

OF THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. XX. 17.—*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*

THE scope of this command is to strike at the root and first risings of sin in the heart, in the desires going out of their right line of purity and equity. It is a strict boundary set to the unbounded desires of the heart.

In it, there are, 1. The act. 2. The object. The act, *Thou shalt not covet*, or *lust*, as the apostle terms it, Rom. vii. 7; which implies an inordinateness of desire, a feverish motion of the soul towards the creature, irregular and disorderly; and so a dissatisfaction with one's present condition, as appears from Heb. xiii. 5. 'Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have.'

The object is held forth particularly for example's cause, *thy neighbour's house, thy neighbour's wife*, his servants, and goods. Thou shalt not only not take away thy neighbour's house from him by oppression, nor entice away his servants, nor steal his goods, nor entertain a fixed and deliberate desire to do him that injury as is forbidden in the eighth command; but the inordinate desire of having them shall not rise in, nor go through the heart, however lightly, if it were like a flying arrow, saying, O that his house, his servant, his ox and ass were mine! Thou shalt not only not defile his wife, nor deliberately desire to do it, as is forbidden in the seventh commandment; but thou shalt not say in thine heart, O that she were mine! though thou hast no mind, right or wrong, to make her so.

This object is held forth universally, *nor any thing that is thy neighbour's*: whereby it appears, that this command looks through all the other commandments of the second table, and so condemns all inordinate desire of any object whatsoever. And therefore the Papists dividing this command into two is absurd, and but a trick invented to atone for their confounding the first and second. While this command says, *nor any thing*, it says, Thou shalt not only not dishonour thy neighbour by insolent and contemptuous behaviour, but there shall not be a desire in thy heart, saying, O that his place and post were mine, as in the fifth command; nor, O that I had his health and strength, as in the sixth; nor his reputation and esteem, as in the ninth; though you have no deliberate design or desire to wrong him in these.

I do not wonder, if some are surprised at this, and say, Are these sins? for indeed this command goes deeper than the rest; and if it did not so, it would be superfluous; for you see it aims not at any new object, but holds by the objects of the former commands; therefore it must look to some more inward and less noticed motions of the heart, than the rest do. And therefore Paul, though he learned the law at the school of divinity under Gamaliel, a professor of it, yet, till he learned it over again at the school of the Spirit, holding it out in its spirituality and extent, he did not know these things to be sin, Rom. vii. 7. It was this command brought home to his conscience, that let him see that lust to be sin which he saw not before.

And seeing this is a command of the second table, and ourselves are our nearest neighbour, the lust or inordinate desire of those things that are our own must be condemned here, as well as lusting after what is not ours.

So much for the negative part of this command, which in effect is this, Thou shalt not be in the least dissatisfied with thy own present condition in the world, nor have any inordinate motion in thy heart to that which is thy own or thy neighbour's.

The positive part is implied; and that is, Thou shalt be fully content with thy own lot, whatever it be, and arrest thy heart within the bounds that God has inclosed it in, bearing a charitable disposition to thy neighbour and what is his. For all covetousness implies a discontent with our own condition.

Quest. 'What is required in the tenth commandment?' *Ans.* 'The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbour, and all that is his.'

Here I shall consider the duty of this command, as it respects,

I. Ourselves.

II. Our neighbour.

III. The root of sin.

I. I shall consider the duty of this command as it respects ourselves. If we consider, that this command forbidding coveting in the general, says, in effect, these two things, 1. Thou shalt not covet or lust after what thou hast; nor, 2. What thou wantest; the great duty of this command with respect to ourselves will appear to be twofold.

First, A thorough weanedness from and indifferency to all those things that we have, in which our desires may be too eager. There are some things whereof our desire cannot be too much, as of God, Christ, grace, victory over sin; and therefore we read of a holy lusting, Gal. v. 17. The renewed part not only desires, but eagerly

and greedily gapes for perfect holiness and entire victory over sin. This is holy lusting, where there is no fear of excess, although indeed even that may degenerate, when our own ease, that is disturbed by sin, may be more in our view than the sinfulness of sin; and in this respect these lustings are mixed, and therefore sinful and humbling in the best; and they are so far contrary to this command, as they are lusting after ease, more than conformity to the holy will and nature of God.

There are other things to which our desires may be carried out too eagerly and inordinately; and the desire of them is lawful, but the coveting or lusting after them, which is the inordinate desire of them, is here forbidden. Thus we may sin, not only in the inordinate desire of sensual things, as meat, drink, &c. but in rational things, as honour, esteem, &c. The desire of these things is not sinful; but there is a lust of them which is so.

Now, in opposition to this, we must be thoroughly weaned from and holily indifferent to these things, not only when we want them, for that falls in with contentment, but when we have them. So should one be to his own house, wife, servants, and any thing that is his; keeping our love to, desire after, and joy in them, within due bounds, as the Psalmist did, Psal. cxxxix. 2. 'Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.' We may take it up in these four things following.

1. The heart's sitting loose to them, so as the heart and they may fall asunder as things closely joined, yet not glued, when God shall be pleased to take them from us. For if they must needs be rent from us, it is an argument that our love to them was indeed a lust towards them. Therefore this disposition is called a hating of them, Luke xiv. 26; for things that we have, we can part with, without their tearing as it were a piece of our heart along with them. We can say little on this piercing command, but what will be accounted hard sayings, by all that have not a clear view of the transcendent purity of the law, which is carried to the height in this command, because to the root, the corruption of our nature. And that corruption we must still keep in view here, or we will do no good with it.

2. The heart's looking for no more from them than God has put in them. God has made created things as inns in the way to himself, where a person may be refreshed, but not as a resting-place, where the heart is to dwell. For the desire is inordinate when the man seeks his rest and satisfaction in these things instead of God, Psal. iv. 6. The corrupt judgment magnifies earthly things, and

looks on shadows as substances; and then the corrupt affections grasp them as such, and after a thousand disappointments lust after them still, Isa. lvii. 10.

3. The soul's standing on other ground, when these things stand entire about the man; drawing its support from God as the fountain, even when created streams are running full, 1 Sam. ii. 1. Psal. xviii. 46. The world's good things must not be thy good things, Luke xvi. 25. Thou mayst love them as a friend, but not be wedded to them as a husband; use them as a staff, yet not as the staff of thy life, but a staff in thy hand; but by no means a pillar to build on them the weight of thy comfort and satisfaction.

4. The using of them passingly. We must not dip too far in the use of them. Lawful desire and delight, like Peter, walks softly over these waters, but lust shines in them; in the one there is a holy carelessness, in the other a greedy gripe. The apostle lively describes this weanedness, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. 'It remaineth that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.' The violent pulse of the soul in our high-bended hopes, perplexing racking fears, vehement love, swelling joy, and overmuch sorrow about these matters, is a sad symptom of the distemper of natural corruption that has seized all Adam's sons. The greedy appetite that the heart is carried with these things, is a sad sign of an unweaned soul. A man may have a sinful lust to his meat, which yet is necessary to support his body; and a lust in the using of it, as those of the old world, Matth. xxiv. 38. 1 Sam. xiv. 32. The dogs of Egypt, they say, lap the water of the river Nile running, for fear of the crocodiles; for not only in every berry of the vine, but in all created things there is a devil. See how the Lord tried the people, Judg. vii. 6. 'And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men; but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.'

All these things the law requires in their perfection without the least mixture. Where is the clean man to cast a stone at the rest? It must be on a very transient glance of the heart that men say, The world is not their temptation, they care not for the world. For a view of the spirituality of the law would make us see that the world is fixed in our hearts, and only grace can loose it at the root, and only death can cast it over the hedge.

Secondly, A full contentment with our own condition. As for the

sin in our condition, it is not from God, and there is no good in it; we are not called to be content with it, because it is not the condition which God set in us. But whatever else be in our condition, we are obliged to be content with it, because so is the will of God that we should be in it. Every one is to look on his condition, as the paradise that God has set him down in; and though it be planted with thorns and briars, he must not look over the hedge; for *thou shalt not covet*. Though that which is wanting in thy condition cannot be numbered, and that which is crooked cannot be made straight, yet none of these things must render us uneasy in the least. There is required a full contentment, without a discontented glance of the eye. Much goes to the making up of it, all here required.

1. Hearty renunciation of our own will, saying with the pattern of contentment, Not my will, but thine be done. We must no more be chusers for ourselves of our own lot; but as little children standing at the table, not to carve for themselves, but to take the bit that is given them. 'He shall chuse our inheritance for us,' says the Psalmist, Psal. xlvii. 4. Shall not Infinite Wisdom rule the world? This lies in three things.

(1.) We must not determine the kind or sort of our comforts, as we often do, like petted children, that will not have this the parent holds out, but that which they set their eye on. Like Adam, whom the fruit of the tree of life could not serve, but he would have the forbidden fruit. The desire of fruit was natural, therefore not evil; other fruit would have served that desire, if kept orderly; but the lusting desire could not want forbidden fruit. Rachael had a husband but she must have children too. Orpah must have a husband. Ruth wants both; but she determines nothing, but only she must have a God, and that she got, and both too.

(2.) We must not be positive as to the measure of our comforts; and there is no reason that beggars should be chusers. If the heart say, of our comforts, They are too little, and of afflictions, they are too great, it flies in the face of this command, and of God's sovereignty, setting up for independency, 1 Tim. vi. 1. 'Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content,' though the food be coarse, though scanty, &c. Nature is content with little, grace with less, and sets no measure; but the measure of lust can never be filled.

(3.) We must not be wilful in any thing, 1 Tim. vi. 9. 'They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare,' &c. They that will have these things, and will not want them, will never be truly content till God's will be brought down to theirs; which will never be altogether; and if in a particular it come to be so, they will readily get their will with a vengeance, as the Israelites in the wil-

derness got. Psal. lxxviii. 29.—31. ‘So they did eat, and were well filled; for he gave them their own desire; they were not estranged from their lust: but while the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel.’ Thus we must renounce our own will.

2. Absolute resignation to the will of the Lord, Matth. xvi. 24. ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.’ We must give over the war betwixt our will and the will of God, and our will must run as a captive after his triumphal chariot. His preceptive will is the rule of our duty; and his providential will, must with our consent, be the rule of our condition. Our will must follow his, as the shadow does the body, without gainsaying. If he will let us have a created comfort, we must be content to keep it; if not, we must be content to part with it. We must lie at the foot of Providence, as a ball before him that tosses it, to be thrown up and cast down as our God sees meet. This Providence will do with us whether we be willing or not; but if we be thus resigned, then our necessity is our obedience.

