men's will, give it a new bent of conformity to his own, and fix it too therein, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. So they put their own and other's hearts in God's hand, that he may set them in a way of obedience, Psal. cxix. 36. It imports also,

*Thirdly*, Something desired. And there are two things here desired of God by all the saints.

1. That he would by his grace remove from themselves and others all spiritual blindness and cause them to know his will, Eph. i. 17, 18. There can be no doing of God's will, without first knowing what it is, Rom. xiv. ult. For suppose one to do what God requires, who yet does not know that he requires it, it is plain that one in such a case does it, not because it is the will of God, but because it is his own will. There is a natural blindness in all, and the remains of it are in the regenerate. This hides the will of God from them in many particulars, and so hinders them from doing it. But the children of God desire to know it in all things.

This desire to know the will of God is a mark of sincerity, if it be attended with these two properties.

(1.) If it be universal, if the soul really desires to know the whole will of God, Rom. vii. 22; not only some shreds of the law, but the whole law, Psal. cxix. 6. Hypocrites may desire to know some parts of God's will, which are most agreeable to their own ends and inclinations. But happy they whose souls are opened to receive the intimations of the divine will in all things.

(2.) If it be practical, if they desire to know his whole will that they may conform themselves to it, Psal. ciii. 18. There may be a desire of the knowledge of God's will for speculation, to know it for the sake of knowledge, which may be found in the ungodly. But to desire the knowledge of it for the sake of practice, is a mark of sincerity.

Such a desire is a sure mark : because,

[1.] It evidences a heart reconciled to the whole will of God, Heb. viii. 10. The unrenewed heart is never so reconciled, Rom. viii. 7. And therefore, since they have no inclination to let in the whole law into their heart, they do what they can to keep it out of their heads, and are willingly ignorant of what they are unwilling to practice, Job xxi. 14.

[2.] It evidences a heart ready to part with every known sin, with any thing whatsoever, upon the discovery of its contrariety to the will of God, Psal. xix. 12. It is an evidence of an honest heart to be content to be searched, Psal. cxxxix. 23; but those who harbour deceit, will be unwilling to let in the discovering light, Jer. ix. 6.

2. That God by his grace would remove from themselves and others, all weakness, indisposition, and perverseness, and cause them to obey and do his will, as it is done in heaven, Psal. cxix. 35. So this desire extends to,

(1.) The removal of the impediments of dutiful obedience to the will of God. The children of God are sensible of the obligation

lying on all to conform to the will of God in all things; but withal, that there is in them,

[1.] A weakness, obstructing their obedience, which they would fain have removed, Eph. iii. 16. The weak knees, the feeble hands, fail them when they would ever so fain do his will. These are their burden, and these they lay before the Lord daily for strengthening, longing for the day when the executive power shall be answerable to their will, and their will to the will of God.

[2.] An indisposition, hindering their obedience, which they would fain be rid of, Matth. xxvi. 41. The gracious heart itself has such a mixture of corruption, that there is always a spice of backwardness to compliance with the will of God, and an inclination to the wrong side which they have to strive with. This is as iron fetters on them, out of which they would be enlarged, to run the way of God's commandments.

[3.] A perverseness of spirit, whereby one is inclined to resist and go quite contrary to the will of God. Ephraim complains of this, Jer. xxxi. 18. 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God.' And the remainders of it in the best occasion them many a sad struggle; by which the heart of a child of God is like a field of battle; the new nature endeavouring to take on the yoke, the corrupt nature resisting, and shifting, like an untamed ox.

(2.) God's advancing them to, and fixing them in a course of dutiful obedience to his own will, that they may do it as it is done in heaven. They look on perfect holiness as what would be their happiness. They see the will of God how it is done in heaven; they approve and love that way of it, and condemn their own, and would fain be brought up to the way of heavenly obedience, being wearied of their own earthly heartless way of doing it.

*Quest.* What signifies their praying for it, since they cannot obtain it while here? *Ans.* It speaks,

1. Their sense of duty in that case, and of their failings in their best performances. It is certain that perfection as well as sincerity of obedience is our duty, though we cannot reach it, Matth. v. ult. 'Be ye perfect, &c. And when the saints have stretched out to the utmost, they sit down sighing, that they cannot get the length they should, Luke xvii. 16.

2. Their desire of perfection, which is accepted of God, 2 Cor. viii. 12. They would do the will of God on earth as it is in heaven, if they could. That is the bent and disposition of their new nature,



and they would as fain be rid of the remainders of corruption, as ever a prisoner was desirous of being rid of his chains, Rom. vii. 24. while others please themselves therewith as with golden chains.

3. Their sincere endeavour to go forward to that perfection. Though, the stormy wind blowing in the face of the weak creature, they cannot hold pace with those in heaven in doing the will of God; yet they are still following them at a distance, if at length they may get up with them, Phil. iii. 13, 14. And here as in a glass, we may see what sort of doing the will of God the saints aim at, and desire. It is,

(1.) To do it evenly, without stumbling or changing their course. So the heavenly bodies and the angels are uniform in their course, Psal. cxix. 91. But, alas! what an unevenness is there in the walk of the best! Sometimes they are warm in obedience, and again key-cold. Sometimes they are tender with respect to the least of sins, and sometimes untender in great matters, according as grace or corruption gets the mastery. But all the saints are ashamed of this, and groan under the burden of it, longing for the day wherein they shall keep a stayed even course of obedience, as it is in heaven.

(2.) To do it unweariedly. Thus it is done in heaven, Psal. xix. 5. 'The sun is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race,' Rev. vii. 15. 'They are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.' There is no wearying of this doing the will of God in heaven. But, alas! how soon are we on earth weary of well-doing? Even when the spirit is willing, the clog of earth which the soul is fixed to often sets up, and can go no farther. This often makes them long to be dissolved, that without weariness they may be capable to serve the Lord day and night in his temple.

(3.) To do it universally. So the angels do it, knowing all, and doing all in perfection, without the least failure, Psal. ciii. 21. But which of the commandments do we not break on earth? what part of God's will is done by us in every point as is required? None at all. But the saints hope and long for the day, when they shall be able to know and do the whole of it in every point.

(4.) To do it humbly. When the angels have wings to fly on God's errands, yet they have also wings to cover their face and their feet, Isa. vi. 2. There is no raising of pride in their hearts upon the doing of their duty, nor to keep them from any duty. But how does pride of heart keep us back from many duties as too low for us! and how often does it arise upon the doing any thing well; 2 Cor. xii. 7. This is a heavy piece of the body of death, which the saints long to be rid of.

(5.) To do it cheerfully, Psal. ciii. 20. So the angels do in heaven. It is no burden to them to do his will; there is no heavy driving in the course of their obedience. This also is our duty, Psal. c. 2. But, ah! how often are our hearts to be dragged to duty! what backwardness to the doing of God's will, like the cutting off of a right hand! How desirable is it to a holy heart to be able to obey cheerfully!

(6.) To do it readily, without delay. So the angels are represented with wings, to shew their readiness and speed in obeying their Lord. So should we, Psal. cxix. 60. 'I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.' But, alas! how far from it are the best many times! God speaks once, yea, twice, but we perceive it not. How often are we ruined with delays, and our work is marred in our hand! It is the desire of all the godly to be rid of this indisposition.

(7.) *Lastly*, To do it constantly. So the heavenly bodies do it without intermission, without interruption: and so do the angels. So the saints desire to do, Psal. cxix. 112. 'I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end.' But, alas! how fickle and inconstant are they now, through a lightness of heart, which is heavy, heavy to every gracious soul!

SECONDLY, I shall shew, what is the import of this petition with reference to the will of God's providence. It imports,

*First*, A confession, (1.) Of a natural aptness in all men to quarrel, repine, and murmur against the methods and disposals of Providence, Numb. xiv. 2. No king's management is so freely canvassed and censured by the subjects, as the King of heaven's management in this world is by the hearts of men. An all-wise Providence guides the world, in every particular; but where is the man that has not some quarrel or other with it?

[1.] Kind providences towards others are grudged, Mat. xx. 15. Though God is a Sovereign Lord of all, and all things are his own, and he is debtor to none, men are prone to quarrel the disposal of his benefits, as if they would teach him on whom to bestow his favours.

[2.] Afflictive providences towards one's self are quarreled. The foolish heart speaks as one of the foolish women, Job ii. 10. Though the most we meet with in the world is short of our deservings, yet how does the heart rise against the smallest evils laid upon us! When the yoke of affliction is wreathed about one's neck, the unsubdued heart rages under it like a wild bull in a net.

(2.) Of a natural backwardness to fall in with the designs of providence of one sort or other. God teaches by kind providences, and

afflictive ones too. But such is the perverseness of human nature, that it scorns to be led by the one, Rom. ii. 4. or to be driven with the other, Jer. v. 3. Whether God write men's duty in white or black lines of providence, the heart is disposed not to fall in with it, Matth. xi. 16, 17.

*Secondly*, A profession, (1.) Of the saints' sorrow for this disposition of heart crossing the will of God. It is a burden to them, and the renewed nature hereby enters a dissent against this quarrelling of the corrupt nature against the will of God, Jer. xxxi. 18. They condemn themselves for not submitting cheerfully to, and falling in readily with the divine will in all things. It is one of the greatest struggles which a child of God has, to get his will conformed to the will of God.

(2.) Of the faith of the power of grace to subdue the will to this conformity. So they hereby put their stony refractory heart into the heart-changing hand to melt it down, and make it pliable, Jer. xxxi. 18. forecited. And it is the comfort of all the saints, that there is a remedy of sufficient grace in Jesus Christ, for the removing of the natural perverseness of their wills.

*Thirdly*, A desire of grace for a thorough compliance with the will of God's providence. Which extends to,

1. A submission to the will of God in afflicting providences. This is our duty, whatever be our trial, Psal. xxxix. 9. 'I was dumb,' says David, 'I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.' But it was a difficult duty, because of that corrupt self-love which cries for ease, and so much prevails in all men; because of that blindness of men's minds, whereby they take that which is really for their good to be for evil to them, and because we are all so much wedded to our own will. Therefore the saints desire the removal of these impediments by God's grace, and the subduing of our hearts to a submission.

2. A thankful acceptance of merciful and kind providences, Luke i. 38. This is our duty also; but it is the natural bias of our hearts to sacrifice to our own net, and to forget and overlook God's goodness in these; to sit down to the covered table of kind providence, not looking up with due acknowledgments to him who has provided it. So it is the saints' desire to have grace to enable them to receive thankfully.

3. A compliance with the design of providences of all sorts. We must act according to the will of providence, Acts xiii. 36. and we have need of grace for it. When God by his providence puts work into our hands, and gives us abilities and occasions to serve him, we are obliged to employ all for his service, else we answer not the design. Mercies and rods have a call. And every one is by providence

put into some particular station, with some talents, less or more, for the duties of that station. He does the will of God's providence, that employs his interest, gifts, and abilities in his calling, moving in his own sphere prudently, constantly, and vigorously, as those in heaven do.

*Fourthly*, A consent to the will of God, a yielding of the heart that it may be done. Our Lord gives us a copy of this resignation to the will of God in his bitter sufferings, Matth. xxvi. 42. 'O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.' And the church in Paul's case wrote after this copy, Acts xxi. 14. saying, 'The will of the Lord be done.' And whatever befalls the church, ourselves, or others, by the will of providence, there ought to be a humble resignation to the will of God in it all.

IV. I shall give the reasons why the saints have such a concern that the will of God may be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

1. Because it is most just, holy, reasonable, and equitable, in all things, and they see it so, Psal. cxix. 128. 'I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right.' Psal. cxlv. 17. 'The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.' God is holy and just in his own nature, and can command, demand, or inflict nothing that is unjust. He can do no wrong to the creature, nor can he bid the creature do any thing wrong. He is infinitely wise, and knows how to guide the world best. What wonder, then, they be concerned his will be done, since it is the best that can be done?

2. Because the glory of God, which of all things is dearest to the saints, is deeply interested in this matter, God is perfectly glorified in heaven, because there his will is done perfectly: but he is dishonoured on earth, because his will is not obeyed and submitted to there. It is by this that his Spirit is vexed, his will being crossed and contradicted by vile worms.

3. Because this would make a heaven on earth. If there were such a harmony betwixt earth and heaven, that God's will were done in the one, as in the other, it would make on earth,

(1.) A heaven for beauty and order of all things. There is a comely order in heaven, because all there keep their own place, and follow the will of the Creator in all things. But sin has filled the earth with confusion and disorder, which will never be rectified till those on earth return to move according to rule, viz. the will of the creature. What would become of us, if the sun and moon were as irregular in their motions as we are?

(2.) A heaven for happiness. The happiness of men lies in their assimilation to God; and they are so far like him as they conform



to his will. Were our will perfectly conformed to the will of God, we could never be miserable; for if God's will were our will, nothing could befall us against our will; we would be pleased with all that we meet with.

USE. Are we directed thus to pray? Then,

1. We ought to be very careful to know what is the will of God in the several passages of our life, Eph. v. 10. Lest we mistake his will, or overlook it, we should study his word, that we may do it: and study his works, that we may comply with the call of them. For we can never be doers of the will of God, if we know it not. It is impossible that an ignorant person can do the will of God; and therefore it behoves us, if we would do his will, carefully to search the scriptures, and narrowly consider the works of God.

2. Let us be careful to do the will of God's commands, in such sort as we may most nearly resemble those in heaven, doing it evenly, unweariedly, universally, humbly, cheerfully, readily, and constantly, as you heard the saints desire to do. And let us never forget to comply with this great commandment, of believing in the name of Jesus Christ; for if this be not done in the first place, we cannot possibly do the will of God in any other thing. Faith is the foundation of all acceptable obedience to the will of God, leads to it, and animates the soul therein. For motives, consider,

*Mot.* (1.) We are under the greatest obligations to the doing of the will of God. God is our Creator, our Sovereign Lord and Ruler, and therefore has a just title to our obedience. The Creator's authority, and the Redeemer's love and grace, so amply displayed in the work of our redemption, loudly call for our obeying the will of God. The law is given us as the matter and rule of our obedience; and we are redeemed by Christ, that we may be holy, and comply with the whole will of God revealed to us.

(2.) It is only the doers of his will that shall get to heaven, Matth. vii. 21. There is a reward of grace to be reaped afterwards for it. 'In keeping of the divine commandment,' says the Psalmist, 'there is great reward.' None are fit or qualified for the work and employment of heaven but holy persons, and none can be holy without doing the whole will of God. Obedience to his will is an infallible evidence of holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

(3.) Since his will is manifested to us in his word and works, the neglect of it will lay us open to double stripes, Luke xii. 47. Since God has been pleased to write to us the great things of his law, and to reveal his will respecting both matters of faith and practice, we can have no pretence for ignorance, nor room to plead that we know not what is our duty. All pleas of ignorance are as inexcusable as

those of neglect, which shall be rejected at the great day, and all neglecters of the will of God punished with everlasting destruction.

3. *Lastly*, Let us be careful to comply with the will of Divine Providence. And,

(1.) Let us consider what the dispensations of the day towards the church, and towards ourselves do call for, and comply therewith. While the Lord's hand is stretched out, and he threatens to take away his peace from us, [1.] Let us examine ourselves, smiting on our breasts, and saying, What have I done to kindle the fire of the Lord's anger? [2.] Let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and have a deep concern for the preservation of truth and peace; that the Lord may support his own cause, bless the gospel for the conversion of sinners, and the edification of all who have given their names to Christ.

(2.) Let us be submissive under all afflicting providences, laying our hands on our mouths, accepting the punishment of our sins, and justifying God in whatever we meet with.

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#### THE FOURTH PETITION.

MATTH. vi. 11.—*Give us this day our daily bread.*

THE former three petitions respect God's glory; and the latter three our own welfare. In the first three we are directed to pray for the advancement of his name, kingdom, and will, and in the last three for our own temporal and spiritual good. The order is divine, and teaches us this

DOCT. 'That it is the duty of all, and the disposition of God's children, to prefer God's honour to all their personal and private interests.' It is preferable,

1. To our own temporal welfare: *Thy name be hallowed, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done*; and then, *Give us this day our daily bread*. It speaks the disposition of God's children in three things.

(1.) They desire that God's glory may be advanced, whatever come of their bread or provision for this life. Their life itself is by them put in subordination to God's honour, much more the outward comforts of it, Acts xxi. 13. If the chariot of God's honour cannot drive forward, but it must drive over their table, they bid it welcome to drive on, though it cast down their table, making its way over it, Luke xiv. 26.

(2.) They desire not bread in a way inconsistent with the glory of

God's name, the coming of his kingdom, and doing his will, Heb. xi. 25. If they cannot have it, but out of the ruins of these, they will rather want it: it is too dear bought at the expence of the profanation of his name, wronging and marring the progress of his kingdom, and going over his declared will.

(3.) In pursuing the honour of his name, the advancing of his kingdom, and doing of his will, they will cast themselves on their Father for their bread, in confidence that he will furnish them with what they need of it for those great ends, 1 Cor. ix. 7. 'Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?' They have his promise for it, Psal. xxxvii. 3. 'Verily thou shalt be fed.' And he will be as good as his word: it is a ruled case, Luke xxii. 35. 'When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, wanted ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.'

2. To our own spiritual welfare: *Thy name, &c. Thy kingdom, &c. Thy will, &c.* Then, *Forgive us our debts, &c.* It speaks the disposition of the saints in submitting even their spiritual comforts and ease unto the glory of their Father. An eminent instance of this we have in David, 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26. 'And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee: behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.' And we have another eminent instance of it in David's Lord, Psal. xxii. 1, 2, 3. 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not; and in the night-season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.' To this holy sovereignty Mary was required to stoop, and she did it, John xx. 17. 'Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.' And why should not all the children of God submit the whole of their spiritual comforts, and the way of their travelling through the wilderness unto their heavenly Father, that he may dispose of it to his own glory, and according to his will? I make no question, but men are to submit their eternal salvation to the honour of God; but as soon as one is brought into God's family, that is secured, and put beyond a possibility of losing.

