

2. His propriety in us, *Thy God*. Therefore we must not go a-whoring after our own or others' inventions, which alienate the heart from God, but must keep ourselves undefiled with these things; as a chaste wife holding by her husband, who will neither be a whore nor behave like one, Hos. ix. 1. Because he is our God (I mean), we must neither be idolaters nor superstitious, symbolizing with idolaters.

3. The zeal he hath to his own worship, *I—a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, &c.* Zeal or jealousy is an affection of a husband, whereby he can endure no partner in his wife's love, but is highly incensed against it, if any such thing there be. So the Lord is specially displeased with all false worship, as spiritual whoredom, and has such a peculiar regard to the matter of his worship, that it is a most dangerous thing to make a wrong step in it, Lev. x. 1, 2. This zeal appears, (1.) In his accounting the breakers of this command haters of him, though idolaters and superstitious persons pretend highly to love and honour him, and threatening to punish them to the third and fourth generation, because so long men may live, and see themselves punished in their children. Not that God properly punishes one for another's sin; but that from the parent's sin he often takes occasion to punish children for their own sins, and such their parents' sins oft-times are by imitation, or some way approving of them. (2.) In his accounting the observers of this command such as love him, and promising mercy unto them to many generations, even thousands of theirs after them.

OF THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. XX. 7.—*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

As the first command respects the object of worship, and the second the means, so this third hath respect to the right manner of worship. In the words there are two things.

1. The command, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*. It is expressed negatively, to strike into men the greater awful reverence of that glorious and great name. Now, as men by their names are known, and distinguished one from another, so by the name of God we are to understand generally, whatsoever it is

whereby God makes himself known, which we learn from his word and works. 'For no man hath seen God at any time,' John i. 18; nor do we know any thing of him, but what he has been so pleased to reveal of himself. So that God being thus revealed unto us, the scope of this command is to bind upon us a holy reverence of him so far as he has revealed himself to us.

To take this name *in vain*, signifies, (1.) To a lie, or falsely. God is a God of truth; and his name must not be in any ways interposed to falsehood, as they do who father their own lies on him, or call him to witness to a lie in swearing falsely. (2.) *In vain*; God is great, and we must not use his name in thought, word, or writing, lightly without just cause, rashly without reverence, or unprofitably to no good purpose, God's honour, the good of ourselves or others, and much less contumeliously and wickedly, as in cursing and blaspheming.

The positive part is implied, viz. That we must hallow the name of God, treat it holily and reverently, Isa. viii. 13. interposing it only to truth, whereof he is the author, and that upon his own call, with reverence, for his honour, and the good of ourselves and others.

2. The reason annexed to this command. *For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.* Where observe,

(1.) The evil threatened against the breakers of this command. *The Lord will not hold them guiltless.* Two things are remarkable here. [1.] In that it is said, *The Lord will not hold them guiltless*, it implies, that profaners of God's name many times hold themselves guiltless. They abuse God's name, and then wipe their mouths, and say they have not sinned. Men hold them guiltless, they escape punishment from men; but while both themselves and others let the plea sleep, God will awaken it, and take the quarrel into his own hand. [2.] In that it is said, *The Lord will not hold them guiltless*, more is meant than is expressed, viz. that God will severely punish the profaning of his name. The less they think of it, God will think the more of it, and men shall find peculiar severe resentments of this sin from a highly provoked God. They will find, that though it lies far from their hearts, yet it touches a holy God near.

(2.) How particular the threatening is, *Hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.* The sin is repeated in the threatening, to shew the heinousness of it, how ill God takes it to have his name taken in vain. And though it be a common sin, yet none shall be hid or escape among the multitude of criminals, but God will bring out this man and that man, even every man that is a profaner of his name, and judge him as particularly, and punish him as severely, as if there were but one man in the fault. And though some by their being set

above others in the world, think they may take a latitude in this sin, yet, be the man who he will, him will God punish for it: were he the greatest on earth, he shall know that his tongue is not his own, but that JEHOVAH is Lord over him.

(3.) How peremptory the threatening is: it is not simply said, God will punish him that taketh his name in vain, but *God will not hold him guiltless*. Let him not think to escape, God will not quit his honour so. His glory engages him to resent the dishonour done to his name, and the abuser of it shall not go free. If God's name be profaned by him, it shall be glorified upon him one way or other.

In discoursing further from this subject, I shall shew,

I. What is required in this command.

II. What is forbidden in it.

III. The reason annexed to it.

IV. Make some improvement.

I am to shew what is required in the third command. It 'requires the holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, words, and works.'

And here I shall shew,

1. What is the name of God by which he makes himself known, which is to be hallowed by us.

2. What is our duty with respect to this glorious name, in all the parts thereof.

First, I shall shew what is the name of God by which he makes himself known, which is to be hallowed by us. Under this are comprehended.

1. The particular names that God takes to himself in his word, as *Jehovah, Lord, God, I am, &c.* Exod. vi. 3. And whereas he is one God in three persons, we take in here the names of all the three, the Father, the Son, who is also called *Jesus Christ, Immanuel*, and the Holy Ghost.

2. The titles of God. For as great men have titles of honour, whereby they are distinguished from others, so God has taken certain titles to himself, as *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Preserver of Men, Hearer of Prayer, &c.* So the three persons in the Trinity have titles. The Father is called *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.* the Son *King of kings, Lord of lords, Head of the Church, &c.* and the Spirit, *the Comforter, Sanctifier, &c.*

3. The attributes of God, that is, his perfections and properties, whereby he is distinguished from all the creatures; such as, his eternity, unchangeableness, infinity, omniscience, &c. in a word, all the glorious properties of the divine nature common to all the three persons. Each of these is as it were a letter of his name,

Exod. xxxiii. 19. 'I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee.' Chap. xxxiv. 6, 7. 'The Lord—proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.' And happy they that can believably read this name.

4. The ordinances of God. These are his name by which he is known in the world, Micah iv. 5. with Luke i. 6. Such are prayer, praise, the sacraments, &c; oaths, for swearing by the name of God when we are duly called thereto, is a part of religious worship, and a very solemn and awful ordinance of God, Deut. x. 20. So are lots an ordinance of God, wherein the decision of any thing is committed to Divine Providence, and thereby God makes his will known, Prov. xvi. 33. Acts i. 24, 26.

5. His word, which we have in the holy scriptures, Psal. cxxxviii. 2. This is to be read by us, preached and heard, that we may thereby know our God; for therein is his name unfolded, both in the law and in the gospel, which are the two parts thereof.

6. *Lastly*, His works. By these is he known, viz. his works of creation, Psal. xix. 1; and of providence, whether of mercy, Acts xiv. 17; or of judgment, Psal. ix. 19.

Secondly, I come now to shew what is our duty with respect to this glorious name in all the parts thereof. We may take it up in these two things.

1. We are to use it in all the parts thereof as we are called. God has laid it before us for our use, and we ought to take it up. This is plainly implied in the command, not to take it in vain: for (observe) there is a great difference betwixt the orders Heaven gives concerning the name of other gods, and the name of the true God, Exod. xxiii. 13. 'Make no mention of the names of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth;' compared with this command, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*. And indeed when God gives us his names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works, if we use them not we take them in vain, Cor. vi. 1. Now, there are three ways how we may be said to use this name.