3. Entire submission to the will of God, 1 Sam. iii. 18. ‘It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.’ As they resign themselves to his disposal, they must stand to his decision in the case. We must no more dispute the sovereignty with God, but allow the divine will and pleasure to carry it over the belly of our corrupt inclinations, and be disposed of by him, as the weaned child is by the nurse. If that which is crooked cannot be made straight, we must ply to it as it is; if our lot be not brought up to our mind, we must bring down our mind to our lot, as Paul did, Phil. iv. 11, 12. ‘Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.’ In this submission to the will of the Lord the soul of content lies. For God does not subject the man only, or cast him down, as he can do the most discontented person, making him walk with the yoke wreathed about his neck, whether he will or not. But the man voluntarily submits himself to God’s disposal in the whole of his condition, whatever his wants be. Whatever be wanting in our condition, if we would be content,

1st, We must submit to them as just without complaining, as Cain did; saying with the prophet, Micah vii. 9. ‘I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me

forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.' We meet with no hardships in our lot, but what we have procured to ourselves. And it is but just that we kiss the rod, and be silent under it. Let us complain of ourselves; why not? only leave our complaints there; but not set our mouths against the heavens; no, not in our hearts, for God knows the language of our hearts as well as our mouths. We must love his holiness and justice, in all the works thereof, though against ourselves. Nay more,

2dly, We must be quiet under them, without murmuring, as tolerable, Lam. iii. 27—29. 'It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope.' So was Job at first, though his corruption got up at length, Job i. 22. 'In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.' How often do we cry out of insufferable affliction? yet we do bear up under it for all that, and would bear the better if we could be content and quiet under it. A meek and quiet spirit makes a light cross, for a proud unsubdued spirit lays a great overweight upon every cross; as Rachel's unquiet spirit made the want of children wonderfully heavy, which others go very quietly and contentedly under. Nay more,

3dly, We must be easy without those things we want, as things we can want, without anxiety to get them, Phil. iv. 12. Weaned hearts will be very easy without those things which others cannot digest the want of. What is the reason of so much uneasiness in our condition, but that we are wedded to this and the other thing; and being glad of the having of it we are exceeding uneasy at the parting with it, as Jonah was with his gourd? The contented man will be easy, and that not upon a sensible prospect, but on the faith of the promise, Phil. iv. 6. 'Be careful for nothing: but in every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' But more than that,

4thly, We must be well satisfied and bear up comfortably under the want of them; standing upright when they are gone, as we did when we had them, or would do if we had them; even as the house stands when the prop that it did lean upon is taken away, Hab. iii. 17, 18; 'Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olives shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' It is a sad evidence of the corruption of our nature, that woful lust after the creature that is bred and born with us, that our comfort waxeth and waneth, accor-

ding to the waxing and waning of created enjoyments, and ebbs and flows as the breasts of the creature are full or empty. So, many lose all spirit and life in religion, when God pulls their worldly comforts from them; and even good people walk much discouraged and damped, not so much with the sense of God's anger, as the affliction in their lot. But what is yet more,

5thly, We must have a complacency in our condition, as what is good for us, otherwise we can have no full content. Observe the language of a contented mind, not only *just*, but 'Good is the will of the Lord,' Isa. xxxix. ult. Content suffers not a person to go drooping under God's yoke, but makes him carry it evenly with a sort of complacency in it. Wise men have a pleasure in the working of physic, though it gripe them sore, if their physician thinks it good for their health, and they think so too. And grace sometimes finds a pleasure in pain, and a paradise within the thorny thicket of afflictions. See how the apostle gathered olive berries off the thornhedge of crosses, 2 Cor. xii. 10. 'Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecution, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong.' Ay, there is a refined pleasure there, to see how God stops the entry for provision, that lusts may be starved; how he cuts off the by-channels, that the whole stream of love may run towards himself; how he pulls and holds off the man's burden, that he may run the more expeditely in the way to heaven. Nay, more than all that,

6thly, We must have a complacency in our condition, as that which is best for us for the time. Though he take health from thee, wealth, relations, &c. How is that possible? It is not easy to do it, but you must endeavour to see it; for that must be best that God judges best, and by the event it appears that God sees that condition best for thee for the time. Therefore we should meet it as David did Abigail, with 'Blessed be the Lord that sent thee to meet me this day.' So did Job. chap. i. 21. 'Blessed be the name of the Lord.' Faith in the promise makes it practicable. All the works of God are the most perfect in their kind. But to come to the top of the ladder, the full sea-mark of content,

Lastly, We must rest in that condition, without the least squint look for a change of it, till God's time come. There must be no motion for it, but as heaven moves to carry our condition about with it. And so this hinders not prayer, nor the use of means, in dependence on God: but requires patience, faith, hope, and absolute resignation, 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26. In this sense he that believeth doth not make haste; that is, the unbelieving haste which cannot wait God's time.

Quest. Is this full contentment possible? *Ans.* There is a twofold contentment: the one legal, which is full in the eye of the law; and this we can no more attain to than the perfect fulfilling of the law. It ceases not, however, to be our duty, and will be humbling to gracious souls so far as they come short of it. The other evangelical, which is full in the eye of the gospel, i. e. it is sincere: though it is not full in degrees, yet it is full in parts; it is in all the parts of contentment, though none of them are perfect; there is a submission to the whole will of God, though not perfect in degrees. And this is a necessary part of the new man, so that without it we are not sincere.

I shall now give reasons why we should be fully content with our own condition, whatever it be.

1. Because he that made the world guides it, and it is highly reasonable we allow it to be so. Let the discontented person answer that question which God proposes to sinners to silence their murmurings. 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Matth. xx. 15. The world is made by the Lord; and shall he not govern it, and dispose of it and all things therein as he sees best? Must the clay be allowed to say to the potter, 'Why hast thou made me thus? Should it be according to thy mind?' Job xxxiv. 33. Providence guides all, the Creator sits at the helm; and will not we be content with the course that is steered?

2. Thy condition is ordered by Infinite Wisdom. There is nothing that befalls us without the providence of God; and that is no blind chance, but a wise disposal of all according to the counsel of God's will. If the product of Infinite Wisdom content us not, we do but shew ourselves headstrong fools. He that numbers the hairs of our heads, Matt. x. 30. no doubt keeps an exact account of all the crosses in our lot, and of every ingredient in our cross, and gives them all out by weight and measure, as may most suit his infinitely-wise ends. And it is the height of folly to impeach the conduct of Infinite Wisdom.

3. All the good that is in our lot is undeserved, Lam. iii. 22. The bitterest lot that any has in the world is mixed with mercy; and mercy is still predominant in our cup. It is true, discontented persons are like wasps and flies that look not near the sound parts, but swarm together on the sore place. They magnify their crosses, and multiply them too; but deal with their mercies as the unjust steward, instead of a hundred setting down fifty, and hardly so much. But let there be fair count and reckoning betwixt us and Providence, we shall find we are in God's debt, and every mercy we enjoy we have it freely and undeservedly from God's hand, Job ii. 10.

4. All the evil that we meet with in our lot, we deserve it, we have ourselves to thank for it, Lam. iii. 39. Shall men's hearts rise against God for what they have procured to themselves? Is it not a reasonable resolve, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him?' Mic. vii. 9. A discontented spirit will always be found an unhumiliated spirit, insensible of its ill deservings at God's hand.

Use. I exhort all to labour for a full contentment with their own condition. For motives to press this, consider,

1. The beauty of the rational world, under the conduct of Divine Providence, lies in every one's contentment with their own condition. One last shall as soon serve every foot, as one condition shall be agreeable to all. What confusion would be in the world, if there were not variety? If time were all day and no night, the moon and stars every one a sun, how would we be able to endure it. If the whole body were an eye, where were the useful and pleasant variety of members. And if all men were set under the same smiles of Providence, where were the beautiful variety and mixture in the web of providence that inwraps the world. Let us remember we are in the world as on a stage, where one must represent a king and another a beggar. It is God's part to chuse what part we shall act; and it is our business contentedly to act the part allotted for us.

2. Contentment makes a man happy and easy in every condition. It is the stone that turns all metals into gold, and makes one to sing and rejoice in every condition. A strong man will walk as cleverly under a heavy burden, as a weak man under a far lighter one, because of the proportion that is betwixt the strength and the burden in each. One man has his lot brought up to his mind, another has his mind brought down to his lot; is not the latter, then, as easy as the former is. All our uneasiness proceeds from our own minds; and could we manage them to a full contentment in every condition, no condition could make us miserable.

3. Time is short, and ere long we will be at our journey's end. The world's smiles will no more follow us, neither will the frowns of it reach us. Eternity is before us, and we have greater things to mind than our condition here. One traveller walks with a rough stick in his hand, and another with a cane: the matter is small which of them be thine, for at the journey's end both of them shall be laid aside.

Quest. How may we attain to full contentment with our own condition in a gospel-sense. There are two sorts of persons to whom we speak, some in a state of nature, others in a state of grace. One

answer will not serve both; for though unrenewed sinners may have a shadow of contentment, it is impossible they can have true Christian contentment in that state. They may have a sort of contentment from a careless easy humour, yea, they may reason themselves into a sort of contentment as some Heathens did do. But true contentment with their condition they cannot have.

This is clear, if ye consider, that a restless heart can never be a contented heart; and seeing the heart of man is capable of enjoying an infinite good, and the whole creation is not capable to fill it, it follows, that the heart can never rest, nor be truly content, till it be so in God himself. Adam falling off from God, left us with a breast full of unsatisfied desires, because he left us seeking our satisfaction among the creatures, which are dry breasts, and cannot fill the heart; so till the soul return to God, it can have no true rest nor contentment. We may say enough to stop the mouths of the discontented, whatever they be; but no considerations will avail to work true contentment in a person out of Christ, more than a hungry child will be reasoned into quietness while you give him no bread. Therefore the great and,

First, Direction for contentment is, that ye take God for your God in Christ, as he offers himself to you in the gospel. The great thing that ye want is a rest to your heart, and satisfaction to the unbounded desires thereof, to possess that which if you had your desires would be stayed, and ye would covet no more. I know, your false hearts and your foolish tongues have said, O, if I had such and such a created thing, I would be content, I would desire no more! But when ye got it, was it so indeed? was there not still a want? So it will be to the end. But here is the way to contentment: Jesus Christ, in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead, offers himself to be yours. Accept of him by faith and then the sun is up with you, and ye will be content, though the candles of creature-comforts be put out. The wise merchant is content with the loss of all when he finds the one pearl, but not till then, Matth. xiii. 45, 46. Thus the foundation of full contentment is laid. And so I may go on to shew you further how to attain it. Therefore,

2. Believe that God is your God in Christ; apprehend him by faith as your portion; and contentment with your condition will follow of course, though your condition be very gloomy, Heb. iii. 17. Full contentment with one's condition goes in equal pace with a man's clearness as to his interest in Christ. Let that be darkened, and he shall find himself grow more fretful and uneasy with crosses in the world. Let that be rising clearer and clearer, and the more clear it grows, his cross will grow the lighter, and easier to be borne.

If any should say, There is a particular thing in my condition that above all things I cannot be easy under; there is something I would have, and God sees it not meet to give it me: what shall I do to be content under it. I would say, be what it will, go to God, and make a solemn exchange of that thing. If he has kept that from you, he offers you as good and better, that is to say, himself, instead of it. And do you renounce that thing, and give up with it, and take Christ instead of it; and having taken him so, believe that ye have him instead of it. Say, Lord, there is an empty room in this heart of mine, such a comfort would I have to fill it; but thou seest meet to refuse it; therefore I give up with it; thy will be done; but I take thyself instead thereof to fill up that room. And now I have made the exchange, and Christ is to me instead of that which I want. So shalt thou find thy heart satisfied. And if God see the comfort meet for thee, thou art then in the fairest way to get it too, Psal. xxxvii. 4.