The reason of this point is, that God is man's chief end, and the

chief good. All things are from him, and so must be for him, Prov. xvi. 4. Rev. iv. ult. And to alter this order, is for men to make God's honour the means, and their own welfare the end; which is to lift up themselves very proudly above God.

USE 1. This speaks death to those who make the interest of God's name, kingdom, and will, lacquey at the foot of their personal private interests; and who cut and carve in their religion, as may be most subservient to advance their own interest, Phil. ii. 21. They will drive over God's honour, conscience, justice, and equity, to compass their own ends, and sacrifice all that is sacred to their own worldly interest.

2. It speaks comfort to those who first seek the kingdom of God in the habitual conduct of their lives, Matth. vi. 33. These seek in the order prescribed, and so cannot miss to come speed. Heaven is a top with them, and earth under their feet. They consent to the cutting and carving of their own lot, as may be most subservient to God's honour, and God will see well to their welfare.

In the text God is represented as the universal Benefactor, Maintainer, and Supporter of all, out of whose hands every one must receive his portion; and to whom Christ sends rich and poor, to beg their bread of him. And here see,

1. What we are to seek of him, for our bodies, *bread*, i. e. all the means of life, necessaries and conveniences; for a man may be killed with thirst, and starved with cold, though he had abundance of other things, if he want things necessary in these cases.

2. What bread, *daily bread*, i. e. a competent portion of the good things of this life; God as the great Steward giving to all their portion meet for them, as a master or steward of a family gives to every member his stated allowance.

3. What sort of daily bread, *our own*; such as we lawfully come by; for what is unlawfully gotten, and we have no right to by God's gift, Satan puts it into men's hands, not God.

4. When we are to seek it, *this day*, i. e. every day. God keeps all men hanging on him for every day's provision. In respect of God, those who have the greatest fulness live from hand to mouth; and they are indebted to God for every day's mercies as well as the poor.

5. How we are to seek it, *Give us*, i. e. by way of free gift. We cannot plead the merit of a crumb; but grounding our plea on mercy through Christ, we may seek all we need.

6. *Lastly*, For whom we are to seek, *us*, i. e. for ourselves and others; for we are one needy company, and must be all furnished from the same hand.



Before I proceed to a particular consideration of this petition, I shall observe this point of doctrine from it, viz.

Doct. 'Men depend wholly and entirely on God's bounty, for all the means and comforts of life.' There are some who are quite broken, have nothing left them, and can do nothing for a livelihood: how do they live? they hang on about their friends' hands, and they have nothing but what they give them. That is the case of all men with respect to God, the best friend of the creatures; and have what ye will, ye know not your own state, if ye know not that ye thus depend on him.

To confirm this point, consider,

1. God is the Creator of all things. He made us and all things, and particularly those which contribute to the support and comfort of our lives, Psal. c. 3. What a precious thing is the life of man, for which so many hands are set on work to maintain it? They that have a great family to maintain, will have several hands employed in several pieces of work, and all to provide for them. All mankind depend on God; his family of nature is a vast one: and he has made the hands to be employed in it accordingly. He made the corn, and the beasts of the earth, for this end; the earth itself to produce the one, and feed the other; and the heavens, with the glorious bodies therein, to influence the earth for that effect. For this cause the sun, that great servant of the world, is constantly going about, making day and night, seed-time and harvest, &c. and all for the support of the family.

2. He preserves them all in their being, Heb. i. 3. The whole frame of the universe, and all the creatures in it, are upheld by him, as a ball in the air: which would presently fall down, if he should withdraw his supporting hand. The being of the creatures is in a continual flux; there is no necessary connection betwixt their being one moment and another; so that if God should withdraw his hand, they would immediately dwindle into nothing. Our food would all vanish, the beasts disappear, the whole globe of the earth go like ashes in the wind, and the sun go out like a candle burnt to snuff, without his supporting influence.

3. He is the Proprietor of us, and of all the creatures that we have the benefit of, in heaven or earth. He has given you the use of them, but property remains with him: he is the true Owner and Lord of all. Have you got the corn into your barns or barn-yards to feed you, and the wool to clothe you? remember, God says, it is 'my corn *and* my wool,' Hos. ii. 9. Have you the hills plenished with your store? remember God's mark is upon them all, small and great, Psal. l. 10. As it is his earth that bears us, and his air that

we breathe, so it is his food that maintains us, and his raiment that clothes us.

4. All things that have life are maintained on his charges, man not excepted, Psal. cxlv. 15, 16. 'The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.' He makes grass to grow for the cattle, and feeds the young ravens that cry. The same heavenly Father whom we seek our daily bread from, feeds the fowls of the air, Matth. vi. 26. If God should close his hand upon the creatures that wait on him for their food, where would man's comforts be, that are drawn from them, for the support of his body.

5. All the usefulness and comfort of the creatures to us depends on God, Matth. xix. 17. Whatsoever good is in them is dropt into them from the fountain of goodness. The creature is a mere empty nothing in itself, and has no substance without the blessing from the Lord, Matth. iv. 4. No creature can be more to another than God makes it to be, Hos. ii. 21, 22. The corn cannot hear Jezreel, nor the earth the corn, nor the heavens the earth, unless God hear first; and then the heavens will hear the earth, the earth the corn, and the corn Jezreel.

6. Wherefore God has a negative on all the creatures. Should they all say, Yea, if he says No, nothing can be done, Lam. iii. 37. He is the spring that sets all the wheels of the creation a-going. Should he stop, and deny his influence, then all of them are motionless that moment. Thou hast bread; but what will it avail thee without his blessing? if he withdraw it, thou mayst eat, and not be satisfied, Hos. iv. 10. Thy clothes could not warm thee without it. Ye might plough and sow, and get nothing for your pains, if he but lay his charge on the earth to deny her fruits. Ye might tend your cattle and flocks and do your best for them, and all to no purpose, if he keep back his own, Psal. xcv. 4. which ye cannot crave as a debt. Ye might rise early and sit up late, and ply your business with the utmost diligence; but when thou hast done all thou canst do by art or industry, remember what Moses says to the Israelites, Dent. viii. 17, 18. 'Thou sayest in thine heart, My power, and the might of my hand, hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.' And consider what the Lord says, Psal. cxxvii. 1, 2. 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.'

7. *Lastly*, Our comforts and supports of life are never out of God's reach. If they were ever in such a flourishing condition, he can blast them to us in a moment. One day saw Job exceeding rich and poor to a proverb, Job i. 13, &c. having seven thousand sheep in the morning, and not a living one among all at night. How often has it been, that a fair braird has brought little into the barn-yard? When it has been ready for the hook, or cut down in the field, shaking winds and rotting rains have made it little worth, Hos. ii. 9. When it is brought to the barn-floor, even then we are not sure of it, Hos. ix. 2. 'The floor and the wine-press shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her.' When the corn is made in bread, 'the Lord can take away the whole stay of bread, Isa. iii. 1. When it goes down the throat he can make it choke us, and when it is in the belly, he can 'turn it,' and make it 'the gall of asps within us,' Job xx. 14.

I proceed to the petition itself, in which we pray, 'That of God's free gift, we may obtain a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.'

In discoursing from this petition, I shall shew,

I. What is meant by *bread* in it.

II. What is the import of this petition for *bread*.

III. Apply.

I. I am to shew, what is meant by *bread* in this petition. Not the spiritual bread, which is Jesus Christ; that we pray for in the second petition. Not the sacramental bread neither; that is prayed for in the fifth petition, being a seal of the pardon of sin. But, as I have already observed, bread for the sustenance of our bodies, bread for our own tables, for nourishing the clay bodies in their present earthly state. So this petition concerns our bodies. Hence,

Observe, That we are allowed to be concerned for our bodies, and their sustenance. The neglect of it is a sin against God, Col. ii. nlt. And the care of it is necessary to fit us for serving God in our several stations, as the horse must be seen to by him who would make out his journey. And if we be the Lord's children, our bodies are the Lord's by a peculiar title; they are the members of Christ, and temples of his Spirit. And therefore we owe them a particular honour and regard.

Yet there is but one petition here for the body, while there are two for the soul, 'Forgive us our debts,' &c. 'And lead us not into temptation,' &c. Whence,

Observe, Our main concern should be for our souls; and so it is indeed with the saints. This is that better part of the man, which is worthy of double honour, double care and concern, Matth. xvi. 26.

1. The body is of the earth, the soul is from heaven. By the body we are allied to the beasts, but by our souls to the angels. The one is the brutal part of the man, the other the angelical part. And as heaven is above the earth, so should the care of our souls be beyond that of our bodies.

2. Our bodies are mortal, but our souls immortal. When one dies, his body goes to sleep in the dust till the resurrection; but his soul goes to God who gave it, to live either in heaven or hell. Shall we not then have a greater concern for the immortal inhabitant, than the clay cottage, the weak tabernacle in which it dwells?

3. Caring chiefly for the soul, we secure the happiness of the body too, in this life, Matth. vi. 33. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you;' and also in the life to come, Rom. viii. 11. 'But if the Spirit of him, that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' But caring chiefly for the body, we lose the soul and body too, Matth. x. 39. 'He that findeth his life shall lose it.' And there is no compensating of this loss.

USE. How far are the most part of men from this duly divided concern! Alas! does not the body get the double portion of desires, cares, and concern; and is not the soul admitted only to the least part? For the quantity it gets more, and for the quality too; we being vigorous and lively in our concerns for the body, and careless and indifferent in those for the soul: which is the very reverse of the frame which grace puts the heart into.

Under the name of *bread* here is comprehended not only bread strictly so called, but generally the good things of this life for the support of our bodies.

1. Necessaries, without which life cannot be sustained, viz. food and raiment. For, as formerly noticed, a man may be killed with thirst, and starved by cold, though he had plenty of other things, 2 Tim. vi. 8. Thus the scripture uses of the word *bread*, Eccl. xi. 1. 'Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.'

2. Conveniences, which one cannot live comfortably without, Prov. xxx. 8. 'Feed me with food convenient for me.' God does not pen up his people to what is absolutely necessary for keeping in their life, but allows them for conveniency and delight, both as to desire and use. This varies according to the several stations in which men are placed in the world, that being abundance to one which would quite hamper another. And so in this men are allowed to beg of God, such a portion of the good things of this life, as is agreeable to the condition which he has placed them in.



Now, all necessities and conveniencies of life are comprehended under bread : (1.) Because bread is, generally speaking, the most common and ordinary, the entertainment of the poor and of the rich, and what by a special providence so ordering it, men are least apt to loath.

II. I proceed to shew what is the import of this petition for *bread*. That I may the more directly handle this, I shall consider it in the several parts thereof, by shewing the import of the words, *Give bread*, *Give us bread*, *Give us our bread*, and *Give us our daily bread*.

*First*, I shall shew what is the import of these words, *Give bread*. Our Lord teaches all his people to come unto God, and say, *Our Father—give us bread*. It imports,

1. That we are allowed to lay our temporal concerns and wants before the Lord in prayer, as well as our spiritual concerns, Prov. iii. 6. ‘In all thy ways acknowledge him.’ The praying Christian is a trader with heaven, and he may trade there in small things as well as in great things ; nay, he ought to do it. For the covenant comprehends the small things of this life, the bread and the water, Isa. xxxiii. 16. discretion in managing his affairs, Psal. cxii. 5 ; and the success of his management, Psal. i. 3 ; as well as the great things of eternal salvation, 1 Tim. iv. 1. And much of God may be seen in answers to prayers of that kind. Gen. xxxiii. 10.

2. That men depend entirely on heaven for the means and comforts of life. Our country in this world is nourished by the king’s country : and if the communication betwixt them were stopt, we would all starve, Hos. ii. 21, 22. He is the Creator, Preserver, and Proprietor of all the creatures, and their Provisor. There are some who, having nothing of their own, do live by hanging on about the hands of their friends. And that is the case of all men with respect to God, the great Friend of the creatnres.

3. That we need bread. While we are in this world, we will need it. The clay tabernacle in its present state, like an old thatched house is still needing reparation : but in a little time we will need no more. Death puts an end to all these needs ; and after the resurrection our bodies will be supported without these things which are now necessary.

4. That it is God who giveth us bread. The necessities and conveniencies of life are distributed by his hand, Psal. cxlv. 16. Though you get your bread by your labour, you have it from God ; for it is God that gives success to your labours. Though others give it you of their own, it is from God ; for it is he that opens their hearts to bestow it on you, Dent. viii. 17, 18. Neither your industry nor interest can procure it without him.

*Lastly*, That our bread is God's free gift of mercy, without any merit of ours, Gen. xxxii. 10. The least rag for our clothing, crumb for our food, breathing in God's air, &c. is what we deserve not at the hand of God, Luke xvii. 10. In Adam we forfeited our right to God's creatures, Gen. ii. 17; and by that sin of breaking the first covenant, and many other rebellions against the sovereign God, we have deserved to be stript of all our comforts: so that all we get is God's free undeserved gift.

*Quest.* What needs one pray for bread, when he has it already? He that has it in his house, yea, upon his table, has good reason to pray for it; because,

1. Without the efficacy of the divine appointment, it cannot be bread to us, it cannot nourish us, Matth. iv. 4. Without that our bread will not strengthen us, more than ashes, if God break the stay and staff of it, Isa. iii. 1.

2. Without God's good-will and favour with it, there is a curse in it, Mal. vi. 2. And cursed bread makes a sad meal.

*Secondly*, What is the import of these words, *Give us bread*? It imports,

1. That we may and ought to look to the Lord, not only for our own provision, but for the provision of our families, 1 Pet. v. 7. He that has laid it on masters of families to provide for their families, will make them welcome to pray for their provision. They who have had nothing to provide them with, have got them provided this way: and those who have had enough for them, little or nothing of it has come to their hand, when God has seen it meet to make it so.

2. That we should be concerned for others also, that they may have bread as well as we. Good men are merciful men, and will give to others that need, and much more wish them well, Jam. ii. 15, 16. We are all of one common nature, which requires this sympathy; and it well becomes those who are full to remember those who are hungry.

*Thirdly*, What is the import of these words, *Give us our bread*? There are three things imported in it, as desired by us.

1. That whatever portion of the good things of this life be bestowed on us, we may have a right to them, and so may look on them as our own bread.

(1.) A covenant-right to them, through Jesus Christ, by whom the lost right to the creatures is restored to believers, 1 Cor. iii. 22. For if one be in Christ, he enjoys his bread by a new tenor, the tenor of the covenant, Isa. xxxiii. 16. And that makes dry bread sweet.

(2.) A civil right to them, that it be such bread as we come law-

fully by; that it be our own, not another's coming to us in an unjust way, 2 Thess. iii. 12. One had better want, than be sustained on the gain of injustice; for upon that one can never expect God's blessing.

(3.) That God would bless our lawful endeavours for bread. That is a promise of the covenant; and what God has promised we may pray for, Psal. cxxviii. 2. 'Thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands.' One must not think to get his bread by praying for it, with folded hands, Prov. x. 4. 'He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand.' Nor is working for it without prayer to God, the way to obtain it, Hag. i. 6, 9. But God's blessing and man's industry must go hand in hand towards it.

3. That our bread thus brought to our hands may be blessed of God to us, 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5. As an ingenuous child loves rather to take his bread out of his father's hand, than to take it to himself; so the bread which is ours, as aforesaid, the children of God do by prayer put again into God's hand, that they may receive it out of his hand again with his blessing. Lord, do thou give us our bread.

*Fourthly*, What is the import of praying for *daily bread*? It imports,

1. That we are to confine our desires of the good things of this life to a competency, and not extend them to wealth and riches, Prov. xxx. 8. 'Give me neither poverty, nor riches.' We are to pray for daily, not weekly and yearly bread. Riches are a snare to our corrupt hearts, Matth. xix. 23. and they who are anxious for them, court their own harm, 1 Tim. vii. 9. If God lay them to your hand, as he has done to some of his own, ye are to be thankful for them; but beware the heart go not out after them, but use them for the honour and service of God.

2. That we are to be content to live from hand to mouth, having daily bread, without anxiety for the time to come, Matth. vi. 34. Surely we have enough, if God provide for every day as it comes.

*Fifthly*, What is the import of praying, *Give us this day our daily bread*? It is not, Give us to-morrow our daily bread. It teaches us,

1. That we are not to be anxious about to-morrow's provision, Matth. vi. 34.

2. That God will have us every day coming to him for the supply of our needs. He likes to have his people about his hand; and therefore never furnishes them so one day, but they need to come again another day.

3. That we are not sure of to-morrow. Every day may be our last. 'For what is our life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away,' Jam. iv. 14. We may

die this day, and need no more. So that there is no occasion for praying for any more than provision suitable to the day when it comes.

I shall conclude this subject with a few inferences.

*Inf.* 1. Let us be thankful to God for what we enjoy of the good things of this life. We owe it all to him; and therefore let us take all we have as out of his hand, whatever we do for it: for it is at his charges we live. Let us then be thankful to God, and own ourselves debtors to him, for all our mercies; for he it is that giveth rain and fruitful seasons. That there is food for man and beast among us is the effect of his free bounty. And it is owing to the same cause that we have peace to enjoy the fruit of our labours, and that God has not put it into the hands of enemies to eat it up. Let us admire his bounty to a sinful generation; and see and notice with wonder, how he does good to the unthankful and unholy, and how strictly he observes his promises, Gen. viii. ult. ‘While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.’ That year the general deluge happened, there was no seed-time, nor harvest; but since they have never failed.

2. Let us look to God, and depend by faith on him for future mercies; and particularly look to him, for his blessing on the winter and spring season, on which so much depends with us. Whatever strait he may be pleased to bring, let us accept it humbly off his hand, since he owes us nothing, and may do with his own what he will. Look to him for removing of it, and patiently wait his time. Pray for his blessing on your substance, and on the work of your hands. You see the petition is put in your mouths for it every day. And therefore being offered through Christ, it will be accepted.

3. Let us be content with the measure he sees meet for us. Though others may have more than we, we have more than we can crave as debt? and it becomes us not to pretend to teach the ruler of the world, to whom he should give more, and to whom less, Matth. xx. 15.

