

## 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. xlvi. 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, Deut. 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. lxxiii. 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 of. There are not a few at this day of that

sort, who sometimes were blooming professors, but now they have lost leaf as well as fruit; and nothing ailed them to loose it, but just that the root of the matter was never in them. They have drawn back, and have not staid till they had been driven back. [2.] There are some whose leaf falleth, like the leaf of a tree in summer, by a stormy wind of persecution. They would keep their leaf if it would always abide calm; but they cannot abide the shock of persecution, and so, rather than deny themselves, they will deny Christ before men, Mark 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 possesseth his room in the heart. That is a subtle kind of idolatry, so hid that others cannot, nay men themselves do not always, perceive what it is that is their idol. But God sees it very well.

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