

sins without repentance. Especially, you have need to take notice of this, that are the children of parents, that have opposed the purity of God's service and worship, and the work of its reformation, and have been corrupters of it: Children may be partakers of their parents faults, and so plagued for them several ways; and we think that this forfeiture is more than ordinary. And therefore, as amongst men, there are special crimes beyond ordinary procuring such a sentence, so is it here. And, 1. They be guilty by following their foot steps, in walking in their parents sins, as Jeroboam's children did. 2. In approving their fathers way, praising their fathers sayings or doings; as it is, Psal. xlix. 13. 3. In winking at their parents sins and wickedness. 4. In boasting of their oppressions, blood-shed, &c. as if they were acts of valour and man-hood. 5. In being content that their fathers sinned, if it gained any possession to them. 6. In possessing and enjoying without repentance, what to their knowledge they sinfully purchased. 7. In spending prodigally and riotously what the parents covetously gathered; the sin of the parent here, is the seed of the son's sin. 8. In professing sorrow for the want of occasion to live in ignorance, prophanity, or looseness, as their fathers did, as in Jer. xlv. 17, 18, 19. They said that things went well then. In not being humbled before God for the sins of predecessors, nor confessing them to him; as Levit. xxvi. 40. nor repairing the losses or injuries which we knew they did to any that were wronged or oppressed by them.



THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

EXODUS 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.

THIS Command the Lord preffeth with a threatning, that it may be known that he is in earnest, and will reckon with men for the breaches of it: The scope of it, is, To have the name of the Lord sanctified, hallowed, and had in reverence by all his people; and so every thing eschewed that may be dishonourable to that holy name, and which may make him, as it were, contemptible: This scope is clear from Lev. xxii. 23. where having forbidden

the prophaning of his name, he addeth this positive precept as opposite thereto; *But I will be hallowed among the children of Israel*; So then it is that he himself may be hallowed, and had in reverence amongst them, as Psal. lxxxix. 7. and cxi. 9. And so this command is much more extensive than at first view it appeareth; the scope thereof being to keep the heart in a holy awe and reverence of God, and so in a holy way of using, and reverend way of going about every thing which concerneth him.

For more clear handling of it, let us consider, 1. What is meant by the *name of God*. 2. What is meant, by *taking that name of God in vain*.

1. By the *name of God*, is often understood God himself; for to call on God's name and on himself are one. 2. Properly hereby is understood in titles, attributed to him in scripture; as God, Jehovah the Lord, Holy, Just, &c. or such titles as signify that excellent Being which we call God. 3. More largely it is taken for whatsoever he maketh use of, for making of himself known, seeing otherwise he hath no name; but whatever title he taketh to himself, or whatever thing he maketh use of, thereby to make himself known, that is his name; such are 1. His attributes, mercy, justice, omnipotency, &c. which Exod. xxxiv. 36, 37. are called his name. 2. His word or gospel, called his name, Acts ix. 15. 3. His ordinances, sacraments, Mat. xxvii. 19. Discipline and censures, which are the exercise of his authority, Matth. xviii. 20. 1 Cor. v. 4. 4. Prayer is a piece of his name; he is a God that heareth prayer, Psal. lxiii. 2. 5. His works, Rom. i. 20, 21. 6. All his worship. Deut. xii. 5. Exod. xx. 24. 6. Lots. Acts i. 26. By these God maketh himself (when he thinketh fit) known in his will, as he doth by his word. 7. Profession of subjection to him; so they that profess this, are said to bear his name, and it should be reverently used, as all actions which make himself or his will and decree (which is himself) known, as lots do, Prov. xvi. 33.

By all these God is to be known, and something of him may be seen, and we take under name here all these to be comprehended: The first, because the scope is to hallow himself in obedience to all that he commandeth, as appeareth, Lev. xxii. 31, 32 and the first petition in the Lord's prayer, *Hallowed be thy name*, being compared with the other two that followeth, cleareth it. The second is properly and primarily in the very letter here understood. The third cometh in by native consequence for attaining the scope of the command, so that there is neither word nor work of God, but all relateth to this.

The second thing to be cleared, is, What is meant by taking *his name in vain*. To take his name (as it is Psal. l. 16. and xvi. 4.) is to mention any of those things before spoken of (which are so many pieces of his name) or any way to meddle with them in thought, word, or deed, as by writing, or otherwise: *In vain*, doth not only comprehend, 1. False swearing, or blaspheming, charming, and what is wrong as to the matter: Nor, 2. Only prophane abusing of the Lord's name when the matter is right, by rashness, precipitancy, frequency in swearing: Nor, 3. Doth it only mean unnecessary swearing, when it may be forborn: But 4. *In vain* is also when it is not mentioned or made use of to good purpose, that is, to God's honour, the edification of others and of ourselves; so whenever God's name is any way meddled with without fruit, it is *in vain*.

The scope of this command then we take to be, To press the manifesting of reverence to God. 1. In a high esteem of his holy majesty. 2. In a reverent use of all his ordinances in the right way appointed by him. 3. In a good conversation adorning this doctrine of the gospel, and keeping his blessed name, that is named over us, from being evil spoken of, or contemned by others, because of us, Rom. ii. 24. 4. And more especially (that God may be honoured) in a right, reverend, and edifying use of his name, in thinking, speaking, praying, reading, writing, swearing, vowing, &c. and abstaining from all irreverence in these, unbecoming the greatness of God, and using each of them reverently, when called to go about them.

If it be asked what the mentioning of God's name reverently is? take these rules to clear it.

1. It is necessary that the matter be lawful in which his name is mentioned; by this, all hereticks, charmers, cursers, fore swearers, and blasphemers, are grossly guilty of sinning against this command.

2. It is required that the matter be not only lawful, but important, and of some weight: hence loosing for a thing of nought, or swearing in a thing of no importance, are an abusing of the name of God, and a tempting of him.

3. It is required that the matter be necessary also; for if a thing may be decided other-ways, it ought to be neither by loosing nor swearing; hence in the hebrew, to swear is still used in the passive voice, to shew, That men ought not to swear, but when they can do no otherwise, and when a lawful call presseth to it.

4. It would be in the manner, grave, deliberate, understood, done in judgement, Jer. iv. 3. with fear and reverence.

5. A good end is to be proposed, namely; one of these three, God's honour, the good of others, or our own necessary vindication in something, that so it be not taken to no purpose.

There is this difference betwixt this command and others; in other commands, God expresseth the highest degree of every kind of sin, to scare men from the breaches of these commands; here he mentioneth not forswearing or blasphemy, but taking the Lord's name in vain; which is the lowest degree of that kind; that by this, God may teach us what reverence we owe to him, and of what large extent the command is, and how careful he would have us to be, lest we should come upon the borders of any thing that seemeth to be a breach of it.

If it be asked, why the Lord is so peremptory in urging this command, and in pressing the thing here commanded in the very least?

Ans. 1. That he may in this set out his own greatness, and work a fear and reverence of him in the hearts of his people; therefore will he have them reverently using that which concerneth him, that the due distance, betwixt God that is in heaven, and creatures that are on earth, may be imprinted on us, and entertained by us. Eccles. v. 1, 2, 3. Lev. xxii. 31, 32. Psal. lxxxix. 9.

2. Because his name, whereby he holdeth forth something of himself, or that infinite excellent Being, called God, is great, dreadful and glorious, and is so to be had in reverence, Psal. cxi. that more than ordinary watchfulness should be used in testifying our respect to it.

3. Because this is the way to curb atheism and prophanity, which the devil driveth on by these steps; first, to think little of God, and then by little and little, to innure men to prophanity, and habituate them to baffle and affront the name of God; Hence it is, that he taketh possession, mainly, of young ones this way; and hardly ye will see any that irreverently meddle with the name of God, but they are gross, or fall at length to be gross, in other things.

4. God's name is precious, and given to his people for a great refuge, Prov. xviii. 10. therefore will he not have that which is their singular mercy to be abused.

5. God is a friend in covenant, yet so, as that relation may not in the least wear out his honour and our due distance with him, Deut. xxviii. 58. *Its the great and dreadful name of the Lord our God.*

6. Because this honoureth God, and adorneth the profession of the gospel before others, whereas, irreverence therein dishonoureth God before them.

For more particular considering the matter and breaches of this command, we shall draw it to these heads; and 1. We shall speak to what concerneth swearing, vowing, or public covenanting with God. 2. To what concerneth blasphemy. 3. Concerning the taking the name of the Lord in vain, in worship, private or public, particularly, how it is taken in vain by hypocrisy. 4. Of taking it in vain out of worship rashly and unnecessarily. 5. How it is taken in vain our conversation, as others are occasioned, or caused to blaspheme God's name by our carriage. 3. Concerning lots, &c. These we shall consider, especially, with respect to our practice.

In speaking of what concerneth oaths, we would, 1. speak of an oath. 2. Of the obligation of it, for this command both requireth oaths, and the keeping of them, and it may be broken in reference to both.

We would in the entry distinguishing betwixt these four, 1. Oaths. 2. Affeuerations. 3. Simple affirmation or assertions. 4. Imprecations or curses.

1. Oaths are such, as directly invoke God by such expressions, as, *be, or by, by my holiness I have sworn*, Psal. lxxxix. *I swear by the Lord.*

2. Affeuerations (called vehement Assertions) are like expressed thus, *As the Lord liveth, As that light shineth, in conscience, faith, &c.*

3. Simple assertions are, such as *in truth, truly, indeed*, which but speak the thing simply, and affirm that to be true or false that is asserted, and so belongeth to the ninth command only, as such.