5. Let us make God our friend through the mediation of his Son, Acts xii. 20. Repent, and turn from your sins; and reform yourselves and families. Sin is the only make-bate betwixt God and us: put that away, since ye depend entirely on him for all you have. It is a strange thing to be provoking him, and grieving his Spirit, by a course of sin, on whom we depend for all things.

5. Beware of abusing God’s creatures to gluttony, drunkenness, sensuality, and luxury. Be not like the horse that kicks against him that feeds him: and fight not against the Lord with the bene-



fits he puts into your hands. Many to whom the Lord has given plenty of worldly good things, look on themselves as entitled to a greater liberty than others: but know that the more ye have, ye are the more in God's debt; and as your receipts are more than others, your reckoning will be deeper.

6. Let us serve God joyfully with what he gives us. Let not men take God's gifts, and bestow them on their lusts, as those who use their worldly good things to the dishonour of the name of God, and the feeding of their pride, sensuality, and other brutal passions. Sobriety becomes us; and as our Lord has stinted us to ask no more than a day's provision, let us use what he gives for every day soberly, with thankfulness; and improve it to his honour, in doing his will.

7. Let us not be anxious about provision for this life, nor go out of the road of duty or righteousness to get it. For the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; and they that keep his way, he will see to their provision. Let us be diligent in our several callings to maintain ourselves in an honest way, without anxious solicitude and carking cares about the event; but leave the success to God, taking thankfully whatever he sends, and craving his blessing upon it.

8. *Lastly*, Let us, from the same God, through Jesus Christ, look for eternal life, and the means leading thereto. Be concerned for your souls, and for the bread of life to them. Little bread will serve us till we will need no more. Many of us have eaten most of our bread already, and less may serve us than we are aware of. Our souls must have food too, and live for ever; therefore be especially concerned for them.



#### THE FIFTH PETITION.

MATTH. vi. 12.—*And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.*

THIS petition concerns our souls, as the former did our bodies, and relates to the pardon of sin, which we are here taught to pray for.

In discoursing from this subject, I shall consider,

I. The order of this petition, and the connection of it.

II. The petition itself.

III. Deduce some inferences.

I. I shall consider the order of this petition, and the connection of it. Concerning the order of it, two things may be observed.

1. That it follows the petition for daily bread. Not that bread

is comparable, far less preferable to pardon; but that the time of this life is the season of pardon, Heb. ix. 27. Now or never we must be pardoned. When we have no more ado with bread, death taking away the necessity of it, we have no more ado with pardon.

2. That is the first of the petitions for spiritual blessings. Because pardon of sin is a leading benefit, and while sin remains unpardoned, the communication betwixt God and the sinner is stopped, Amos iii. 2. 'Can two walk together, except they be agreed?' While God has a controversy with the sinner, he pursues it in greater or lesser measure, Psal. lxvi. 18. And the removal of guilt is the opening of the spring of spiritual blessings, to run abundantly; it is the taking the stone off the mouth of the well.

As to the connection, this petition is knit to the former by the particle '*and*, Give us this day,' &c. 'And forgive us,' &c. which speaks this, that, in giving bread without forgiving sin, there is death in the pot, Psal. iv. 6, and xvii. 14. There can be little sap or sweet in the bread of the condemned, though, alas! many eat it cheerfully. Like the rich man, Luke xii. they eat, they drink joyfully, while the sword of Justice hangs over their head by a hair. It is because they see it not. The looks of an angry Judge, the frowns of a Father, in giving the bread to us, will make it very sapless, to those who discern them. A pardon is the best seasoning to any meal, Eccl. ix. 7. Compare Acts ii. 37, 46.

II. Let us consider the petition itself, wherein we pray, 'That God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.' In which we may speak of two things.

1. The thing petitioned.
2. The argument backing it.

FIRST, Let us consider the petition itself, *Forgive us our debts*. This is the petition, strictly speaking. Upon which I am to enquire,

1. What is meant by *debts*.
2. What is meant by *our debts*.
3. Who are meant by *us*.
4. What is meant by *forgiveness*.
5. What is the import of this petition.

First, What is meant by *debts*? Sins are the debts here prayed to be forgiven, Luke xi. 4. the worst debts in the world.

1. Why is sin called a debt? Not because it is a non-payment of God's dues, a non-performance of duty, as some say; these things answer not the notion of debt: far less because we owe it to God.

But sin is called debt, because it is a taking away from God something for which we owe him an equivalent, Psal. lxxix. 4. 'Then I restored that which I took not away.' This notion is the common notion of debts. By sin we rob God of his honour, and owe him reparation.

So in sin as a debt four things are to be considered. (1.) The debtor which is the sinner. Every sinner is a debtor, owing more than he is able to pay. (2.) The creditor is God, at whose mercy the sinner lies. (3.) The valuable thing which the sinner has got away from God for his own use, or rather abuse, is God's honour. (4.) The equivalent which the sinner owes on that account to God, is the reparation of God's honour.

2. What sort of a debt is sin?

(1.) It is a drowning debt, a debt so great as no mortal is able to pay, Matth. xviii. 24, 25. And all mankind had died in it, if a cautioner able to pay it had not been found, Psal. lxxxix. 19.

(2.) It is a disheartening debt for the presence of God. As an insolvent debtor has no will to come in his creditor's sight; so the sinner has no will to come into God's sight till he be brought, Matth. xviii. 24. This is the reason why many otherwise jovial and merry, when they come into God's presence in duties, are quite heartless.

(3.) It is a debt that the sinner is very ready to diminish, Luke xvi. 6. As he is unable to pay, so naturally he is unwilling to confess it, and make fair count.

(4.) It is a debt that in the end will be fairly and exactly stated, and not the least article forgotten or miscounted. The creditor has given his oath upon it, Amos viii. 7. 'The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely, I will never forget any of their works.' And the debtor, whether he will or not, shall be convinced of the justness of the accounts.

(5.) It is a debt that must be paid one way or other. The debtor has but three choices, Pay, Find a cautioner, or Go to prison, Matth. v. 25. None can pay, few will employ the cautioner, therefore must go to prison.

(6.) It is a growing debt. While its growth is not arrested, the interest runs on, and the great sum to-day becomes greater to-morrow, Rom. ii. 5.

*Lastly*, When it is pursued, on the debtor's expence. The pursuit is at the sinner's cost, and he is made to bear the weight of it.

*Secondly*, What is meant by *our* debts, or sins? All sins which we are any manner of way chargeable with, and accountable for, before the Lord. Now sin becomes ours four ways.

1. By imputation. So Adam's sin is our sin, Rom. v. 19. and

therefore must be pardoned to us otherwise we will be ruined by it, as the heir is ruined by the father's debt.

2. By inhesion in us. So the sin of our nature conveyed to us from Adam, consisting in a bent to evil, and backwardness to good, is our sin as subjected in us, Psal. li. 5. This will ruin us also, if it be not forgiven as to the guilt of it: for 'the wages of sin is death,' Rom. vi. 23.

3. By personal omission or commission, Jer. xvi. 10. Thus all our omission of duties, and commission of sins, are our sins which we absolutely need to be forgiven, as treason personally done by us against the King of heaven.

4. By accession any manner of way, to the sins of others, 1 Tim. v. 22. Thus other men's sins, which we become accessory to by commanding, counselling, approving, and the like, become our sins, and involve us in guilt, which we need to be forgiven.

*Thirdly*, Who are meant by *us*, for whom forgiveness is asked?

1. Ourselves: for every man is, in the first place, to be concerned for his own pardon. Yet not ourselves only,

2. But others also; not only those who are already of God's family, but all sorts of men living, 1 Tim. ii. 1; those only excepted who have sinned the sin unto death, 1 John v. 16. The saints are daily orators at the throne of grace, for the rest of the world, and are concerned for pardon to those who are not concerned for it to themselves. Thus our Lord set the copy, Luke xxiii. 34. 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And Stephen the first martyr followed it, Acts vii. 60. 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.'

*Fourthly*, What is meant by forgiveness or pardon? It is the removal of guilt, which is an obligation to punishment. Guilt is twofold; the guilt of eternal wrath, and the guilt of temporary fatherly anger. Guilt is removed two ways, formally, and declaratively. Pardon is threefold.

1. Pardon of the guilt of eternal wrath. Thus every soul, upon its first closing with Jesus Christ in the gospel, is pardoned, Rom. v. 1. The condemning sentence of the law, binding them over to vindictive justice, to go to the prison of hell, and lie there till they have paid the utmost farthing of their own debt, is removed, Rom. viii. 1. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.'

2. Pardon of the guilt of temporary strokes and fatherly anger, 2 Kings xxiv. 4. The law of grace says, 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments: then will I visit their transgres-



sion with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail,' Psal. lxxxix. 30,—33. So the children of God, who are beyond the reach of eternal wrath, are oft-times liable to temporary fatherly wrath, which they need a pardon for, as the child needs the father's pardon. And upon their fresh application to the Lord Jesus Christ they obtain it.

3. A declarative pardon, which is the pardon manifested to the soul, a sense of pardon, Luke vii. 47, 48. 'Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, thy sins are forgiven.' She was a pardoned sinner before, for that is evident from her love to Christ; but now the pardon is intimated to her. The debt is not only forgiven, but the debtor gets the discharge of it.

This threefold pardon is here meant, and each of them is given for Christ's sake, and we obtain them by faith apprehending his obedience and death, Eph. i. 6, 7. Therefore the sea of glass is represented as betwixt the throne and the elders, Rev. iv. 6. See Zech. xiii. 1.

*Fifthly*, Let us consider the import of this petition. This we take up in these three things.

1. A confessing of debt. The saints own themselves and all others God's debtors, Dan. ix. 5. 'We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments.' They will not deny the debt, nor mince it. They see that God is spoiled of his honour by themselves and others, and that they are bound to a reparation. They confess their folly with shame and sorrow.

2. A pleading poverty, and utter inability to pay the debt, Psal. cxxx. 3, 4. 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' Who among all the sons of Adam is able to repair God's honour taken away by sin? There is an infinite evil in the least sin, which no creature is able to expiate, far less Adam's broken family, where the party has nothing to pay, whether he be owing ten talents or ten thousand.

3. A desire of free forgiveness, for Christ's sake, Dan. ix. 17. 'Now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.' What can the debtor do, who is not able to pay? He must plead to be forgiven, or he is a ruined man. And it is to free forgiveness that the saints do all turn, Psal.

exxx. 3, 4. forecited. And it is a forgiving of the debt to us, though Christ merited it; for we can do nothing to procure it to ourselves. Our pardon indeed stood dear to Christ, but it cost us nothing, Rom. iii. 24. 'We are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.'

Now, the pardon which the saints are taught here to desire daily, is to be considered agreeably to the state of the parties for whom it is desired.

1. Pardon of the guilt of eternal wrath, is desired for those who are yet out of Christ, and in an unjustified state. Not the saints themselves, who being already justified can never be more actually liable to eternal wrath, Rom. vii. 1. forecited. They are not under the law, but under grace, the threatenings of which extend no farther than rods, &c. Psal. lxxxix. 30. &c. forecited. It is one thing, what a saint may pray for, apprehending himself liable to eternal wrath, and another what Christ bids him pray for.

2. Pardon of the guilt of temporal strokes, is desired for the saints themselves. For under that guilt they may fall: and being duly considered, it is dreadful, as comprehending all miseries consistent with the love of God.

3. Declarative pardon is also desired for themselves, that they may be delivered from doubts, and fears of eternal wrath, Psal. iv. 6. 'Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.'

SECONDLY, Let us consider the argument enforcing the petition, *as we forgive our debtors*. This is not put in our mouths, to move God to forgive us, but to move ourselves to believe that our prayer shall be heard, and so to encourage us.

Here I shall shew,

1. Who are meant by *our debtors*.
2. What is meant by *forgiving* them.
3. What is meant by *our forgiving as we forgive*.
4. What encouragement one can draw from his forgiving others, to hope that God will grant the forgiveness desired.

*First*, Who are meant by *our debtors*? All such as have sinned against, or wronged us any manner of way, 1 Sam. ii. 25. For sin may reach both God and man at once; and in respect of the injury done to us by the sin of others, they are our debtors, owing us a reparation of the injury, which many times they either cannot or will not do.

*Secondly*, What is meant by *our forgiving* them? It is our hearty forgiving them the injury done to us, (to forgive the injury against God is not in our power), entertaining no hatred or malice against them, but loving them with a love of good-will, heartily wishing

their good, and being ready to do them good, Matth. v. 44, 45. 'But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' But it does not extend to a love of complacency or delight in them, in whom there appears no ground for that, either as men or as Christians, Psal. xxvi. 4. 'I have not sat with vain persons,' says David, 'neither will I go in with dissemblers.'

*Thirdly, What is meant by forgiving as we forgive?*

1. It does not denote the desire of a perfect equality or likeness betwixt God's forgiving and ours, for at best ours is but lame, and is neither so free nor full as we would desire of God. But the reality of our forgiveness that it is real and sincere, though imperfect (Matth. xviii. ult.), for which we can appeal to God.

2. It denotes our forgiving to go before the forgiveness here asked of God for ourselves, Luke xi. 4. 'Forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.' And this is a demonstrative proof, that the forgiveness the saints here ask for themselves is only the pardon of the guilt of fatherly anger, and the manifestation of pardon, and not the pardon of the guilt of eternal wrath, which concerns their state. For till this last be obtained, one cannot sincerely forgive others, Matth. xviii. 32, 33. 'Then his Lord, after he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?' No man can sincerely forgive his brother, who does not so love him; and none can love his brother, but he who loves God; and none loves God, but he who is forgiven of God, Luke vii. 47. 'Her sins, which are many are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little.'

*Fourthly, What encouragement can one draw from his forgiving others, to hope that God will grant the forgiveness desired?*

1. What we find that we who are such evil and malignant creatures, so hateful and ready to hate one another, are by the power of God's grace enabled to forgive those who have injured us, we have ground to hope that the most gracious God will forgive the injury against himself, even to those who are under the guilt of eternal wrath, it being easier for him to forgive a talent, than for us to forgive a mite.

2. From our disposition to forgive, we may confirm our confidence

in God as our God, and therefore firmly believe that our feet shall be washed, where our whole body has been washed before.

I shall conclude with some inferences.

*Inf.* 1. Beware of sin, as ye would be of contracting a debt which ye are unable to pay; and make sure your interest in the great Cautioner in time, lest ye be arrested ere ye are aware.

2. See your debts, and mourn over them, and apply to the blood of Christ for the pardon of them all, your imputed, your inherent, and your actual sins.

3. Pretend not to pay your debt by your good hearts, works, mourning, repentance, &c. but betake yourselves to free grace for forgiveness. If ever ye obtain pardon, it will be in the way of free grace.

4. An unforgiving irreconcilable disposition, and revengeful spirit, unfits men for praying. Forgive, if ye would be forgiven. And so it unfits for other duties, and particularly for the Lord's supper, the seal of forgiveness.

*Lastly*, Come to God through Christ for pardon. He is a forgiving God. Why does he teach us to pray for pardon to ourselves and others, but that there is a fulness of mercy for pardon with him?



#### THE SIXTH PETITION.

MATTH. vi. 13.—*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

THIS is the second of those petitions which concern our souls, and it relates to temptation, for warding off that great evil, as the former for the enjoyment of a great good, the pardon of sin. Thus all that are to seek for our personal, spiritual good, is deliverance from sin, from the guilt of it, petition fifth; and from the power of it, petition sixth. For these being obtained, the soul is happy, since nothing can hurt us but sin.

In discoursing from this subject, I shall shew,

I. The connection of this petition with the former, in the particle *and*.

II. The petition itself.

III. Apply.

I. I am to shew the connection of this petition with the former, in the particle *and*. This teaches us, that,

1. No man can with a good conscience sue to God for pardon, nor



will he obtain it, who is not resolved to fight against sin in time coming, and to beware of it, Psal. lxvi. 18. There are two things frightful to a penitent, the guilt of past sin, and the power of sin for the future. He is equally concerned for justification and sanctification. They who separate them, act hypocritically, and therefore cannot come speed at the throne of grace. They are unreasonable, in that they would be saved from death, and yet lie under the power of the disease. Unchristian, in that they would make Christ the minister of sin, and his pardon a sconce for a sinful life.

2. A pardoned sinner is not past danger. He is in a sickly country; and though he be recovered he is in danger of a relapse. He is still in the field of battle; and though he is cured of one wound, he will be fair to get another, if the Lord do not shield him. Therefore he is to pray, *Forgive our debts; And lead us not into temptation, &c.* Nay, Satan will be most apt to bait the pardoned sinner, Acts xiii. 8.

II. Let us consider the petition itself, in which we pray, 'That God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.' It consists of two parts.

I. The first is for preventing grace, *Lead us not into temptation.*

II. The second is for assisting grace, *But deliver us from evil.*

The FIRST is for preventing grace, *Lead us not into temptation.*

Here I am to shew,

1. What is meant by *temptation*.

2. What by *leading us into temptation*.

3. What is the import of this part of the petition.

FIRST, What is meant by *temptation*? In general, it is a trial made on a man to see what is in him, and what he will do; and so the matter it is designed to bring forth may be good as well as evil. Thus 'God did tempt Abraham,'\* Gen. xxii. 1. But ordinarily it is

\* The author, in his manuscript treatise on Genesis, of which several extracts have been already given, thus renders and comments on these words: 'The God himself; he tried Abraham;' i. e. the true God, and no other, the God who had made him the promise of Isaac, and fulfilled it, who had promised to establish the covenant with him, and had declared, that in him only, Abraham should be called a seed; even he tried Abraham, and tried him exquisitely, by calling him to sacrifice, that his son, thereby discovering him, and, as it were, opening him out like a banner displayed to public view, whereby his most firm faith in God, and absolute resignation unto him, were laid open to the view of all, to whose knowledge this his trial might at any time come. The word by which the trial is expressed, doth never, so far as I have observed, signify to entice unto sin. Neither was the thing sin which Abraham was by the trial carried to the very point of accomplishing; since he had thereto the call of God, who was absolute Lord of the life of Isaac; as of all other men; and might vest whom he would with authority to take it away, as he has vested magistrates in other

taken in an evil sense; and so it is here meant of temptation to sin, which is the plying of a man with some engine or other to draw him into sin. So in temptation four things are to be considered.