This is the way of the gospel to full contentment, viz. the way of believing, by which all Christian duties are done, and gospel-graces are nourished in the heart. And to let you see the efficacy of these means for contentment, consider,

1. The heart of man is an empty hungry thing, that must be filled with something, and cannot abide want. Therefore it is, that when people miss their desired satisfaction in one thing, they go to make it up by another. Mordecai's not bowing to Haman discontented him, and he went to make it up by a revenge on all the Jews. But the misery is, there is a want in that thing too. It is like the putting of an empty spoon in the child's mouth, that may stop it for a moment; but as soon as it finds it is disappointed, and there is nothing in it, it falls a-crying again. Now, this directs you to that which infallibly makes up the want, and in which there is no want. And it is a sad matter, that those who have tried so many ways to make up their wants, will not try this too.

2. God is the Fountain of all perfection, and whatever is desirable in the creature is in an eminent way in God, Mat. xix. 17. If the sun shine in at your windows, ye do not complain for want of candle-light. If all the vessels in your house were emptied of water, and the fountain were brought into it, ye are at no loss, but in better case than before. Even so, if all created streams should dry up, if ye have God for your God, ye may say indeed, that ye want these created things, but ye have all the good that was in them, in another, to wit, in God. Ye want the vessels, but ye want not the water of comfort that was in them, for ye have it in God.

3. Having God for your God, ye have all in the promise, Rev.

xxi. 7. He is unreasonably dissatisfied that has a good stock in bills and bonds from a sure hand, though he has little in his pocket, especially when all that is needful will be upon them answered on demand. He that has the lively faith of inheriting all things at length, will find it none of the most difficult tasks to be served with very little for the present.

4. *Lastly*, Having God for your God, the nature of your afflictions is altered. Your crosses are changed from curses into blessings; and however heavy they be, they run in the channel of the covenant to the common end of all covenant-blessings, your good, Rom. viii. 28.

This way of believing in order to contentment is,

1. A sure way, which will infallibly produce it, as surely as the laying of a hungry babe to a full breast will stay it. How many ways do men try for this which all misgive? but this cannot misgive, seeing God in Christ is a full contenting object. And if our faith were perfect, our contentment would be so too. When faith is perfected in sight in heaven, the saints will be warm without clothes, full without meat, and rich without money, for God will be all to them.

2. A short way, by which we may come quickly to it. What a far way about do men go for contentment, while they compass the creation for it, and when all is done miss it? But here we may say, 'Be not afraid, only believe,' Mark v. 36.

3. The only way; there is no other way to come to it. Fulness in the world will not do it; for as the estate enlarges, the desire enlarges too, and knows no bounds till it comes to that which is infinite; and thither it cannot come till it comes to God. A kingdom could not content Ahab, discontent crept in under a crown on his head, 1 Kings xxi. 4. If ye do not take up your soul's rest in God as your God in Christ, no considerations will prevail to content you. But if ye do, there are several considerations that may be of good use to you. As,

1. Consider, that the heaviest thing in thy lot comes out of a friend's hand. It is good news to Zion in the worst of times, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that sayeth unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!' Isa. lii. 7. Whoever be the instruments of our affliction, and whose hand soever be heavy on us, we meet with nothing but what comes through our Lord's fingers, John v. 22. 'The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son. And will we not venture our outward condition in his hand, on which we venture ourselves for eternity?

A tongue, far less a hand, cannot move against us but by him, 2 Sam. xvi. 10.

2. Consider how unmeet you are to carve for yourselves; 'and should it be according to thy mind?' Job xxxiv. 33. How weak are ye to discern your true interest? Could ye venture to pilot yourselves through the rocks and shelves in the world? No, ye dare not, if ye know yourselves. Why will ye not then resign yourselves to wise Providence? But, say ye, it is only in some things we would have it so or so. Ay, but Christ will be steersman for thee through the whole, or not at all. He will not share the government with thee; and there is no reason he should, for thou art weak, and seest not far off. There is many a pleasant green path in the world that leads into the lion's den, and many a rugged way that leads into a paradise: thou seest the hithermost end of the way, but not the far end; he sees it.

3. Have ye not already lived to see your hopes and fears both baffled by the conduct of wise Providence? As for the hopes ye have conceived of the choice of your own wilful will, have ye not been sometimes made to let the knife drop with shame, after ye have cut your fingers in carving for yourself; like Lot, not daring to stay in all the plain, though sometime before he built his own nest in the heart of it? And for your fears of the conduct of Providence, have ye not seen how God has drawn you to your good against your will, and that it was good ye were crossed in such a matter, and that such a project of yours was baffled? Seeing, then, we are such bunglers at the carving of our lot, it is reasonable we quit the knife, and give it over, as Jacob did in Joseph's case.

4. Consider, that there is much about the ordering of thy lot, infinitely more than thou art master of thyself. Believe it,

(1.) That the seven eyes of Infinite wisdom are about it, Zech. iii. 9; Now in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. There is no chance-work in the world, no random work in thy condition; it is not a work huddled up in a haste. The scheme of it was drawn from eternity, and lay before the Lord, without any need of alteration. Every thing in thy condition, however late brought forth, was from eternity in the womb of the wise decree, Zech. vi. 1.

(2.) That there is a soft hand of grace and goodness about it, Rom. viii. 28. A gracious Providence brings it forth out of the womb of the decree: why should we not then embrace it, and welcome it into the world? There is a stream of grace that goes through all the dispensations of providence to the Lord's people. Now, when Infinite Wisdom, tempered with grace and good-will,

orders our lot, is it not reasonable, that we be fully content with it? Hence I infer,

1. Thy condition, whatever it is, is for God's honour; for it is ordered by him who does all for that end, and cannot fail of his design. Though thou dost not see how it is so, thou mayest believe that it is so, upon this ground. Providence runs much underground, so as weak man cannot see how the means answer the end: but God sees it, and that is enough. This is a contenting consideration to a gracious soul, that will be pleased with that which may glorify God, Phil. i. 20.

2. Thy condition is good for thee, Rom. viii. 28. That may be good that is not pleasant; it may bring profit that brings no pleasure. God loves to work by contraries, to bring health to the soul out of sickness of the body, to enrich his people by poverty, to do them good by crossing of them, and blow them to their harbour by teeth-winds.

3. Nay, it is best for thee. If thou be a child of God, thy present lot in the world is the best thou couldst have for the present. Infinite Wisdom sees it is so; and grace and good-will makes it so. All God's works are perfect in their kind, Deut. xxxii. 4. Will vain man come after God, and tell him how to mend his work? If it were not fittest for his own holy ends, it were not perfect. Nay, if thou be not in Christ, those things in thy lot which thou art discontented with, thy crosses and afflictions, are best for thee; for if any thing in thy lot bring thee to God, it will be this. Which brings me to a fifth thing.

5. Consider that those things in thy lot which thou art so ready to be discontented with, are truly necessary for thee, Lam. iii. 33. If thou couldst want them, thou wouldst not get them; for God takes no pleasure merely in making his creatures miserable. If thy lot be afflicted, know that strong diseases must have strong remedies: blame not the physician for that, but the disease. The wilful child would live without the rod, but the parent sees it necessary to chastise him. If God withdraw any thing from thee, it is but to starve a lust that would feed on it; if he lay on thee what thou wouldst not, it is but to bear down a lust, that otherwise would carry thee headlong. Give Providence a fair hearing, it will answer for itself. Why should people then cast out with their mercies, and be angry with their blessings?

6. Consider that great things in one's lot have a great burden with them. A man will get a softer bed in a palace than in a cottage, but the mean man will readily sleep sounder in his cottage than the king in his palace. People look to the great things which

others have beyond them, but they do not consider the burden going along with them. They who want the one want the other too, and therefore have reason to be content.

(1.) Where there is a great trust, there is a great reckoning, Luke xii. 48. Thou seest others have much that thou wantest, grudge it not; they have the more to reckon for. God keeps an account of all his mercies bestowed on all men, and they that have most now have most to account for when the Lord shall seek an account of his servants. Look well to thyself, and be content. I fear it be found, that for as little as thou hast, thou hast more than thou canst guide well.

(2.) Great things in the world are great snares, and bring great dangers along with them, Mark x. 23. They that walk low make not such a figure as those that walk on high; but the latter are most apt to fall. How foud are we of the world even when it frowns on us? what would become of us if it did nothing but smile? It is hard to carry a full cup even. Affliction is often seasonable ballast to a light heart, that prosperity would give too much sail to, till it should be sunk.

7. Consider, if thou be a child of God, that which thou hast, thou hast on free cost, Rom. viii. 32. And therefore, though it be little, it is better to thee than the abundance of many others, which will bring a dear reckoning at length. The children of the family may fare more coarsely than strangers; but there is a great difference; the strangers have a reckoning for it when they go away; but the children have nothing to pay.

(1.) Remember thou forfeited all in Adam; it is a mercy that thou hast any thing at all. I know nothing but sin and death that we can lay claim to as our own property, Lam. iii. 39. He that deserves hell has no reason to complain, while he is out of it.

(2.) Any thing which thou hast a covenant right to now, is through Christ; it is the purchase of his blood. So that makes it precious, as being the price of blood; and that should make us content with it, seeing we have it freely through him.

8. Consider the vanity of all things below the sun, Eccl. i. 2. A just estimation of worldly things would make us content with very little. But a blind judgment first sets an exorbitant price on earthly things, and raises the value of them; and then people think never to get enough of them. But low thoughts of them would clip the wings of our affections to them, and little of them would content us, Prov. xxiii. 5. Riches make themselves wings, and fly away. There is a wing of chance, casualties, and losses: and though by thy wisdom thou could clip all these wings, yet there is a wing of death and mortality that will carry them away.

9. Consider the preciousness and excellency of heavenly things, Col. iii. 2. More heavenly-mindedness would make us less anxious about these things. If we be in hazard of losing these, it is madness to be taken up about trifles, and concerned with earthly losses. Will he whose life is in hazard go up and down making moan for a sore finger? And if they be secured, it is horrid ingratitude to be discontent with our lot here. Would a man that has a ship loaded with goods coming ashore, vex himself for losing a pin out of his sleeve, or a penny out of his pocket? Heaven will make up all our losses; and hell will make men forget their greatest crosses in the world.

Lastly, Consider much of death and eternity. For as little as any of us have, we have perhaps as much as will serve our turn here. Our time is uncertain. It is folly to vex ourselves, though we have not all conveniences that we would desire in a house that we have no tack of, but may remove from it to-morrow.

I have insisted largely on this point, because it is so very necessary. Labour for a full contentment with your condition. This is the way to make a virtue of a necessity; for our discontent and uneasiness will not add a cubit to the stature of our lot. And that which God will make crooked in it, we will not get made straight, however uneasy we may be about it.