4. Imprecations are either directed to ones self conditionally, and if such a thing be truth, *then let me perish; Shame befall me* if I do not this or this; or towards others, especially in these, *shame befall thee, the devil take thee, a vengeance on thee*, and other expressions abominable to mention.

Again, in oaths which are for confirmation, let us distinguish betwixt assertory oaths, that do but confirm such a thing to be truth, and promissory oaths, that engage the person swearing to the performance of such a thing for the time to come, either absolutely, or with qualifications.

For clearing the matter, take this proposition, that oaths in both these cases being well qualified, is a lawful piece of God's worship, and may, and should be made use of by his people; this is a clear truth from these scriptures, Deut. x. 20. Deut. vi. 13. Jer. iv. 2.

As for Anabaptists, who deny the lawfulness of oaths under the New-Testament, we are not now to meddle with them, because there be few in these days that are in such an

an error. We shall consider. 1. What qualifications are requisite to right swearing: Then, 2. clear some practical questions. 3. Shew wherein this command is violate in respect of swearing.

In an oath consider, 1. Its matter. 2. Its form. 3. Its rise, or mens call to it. 4. The expression its conceived in. 5. Our manner of going about it. 6. Our keeping of it, which followeth after to be spoken to distinctly.

First, for the matter of an oath, Assertory oaths must be of things that are, 1. True. 2. Weighty. 3. They must be such to our knowledge. Again, Promissory oaths must be in things just and lawful, possible, profitable, and in our power, and which to our knowledge are such.

2. The form must be, By the true God, it being a peculiar part of his worship, for we can swear by none whom we cannot invoke, therefore idols, creatures, graces, &c. are excluded here, for none of these are God.

3. Its rise must be edification, that is God's glory, our own vindication, or our neighbours good, or the call of a magistrate putting us to it; and it should be used for deciding of controversies, when no other mean of clearing or deciding such a thing is remaining; hence we say, *juratus fuit*, he was sworn passively; and the Hebrews have no active word for expressing it, to let us see, men ought not to swear, but to be sworn, or by necessity pressed to it.

4. As to the expressions in which it is conceived, or the thing sworn; it is required not only that it be truth to, and in the man's meaning that sweareth, but that the expression be plain and intelligible to his meaning and understanding, to whom the oath is given; otherwise it deludeth, but doth not clear. Hence these two rules are to be observed. 1. That the meaning be so clear, as may be, and is most ordinarily and obviously gathered from such words and expressions as are used. 2. That the expressions be according as they are supposed to be understood by others, especially him that exacteth the oath; for if he mean one thing, and we another, God's name is prophaned, and the end of an oath frustrate; much more equivocations in expressions and mental reservations are to be condemned here; the first whereof taketh in ambiguity in words; the second a different sense in our thoughts from what seemeth to be meant in our words.

3. As to the right manner of swearing, these things ought to be noticed: 1. That it be in judgment, that we understand the thing we swear, and the nature of our oath, and him we swear by, Jer. iv. 2. 2. Fear any reverence going about

about, as being in an especial way in God's own sight; thus *to fear an oath*, is a good property, and the heart would be filled with the apprehension of a present God. 3. Singleness in the end, that it be not to deceive any, but to express the truth truly and faithfully, called righteousness, Jer. iv. 2. And for the most part these properties or qualifications may agree to oaths, asseverations and imprecations.

For the further clearing of this matter, we would speak to some questions.

And the first question is, how then differ oaths from asseverations?

Ans. They should both be in truth and judgment with fear, and when called unto; but in this they differ, that in oaths we are only to make mention of the true God, and swear by him; but asseverations may be thus expressed, *As thy soul liveth*, 2 Kings ii. ver. 2, 4, 6. and yet we do not swear by the soul of any.

A second question is, What we may judge of such oaths, as are, by angels, saints, Mary, Paul, and by other creatures, as heaven, light, the world, by soul, conscience, &c. Or by graces, as by faith.

Ans. We need not use much curiosity in distinctions: For, we conceive them all to be simply unlawful. 1. Because none of these are God, and swearing is a peculiar piece of his worship, Deut. vi. 13. And swearing by any thing whatever it be, which is not God is condemned, Jer. v. 7. *They have sworn by those who are not God's.* 2. Because we cannot invoke any of these, and therefore cannot swear by them, seeing an oath carrieth along with it, an invocation of him we swear by. 3. Because they want these properties due to such, to whom this worship belongeth. As 1. Omniscience, to try whether we mean as we have sworn or not. 2. Omnipotency. And 3. Justice to avenge, if it be not so as we have sworn. 4. Sovereignty, to call the swearers to a reckoning. 5. Because it would derogate from the scope of this command, which giveth this to God alone, as his due and implieth, that he alone hath all these properties in him. 6. Because such oaths are expressly prohibited by Christ, Matth. iii. 34. *Swear not at all, neither by heaven nor earth;* For they stand in an inferior relation to God, and are his servants. 7. Because as none of these things are God to take order with us, if we swear falsely; so none of them are so ours, as we can lay them in pledge, for the lest change to be made upon them, in case our oath be not true; none of them can be added unto or diminished from by us. We cannot make one of our hairs black or white; and therefore ought not to swear by our head;

head; much less can we quiet our conscience, or increase our faith, that we should so freely swear by these, That place, Matth. v. 36. cleareth this: For that of Matth. xxiii. 16, 17. &c. speaketh of the obligation of an oath sinfully made, as to that manner of swearing, which yet still bindeth: but it warranteth not the making of such oaths.

A third question is, What is it to be judged concerning asseverations; such as, *In conscience, good faith, as I shall answer, &c. as I am a Christian; as I have a soul to be saved,* and such like? *Answ.* 1. We think, there is no question, but if these were rightly, and in the due manner made use of they might be lawfully used, as scripture cleareth. 2. Yea, we think, if any oaths be made use of, these would first be used; and a man may be called to use one of these, when he is not directly to swear. 3. Therefore, we think they cannot be used, but in necessity, when less will not serve, and should be used with fear, reverence, understanding, and the other qualifications: And that therefore they sin, who in common discourse, rashly and vainly use them, which we conceive to be forbidden here; and when they are not conscientiously used, they lead men to a greater degree of sin, here discharged: As we see some begin with asseverations then idle oaths, and then imprecations, as Peter sinfully did, Matth. xxvi. Reason 1. All these asseverations are reductively oaths and imply the contrary imprecations in them. Thus, let me not be esteemed a Christian, nor have a soul to be saved: which must relate to God for executing these; therefore, being indirect oaths, and belong to this command. 2. Because the very end of any vehement asseveration is to confirm what is said, more than any ordinary assertion can; Now in so far, it is an oath; it being proper to an oath, to confirm what is spoken, and seeing what agreeth with an oath in the essentials, they must be materially one, though asseverations, be pronounced in another form. 3. Vain asseverations, are against that rule, Matth. v. 57. James v. 12. *Let your communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay; and whatever is more* (in ordinary communication) *is evil:* And it cannot be denied, and therefore needless and sinful. 4. We do not find asseverations, such as, *My conscience beareth me witness,* to be used (warrantably) by saints in scripture; but with great reference, even almost in such things as they used to confirm by oaths; therefore, swearing is often joined with them, Rom. ix. 1, 2. 2 Cor. xi. 31. 5. For what end are they used? It is either to confirm something or to no end: Beside, the needless use of them habituateth folk to baffle and prophane excellent things, and do inure them to prophanity; Hence these

these that use them most, are ordinarily less tender in their other carriage, and it cometh to direct swearing at length. If it be said, good faith, signifieth no more but in truth, and without dissimulation, as it is understood sometimes in the laws,) *Bona Fide* and *Mala Fide*. *Answ.* Yet faith is otherwise taken in our common acception, and words would be so used, as they are commonly made use of by others.

2. If it be not evil, yet it hath the appearance of evil, which should be eschewed and abstained from, 1 Thess. v. 22

3. Whatever good faith signifieth yet certainly in our common use, it is more than a simple assertion; therefore, should a man tell me an untruth, and put *Bona fide*, or good faith to it, to confirm it: Will any man think but he is more than an ordinary liar, against the ninth command? Yea, would he not be thought infamous in breaking his good faith? Therefore it is more than yea or nay, and so not ordinarily to be used. Yea, we conceive that these asseverations will have more weight on natural consciences, than simple assertions; and therefore the challenges of dealing falsely with these, will bite and wound the conscience, much more sharply than falsifying simple assertions, which speaketh out this; that they are nearer of kin unto, and more involved in this command, than at first appeareth.

The fourth quest. is, What may be said of imprecations? *Answ.* Distinguish betwixt such as one useth against himself; as, *Let me not see heaven, if that be not truth*, or the like

2. Such as are used against others (I speak by private persons,) as, *Shame fall thee; Devil take thee*, and the like; which are either conditional, as, *If thou do not such a thing, &c.* are absolute, without any such condition. We say then, 1. That keeping the qualifications, formerly mentioned, and required to an oath; one may in some cases lawfully use some imprecations, even to ones self, the scriptures having such patterns in them; but with great caution, circumspection, and tenderness.

2. Cursing of others by private persons, out of passion or revenge, is simply prohibited, and that in several respects. For 1. It derogateth from the glory of God, if he be therein invocated, in making him subservient to our passions, and to execute our revenge; or if he be not invocated in these imprecations; it is worse because of the devil, or some other thing is put in his room. 2. It derogateth also from that love we owe others.