1. The party tempted or liable to temptation.
2. The parties tempting, the black instruments of temptation.
3. The bait wherewith the hook of temptation is busked.
4. The mischievous design.

*First*, The party tempted, or liable to temptation, viz. ourselves and others, who live in this world of pits and snares, Cant. iv. 8. Those who are in the upper house are beyond the reach of temptation; no hissing serpent is there; they are not within bow-shot of Satan. But here he raugeth up and down, 1 Pet. v. 8. here he has the length of his chain. Adam in paradise was tempted,\* and the

cases. But the matter was so suspicious like, that the infinitely holy Author of the trial is, by the sacred penman, indicated in the strongest terms, for to cut off all suspicion of delusion in the case. He tells us, it was the GOD, i. e. the true God; and that word is in effect doubled, q. d. the true God, even the true God. And after all there is an emphatical stop after it, the GOD; he, &c. So that, with good reason, the force of that term is, with Junius and Termellius, thus expressed, God himself, to the exclusion of all other. Moreover, that term looks backward, q. d. the same who had made so great promises with reference to Isaac; all which were thereby threatened to be quite overthrown and buried in oblivion. The word, he tried, is also emphatically pointed to shew it to have been a most exquisite trial, far surpassing all that Abraham had met with before. Nissah, he tried. It is of the form Phiel, and doth not clearly appear to be used in Kal at all. It notes an attempt, or essay, as David had not tried, viz. to go with Saul's armour, 1 Sam. xvii. 39. whether more full, as God tried Israel, Jud. iii. 1. and the queen of Sheba did Solomon, 1 Kings x. 1. or more light, as the delicate woman had not tried the sole of her foot, to set it on the earth, Deut. xxviii. 56. made by some means, as by the nations, Jud. iii. 1. by hard questions, 1 Kings x. 1. for discovering and laying open the object to view, as God tried the people, whether they would go in his law or not, Exod. xvi. 4. and Hezekiah, for to know all in his heart, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. even as a banner displayed is set forth to view, for it is akin to Nasa, to lift up; and to Nasas, whence Nes, a banner or standard. It differs from Bahhan, to prove, as an action incomplete from itself as completed: Nissah, importing only the discovering or laying open of the object; Bahhan, not only that, but also the judgment formed upon the discovery made. Hence, Psal. xc. 9. Your fathers tried me: they proved me, &c. From all which, the formal notion of Nissah appears to be to try.

\* The temptation and seduction of our first parents is justly considered as the devil's master-piece, and a most glaring demonstration of that infernal spirit's implacable malice and desperate hatred against God and his innocent creatures. It was at the same time attended with the most interesting consequences to the guilty pair, and their descendants. It may not therefore be improper to give here several particulars relating to this remarkable event, selected from the author's notes on part of the second and third chapters of Genesis. As the essay on this book was written posterior to this illustration, and as these remarks contain many striking and important things concerning the grand temptation, and the effects thereof, it was judged expedient to insert

second Adam too; the one able to have stood, the other one who could not fall. What wonder then that he attack us, in whom he has bosom friends!

*Secondly*, The parties tempting, the black instruments of temptation.

them here, though not the most proper place, rather than omit them altogether, as they were not adverted to when the discourses on the fall of our first parents, and on the first sin in particular, vol. i. were printing. And it is presumed, their getting a place in this work will not only be a valuable addition to it, but of no small advantage to the reader, as the extracts undoubtedly contain several observations new and uncommon, and which appear to have escaped the notice of former commentators, all tending to shew the evil and horrid nature of sin, and the riches of sovereign grace in the salvation of ruined man, discovered to him immediately after his fatal transgression; as well as they afford no mean specimen of the author's learning and skill in sacred criticism.

“Gen. ii. 25. Now they two were naked. Here begins the history of the fall of man; and this should have been the beginning of the third chapter. Though the division into verses is of divine authority, the division into chapters is not so.—The man, and his wife. They were naked, not only in presence of one another, but separately wherever they were.—But they would not have been ashamed of themselves, notwithstanding of their nakedness. The manner of expression bears, that so it was during the happy state they were in, but that it lasted not, that was soon over, and now is gone. The distinctive in these words is emphatical, q. d. But they would not have, &c. i. e. they would not at all, in the least, have been, &c. Bosch is to be ashamed. If therefore, it were used in Pih. i. would be to shame, act, as the root in Kal is neuter. Here it is in Hithp. the relative of Pih. and therefore signifies formally to shame one's self. It is no where else used in this form, which is here purposely chosen, not only to intimate that our shame ariseth from a certain secret motion within our own breasts, but also, and chiefly, in opposition to Satan's endeavouring to shame them, on the account of their nakedness, which will appear by the sequel.

Gen. iii. 1. “And the serpent was subtile, from every wild beast of the field; which Jehovah God had made, i. e. And the old serpent the devil, was subtile, nicely observing, and artfully improving, what might make for his mischeivous design against mankind; and in his attack he argued subtilely, from the state and case of the wild beasts; every one of which he observed to have been made covered, none of them naked, though not of an erect posture, as man was; and withal that they were left to range up and down in the field, at their pleasure. So Satan pitching upon the case of the wild beasts, as the great engine for the ruin of mankind, to be made effectual for that purpose by a comparison instituted, with hellish subtilty, between it and the case of our first parents, found in it a double topic, which he improved to the actual ruining of them, and of all their posterity in their loins. The first of these was the nakedness of our first parents, while the wild beasts were all covered and created so. Their nakedness, he would persuade them, was shameful and indecent; and that the wild beasts were in that respect in better case than they. This was the first temptation, as Moses shews us in these words, making up the first hemistich of this verse. And this is the plain literal sense of the words, as thus pointed. Compare Job xxxv. 11. ‘Teaching us, from beasts of earth: and from flying things of the heavens, &c’; with which compare chap. xii. 7. ‘Come now ask thou beasts, and it (i. e. every one of

1. The grand tempter is the devil, Matth. iv. 3. He was an angel of light, but is now turned to a tempting devil. An apostate from God, for whom there is no hope; and being God's irreconcilable enemy, goes about withdrawing men from their allegiance to

them) will teach thee: and flying thing of the heavens; and it will tell to thee.' Accordingly the context doth not obscurely intimate the nakedness of our first parents to have been the first topic Satan made use of in his attack on them. God himself asks Adam, ver. 11. Who told him of his nakedness? which is no obscure indication, that the devil told them of it. Moses takes notice, ver. 7. that after eating of the forbidden fruit, their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked, really needing clothes to hide their shame, which Satan would have persuaded them they were in need of before, and which they could not see while they stood in their integrity, there being really no such thing as the tempter alleged. Thus the connection is natural: 'The two were naked.'—And the serpent was subtiler from the wild beasts of the field, to improve their case against the naked pair. This is confirmed from the words used by the inspired penman. He tells us, chap. ii. ult. They two were *Gnarummim* (naked), and here the serpent was *Gnarum* (subtile). Thus, also the last clause, which Jehovah God had made affords a more efficacious sense than otherwise, viz. being understood, not of God's making them simply, but of making them covered. And hereunto fitly agrees the Lord's clothing the sinful naked pair, with the skins of beasts; which was a humbling memorial to them of the spring of their ruin. *Nahhasch* the serpent. Whether it is from the verb *Nahhasch*, or the verb is from it, is all a case in this point. But the verb does import, subtiler observation, learning by observation; particularly it is used of observing omens, chap. xxx. 27. and xlv. 45. 2 Kings xxi. 6. And since *Nahhasch* is not the only name of the serpent in Hebrew, it would seem that primarily and originally it was the name of the devil, the old serpent, given him from this fatal event, and communicated to that animal, as having been the instrument of the devil in this mischief. *Gnarum*, subtiler; for the word is indifferent, either to good, as Prov. xii. 16, 23. or evil, as Job v. 12. Now, it is true the Hebrew forms its comparative phrases, by the preposition from, which in that case may be rendered above, as Judg. xi. 25. Good, good, [art] thou; from (i. e. above) Balak, i. e. [Art] thou better, better; than Balak? So Prov. viii. 11. Hag. ii. 9. Eccl. iv. 9. and vii. 1, 2, 3, 5, 8. Isa. liv. 1. Psal. cxviii. 8, 9. Prov. xxv. 7. But the comparative sense cannot be admitted here. For, (1.) The reading offered is the primary and literal one, therefore not without necessity to give place to another. (2.) The comparative phrase is elliptical. And no ellipsis is to be admitted without necessity neither. (3.) The word from all, doth not immediately relate to the adjective subtiler, but to the substantive verb was, as the principal word of the part referred to: so the construction is not, The serpent was subtiler; [subtiler] from, &c. but, The serpent was subtiler; [he was so] from. &c. If the comparative phrase had been designed, I conceive the adjective would have been set before the substantive verb; that so it might have related immediately to the word from-all: thus, The serpent subtiler was; from, &c. i. e. subtiler from, that is more subtiler than. And in all the above cited texts, bearing the comparative phrase, the adjective is so posted; being either the only or the first, word of the clause, or part of the clause, in which it is found: by which situation it plainly relates to the word that hath the proposition—'And he said unto the woman, then, how hath God said, Ye shall not eat of all, tree of the garden? The phrase not all is used for not any. Thus the woman understood it, as



their sovereign Lord. He is an expert tempter; and has now had the experience of several thousand years in the hellish trade. He has his devices for entrapping poor mortals, and knows how to suit his temptations, as they may best take.

appears from the following verse. And so Satan was a liar, in the strictest sense from the beginning. Here is the second topic Satan made use of, viz. the restraint our first parents were laid under in respect of their food, while the wild beasts were at liberty in that point. In what words he proposed this second temptation, is here recorded; though his speech on the first is not. But that he did speak on this mischievous design, and unto the woman too, before he uttered the words here recorded, the text itself doth plainly intimate. The words, Then how q. d. More than that, in the next place, shew that there was a foregoing speech he had to her. Accordingly the text saith, He said unto the woman, q. d. unto the woman unto the woman; i. e. he said unto the woman words agreeable to the narration foregoing, and he said unto the woman the words following. Accordingly the word He-said, is by the distinctive fitted to be constructed after this manner. Comp. 2 Sam. xi. 8. And said David to Uriah; Go down to thy house. And it is generally owned, that *Aph hi*, the first words of the devil which are here recorded, is never put in the beginning of a speech; and that some words of the tempter did go before these. I conceive, then, the holy text itself intimates to us, that the devil in the serpent spoke to the woman to this purpose. ‘What can be the design of God in this? How is it, that when every wild beast of the field hath a covering put upon it by his own hand, though they do withal look downward; yet ye are naked, and that in an erect posture, in the which there is a shameful indecency, that ye would manifestly see if your eyes were opened: Then, in the next place, How is it, that, whereas they are at full liberty, in the open fields, ranging up and down at their pleasure, eating freely whatever is before them, ye are under a notable restraint as to your food, that ye may not eat of any tree of the garden?’ Thus food and raiment were early snares to mankind.

Ver. 2. “And the woman said unto the serpent: of the fruit of the trees of the garden, we may eat.” Thus she repels this temptation, directly contradicting what Satan advanced concerning the restraint laid on them as to their food: and she also had repelled the other, continuing unashamed of her nakedness.

Ver. 3. “But of the fruit of the tree which [is] in the midst of the garden.” This part of the woman’s answer is elliptical: and the ellipsis is of that sort, which is caused by horror arising from the subject mentioned, q. d. “But of the fruit of the tree which [is] in midst of the garden! Supply, for the sense, we may not eat, of it ’tis said, lest ye die.” The last member of this verse, by the pointing, refers to both the preceding: and that points us to the latter part of the words understood, as the foregoing words, to the former part of them, “God has said, Ye shall not eat, of it; and shall not touch on it, viz. the fruit of the forbidden tree.” They were forbidden, not only to eat of it, but even to touch it at all, though never so lightly. From these words, directed to a plurality of persons, it appears that God repeated, in the hearing of Adam and Eve together, the law concerning the forbidden fruit, together with the grant of the fruit of the rest of the trees of the Garden; and consequently, that Eve had the revelation of the divine will and pleasure, in this matter, from the mouth of God himself. And the repetition of this law and grant, which were first given to Adam alone, chap. ii. 16, 17. seems to have been made at the solemnity of God’s bringing in the woman to the man: for it natively takes place, in connection with

2. Men are tempters to one another. Satan so prevails with them, as to act his part one against another. Sometimes they set themselves to drive others into sin by force, Acts xxvi. 11. sometimes gently to draw them into it, Gen. xxxix. 7. And Satan gets

chap. i. 29.—Lest ye die. These words import no doubting, being the Lord's own words repeated by Eve.

Ver. 4. "And the serpent said unto the woman: Ye shall not dying, die, i. e. Ye shall not at all die." Satan flatly contradicts the divine threatening; and that with an air of great confidence, for the stop between these two words is emphatic. That this is the sense of the phrase, appears from Psal. xlix. 8-7th, He cannot redeeming redeem, i. e. He cannot at all, or by any means, redeem. The negative here doth primarily and directly affect but one of the verbs, as Exod. v. 23. and xxxix. 7. In the phrase respecting the certainty of the thing, it affects them both in conjunction equally, as Jer. xxxviii. 15. Will ye not, putting me to death put me to death, i. e. surely put me to death.

Ver. 5. But God he knoweth, viz. very well. Compare the last clause of this verse. Satan pretends to open up the mystery of the restraint put upon man, as to the fruit of the forbidden tree. "That in the day of your eating of it; then they shall be opened, viz. your eyes, q. d. Your eyes are now shut to the shameful indecency of your nakedness;" but if once ye eat of that fruit, it will open your eyes, make you so sharp-sighted, that ye shall clearly see the truth of what I say. And therefore it is, ye are forbidden to meddle with it; that ye may still be kept in a mist. Thus Satan chains together the two temptations, ver. 1. and so makes an attack with both at once. And thus, from the beginning, he sported himself with his deceivings, the cheats put upon man, by him. "And ye shall be as God, as God himself, appears from verse 21; whereas now ye are in some respect worse than the wild beasts. Knowing, of good and evil;" singularly skilful and expert in the matter. Thus the tempter promiseth, from the opening of their eyes by eating of the fruit, a vast penetration as to good and ill, q. d. Not only shall ye know the particular, which I see you are now ignorant of, viz. the shameful indecency of your nakedness; but your knowledge will be universally improved, and that to a pitch.

Ver. 6. "And the woman saw, that good was the tree for meat, and that lovely that [tree was] to the eyes: She saw it pleasant to the eyes, and her heart began to entertain a hankering after it. The demonstrative that is emphatic; and is here used to point out that fatal tree, to the minds of her posterity. An affection it put for a thing very much to be affected, the abstract for the concrete. The manner of expression, the course of words being precipitated, represents lively the infernal fire now flaming in the woman's breast. And [that] the tree [was] desirable, for to afford wit; that is to make them knowing of good and evil, ver. 5. singularly skilful and expert in those matters. Thus the tempter was believed, and his lies received for truth. "And she took [some] of its fruit, and ate [it.]" Observe here the degrees of the woman's yielding to the temptation. (1.) Her mind and understanding went off by unbelief: she saw and judged the tree to be good for meat, though it had no word of divine appointment for that end, but on the contrary was forbidden as deadly. [2.] Her affection towards it riseth, and she hankers after it. (3.) She is inflamed with the desire of it. (4.) She pulls it with her hand, and eats it with her mouth. "And she gave also to her husband, with her, and he ate." Not, she gave to her husband with her, as if he had been present with her, in her encounter with the

not only wicked men, but many times godly men, yoked to this his tempting work, as in the case of Peter, Matth. xvi. 22, 23.

3. The lusts of the heart are temptations to all, Jam. i. 14. This is the most dangerous enemy, as being within. These are Satan's

serpent; no, Satan managed the matter more artfully: but, she gave to her husband, [to eat] with her, she plucked off so much of the fruit, as served her to eat, for the time while she was at the tree; and not only so, but she came eating unto her husband, and gave him also of it, to eat with her: and he ate with her accordingly. The word also is here emphatical; for in giving it to him, the deadly morsel was given to all mankind, the covenant being made with him, before the woman was in being, chap. ii. 16.

Ver. 7. Then were opened, the eyes of them both, viz. to see what they never saw, nor could have seen, before, namely, the shameful of their nakedness: and so were Satan's deceitful words, ver. 5. accomplished. And they knew, they knew, i. e. they knew, alas! they knew to sad experience. That nakedness, (i. e. stark naked) they [were.] The abstract for the concrete in the superlative degree. They saw their nakedness most shameful and indecent, and that they were greatly in need of a covering.

Ver. 8. "And they heard, even the voice of Jehovah God, walking in the garden, i. e. the voice walking: for so the words are by the pointing constructed. This voice which they heard walking, was the Word, the eternal Son of God, now entering upon the execution of the Mediatory office, and coming to discover the eternal counsel concerning the salvation of sinners.—At the wind of the day, i. e. in the cool of the day, when the sun declining, there was a breeze of wind, which would quickly let the guilty couple see the insufficiency of their fig-leaf coverings, for hiding their nakedness. The Hebrew text mentions three parts of the artificial day, one of which is called the blowing of the day, Cant. ii. 17; another the warm of the day, Gen. xviii. 1; a third, here, the wind of the day. The first is the morning, as appears from the text wherein it is mentioned: the second from morning to noon, and as long after it as before: the third from thence to the end of the day, otherwise called the space between the two evenings, Exod. xii. 6; i. e. between three and six of the clock in the afternoon.—And the man hid himself, and his wife [hid herself], for so the pointing shews the words to be constructed. The guilty couple, at hearing the sound of the Voice walking in the garden, ran asunder, he one way, she another, and hid themselves in different places, not together. From the face of Jehovah God: i. e. from the *Schechinah*, the visible sign of the divine presence, the habitation of the divine majesty, from whence they were to have solemn communion with him.—In midst of tree of the garden. In some groves or other, some places where the trees were thick about them. The divine presence, which before was the joy of their hearts, was now become a terror to them, being guilty.

[Extracts from the notes on ver. 9.—14. must be omitted for want of room].