1st, In thought, whether by simple conceiving it, and the several parts of it, or by settled meditation upon it. Thus we are to take up the name of God into our minds, thinking and meditating upon his names, titles, attributes, &c. And thus that question, 'What is his name,' Prov. xxx. 4. may be our continual study, our every day's lesson; and it will serve us to learn as long as we are in the world; and no wonder, for it is what the saints in heaven are learning, and will learn through eternity. This is our duty, and

would be a most profitable study, being a great part of the life of faith, whereby the soul feeds on God himself.

2dly, In words, whether by speaking of it, or writing of it. And thus we are to take it up in our lips and pens. The first is the duty of all; the second of some only, whom God calls and has fitted thereunto, as he did the prophets, apostles, and others, who by their writings have been useful to particular persons, or to the church of God. To speak of God is the great end of speech that is given to man, made to be the mouth of the creation; and therefore our tongue is called our glory, by which we ought to contribute to the displaying of the glory of God, in his names, titles, &c.

3dly, In deeds; and so we are to take up his holy name in our practice, making conscience of the practice of the duties enjoined in God's word and ordinances, praying, reading, hearing, communicating, swearing by his name, when in a lawful oath duty called thereunto, &c. Thus a practical profession of religion, as well as a verbal profession, is a duty of this command. And,

(1.) A verbal profession is necessary at some times; that is, when we are by the providence of God called thereunto, to give a testimony unto the truth, 1 Pet. iii. 15. For then it is asked, as it were, By what name are we called? and then we must not be ashamed of our Father, before men, but meekly though boldly declare it even in words, Rom. x. 10; and so take up his name before the world; owning his names, incommunicable titles, attributes, ordinances, &c.

(2.) A real or practical profession is necessary at all times, Rev. xiv. 1. having our Father's name written on our foreheads; that is, we must not only be, but give out ourselves in our way and carriage to be the servants of God, following the duties of religion, whereby we are distinguished from the world that have no profession; and so professing his name in the several parts thereof.

Three things make this threefold use of the name of God necessary.

[1.] The glory of God, 1 Cor. x. 31. Lev. x. 3; for by his name he has made his glory shine; but if we use it not, we do what in us lies to put that glory under a bushel. Whereas for his honour we should use it in all the parts thereof.

[2.] Our own good, Jer. xxxii. 39. The name of God is good at all times, but especially in a time of trouble, Prov. xviii. 10. 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.' Every part of his name is a secret chamber, where a believer may feed, feast, and be safe in the worst of times. His names and titles are cordials to a fainting soul; his attributes are a magazine of comfort, and a fountain of fulness for all wants; his ordinances are breasts of consolations; his word is a good heritage;

and his works are full of wonder, declaring what a great and good God he is.

[3.] The good of others. It is a great kindness to a blinded world to take up this name in our lips and lives. It is like the pouring out of ointment, and breaking of spices, that they may find the fragrant smell, and desire to be partakers, John iv. We should commend his names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works to others. It is glory to God, good for us, and may do good to others. It was Christ's work, John xvii. 26. and was comfortable to him when going out of the world, and would be so to us at that hour.

Secondly, We are to use this name in all the parts of it holily and reverently, whatever way we use the same, whether in thought, word, or deed. This is very extensive; but there are three things especially aimed at in the holy and reverend use of God's name.

1. The using of it in faith. If we use not his names, titles, &c. in faith, we take them in vain, Heb. xi. 6. Rom. xiv. ult. If we believe not his being, what his names and titles import, our giving them to him is but hypocritical compliment. Do we call him Hearer of prayer? let us be sure of the faith of it, or we do but mock God. If we believe not his word, as it will not please him, so it will not profit us, Heb. iv. 2. Unbelief makes us take his name in vain.

2. In fear. To use the name of God without fear and reverence of his majesty, is to abuse it, Deut. xxviii. 58. His names and titles are dreadful, though sweet. I may say of them as of the rings, they are so high that they are dreadful, Ezek. i. 18. His attributes are so: for even that love, mercy, and grace towards sinners, comes not but through the wounds made in the side of the Mediator by the sword of justice. His ordinances need nothing from men to make them awful; in their greatest simplicity they have an impression of divine authority on them, and God's special presence in them, sufficient to awe the hearts of them that are not blinded. His word has a peculiar majesty in it; and the meanest of his works bear the impression of a divine hand. And shall we use them without fear?

3. In singleness, to a right end; not for no end, a carnal selfish end, far less a wicked end; but for the honour of God, the good of ourselves and others. It is a precious treasure opened unto sinners for their eternal welfare, not to be lavished out to no good purpose, but for the highest and best ends. So that these things must be reserved as sacred, and not meddled with but in matters of highest importance. More particularly,

1st, We must holily and reverently use his names and titles, when we think, speak, or any way handle them, with faith, fear, and singleness, having a holy dread and awe of his majesty on our spirits, as

believing him to be what he calls himself, Jer. v. 22. and looking on him as his name is high above all.

2dly, We must holily and reverently use his attributes, thinking and speaking of them in a reverent and spiritual manner, and making such use of them for our own particular case, and the case of others, as the revealing of them is designed for, otherwise we use them in vain, Psal. cxxx. 4. 2 Cor. v. 11.

3dly. We must holily and reverently use his ordinances going about them in the right manner; praying in the spirit, singing with grace in the heart, making melody unto the Lord; preaching or hearing in faith, communicating worthily with grace and grace in exercise, &c. In a word, it requires all to be done in the ordinances after the right manner. Particularly,

(1.) We must use God's name holily and reverently in an oath. When the oath being lawful, and we are called to it by authority, we 'swear in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.' Jer. iv. 2.

(1.) In truth; which implies, (1.) That the thing be truth in itself which we swear to, otherwise we call God to witness to a lie. (2.) That we be persuaded in our consciences that it is truth. So that here is required an agreement of our words with the truth of the thing sworn, and an agreement of our minds with our words, Psal. xv. 2. (3.) That it be without fraud or deceit, whereby all equivocations or mental reservations are to be far from oaths, as we would not profane that sacred name; and the intent of the imposer is to be regarded.

(2.) In judgment; which implies, (1.) That we must understand the thing we swear, that it be not dubious and perplexed, swearing we know not what. (2.) That we understand the nature of an oath, viz. that we thereby solemnly call God to witness to the truth of what we assert or promise, and to judge us according to the truth or falsehood of what we swear. And therefore, (3.) That it be gone about with due fear and reverence of God on our spirit, as knowing it is God we have to do with. Hence the righteous man is represented as one that feareth an oath.

(3.) In righteousness; which implies, (1.) That the thing we swear be lawful and just; for an oath is abused when it is made a bond of iniquity; and so that the thing be possible, and in our power. (2.) That it be for good ends, viz. that God be glorified, Josh. vii. 19; our neighbour satisfied, and controversy ended, Heb. vi. 16; our own innocency cleared, Exod. xxii. 11, &c. (3.) That we mind well and firmly resolve to perform it.

(2.) In lots God's name is holily and reverently used, when,

(1.) They are used in a matter of weight; for the end of them is

the same with that of an oath, Prov. xviii. 18. And the nature of them is not unlike, being an appeal to God's decision, Prov. xvi. 33. And so we find they are weighty cases in scripture wherein they are used, as in the cases of Jonah and Matthias.

(2.) When they are necessary, and the matter cannot otherwise be decided without great inconveniences, as in the above cases. And reason teaches, that this being God's decision, men ought not without great necessity to go off the ordinary road.

(3.) When men eye God in the lot, look to him for the decision with calling on his name, Jonah i. Acts i.

(4.) When the matter is singly given up to God, and no fraud or trick is used to cast the matter to one side rather than another; for that is to put the decision first in God's hand, and then to take it out again, which is a mocking of God.