3. As for mentioning the Devil in such imprecations, as *Devil a bit, Fiend a body*, or such like, it is most abominable: For thereby the Devil is employed in God's room,

and God is forsaken; because there is no ground to expect a hearing of such a suit from him, and so you betake you to the devil; praying to him, employing him, reverencing and worshipping him; as if he were just, to execute your judgment, when God doth it not: And sometimes by such imprecations; you call on the devil, who is the father of lies; to witness a truth. Ah! how abominable to be heard amongst Christians! Men need not go to the Wild-Indians, nor to witches, to seek worshippers of the Devil! Alas! There are many such to be found amongst Christians! How sound these words? What devil now! The mickle devil, &c. It is horrible to mention, that which goeth out of some mens mouths without any fear! Ah! What can be the reason that Christians thus worship the Devil, and swear by him, as Israel did by Baal.

There remain yet some things concerning oaths, especially promissory oaths to be cleared. As, 1. How promissory oaths differ from an assertory oath.

And, 1. They agree in this, that truth is the scope of both. But, 2. They differ in this, that assertory oaths, have but one verity, to wit, That the thing be, in the present time, true as the man sayeth or sweareth: But promissory oaths have a twofold verity, to wit; one present, that the swearer meaneth what he promiseth. 2. That for the time to come, he shall endeavour, effectually to make the thing truth which he sayeth and sweareth: The first, is only a truth in the person: The second is also a truth of the thing or matter.

2. We would difference vows from promissory oaths. Vows have God both for party and witness. Oaths may have some other for, party, but God for witness to the giving an oath or promise to such a party: Yet in some things there is a great affinity, as to the matter, in both.

Concerning promissory oaths; we may enquire. 1. Concerning the making of them. 2. Concerning the obligation of them; That a man may make such oaths tying himself to somethings in which he was before free; is without all controversy, and clear in the scripture. Concerning such oaths it may be enquired. 1. In what matter. 2. On what occasions. 3. With what conditions, they may be engaged in.

And, 1. For the matter of them; they may be in three sorts of matter. 1. In such matter as is morally necessary, as the fearing serving, worshipping the true God, &c. So was Jacob's oath and vow, Gen. xxviii. 20, 21. *That the Lord should be his God.* And many of the covenants menti-
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ned in the Old-Testament ; and David's swearing, Ps. cxix. 106. *To keep God's statutes.*

2. There is a civil lawful good matter ; such as duties to superiors, or to make some obligation to others forth-coming ; or to return and requite such a particular good turn to one. Such are oaths of allegiance to lawful superiors : Such did the spies swear to Rachab Joshua ii. 12. &c. And David to Jonathan ; and that these are lawful, having due qualifications, cannot be denied.

3. There are some things indifferent ; as eating or abstaining from such and such meats or drinks, or on such and such days ; and although the thing be not simply unlawful, yet oaths therein would be engaged in, with much prudence on such grounds, and with such qualifications and conditions, as may make it appear, the swearer is not using the name of God unnecessarily, and that he cannot otherwise gain this point : Nor superstitiously to make it appear, that he doth not bring his conscience under a yoke of will-worship. One of which ways ordinarily men fail, in these oaths ; and so they are neither to God's honour, nor others good ; and therefore such oaths are either rarely to be engaged in, or not at all.

Next such oaths as to the occasions of parties engaging in them, may be divided into these three.

The first is, When we engage in public oaths and promises solemnly, when authority calls us to it.

2. When the edification or satisfaction in another, in private calleth for it. There are sometimes when a Christian may be, yea is called to it, for gaining credit to something, (that the other is called to believe) to interpose reverently the oath of God, as Jacob did to Laban.

3. One in secret may thus engage himself to God, in lawful and necessary things ; as David, *I have sworn, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.*

Yet in the third place, all these oaths, would still be with these qualifications, mentioned Jer. iv. 2. First in truth, namely, the two-fold truth before mentioned. 2. In judgment, that is, with knowledge and deliberation, minding and understanding what it is we swear. 3. With righteousness or justice, that is, That it be in things, that are according to the law of equity, as well as piety, neither wronging God nor others by our oaths ; for oaths are in themselves still, *Vincula Æquitatis*, and not by *Iniquitatis* : Bonds of equity and justice, and not of iniquity and injustice.

There are also to be observed these tacite or express conditions in all promissory oaths, (and sometimes it is fit to express them and sometimes not) ; *If God will*, and if no-

thing interveen to hinder, Jam. iv. *If I live*, and health permit. As much as in them lieth, they shall aim at if some impossibility interveen not. 3. So far as they fulfilling of this, shall be lawful; for it only can tie to lawful things, and lawful means and courses; and this is especially to be understood of indefinite oaths. 4. While things stand so; but if the case alter essentially, and men turn enemies to the kingdom or common wealth, to whom we are by oath obliged, to give or sell somewhat that we know would be made use of, to the probable ruin or hazard thereof: then it is not in our power, *Selva profeſtate superioris*.

It may be asked, How we shall judge of indefinite oaths; such as foldiers give to their officers, to be obedient to them: Or of oaths in things which are indistinct, and the matter not obvious, as oaths in colleges, incorporations, towns, &c. Where the things sworn are complex.

Ans. These cannot altogether be condemned. 1. Because though a man have not, yea cannot have, a particular and distinct knowledge of all particulars; yet he understandeth such oaths, as binding to all necessary and lawful things, as the general condition requireth. 2. Because he taketh the oath for the end, and in the sense, that is commonly taken, which bindeth in the essential things, pertaining to the being of that incorporation, but taketh not in, every particular strictly.

By what is said then; We may 1. Condemn oaths in trivial things, as oaths in compliments; when men swear they will not go one before another. That men are welcome to their houses: Then they will not let them go soon: That they shall drink so much tho' it may not be to excess: That they shall return some petty thing they have borrowed, and the like. 2. Rash promises, such as are hastily and unadvisedly or doubtingly made. But ere we come to particulars; let us consider what is condemned, as perjury, which is the highest degree.

There are several sorts of perjury mentioned; some whereof are more direct and immediate; some more mediate and indirect.

The first sort of perjury is: When one upon oath asserteth as a truth, that which he knoweth is not a truth, or doubteth of it; or is mistaken in it, through his own negligence, not being certain that it is as he saith, whether he affirm or deny: Thus Naboth's false witnesses were guilty; and many other instances may be adduced.

The second is: When one promiseth something, which he mindeth not to perform, and confirmeth that with an oath;

oath : he is no doubt perjured, because there is not a correspondent verity betwixt his oath and his purpose.

The third is : When men promise and intend for the time to perform ; yet, upon no just ground, fail afterwards in performing what they have sworn. This is perjury, because there is not truth in fulfilling the thing sworn, according to the oath. These are direct perjuries.

More largely again, a man may be said to forswear himself. 1. When he sweareth to perform a thing, which is simply impossible ; especially, while he knoweth it to be so : For as the former is not a swearing in judgement and truth ; so this is a prophane and wicked swearing, against light and judgement, or a manifest lie and falshood : So that betwixt his promise to perform such a thing, and the performance, there is implied a contradiction. As for one to swear, to be to-morrow at Rome, who is to day at Glasgow ; the very swearing is fore-swearing. 2. When one sweareth, an unlawful or wicked thing, or confirmeth it with an oath ; like those forty that swore to kill Paul ; especially, if that oath be contrary to some duty which lieth formerly by oath on the person for swearing : For, that is not to swear in righteousness and justice : Beside, that it withdraweth on a necessity, either of breaking that oath, and so of being perjured, or of going on to fulfil it ; and so of being doubly perjured. 3. Men are forsworn and perjured, when they fulfil a wicked oath ; as Herod did, Matth. xiv. in beheading John the Baptist ; for, though he seemed not to overturn, and make void his own oath, but to keep it : Yet this (as also the former) over-turneth and maketh void, the scope and nature of an oath in general, and is a plain contradiction to it, and maketh an oath, which should be *vinculum aequitatis*, a bond of equity ; (there being *nulla obligatio* but *ad officium*, no obligation but to duty,) to be *vinculum iniquitatis*, a bond of iniquity : And so thwarteth with the very end wherefore such oaths are appointed (in which respect David did better in not executing his rash oath, but keeping the general scope of all oaths, when he refused not to hearken to Abigail's counsel, even to the non-performance of what he had sworn.

It may be questioned here, Whether one man may be accessory to anothers perjury, if he constrain him to swear, of whom he hath a sumption that he will forswear.

Ans. Distinguish 1. The matter in which, if it be of grave concernment, or of little moment. 2. Distinguish betwixt the publickness and privacy of it. 3. Distinguish betwixt parties : as betwixt a judge, who is to decide, and a party that is the pursuer.

We say then first, a party pursuing in a particular of his own concernment; especially if it be of no great concernment; may, yea, should forbear pressing such a person to swear, both for sparing the party, and for respect to the name of God; since he can hardly, in this case, be very hopeful to gain by it.

2. We say, (notwithstanding in some cases,) that the judge may admit some to swear, especially in public scandals. 1. Because none can certainly know, but God may constrain them to swear truth. 2. Because it is his way, left to decide all controversies; and a judge cannot eschew it, when it lieth on him to put a close to such a controversy, as which he cannot win by any other means; though great prudence is to be used in proceeding in such a case, especially, it being of that nature as is in scripture appointed to be decided by oath, as *Exod. xxii. 11.*

The great question, is concerning a promissory oath, if in any case it may be made void, and cease to oblige, or in what cases that may be?

