

not according to their own security only, but also according to the borrowers necessity, and their own duty, as the Lord's word, Luke vi. 35. plainly holds forth.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

EXODUS xx. Verse 16.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

THE Lord having in the foregoing commands directed us how to walk with others in reference to their honour, life, chastity, and estate: Now because men and humane societies are greatly concerned in the observing of truth and ingenuity, he cometh in this command to direct us how to be tender of this, that by us our neighbour be not wronged in that respect, but that on the contrary all means may be used to preserve truth for his good, to prevent what may load his name, and to remove what lieth on it. The scope of it is the preservation of verity and ingenuity amongst men, Col. iii. 9. *Lie not one to another.* Eph. iv. 25. *Speak every man the truth, &c.* and ver. 15. *Speak the truth in love;* because if otherwise spoken, it is contrary to the scope of this command, which is the preservation of our neighbours name from a principle of love: The sin forbidden here is expressed by false witness bearing, which is especially before judges, because that is the most palpable gross way of venting an untruth, under which (as in other commands) all the lesser are forbidden.

Although there be many sorts of sins in words, whereby we wrong others, yet we think they are not at all to be reduced to this command, for injurious and angry words belong to the sixth command, and filthy words to the seventh; but we take here such words as are contrary to truth, and fall especially under lying or wronging of our neighbours name; Now truth being an equality or conformity of mens words to the thing they speak, as it is indeed, and in itself: And lying being opposite thereto, we may consider it two ways, 1. In reference to a man's mind, that is, that he speak as he thinketh in his heart, as it is Psal. xv. 2. this is the first rule whereby lying is discerned, if our speech be not answerable to the inward conception which it pretendeth to express

press and this is that which they call *formale mendacium*, or a formal lie, which is an expressing of a thing otherways than we think it to be, with a purpose to deceive. Then 2. there must be a conformity in this conception to the thing itself, and so men must be careful to have their thoughts of things suitable to the things themselves, that they may the more safely express them, and thus when there is a disconformity between mens words and the thing they seem to express, it is that which they call *materiale mendacium*, or a material lie, and a breach of this command that requireth truth in mens words, both as to matter and manner.

That we may sum up this command (which is broad) into some few particulars, we may consider it first, as it is broken, 1. In the heart, 2. in the gesture. 3. In write, 4. in word.

First, In heart a man may fail, 1. By suspecting others unjustly, this is called *evil surmizing*, 1 Tim. vi. 4. or, as it is in the original, *evil suspicion*; which is when men are suspected of some evil without ground, as Potiphar suspected Joseph, or it is jealousy, when this suspicion is mixed with fear of prejudice to some interest we love, so Herod was jealous when Christ was born, and the neighbouring kings when Jerusalem was a building. There is, I grant a right suspicion, such as Solomon had of Adonijah, and wherein Gedaliah failed, in not crediting Johanna's information against Ishmael's conspiracy against his life. 2. By rash judging and unjust concluding concerning a man's state, as Job's friends did; or his actions, as Eli did of Hannah, saying, *That she was drunk*, because of the moving of her lips; or his end, as the Corinthians did of Paul, when he took wages, they said it was covetousness, and when he took not, they said it was want of love, see Rom. xiv. 4. and 2 Cor. xii. 4. &c. 3. By hasty judging, too often passing sentence in our mind from some seeming evidence of that which is only in the heart, and not in the outward practice, this is but to judge before the time, and hastily, Matth. vii. 1. 4. There is light judging, laying the weights of conclusions upon arguments or midses that will not bear it, as Job's friends did, and as the Barbarians suspected Paul, when they saw the viper on his hand, to be a murdurer, Acts xxv. 4. Thus the king Ahasuerus trusted Haman's calumny of the Jews too soon. 5. The breach of this command in the heart may be when suspicion of our neighbour's failing is kept up, and means not used to be satisfied about it, contrary to that, Matth. xviii. 15. *If thy brother offend thee*, &c. and when we seek not to be satisfied, but rest on presumptions, when they seem probable.

Secondly,

Secondly, In gesture this command may be broken, by nodding, winking, or such like (and even sometimes by silence) when these import in our accustomed way some tacite sinisterous insinuation, especially when either they are purposed for that end, or when others are known to mistake because of them, and we suffer them to continue under this mistake.

Thirdly, By writing this command may be broken, as Ezra v. 6. Neh. vi. 5. where calumniating libels are written, and sent by their enemies against the Jews and Nehemiah; in which respect many fail in these days.

Fourthly, But words are most properly the seat wherein this sin is subjected, whether they be only or meerly words, or also put in writing, because in these our conformity or disconformity to truth doth most appear.