(5.) *Lastly*, When with due reverence that is received which falls by the lot, as coming from the determination of God.

Were these things duly considered, I think men would not make such use of lotting, by casting cavils, drawing cuts, &c. but would satisfy themselves otherwise many times.

4thly, We must holily and reverently use the word, thinking of, speaking, and hearing it with godly fear, as the word of God, and that we may obey it.

5thly, and *lastly*, We must holily and reverently use his works, thinking of, speaking of, and using them to the honour of God, our own and others' welfare, adoring the Author, and giving him the praise of all.

To shut up all, we do thus use the name of God, by having a conversation suitable to that great and glorious name we profess to honour, Phil. i. 27. For we take his name in vain when our practice thwarts our profession; for that makes the name of God to be blasphemed, Rom. ii. 24.

II. I proceed to shew what is forbidden in the third commandment. It 'forbids all profaning or abusing of any thing whereby God makes himself known.

This command is broken two ways.

1. By not using the name of God as is required, Mal. ii. 2. So as many duties as are required, so many sins there are in omitting these duties. Hence this command is broken by our not hallowing and glorifying God's name, by not taking up the name of God into our minds, lips, and lives. We contract guilt against this command by not thinking and meditating on God's titles, attributes, &c. not speaking of them for the glory of God, our own and the good of others; not writing of it when men are gifted for it, and have a

real call to do it. So also by not making a profession of religion ; a real profession at all times ; a verbal profession when men are by providence called thereto. Not using God's ordinances. Particularly it is a sin against this command, to refuse an oath touching what is good and just, when duty called thereunto. For in all these cases there is a neglect of the duty of glorifying God's name enjoined in this command.

2. By profaning or abusing of the name of God ; that is, any thing whereby God makes himself known. This is the great sin forbidden in this command ; a bitter root that spreads itself out with many branches. In speaking to it, I shall shew,

1. The more plain and palpable profanations of that holy name forbidden in this command.

2. Other ways how the Lord's name is abused and taken in vain.

First, I am to shew the more plain and palpable profanations of that holy name forbidden in this command. The name of God is plainly and palpably abused,

1. When it is used ignorantly, as it was by the Athenians, whom the apostle Paul charges with worshipping God ignorantly, Acts xviii. 23. And of this all those that are ignorant of God, Christ, and the way of salvation, cannot but be guilty, when they do at all use that holy name : for as no man can work right in the dark, so the darkness of ignorance on the soul utterly unfits it to glorify the name of God. And in what measure soever that culpable ignorance lies on us, so far are we guilty in that case. How is the name of God abused by ignorant persons, while they mention the name of they know not whom, and speak of him they know not what? They will call God their God, who know not the nature of that God, the covenant of grace, or the way how he becomes ours. They will call Christ their sweet Saviour, while they know not who he is, nor are acquainted with his salvation. They will call his Spirit their Sanctifier, who know nothing of his sanctifying operations and influences.

2. When it is used vainly and irreverently, that is, lightly and rashly. There is so little of God in the hearts of many, that his name, that dreadful name, is much in their mouths, without any necessity or reverence in their common talk. The Jews had so great thoughts of the name of Jehovah, that they would not mention it. They permit not their children to mention the name of God till they be seven years old. If the Mahometans find a piece of paper in the way, they put it in some hole of a wall or so, because the name of

God is or may be in it. But, alas! among Christians it is much used in vain and irreverently. The name of God is thus profaned, vainly and irreverently used.

1st. By exclamations in a way of foolish wonder. It is sad to think how that holy name is profaned by men, when, being surprised to see, or hear, something they wonder at, they cry, O God! O Lord! God bless us, save us, guide us, have a care for us! That it is lawful to pray for these things, none doubt. But such as are in earnest for his blessing, guidance, &c. will see them to be matters of so great moment, that, when they are to seek them, they will compose themselves to a praying frame, and lift up their hands with their hearts to the heavens for them, with singleness, fear and faith, in the blood of Christ. But, to use his holy name, to give vent to our foolish passions, is horrible prostitution of it.

2dly, It is used vainly and irreverently in thanksgivings to God, and salutations. How formally and lightly will many say, God be thanked, Blessed be God, when the very shew of their countenance declares they have no grateful sense of God's goodness, nor reverence of him on their spirits? So God speed you, God be with you, are good prayers indeed, but mostly used so formally, that they are but an abusing of that holy name.

3dly, In obsecrations, wherein the name of God is interposed to beseech a person to do or forbear such a thing. They are very good when in matters of weight they are gravely and reverently used, as Rom. xii. 1. 'I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' But to use them in small matters, as many do, entreating for God's sake, or God's love, to do so and so, is but abusing that holy name. Common beggars are very guilty in this way.

4thly, In adjurations, wherein the name of God is interposed to oblige a person to do or forbear something. This is a very solemn piece of business, 2 Tim. iv. 1. and may very safely be used by those who have authority in matters of weight; and people's slighting of these solemn charges given by ministers, or other superiors, is very sinful. But it is a sin, (1.) To use these things in light matters, as to bid one do any thing we are little concerned about, in God's name. (2.) And though any person may pray to God against devils, that he would bind them up, yet it is a sin for any who have not the gift of casting out devils, to adjure the devil, or command him in the name of God to go, as the vagabond Jews did, Acts. xix. 13, 14.

5thly, In appeals to God. We find the saints using them reverently in matters of weight, as the apostle Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 2. but

to appeal to God in trifles, is the way to bring down the judgment of God on the appellant. The serious thoughts of God's knowledge may make the best to tremble, and strike all with so much awe of his majesty as not to make a by-word of it.

3. When the name of God is used superstitiously, 1 Sam. iv. 3, 4, 5. So, to name the name of God over diseases, or against the devil, as if the very mentioning of that name, without faith in him, would do the business. So is that bowing at the name of Jesus, used by those of the church of England, a superstitious abuse of that holy name.

4. When it is used profanely and wickedly. Under this may be comprehended,

1st, Profane swearing. Swearing is an holy ordinance, appointed by God, a piece of most solemn worship, wherein we invoke God as our witness and judge, which makes common swearing a dreadful sin. It is twofold, both of them abounding in our day.

(1.) Swearing by God and Christ. How do many glory in their horrid oaths, which may make one that has any notion of the greatness of that name to tremble! They have a God to swear by, but not to worship and pray to. But indeed it is wounding, that there should be others, who will both pray to and profanely swear by that God, Jam. iii. 10.

(2.) Swearing by the creatures. The papists, that worship the creatures, no wonder they swear by them too, as by the holy bread in the sacrament, by St. Mary. But what have Protestants to say for swearing by them? Yet how frequent are oaths, by our faith, troth, soul, conscience, &c.? The mincing of these oaths will not make men guiltless; yet, alas! how few are there that want them, *Ha'th Faith, Ha'd'ye, Fa'd'ye, Mary?* This swearing by creatures is,

[1.] Impious idolatry, giving that worship to the creature which is due to God alone, Deut. x. 20. Swearing is an invocating of the object we swear by, to be witness of the truth of what we affirm or deny, and so to judge and punish us if we swear falsely; and to whom can this belong but to God? Jer. v. 7.

[2.] The dishonour redounds to God, because these things have a relation to God, Matt. v. 34, 37. The soul is his creature, conscience is his depute, truth his image, &c. Hezekiah broke the brazen serpent when the people abused it to idolatry. Take heed God break not that soul of thine on the wheel of his wrath.