That every oath bindeth, not according to the letter, we suppose needeth no reasons to clear and confirm it: There are two ways in general how the obligation of an oath promissory ceaseth. 1. When the oath itself is null, and never had any obligation. 2. When by some other thing interveining, there is a loosing from the obligation which the oath once had.

That it may be clear that, notwithstanding of this, oaths are of a most strict obligation, having the great and dreadful name of God interposed in them; and that many things, whatever weight be laid on them by men that way, do not loose from it, such as these following which we shall put by, in the first place.

1. No man's temporal loss in goods, name, or estate, will loose him from his oath, nor make it null and void, *Psal. xv. ult.* 2. that our engagement by oath is to something of its own nature indifferent, will not loose us, though there be here no other tie upon us to the thing, and that without the oath we were free; yet the oath once engaged in, will tie us, as is clear from that same fifteenth Psalm. For an oath is of its own nature obligatory, and according to *Numb. xxx.* Persons at their own dispose must do even in such cases as they have bound their souls. 3. Though we were engaged in the oath by the deceit and guile of others, the deceit being circumstantial only, yet if the thing be not sinful, it bindeth us, as is clear in that oath to the Gibeonites, wherein the deceit was such. 4. Though by fear or violence the oath had been extorted, yet the matter being lawful, it
bindeth

bindeth because of the honour of God's name interposed. 5. Though it was sinful as to the manner, and rashly made at first, as that with the Gibeonites was; yet is it binding, if lawful in the matter, there being a great difference betwixt *juramentum illicitum*, an oath unlawfully come under as to its manner, and *juramentum de re illicita*, an oath in an unlawful matter. 6. Though we could devise and find out some interpretation or meaning of the words of the oath that might seem to make for loosing us from its obligation: yet, if that was not meant at the first tendering of the oath, but otherwise understood by him that did take it, it will not absolve nor excuse from the guilt of perjury, To put afterwards a new gloss on it; because an oath is *stricti juris*, and will not admit for any respect nor on any account, of interpretations prejudicial to the native truth of it, lest it should be found to be, according to Psal. xxiv. a swearing deceitfully. 7. Though there may be a good meaning and intention in reversing the oath, and going cross to it, men not doing so for a particular end of their own, but for a public good as is supposed; yet that will not absolve from the obligation of the oath, nor from the guilt of perjury, as is clear in God's punishing Saul's family for breaking that oath with the Gibeonites, even though he did it out of his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah, as the scripture expressly affirmeth, 2 Sam. xxi. 2. 8. Though the oath be conceived by a creature, as at least the immediate object of it, and so sinfully made in that respect; yet, being made, it tieth from respect due to God, who shineth in his creatures, Matth. xxiii. 19, 20, 21. 9. Though the thing become impossible, if that impossibility might have been prevented by our searching ourselves as far as in us lay, we are not freed from the guilt of perjury, though the thing sworn do now by our own sloathfulness become impossible; or if the thing sworn might have been performed before any such impossibility came on; or if we might have prevented it by our suitable circumspection and diligence. 10. Though a sinful oath, to wit, being made on a sinful promise, in itself, bind not; yet the sinful condition being fulfilled, it bindeth; as in the case of Judah, his promising a kid to Tamar, upon that wretched condition of prostituting herself to his sinful lust, who did offer the performance of what he had engaged to, upon that most sinful condition now fulfilled, for the condition being fulfilled, the promise is absolute; and the sin was not in giving the kid, but in the condition that was made, which is past. 11. Much less will it exempt any man from the guilt of perjury, that in swearing he had a meaning of the words of the oath,

contrary to what in common sense they bear, and in the construction of all indifferent persons, or to their meaning *sine juramento*, or *extra juramentum*: or that he had any reservation in his own mind; the first is, æquivocation; the second is, mental reservation, that have no place in such an oath which should be plain, single, and clear. Neither 12. Will a dispensation from any other, as for instance, from the Pope, who hath no power to dispense in oaths, nor from lawful superiors, except it be in things wherein by our relation to such superiors we are subjected to them, loose the obligation of our oath, nor free us from the guilt of perjury; if, I say, the matter of the oath be in things to which their power over us doth not extend, in such things doubtless they cannot dispense. 13. The obligation of an oath cannot be loosed, nor the guilt of perjury evited by commutation of the thing sworn, for it must be according to what is proceeded out of our mouth, Numb. xxx. 2. Psal. xv. 4. 14. Nor can it be loosed, and perjury eschewed, by an posteriour tie and oath: for thereby the prior or former oath is not made null, but the posteriour or latter is made null by the former, for *juramentum non derogat juri alieno*, because God is party, and we cannot reverse an obligation to him, which he or any other hath by a prior right and tie.

But they are null and of no force, 1. When the thing sworn is sinful and unlawful in itself, because there is, *nullum vinculum iniquitatis*, there is not, neither can there be, any obligation to iniquity. 2. When it is unlawful to him that sweareth, as suppose one would swear to do that which were incumbent for a magistrate or minister, he himself being but a meer private person, and it no ways belonging to his station: it tieth him indeed to endeavour by all suitable means the affecting of the thing by them, but not to do it himself, for it altereth not stations. 3. When the thing is simply impossible, oaths cannot bind, in that case. 4. When the oath is engaged in by any, in whose power the thing sworn is not, as by children, wives, servants, or subjects, in such things wherein they are subject to others, and of which they are not masters; it tieth them only to endeavour it with their approbation or permission, see Numb. xxx. 5. When the deceit is not in circumstantial, but in essentials; as, suppose one should swear to such an other person to pay him such a debt, or to give such and such obedience, thinking him to be the very person to whom he oweth these things, who yet is not the person we suppose him to be; the ground of the oath is null, and its obligation accordingly ceaseth, as when Jacob was deceived by his
get-

getting Leah first for Rachel, because such an oath wrongeth another, to whom that which is sworn is due, and supposeth the condition of being due. 6. When the oath is impeditive of a greater good, or of a moral duty; as suppose a man had sworn not to go to such a place, nor to speak to such a person, nor to eat such meat; that oath (being at first rash, and without judgment) if duty and necessity call him to the contrary of what he hath sworn, bindeth not, because a moral command may require him to go thither to take on such a charge there, or to speak to that person for his edification, &c. yet this would be tenderly applied and with great circumspection. 7. When the oath is interposed to oblige to the performance of some thing which have a tendency to an ill end; as for instance, if a man should swear to meet with a woman for committing filthiness, to give armies for helping to oppose an innocent, or any such like thing; for though coming to such a place, or giving such armies may be lawful, yet as so circumstantial; this coming, and this giving of them with such an intention, is unlawful, and therefore the oath is null.

For loosing from the obligation of an oath which is lawful, there are these cases granted. 1. When it is contradicted by a superior, having power in that very particular, as Numb. xxx. 2. When the case materially altereth, as if one should swear to give such a man armes, who afterward turneth mad, or an enemy; to give obedience to such a commander, who afterwards becometh a private man, and ceaseth to be any more a commander; because in such cases the relation upon which the duty and oath is founded, ceaseth. 3. When the party sworn unto, relaxeth us: For though none can absolve from a vow, yet in a promissory oath, whereby some right accureth to one from another, a man may dispense with his own right; as for instance, he may in whole, or in part, forgive and discharge such a sum of money that another by oath has sworn to give him, which when he doth, in so far the oath and its obligation is loosed; he having, as himself thinketh fit, accepted satisfaction for whole or part; but in vows to God no man can dispense, he being party there. 4. When by some after and unforeseen enterveening emergent, the man is quiet disabled from performing his oath, as by sickness, plundering, &c. In that case so far and so long as he is disable, in so far and so long is he loosed; that condition being necessarily presupposed in giving the oath at first, though the obligation to performance lieth still on him so far and so soon as he shall be able.

It may be marked by the way, That often prophane men

are more strict in keeping sinful oaths, than those who are lawful: the devil putting home that obligation on them as a snare, and their own corruption siding with the oath in its matter, maketh it appear strongly binding to them.

If it be asked, Wherein it is that an oath bindeth more than a promise doth?

Ans. An oath bindeth to nothing but what is in the promise, but it bindeth more strongly, and so the sin is greater in breaking an oath than a promise; because not only our truth to men is engaged in the oath, but our reverence and respect to God also, and his dreadful name thereby notably taken in vain.

So then against this doctrine of oaths faileth perjury or forswearing, rash swearing, indeliberate swearing, as in compliments (as for instance, if one should swear he will not drink, or go before such another person :) Solemn oaths entered into, at communions, at baptism, or in other lawful covenants not performed; ah! how often are these broken, even in that which we might easily do? We so carry and keep to God as men could not but quarrel; irreverent swearing even in that which is right; grossly prophane swearing, as by God's soul, his wounds, blood, &c. Uncouthed, strange, newly-coined and invented oaths, no doubt by special help of the devils art; cursings, wherein the devil is mentioned, and his aid implored for the execution of mens passionate and revengeful imprecations; yea, not being suitably affected with the oaths of others, not admonishing them, nor seeking to recover them, not endeavouring by all requisite care the preventing of them, withholding of instruction and correction when called for, and not procuring the erection of schools, &c. may make many guilty of oaths they never heard, when they fall out in persons, whom it became them to teach and admonish, &c.