Ver. 15. And I will set enmity; between thee, and between this woman, viz. Eve, called the woman all along hitherto, and now standing as a criminal before the Judge, together with the serpent. And this looks to the friendship between that woman and the serpent, in their joining together, to the dishonour of God, and the ruin of mankind. *q. d.* And whereas you and this woman did conspire to violate my law, and to ruin this man, I will settle an enmity, a lasting enmity, between you, for all time coming. And this is a promise of efficacious grace, to convert and bring the woman to repentance, so that she should mortally hate, and seek the destruction of, the power

trustees, which effectually lead us off the road, and rob us of our purity. They are deceitful lusts; and as the heart of man is furnished with them, it is deceitful above all things, Jer. xvii. 9.

*Thirdly*, The bait wherewith the hook of temptation is busked.

and works of the devil, in herself and others.—And between thy seed, and between her seed: understand, I will set enmity: therefore these words are in a clause by themselves, as being equally constructed with the clause concerning the woman, and the clause concerning her seed: which shews even the gracious woman's utter inability to convey that enmity into her seed, and an equal necessity of efficacious grace for that end, to them, as well as to her. Hereby it was secured, that this enmity should not die with that woman, but that it should be propagated from generation to generation; the Lord himself still setting this enmity against the devil, into the heart of the woman's seed, to the end of the world. It is manifest that the serpent, the devil, can have no seed, but by imitation only: but the woman was capable of having a seed two ways, viz. (1.) By imitation. (2.) By generation of her body. Now, the woman's seed here mentioned is opposed to the serpent's seed: and the serpent's seed is the devil's angels, and wicked men, called his seed in respect of their imitation of him. Therefore the woman's seed is believers in Christ, called her seed, not in respect of natural generation, for the holy enmity, the enmity against the serpent and his seed, goes not so wide as that; but in respect of imitation, as followers of her faith: for the holy enmity is of equal latitude with that imitation; all and every one who become her seed, by believing as she did, being thereupon blessed with true (evangelical) repentance, according to the promise of the Lord's setting the enmity in the woman's seed. And in this respect Adam himself was one of her seed; in testimony whereof, he called her the mother of all living. Thus the believing Gentiles are Abraham's seed, to wit, by imitation, being followers of his faith. All this is agreeable to the scripture phraseology, in which one who is first in any thing, leading the way which others follow, is called the father of them, chap. iv. 20, 21.—That shall bruise away (to) thee the head; i. e. bruise away thy head, as a thing that is bruised into so very minute particles, that it flies away, to be seen no more. That shall do it, viz. the woman's seed: not, her seed by imitation, opposed to the serpent's seed; but her seed by generation of her body, opposed to the serpent himself. And that is the man Christ Jesus only. He is the seed of the woman in a proper sense, yea, in the strictest propriety: and he only is so; all other men being the seed of men. Believers only are the woman's seed, mentioned in the foregoing hemistich, and not Christ: for they alone are the seed in which the enmity is set. Jesus Christ being the speaker, ver. 8. is the party who sets the enmity; not the serpent and his seed, for their enmity is not from God; but in the woman, and her seed there mentioned: but he is none of those in whom the enmity is set; for the setting of the enmity being an introducing of a hatred, which was not before in the subject, it cannot agree to him. But he is the woman's seed here meant, and he alone; for the bruising away of the serpent's head can agree to none other but him. The head of the serpent, is that which holds together the venom, in its deadly killing efficacy: and as long as it is hale, the serpent can kill with his venom. Now, according to the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 56. the strength of sin is the law. Wherefore the bruising away of the serpent's head, is the abolishing of the law as a covenant of works, armed with the curse and threatening of eternal death, in respect of the woman and her seed by imitation; i. e. believers. This is a work competent to Christ only: and he did it, by satisfying the law fully,



This is always some seeming good, if it were but the satisfying of a lust or a humour. In drawing or alluring temptations, the bait is some seeming good to be got. Thus was the present world to Demas, and the thirty pieces of silver to Judas. In driving tempta-

in their room and stead. Hereby he disarmed it of its curse, and as it were grinded to powder the stones, on which the ministration of death was engraven, as to the woman and her believing seed : though as to others it still remains in its full force. Now, the serpent's head being bruised away, his venom is destroyed, and he can kill no more ; as when a cup is bruised, the liquor in it perisbeth. Sin is the serpentine venom, most deadly, therefore, metonymically called the head, Deut. xxxii. 33. Poison of dragons, [is] their wine : and head of asps, cruel, i. e. venom of asps, (the containing being put for the contained), cruel venom, that is deadly and killing. So Jesus Christ bruising away the serpent's head, by his full satisfaction made to the law, sin is destroyed ; and sin being destroyed, death is abolished ; and death being abolished, the power of the devil is entirely ruined. The enemies mentioned in the first hemistich, are the serpent, and his seed, on the one side ; the woman and her believing seed, on the other. An unequal match ! How then shall the victory fall to the side of the latter ! Why, an eminent One, the seed of the woman by generation of her body, as his brethren are by imitation of her faith, shall be more than match for the serpent, and all his power, and quite destroy it : so shall the woman and her believing seed be more than conquerors through him. For he shall bruise away the serpent's head. Thus the woman's seed is taken collectively, in the first hemistich, but here individually : and this agreeable to the phraseology of the Holy Ghost elsewhere, chap. xxvi. 4. ' And I will make to increase even thy seed \* \* \* ; and they shall bless themselves in thy seed ; all, nations of the earth.' The former is meant of the collective body of Isaac's seed, the latter of Christ alone. So chap. xxii. 17, 18, and xxviii. 14. Thus, 2 Sam. vii. 12. ' I will set up even thy seed after thee \* \* \* 13. That shall build a house, for my name.' To wit, Solomon, the seed of David by way of eminency. And thou shalt bruise away [to] him the heel, i. e. bruise away his heel, that is, his body in the likeness of sinful flesh, with which he trod on earth, liable to infirmities and death. Here is a vehement encounter, bruising on both sides. But that seed of the woman bruises the serpent's head, where the bruise is deadly ; the serpent bruises not his head, but his heel, where the bruise is not deadly. This manner of expression looks to what goes before, touching the sin and punishment of the old serpent. And the heat of this battle was on the cross. Upon that tree that seed of the woman in an erect posture, and naked, (Heb. xii. 2), bruised the head of the serpent, and bruised it away, fully satisfying the demands of the law, John xix. 30 ; destroying sin, Rom. vi. 6 ; and abolishing death, 2 Tim. i. 10 ; while the serpent, doomed to go upon the belly, and incapable to reach his head, bruised and bruised away his heel, bringing his mortal body to the dust of death, to the darkness of the grave, never to be seen more, liable to death or infirmity, Rom. vi. 9. Here ends a closed section. The woman believes the promise : the enmity, set in by efficacious grace, commenceth : and the serpent, in virtue of the curse pronounced upon him, is hurried away from the place of this judgment. But the judgment is not yet over, though the judgment of death is, which the serpent carries away upon him.

[Extracts from the notes on ver. 16—19. must also be omitted for want of room.]

Ver. 20. ' And the man called the name of his wife, Eve.' The name given her at first, was taken from man, she being called woman ; or manness, chap. ii. 23 ; for then

tions, the bait is some seeming good to be kept, by preventing evil, as those spoke of, Matth. xiii. 21. who, 'when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by are offended.' And it is no small advantage in temptation, to see through the bait,

Adam considered her chiefly as a wife, as one made after his own likeness. But the new name he gave her, after the awful solemnity before described, is taken from life; for then he eyed her chiefly as a mother, the mother of the living and life-giving seed. And by his naming her so, he declared his faith of the promise. And thus by the same method, that God reconciled man to himself, he reconciled the man and the wife, namely, through that promised seed.—When, she was, mother of all living, namely of the life-giving seed and his brethren, who shall live for ever. She was mother of all these when she got this name; but of no other. She had been solemnly declared mother of the Messias, the seed that shall bruise away the serpent's head; and had actually commenced mother of all that should believe in him, by believing first herself. And no other seed of her's has been as yet mentioned, as her seed, but what should be at enmity with the serpent the devil. And what comfort could it have been either to Adam or her, that she was to be the mother of others also: since to them she was to be the mother of death, rather than of life?

Ver. 21. "And Jehovah God made, to Adam and to his wife, coats of skin, and caused them to put [them] on." Coats of skin are skin-coats, or coats made of skin. These skin coats were a humbling memorial to our first parents, of the first spring of their ruin. Satan, by his subtilty, induced them to accuse God, of dealing better by the beasts of the field, than by them, in that these were covered, but they were left naked. Now they are covered like them; and instead of being like God, are like beasts. Thus the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways. I make no question but this clothing of Adam and Eve, was a typical action. Sacrifices were offered by Abel, chap. iv. 4. And if by Abel, then by Adam too before him, from whom he learned it. And being an acceptable piece of service to God, they behoved to be of divine institution, which we can no where find, if not in this text. The skins of the sacrifices, by the law of Moses, were given to the priests, Lev. vii. 8: the great promise of Christ to come, which was all along confirmed by sacrifices, was now made: the curse was now laid on the beasts in man's stead; and so they were fitted to be made sacrifices, as God himself should be pleased to design the kinds of them, to be so used: God spake to Noah, before the flood, concerning clean and unclean beasts, as a distinction well known to him, chap. vii. 2. being handed down from Adam; in token whereof, it is marked, that Abel's sacrifice was of the flock, viz. sheep or goats, which were clean beasts: it was after this that access to the tree of life, a seal of the first covenant, was blocked up, ver. 24; it was at the wind of the day, ver. 8. that these things were transacted; the same time of the day, at which Christ in the fulness of time, died a real sacrifice for sin. From all which one may reasonably conclude, that the promise, the new covenant, being promulgated, and by our first parents believed and embraced, was instantly, by divine appointment, confirmed and sealed by sacrifice; by which means the tree of life was superseded, as the passover, by the institution and administration of the Lord's supper; and the girdle of fig-leaves, by the skin-coats; and Christ was typically slain from the foundation of the world, (Rev. xiii. 8.), which is the date of the events of this open section, Gen. ii. 4; and that these beasts of whose skins the coats were made, were clean beasts, which, Adam and Eve having first laid their hands upon the heads of them, were offered in sacrifice, by Adam as the

that it is but a bait to deceive. For so one will perceive, that it will not quit the cost, that by the bargain they will never better their condition, Matth. xvi. 26. 'For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'

priest, to whom accordingly the skins were given, for his own use, and the use of his wife, whose recourse was to be to him, for what she wanted. Thus these skin-coats signified the righteousness of Christ; by which our spiritual nakedness is covered, we are defended from the wrath of God; and adorned in his sight, Isa. lxi. 10. God himself made these coats; for it is the righteousness of God, Rom. iii. 22. and they were put on for benefit by them: for it is the righteousness of God, by faith of Jesus Christ, *ibid.* They were made to the man and his wife; for it is unto all, *ib.* They were actually clothed with them, had them on them; for it is upon all them that believe, *ib.* even Eve, as well as Adam; for there is no difference, *ib.* And in this matter, there is neither male nor female, they are all one in Christ Jesus, Gal. iii. 28. The same God who made them, caused the man and his wife to put them on; for as the righteousness itself is God's free gift, so is faith also, by which it is put on and applied, Eph. ii. 8. In these coats Adam and Eve appeared like the beasts whose skins they wore: and they who have on them the righteousness of Christ, appear in some measure like him, in holiness of life, walking as he also walked, 1 John ii. 6. Thus the coats of skin were garments of honour [put] upon their flesh, as Oockelos paraphrases the text. —To this occasion also, I would refer the original eating of flesh, as brought in by sacrificing. This agrees best with the vanity and bondage (*φθοράς*) of corruption (or destruction), which the creature was unwillingly made subject to, through the fall of man, Rom. viii. 20, 21. the chief branch of which bondage Peter expresseth, 2 Pet. ii. 12. brute beasts made (*εἰς φθογὰν*) for destruction. So man's new diet would be of use to keep him in mind, that it was by eating of the flesh, and drinking of the blood, of the great sacrifice, he was to have life, now that the first covenant was broken. Here ends this open section, bearing an enlargement of the history of the three last days of the creation, wherein there is a very particular account of man's creation, on the sixth day, the making of the woman, their fall and their restoration, all in a continued connection. Those who cannot believe that so many various events, as are here related from chap. ii. 7. were crowded within the compass of one day, may consider the words of the Holy Ghost, Psal. xlix. 13-12ths. Adam in honour could not night, without receding from the propriety of the expression, till they have otherwise proved the necessity of so doing. And withal they may consider the variety of events, relative to the second Adam's death, recorded Luke xxii. 66. to the end, chap. xxiii. 1,—33. and elsewhere; and what time these events took place. There one finds, the sanhedrim is convened; Christ is examined and condemned before them; they lead him to Pilate; he holds a court; Christ is accused, and answers for himself before him; Pilate sticks, and will not go forward so cleverly as the Jews would have him; he removes the cause to Herod's court; they had about a mile to go to Herod, and Christ appears before him; he is questioned by him in many words, vehemently accused, mocked, arrayed in a gorgeous robe, and sent back to Pilate again; Pilate convenes the chief priests, the rulers, and the people; there is a mighty struggle between Pilate and them, about him, the former to save him, the latter to get him condemned to the cross; Pilate's wife sends to him; Jesus is scourged; John xix. 1. led by the soldiers into the common hall; they put on him a scarlet robe, Matth. xxvii. 27, 28. they plate a crown of thorns, and put on his head, John xix. 2. Christ is brought out again and shewn to the chief priests, as a spectacle of commiseration, by

*Fourthly*, The mischievous design. The design of the great tempter, and the design of the thing, is always the ruin of the party, by falling into sin, and misery by sin. They are snares and traps for ruin, 1 Cor. x. 12. and land men in the bottomless pit.

Pilate, ver. 5. Pilate prevails not, goes in again into the judgment-hall, examines him anew, ver. 9,—12. Jesus is brought thence also, and Pilate sits down in a place called the Pavement, and there has a new encounter with the Jews, ver. 13,—15. Pilate washeth his hands, declares the pannel innocent, Matth. xxvii. 24. and then sentenceth him to die; then they lead him out of the city to Calvary, and crucify him there: All these things were done in the space of half a day, men being the immediate actors in them: for Christ was crucified about twelve o'clock, and hung upon the cross more than three hours, Luke xxiii. 44,—46.

Ver. 22. And Jehovah God said; Behold the man (who) was as one of us, viz. being made after our image, chap. i. 26, 27. the image of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which is one, and but one in the blessed Threc; so that he was, as it were, a fourth, a God upon earth, partaking of that image: so groundless was the temptation, ver. 5. Ye shall be as God. The plurality here mentioned cannot be God and angels, for the image of God and angels is not one, but two vastly different; neither was man made after the image of angels, but of God himself, chap. i. 26, 27. Therefore not angels, but the three persons of the ever-blessed Trinity, are here meant. That there is here an ellipsis of the relative, appears from the pointing, which determines the word, the man to be the accusative after behold, not the nominative before was: and the pointing being observed, our language bears the ellipsis, as well as the Hebrew. Comp. Lam. iii. 1. I (am) the man, hath seen affliction. Psal lii. 9-7ths. Behold the man; would not, &c. i. e. the man [that], &c. as our translators rightly supply it in both these texts. For knowing, good and evil, q. d. and particularly was as one of us, in the point of knowing good and ill; knowing ill as we know it, though not experimentally as now he does. "And now lest he should put forth his hand; and take also of the tree of life; and eat, that he may live for ever." This verse is so far from being an irony, that it is a most pathetic lamentation of the Mediator over fallen man, with a most affectionate concern to prevent a second ruin. And in token hereof, the sentence is imperfect; something is suppressed, and stopt as by a sob; as when David's grief swelling, cut short his expression, Psal. vi. 4. 3ds. The same is to be observed in his lamentation over Jerusalem, in the days of his flesh, when he wept over that city, Luke xix. 41, 42. The sense of the whole is, q. d. "Behold the man." What a spectacle of commiseration is he now, who not long ago was as one of us, with our image in perfection upon him; who was as one of us, particularly for knowing of good and ill, knowing the same as we know them, yet could not be content with that, but would needs otherwise be as God, knowing of good and ill; and for that end put forth his hand, and ate of the forbidden tree: how much more now that he is fallen, will he entertain the thought of making himself proof against dying, slight his own mercy, thinking to keep himself in this miserable life? and for that foolish end, eat of the tree of life, with the same success with which he did of the tree of knowledge, and by eating of it reject the covenant of grace he hath embraced, and, by betaking himself to the seal of the covenant of works, run back to that covenant where there is no life for him now? So then, lest he put forth his hand again; and take also, of the tree of life, as he took of the tree of knowledge; and eat of the former, with a design thereby to render himself immortal, as he did eat of the latter, that he



SECONDLY, What is meant by leading us into temptation? It is holy wise providence so ordering matters about us as we are attacked with temptation to sin, brought upon the stage to fight with temptations, so as we may give a proof of ourselves. Here consider,

might be as God, knowing of good and ill, and so reject the new covenant, by eating of this tree, as he broke the first covenant by eating of the other tree, [I must, I will set him away out of paradise], to prevent his being ruined a second time.

Ver. 23. "And Jehovah God, did set him away from the garden of Eden;" i. e. obliged him to remove out of the garden. That no ignominy nor violence is imported in this word, whatever may be in some things, of which it is used, appears in that it is the word Moses constantly makes use of, in the name of God, to Pharaoh, in favour of the Israelites, Exod. iv. 23. v. 1. vii. 26. al. viii. 1. viii. 16. al. 20—For to dress even the ground; what he was taken away from, i. e. from whence he was taken away. Instead of dressing the garden, chap. ii. 15. which was one inclosed plat of ground, he is set to dress the ground, q. d. the ground the ground, i. e. the ground in several plats here and there. The construction is, to dress the ground; [to dress] what (i. e. that which) he was taken away from. So he was sent back to the place, where he was formed, chap. ii. 7. From thence the Lord brought him in unto paradise, and there made the covenant with him, and now that he had broken that covenant, he is sent back to the place whence he came; there to dress the ground, and as it were to dig his own grave; until he should return to that ground, from whence he had been taken away.