As for your minced oaths, I pray you consider, (1.) That they are at least an appearance of evil, 1 Thess. v. 22. (2.) That they are surely idle words, Matth. xii. 36. (3.) Are not the most serious Christians conscientious in this? Phil. iv. 9. (4.) That they are

offensive to the serious godly, Matth. xviii. 6, 7. (5.) That they must either be oaths, or they have no sense at all.

2dly, Sinful imprecations or cursings, whereby people pray for some evil against themselves or others, whether absolutely, or conditionally. We find the saints conditionally imprecating evil against themselves, as in the case of clearing themselves of what they are wrongously loaded with, Psal. vii. 3, 4, 5. And in this we may imitate them, when in matters of weight we are duly called thereto, behaving therein as in the taking of an oath; for in every oath there is an imprecation. Also there are examples of the saints imprecating a curse against God's incorrigible enemies, out of pure zeal to the glory of God, which they, from the Spirit of prophecy apply to particular persons, Psal. cix. 6, &c. But it is a profaning the name of God.

(1.) When people unnecessarily imprecate a curse on themselves or others, conditionally, if they do not so or so, or if it be not truth that they may say, as wishing,—confound them, they may be hanged, or never stir out of the bit, &c. if matters be not so or so, when there is no necessity for it, or edification by it. In that case, the name of God is profaned; and though the name of God be not expressed, it is still abused; for it is God that must be the executor of the sinful wish.

(2.) When people serve their passions against themselves or others, by their curses. Thus people sin in their fits of discontent, wishing evil to themselves, and in their fits of passion and revenge against others, praying, Shame fall, ill chance, &c. This is the product of a bitter spirit, highly dishonourable to God, whose name is prostituted to serve men's hellish passions.

(3.) When people use them to confirm a lie, or to bind them to sin. Thus people are doubly guilty, and dare the vengeance of heaven, cursing themselves if such a thing be true, which yet they know is not true; or binding themselves to do some evil, by a curse.

(4.) Neither is the matter mended by invoking the devil instead of God. Much homage gets the devil from some, who are often found praying to the devil to take themselves or others. So they mention, *Foul Fiend*, &c. which are only other names of that wicked spirit.

3dly, Perjury is falsehood confirmed with an oath. It is twofold.

(1.) There is perjury opposite to an assertory oath; and that is, either when a man swears a thing to be true which is false, or a thing to be false which is true. It is opposite to swearing in truth, which is swearing so as a man's mind agree with his words, and his words with the thing. So that a man is not only perjured when he

swears against his mind and knowledge, as the false witnesses against Naboth did ; but also when he swears against the truth of the thing, though not against his mind, being mistaken ; for in both cases God is called to witness to a lie ; though indeed the former is far more heinous than the latter. And therefore it is, that no man can lawfully swear what he doubts of ; that is to run a dreadful risk.

(2.) There is a perjury opposite to a promissory oath ; and that is, either when a man promiseth something upon oath which he has no mind to perform even when he takes the oath ; or though he minded to perform it when he took the oath, yet afterwards changes his mind, and does it not, when he both ought and can do it. Only remember, that the breaking of an unlawful oath, so far as it is unlawful, is not perjury. It is a sin indeed to take such an oath ; but it is no sin, but duty to break it. And the case is the same in vows, 1 Sam. xxv. 22, 32, 33. The sin of perjury is dreadful. For,

[1.] It is a most solemn affronting of an omniscient and just God, and is near akin to atheism. It is a calling of God to be witness to a lie ; it is a playing with infinite justice, a daring of heaven's vengeance, while men devote their souls to destruction wilfully ; because in every oath men invoke God to judge them according to the truth or falsehood of what they swear.

[2.] It is most provoking in the sight of God ; a sin which God's anger smokes against in a peculiar manner, Zech. v. 4. Mal. iii. 5. This seems to be engraven especially on the consciences of men ; so that this sin amongst the heathen was reckoned most atrocious ; and even men that otherwise have little religion, will yet tremble at the thoughts of perjury.

[3.] It is a sin that deservedly makes men infamous, so that their testimony is not afterwards to be regarded among them : for what respect can they have to truth that will swear falsely ? It looses the bond of human society ; for if an oath cannot bind men, the world would have no security of one another. And therefore such deserved to be hissed out from among others, as the plagues of human society.

4thly, Blasphemy, which is a wronging of the majesty of God, by speeches tending to his reproach. This sin is the most atrocious of all sins ; and of this kind is the unpardonable sin. As among men it is a great fault not to believe the word of a faithful prince ; yet greater to rebel against him ; greater yet to reproach him, disgrace him, speak and use him contumeliously. Men may be guilty of blasphemy against God two ways.

(1.) As they partake with others in their blasphemies. And this we may do several ways ; particularly, (1.) When we give no testi-

mony against the blasphemy of others. The custom of the Jews was to rend their clothes at the hearing of blasphemy. And they must needs have a stout heart that can hear it without one way or another manifesting their abhorrence of it. (2.) Much more when men shew any approbation or satisfaction with it, as smiling or laughing at it, when they hear how freely hellish mouths vent their reproachful speeches against God. (3.) When by our deeds we give occasion to wicked men to blaspheme, Rom. ii. 24. Thus particularly, (1.) Oppressors and persecutors are guilty of blasphemy, Acts xxvi. 11. (2.) Professors of religion, by their scandalous walk, 2 Sam. xii. 14. (3.) Inferiors by their undutifulness to their superiors; as subjects, 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, 15; wives, Tit. ii. 5; and servants, 1 Tim. vi. 1.

(2.) As they themselves are formally the blasphemers. And so there are two ways that men blaspheme.

[1.] There is a blaspheming of God mediately, when, though men do not expressly speak against God himself, yet with the sword of the tongue they thrust at him, through the sides of his word, way, people, ordinances, works, &c. 1 Tim. vi. 1. Tit. ii. 5. 2 Pet. ii. 2. 1 Cor. iv. 13. Mark iii. 29, 30. Such blasphemies are very frequent amongst mockers and malicious enemies of the way of God, as when religion is called madness, fanaticism, folly, &c. the Spirit's assistance in prayer, heat of the brain, &c.

[2.] There is a blaspheming against God immediately, when God is directly and immediately attacked with the blasphemous tongue. And that is,

(1.) When men detract from God what truly belongs to him, and makes for his glory, Isa. xxxvi. 20; in the case of railing Rabshakeh. Such blasphemy, some say, is uttered by the French Tyrant, with respect to the bringing in of the Pretender on us, That Heaven itself cannot stop his project.

(2.) When men ascribe to God that which agrees not to him, but tends to his reproach. So did the Pharisees of old blaspheme Christ, Mark iii. 30. So do bitter spirits blaspheme God, saying, He is unjust, cruel, &c. So did these blaspheme when they said, 'Every one that doth evil, is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them: or, Where is the God of judgment?' Mal. ii. 17. And many are guilty with them.

(3.) When men insolently rise against God, belching out bitter, virulent, and reproachful speeches against him. So did Pharaoh, Exod. v. 2. 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? I know not the Lord.' So did he, mentioned 2 Kings vi. 33. 'Behold, this evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer?'

Thus Job's wife advised him to blaspheme, 'Curse God and die,' said she. And so many in their bitterness rising against God under afflictions, are apt to blaspheme.

(4.) When men ascribe that to the creature which is due to God alone. So the Jews, supposing Christ to be a mere creature, accused him of blasphemy, John x. 33. So men blaspheme in calling either Pope or magistrate head of the church. And thus men immoderate in their own praise, or the praise of others, are ready to fall into blasphemy, Isa. x. 13. Acts xii. 22.