There are some things near of kin unto (to say so) and of affinity with oaths; as 1. Adjurations, when we adjure or charge one by the name of God to do or forbear such a thing; as Saul bound the people with a curse, 1 Sam. xiv. And Joshua charged Achen, Josh. vii. and the high-priest Christ, Matth. xxvi. and Paul Timothy, 1 Tim. v. 21. and vi. 13.

Adjurations differ thus from oaths, that by an oath we bind ourselves to do or forbear somewhat, or to tell truth; by adjurations we bind others by interposing the name of God for commanding, charging, persuading to do or forbear such a thing, and implying, if not expressing some threatening or curse if it be not done or forborne: There are three sorts of these in scripture, 1. When men adjure men.

2. When

2. When they adjure devils. 3. When they adjure unreasonable creatures, as serpents, &c. To each of these, a word.

As to the 1. We say that men may sometimes adjure other men in matters weighty, suitable, and necessary to be done, when it is rightly gone about, and not in passion or for self-ends, but soberly, gravely, and singly for the glory of God immediately or mediately, by another's good being interposed; so, many examples confirm, and so necessity requireth, that when regard to men doth not suitably weigh, that such a desire be put home to the conscience from respect to God and his authority, who is witness and will judge; this some way sifteth a man before God, and so may prove a good means, through his blessing, to make the man serious; which sort of adjurations may be distinguished thus.

1. There are proper adjurations or charges authoritatively laid on in the name of God, or of Jesus Christ; this is done by magistrates and ministers in their places, as Paul chargeth Timothy, 1 Tim. vi. 13. and giveth him charge to charge others ver. 17. This being used in serious and weighty matters, and not too frequently (lest the name of God become thereby contemptible) is the most proper and most weighty charge.

2. There are obtestations which are serious and weighty intreaties and beseechings in the name of God, and for Christ's sake, that one may do or forbear such a thing, as when Paul beseecheth the Romans and Philippians by the mercies of God, Rom. xii. Phil. ii 1, 2. and Abigail interposeth seriously with David: this is most properly done by inferiors, subjects, children, &c. to their superiors; and hath in it also a more implicate threatening if such a thing be slighted, as in Abigail's words to David, 1 Sam. xxv. is clear.

3. There are attestations, whereby one is seriously put to it to tell some truth, or to bear witness of some truth asserted by another; thus Joshua attested Achan.

4. We say, These have a binding virtue in some cases, and cannot without contempt of God (who so chargeth them, and before whom they are so attested) be slighted; and therefore if it be not properly perjury for a man, either not to speak at all, being attested, or to speak what is not truth; yet sure it is more than ordinary contempt, and a greater sin, than if no such adjurations; attestations, or obtestations had been used, because the name of the Lord has been interposed by others: and if such attestations, &c. be lawful, as we have proved them to be in some cases, then ought they to have weight, or they are used in vain; we see our Lord Christ answered to such, Matth. xxvi. after a while keeping silence.

And in reference to these ye fail, 1. In giving little entertainment unto, and laying little weight upon the charges and obtestations of ministers, which come unto you by them from this word and gospel; these charges of ministers are, as if an herauld gave a charge in the magistrates name, which bindeth us from him, and more than another message delivered in other terms. In this then, ministers are as heraulds, charging you in their master's name, even in the name of the great God, and of Jesus Christ, the Prince of the kings of the earth.

2. When one of you putteth not another seriously to it, to forbear and abandon sin, or to practise such a duty, charging them, or rather obtesting them, as they will answer to God to do so, as often in the Canticles we find, *I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem.*

3. In your overly, rash, and slight way of using obtestations and grave intreaties, meerly or mostly for the fashion, or by way of compliment, or in petty and trivial things; as when ye say, for God's sake, for God's blessing do this or that, only as a customary by-word; this is no doubt more than an ordinary taking of God's name in vain in common discourse, because ye take on you to bind others in the name of God, not considering what ye are doing; and in a matter not necessary, and of no weight, exposing the name of the Lord to contempt, and thereby tempting others to care but little for it; this is a most horrid and crying sin amongst our ordinary beggars, whereof others also are guilty, who are not suitably affected with it, and do not in their places seriously endeavour to have it mended; as also this is, when we desire one another lightly and irreverently to do such and such a little thing in the name of God, as to sit down or rise up, in God's name, &c. which things are alas, too too frequent.

2. For adjuring of devils, it is two ways lawful, and two ways not.

1. It is lawful to command devils in the name of God by those who are called to it, and are gifted to cast them out.

2. Is it lawful for any by prayer to God, and the exercise of faith on him, to endeavour to repel and resist them; and to beg that he would rebuke them; as thus, the Lord rebuke thee Satan; this way, we neither command the devil, nor pray to him, but pray unto the Lord to command him.

Again: It is unlawful. 1. When one adjureth him, who is not called to it, as those sons of Sceva did, Acts xix. 13, 14. This certainly being a peculiar and extraordinary gift, as those of prophesying, for-telling of things to come, speaking with tongues, and healing of the sick with a word, were;

were; ought not without special warrant to be usurped more than they.

2. It is unlawful when it is done by exhorting or obtesting of, or praying unto the devil himself, and entreating him as we do God, which way implieth. 1. First friendship with him, when we intreat him as a friend. 2. Prayer or worship to him, who is not the object of it. 3. An obligation on us to him, when he yieldeth to obey; and he will not fail, if by any means he can, to put that compliment or obligation on us, and so Necromancers, Witches, Exorcists, &c. may cast out devils by collusion (though possibly not in a way so explicit) whereby the devil gaineth his point upon such, as effectually, as if there were a most expressly formed covenant betwixt him and them; and this the Pharisees falsely and blasphemously, charged on our blessed Lord, Matth. xii. as if by Belzebub; that is, by collusion with the prince of devils, he had cast out devils. There are no doubt many sins committed this way, while some take on them confidently to command the devil, as if to avoid Satan, they could put him into bonds: and others seek health from devils or witches, (especially, when it is supposed to come from them,) and intreat them to do such and such things: All which are breaches of this part of the third commandment.

3. What is said of adjuring devils, may be said proportionally of adjuring reasonable creatures, which is the same ways lawful and unlawful: Charming also, and naming the Lord's name over diseases, as if some special worth and efficacy were in some words; is unlawful and condemned by this command.

It followeth now that we may say something to vows, which are bonds whereby a man bindeth himself (and so they differ from adjurations) to God only as party, and that in things belonging to God; willingly, and upon deliberation. (And so they differ from promissory oaths, wherein we bind ourselves to others; and in matters which are not of themselves religious.

Under vows we comprehend. 1. Sacraments. 2. Covenants, solemnly engaged into before others. 3. Particular vows to God. 4. Promises and engagements, whether inward, in the heart only, or also outwardly expressed to, or before the Lord: For though they have not always God's name, formally and expressly interposed in them; yet he being party, and they being made to him, he cannot but be singularly looked at, as party, witness and judge, in the making and performing of them: Therefore, do we comprehend

prehend all even purposes, expressed in prayer to him, as being of the same kind, tho' not of the like degree.

We mind not here to meddle with speculative debates about vows, but to hold us only at what concerneth practice : And say, 1. That such promises to God, and engagements, being rightly made and taken on, or rightly gone about ; are not only lawful, but sometimes necessarily called for as appeareth. 1. From the command which is to vow, as well as to perform, Psal. lxxvi. 11. 2. From example of saints in all ages ; David saith, Psal. cxix. when his frame is most tender, verse 57. *I have said, I will keep thy words.* And thereafter, verse 106 *I have sworn, and will perform it, That I will keep thy righteous judgments.* For, saying and swearing to God are near the same ; and who sincerely say in secret, may in some cases also articulately swear. 3. From the end of vows, which is to bind us to something the more straitly, and to evidence our greater desire and willingness, to be so bound ; And therefore they being midles for that end ; when the end is in a special manner called for and may, in all probability, be the better obtained, by the use of this mean : Then it is called for also, and cannot be omitted. 4. From the Lord's gracious accepting of such engagements and vows, and approving of them. 5. From the several promises and prophecies of them, as commendable and good service, from men to God under the gospel, Isa. xix. 18. and 21. Jer. 1. 4, 5. Isa. xlv. 5.

So then, I say, 1. In some cases ; to wit, when it gloriifieth God, and edifieth others ; or, is profitable to ourselves : But if that word thwart with any of these, there is a failing ; or when some pressure of spirit, or cogent reason putteth us not to it, or some great need calleth for it ; (as Abraham, for the weighty reason, expressed by himself, Genesis xiv. Swore we would take none of the spoil, he had rescued from the kings over-come by him : For we are not always called to it.

2. I say, Not in all things ; Because the matter of a vow, must be one of these two : Either, 1. Some commanded duty, as Jacob's vow, Gen. xxviii. and David's, Psal. cxix. 106. were : Or, 2. Something that relateth to worship ; or, may further some commanded duty, or prevent some sin, to which we are given, and much inclined : As suppose a man should engage himself to rise sooner in the morning, that he might the more effectually cross the lust of his laziness ; and to keep more at home, the better to prevent the snare of evil, and loose company : It is not house-keeping simply, or rising soon, that is the matter of his vow ; but

as they relate unto, or are made use of for such ends; Therefore vows can only be made to God alone, Psal. lxxvii. 11. and Psal. cxxxii. 2.