Ver. 24. So he quite turned out, even the man. The Lord set him away, ver. 23. So he quite turned him out of paradise, for good and all, never to come back again. As this is the genuine notion of the word, so here it is most agreeable to the pathetic lamentation, and affectionate concern shewn for man, ver. 22. whereof this was the effect. And since this word in Pihel denotes no violence it can far less import any such thing in Kal. It is not more generally, than justly observed, that these two words rendered setting away, and turning out, are terms used in the law of divorce. The law, as the covenant of works, was, according to the scripture, the first husband, Rom. vii. Paradise was the house of that husband. But our first parents having once sinned, were no more able to live with the first husband: So the Son of God, as supreme Lord, wrote the divorce, dissolved the relation, upon most weighty grounds, and turned them out of its house. And never was there a divorce and turning out so great a mercy to any poor broken hearted woman, who could have no comfortable life with her husband, as this was to Adam and Eve in their lapsed state, and will be to all who imitate their faith in Jesus Christ, the second Husband. And he made to inhabit on the east to the garden of Eden, i. e. east in respect of the garden. Now, the garden was on the east part of Eden, chap. ii. 8. And the dwelling of the cherubims here assigned them, was east in respect of the garden. Therefore this dwelling-place was without Eden, or at least in the outmost part of Eden, to the east. And even the flame of the sword, [the sword] that turned itself. Flame of the sword is a flame like a sword, and therefore a real flame, but the sword not real. For to keep; even the way of the tree of life, i. e. he did this, that thereby he might keep the way leading to the tree, or trees, of life; that man might not come upon that way: for the two last clauses are, by the pointing, balanced with the two first of this hemistich. The pointing of the first word of this verse, and the manner of expression used through the whole, agreeing to the native effect of that pointing, persuade me, that the cherubims

How the Lord leads men into temptation; and how it consists with his holiness so to lead them.

1. How the Lord leads men into temptation. He does so only two ways.

(1.) By a providential placing them in such circumstances, as the heart may take occasion of sin from them. Thus innocent Adam was led into temptation, being placed within reach of the forbidden

and the fiery sword were within the garden before this time, as well as the man was: and that he being turned out, they were turned out too in mercy to him. For the first word of the verse, being by a distinctive separated from the second word, with which it doth undoubtedly agree in construction; that shews it to be constructed, not only with that second word, but also with what follows, since the words themselves will admit the same, q. d. "And he quite turned out even the man: [And he quite turned out] and made to inhabit on the east, the cherubims; and flame, &c." I conceive, then, that Moses here gives us an account of the *Schechinah*, the visible sign of the divine presence, called the glory of Jehovah, or of God, Ezek. x. 4. 19. there represented to be upon the cherubims; in respect of which God is said to dwell between the cherubims, or, as the Holy Ghost phraseth it, to sit the cherubims, Psal. lxxx. 2-1sts: so that the removal of the cherubims was the removal of the *Schechinah*: that the fiery sword was an attendant on the *Schechinah*: that they both were within the garden, while man stood in his integrity: but that man having fallen, could no more enjoy the *Schechinah* there: nevertheless, being reconciled to God through the blood of the new covenant, and set away out of paradise; it was removed too, and the fiery sword after it: and that then the *Schechinah* inhabited, without the garden, on the east, next to the place where the man now was; and the fiery sword between the *Schechinah* and the garden, according to the order of the text; that so man might have access to the former, but no access any more to the latter. Accordingly, Moses speaks of them, not as of things newly appearing, but in the same manner of expression, as of the man, and of the tree of life. It is reasonable to think that the *Schechinah* was in paradise before the fall; man being there in a state of communion with God, and the tabernacle of God being said to be with men in the heavenly paradise, Rev. xxi. 3: and that the fiery sword, attended it there; since man was then in a state of probation, not beyond the hazard of the sword of justice, being capable to sin, and fall under the curse. And the removing of the *Schechinah* from out of the garden, where man sinned, unto another place, upon that occasion, is very agreeable to the method of the divine dispensations in such cases. Now, the *Schechinah* being thus removed out of paradise, together with its attendant the fiery sword; man was effectually kept from returning into it, by the lively majesty of the one, and the terror of the other: for should he have attempted a return, he behoved to have turned his back on the *Schechinah*, and set his face to the fiery sword; they being posted in manner above observed. Moreover, by this means, Adam, and the church in his time, were provided of a gospel-paradise, a place of the world, where was the divine presence, called the face of Jehovah, from which Cain was afterwards banished, chap. iv. 16. And thus was our Lord Jesus Christ, the true *Schechinah*, Col. ii. 9. turned out of the vineyard, Matth. xxi. 39. and made to inhabit in the dust of death, by his burial: whereby all believers in him, are for ever after freed from the law as a covenant of works, Rom. vii. 4. By the connection of events narrated in the text, all this seems to have been done at that time of the day wherein Christ was buried.

fruit; Joseph, by being alone in the house with an adulterous woman, where yet he came fair off; Achan, by seeing the wedge of gold, and having an opportunity to take it, where he fell by it; Peter by being in the High Priest's hall, where he was attacked. It is on this account that afflictions and persecutions are called *temptations*, Jam. i. 2. because there the man is beset with such things as are apt to work on his corruptions, and so to lead him into sin, through fear or hope.

(2.) By permitting Satan or his instruments, to tempt them to sin. God has them in a chain, but sometimes, for holy wise ends, the Lord lets them loose, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. compared with 1 Chron. xxi. 1. They need no positive order; if God do not restrain them, they will fall on with all their might.

2. How it consists with God's holiness to lead men into temptation. This will appear from the consideration of three things.

(1.) God gave man a power to stand against temptation, if he would, Eccl. vii. 29. 'God made man upright.' Thus the stock was put in man's hand, and he is bound still to stand out against it.

(2.) God is debtor to none, either to keep them out of such circumstances, as the heart may not take occasion of sin from thence, or to restrain Satan, or his instruments, from tempting them. Nay, it is just with him so to do, since men often cast themselves unnecessarily upon temptation, and will not be kept back from sin.

(3.) God can bring good out of it, for his own glory, the sinner's profit, or both. Thus Hezekiah and Peter were checked for their pride and vanity, and humbled.

THIRDLY, What is the import of this part of the petition?

1. That we are in danger to be tempted to sin. Temptations are ready for us in this evil world, the devil, the world, and the flesh, are ready to attack us, and break in upon us, if the hedge whereby they are held off were but removed, 1 Pet. v. 8. We walk amidst armed enemies, amongst lions' dens, amidst sparks of fire; were they but let loose, they would set on vigorously.

2. That no temptation can befall us without an over-ruling providence. Though the lion roar, he is in a chain, and cannot set on us, but as he is permitted of God, Job i. 8,—10. He who rules the sea, when the waters thereof do roar, has an over-ruling hand over devils, men and the corruptions of our hearts, that no flood can break out, but where the sluice is opened, he withdrawing the restraint.

3. That when the Lord leads us into temptation, we will be sure of an attack. There is no hope in the mercy of our enemies, no hope that they will let an occasion of fighting us slip. He that goes about seeking his prey, will not pass by it, when it is laid in his

way. We are ready to let advantages against sin and Satan slip, but they will let none slip, which they have against us.

4. That God may justly lead us into temptations, and leave us under the power of them, Psal. lxxxi. 11, 12. How often do we court temptations, and tamper with them, like the fly about the candle till its wings be burnt? How often do we grieve his spirit, and cleave to our idols, over the belly of warnings? What wonder he say, 'Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone?' Hos. iv. 17.

5. That we are not able of ourselves to stand against temptation, but if once we be engaged, we are fair to be foiled, Rom. vii. 23, 24. And so much the more unable are we, that presumption and self-confidence is our ordinary plague in this case. So that there is much need of fear and trembling, when entering into temptation, lest we be overcome.

6. *Lastly*, That it is the duty of all, and the disposition of the people of God, to desire they may be kept from engaging with temptations, as with an enemy too strong for them, Matth. xxvi. 42. 'Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.' It is their souls' desire that God would restrain Satan, 2 Cor. xii. 8; subdue their lusts, Psal. cxix. 133; and over-rule all in this evil world, as they may be kept from the evil of it, John xvii. 15.

I shall conclude this first part of the petition with a few inferences.

*Inf.* 1. Trials and persecutions, though God may bring good out of them, are not to be desired, but the averting of them prayed for. For they are sharp temptations to sin, wherein though God is much honoured by some, he is much dishonoured by many, Matth. xiii. 21. forecited, compared with Luke viii. 13. 'They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.' And they that desire them are much of the temper of those disciples who would have prayed down fire from heaven, when they knew not what spirit they were of. The desire of them is downright contradictory to this petition; for the language of it is, *Lord, lead us into temptation.*

2. To run into temptation, cannot be from God's Spirit, but from Satan, and a corrupt, blind, and presumptuous heart. For it is a running into that which we should beg of God that he would not lead us into. If a man be called of God into a place where he is beset with temptations, he may look for grace to be kept up against them, because he is in God's way, and where he has his call to be, Psal. xci. 11. 'For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways,' See 1 Kings xviii. 3. Obadiah was the governor of the house of Ahab, an idolatrous prince. But it is observed



of him, that 'he feared the Lord greatly,' even in such a corrupt court. But where a man steps in among temptations without a call from God, he cannot expect such grace to be vouchsafed him. This rashness, self-confidence, and curiosity has cost dear to many.

3. 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation,' Matth. xxvi. 41. Praying without watching is a tempting of God: watching without praying is a contempt of God and his grace. There is need to watch, for our enemies are ever lying at the catch, and they are ready to steal a dint of us when we are not aware; and we cannot expect God's help, but when we are in the way of duty. There is need to pray; for watch as we will, our enemies are too strong for us, if the Lord himself do not second us. We must have new supplies of grace, from the grace in Christ Jesus, if we would stand. What then God has joined, put not ye asunder.

The SECOND part of this petition is for assisting grace, *But deliver us from evil.* Here I shall shew,

1. What is meant by *evil*.

2. What by *deliverance* from it.

3. What is the import of this part of the petition.

*First*, What is meant by *evil*? By *evil* is meant,

1. Sin, which is the greatest of evils, the worst of evils, and the cause of all other evils, Amos v. 15. 'Hate the evil.' There is no good in sin, it is an only evil. What makes the devil evil, the world evil, and the heart evil, but sin? Strip them of sin, and there would be no evil in them.

2. Temptation to sin, or whatsoever draws the soul to sin; that is, 'the evil of the world,' John xvii. 15. The soul-ruining snare that is in any thing, is the evil of it. For as sin is evil, so every thing that has a native tendency to draw into sin is evil.

*Secondly*, What is meant by *deliverance from evil*? It stands in two things.

1. To be brought out of it, by way of recovery when fallen into it, Psal. li. 12. Temptation may get the child of God down, his foot may be fast in the snare, and he needs an omnipotent hand to rid him out of Satan's net.

2. To be kept from it, that he fall not into it again. The snares are so many, that it is hard to stand; there is need of a divine power to keep back the sinner's soul from the pit of sin, Jude 14. to take part with him when engaged with a temptation.

*Thirdly*, What is the import of this part of the petition? We may take it up in these three things.

1. There is no escaping of temptation, in greater or lesser measure, while we are in this world. Though we should watch ever so

narrowly, so as not to cast ourselves into temptation; though by no special providence we be led into temptation, yet the heart within is so full of corruption, the world without is so full of snares, and Satan goes so constantly about, that we are in danger every where, and no where safe.

In prosperity we are apt to be proud, vain, carnal, secure; to forget God, and grow tasteless of heavenly things, &c. In adversity, we are impatient, and discontented, and fretting, and dead to good things, Psal. cxix. 107. In company we are apt to be infected, or to infect others; and in solitude to become a prey to the tempter. House nor field, bed nor board, civil duties nor religious duties, are not such, but temptations will haunt us at them.

2. God's children would fain be delivered from evil, from sin and temptation to it, Rom. vii. 24. 'O wretched man that I am!' says Paul, 'who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' The new nature in them makes them long and groan for it, as ever the captive exile longs for deliverance from captivity. And there is a threefold deliverance which their souls desire here.

(1.) A deliverance in temptation, that God would powerfully support and enable them to stand in the hour of temptation, 2 Cor. xii. 8; that when they are engaged in the battle with Satan, the world, and the flesh, the Lord himself would come in for their rescue. They see they are not man enough for their enemies; and they would fain have Heaven to interpose, and cast the balance of victory to their side.

(2.) A deliverance under temptation, Psal. li. 8. Sometimes they are trod under foot by their lusts and passions: they are lying in the mire, and cannot get out. But they look again towards the Lord, as Jonah out of the whale's belly, that he would afford them his helping hand, and so sanctify their lot to them, as all may work for their good.

(3.) A deliverance completely from all sin, and temptation to it, Rom. vii. 24. forecited. And thus the petitions of this prayer end with a longing cry for perfect freedom from sin in another world. And this good the Lord brings out of the hard handling which his people get there, that thereby they are made to long for heaven.

3. They believe that God, and he only can deliver them from evil. Without this faith they could not put up this petition; but the belief of the power and willingness of God to grant this deliverance to his people, daily excites them to cry unto him, *Deliver us from evil.*

I shall conclude this part of the sixth petition with a few inferences.

*Inf.* 1. Sinning is more terrible than suffering, in the eyes of the children of God. They pray to be delivered from sin absolutely, at any rate, cost what it will. And they have good reason for it; for there is more evil in the least sin than in the greatest suffering. In sinning we are conformed to the devil, but in suffering to Jesus Christ. Let us then cry earnestly to God, that he may *deliver us from evil*.

2. It is a black mark of one that belongs not to God, when there is no parting betwixt him and his lusts. The word and providence works to the delivering the man from his sin, but he will not part with it; he is not content to let it go. It is not the spot of God's children.

3. A careless, fearless way of going through the world, without daily care of being ensnared in sin, is an evidence that the man is at home, and is not travelling Zion-ward. For those who are going through this world as a wilderness, are walking with fear and trembling through it, still saying, Lord, *lead us not into temptation*.

4. *Lastly*, It is in the nature of all God's children, to desire to be home. *Our Father which art in heaven,—deliver us from evil*. They know that this will never be completely and fully answered till they be beyond the clouds: but from their hearts they desire it. Let us evidence ourselves to be the children of God, by our ardent desires for this complete deliverance from sin.



#### THE CONCLUSION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 13.—*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.*

WE come now to the conclusion of the Lord's prayer, which teacheth us, 'to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him. And in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen.'

In this conclusion three things are to be considered.

I. The connection thereof with the petitions.

II. The concluding sentence.

III. The concluding word.

IV. I shall deduce some inferences.

I. Let us consider the connection of this conclusion with the petitions in the particle *for*: which shews it to contain arguments to be

used in prayer for hearing: *q. d.* Lord, hear us, for the kingdom is thine, the power is thine, and the glory is thine; and teaches us, that when we pray, we should plead and pray, press our prayers, and enforce our petitions, with arguments and reasons, to be heard. I shall shew you,

1. The truth of it.
2. The reason of it.

*First*, I shall shew you the truth of this pleading. And that it is so, appears from,

1. The Lord himself's teaching us so to do, which shews it to be acceptable to him, since he himself directs us to it. We have the Mediator's direction for it in this pattern of prayer, petition 5. and conclusion. See also Luke xi. 5,—9. And the more of the Spirit that one has in prayer, he will have his mouth the more filled with arguments.

2. The practice of the saints. See how Moses pleads and reasons with God, Exod. xxxii. 11,—13. 'Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians say, for mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of, will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.' See also how Asa pleads, 2 Chron. xiv. 11. 'Lord it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power; help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude; O Lord, thou art our God, let not man prevail against thee.' Job thought it a good way of praying, and longed to be at it, Job xxiii. 4. 'I would fill my mouth with arguments,' says he. The woman of Canaan recovered her arguments, when they seemed to be answered, Matth. xv. 22,—27. 'Have mercy on me,' says she, 'O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.'



3. The nature of the thing. In prayer men are upon business of the greatest weight, and utmost necessity, and should be in deep earnest in it; and ordinarily the Lord does not answer but to importunity. Is it not very natural in such a case to plead? Yea, what case can men be in that requires more importunate pleading, than that which relates to God's glory, and their everlasting felicity?

*Secondly*, I come to shew the reason of this pleading, why we should do so.

1. It is not to move, persuade, or bring over the Lord, to give us what we desire. Force of argument may prevail with man to change his mind, but the unchangeable God cannot be turned about with any reason or thing whatsoever. For 'with him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,' Jam. i. 17. 'He is in one mind, and who can turn him?' Job xxiii. 13.

2. But it is to exercise and strengthen our own praying graces, faith and fervency, &c. So that the effect of the pleading is on ourselves, not on God, though the consequent of it, by the divine purpose, is prevailing in prayer. It is true, the design of the pleading person is not on himself, though the effect is; neither ought it to be upon God, to move him, but upon the thing itself, to lay it out before the Lord, in the necessity and reasonableness of it. It is as if a hungry child should apply to his father for bread and the father should say, 'Child, wherefore should I give you bread?' and thereupon the child should say, 'Alas! I am pained with hunger, and who will give it me if you refuse? will it not be a reflection on your name, to say your children faint for lack of bread?' While the child pleads thus, the tear strikes in his eye, and his earnestness increases: whereupon he is answered. Here it is evident, that the effect of the pleading is not on the father; it would be but a child's weakness to think that the father is overcome with his arguments, though the consequent of the pleading is the child's getting bread: But the effect of it is plainly on the child himself, though the child designs it not so: And suppose the child to have so much wit, as to know that his arguments are not needed to persuade his father, his design of pleading in that case is on the thing itself, to hold out the necessity and reasonableness of it.

II. Let us consider the concluding sentence, *Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever*. Here I shall shew,

1. What is meant by *the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever*.

2. What is the import of this sentence.

FIRST, I am to shew what is meant by *the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever*.

1. By the *kingdom* is meant, not the kingdom of grace, nor the kingdom of glory either; but God's essential kingdom, his universal sovereignty over all persons and all things whatsoever.