Each of these four ways men may be guilty of blasphemy against the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost. The world is full of these blasphemies; some blaspheming the Father, denying that relation in the Godhead, as Jews, Mahometans, &c; some the Son, as they do also; and indeed Popery is a mass of blasphemies against Christ; some the Holy Ghost, as those that deny his personality, and the profane world that make a mock of his work.

But the most dreadful of all sins and blasphemies is that which by way of eminency is called blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, commonly called *the sin against the Holy Ghost*, which is the unpardonable sin, Matth. xii. 31, 32. John calls it 'the sin unto death,' 1 John v. 16; which elect souls never fall into, yea even but few reprobates. It belongs to this command. But as I have spoken largely of this sin in a former part of this work, I shall not further insist upon it.

Secondly, Having spoken of the more gross and palpable breaches of this command, I shall now consider otherways how the Lord's name is abused and taken in vain.

1. With respect to his names and titles. They are taken in vain.

1st, When they are not improved for those uses to which they natively tend. Hence the Lord says, 'If I be a Father, where is mine honour? and if I be a Master where is my fear?' saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests that despise my name,' Mal. i. 6. Thus we take them in vain when they have not their fruit in us. Do we call him Father, and not honour him; Master, and not fear him; Hearer of prayer, and yet put no confidence in him; Lord of hosts, and yet cannot quietly commit ourselves to his protection? Do we not thereby take his name in vain? The strong tower of his name is built but in vain, in that case, when we do not improve it.

2dly, When we make an ill use of them, either to encourage ourselves in sin by them, or to drive us away from him by terror, or to any other use dishonourable to God, and contrary to the intent of the revelation of them to us.

2. With respect to his attributes, God's name is abused,

1st, By the working of unbelief against them, doubting of, questioning, and denying them. Thus the atheistical heart works often in wicked men, calling in question the power of God when driven into straits, 2 Kings vii. 2; and when they mind to lie securely in sin, fostering unbelief of his omniscience, Ezek. ix; of his justice, Zeph. i. 12; of his holiness, Psal. l. 21, &c. Yea, thus under temptation it works even in the godly, so that often they are found bordering on blasphemy, through the power of unbelief, questioning his goodness and truth, Psal. lxxvii. 8, 9. Jer. xv. 18.

2dly, By the aversion of the heart unto them, and its rising against them, Rom. viii. 7. There is a natural enmity in the heart of man against God, shewing itself in the aversion they have to his holy nature and attributes. They do not love his perfections; they would wish he were not such a one as he is; and this is the rise of atheism. The heart is glued to sin; and the discovery of God's attributes, his holiness, justice, &c. disturbs sinners in their rest in it. Hence their hearts rise against God, and his perfections.

3dly, By using them to wrong ends and purposes. Thus we sin many ways, perverting the knowledge of his perfections to God's dishonour and our own ruin. Thus the mercy of God is abused to encouragement in sin; his patience to continuance in it; his justice to desperation, &c. Eccl. viii. 11. Rom. ii. 4, 5.

3. With respect to his ordinances. The name of God is abused in ordinances when we do not go about them after the right manner; for this command directs us to the right manner of performing duties. And as a master reckons his servant has been working in vain, when though he has been doing the thing he bade him, yet he has not done it as he bade him, but marred it in the making; so God reckons those duties that are wrong as to the manner of them, are a taking of his name in vain, and those ordinances that are gone about in a wrong manner, in vain.

1st, We are guilty of profaning God's name in ordinances and duties of worship, when we are not upright in our end and aim in them; that is, having the honour of his name before us as our great end, 1 Cor. x. 31; shewing itself in seeking to honour him, to get and advance communion with him, and to give obedience to his commands. Instead thereof, his name is abused by going about ordinances formally, out of custom more than conscience, seeking ourselves more than God in them, a name and reputation more than the glory of the Divine Being.

2dly, When we have not a holy principle from which we act, viz. the Spirit of God in us, without whom we cannot worship in spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 3; and a renewed heart, 1 Tim. i. 5. Hence it is that

no unrenewed man's duties are acceptable or truly good. And no duty can be accepted of God, wherein we act from natural principles, parts, and abilities only, and not from supernatural gracious principles.

3dly, When we go not about duties in the due manner, with those other necessary qualifications of acceptable obedience, which must be sincere and not hypocritical, with faith, fear, fervency, &c.

I shall instance in some particular ordinances how we abuse the name of God in them.

1. In prayer. God's name is abused in prayer several ways.

1st, When before prayer we are at no pains to prepare for it, but rashly and precipitately adventure on it, Eccl. v. 1. How often do we mar it in the entrance, by our not impressing our hearts with a due sense of our own insufficiency, God's greatness and majesty, our own wants; and by not emptying our hearts of all carnal thoughts, and not using of ejaculations to God for fitting us for a more solemn approach.

2dly, In prayer we fail many ways. As, (1.) When we pray formally and hypocritically, our hearts not agreeing with our tongues in our confessions, petitions, and thanksgivings, Isa. xxix. 13; so that our heart-labour comes not up to our lip-labour. (2.) When we pray coldly and faintly, without fervency of spirit, Matt. xxvi. 41. This fervency consists not in the loudness of the voice, but in the eagerness of the affections, like Jacob, 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me.' (3.) Heart-wanderings much mar this duty, Rom. xii. 12. (4.) When we do not pray in faith, but are lifted up with a conceit of our own worthiness, like the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11. have no confidence in the promises of what we ask, Jam. i. 6. and place not our sole confidence in the merits of Christ.

3dly, After prayer, when we quickly put out of our heads the impression of our approach, grow vain and carnal, and not look after our prayers as to their success, Psal. v. 3.

2. In praises, or singing of psalms, God's name is taken in vain many ways. As, (1.) When we rashly venture upon it, not labouring to get our hearts in a tune for praise. (2.) When we do not understand what we sing, 1 Cor. xiv. 15; God can never be praised ignorantly. (3.) When we make not heart-work of it, sing with the voice, but make no melody in the heart to the Lord, Eph. v. 19. (4.) When we are not affected in a suitableness to the matter that is sung, which being very different, certainly requires that our hearts should follow. (5.) When we make no application of the matter to ourselves in singing.

3. In reading or hearing the word, we take God's name in

vain, (1.) When we do not prepare ourselves for it, appointing a meal in it to our souls by prayer and looking to God; and when we make it not our business to get our hearts emptied of worldly thoughts and affections, and come with an appetite, 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2. (2.) When we do not strive to understand what we read or hear of the word, Acts viii. 30; but pass it, as if bare reading or hearing were all. (3.) When we are not attentive thereto, but let the heart wander in the time after other things, Ezek. xxxiii. 30. (4.) When we are dull, drowsy, sleepy, and weary in it, crying in our hearts, When will the Sabbath be over? like Doeg, detained before the Lord. (5.) When we do not receive it as the word of the living God, looking on it as God himself speaking to us, 1 Thess. ii. 13. (6.) When we do not subject ourselves humbly to what we hear from the Lord by his word, being affected suitably to every part of the word, approving the commands thereof, believing the promises, and trembling at the threatenings, Heb. iv. 2. (7.) When we do not lay ourselves open to the word, to be taught our duty, to be reprov'd for our faults, to be searched and known as by the candle of the Lord; but ward off convictions, and rise against the speaker when the word toucheth us. (8.) When we hear it partially, having more respect to the speaker, to receive it or reject it according to our opinion of him, than to the Lord's word itself, Acts xvii. 11, &c. (9.) *Lastly*, When we do not meditate upon it afterwards, confer about it, and labour to improve it to our soul's good.