3. I say, Rightly gone about: That is, 1, Deliberately, and judiciously; for, ignorance, haste, and rashness will spill all. 2. With humility; and due sense of our own corruption, which maketh us, (Alas!) to stand in need of such bands to keep it in, and of such up-stirrings and excitements to duty. 3. With fear, singleness, and zeal for God; with love to his honour, and to true holiness; Not for our self-ends, to gratify, an humour or passion, or in fits of conviction, to stop the mouth of a challenge, and so put it by.

4. The vow would be heartily, and chearfully undertaken, not as a piece of bondage, but of liberty, that we may be thereby indeed engaged unto the Lord, having no hink or hesitation; nor reservation in the making of it: What can be expected as to the performance, if there be hesitation, in the very undertaking?

5. There should be much deniedness in it. 1. To ourselves. 2. To the oath, as not accounting ourselves to be more religious by it; or more pleasing to God, as if it merited somewhat, nor yet more strengthened by making of it, but more engaged to perform and keep what we have vowed.

6. There should be diligence in doing, going on, and helping and inciting others to join with us; that so it may thro' grace be made irrecoverable, which is the practice of the people of God, Jer. l. 4, 5.

7. There should be engaging, in the lively exercise of faith; drawing strength from Jesus Christ, according to his own promise; and of ourselves to make use of him, for that end: Yea, that should be laid for the foundation of our undertaking: Therefore every such engaging, is a covenanting with God, and there is no covenanting with him, but by interposing of Jesus Christ, both for the procuring of pardon for by past failings and guilt; and for grace and strength, to perform, called for and engaged into duties, for the future. See a frame of Spirit, fit for covenanting, when seriously and suitably gone about, Jer. l. 4, 5.

Concerning these engagements, we say. 2. That they are of themselves obligatory, and binding to those who come under them, as Numb. xxx. 2, 3. 3. Vowing is called the binding of a man's soul; and Psal. lvi. 12. it is said, *Thy vows are upon me, O God*, as pressing him with a weight, till they were paid.

If it be asked, 1. How vows binds? We answer, 1. In moral duties, they make the obligation no greater; for, they

they being laid on by the command of God, and having his authority, there can be no addition to that in itself: But there is a two-fold addition, 1. In respect of us; so that though the obligation be not greater in itself, yet we join our approbation or consent unto that, whereby, as by a positive superadded voluntary consent, we bind ourselves; so that in some respect we have two bonds (the law; and our oath both) for one. 2. Though it make not the former obligation to bind more strongly in itself: Yet it maketh that obligation to have a more deep impression upon us; so that a man, by vow bound to a commanded duty, will think himself more bound to it than before; and that command will have a deeper impression, and more weight on him, to persuade him to do, and to challenge him when he hath omitted, than before. Again, in things that are merely accessaries to a religious end, as extrinsic means; for instance, fasting, staying at home, vowing, never maketh the doing of these of themselves to be acts of religious worship: but it maketh our keeping of them to be by a religious tie; so that without prophanity they cannot be altered out of the case of necessity.

If it be asked, 2. What is to be thought of our common and ordinary engagements, 1. By baptism. 2. At the Lord's supper. 3. By oaths in covenants. 4. Engagements in private to God by vows, purposes, promises resolutions, in thoughts within; or, expressed in prayer: (I suppose it doth not a little concern all of you to know, how they bind and when they are broken.) We answer.

1. That, all these are binding, and still accounted so, (Psal. cxix. 106. Psal. lxvi.) is not to be doubted, yea, binding in an eminent degree, as being made to God and not only before him; The nature of the thing and our consent also bindeth: For, 1. If interposing the name of God to men doth bind, much more to God. 2. if a promise solemnly ratified bind to men, much more to God. Hence 3. Our obligation in baptism and the Lord's supper, receive strength and conviction against us from the covenant, which we solemnly retify and renew with God therein, and that before the world: And our breach of these vows is charged on us by the Lord, as an open breach of his covenant; the obligation whereof is pleaded from them, Gen. xvi. ver. 10. and 14. and else-where.

2. Yet they do not bind absolutely, as the duty lieth upon us, and as we should aim at it; for though we be bound by the law to be perfectly holy, and without sin; yet doth not a vow so tie us, or that obligation is not from our vow
but

but from the law ; because our vow is to be understood,

1. With respect to our nature, now corrupt and sinful : And therefore to vow, absolutely, to be without sin, or absolutely to abstain from it, is injurious and impossible.

2. With respect to our aim and desire. 2. With respect to our not approving, or disapproving ourselves in any thing, wherein we come short. 4. In respect of the obligation to endeavour it, which is, always and by all suitable means to press at it, and to leave nothing undone which may further it : So then, 1. they do not bind absolutely or simply, but respectively. 2. Not as to the the victory, but as to the wrestling and fighting for victory. 3. Not as to the event, but as to the means which are in our power, and therefore some plead, That they had not broken covenant, though they had sins, Psal. lxiv. 17.

3. Tho' they bind not simply or absolutely, (and are not therefore to be so taken and understood) yet they tie absolutely, 1. To the main, of having God ours in Christ. 2. In other things, thus :

1. They tie us to live in no known sin, especially, outward sins, and to delight in none. 2. To omit no known duty, but to essay the doing of it. 3. As to the manner, to essay it seriously ; so that though a man cannot swear, that he shall have no corruption in him, while he is upon earth : Yet, in so far he may : As 1. Not to approve of it. 2. To leave no means un essayed, consisting in his knowledge, that may help to mortify it, 3. Seriously, and in good earnest, to be aiming at the mortification of it, in the use of these. And so this tie of a vow is, 1. As far as in us lieth. 2. As universal as the duty is. 3. Constant and always binding. 4. When it is taken on, we should not let it lie on, (to say so) till the sun go down, but endeavour that we may be free of it ; it bindeth us to quit sin, as well as to eschew it. It reaches not all infirmities, to make them breaches ; but known sins, or the least sins stuck to.

3. Concerning these vows, we say that the breach of them is a very great sin, and doth much more aggravate sin, where it is, than where it is not : So that, the sins of Christians against baptism, communions, oaths in covenants, secret engagements, resolutions and promises to God, are much greater than the sins of others. Hence the Lord chargeth Israel with covenant-breaking, by virtue of their circumcision which they had received as a seal thereof, and aggravateth all their sins by that, and looketh on them in that respect, as singularly sinful, Deut. xxix. 24. Jer. xxii. 8. &c. which could not so well be, if there were not some peculiarity in that obligation. Our baptism, doubtless, is no

less binding unto us, nor the baptismal vows less sinful, Col. ii. 11, 12. Neither can there be any reason given, why the breach of an oath to man, should be charged on a person, as a sin and infamy; and the breach of an oath to God not be much more charged so. Oh! Take notice then, ye who sin willingly, who drink, swear, omit prayer; let your minds wander, and study not holiness in good earnest, that your sins have these aggravations to make them horrible, infamous, and inexcusable; 1. There is a manifest perjury against the oath of God, which even according to the Pharisees doctrine, Matth. xv. 33. was abominable: Thou shalt not (say they) forswear thyself, but shalt pay or perform thy oath to the Lord. 2. There is unfaithful dealing and abominable treachery, to break under, trust and to keep no engagement to him. 3. There is not only perjury, and treachery simply; but towards God, which is more, and draweth a great deal deeper, than towards any other. It is dreadful to deal unfaithfully, treacherously, and perjuri-ously with him. 4. All this is in things that are very equitable, and much for your own good, which maketh no small aggravation. 5. This is done not only against promises, but against many promises, and many other bands. 6. That it is often and in many things that you sin against these promises. 7. That sin is little repented or laid to heart on this consideration, and as so aggravated.

It be said, Then it is better to make no promises at all, than to come under such aggravations of guilt by breaches of them, for none keep them exactly: And so men must needs be in great and continual disquietness and anxiety, while under them: Were it not better then, to be doing without promising?

Ans. 1. It is not free to us, Not to make them more than it is to break them; or not to keep them, and when we are called to make such promises, and make them not, it becometh sin to us as was said. It is not free to us, whether we shall be baptized communicate, &c. or not; therefore whosoever, would not so engage, were to be censured and punished as utter despisers of the Lord's covenant, Gen. xvii. 14. Ex. xii.

2. They, who refuse to take them, lay themselves open to the temptation of being more easily prevailed with, not to perform these duties, or of being sooner insnared in such sins, because they are not formally engaged by vow against them, and so they make themselves culpably accessory to the strengthening of temptation, and weakening of resolution; to the contrary whereof, they are no doubt obliged.

3. If you intend indeed to perform these duties, then ye may engage to do so; but if ye will not so much as promise and

and engage to do them, it cannot be expected in reason that ye will do them; especially considering that even those who honestly promise and engage, do yet notwithstanding, find a great difficulty to do and perform. O take heed that you be not, by your refusing to engage, making a back door for yourselves to go out from your duty, that so you may the more easily, and with the less challenge shift it.