2. The *power* is not authority whereby God may do, but the ability whereby he can do what he will, in that kingdom.

3. The *glory* is not God's essential glory, but the declarative glory, arising from what he doth in that kingdom, which will shine forth for ever through eternity.

SECONDLY, I am to shew, what is the import of this sentence. It is twofold, praise, and pleading arguments.

*First, Praise.* Hereby we praise him in our prayers, expressing high and honourable thoughts of him: *Thine is the kingdom, &c.* Thus we exalt him above ourselves, and all creatures whatsoever.

1. As the universal and absolute Monarch of all the creation, and the only one, 1 Chron. xxix. 11. 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in heaven and in the earth, is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.' Universal and absolute sovereignty are the flowers of the imperial crown of heaven, and belong to no other. There are many kings on earth, but they are all limited monarchs, and vassals to the King of heaven, who can have no competitor: *Lord, thine is the kingdom.*

2. As the Omnipotent, and only Omnipotent, *ibid.* The power of men and angels is but a shadow of power, weakness in comparison with God's. None of them all are capable to do what they are capable to will. But his power and will are of equal extent.

3. As the chief end of all things, *ibid.* and the only chief end. It is the peculiar prerogative of God to say, 'For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it,' Isa. xlviii. 11. All persons and things are for God, God is for himself; and the glory of all redounds to him, and will do for evermore.

This teaches us, That in our prayers we should praise God, as well as petition him. Praise is a comely mixture in all the parts of divine worship. It is most directly tending to God's honour; and it is the piece of worship that will last longest; when prayers, &c. are laid by in heaven, praise will be there for ever.

*Observe.* This pattern of prayer begins with praise, and ends with it too. For it is necessary, in the entrance, that we have our hearts awed with the divine glory, that so we may be the fitter to pray on: and in the end, that we may carry away high thoughts of God, for the better regulating of our life, in the intervals of duty.

*Secondly,* Let us consider the pleading arguments in prayer: and they are all taken from God himself. *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever.*

*Observ.* This teaches us to take our encouragement from God only in prayer, to draw our arguments from the consideration of what God is. This is a large field to fill our mouths with arguments, and to furnish us with suitable pleas in prayer.

*Quest.* May we not plead with God upon any thing in ourselves?  
*Ans.* (1.) We may not plead upon any worthiness in ourselves or any other creature, Dan. ix. 18. 'We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.' 1 Tim. ii. 5. 'For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.' (2.) Though in our pleading we may bring in both our evil and our good, yet the force of the plea or argument is not to be laid on either of them, but on something in God himself answerable thereto. David, brings in the greatness of his sin, in his plea for pardon; but the stress of the plea lies not there, but on God's own name, to be magnified greatly by the pardon of great sin, Psal. xxv. 11. 'For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity for it is great.' Hezekiah brings in his upright walking in the plea for prolonging his life, Isa. xxxviii. 3. 'Remember now, O Lord,' says he, 'I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.' But the stress of it lay on God's faithfulness in that promise, 1 Kings viii. 25. 'Therefore now, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David, my father, that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me, as thou hast walked before me.'

Now, the plea for hearing, here put in our mouths, is threefold.

1. The kingdom is the Lord's. The stress of the argument from this is, Therefore thou mayest do it, thou hast full authority to grant us whatsoever thou wilt, Matth. xx. 15. 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?'

2. The power is the Lord's. Therefore thou canst do whatsoever we ask, over the belly of all opposition, and however hopeless it be in itself, Eph. iii. 20. 'He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.'

3. The glory is the Lord's. Therefore thou wilt do it, since thou lovest thy glory, and wilt have glory for evermore from answering our petitions, Josh. vii. 9. 'What wilt thou not do unto thy great name?'

III. Let us consider the concluding word, *Amen*. It imports two things. (1.) Our desire to be heard, q. d. so be it, Rev. xxii. 20. 'Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.' And the believer uses this word properly as a testimony of his desire, when by faith he is en-

abled and emboldened to plead with God, that he would fulfil his requests, 2 Chron. xx. 6, 11. (2.) Our confidence and assurance that we shall be heard; q. d. so certainly it shall be, Rev. i. 7. 'Even so Amen.' And the sincere Christian uses the word with great propriety in the conclusion of his prayers, in testimony of his assurance to be heard, when he is by faith emboldened quietly to rest upon the Lord, that he will fulfil the desires of his heart, 2 Chron. xiv. 11.

I conclude all with a very few inferences.

*Inf.* 1. Be fervent and importunate with God in prayer, and set yourselves to plead and pray, as men that are in the deepest earnest about a thing on which their highest interests were suspended, Jam. v. 16. If earnestness and importunity are any where required, here they are highly, nay, absolutely requisite.

2. Let not complaints jostle out praises from your prayers, but still remember that every day affords you as much matter of praise as of request. God's mercies are new every morning; let therefore the sacrifice of praise be a part of the daily sacrifice ye offer unto God. Never bow a knee unto God for supplicating a mercy from him, without praising him for what mercies ye enjoy. This is a very promising way of obtaining the requests ye make at the throne of grace in the confidence of faith.

3. Deeply consider what a God he is with whom you have to do, to fill your mouth with arguments. Pleas in prayer may be fetched, and faith will fetch them, from every divine attribute and perfection; and faith will improve these pleas in such a manner as to procure the good things it applies to the throne for. 'What wilt thou not do to thy great name?' is a standing plea for faith, which can never be rejected. Mercy, holiness, justice, truth, &c. all magnified by the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, will be never-failing pleas in the mouth of the prayer of faith.

4. *Lastly*, Use not Amen superficially at the end of your prayers, but with earnestness and faith. As for those who think it superstition to say *Amen*, they are ignorant of the word of God; and I would recommend to them to consult their Bible and Catechism, in order to cure them of that senseless conceit.

And thus, by the good hand of God upon me, I have finished what I intended by way of illustration of the great doctrines of the Christian religion, with respects to faith and practice, as compendized, from the Holy Scriptures, in our Shorter Catechism. I am sensible of many defects in the prosecution of such a large work; for who is sufficient for these things? but I have endeavoured, according to the measure of grace given unto me, to declare unto you what I am per-



suaded is truth, agreeable to the word of God, the rule and standard of all religious truth. And I would now ask you, What entertainment have ye given to the great and important truths laid before you, from the Lord's word, in the course of these sermons, in which I have been engaged a considerable part of several years? Do ye now believe? Have ye embraced these doctrines with a divine faith, a faith of the operation of God? have ye received the truths into your hearts? and are your hearts moulded into the image of them? Are they become the food and nourishment of your souls, so as ye are made to esteem them more than the food that is necessary for the support of your natural life? Are they written on your hearts, and impressed on your consciences, so as to become an effective principle of new obedience? Is the effect of them the sanctification of your hearts and lives? and is the result of the whole an earnest desire to know the truth more fully and clearly, and to regulate every motion and desire of your hearts, every word of your mouths, and every action of your lives, by the truth, so as ye may be enabled through grace to do the whole will of God? If these catechetical discourses have not produced some such effects upon you, or any of you, alas! they have been all lost as to any saving benefit to your souls, and will be a swift and terrible witness against you in the day of the Lord Jesus. O, Sirs! consider, bethink yourselves, recollect the great and important truths I have been laying before you, drawn from the pure and uncorrupted fountain of the Lord's word, and let them have a suitable and lasting influence on your hearts and lives. If ye imprison the truth, and hold it in unrighteousness, by resisting and opposing its effect, which is sanctification, John xvii. 17. and refusing to let it rule over you, and raising up your lusts against it, and unrighteously smothering and suppressing it, ye do so at a terrible risk: 'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness,' Rom. i. 18. It is very probable that many of you at least have acquired more knowledge of the principles of religion, than ye had formerly; and I am obliged to own, that your knowledge of the truths thereof is as much generally, as ever I observed in other places. But is it sanctifying saving knowledge, or only merely speculative, floating in your heads, without having a due and efficacious influence upon your hearts? Alas! I must say, that truth is held prisoner with a witness among us, and that our lives are not answerable to our light, and I am much afraid it may bring wrath on the place. I therefore earnestly beseech and exhort one and all of you, to study to know the truth as it is in Jesus, to have a heart experimental knowledge thereof, a real feeling and sensation of the

xxii. 9. Every thing that is numbered must have a beginning; and therefore God's duration is not liable to numbering. But we may soon perceive our beginning to be in the world; and thence learn and observe,

(1.) That it is by divine appointment, and not by necessity of our nature, that we continue to be. The latter is proper to God only; by the former, angels and men, and all creatures, are continued in being. For he that once had no being, can never claim a natural necessity of continuing to be.

(2.) That every moment of our life hangs on the divine will and pleasure, Rev. iv. ult. There is no necessary connection betwixt your living this moment and living the next. The only bond betwixt them is God's word of appointment, Heb. i. 3. Loose that, and remove it, our life goes, and our eyes shall never see the next moment. No food, no physic, can prevent it, Matth. iv. 4. There is no outliving that word, Psal. xc. 3. 'Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men,' so much as for one moment.

(3.) That we must go the way of all flesh; for many of those we found in the world at our coming into it, are now gone, Zech. i. 5. This world is always like a fair near the height, where some are coming in, others going out, and those within in confusion, Eccl. i. 4. I doubt not but there may be some in this house this day, who, if they will consider, shall not find one of all those that filled it at their first coming into it. But these are gone, and others have come into the room of them all. And shall not others reckon so of us in a little time?

2. Our days will have an end, and we must seriously consider that. Hence says the Psalmist, Psal. xxxix. 4. 'Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is.' Every thing that is numerable has an end; and therefore eternity cannot be numbered, since it hath no end. But we may soon come to the end of our count, when we are counting our days; and thence may learn and observe,

(1.) That the shored tree will be cut down at length. 'I know that thou wilt bring me to death,' says Job, 'and to the house appointed for all living,' Job xxx. 23. When we were first planted in this world, the axe was laid down at the root of the tree, and we have grown up beside it. There is never a pain nor stitch, but it is a stroke of that axe, a pledge of a greater. Sometimes it has almost struck through, but in a little time it will go through altogether. So that man shall lie down, and not rise till the heavens be no more.

(2.) We will need nothing for this life ere long. Dip not so deep

in the cares of this world as most do, to the ruin of their souls. Many have been anxious to provide for the day which they never saw, as the rich man in the parable did, Luke xii. 17,—20. The clods of earth will serve for back and belly ere long, and we will have no portion in what is done under the sun; others will possess the houses, land, &c. which we now occupy.

(3.) See now how ye will begin eternity. It will begin with us when our days are come to an end; and as we begin it, so we will continue in it, Heb. ix. 27. Our state now is alterable, but then it is unalterable for ever. Therefore now or never let us secure a happy eternity. Learn your duty from the unjust steward, the serious consideration of which I recommend to you, Luke xiv. 3,—8.

(4.) Working time for eternity will not last. It closeth with the end of our days: Therefore ‘whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest,’ Eccl. ix. 10.

*Use.* Be not idle spectators of the dispensation of this day. Number your days, so as ye may apply your hearts unto wisdom. If you will not take warning to prepare for eternity, by the removal of others, take heed lest God make you a warning to others. Let the aged and young hear the voice of the rod, and seriously improve it.

3. Our days are few, and we must consider, that they are the number of a man, they may be counted. There are some things not innumerable in themselves, yet cannot be numbered for their multitude. But there is no such multitude of the days of our life.

(1.) Consider the counters the scripture affords us to count our days by. A web, Isa. xxxviii.; it is such a web as one is still working at without intermission, and therefore will soon be cut out:—grass, and a flower soon withered, Isa. xl. 6, 7;—green at morn, and cut down at night, Psal. xc. 6:—a vapour that vanisheth away, frail, uncertain, and of short continuance, Jam. iv. 14:—smoke, Psal. cii. 3:—a wind, a blast, or puff, Job vii. 7:—a sleep, Psal. xc. 5:—a dream, Job xx. 8:—a hand-breadth, Psal. xxxix. 5:—nothing, *ibid.* compare Eccl. iii. 2. Count with these counters, and the reckoning will be very small, which the scripture also has cast up to our hands.

(2.) Consider the scripture-reckoning of man’s life. The highest reckoning is by years, now brought down to a few scores, Psal. xc. 10. Nay, as we count the age of infants by months, so is man’s age reckoned, Job xix. 5. As if months were too big a word, it is brought down to days, and a few days, Job xiv. 1; yea, to one day, wherein there is but a morning, noon, and evening, Job xiv. 6; and  
 ‘lower, to an hour, 1 John ii. 18; aye, to a moment, that is past

ere one is aware, 2 Cor. xv. 17. Prov. xii. 19. So the sum of our days is very small.

From both ye may find that our days are few; and thence learn and observe,

(1.) It is no safe counting to count many years to come, whatever ye be, lest ye be out in your account, as the rich man was, Luke xii. 19, 20. Many whose youth and strength seemed to give them ground for counting so, have been forced to see their mistake, and count again, little to their comfort, death coming ere it was looked for.

(2.) Our days will soon be at an end. We will quickly be over our hand-breadth. They fly like a shadow, Job xiv. 2. And though a weaver's shuttle is very swift, in going from one side of the web to the other, our days are swifter than it is, Job vii. 6. See what Job says, chap. ix. 25, 26. 'Now my days are swifter than a post; they flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the swift ships; as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.'

(3.) We have no time to be idle. Our work for eternity is great, for it is long, and our time is short. They who have much work, little time to do it in, little strength to do it with, and much opposition to wrestle against, had need to lose no time, John ix. 4. The shadows of the evening are stretched out; we have made but little way; let us therefore mend our pace.

(4.) *Lastly*, We must make the considering of our days, a serious business. The counting of them to purpose will not do otherwise. It deserves it, for eternity lies upon it; a mistake in that may be fatal; and we are very ready to miscount our days. And,

[1.] Make it a work by itself. If one have but a few threads to count, they will let other work alone till that be done; for it is of that nature that it will not mix with other pieces of work. Surely at any time, and much more at this time, God calls us to take some particular time for this work, Hag. i. 5.

[2.] Hold to it, till you have done it to purpose. Counting is not a work to be done by fits and starts. If it be broken off, readily all that is counted is lost, and one must just begin again, having lost his count. Fleeting thoughts of the shortness and uncertainty of time are to little purpose. The impression they make is soon worn off.

[3.] Dip into the business, and be not overly in it. One thing that is counting will be loath to hear or answer a word spoken to him, lest he miss his count. Satan and our ill hearts are apt to cast in diversions to those employed in counting their days; and by that means many times mar the work. But ye must stop your ears, and mind your business.



II. I proceed to shew, that a time of mortality is a special call to this work.

1. It sets death and eternity in a particular manner before the eyes of mortals, as appears from this psalm wherein our text lies. It is a looking-glass wherein every one may see his own frailty; for the strength of the hale is no more the strength of stones, nor their bones brass, more than others whom death has cut down. What is the lot of one mortal to-day, may be the lot of another to-morrow; and that calls to consider it.

2. God, by laying his hand on some, speaks unto others, as appears from what our Lord says, Luke xiii. 1. and downwards, and warns them. And they that are wise will take warning, Micah vi. 9. And it is a sad evidence when people will not hear it. They look like those marked for destruction, who, in the face of God's judgments going abroad in a place still do wickedly, Isa. xxvi. 11.

3. It is an evidence of the Lord's anger against a land or country-side where it prevails, Amos iii. 8. And not laying it to heart is a contempt of God, that he will surely avenge, Psal. xxviii. 5. It speaks God to be risen up from his place to punish; and who knows who may fall ere God's sword, once drawn, be returned into its sheath?

*Use.* Let old and young comply with the call of God by the present sickness and mortality: let every one be stirred up thereby so to count their days, as they may apply their hearts unto wisdom. For motives, consider,

1. We will be most inexcusable, if after all these warnings death find us unprovided. The dispensation of the day is such, that no body needs to pretend to be surprised with death's coming to their own door, since it is carrying off so many, both young and old.

2. It is a piece of that duty we owe to an angry God, as we would not inflame his anger more against us, Psal. xxviii. 5. Amos iii. 8. It is not true courage, but stupidity and obstinacy, not to be deeply affected with the hand of God gone out against us. Let creatures despise, if they will, the stroke of their fellow worms, but let them not despise the stroke of God, Heb. xii. 5. It becomes saints of the highest pitch to fear God smiting, Luke xii. 4, 5.

3. This would be the way to get the stroke removed, or at least to get it sanctified, Hab. iii. 16. The design of Providence in the stroke is to stir us up to this duty, and the answering of the call of the rod bids fairest for the removal of it, Lev. xxvi. 41, 42. If not, the venom will be taken out of it; and if one be taken away being <sup>ted</sup> for it, he will exchange this life for a better.

*Lastly,* If this be misimproved, it lays us open to a worse,

Amos iv. 11, 12. In a land so full of sin, so often threatened with desolating strokes, and so often delivered, but nothing bettered by deliverances, this stroke looks rather like the beginning than the end of sorrows, rather like an earnest than the round sum, that might clear the accounts betwixt God and a sinful nation.



#### THE SERMON IN THE AFTERNOON.

WE are again met this day to humble ourselves under the hand of God, gone out against the congregation and country-side, in great sickness and mortality, and to deprecate the Lord's anger. I know no such expedient in our case, nor any thing that will bid so fair for the removal of the stroke, as our coming up to the standard of proficiency in the lesson in our text, which falls now to be spoken of, and which I shall cast into this doctrine.

DOCT. 'The right and necessary improvement of a time of bodily sickness and mortality, is to become wise for our souls.'

The Lord is putting particular persons and families among us, yea, all of us, to the school of affliction, since the hand of God gone out against some concerns all; and it is necessary we learn our lesson aright, and become wise thereby.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Shew what is that *wisdom* we must learn thereby.