2. Lies are commonly divided into three sorts, according to their ends: 1. There is *mendacium perniciosum*, a malicious or pernicious lie when it is hurtful to another, and so designed, as were the lies of those that bare witness against Christ and of Ziba against Mephibosheth. 2. There is *officiosum mendacium*, or an officious lie, when it is for a good end, such was the midwives lie, Exod. i. 9. thus the denying of a thing to be, even when the granting of it would infer hurt and damage to another, is contrary to truth, and we ought not to do evil that good may come of it, and it overturneth the end for which speaking was appointed, when we declare a thing otherways than we know or think it to be; and as no man can lie for himself for his own safety, so can he not for another's; thus to lie even for God is a fault, and accounted to be talking deceitfully and wickedly for him, when to keep off what we account dishonourable to him, we will assert that he may, or may not do such a thing, when yet the contrary is true, Job xiii. 4, 7. 3. There is *jocosum mendacium*, when it is for sport to make others laugh and be merry, which being sinful in itself can be no matter of lawful sport to make others laugh. 4. We may add one more, and that is *mendacium temerarium*, when men lie and have no end before them, but through inadvertency and customary looseness, speak otherways than the thing is, this is called the way of living, Psal. cxix. 29. and is certainly sinful; as when they told David when Annon was killed, that all the king's sons were killed, being too hasty in concluding before they had tried.

3. Consider lies or untruths, either in things doctrinal, or in matters of fact; In things doctrinal, so false teachers and their followers are guilty, who teach and believe lies, so such teachers are said, 1 Tim. iv. 2. to speak lies, and so
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when they foretell vain events, this is a hard degree of leud lying on the Lord, to say he meaneth or sayeth another thing than ever he thought, or then ever came into his heart, and to pretend a commission from him when he giveth no such commission. In matters of fact, men are guilty when things are said to be done when they are not done, or other-ways done, than they are done indeed.

4. We may consider this sin in mens practice, either in reference to God, so hypocrisy and unanswerableness to our profession is lying, Psal. lxxviii. 30. and Isa. xxix. 13. or we may consider it as betwixt man, and man, which is more properly the scope here: Again we may consider the wronging of a man three ways, 1. By false reports, speaking what is indeed untruth; 2. By vain reports, which tend to his shame; so Deut. v. 20 This command is repeated in these words, *Thou shalt not take up any witness*, (as it is in the original) *against thy neighbour*. 3. When the reports are malicious, whether they be true or false, and intended for that end that our neighbour may loose his good name. Further, Consider it in reference to the person guilty, either as he is, 1. the raiser or carrier of a tale, true or false, yet tending to the prejudice of his neighbour; thus he is the maker of a lie: or 2. as he is a hearer or receiver of tales, Prov. xvii. 4. Thus he is to lying as a refetter is to theft, and would not men hear tales, few would carry them; whereas when men will hearken to lies; especially great men, all their servants ordinarily become wicked tale-bearers and whisperers: or, 3. as he is the sufferer (albeit he be not the venter) of a lying tale to pass on his neighbour (so he loveth a lie, as it is Rev. xxii. 8) or but faintly purgeth him of it, but letteth it either lye on him, or possibly taketh it up and repeateth it again, which is condemned, Psal. xv. 3. where a man that taketh up any evil report of his neighbour, even where others possibly have laid it down, is looked upon as a person who shall never dwell with God; Thus one inventeth a lie, another venteth and outeth it, and another refetteth it like coiners, spreaders and refetters of false money; for, that one said such a thing, will not warrant our repeating of it again.

5. We may consider wrongs done to our neighbour by words, as unjust and without all ground, and so a lie is a calumny, as was that of Ziba, made of his master Mephibosheth: this is in Latin *calumnia*; or when there is ground, yet when they are spoken to his prejudice, this is *convitium*, if especially in this they suffer for the truth's sake; or if after repentance, former faults be cast up to a person, as if one should have called Paul a blasphemer, still, even after

his conversion and repentance, of this was Shimei guilty by railing on David.

6 Both these sorts of lies are either spoken or received, and not afterward rejected, as David too hastily received that false report made of Mephibosheth by servant Ziba, and thinking it unlikely, because the reporter made it seem to be so, did therefore conclude it was truth, and did not reject it afterwards; or when at first received, yet after upon better information it is rejected.

7. Again, this wronging of our neighbour by words is either of him when absent, and this is back-biteing, which often is done under pretence of much respect (that the report may stick the faster) in such like words as these; "He is one I wish well, and should be loath to have him evil reported of, but this is too evident, that is the truth," &c. this is *susurrare*, to whisper. Or it is of him when present, so it is a reproach and indignity, or upbraiding.