If it be yet said, that the sin of simple omitting the duty, is less than the omitting of it after engagements and vows to the contrary. *Ans.* 1. It is not so to a Christian, who is called to engage himself, yea, who by baptism is already engaged; for 1. The man that neither engageth to do, nor doth the duty, faileth twice, whereas he that engageth and performeth not, faileth but once: though that once failing is, by its being cross to his engagement, not a little aggravated; so that in some respect each fault or failing exceedeth the other; the one is a greater sin considered in itself, but the other is greater considered complexly. 2. The man that engageth not, is more necessary to his own failing, in respect that he used not that mean to prevent it; yet the other when fallen, is more guilty, in respect of the breach of his engagement. 3. The man that will not engage, bringeth himself under a necessity of sinning; for if he perform not, he faileth twice, as is said if he perform he faileth, because he engaged not when he was called to it: So his performing, is not the performing a vow to God, who requireth promising, in some cases at least, as well as performing. 4. The man that promiseth and voweth, and also performeth what he promised and vowed, his performing is so much the more acceptable, as it proceedeth not only from the awe of a command, but from a spontaneous and free will offering of it to God, and so is both obedience to a command and the performance of a vow; for thus he chuseth obedience, as it is, Psal. cxix. 30. It is not so with the other, whether he perform it or not, though we think, that God often letteth the man fall that will not engage, because he sayeth by his refusal, that he trusteth not to God for the performance, otherwise he would engage and undertake on his account also; he saith with all, that he aimeth to perform only because he cannot eschew it; And if he could shake off, and be freed from that obligation to holiness, that he would not out of respect to God, or love to holiness, take on a new one. 5. The man that engageth not, sinneth more innexcusably in that he will not do that which is the lesser, and in his power. The less and more easy a thing it be to promise and engage (as it is no doubt more easy than to perform) the omission of it is the greater sin, and more

inexcusable. The case is indeed, as to heathens, otherwise, who were never thus engaged, nor called to engage themselves: but, unto Christians it will be no excuse.

If it be replied, that this is very hard; for then no Christian will be free of perjury, nor have peace. *Ans.* 1. I grant the case is hard, and the strait great; but it is such as floweth from our own corruption in this, as in other duties and parts of holiness: for as the law is holy, just, and good, Rom. vii. and is not to be blamed, as accessory to our sin; so the vow is holy, just, and good, and is not to be blamed, if in the circumstances right, because of our breach. 2. As I think, it is hard to keep ourselves free of sin, even against light; so I think, it is a difficulty to be kept free of this aggravation of sin, to wit, of our committing it against our engagements; and therefore (as the manner of the people of God is) I think it safest to take with these aggravations of our sins, as chief parts of them (to speak so) and to take them with the rest to Jesus Christ, that we may obtain pardon of them through him, and to maintain our peace rather by often washing ourselves from the filth of breaking, than by pleading no breach at all. 3. Yet may Christians even as in other duties of holiness) in their vows and promises to God, have peace, and say, in a gospel sense, We have not turned back from thee, nor dealt falsely in thy covenant, as it is, Psal xliv. 17, 18 which certainly implieth not absolute holiness, or exact performance of all the articles of the covenant; but that 1. In the great and main articles they were honest, and did not put another God in his room to provoke him to jealousy. 2. That they intended truly the keeping of all, and said nothing by their profession or engagements, which they minded not to perform. 3. That they had some testimony as to what was past, that they had in some measure walked according to their engagements, and had left nothing undone, at least willingly, and with approbation of themselves therein, that might have furthered them in keeping covenant, but had stuck to him in doing and suffering honestly; a man sincerely and in the strength of grace studying this, may attain to such a testimony from his own conscience, and to a good measure of peace; yea, a man that may have quietness in his performing duty upon the account of other ties, without engaging, may also come to have quietness in his engaging to it.

If then there be a necessity to engage, it may be asked, how peace may be attained in it, and how we may be helped to perform? *Ans.* 1. We would endeavour to be clear and quiet, as to the soundness of our by-past engagements, and of these we presently enter in, as to the motives, grounds, ends,

ends, and manner of engaging, that all be right there. 2. If any thing be seen to be wrong, it should be taken with, and mended, that we use not vows mainly to put by a challenge for the time, without any more of it. 3. Ye should seriously mind these directions.

1. Forget not your vows and engagements, be minding them often, and thinking of them, so as they may never be forgotten, Jer. l. 4, 5. 2. Defer not to pay them, Eccles. v. 4. Deut. xxiii. 21. Delays make the impression of the weight of the vow, and of the dread of him to whom it is made, much to wear out; and, taking liberty to be slack in paying of it, for, but for this once, or for a little while, is a direct breach of itself, and maketh way for more. 3. Keep in mind, and entertain such a frame of spirit as ye wore in, when they were at first made; such humility, tenderness, awe of God, &c. We often, alas, take on vows in a good frame, to be on the matter a sort of excuse for us, in letting such a frame go, or at least, to ease us a little for the time, as if engaging were performance, which is not the least part of the deceit of our hearts. 4. The performance of the thing would be followed as it is undertaken, to wit, in the strength of grace, and by virtue of life driven from Jesus Christ, quickning and strengthening us both as promising and performing. 5. We should be often considering the fearfulness of the sin of breaking, and examining ourselves about our keeping of them; making breaches, that are particularly observed, the matter of confession to God, and of serious repentance before him. If we would suffer these things to sink down deep in us as in the sight of God; this no doubt would make them have a quite other impression. 6. We should still keep the knot fast, and if one promise or resolution seem to be loosed, we should forthwith cast another; or if one obligation given, seem to be weakned, if we should give another, that there may be still some obligation standing over our heads: and following engagements, not formally, but soberly and seriously renewed, may be made use of to bind on the former upon us, and to make them more effectual, so say they, Jer. l. 4, 5. going, and weeping as they go, *Come let us join ourselves unto the Lord in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten.* This is to be understood mostly, if not only, of private engagements; as for public solemn oaths and covenants, we neither find in scripture that they have been frequent, but on some great and very grave occasion; neither could they well be, (so great multitudes engaging in them) without diminishing from the weight of them, and so without wronging of God's name. 7. We should by no means suffer breaches,

breaches, though never so small, to lie long on, but should get us to the fountain with them, as foul and loathsome, lest they bring on more and greater.

Now then try perjury and breach of vows and oath to God.

1. In baptism, which extendeth to engage professing believers to the mortification of sin, and to the study of holiness as to both tables of the law, and to a conversation as becometh the gospel. 2. In, and at communions, where the same covenant is sealed. 3. In your oaths solemnly taken in covenants. 4. In your more private engagements to God and for him to others.

Beside these which are common, some come under particular oaths and engagements by virtue of their stations; as ministers, elders, magistrates, for the faithful discharge of their respective duties; some by their relations, office and place, as husbands and wives each other; as parents in reference to their children, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and in his fear; some by virtue of their common trades and callings, have come under particular oaths to such and such incorporations, trades, &c. And some on more particular occasions have come under engagements: O look well what ye do, and have done; there will, I fear, many be found perjured. I do not here speak of every particular infirmity, but certainly there is sin against God, and perjury before him which cannot easily, if at all be interpreted so with men; in which respect, Mal. ii. the Lord condemned putting away an innocent wife, even though it seemed to have a permission by the law; in these things when men do not what they may do, or if there be yet more in their power than is done, or if the obligation of the oath on them awe them not, or weight them not to it, cannot but be a prophaning of the Lord's oath: many alas, according to their several relations and stations, are found guilty here, who have little or no awe of God on them in these things.

In sum, This command is broken these three ways, In reference to such engagements; 1. In shunning to make them when we are called to it. 2. In not making them rightly. 3. In not performing of them when made; and it bindeth. 1. Absolutely, to many things which cannot come within the compass of ordinary infirmity. 2. To eschew all known sinful deeds, as swearing, and may be inductive to it, drunkenness, unlawful gaming, needless contentions, &c. 3. To do all outward duties, as to read, hear, pray, &c. 4. To do them as seriously as we may. 5. Not to lie in any seen or known sin here forbidden, nor to delay repentance, though for never so little a while; it dispenseth not
all

all here, because these are in power, and when we fail it is not out of ordinary infirmity.

Beside what is said, there are yet two ways of taking or using the name of God, which are sib or of kin to oaths; The first is that of appealing to God to judge, as David did, that God might judge betwixt him and persecuting Saul, 1 Sam. xxiv. 12. The 2. is that of attesting God, thus, *The Lord knoweth, God is my witness, my witness is in heaven, &c.* as Job doth, chap. xvi. 19. and Paul Rom. i. 9. These are lawful when called unto and rightly gone about, but when abused in rash, precipitant, passionate appeals or in unjust matter, as Sarah's was, Gen. xvi. and in rash and unnecessary attestations or in trifling matter; they are more than an ordinary taking of God's name in vain, and therefore should never lightly be interposed and made use of.

The great breach of this command is blasphemy, though perjury be most direct. That we may see how this sin is fallen into we shall, 1. Define it; 2. Divide or distinguish it, which we shall find to be exceeding broad; blasphemy then against God, (as the word beareth) is a wronging of God's holy majesty by some reproachful speeches or expressions, uttered to his disgrace; we say uttered, because that which is in the heart is most part atheism and infidelity, and so belongeth to the first command.

Of this there are three sorts, or there are three ways whereby men fall into it: 1. When any thing unbecoming God, is in a word attributed to him, as that he is unjust, unholy, unmerciful, &c. such as that complaint, Ezek. xviii. 25. *The ways of the Lord are not equal.* 2. When what is due to him is denied him; as when he is said not to be eternal, omniscient, almighty, &c. as he was by proud Pharaoh and railing Rabshakeh in his masters name, who most insolently talked at that high rate of blasphemy, *Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice, &c? Who is the Lord that is able to deliver you out of my hand?* Exod. v. Isa. xxxvi. 18, 20. 3. When what is due to God, is attributed to a creature, or arrogated by a creature: Thus the Jews charged Christ as guilty of blasphemy, Luke vii. 49. and John x. 33. (supposing him to be a creature) because he forgave sins, and called himself God; of this sort of blasphemy as to some degree of it, is the commending or crying up our own or others parts, pains, wit, &c. for attaining, effecting, and bringing to pass of somewhat to the prejudice of divine providence, so those of Zidon did to Herod, Acts xii. 22. And thus often men make mediators and saviours as it were of themselves and of other men.