II. Condescend on some particulars of *wisdom* which such a time calls us to apply our hearts to.

I. I am to shew, what is that *wisdom* we are to learn by a time of bodily sickness and mortality. It is serious godliness, or true religion. When one becomes seriously godly, leaving the way of sin, and entering on the way of faith and holiness, then he has learned the lesson that God is teaching us this day, Job xxviii. ult. 'Unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding.' This is the only true wisdom; and they continue arrant fools who do not arrive at it, whatever other wisdom they be masters of. This is the wisdom taught at God's school of affliction, Heb. xii. 10. The voice of the rod is, Be wise for your souls. That this is the true wisdom, appears in that,

1. It is practical wisdom, wisdom for regulating a man's life in the way to happiness, Hos. xiv. ult. How many are there accounted wise, who betray their folly in quite shooting by the mark, in the way of life they chuse, Jer. xxii. 13,—16. Surely that is wisdom which sets men in the true way to happiness, which is faith and ho-

liness, Mark xvi. 16. Heb. xii. 14. What avail carnal worldly wit, the profound speculations of natural men in the learned sciences, and the dry and sapless notions of religion in formal professors? All these are but laborious trifling, and making a noise, doing nothing, while they never make them better men, though more knowing.

2. It is wisdom for one's self, Prov. ix. 12. There is a set of men, whose wisdom is noted to be for others, but not for themselves, resembled by boatmen, who ferry others over, but, during the whole time of their rowing, have their eyes fixed on the place whence they came, and, immediately after landing their passengers, return to where they set out. Such is the wisdom of all ungodly men: their wisdom may profit other men's souls or bodies; but, alas! it profits not themselves, 1 Cor. ix. ult. Matth. vi. 19, 20. But this is the excellency of real godliness, that 'it giveth life to them that have it,' Eccl. vii. 12. It casts the soul into the mould of truth, sanctifies the heart and life in conformity to the divine nature and will; and so perfects human nature, raising up a glorious fabric out of the ruins in which it was laid by the fall.

3. It is wisdom for one's latter end, Deut. xxxii. 29. The fool in the gospel had wit enough to provide for many years' life. But here lay his folly, he had nothing provided for his latter end, for a dying hour, Luke xii. 20. Many such fools are among us. It was one of the dying expressions of a learned man of the last age (Grotius), *Ah! vitam perdidi, operose nihil agendo.*

4. It is wisdom for the better part, Luke x. 41, 42. The wisdom of the world is but for the baser part of man, the body; it makes him useful in business and civil conversation. But this reaches only the outworks, while in the mean time the soul's concerns lie by neglected. But this wisdom advanceth the life and interests of the soul, insures one's title to heaven, and sets him on the way to eternal happiness, Prov. viii. 35.

5. *Lastly*, It is wisdom for the better world, Heb. xi. 14, 16. Our projects for this world, as to ourselves, must die with ourselves, Psal. cxlvi. 4. but they who are wise for that better world, by being religious indeed, will find their measures wisely laid in time, to take and have their effect happily in eternity, Rev. xiv. 13. What they now sow, they shall then joyfully reap.

III. I proceed to condescend on some particulars of wisdom which such a time calls us to apply our hearts to.

1. To inquire seriously into the causes of the Lord's controversy with us, Job x. 2. When God's hand is stretched out, it will be our wisdom to search wherefore it is so, Lam. iii. 39. Surely there is a cause; he does not smite without good reason: and unless our eyes see it, our hearts cannot rue it.

God has a controversy with the congregation and country-side ; it were good we could lay it to heart. Two things seem to have the main hand in it.

(1.) Abuse and misimprovement of spiritual mercies and privileges. Thus the Lord threatened the Old-Testament church, Deut. xxviii. 58, 59. 'If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law, that are written in this book, that thou mayest 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.' This brought a sore sickness upon the church of Corinth, 1 Cor. xi. 30. The noted divisions, and deserting of ordinances, in the country, are the judgment and the sin of the corner, whereby contempt is poured on precious gospel-ordinances, the success of the gospel marred by so many hinderances laid in the way of souls getting good of it ; and thus gnats are strained at, and camels swallowed down, in respect of the deep-dyed guilt in what it does to hinder the spiritual good of perishing souls. Men will not see it, but they shall see. And alas ! how evident is our unfruitfulness under means of grace ? How few are bettered now by a preached gospel ? God's word is slighted, and ineffectual for our reformation, his holy name is profaned, his Sabbaths are violated, sacraments are neglected by some, and profaned by others with their unholy and untender lives. What wonder that for this cause 'many are weak and sickly among us, and many sleep ?' 1 Cor. xi. 30. Warnings and reproofs prevail not, conviction is rare, and conversion is more rare. Many have not a form of godliness left them ; and few have any thing but a form of it. Many are crying out against the sins of others, while the visible blots in their own lives do not make them smite on their own breasts and say 'What have I done !' God grant that the contempt and abuse of gospel-privileges bring not a removal of the kingdom of God from us.

(3.) Abuse and misimprovement of temporal mercies. It is observable, that with the promise of plenty to the church, using their plenty in a holy becoming manner, the promise of the taking away of sickness is joined, Exod. xxiii. 25. Deut. vii. 12,—14. This says that God punisheth abuse of plenty with sickness. God has given the country plenteous years ; and what has been the issue of it, but contempt of God and the rules of righteousness, increase of pride and vanity, and drunkenness, with an unordinary abuse of that fiery liquor, never ordained for ordinary drinking ; masters breaking the yoke, undermining and undergoing one another through the country ; servants bursting all bonds, and turned quite unmanageable and un-



dutiful? The last year, a little before this time, I gave warning from the Lord's word against these things particularly\*: but I think there was never more of them in my time, than followed upon the back of it. No wonder then, that God has shapen us out another piece of work this year.

Let these things be weighed in an even balance, as in the sight of God, by us all. And let particular persons and families, especially those who have been or are under the rod, inquire into the causes of God's quarrel with them, that they may see why the Lord contendeth.

2. To be humbled under the causes of the Lord's anger, and to turn to a smiting God in Christ. This would be our wisdom, Lev. xxvi. 41, 42. Micah vi. 9. It is not time to stand in the way of sinners, when God is risen up to plead; it is high time to fall down before him in humiliation, and to fall off from God-provoking courses by reformation. Hear the voice of the rod. It is crying two things loudly this day.

(1.) Improve a season of the gospel. Some sermons have of late been the last to them that heard them. Some heard the sermon on the Lord's day in health, that were in eternity ere the next Sabbath. This says, Hear ye every day as if it were to be your last.

(2.) Improve temporal mercies, lest God be provoked to take them from you. Health and strength, and other temporal conveniences, are to be wisely managed, for you see we have no tack of them, Eccl. ix. 10.

3. To be upon your guard, and make sure for eternity, while you live. Remember the parable of the wise and foolish builder, and how apt ye are to play the fool in these matters, while health and strength last.

(1.) Beware ye be not cheated out of your most valuable interests, by a deceitful heart, a treacherous world, and a wily devil. Satan goes about many a poor simple one, till they are tricked of their souls, their part of Christ and heaven, and all the happiness of another world, Matth. xvi. 26. And wherefore do they part with them, but for the gratifying of a lust, which is a practice more foolish than if one should part with an estate for a childish toy. So did Esau. Wherefore be wise in time.

(2.) Beware the best bargain slip not through your fingers, while ye are pursuing vanities, Prov. xvii. 16. Alas! there are not a few, who, being busied with vanities of this world, which pass away with

\* In a discourse preached March 19, 1719, from Josh. ix. 14. which is printed in a collection of ten sermons of the author's published in 1772. It is the ninth in that collection, and deserves a serious perusal.

the using, miss the opportunity of making the treasure hid in the field of the gospel their own. Therefore be wise.

(3.) Beware of feeding yourselves with dreams and fancies, wherein there is no reality. There are many foolish virgins with lamps without oil, and foolish builders on the sand. There are many whose life is but one continued dream, wherein they judge aright of nothing, neither God, heaven, hell, nor the world. So that their awakening cannot be but terrible. But be ye wise.

4. To prepare timeously for death and judgment, Matth. xxiv. 44. It is certain that naturally we are quite out of case for that great change: and, alas! we are naturally unwilling to think of it, or provide for it. But necessity has no law. We must die; and we must either be provided for death, or we are ruined: and if we be not timely provided, our candle may be put out ere our work be done.

(1.) Get habitual preparation for death, in a gracious state, Rom. viii. 1. Be sure to get out of the state of nature into the state of grace. And then come death when it will, it will but transport you into the state of glory. And there are two things here to be secured.

[1.] Get your title to heaven fixed. None will get thither but those who have a right to it, Mat. xxv. 34. 2 Cor. v. 1. To others the door will be cast in their face. But, ye may say, how may we get a title to heaven? *Ans.* Marry the Heir, and heaven will be your dowry. The everlasting covenant is offered to you in the gospel, God to be your God in Christ, and Christ to be yours in all his offices. Therefore make a solemn deliberate transaction with God this night, embracing Christ in the covenant, and consenting to it, with an eye to death and eternity.

[2.] Get a fitness for heaven wrought in you, Col. i. 12. For ye cannot be meet for it, till your nature be changed. How may we get that fitness? may ye say. *Ans.* Believe and embrace Jesus Christ, for his spirit of sanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30. There is a fullness of the Spirit in him to be communicated, and faith must eye Christ for his sanctifying Spirit. Put off the old man, and put on the new man: be new creatures, and let old things pass away, and all things become new. In vain do men pretend to faith without this, 2 Cor. v. 17. and in vain will men look for heaven without it, John iii. 3.

This is habitual preparation, which whoso have, if they should be struck dead in a moment, or immediately seized with diliriousness, and die raving, yet they are safe; 'for there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,' Rom. viii. 1.

(2.) Get actual preparation for death, in a gracious frame for dying, that ye may die comfortably.

[1.] Make speed with the work given you to do. Whatever piece of work is put into your hand, for God's honour, dispatch it with all expedition, Matth. xxiv. 46. for if ye delay it, ye may lose the opportunity for ever.

[2.] Be habitually tender in your life, Acts xxiv. 16. And beware of any standing controversy betwixt God and you : for if there be any such, it will readily stare you in a dying hour.

[3.] Be weaned from the world, and hold a loose grip of all you have in it, that it might drop like Joseph's mantle.

(4.) Keep waking and watchful, Luke xii. 36. Be much in the thoughts of death, and the life to come, that ye be not surprised\*.

[5.] *Lastly*, To prepare for more public and general trials and calamities. This is a piece of wisdom to be learned from such a dispensation. For lesser strokes are usually the forerunners of greater ones. Sodom and Gomorrah were tried with a lesser stroke, ere they were destroyed by fire from heaven, Gen. xiv. 10. And our Lord told the Jews, that unless they repented, they should perish, Luke xiii. 5.; which threatening was accomplished in the destruction of Jerusalem. The day may yet come, wherein men shall praise the dead, that are already dead; and they may miss this stroke, who are reserved for a worse, and shall meet with it ere all be done. In a time when the cup of God's anger is going through a land, they that drink first usually fare best. How are we to prepare? may ye say. *Ans.* Keep your garments clean from the sins and snares of the day, and place where ye live, and take up your lodging in the sure and unalterable covenant of grace, and then no evil shall befall you.

\* See these directions amplified and illustrated in the Fourfold State, state 4. head 2. title, Directions how to prepare for death.

## TWO FORMS OF PERSONAL COVENANTING BY THE AUTHOR.

[As Mr. Boston, has in his writings accurately explained the nature, and warmly inculcated the duty and necessity, of personal covenanting, or explicit entering into, or renewing covenant with God, by taking hold of God's covenant of grace; it will not be improper to subjoin the two following specimens of that solemn transaction in his own practice: the first, dated August 14, 1699, a little before his ordination to the ministry; the other, dated December 2, 1729, about two years and five months before his death. Both are printed from the original copies.]

I, MR. THOMAS BOSTON, preacher of the gospel of Christ, being by nature an apostate from God, an enemy to the great JEHOVAH, and so an heir of hell and wrath, in myself utterly lost and undone, because of my original and actual sins, and misery thereby; and being, in some measure, made sensible of this my lost and undone state, and sensible of my need, my absolute need of a Saviour, without whom I must perish eternally; and believing that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the eternal God, is not only able to save me, by virtue of his death and sufferings, but willing also to save me (though most vile and ugly, and one who has given him many repulses), both from my sins, and from the load of wrath due to me for them, upon condition that I believe, come to him for salvation, and cordially receive him in all his offices; consenting to the terms of the covenant: therefore, as I have at several opportunities before given an express and solemn consent to the terms of the covenant, and have entered into a personal covenant with Christ; so now, being called to undertake the great and weighty work of the ministry of the gospel, for which I am altogether insufficient, I do by this declare, That I stand to and own all my former engagements, whether sacramental, or any other way whatsoever; and now again do RENEW my covenant with God; and hereby, at this present time, do solemnly COVENANT and ENGAGE to be the Lord's and MAKE a solemn resignation and upgiving of myself, my soul, body, spiritual and temporal concerns, unto the Lord Jesus Christ, without any reservation whatsoever; and do hereby give my voluntary consent to the terms of the covenant laid down in the holy scriptures, the word of truth; and with my heart and soul I TAKE and RECEIVE Christ in all his offices, as my PROPHET to teach me, resolving and engaging in his strength to follow, that is, to endeavour to follow his instructions: I TAKE him as my PRIEST, to be saved by his death and merits alone; and renouncing my own righteousness as filthy rags and menstruous cloths, I am content to be clothed with his righteousness alone; and live entirely upon free



grace; likewise I TAKE him for my ADVOCATE and INTERCESSOR with the Father: and finally, I TAKE him as my KING, to reign in me, and to rule over me, renouncing all other lords, whether sin or self, and in particular my predominant idol; and in the strength of the Lord, do resolve and hereby engage, to cleave to Christ as my Sovereign Lord and King, in death and in life, in prosperity and in adversity, even for ever, and to strive and wrestle in his strength against all known sin; *protesting*, that whatever sin may be lying hid in my heart out of my view, I disown it, and abhor it, and shall in the Lord's strength, endeavour the mortification of it, when the Lord shall be pleased to let me see it. And this solemn covenant I make as in the presence of the ever-living, heart-searching God, and subscribe it with my hand, in my chamber, at Dunse, about one o'clock in the afternoon, the fourteenth day of August, one thousand six hundred and ninety-nine years.

T. BOSTON.



#### A SECOND PERSONAL COVENANT.

O LORD, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I confess from my heart, that I am by nature a lost and undone sinner, wholly corrupted, and laid under the curse, in Adam, through the breach of the covenant of works; and have ruined myself more and more by my innumerable actual transactions, whereby my whole life appears in mine eyes this day a heap of vanity, sin, and foolishness. I am fully convinced, and do from my heart acknowledge, that I am utterly unable to help myself, in whole or in part, out of this gulf of sin and misery, into which I am plunged; and that it is beyond the reach of the whole creation to help me out of it; so that I must inevitably perish for ever, if thine own strong hand do not make help to me. But forasmuch as there is a covenant of grace, for life and salvation to lost sinners, established between THEE and thine own SON, the Lord Jesus Christ, as second Adam; wherein, upon condition of his fulfilling all righteousness, which is now performed, in his having been born perfectly holy, lived altogether righteously, and made perfect satisfaction to justice by his death and sufferings, thou hast promised that thou wilt be their God, and they shall be thy people, to the making of them holy and

happy for ever; and that this covenant is, in Christ the head thereof, offered and exhibited to me in thy gospel, and thou callest me into the fellowship thereof, in him: Therefore (adhering to my former acceptings, and taking hold of it, declared whether by word or writ before thee, without wilful mistaking of it, or known guile), upon the warrant of, and in obedience to, thy command and call, I, in myself a poor perishing sinner, and worthy to perish, do now again TAKE HOLD of that COVENANT, for life and salvation to ME; believing on the name of Christ crucified the head thereof, offered and exhibited to me, as the great High Priest, who, by the sacrifice of himself, hath made atonement, paid the ransom, and brought in everlasting righteousness for poor sinners. I CREDIT his word of grace to me, and accordingly TRUST on him, that he with his righteousness will be mine, and that, in and through him, God will be my God, and I shall be one of his people, to the making of me holy and happy for ever. O my God, I do by thy grace acquiesce in that covenant, as all my salvation, and all my desire. With my whole heart and soul, the SON incarnate is my only PRIEST, my surety, my Intercessor, and my Redeemer; and, in him, the FATHER my FATHER, the HOLY GHOST my SANCTIFIER; GOD in CHRIST my God. I resign myself, soul and body, to him, to be saved by his blood alone; renouncing all confidence in mine own righteousness, doings, and sufferings. With my whole heart and soul he is my HEAD and HUSBAND: and I am his only, wholly, and for ever; to live by him, to him, and for him. I take him for my alone PROPHET, Oracle, and Guide; give up myself wholly to him, to be taught, guided, and directed, in all things, by his word and Spirit; and renounce mine own wisdom, and the wisdom of this world. He is, with my heart's consent, my alone KING and Lord. And I resign myself wholly, soul and body, unto him, to be rescued, by the strength of his mighty hand, from sin, death, the devil, and this present evil world, for to serve him for ever, and to be ruled by the will of his command as my duty, and the will of his providence as to my lot. I am, with my whole heart, content (Lord, thou knowest) to part with, and do renounce, every known sin, lust, or idol, and particularly that sin which most easily besets me; together with my own foolish will, and other lords besides him; without reservation, and without exception against his cross: *Protesting* in thy sight, O Lord, that I am, through grace, willing to have discovered unto me, and upon discovery to part with, every sin in me that I know not: and that the doubtings and averteness of heart, mixed with this my accepting of thy covenant, are what I allow not: and that, notwithstanding thereof, I look to be accepted of thee herein, in the Beloved, thine only Son and my Sa-

viour, purging away these, with all my other sins, by his precious blood. Let it be recorded in heaven, O Lord, and let the bed on which I leaned, the timber, and the stones, and all other things about me here, in my closet, bear witness, That I, though most unworthy, have this second day of December, One thousand seven hundred and twenty-nine years, here taken hold of, and come into thy covenant of grace, offered and exhibited to me in thy gospel, for time and eternity; and that thou art my God in the tenor of that covenant, and I am one of thy people, from henceforth and for ever.

T. BOSTON.

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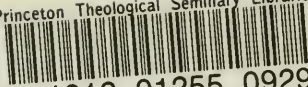
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