II. We are to consider the duty of this command, as it respects our neighbour. And that is a right and charitable or loving frame of spirit towards himself and all that is his. We may take up this in five things, which are here required.

1. Love to our neighbour's person, as to ourselves, Rom. xiii. 9. For seeing this command forbids us to wrong him so much as in thought, it plainly binds love to him upon us; not in word only, nor in deed only, by doing him good, but in heart, that our bowels move towards him, for the sake of God. For whatever be unholy in him, yet he is one of God's creatures, of the same nature with ourselves, and capable of enjoying the same God with us.

2. An upright respect to what is his, for his sake. As we are to love himself for God's sake, so what is his for his sake, Deut. xxii. 1. A careless disposition and unconcernedness about what is our neighbour's, can never be a right frame to what is his. So it is an argument of the world's corruption, that all men seek their own things, and are so little concerned for the things of others. That is not charitable walking, Phil. ii. 4.

3. An hearty desire of his welfare and prosperity in all things, as of our own, his honour, life, chastity, wealth, good name, and whatever is his. This we owe to our very enemies, so far as it may be

consistent with the honour of God, and their own spiritual good, which is the main thing we are to desire for all. I add this, because sometimes the loss of these may be more to the honour of God, and our neighbour's advantage, than the having of them, to wit, when they are abused to sin, Rom. xii. 20. Matth. v. 44.

4. A real complacency in his welfare and the welfare of what is his, Rom. xii. 15. If our hearts rejoice not in our neighbour's welfare, we covet what he has, and secretly in our hearts devour it. But as we are to be well content with our own condition, so we are to be well content with our neighbour's welfare.

5. *Lastly*, A cordial sympathy with him in any evil that befalls him, Rom. xii. 20. For we are members one of another; and as every member shares in the grief of any one, so should we in one another's afflictions. A hard heart unconcerned with the afflictions of others, especially where people talk to the grief of those whom God has wounded, is a sign of a wretched temper and uncharitable frame of spirit, Psal. lxxix. 26. and xxxv. 13, 14, 15.

III. We must consider this command as it respects the root of sin. And so it requires original righteousness, a holy frame of the soul, whereby it is bent to all good, and averse to all evil; that holy frame of spirit that was in the first Adam when he was created, and all along in the second Adam. And thus this command carries the matter of holiness to the utmost point.

That this is here required, will appear, if ye consider that this command forbids the very first risings of original corruption, whose very nature it is to be still coveting; and therefore original corruption itself is forbidden, and consequently original righteousness required.

Not only good actions are required by the holy law, but a holy temper of the spirit, consisting in the light of the mind taking up duty, a bent of the will inclining ever to good, and averse to every evil, and the orderliness of the affections, keeping precisely within the holy boundaries set to them by the law, not to look over the hedge in the least point.

This is certainly required somewhere in the law; for men are condemned for the want of it; and in none of the commands is it required, if it be not here. And thus ye may see the utter impossibility of keeping perfectly these commands; for whatever men pretend as to the rest, who of Adam's children do not stick here as soon as they are born?

This command reaches us as soon as we are born; nay as soon as we are living souls in the womb, requiring of us what we have not to produce, and that is an holy nature. But, alas! we are evil be-

fore we can do evil; and we want that holy nature naturally, and therefore have at length such unholy lives.

If it be inquired, How this command in this point is answered sincerely? *Ans.* It is by our being renewed in the spirit of our minds, our partaking of the new nature in regeneration, where old things being done away, and all things becoming new, we are made new creatures. This is that new nature which is the image of God repaired, with a perfection of parts, to be crowned in heaven with a perfection of degrees.

And it is worthy of our observation, that Jesus Christ being to fulfil all righteousness, was born holy, and so fulfilled this command for us. In him the law has its due, he being a man, who from his birth had a holy pure nature, a holy frame of spirit, without the least irregularity or disorder.

To conclude, ye may see the command is pure, just, and holy, however impure we be; and requires of us the utmost purity of heart, life and nature.

I now proceed to consider the sins forbidden.

Quest. 'What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?'

Ans. 'The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbour, and all inordinate motions and affections to any thing that is his.'

This command is a curb and bridle to the distempered heart of man, which of all parts of man is the hardest to be commanded and kept within bounds. Men may be of a courteous obliging behaviour, keep in their hands from killing, or what tendeth thereunto, their bodies from uncleanness, their hands from stealing, and their tongues from lying; while, in the mean time, the heart in all these respects may be going within the breast like a troubled sea, unto which this command by divine authority saith, Peace, and be still.

The heart distempered by original sins runs out in the irascible faculty in tormenting passions, bearing an aversion of the heart to what the Lord in his wisdom lays before men. This great stream of the corruption of our nature divides itself into two branches; one running against our own condition, namely, a torrent of discontent; the other against our neighbour, namely, envying and grudging at his good. In the concupiscible faculty, in lusty affections and inordinate motions towards something which God has put out of our way, at least withheld from our closest embraces. This also divides itself into two branches; one running towards what is our own, namely, a sinful eagerness, lust, or inordinate motion of the heart to what we possess; the other running towards what is our

neighbour's, an inordinate affection to what is his. Thus the corrupt heart runs in a direct opposition to the will of God, refusing what he would have us to accept, and embracing closely what he would have us to stand at a distance from. The corrupt fountain with its several streams is all here forbidden. We shall speak to them all as laid before us, tracing the streams to the fountain-head.

FIRST, the streams in which the distemper of the heart runs are here forbidden expressly, because these are most exposed to our view. Let us view,

FIRST, The tormenting passions, in which the corruption of nature vents itself; for sin is in its own nature misery. We need but go in the paths of sin to make us miserable, and in the high road of duty to make us happy. We shall consider the tormenting passion,

First, Of discontent with our own estate or condition. This is plainly here forbidden; for discontentment is presupposed to coveting; and there could be no coveting of what we want without discontentment with what we have. The lusty gapings of the heart say, there is an uneasiness within. It is only the plague of discontentment that makes the heart cry, Give, give.

I. I will shew the evil of discontentment, and paint out this sin in its black^o colours. It is the hue of hell all over.

1. Discontent is, in the nature of it, a compound of the blackest ingredients, the scum of the corrupt heart boiling up, and mixed to make up the hellish composition.

1st, Unsubjection to and rebellion against the will of God, Hos. iv. 16. 'Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer;' backsliding or refractory, that will not admit the yoke farther than it is forced on. The discontented heart cannot submit, but sets its foot as par against the divine dispensation. Though God guides and governs the world, they are the malcontents, that are not pleased with the government, but mutiny against it. What pleases God, pleases not them; what is right in God's eyes, is evil in theirs. And nothing will please them, but to have the reins of government out of God's hands into their own; though, if their passion did not blind their judgment, they might see how they would quickly fire the little world of their own and other's condition, if they had the reins in their own hand.

2dly, Sorrow of heart under the divine dispensation towards them. It is not according to their mind, and so their heart sinks in sorrow, 1 Kings xxi. 4. God crosses their will, and they pierce their own hearts with many sorrows; as if a man, because he cannot stop the course of the sun in the firmament, would wrap up himself in darkness.

And this is a killing sorrow, a sword thrust into a man's heart

by his own hands, 2 Cor. vii. 10. It melts a man's heart within him; like a vulture, preys upon his natural spirits, tending to shorten his days. It makes him dumpish and heavy like Ahab, and is a heavy load above the burden of affliction. That is the black smoke of discontentment, which yet often breaks out into a fiery flame, as in the same case of Ahab, where Naboth fell a sacrifice to it.

3dly, Anger and wrath against their lot, Jude 16. *Complainers*. The word signifies such as are angry at their lot, and in the distributions Providence makes of the world, still complain that the least or worst part of it falls to their share. Thus the discontented do in their hearts bark at the mountains of brass, Zech. vi. 1; as dogs do at the moon, and with the same success. They are angry with God's dispensations, and their hearts rise against it, and snarl at it.

And this is a fretting anger, whereby men disquiet and vex themselves in vain, like men dashing their heads against the wall; the wall stands unmoved, but their heads are wounded. Like a wild bull in a net, the more he stirs, the faster is he held; so that still they return with the loss. Thus discontent is in the heart like a serpent gnawing the bowels, and makes a man as a moth to himself, consuming him, or a lion tearing himself, Job xviii. 4.

Lastly, There is a spice of heart-blasphemy in it; for it strikes very directly against God the Governor of the world, and accuses his administration; and for an evidence of this, it sometimes breaks out in words, Mal. iii. 13, 14, 15; 'Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord: yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy: yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.' Discontent accuses him,

(1.) Of folly, as if he were not wise enough to govern the world. The peevish discontented person, in his false light, sees many flaws in the conduct of Providence, and pretends to tell God how he may correct his work, and how it would be better. If the work of Providence be wisely done, why are we discontent with it? or would we be discontent with it, if we did not think we saw how it should be otherwise, and how it might be mended?

(2.) Of injustice, as if he did us wrong. The judge of all the earth cannot but do right. He cannot be bribed nor biassed; yet the discontented heart rises against him, and blasphemes him as an respecter of persons. It looks on his distributive justice (if we may so call it, for indeed all is his own, not ours) with an evil eye, and

accuses him of partiality in not giving them as good as others, complaining of their share. On his corrective justice, if they did not deserve what he lays on them. For if we do deserve the evil in our lot, there is no wrong done us; and why do we then complain? And to fill up the measure, it accuseth him,

(3.) Of cruelty. Job, in a fit of discontent, speaks it out, chap. xxx. 21; 'Thou art become cruel to me.' Thus goodness itself is blasphemed by the discontented, who behave as if they were under the hands of a merciless tyrant, who would sport himself with one's misery. Discontent fills the heart with black and hard thoughts of God, and represents him as a rigid master and cruel lord; otherwise people would lay their hand on their mouth, and be content.

Some will say, that their discontent is with themselves, not with God, having brought their cross on with their own hands. *Ans.* If it be the effect of your sin, ye may mourn for your sin, but ye should the rather be content with your lot. And as for mismanagements, there is a providence that reaches them, and so God is our party still: but nothing is more ordinary than that, Prov. xix. 3; 'The foolishness of man perverteth his way; and his heart fretteth against the Lord.'

Others say, that it is with the instruments of their trouble they are discontented. *Ans.* But consider that they are but instruments in God's hand, in the hand of his providence, and therefore ye should not be discontent. Say as David did to the sons of Zeruiah, 'What have I to do with you? so let him curse because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?' 2 Sam. xvi. 10. No creature can be more to us than God makes it to be: if then God shall squeeze any creature dry of comfort to us, and we thereupon prove discontented, whatever we pretend, our hearts fret against the Lord, Exod. xvi. 2; compare ver. 7.

Thus ye see the picture of discontent; and does it not look very black? There are ounces and pounds of rebellion against the will of God, killing sorrow and fretting anger, and hideous heart-blasphemy in it, while there is not one grain of religion or reason that goes into this hellish composition. If one should take it for a description of hell, he would not be far out; for the truth is, discontent is a hell in the bosom, and a lively emblem of the pit of darkness.