4. In oaths (besides what has been already said), we take God's name in vain with respect to them. (1.) When we refuse a lawful oath, being duly called thereto, and the glory of God and the good of our neighbour requires it, Neh. v. 12. 'For an oath for confirmation is to men an end of all strife,' Heb. vi. 16; and men might be ruined in their lives, reputation, &c. if men would refuse a just and necessary oath when called to it, which God's honour and our neighbour's good requires. (2.) With respect to an unlawful oath; it is a sin, [1.] To take it or make it; for it is a terrible profaning of that ordinance to make it a bond of iniquity, as Herod did, Mark vi. 23. [2.] To keep it and perform it, as he also did, ver. 26; for what is this but to make the name of God subservient to God's dishonour? And that is to be reckoned an unlawful oath, which is of any thing that is false, sinful, unjust, or impossible to us. (3.) When men use equivocations in oaths, or mental reservations; for so he for whose sake the oath is imposed, is deceived and wronged. But whatever shifts men may use that way, God will reckon them as false swearers. (4.) When men swear unnecessarily, ignorantly, doubtfully, without due regard and reverence of God in our spirits. (5.) *Lastly*, When

a lawful oath leaves no due impression on men's spirits, as a sacred bond which they come under to God.

5. *Lastly*, In lots. God's name is taken in vain, (1.) When the right manner is not observed in them, where they are lawfully used in weighty matters, as when God is not eyed in the lot, when they do not singly refer and leave the matter to God's decision, and when they murmur and grudge at what falls by the lot to them. (2.) When they are used in matters of very small moment, which are not worthy of an appeal to God's decision, but without any great inconveniency might be otherwise decided. This is a very common sin, which people need no more to convince them of the evil of, but the true up-taking of the nature of lots, as the scripture holds it out, Prov. xvi. 23. and xviii. 18. (3.) When they are used in games and plays. For which reason playing at cards, dice, and all games of lottery, are unlawful. For, [1.] That cannot but be a profaning of the name of God, which turns an appeal to God for his decision unto a play. And though men call it fortune, it is certain that it is nothing indeed but God's determination. And it will not excuse men, that they first miscall God's providence by the name of fortune, and then play themselves with it. [2.] It gives occasion to much sin against God, as blaspheming God's providence under the name of fortune and ill luck; and commending good fortune, overlooking providence when it falls well. And it renders this ordinance of lots contemptible, being so used.

4. With respect to his word, men are guilty of profaning the name of God,

1st, By misimproving and misapplying the word of God, as the Pharisees did, Matth. v. Ezek. xiii. 19.

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

3dly, Using it to the maintenance of erroneous principles, unprofitable questions, and vain janglings, 2 Tim. ii. 14, 15.

5. With respect to his works, men are guilty of profaning the name of God, when they use the works and creatures of God to sinful lusts and practices.

6: *Lastly*, Men profane the name of God, in respect of religion, and the profession of it.

1st, By maligning, scorning, and reviling religion, and the profession of it.

2dly, By a hypocritical profession.

3dly, By a scandalous walk.

To be a little more particular in these things, the name of God is profaned and abused, and this command violated,

1. By malignity, maligning the truth, grace, and ways of God,

otherwise called *malignancy*. It is a heart-enmity and bitterness of spirit, vented by word or deed, against the truths, grace, and way of God, Rom. i. 29. Such malignants were the Jews, who were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming, Acts xiii. 45. In our father's days, the spirit of malignancy run with a violent stream against the work of reformation, till it had swallowed it up, and is now again appearing in its violence. A different opinion from the truth in point of church-government is not malignancy; but when a set of men lay out themselves to bear down the Lord's work in the land, and in the spirits of his people, when men pretending to be ministers bear down and discourage the power of godliness in others, and men in civil power are filled with a spirit of persecution against those whom they can find nothing against but in the matter of their God, and meaner people aid and assist these, and contribute to, or rejoice at the calamities of the people of God, malignant is their name; for malignant is their nature and course of life. And colour it over as they will, God will not hold them guiltless; for they are his enemies that take his name in vain.

By scorning the ways of God, Ps. i. 1. The scorner has a high seat in the devil's court, where he sits on hell's bench, giving out a sentence of disdain against the way of serious godliness, as unworthy of a man, and inconsistent with his honour, sentencing the serious person to be the fool of the company. Thus Satan's madcaps, whom he has blinded, make a jest of the wisdom of God; but the day will come when their scorning shall be turned to roaring, Isa. xxviii. 22.

3. By reviling the truth, grace, and way of God, 1 Pet. iv. 4. Revilers are a generation of hell, who are set to gather together all the filth and vileness they can get to throw upon religion and cover it, that the world may loath it, 1 Cor. iv. 13. And so with them religion is rebellion, soul exercise distraction, communion with God melancholy fancies. They load men with vile calumnies; and if they see nothing without them, they conclude they are but hypocrites.

4. By hypocrisy, while men pretend to religion and take up a profession, but have nothing of the truth of it in their hearts, 2 Tim. iii. 5. Hypocrites indeed take God's name in vain, making profession of religion, not out of conscience towards God, from love to him, or a design to honour him, but for some sinister ends, as reputation, worldly advantage, or at best their own peace and safety; which is a horrid prostituting the name of God to cursed self.

1st, They take his name in vain in their hearts; for the truths of religion, they know, have no suitable efficacy on their hearts or lives,

Rom. i. 18. The candle of God is set up before them in their knowledge; but in vain it wasts, for they do not work at it. Their knowledge of sin does not make them loath it. The love of Christ does not constrain them to walk in the paths of new obedience.

2dly, In their mouths. They may go about duties but they go about none in the right manner. Their words are good, but their heart is not upright, Ezek. xxxiii. 30. Hence their prayers are an abomination, their best works are but glistening sins, like a potsherd covered over with silver dross. (1.) Their largest duties are but half-duties, and that the worst half, as wanting spiritual worship, which is the soul and life of worship. (2.) Their service is but self-service. All the streams of the hypocrite's duties disburden in the dead sea, self.

3dly, On their foreheads; for there hypocrites bear it in an external profession: but in vain; for though they wear Christ's livery, they are but the devil's drudges. If they be not such as fulfil the desires of the flesh, they fulfil the desires of the mind; they are under the power of spiritual plagues.

5. By being ashamed of religion, Mark viii. ult. Religion is our glory; men will not miss in a profane world to have it turned to shame; but to be ashamed of it is a sin of naughtiness of heart, and want of experience of the power of truth on the spirit. It is a horrible affront to the majesty of God, to be ashamed of his badge; for that is to be ashamed of him as a Master.

6. *Lastly*, By being a shame to it,

1st, By an uncomfortable, unsuitable walk, Phil. i. 27. The world takes notice of the agreement that is betwixt the principles and practice of professors; and a disagreement there reflects dishonour on religion itself before them, as if it were all but sham and trick.

2dly, By an unwise walk, Eph. v. 15. We should be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves; for the imprudencies of professors are no small handle to the enemies, and much improved for the reproach of religion. There is much need of continual dependence on the Lord for wisdom, especially that we may walk in wisdom toward them that are without, Col. iv. 5.

3dly, By an unfruitful walk, Isa. v. 4. The fruitfulness of the vineyard is the honour of the husbandman, and the unfruitfulness thereof reflects dishonour on him, Rom. ii. 24. The fruits of holiness are the best testimony to the divine original of ordinances and institutions; and while men have been violently running down these, their credit has been supported that way. But, alas! now their credit is impaired by the barren and unfruitful lives of professors.

