

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, reproof, 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 necessaries of life, when in want, according to our ability. For as he that feeds not the fire puts it out, so unmerciful people that shut up their bowels from the needy, are guilty of their blood before the Lord, James 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 necessaries so far as we can: they are not ours, but God's.

6thly, Intemperance, when people keep no measure in satisfying the flesh, Luke 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 ebrii*. 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 whose 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. 1. 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.'