2. If ye view discontentment in the rise of it, ye will see further into the evil of it. It takes its rise from,

1st, A blinded judgment which puts darkness for light, and light for darkness, and cannot see into the wisdom of the conduct of Pro-

vidence, that does all things well. When our blind minds begin to refine on the management of holy Providence, they are apt to produce discontent, which in respect of Providence is always unreasonable. See how good Jacob bewrays his folly and ignorance of the methods of providence, Gen. xlii. 36; 'Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.' Compare with this the promise, Rom. viii. 28; 'All these things shall work together for good to them that love the Lord, to those who are the called according to his purpose;' and also compare the event; and ye will see that all these things were for the benefit of the good Patriarch, and that of his numerous family.

Yea, oft-times does it so readily rise out of darkness, that it springs up from mere suspicion, misapprehension, and mistake, so that a little cloud of that nature over the mind will in the end cover the mind with the blackness of discontent: as in the case of Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 4; compare ver. 6. And indeed there is never a ground of discontent, but the blind mind does magnify it, and lays to it such heaps of rubbish, as the heart is not able to stand under it, as in the case of Rachel, Gen. xxx. 1; 'When Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.' Thus are our own dark minds the anvil on which our miseries are beat out into greater breadth and length than they are of, as they come out of the hand of God, to the end they may cover our hearts with discontent. Happy is the man that can take up his cross as God lays it down, without adding more to it.

2dly, A proud heart. Haman's pride discontented him for want of bows and cringes from Mordecai, which would never have troubled a humble man. A proud heart is a *wide* heart, Prov. xxviii. 25. *Heb.* It is not little that will fill it; it is long ere it will say, it is enough: and so it natively produces discontent. The devil is the proudest creature, and withal the most discontented; for pride and discontent lodge always under one roof. And could we get blood let of the heart-vein of pride, we would see the swelling ulcer of discontent fall apace.

3. An unmortified affection to the creature, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10; Jonah had a gourd, and he was exceedingly glad of it, Jonah iv. 6; it is taken away, and then he was exceedingly discontented, ver. 9. The heart takes such a hold of such and such a created comfort, that it becomes like a live limb of a man's body; so when it is rent away, what wonder one cry out, as if men were cutting a limb off him? No body cries out for the losing of a tree leg, because it

has no communication with the members of the man's body, it is a dead thing. So, were our affection to the creature deadened to it, as it should be, discontent could have no access.

4. A spirit of unbelief. Want of faith marred the acceptance of Cain's offering, Heb. xi. 4; and opened the sluice of discontent on him too, Gen. iv. 5; 'Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.' Discontent feeds on wants, faith brings in the supply of wants, and can feed on it, while it is yet in the promise. Where unbelief is, then no wonder discontent prevail. A lively faith would kill discontent; whereas unbelief nourishes and cherishes it; for it puts an effectual bar in the way of the rest of the heart, which it can never attain but in God.

3. View it in the effect, and it will appear very black. The tree is known by its fruits.

1st, It mars communion with and access to God. Muddy and troubled water receives not the image of the sun, as a clear and standing water will do. So a discontented heart is unfit for communion with a holy God, 1 Tim. ii. 8; 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?' If one would have communion with God, his heart must not be boiling with anger against his brother, Matth. v. 23, 24. How then can he have it, when he is angry with his God, as in discontent?

2dly, It quite unfits a man for holy duties, so that he cannot perform them rightly or acceptably, for speaking to God in prayer, or his speaking to them by his word. 1. It deadens one's heart within him as in Nabal's case, 1 Sam. xxv. 37. whose 'heart died within him, and he became as a stone.' 2. It takes away the relish of spiritual things, vitiates the taste, and turns them sapless to people, as it did to the Israelites in Egypt, Exod. vi. 7,—9. 3. It carries the heart off the duty, to pore on the ground of discontent, and makes them drive heavily in God's worship, and serve him drooping and heartless, as it did the Jews in Malachi's time, Mal. ii. 13, 14. Their unkindness to their wives made them discontented and fretful, so that when they came to the temple, they were quite out of humour.

3dly, Nay, it unfits people for the work of their ordinary calling. It is not only an enemy to grace, but to gifts too, and common prudence. The black fumes ascending from the discontented heart overcloud the judgment in ordinary matters, that the one hand knows not what the other is doing, as in Nabal's case, who should have gone and made his peace with David. So that it is a plague to people, not only as Christians, but as men.

4thly, It mars the comfort of society, and makes people uneasy to

those that are about them. When Elkanah went up to Shiloh with his family to rejoice before the Lord, fretting Hannah is out of tune, and mars the harmony, 1 Sam. i. 7, 8. Peninnah provokes Hannah, Hannah is angry with her, and Elkanah with both. So it is the pest of society, and makes an evil world ten times worse. It makes people a burden to others, because it gives them a cloudy day while it lasts.

5thly, It is a torment to one's self, and makes a man his own tormentor, 1 Kings xxi. 4. It wraps him up in darkness, feeds him with bitterness, and gives him gall and wormwood to drink, Prov. xv. 16. for his ordinary. It robs him of the best worldly thing he can possess, i. e. his peace and tranquillity of mind; and makes his mind within him as the troubled sea that cannot rest. So the discontented person is on a continual rack, and he himself is executioner. All sins are displeasing to God, yet in many there is some pleasure to men, both the actors and others; but corrupt nature cannot strain any pleasure out of this in one's self, nor in others either, unless, like the devil, they have a pleasure in seeing others miserable.

6thly, It is not only tormenting to one's mind, but is ruinous to the body, Prov. xvii. 22. 'A broken spirit drieth the bones.' It is a degree of self-murder. It wastes the natural spirits, and has a native tendency to cut short one's days. The soul and body are so knit, that they mutually affect one another; and the mind disordered by fretting passions, will fret the body, and consume it like a moth.

7thly, It sucks the sap out of all one's enjoyments. As a few drops of gall will imbitter a cup of wine, and a few drops of ink will blacken a cup of the clearest liquor; so discontent upon one ground will imbitter and blacken all other enjoyments. See it in Haman, Esth. v. 11,—13. 'And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman said, moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet which she had prepared, but myself; and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king. Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.' See it also in Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 4. 'And Ahab came into his house, heavy and displeased, because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers: and he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.' As con-

tentment turns all metals into gold, so discontentment turns them into iron. What taste is there in the white of an egg without salt? There is as much as in any enjoyment under the sun without contentment. If we have not that for seasoning to our comforts, they are tasteless and sapless as ashes. And therefore let a man have what he will he enjoys no more than what he has contentment in.

8thly, Hence it always makes one unthankful. Let Providence set the discontented man in a paradise, the fruit of that one tree which is forbidden him, and which he is so uneasy about, will so im-bitter him, that he will not give God thanks for all the variety of other delights which the garden is furnished with. For all these avail him nothing while that is kept out of his reach. It will make him pore so on his cross, that he will not look over his shoulder to all his comforts. Ingratitude is a sin of a black die: how much more must that be so which is the cause of it?

Lastly, It is a fruitful womb of other sins, it brings forth a great brood of other lusts. When once it entered into Adam's heart, it made him at one stroke break through all the ten commandments. It were an endless labour to recount the viporous brood that comes forth of this cockatrice-egg, that fry of enormous lusts that are bred by it. But for a swatch of this, I will instance in three of the grossest sins that man can readily fall into, which are the natural product of discontentment.

(1.) Murder, the grossest sin of the second table, a sin which a peculiar vengeance pursues, and which a natural conscience so startles at, that it is a continual lash to the murderer. This is the product of discontent; for when once the heart smoking with discontent, breaks out into a flame, it breathes out blood and slaughter. So Ahab's discontent was the cause of the murder of Naboth, with all the mocking of God, the perjury and robbery that attended it, 1 Kings xxi. Nay, not content with the murder of a single person, it gaped in Haman to devour a righteous nation for one man's cause, Esth. iii. 6. Nay, the worst sort of murder proceeds from it; the murder of nearest relations, as in the case of Cain's murdering Abel, Gen. iv. 5, 8. And, which is worst of all, self-murder is what always proceeds from it, as in the case of Ahithophel, 2 Sam. xvii. 23. People grow discontented with their lot, their proud hearts are not able to bear it; so they turn desperate, seeing they cannot help it, and make away with themselves.

(2.) Dealing with the devil. The discontented being angry with God, they are in a fair way to be a prey to Satan. Thus Saul, in a fit of discontent, went to the witch at Endor, 1 Sam. xxviii. The discontented heart is a drumly heart, and it is in such waters that

Satan loves to fish. And here is his hook wherewith he catches them; he proffers to do that for them, or give that to them, which God will not. And they being intent upon it, so that they cannot be easy without it, are easily ensnared. Whereof the world has afforded many miserable instances.

(3.) Blasphemy against God, the grossest sin of the first table, for of that kind is the unpardonable sin. Discontent is in its own nature a practical blasphemy, and therefore when it comes to a height, it breaks out in open blasphemy, as in that abominable mouth, 2 Kings vi. ult. 'This evil is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?' For being angry with God, people begin to quarrel with him, and murmur against him; and if they do not hold in time, they are in a fair way to blaspheme. Therefore it is marked concerning Job, how by his sitting down contented under all his losses the devil missed the mark he aimed at in them, Job i. ult. compare ver. 11. It is marked concerning Aaron, that he held his peace, Lev. x. 3. for it is hard to speak, and speak right, under great pressures. These effects may convince us of the exceeding evil of this root of bitterness.

Lastly, View it in the qualities that agree to it, which are not in many other sins. I will name the following.

1st, It is the noted rebel in the kingdom of providence. God who has created the world, vindicates the government of it to himself alone. But the discontented go about to wrest the reins of government out of his hand. It wages war with the Governor of the world, and strives with him, as if the clay should strive with the potter, and say, 'Why hast thou made me thus?'

2. It is a peculiar despiser of the kingdom of grace. There is a particular malignity in it against the grace of the gospel. For it throws contempt on God, heaven, and all the purchase of Christ, which is offered in the gospel to fill up the room of what the discontented wants, Exod. vi. 7, 9. It is true, other lusts do so too, as covetousness, sensuality, and profaneness. But here lies the difference; these lusts have a bait of profit or pleasure with them, and have something to put in the room of spiritual things; discontent has no bait with it, nor any thing to put in the room of them. If one should reject your converse, who has another less worthy to converse with, it is a slight: but if one that has none, if they take not you, do reject you, that is a greater contempt by far. So the discontented will rather pine away without any comfort, than take it from the gospel. Again, in these lusts there is a folly and simplicity; but in discontent there is a kind of gravity and devilish seriousness. To be contemned by a simple one or a roving fool, is not

easy; but it is worse by far to be contemned in a way of gravity and deliberation. This is most cutting.