4thly, By an offensive scandalous walk, Rom. ii. 23, 24. The

scandals of professors are the stumbling-blocks whereon the blind would brake their necks, Matth. xviii. 7. They are the reproach of religion, and the dishonour of God. They harden the wicked, and grieve the truly good.

Lastly, By backsliding from it, Gal. iii. 1, 2. Apostates cast shame on the name of God in a peculiar manner; for having tried both ways, they practically prefer the way of evil.

III. I come now to consider the reason annexed to the third commandment, which is, 'That however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.'

Here I shall shew,

1. Whence it is that men think so lightly of the profaning of the name of God, so that in effect they hold themselves guiltless.

2. Whence it is that the profaners of the name of God escape punishment from men.

3. How God will not let men escape with it.

4. What is the great evil of this sin, that is so severely threatened?

First, I will shew whence it is that men think so lightly of the profaning of the name of God, so that in effect they hold themselves guiltless. Nothing is plainer than that little is thought of the taking of God's name in vain, especially by those that are most guilty. They heap up guilt in this way, and yet in effect hold themselves guiltless.

1. It proceeds from that wicked and malicious spirit the devil, Jam. iii. 6. He is the sworn enemy of God, and does what he can to make men dishonour him. There is so little of the world or the flesh in it, that it seems in a special manner to come from the devil.

2. It springs from the low and mean thoughts they have of God and his dreadful name, Psal. xxxvi. 1, 2. They see not the glory and majesty of his names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works: hence they treat them as common things. A view of God in his glory would cure this profane disposition of spirit. When proud Pharaoh contemns God, and must needs be a god to himself, what wonder he regards not that holy name? Exod. v. 2. Paul unconverted was a great blasphemer; but when he saw the light and heard the voice, he got suitable thoughts of Christ, and so was cured of that.

3. There are many profanations of the name of God, that untender men will not allow to be such. They are not and will not be convinced of a fault in them, as in obsecrations, appeals to God, adjurations, &c. But a due sense of the majesty of that name would

clear people's minds in these things, Matth. v. 37. It is not enough that these things are common. It is so much the worse, when the world is in a conspiracy against God to join it. Though men go in troops to the pit, they shall not be conquerors, but sufferers. Nor is it enough that people have no ill in their minds, when they so profane the name of God. If there be little ill, there is as little good. Were the third command in your minds, it would lay bonds on your tongues.

4. There are many profanations of that name which men do not at all observe, as profaning that holy name in duties by formality, and want of faith and ferency. If they neglect duty, they will be challenged; but their consciences are stupid as to the dishonour done to God in them, Zech. vii. 3,—6. But these will be mountains in the sight of God, that are but as mole-hills in the sinner's eyes.

5. It proceeds from the passion of anger or malice. Anger is a fire in a man's breast; swearing and cursing is the smoke of this hellish fire breaking out at the mouth. Those who are hurried out of themselves with passion, do oftentimes find nothing readier at hand than an oath, which they fling out against heaven itself, when they cannot be revenged on them that have angered them. What but a hellish leaven of bitterness and malice wherewith the heart is soured, can bring forth curses.

6. Custom in taking the name of God in vain takes away the sense of it. The heart being careless about God, the tongue gets a liberty; and when it is set on the run, and has got a confirmed custom, it turns just natural: so that many swearers are never aware till they profane the name of God, and hardly know when they have done it, that it is so. But God will not let wickedness go free, because it is confirmed by custom.

7. Swearing proceeds from unwatchfulness. Men let their tongues go at random. Hence oaths fly out ere they be aware.

8. *Lastly*, In some it proceeds from vanity and hellish bravery. They will swear, that others may see what a fine sort of people they are, who regard not the laws of God, nor the offence of good men.

Secondly, I come to shew whence it is that profaners of the name of God escape punishment from men.

1. Because of the little zeal there is for the honour of God's name in the world. These things strike not so much against our neighbour's good name, life, or goods, as directly against the honour of God. If they stretched their injury that way against men, men would avenge it as their own interest; but, alas! the interest of God's honour is the interest of few people.

2. As the laws of men cannot reach many abuses of God's name, so as for those made against common swearing, they are in effect but a mock, in regard of the little tenderness that way found among those that should execute the laws, who are guilty themselves, or have no zeal to put them in execution. Nay, alas! often we see men are obliged by authority to profane the name of God, by taking unlawful, unnecessary oaths.

Thirdly, I proceed to shew how God will not let men escape with it; that he will by no means hold them guiltless. Consider that the profaning of the name of God is a sin,

1. That brings wrath upon a land, Hos. iv. 1, 2. Jer. v. 7, 9. Abusers of the name of God are a burden to his spirit, and to the spirits of his people, and make the land mourn, Jer. xxiii. 10. And as every one ought to contribute their assistance to the quenching of a fire that breaks out in a house, so should every one to reformation in this point, while there are so many tongues set on fire of hell, that threaten to fire the nations with a fire of God's wrath.

2. It brings wrath upon families, Zech. v. 3, 4. It provokes God to root out families from the earth; for it brings a curse that a house cannot long stand under. O! then, masters of families, do not ruin your families by this; and take heed to your children and servants that are given to this sin, as to those who would pull down your house about your ears. Many times things go wrong, they do not thrive; which is not for want of diligence; they wonder how it comes to pass; but there is even a secret curse from the Lord on families for this and other sins, that consumes all, Jer. xxiii. 10.

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

(1.) By strokes upon the body, Deut. xxviii. 58, 59. And remarkable has the sin of some profaners of God's name been written in their punishment, while the sin of profaning that sacred name has been as remarkably written on the miserable case of their mouths and tongues, as ever the adulteress's has been on the belly swelling, and thigh rotting. For there is a God that judgeth in the earth.

(2.) By strokes on the souls. It is a heavy word, *God will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain*. It imports,

[1.] That however men overlook and forget these things, God writes them down guilty on every such fact. There is a book of remembrance written with God, whereby none of them all shall be lost. The sinner affronts God and his holy name; but though he packs up the affront for the time, he does not forget it.

[2.] God will call the man to a reckoning for them sooner or

later, Jude 15. Though they may pass without a challenge for the time, the time will come that they will get deep challenges for these things, either in mercy or in wrath. Their words shall some time lie as a talent of lead on their consciences, which now they think light of; and shall pierce their hearts as swords.

[3.] However lightly men may look on these things, the guilt of them shall once be wreathed about their necks; and the man shall see to read his own sentence of condemnation for them, under which he must either die, or be released by the Mediator's satisfaction and intercession. They have profaned God's name, and God will have the indignity offered to his honour wiped off, either by the satisfaction of the sinner, or his cautioner, whom he must produce.

[4.] If ever the sinner be pardoned, as his profaning the holy name shall stick to his conscience in a particular manner when once awakened, so after the pardon, it shall make him go with a bowed down back, as it did Paul, 1 Tim. i. 13.

[5.] *Lastly*, If he be not pardoned, the wrath of God in hell shall lie upon him, Rom. ii. 5. and it shall be more severely punished there than many other sins. The man's sin shall continue with him through the ages of eternity, while the violence of his torments shall make him blaspheme for ever.

Fourthly, It may be asked, what is the great evil of this sin, that it is so severely punished?

1. It is a sin that is directly against God, his glorious greatness and infinite majesty. That name is dreadful which men profane, Mal. i. ult. The angels adore it, the devils tremble at it; and should vile worms of the earth profane it at every turn? Sins of the second table strike directly against men, but this is one of those that go out immediately against the Majesty of Heaven. And of this sort is the unpardonable sin, which, as I observed before, belongs to this command, Psal. lxxxiii. 9.