8. Again, this backbiting and reproaching is either direct, so that men may easily know we hate such persons, or it is indirect, granting somewhat to his commendation, and using such prefaces as in shew bear out much love, but are purposely designed to make the wound given by the tongue the deeper, such persons are as butter in their words, but as sharp swords in their hearts, this is that dissembling love which David complaineth of.

9. Sometimes this reproaching and flandering of our neighbour is out of spleen against him, and is malicious; sometimes out of envy to raise and exalt ones self, on the ruins of another (this is *grassari infamam proximi*) sometimes it is out of design, thereby to insinuate upon them whom we speak unto, as to signify our freedom unto them, to please them, or praise them, by crying down another, that is to serve the itching humour of such who love the praise of others, when it may be we know more faults of those we speak to, yet never open our mouth to them of one of these, nor are we free with them anent them, if the things be true.

10. We may break this command by speaking truth, 1. For an evil end, as Doeg did, Psal. lii. 2. By telling some thing that is truth out of revenge. 3. When it is done without discretion, so it shameth more than edifieth: Christ's word is, Matth. xviii. 15. *Tell him his fault betwixt thee and him alone*: and we on the contrary make it an upcast to him, this certainly is not right. 4. When it is minced, and all not told, which if told might alleviate; or construed and wrested to a wrong end, as did the witnesses who deposed against Christ.

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11. We may break this command, and fail in the extremity of speaking too much good of, or to, our neighbour, as well as by speaking evil of him, if the good be not true; and here cometh in, 1. Excessive and rash praising and commending of one, 1. Beyond what is due, 2. Beyond what we do to others of as much worth, this is respect of persons; 3. Beyond what discretion alloweth, as when it may be hurtful to awaken envy in others, or pride in them who are thus praised: 2. Praising inordinately, that is before a man's self, or to gain his affection, and that possibly more than when he is absent and heareth not; much more is it to be blamed when spoken groundlessly, this is flattery, a most base evil, which is exceedingly hurtful and prejudicial to human societies, yet exceeding delightful to the flattered: 3. We fail in this extremity, when our neighbour is justified or defended, or excused by us in more or less, when it should not be.

12. Under this sin forbidden in the command, cometh in all beguiling speeches, whether it be by equivocation, when the thing is doubtfully and ambiguously expressed; or by mental reservation, a trick whereby the grossest lies may be justified, and which is plainly aversive of all truth in speaking, when the sentence is but half expressed; as suppose one should ask a Romish priest, "Art thou a priest?" and he should answer, "I am no priest;" reserving this in his mind, "I am no priest of Baal:" for by giving or expressing the answer so, an untruth and cheat is left upon the asker, and the answer so conceived doth not quadrat with the question as it ought to do, if a man would evite lying.

13. This falshood may be considered with reference to things we speak of, as in buying or selling, when we call a thing better or worse than it is indeed, or then we think it to be; ah! how much lying is there every day this way with many.

14. Under this sin forbidden in this command are comprehended, 1. railing, 2. whispering, 3. tale-bearing (spoken of before,) 4. the tattling of busy bodies, that know not how to insinuate themselves with others, or pass time with them, but by telling some ill tale of another; 5. prevarication, which is the sin of persons who are unconstant, whose words go not all alike, saying and unsaying; saying now this way, and then another way, of the same thing, their words clashing together, and they not consisting with themselves.

15. Consider falshood or false-witness bearing, as it inferreth breach of promise, which is forbidden, Psal. xv. 4. when one performeth not what he promiseth, or promiseth that which he intendeth not to perform, which is deceit and falshood.

16. As we may sin in speaking against others, so we may in respect of ourselves many ways: 1. When we give occasion to others to speak evil of us, 1 Cor. vi. 3. 2. When we are not careful to entertain and maintain, a good name, and by suitable ways to wipe away what may mar the same: It is generally observed, that while men have a good name, they are desirous and careful to keep it, and when they have lost it, they grow careless of it; we ought not to be prodigal of our names more than of our lives or estates, for the loss of them incapacitateth us much to edify others. 3. When we vainly boast of ourselves, and set forth our own praise, that is, as if a man should eat too much honey, Prov. xxv. 27. 4. When we will not confess a fault, but either deny excuse, or extenuate it; this Joshua exhorteth Achan to eschew. 5. When we say that things are worse with us than indeed they are, and deny, it may be even in reference to our spiritual condition, somewhat of God's goodness to us, and so lie against the Holy Ghost. 6. When we are too ready to entertain good reports of ourselves, and to be flattered, there is (if to any thing) an open door to this in us; and as the heathen Seneca said, *Blanditia cum excluduntur placent*, so may it be ordinarily seen that men will seemingly reject what they delight should be insisted in: there is in us so much self-love, that we think some way, that men in commending us, do what is their duty, therefore we often think them good folk because they do so, and men that do not commend us, we respect them not, or but little, or at least less than we do others, because we think they are behind in a duty by not doing so, and which is very sad, and much to be lamented, few things do lead us to love or hate, commend or discommend (and that as we think not without ground) more than this, that men do love and commend, or not love and commend us.