Lastly, It follows men to, and will continue with them, in the kingdom of darkness for ever. There are some lusts which men have no use for beyond the line of time; the covetous will despise their gold, money and wealth in hell, the unclean person his filthy companions, &c. But when the discontented die without repentance, their works will follow them to the pit. In hell they will be discontented for ever without the least intermission; they will never give one smile more, but an eternal cloud of darkness will be on their countenance, and they will fret, murmur, and rage against God and themselves and blaspheme for evermore.

Let us see the evil of this, then, and guard against it.

Secondly, I will offer some remedies against it, and advices in the case.

1. Practise the directions for contentment; particularly take God for your God in Christ, and labour to believe he is so. Take him in the room of whatever ye want, or lies on you, which discontents you. Without this all else will be in vain. The greatest hole in your heart, the enjoyment of God is able to make up. And God often makes such in the hearts of men and women, that there may be room for himself, who otherwise is not missed, Zeph. iii. 17. 'The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.'

2. Labour to be humble. Humility lets us see our true worth that it is nothing, and so fences the heart against discontent, Gen. xxxii. 10. It makes one wonder he has any thing at all left him, and so lets him into the mystery of that text, 1 Thess. v. 18. 'In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.' He that is convinced that he deserves death, will not be discontent with banishment. And he that believes that he deserves to lose the presence of God for ever, will lay his hand on his mouth under temporal losses.

3. Believe that there is nothing in the world in which either your happiness or misery is bound up. I know there are things of which we wont to speak so; but the world's happiness or misery is but a shadow of these things. That is happiness where a man wants no more than he can desire, and that is only in the enjoyment of God. And that is misery where one has nothing desirable left him, and none see that till they be in hell.

4. Do not pore upon your crosses, for that does but breed and feed discontent, Psal. xxxix. 3. It is observable, that Jacob would

not call his son Benoni, lest that should at every naming of the child ruffle his wound. But you may dwell upon your affliction as from the hand of God, to consider wherefore the Lord has contended, that so you may get the good of it. But turn your eyes on your mercies which you enjoy and be thankful.

5. Be much exercised in religious duties. Go often to your knees, and pour out your hearts before the Lord, and tell him all your wants. This gave Hannah a sweet ease, 1 Sam. i. 18. Go often to your Bibles, and hear the good news there from the far country, that is above the clouds, where there is neither cloud nor rain, Psal. lxxiii. 16, 17. and cxix. 92. There are springs of consolation there, which a person never tastes of, till he be brought into the condition for which they were placed there.

6. Be always exercised in some honest business. Idleness is dangerous many ways, particularly in the point of discontent. It is a nurse and fosterer of it. It is the standing pool that gathers mud; and in those that are idle Satan will be busy, and will not miss the opportunity.

7. Curb it as soon as it begins to set out its head, nip it in the bud, for it is a fire that gathers force by continuing and spreading. The water which at the head might be easily passed, comes afterwards to be so big as may easily drown. Discontent is a striving with God, and so is like the letting out of waters, which however small at the beginning, grows to a monstrous bigness, if not timely remedied.

Lastly, Live by faith; that is the best preservative against discontent. Faith stays the soul in all events on the promises; gives a favourable view of all crosses and afflictions, as tending to the good of the party; lays hold upon things unseen as the great portion; and so lessens the care about things of the world; and, in a word, finds all it wants in God. Thus much of discontent.

II. The branch that runs against our neighbour's condition is envying and grudging. The object of this sin is the good of our neighbour; and the better the object is, the worse is the sin. It runs through the objects of all the other commands of the second table; for the heart is apt to envy our neighbour's honour, life, &c. It is near of kin to discontent which always accompanies it, as we may see in the case of Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 4. for it goes always on a comparison of our neighbour's condition with one's own, the grudge being that they have more or as much as we.

I shall shew the evil of it, and the remedies thereof.

First, I shall shew the evil of it briefly.

1. View it in the ingredients thereof, whereof it is made up.

1st, Sorrow and grief for the good of our neighbour, 1 Cor. xiii. 4. (So opposite is it to charity); for envy makes the heart like the moon that shines full and clear in the night, as long as itself is the topping light, but grows pale and wan as soon as the sun riseth, John iii. 26. The prosperity and welfare of others is a weight on the envious heart, a thorn in the evil eye, and a prick in that weak side, Gen. xxxi. 1.

2dly, Fretting anger at their good, Psal. xxxvii. 1. What makes others easy, makes the envious uneasy; and the more fresh and green others are by the providence of God, the more withered and fretted are they, Num. xi. 28, 29. So it was with Joseph's brethren. The sun shining on others burns them up; and the more it warms their neighbour, the more it scorches them, and makes the black fume of envy and grudge to ascend.

2. View it in the springs and rise thereof.

1st, Covetousness of what is their neighbour's. Had not Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard he had not grudged him the possession of it. The envious would draw all to themselves; and what they are sorry others should keep, they themselves would fain possess. A heart knit to the world, and carnal self-interest cannot miss to be envious.

2dly, Discontent. The envious are always discontented that they have not more than others, or that they want what others do enjoy, Discontent makes an empty room with them, and envy frets that it is not filled up with what belongs to their neighbour.

3dly, Pride and selfishness, Gal. v. ult. Pride so exalts one's self, and depresses others, that nothing is too much for the proud man, and nothing too little for his neighbour. Selfishness cares only for what is one's own, and has no regard to the interest of our neighbour; quite contrary to the spirit of the gospel, that teaches, that every man should not look on his own things, but also on the things of others, Phil. ii. 4. Hence the man cannot endure to see others like him, far less above him.

3. View it in the effects thereof. It has almost the same as those of discontent, which may be well applied thereto. I will only say, that envy is a sword, and wounds three at once.

1st, It strikes against God, being highly offensive and dishonourable to him. It quarrels his government of the world, and accuses him of folly, partiality, and injustice, Matth. xx. 15. It cannot rest in the disposals of holy providence, but is ever picking quarrels with its management. Some have too much, others too little, the world is ill dealt; though had they the dealing of it, where there is one

complaint now, there would be ten in that case, for they would heap it up to themselves, come of others what would.

2dly, It strikes against our neighbour. It is a bitter disposition of spirit, wishing his ill-fare, and grudging his good; and not only binds up men's hands from doing him good, but natively tends to loose them to his hurt. It will be at him one way or other in word or deed, and there is no escaping the evil of it, Prov. xxvii. 4. 'Who is able to stand before envy?' Oft-times it drives on men to the greatest extravagancies, as it did Joseph's brethren to murder him; which being stopt, they sold him for a slave, Gen. xxxvii. 11, &c.

3. It strikes, at one's self, Job v. 2. 'Envy slayeth the silly man.' Though it be so weak as to do no execution on others, yet be sure it never misses a man's self; and it wounds one's self the deeper, that it cannot do much hurt to the party envied. It frets the mind, and keeps it always uneasy as upon tenter-hooks; nay, it ruins the body, and silently murders it, Prov. xiv. 30. 'Envy is the rottenness of the bones,' making a man to pine away, because others thrive.

Secondly, I shall give the remedies of this sin.

1. Taking and cleaving to God himself as our portion, Matth. vi. 21. God is a full portion, and in him there is enough for all; and if our souls rest in him, they will easily bear others having other things that we want. But the world can never satisfy; and therefore when people look for their portion in it, it is no wonder they be always complaining, and think others have more and better than they, because if they had it all alone, they would not have enough.

2. Loving God for his own sake, and our neighbour for his sake. Did we thus love, we would rejoice in God's honour, and our neighbour's welfare. This guarded Moses and John against envy, and made them joy in what others grieved at and grudged. An envious spirit is a narrow spirit, that is never concerned for the one nor the other, but for sweet self, to which all must be sacrificed by them.

3. Humility, which would make us low in our own eyes, and make others high. He that is in his own eyes nothing, will not grudge though his part be less than others; the chief of sinners will never think the highest seat among the favourites of providence belongs to him. And whoso have a due regard for others, will not grudge that it is well with them.

I come next to consider how the corruption of nature runs in concupiscence, lust, or inordinate affection. The two branches into which it divides itself are,

1. A lust after what is our own.

2. A lust after what is our neighbour's, or not ours.

First, A lust after what is our own. What God has given us, we may like and desire for the ends he has given it. But when that desire is inordinate, it is sinful, it is lust and inordinate affection, Col. iii. 5. Now the desire of, or love to, or liking of what is ours, is inordinate in these several cases following, all which are here forbidden.

1. The heart's being so glued to them, that it cannot want them, cannot part with them, 1 Cor. vi. 12. There is but one thing needful, Luke x. ult. the enjoyment of God. So God has made it, and therefore he would have us sit loose to all other things. When instead of that the heart cleaves to other things, so that it cannot part with them, that is a lust to them, that must be killed by weaning therefrom, Luke xiv. 26. There the heart grips too hard, and must have it.

2. A too great eagerness in the using of them, when the heart casts off the band of religion and reason, and runs loose after them. Thus a man may have a lust to his own meat or drink, 1 Sam. xiv. 32. For our affections even to lawful things need a curb, because they are ready to be violent; and the violent pulse of the affections to them is a symptom of a feverish soul distempered by original sin.

3. The desire of them for other ends than God has allowed and appointed; for then it is carried without the rule set by the Lord, and cannot miss to be inordinate. Thus oft-times God's good creatures are desired to be fuel to lusts, Jam. iv. 3, 4. To desire meat for our necessity, is not evil; but for our lusts, is not good. Whatever God has made ours, is not absolutely, but with a reserve, to wit, for such uses as he has allowed; if we go beyond that with them, it is a sinful lusting after the same, as if it were not ours at all. But, alas! in these things men are often like a tenant, who having taken a house to dwell in, would make bold to pull it down, and burn it for fuel.

4. The being led to the use of them, without reason, necessity, or expediency. Then we are under the power of them, and not they under our power, 1 Cor. vi. 12. It is lawful to eat, but to be a slave to unreasonable appetite is a sin, and so in other cases. For so the soul is degraded, and made to serve a lust, instead of commanding and regulating the desire, which ought always to be subject to right reason. And however common this is, and but little regarded, it is the native effect of original sin, which has disturbed the order and beautiful harmony of the faculties of the soul; the affections like an unruly horse, refusing to be held in by the curb of reason.

5. The using of them to the hurt either of soul or body; in that

case the desire cannot but be inordinate. Our souls and bodies are the Lord's, and he says as of his own, 'Do thyself no harm.' It must needs be a lust that carries a man over the belly of this command. Yet, alas! how many such motions and affections have people to what is even their own, that to satisfy them they sacrifice both their spiritual and temporal interests! Hence it is a good rule in the use of lawful things, That then people do exceed, when by the use of them they are unfitted, either for the service of God, or their own interest.

6. The using of them without any regard to the honour of God, 1 Cor. x. 31. The glory of God should regulate us in all things, determine us to the use of what is ours, and determine us against it; all being to be cut and carved as may best suit that end.