2. It is a direct violation of the law of God, *Swear not at all; Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*. Have you no respect to the authority of God? Consider, I pray you, (1.) Who gave you a tongue and a faculty of speaking? Was it not God? Might he not have prevented this by making you naturally dumb, as many are? (2.) For what end he gave it. Was it not for his glory? and will ye use it against him to dishonour? He thereby differenced you from a beast; and will you make yourself like a devil? Now if he gave it you, might he not set laws for the use of it to his glory?

3. It is not only a violation of the law of God, but a breach of men's laws. Swearing has been punished by many nations. With

the Scythians, the swearer's punishment was the loss of his estate ; with the Persians, bondage ; with the Grecians, cutting off the ears : with the Romans, throwing down a steep rock. And the laws of our land are against it, though it is the crying sin of our magistrates, that they are not put into execution. But God is mocked that way, and it is the sin of the people that do not press them to their duty, and inform them.

4. It is a sin that has a peculiar contempt of God in it, striking most directly against his honour, Psal. cxxxix. 20. His name is dreadful, and it is that wherein he has displayed his glorious name unto men : to prostitute and abuse it, then, must needs bear a horrible contempt of God in it. It is a proclaiming of our slighting him, and doing what we can to cause that no regard be had to him in the world.

5. It is most directly contrary to the great end of all divine revelation. The first petition in the Lord's prayer is, ' Hallowed be thy name.' This should be our chief design in all things ; for it is God's own design to which all others are subservient, whether in nature or grace. And this flies directly in the face of it, and cannot but be a most heinous sin.

6. It has a particular malignity in it, and in a most special manner proceeds from the devil, as it has less to carry us to it than ordinary sins have.

(1.) What profit is there in it ? The thief gets something for his pains, and the drunkard, a bellyfull ; but what gets the swearer ? Other sinners serve the devil for pay ; but swearers are volunteers, that get no reward. What fruit does it bring you, but the abhorrence of serious persons, and the fearful judgments of God.

(2.) What pleasure is in it ? The unclean person gets no profit, but a sordid pleasure by his sin ; but which of your senses does swearing gratify ? If people were minded to give up themselves to all manner of sensuality, yet there is so little that can be strained from this sin, that unless they be resolved to do the devil a pleasure, they might forbear this sin. Love to that sin, then, must be a love to it for itself, a pure devilish love, without the smallest prospect of pleasure or profit by it. And if men will thus court their own damnation, it is pity if prevented from the lowest place in hell, and the highest room among the servants of the devil, who will serve him just because they will serve him.

(3.) Can any say it is the sin of his constitution ; We have heard of a covetous, envious, lustful, passionate, &c. constitution, but of a swearing constitution never. Is any man born with it ? does the constitution of our bodies incline us to it ? In many other sins the

body drags the soul; but here the soul, contrary to all God's commands, makes the body its slave, and turns up the tongue against the heavens.

7. Common swearers and cursers, will be found to be men either of consciences already seared, or next door to it. And I would say, (1.) Knew ye ever a truly exercised Christian an ordinary swearer? I believe ye will find it as hard to find a saint a common swearer, as a common drunkard or whoremonger. It is hard to say it is a spot of God's children. (2.) It hath been known, that very wicked and loose men, who were given up to sensuality and voluptuousness, have had a dreadful horror of profane swearing; the little natural conscience that was left them startling at the profanation of that dreadful name. (3.) It is seldom found that those do reform. Many are very extravagant otherwise in their youth, that afterwards take up themselves: but oft-times swearing grows grey headed with men (4.) Has it not been often seen that, they never know till the oath be belched out; yea, some will swear, and know not they are swearing; nay, they will swear that they are not swearing. Whence can this proceed but from a seared conscience?

8. Swearing looks like hell upon earth. I said before that there is no advantage by swearing: But now I must say that they will have this advantage, that their works will go with them to the bottomless pit. The whoremonger will not get his whores there, nor the drunkard his cups, nor the covetous man his money; but the swearer and curser will still drive on his old trade, and that with improvement, through all eternity. I had once the unhappiness to hear a great swearer, who had often been reprov'd and admonish'd, say, he would curse and swear in hell through all eternity. I thought it might be a prophecy. But why should men take the trade of the damned over their head on earth? will not an eternity be long enough to give people their fill of profaning and blaspheming the name of God, and cursing? Why need they begin so soon? there is time enough afterwards. I know nothing on earth so like a damned soul in hell, as a curser or swearer, under bodily pains and despair. And some have been seen to die as they lived, cursing and swearing out their dying breath, to the astonishment of beholders. And if such men should happen to leave the world in the rage of a fever, as many do die raving, it will be a wonder if they die not therein.

I shall conclude all with a very short word of improvement.

1. How can these lands escape a stroke that have so much of this guilt to answer for? Can we think that God will hold nations guiltless, that have come under national perjuries in violating law-

ful oaths for reformation, that over and over many times have been involving themselves in sinful unlawful oaths contrary to the truth, besides all the execrable oaths and blasphemies vented by a profane generation that have cast off all fear, and that profanation of the holy name, by cursing, swearing, and profaning of holy ordinances, chargeable upon us?

2. I warn all gross profaners of the name of God to repent, and flee to the blood of Christ for pardon; certifying, that if ye do not, ye shall lie under the wrath of God for ever, and that unruly tongue of yours shall cast you into a burning fever in hell, where you shall not have a drop of water to cool your tongue. Have pity on your souls, have pity on the land, and your families, if ye have any. Pity the rising generation. Is it not sad to think of young ones learning to curse and swear as they learn to speak? Where do they learn these things but at home, or from other children that learn them at home? The blood of their souls will lie at your doors, if they follow your steps; and if God pluck them as brands out of the burning, no thanks to their parents, who do what in them lies by their example to ruin them. Say not, ye reprove them, and do not allow them in it; for an ill example will destroy what ye build by your good advice*.

3. Let us endeavour not only to reform ourselves, but contribute to the reformation of others in this point. It is Cain's language, unbecoming a Christian, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' In several places and nations, there are societies for reformation of manners. And were there but one in a family that had the courage to speak a word for God, to reprove sin, what good might it do, the work being managed with calmness and love? To neglect this duty is injurious to God, our neighbour, and ourselves. But some may object, Our reproofs will do no good, we may as well hold our tongue, I answer, be in your duty, and leave the event to God. Your duty ye have laid before you, Matt. xviii. 15.—17. 'If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.' Habitual profane swearers,

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

are surely more offensive to God and good men, than those that are guilty of a single act of fornication, Lev. v. 1. Tell these things to your neighbours that lie at home unnecessarily on the Lord's day. None are more likely to be guilty of these things than such. Be so kind to their souls as to let them know, that if they continue in these things, what has been said here against them, seeing they were obliged to have come and heard our message from the Lord, shall witness against them at the great day as well as against those who have heard the same, if they continue in such courses. I shall close this with that word, Deut. xxviii. 58, 59. 'If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law, that are written in this book, that thou mayst fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.' And O that all oaths, gross or minced, all profaning of the name of God, and irreverent use of it, and all cursing of whatever kind, might end with these sermons against it!

4. Let us all see ourselves in the glass of this command and threatening, and learn to know our guilt with respect to it, and our danger thereby. God will let us know sooner or later, that he thinks much of what we think very little of. And let us be humbled under, and wash in Christ's blood for our sins in taking God's name in vain*.

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