17. We also may be with-holding a testimony to the truth and by not clearing of another, when it is in our power to do it, be guilty of this sin.

But especially is forbidden here public lying and wronging of another judicially, either in his person, name, or estate, and that, 1. By the judge, when he passeth sentence, either rashly, before he heareth the matter, and searcheth it out, which Job disclaimeth, asserting the contrary of himself, Job xxix. 16. or ignorantly, or perversly for corrupt ends, as being bribed to it, or otherways. 2. By the recorder, writing grievous things, Isa. x. 1. or making a clause in a decreet, sentence, or writ, more favourable to one, and more prejudicial to another than was intended. 3. By the witnesses, who either conceal truth, or express it ambiguously

guously, or refuse to testify, or assert what is not true. 4. By the advocate, by undertaking to defend or pursue what righteously he cannot; or by hiding from his client that which he knoweth will prejudice his cause, or by denying it when he is asked about it; or by not bringing the best defences he hath. And as to the first point here about advocates, it is to be regretted (as a great divine in the neighbour-church hath most pathetically, according to his manner, lately done) as a sad matter, that any known unrighteous cause should have a professed Christian, in the face of a Christian judicatory, to defend it; but incomparably more sad, that almost every unjust cause should find a patron; and that, no contentious, malicious person should be more ready to do wrong, than some lawyers to defend him for a (dear bought fee! I speak not here of innocent mistakes in cases of great difficulty; nor yet of excusing a cause bad in the main from unjust aggravations; but (says that great man when money will hire men to plead for injustice, and to use their wits to defraud the righteous, and to spoil his cause, and vex him with delays for the advantage of their unrighteous clients; I would not have the conscience of such for all their gains, nor their account to make for all the world: God is the great patron of all innocence, and the pleader of every righteous cause: and he that will be so bold as to plead against him, had need of a large fee to save him harmless. 5. By the accuser or pursuer, when unjustly he seeketh what doth not belong unto him, or chargeth another with what he should not, or justly cannot. 6. By the defender, when he denieth what he knoweth, or minceth it, &c. And by all of them, when business is delayed and protracted through their respective accession to it, as well as when justice is more manifestly wronged; this is the end of Jethro's advice to Moses, *Exod. xviii. 23.* that the people may return home, being quickly, and with all convenient diligence dispatched; which, to their great loss and prejudice many ways, the unnecessary lengthening of processes obstructeth, and maketh law and lawyers, appointed for the ease and relief of the people, to be a grievous and vexatious burthen to them; for which men in these stations and capacities will have much to answer to God, the righteous Judge of all the earth, when they shall be arraigned before his terrible tribunal, where there will be no need of leading witnesses to prove the guilt, since every man's conscience will be in place of a thousand witnesses, neither will the nimblest wit, the eloquentest tongue, the finest and smoothest pen of the most able lawyer, judge, advocate, notary or litigant that shall be found guilty there, be able to fetch himself

self fair off. O! then all the fig-leaves of their fairest and most flourishing, but really frivolous pretences, wherewith they palliate themselves, will be instantly blown away by the breath of that Judge's mouth, and so be utterly unable to cover the shame of their nakedness in the manifold breaches of this command; then the greatest stretches of wit, and highest strains of eloquence made use of to the prejudice of truth and justice, will be found and pronounced to be poor, silly, and childish wiles, yea, very fooleries and babblings; after which, they will not speak again, but laying their hands on their mouths, eternally keeping silence; It will therefore be the wisdom and advantage of the guilty in time to take with it, and resolve to do so no more, to betake themselves, for the pardon of it, to that advocate with the Father, even Jesus the righteous who thoroughly pleadeth, and without all peradventure or possibility of loosing it; doth always carry the cause he undertaketh to plead.

In sum, that which in this command in its positive part is levelled at as the scope thereof, is the preserving and promoting of truth, honest simplicity and ingenuity amongst men; a sincerely and cordially loving regard to the repute and good name of one another, and a sweet inward contentation, joyful satisfaction and complacency of heart therein; with a suitable love to, and care for our own good name.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

EXODUS xx. Verse 17.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbours house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbours wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbours.

UNTO all the other commands the Lord hath sub-joined this, for mans humbling and deep abasement in his sight, and it reacheth further in then all of them, being (as the words bear) not about any new object, (for it is concerning wife, house, &c.) but about a new way of acting in reference to that object, and condemning directly a sin, not so condemned in any other of the foregoing five commandments, so that it also seems to be added to the other as a full and