Secondly, A lust after what is our neighbour's or not ours. Every desire of what is our neighbour's is not sinful, otherwise there could be no trading, buying, selling, exchanging, bargaining, &c. amongst men. There are holy boundaries set to these desires by the law of God; and as long as they abide within these, they are lawful; but when they exceed, they are inordinate, lustings, and coveting, and here forbidden. Now they are inordinate,

1. When the very having of them is unlawful, the desire of them is a lust, and inordinate motion. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife*; for as John said to Herod, 'It is not lawful for thee to have her,' viz. his brother's wife, Matth. xiv. 4. What is absolutely forbidden us, we may no way desire, otherwise we do but re-act Adam's sin, in lusting after the forbidden fruit. The heart joins with those things which God has put out of its embrace, and requires it to stand at a distance from.

2. Though the having of them may be lawful, as of our neighbour's house, servant, ox, &c. yet the desire of them may be a lust, and is so in several cases; as,

1st, When they are desired for unlawful ends, to feed some lust, as when a man desires his neighbour's drink, not for strength, but drunkenness, this is a sinful coveting, an inordinate motion to what is his, though he pay for it. O how much sin is contracted this way, that is never noticed: how many things are desired and purchased too from others, even in a lawful way, which are for no other end desired but to feed some lust? If our desires be not regulated by reason, necessity, or expediency, they are but sinful lustings. This sinful humour in the hearts of men and women, has produced many trades and inventions in the world, which had never been known if man's nature had not been corrupted. And these are maintained

and encouraged, by people's care to gratify their lusts, their vanity, pride, sensuality, &c. Whereas, if they walked strictly by necessity and expediency, according to religion and reason, there would be no more use for them than there is of a third wheel to a cart. From the beginning it was not so. Therefore surely the heart is dis-tempered, and these the disorderly motions.

2dly, When the desire sets people on unlawful means to procure them, it is a lust. Though it be lawful to have one's neighbour's servant, his ox, &c. they may be thine lawfully; yet, if thy desire set thee on underhand dealing to rob him of his servant, to cheat or wheedle him out of his ox, &c. it is coveting them with a witness. And thus lust of covetousness thus acting keeps the world in a continual ferment, so that no man is sure of another. For hardly is there a bargain made, but both buyer and seller labours to get something for this lust, as well as for his necessity and expediency. And what wonder is it, that one who has running sores in his hand, leaves some marks of them on every thing he touches? Such is our case by natural corruption.

3dly, When the desire, though it sets not an unlawful means, yet is too eager after what is another's. This sinful eagerness discovers itself several ways, all here forbidden; as,

(1.) When people cannot wait with ease the time they are to get the thing; but the feverish desire makes them uneasy, as Rachel was with the desire of children.

(2.) When they are overjoyed with the enjoyment of it, as Jonah was with his gourd. And indeed it is hard to joy, and not overjoy, in any thing that is not God or grace.

(3.) When they are fretted and discontented at the missing of it, as Ahab was, who, for ought appears, had no mind to seek Naboth's vineyard but for money, till his wicked wife put it into his head; but he was fretted for the want of it.

(4.) When they cannot be satisfied without it, but must have it, though not truly necessary, cost what it will, as Esau was set for the red pottage that his brother had. This makes a price that they call the price of affection, which often is nothing else but the price of unreasonable fancy, which must be gratified at any rate.

4thly, When the desire singly goes out after something that Providence has put out of one's reach, though the man has no mind to seek it, *may*, would not have it if it were offered him. This seems to have been David's sin, when he longed, and said, 'O that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!' 2 Sam. xxiii. 15. Some think this was a gallant soldier's wish, as if he had said, O that we could drive the Philistines'

garrison out of Bethlehem ! Some of the old Rabbi's think it was a pious wish, and that David longed for the Messiah that was to break out there. But it seems to be a sinful wish, as both the word which is used, Prov. xxi. 26 ; 'He coveteth greedily all the day long,' and the pointing in the original, seem to carry it. The weather was hot, and he was thirsty, and a violent fancy took him to have a drink out of the well of Bethlehem, where he had often drank in his young days. But I cannot think that ever he meant, that any body should go fetch it at that time, ver. 17 ; but his men seeing the humour he was in, ventured. Thus lust breaks out, and guilt is contracted, many ways. The eyes see something that is not ours, and the heart says, O that it were mine ! without any design about it. Something that God has locked up from us in providence, and the heart yearns after it, saying, O that I had it ! Something we hear others have got, a good gift, bargain, or match, and the heart says, O that it had fallen to my share ! and many such things, all without any design. They are inordinate desires and lustings, for they still imply a coveting, and a dissatisfaction in some sort with our lot, which the holy law can never allow.

In all these cases the desire of what is not ours is a lust, a sinful, inordinate motion, to what is our neighbour's.

Further, to trace this lust and lusting of the heart forbidden in this command, though it is as impossible for me to follow it in its several turnings and windings, as to tell the notes that appear where the beams of the sun are shining in a room. Besides the actual fulfilling of lusts, (Eph. ii. 3.) in deeds which they drive to, which belongs to other commands, there are other things forbidden here, viz.

1. Lust in the fruit fully ripe, though not fallen off in the act ; that is, when the lust is not only consented to and resolved upon, but all the measures are laid for bringing it forth into action. As Haman's lust of revenge, when he had got the king's sealed letters for the destruction of the Jews ; Joseph's mistress' lust, when she caught him, and said, *Lie with me*. This sometimes Providence blasts when come to all this ripeness, as in those cases, against the person's will. That is before God much alike as the sinful action itself. Sometimes conscience blasts it, so that the person suddenly retires as from the brink of a precipice, which he was going to throw himself over. That is before God as wanting but a very little of the sin completed. And, according to the nature of the thing, it will be very bitter in penitent reflections on it.

2. Lust in the fruit unripe ; that is, when it is consented to for action, but the means of fulfilling it are not deliberated upon. Thus

people, in the hurry of a temptation, are carried so far, that their hearts say within them, they will do it. Then lust hath conceived, Jam. i. 15; when it is brought this length, a little more will bring it to the birth. But though it never come farther, it leaves as much guilt on the soul, as will make a sick conscience.

3. Lust in the blossom; that is, when though it is not consented to for action, yet it is consented to in itself, and spreads in morose delectation, as they call it, or abiding delight in the lust. That seems to be the lust especially meant, Matth. v. 28; 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery already with her in his heart.' O what guilt is contracted this way even by the wandering of the desire, (Ecel. vi. 9;) which the person has no mind to gratify by action! Thus the covetous man lusteth, and heaps up riches and wealth to himself in imagination; the proud man lusts, and heaps up honour, &c. the revengeful, &c. And all that the lust feeds on here is but mere fancy, airy nothings, which perhaps never had, nor does the man really expect will ever have, a being. This is lust dreaming, for which a conscience will get a fearful awakening; though stupid souls please themselves in it, that it does ill to no body, nor minds ill to them.

4. Lust in the bud; that is, the first risings of lust, even before the consent of the will to them; the first openings of particular lusts, sometimes not regarded nor noticed, and so neither approved nor disapproved; and sometimes checked in their very rising, Rom. vii. 15. But however it be, they are sins here forbidden, though the Papists will not allow them to be so, more than Paul in his unconverted state: 'I had not known lust, except that the law had said, Thou shalt not covet,' Rom. vii. 7. Who can number those that are still setting up their heads in the corrupt heart, as naturally rising from it as stench from a dunghill, or weeds and thistles from the cursed ground? These are lustings in embryo, whereof some are formed, others not. They are happiest in this world that crush them in the bud; but happiest of all when they do not so much as bud; but it is so in heaven only.

Lastly, Lust in the seed. The seed itself is the corrupt nature, original sin, of which afterwards. But here I understand particular lusts, as pride, covetousness, &c. which are the spawn of the corruption of nature, the members of the old man, which the apostle calls us to mortify, Col. iii. 5. These are they from which these cursed buds immediately sprout forth. Original sin has the lusts thereof, and these are they, Rom. vi. 12. We cannot enumerate them, more than we can count the dust. But in the general.

1st, There are fleshly lusts, 1 Pet. ii. 11; lust conversant about

the body, and gratifying to the flesh, such as covetousness, uncleanness, sensuality, &c. In these the body drags the soul after it, and the soul goes out in these to gratify the body.

2dly, There are spiritual lusts, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Eph. ii. 3. There is a filthiness of the spirit as well as of the flesh, which lies more inwardly, in the mind and will, having nothing ado with the sensitive appetite, as pride, selfishness, &c. These are the two bands of lusts which the old man sends forth to maintain and advance the government of hell in the soul; but both sorts are under a sentence of condemnation from the law of God; declared rebels to heaven, and intercommuned, not to be conversed with, harboured, or entertained, but resisted, fought against, and brought to the cross. They are in good and bad; but,

(1.) In natural men they are reigning lusts, Rom. vi. 12. They have the throne in the heart, and amongst them command all. But there is readily one among them, like Beelzebub, that is the prince of these devils, called the predominant sin, to which other lusts will bow, though they will not bow to God. As where pride is the predominant, it will make covetousness bow; and where covetousness predominates, it will make pride bow. These do not always continue their rule; but the old man can pull down one, and set up another, as lust in youth may be succeeded by covetousness in old age.

(2.) In the regenerate they are but indwelling lusts, Rom. vi. 12. and vii. 24. They are cast down from the throne in conversion, pursued and hunted in progressive sanctification, and weakened, and utterly extirpated out of the kingdom at death. But their very being there is against the law, though they be not on the throne.

Now, these lusts are 'divers lusts,' Tit. iii. 3. It is not one or two that are in the heart, but many. Their name may be *legion*, for they are *many*. The flesh, or corrupt nature is a monster with many heads; but there is one law for them all, they must die. Though they be all the birth of one belly, they are very diverse; for our natural corruption turns itself into a thousand shapes. But,

The qualities common to them all, whereby ye may see more into their nature, are these. They are,

1. Ungodly lusts, Jude, 18. There is nothing of God in them, no not so much as in the devil, who is God's creature; but they are none of God's creatures, he disowns them, 1 John ii. 16. They are the creatures of a corrupt heart, generated of it, as vermin of a rotten body, by influence from hell.

2. Hellish lusts, devilish lusts, John viii. 44. They were the devil's before they were our's, and so it is a sorry copy we have to

write after. They are eminently in him; and those in whom they are grown to the greatest perfection, are but bunglers at the trade, to the perfection of which he has arrived. They came from him, they are pleasing to him wherever they are, and they like to be with him for evermore.

3. They are warring and fighting lusts, Jam. iv. 1.

(1.) They war against the Spirit wherever it is, Gal. v. 17. They are enemies to grace and the Spirit of grace; and the more they prevail, the kingdom of grace is the lower in the heart. They war against the entrance of grace, and often prevail to keep it out; like so many barres from hell, choaking the word that would bring it in, Mark iv. 19. They war against the actings and exercise of it, till it is often laid by as in a swoon. And they war against the very being of it, which they would destroy if God had not said against it.

(2.) They war against the soul, 1 Pet. ii. 11. and will ruin it, if they be not ruined. They are no other to the soul than vermin and worms to a dead corpse, that feed on it till it be destroyed. Like a sword they pierce the soul, 1 Tim. vi. 10; like a fire they burn it, Rom. i. 27; and like water they drown it, 1 Tim. vi. 9; for they are in the heart like the devil in the swine, that will not let the soul rest till it destroy itself.

(3.) They war amongst themselves, Jam. iv. 1. For though there is a sweet harmony amongst all the graces, yet lusts may be most contrary one to another. This makes the heart often like a troubled sea, and puts a man on the rack, one lust drawing him one way, and another another way. Pride will put one forward to that which covetousness draws him back from. And the service of lusts must needs be difficult, in that they that serve them serve contrary masters.

4. They are deceitful lusts, Eph. iv. 22. They are the deceivers of the soul, which, by pleasing the corrupt heart, destroy the soul; like Ezekiel's roll, sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly. They are a hook to the soul, covered with a taking bait; the silken cords wherewith Satan draws men into destruction.

5. They are hurtful lusts, 1 Tim. vi. 9. They are hurtful to the soul and to the body, to ourselves and others. Being the brood of hell from a corrupt nature, they cannot be harmless; and therefore where no hurt can be done, they cannot enter, Rev. xxi. ult. The softest of them is as a brier, and sharper than a thorn hedge, and always at length pierce the soul with many sorrows. They never fail to leave a sting behind them in the soul.

6. They are worldly lusts, Tit. ii. 12. They have nothing of hea-

ven in them. They range through the world, and feed on that which it does afford; and nothing but what is carnal can please them. They partake of the nature of the serpent, for dust is their meat, and on their belly do they go.

7. They are insatiable lusts, 'greedy dogs that can never have enough,' Isa. lvii. 10. To feed them is but to enlarge their appetite, for they cry, Give, give, like the grave and the barren womb, Eccl. i. 8. Surfeited they may be, satisfied they can never be. They have a heavy task of it, that have them to provide for; no wonder they can get no other thing minded, as a poor woman that has a company of hungry babes ever hanging about her hand, and crying out of hunger.

Lastly, They are former lusts, 1 Pet. i. 14. Their reign is in the black state of nature. And indeed in all they are foremost on the throne, they have the start of grace always, being born with us, in the virtue of their cause, the corruption of nature. And the power of them must be broken by grace coming in on them, or we perish.

A view of these lusts in the glass of this holy law must needs be very humbling, and stain the pride of all glory. Though the outside be never so clean, they make a foul inside. For consider,

1. They are the members of the old man, Col. iii. 5. The corruption of nature is the old man, they are his members, which together make up the body of sin. Now, this old man being entire in all the unregenerate, these lusts are all in them; nay, even in the regenerate, so far as the corruption of nature still dwells in them, though the power of them be broken, yet they still remain, and afford work to them for daily mortification. So that there is none who may not proportionally take that character to themselves, 'Being filled with all unrighteousness,' Rom. i. 29. that is to say, all manner of lusts whatsoever are in the heart of every man, though they do not all break forth in their lives. Consider,

(1.) The same corruption of nature is in all men whatsoever; all are originally and universally corrupt, John iii. 6. There must then be a disposition in all to every evil thing habitually, though not actually. Dost thou see the most abominable lusts breaking forth in the lives of the worst; smite on thy breast, and say, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' and read thy own heart in their profligate lives, Prov. xxvii. 19. 'As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.' When thou readest the law of God against these abominations which are not so much as to be named, conclude that these lusts are in thy heart, for God gives no laws in vain.

(2.) What is it man will not do, when grace restrains not, and temptation draws forward? Who would have thought the lust of

adultery had been in David's heart, of idolatry in Solomon's after the Lord had appeared to him twice, blasphemy in the saints mentioned by Paul, Acts xxvi. 11; or incest in Lot's daughters? But in such a case they broke forth, which they had not done if they had not been within before.

(3.) They are the tinder answering the sparks of Satan's temptations in the world. It was the peculiar privilege of the man Christ since Adam fell, that the prince of this world had nothing in him, John xiv. 30. There is never a temptation goes abroad in the world, but there is a lust in the heart akin to it, so that no wonder they embrace one another as friends when they meet. Satan by this means, be his temptation what it will, has always something to work upon, a fire to blow up. So that in every case whatsoever, that holds true, 'He that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool,' Prov. xxviii. 26.

(4.) They are the filthy matter ready to gather together in a boil in the heart, which being ripened, may break forth in the life, Jam. i. 14. They make way for gross sins, as the seed grows up into a tree that brings forth its natural fruit at length.

(5.) They are the fit opposers of every good motion, Gal. v. 17. So that there is never a good impression made upon, nor motion in the heart, but among these lusts it finds a peculiar opposite to it, one fit to engage against it, by a peculiar malignity in it. And so it is found in the godly, that as they have grace for grace in Christ, so they have corruption for grace in the unrenewed part; still some one lineament of Satan's image to set against another of God's image.

And now these lusts have their lustings and stirrings, a view of which must be very humbling. For consider,

1st, The innumerable occasions of them; at every blink of the eye, opening of the ear, or imagination of the heart, we are in hazard of them. The sparks of temptation are continually flying about us; how can we be safe, while we have these as gunpowder about us?

2dly, How suddenly they will flee through the heart like a stitch in the side, or an arrow out of a bow? A thought, a wish, is soon brought forth.

3dly, How frequent are they? when are we free of them? when is it that the crooked leg can move, and not halt?

Lastly, How little are these things noticed? That hellish steam arising from a corrupt nature, being so much within doors, is little regarded, but extremely blackens the soul.

Thus much of the bitter streams; we come now to the fountain

and spring-head, from whence they have their rise; and that is, the corruption of nature. For as there is a poisonous nature in the serpent, besides its throwing out of its venom; so, besides the sinful lustings of the heart, there is an habitual corruption of the nature, which is the root of these lustings, loathings, and inordinate motions. The reason why the clock or dial points the hour wrong is, because it is wrong set; and till that set be altered, it will never point right. So man's nature has a wrong set, which we call the corruption of nature, whereby it comes to pass that he can never act right till that set be cured by regeneration. It is a corrupt disposition of the soul, whereby it is unapt for any thing truly good, and prone to evil.

The understanding is deprived of its primitive light and ability, unable to think a good thought, 2 Cor. iii. 5; yea, darkness is over all that region, Eph. v. 8. As for the will, it is free to evil, but not to good, utterly unable so much as rightly to will any thing truly good, Phil. ii. 13. Nay, it is averse to it as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. It is prone and bent to evil, Hos. xi. 7; but lies cross and contrary to God and goodness, Rom. viii. 7. The affections are quite disordered, misplaced as to their objects, loving what they should hate, and hating what they should love; or if right as to the objects, they can keep no bounds. But of this I have spoken largely elsewhere.*

This corruption of nature is here forbidden, for it is truly and properly sin, Rom. vi. 12. and vii. 17. It is the flesh that lusteth against the Spirit, Gal. v. 18; and if sin, it must be contrary to and forbidden by the law. And as sinful anger is forbidden in the sixth commandment, as the immediate fountain of murder, Matth. v. 21, 22; so, by a parity of reason, the corruption of nature is forbidden here, as the immediate fountain of that coveting or lusting, expressed therein.

And though it is impossible for us to prevent this sin, being born with it, it would be considered, that this law was originally given to Adam in innocency, requiring him to keep his nature pure and uncorrupted, and so discharging all corruption of it; which law, after his sin, remains in as full force as ever. And that the second Adam might answer the demands of the law in this point, he was born without this corruption and continued ever free from it. And those that are his, being regenerated are freed from the reigning power of it, and partake of a new nature.

If we look to this sin, we have a humbling view of ourselves, and must cry Unclean, unclean.

* See Fourfold State.

1. It is the fountain of all actual transgressions, Mark vii. 21. Look to all disorders of thy heart and life; they flow natively from hence, as the poisonous streams from the poisoned fountain. Look to the disorders appearing in the lives of others, the fountain from whence they proceed is in thee. And if the cause be there, and the effect follow not, thank God and not thyself.

2. All particular lusts are in it, as in the seed. It is the seed-plot of all particular sins. It is the cursed ground, where, let the gardener weed as he will, new ones will still spring up. It is the cage of unclean birds, the mystery of iniquity, which we will never get to the ground of till the foundations be overturned at death.

3. We never were without it, Psal. li. 5. It is a natural and hereditary disease that cannot be cured without a miracle. We dread the serpent that is naturally poisonous, more than any thing that is accidentally so. So may we dread this beyond all things else. When we were not capable of actually sinning, this made us guilty creatures.

4. We never are free of it, while awake or asleep. It is a permanent and abiding sin. Actual sins are transient, though not as to the guilt of them, yet as to the being of them; but whether the guilt of this be removed or not, it abides as fixed with bands of iron and brass.

Lastly, We never will be free of it while we live. If we die out of Christ it will never be cured. But even though we be in him, yet it abides till death, and will never be totally removed till then.

Thus I have now gone through the ten commands, labouring to lay before you the commandment in its exceeding breadth. And though I have been far from reaching all particular duties commanded, and sins forbidden; yet, from the whole of what has been said, ye may see,

1. What a holy God we have to do with. We see his holiness in this law as in a glass. He can endure no evil thing; and there are many things which the world reckons not upon, which he abhors, and will punish.

2. What a holy law this law is, requiring all purity of nature, heart, lip, and life; a perfection both of parts and degrees; discharging all manner of impurity and moral imperfection, not only in the substance, but in the manner of action.

3. That by the works of the law no flesh can be justified. Who can come up to the perfection this law requires? what one line is there of this law that does not condemn us? where is that one point to the perfection of which we attain.

4. The preciousness and excellency of Christ, who has fulfilled

this law in all its parts, has brought in everlasting righteousness, and furnishes all that believe in him with an answer to all its demands.

5. The rule of righteousness, by which ye are to examine yourselves, to see your sins and shortcomings, the mark ye are to aim at if ye would be holy in all manner of conversation, which is nothing the easier to be hit that it is so broad, and the evidence of your sincerity in a perfection of those parts, though ye cannot attain to the degrees.

Lastly, Your absolute need of Christ, of his blood to sprinkle you from guilt, and of his Spirit to sanctify you, that ye may be complete in him. And therefore let this holy law be your schoolmaster to bring you to Christ for all.

OF MAN'S INABILITY TO KEEP THE LAW PERFECTLY.

ECCLES. vii. 20.—*For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*

HAVING at considerable length endeavoured to open up and explain the law of God, as abridged in the ten commandments, in some measure in its spirituality and extent, by describing the several duties required, and sins forbidden therein; and shewn the absolute impossibility of yielding a perfect obedience thereto, in order to give a title to eternal life; and directed you to come to Christ by faith, as the end of the law for righteousness, that your guilt may be removed by the application of his blood to your consciences, and that ye may be sanctified by his Spirit: I now proceed to the exposition of the remaining questions in the Catechism, which I shall mostly discuss in a very short discourse on each, as I have been so long on the former part of this excellent composition.*

Here is the undoubted character of all the human race, fixing im-

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