2. This blasphemy may either be immediately and directly against God himself, or any of the persons of the blessed God-head; or mediately and indirectly against him, when it is against his ordinances of the word, prayer, sacraments, &c. by vilifying them in expressions, or against his people, or the work of his Spirit in them: He is indirectly blasphemed in them, when they or it, are mocked; as when Paul's much learning in the gospel is called madness, or when real and serious religion, repentance, or holiness, are called conceitedness, pride, preciseness, fancy, &c.

3. Blasphemy may be considered, either as it is deliberate and purposed, as in the Pharisees; or, 2. As it is out of infirmity, rashness, and unwatchfulness, over-expressions: Or, 3. Out of ignorance, as Paul was a blasphemer before his conversion, 1 Tim. i. 15.

4. It may be considered, 1. As against the Father, 2. As against the Son. 3. As against the Holy Ghost; all are spoken of, Matth. xii. and Mark iii.

1. Blasphemy against the Father is, That which striketh either against the God-head simply, or any of the attributes which are due to God, and so its against all the persons in common; or against the trinity of persons when it is denied, and so that relation of Father in the God-head, is blasphemed.

2. Blasphemy against the Son, is when either his God-head in the eternity of it is denied, as it was by the Photinians and Arians; or when the distinction of his natures in their respective true properties retained by each nature is denied; or when he is denied in his offices, as if he did not satisfy divine justice for the sins of the elect as a Priest, which is done by the Socinians; or, as if he had not the kingdom or authority; or when other mediators, or other satisfactions to justice are set up and put in his room; or when another head and husband to the church, prince, or pope; or another word than what is written are made and obtruded upon her, and the like, whereof there are many in popery, in which respect antichrist is said to have many names of blasphemy, Rev. xiii.

3. Blasphemy against the Spirit may be considered, either as it is against the third person of the God head, and so it is against the trinity: and was that error peculiar to Macedonius or the *πνευματομαχοι* or *pugnantes contra Spiritum*; that is, fighters against the Spirit; or it may be considered as it looketh especially to the operation or work of that Spirit in a mans self, and so it is that peculiar blasphemy spoken of, Mat. xii. 32. Which when all other blasphemies are declared to be pardonable, is said never to be pardoned. This is the highest

highest degree of blasphemy, which may be so, 1. In that it is not at any time fallen into by a believer or an elect 2. That it is not often fallen into, even by others that are reprobates. 3. That it is hardly known to the person himself that is guilty of it, but much less to others 4. That it is never repented of, and (we think) doth never affect, because it is never pardoned; all other sins are pardonable, and many are actually pardoned.

1. This sin then is not every sin, though all sins grieve the Spirit, Eph. iv. 27. Nor 2. Is it any sin of infirmity or of ignorance, even such as Paul's was: Nor 3. Is it any sin (even tho' against knowledge) committed against the second table of the law, such as David fell into, and may be pardoned: Nor 4. Is it every sin that is against Christ and clear light, for Peter denied him, but it was of infirmity, Mat. xx. 70.

But this sin is 1. In the main of the gospel, and as to its saving work. 2. It is not only against light, but against the spirits present testifying of it, or bearing witness to it, and after fore-going convictions yielded unto in some measure, and sticking or lying on as weighty, and making the conscience to challenge, as may be gathered, from Heb. vi. 3. It is not in one particular sin or act, but in a total and resolute opposing of the truth, whereof men are convinced, seeking to bear it down in others, and to extirpate it out of the world, as the Pharisees did, Matth. xii. who not only rejected Christ as to themselves, but opposed him in all others, and sought utterly to undo the truth; *This is the heir, come let us kill him*, say they. 4. This opposition flows from malice against the truth, hatred of it, and from accounting it a thing unworthy to be in the world; not out of fear or infirmity, or from mistake, but out of envy and despight at it for itself: on this account the Lord objecteth it to the Pharisees, John xv. 24. *But now they have both seen and hated me, and my Father*, and Matth. xxi. 5. It is universal against every thing of the spirit, and obstinately constant, without any relenting, grief, or fear, except only lest it attain not its ends: The fear of that tormenteth it; and malice and hatred groweth, as it is marred or obstructed, being deliberately begun and prosecuted. 6. It has in it a special contempt of, and disdain at those special means and works of the spirit, whereby a sinner is reclaimed, as convictions, repentance, renewing again to it, &c. Thus Heb. x. 10. It doth despight to the spirit, and to Jesus Christ; as to any application, it contemptuously rejecteth him and his satisfaction, and any glance of the spirit that beareth that in; simple contempt, through ignorance and infirmity, is against the Son, but this which is thus qualified, is against

the spirit, and is never to be pardoned; the first is against the object Christ, but the second is against him who is, or him as born in on sinners by the spirit, and as condemned by them after their being under these convictions, and acknowledging of them; this irremissibleness, is not simply, that the sin shall not be pardoned, for so many sins are to the reprobates; nor yet simply, because it endeth in final impenitency (though that be with it too) since many sins are followed by that also: but we conceive it be in these,

1. That seeing this sin (which can be said of no other sin) doth wilfully and not out of despight, reject Christ, there can be no other sacrifice gotten to expiate it, Heb. x. 26. *There remaineth no more sacrifice for it*, and though the person after the first commission of it may be kept a while in the land of the living, yet the nature of that sin being to grow in malice, and to reject that remedy, there being no other, and thus being still wilfully and maliciously rejected, availeth them not; so their sin is never pardoned.

2. That the person guilty of this sin cannot be renewed by repentance, the heart of him supressing that work maliciously; this impossibility is not from the inefficacy of grace, but from the order which God hath laid down in the working of repentance, and in the pardoning of the penitent; so that as he will pardon none but repenting believers, so he will work repentance in none but in those who yield, through grace, to his Spirit's work.

3. That God in justice hath sentenced that sin with impenitency and unpardonableness, making that one sin thus capital and unpardonable; thereby to scare the more from thwarting with his Spirit, he has denied ever to give them that are guilty of it, repentance; and hath said, that he will plague them with spiritual impenitency unto the end.

Fifthly, Blasphemy may be considered as it is, 1. Doctrinal, or maintained by some men in their tenents, such were those of the old Hereticks, such are those of the Pelagians, Papists, and Arminians, as to the nature of providence, and the work of grace upon hearts, or 2. As it is in expressions indeliberately brought forth, or 3. In oaths, as when men swear by the wounds, blood, soul, &c. of our blessed Lord, which as they are horribly to hear, so is it reproachful to his Majesty, that these shoud be so abused, or 4. In deeds, writing, painting, acting. representing any thing derogatory to him, which are also charged with blasphemy, in abusing God's name to such ends. 5. It may be in a high degree, when men act such a blasphemy, or consequently when they punish it not, when we do not rent our cloaths (as it were) at the hearing and seeing such things in testimony

ny of our sorrow and detestation (which was the sin of the princes, Jer. xxxvi. 24, 25. who though they were somewhat displeased, yet they had not zeal vigorous against that wicked deed of the king :) when we have not suitable hatred against such blasphemous doctrine, Rev. ii. 6. much more if we extenuate them, defend them, or plead for them, or 6 It may be either, as we are guilty of it by our own deeds, or when we make ourselves guilty of the blasphemy of others, as having sinfully occasioned it to them, tempted them to it, and laid such and such a stumbling before them, as is said of David, 2 Sam. xii. 14. and of the Jews, Rom. ii. 24. *They that caused others to blaspheme the name of God because of them*; thus Christians, especially, those who have a profession beyond ordinary, and particularly wives and servants, by their miscarriages become guilty of the blasphemy of others, against godliness, and such and such duties of religion: because they give occasion to it, though that make it not a whit the less fault to them that blaspheme; see that casten up to his people, Ezek xxxvi. 20, 21. O how tender should professors be in this matter! lest ungodly men get occasion to speak ill, who lye at the wait to catch all advantages to fortify themselves in their natural prejudice at godliness, and draw their conclusions from miscarriages, not so much against the particular persons miscarrying, as against the way of God, and the whole generation of the godly.

There are these things especially that make others blaspheme, 1. Some gross outbreaking, as David's adultery, 2. Pride, passion and contention amongst godly men, when they walk as men, 1 Cor. iii. 4. and contentiously, 1 Cor. vi. 3. Covetousness and earthly mindedness, 4 Manifest unsingleness, and self-designs, driven under a cloak of religion, which maketh them call all that are religious, cheats, 5 Sinful shunning and shifing off suffering. 6. Undutifulness of inferiors in the several duties of their relations to superiors, as of wives to their husbands, of servants to their masters, of subjects to magistrates, 1 Pet. ii. 15. Tit ii. 4, 5, 10 7. Following of errors by professors, 2 Pet. ii. 2.

6. Blasphemy, may be considered either as it is, here in the way by men living, or as it is by them in the place of torment; who keeping still, no doubt their former wicked nature and corruption, and not considering God as he is in himself, but as they feel him in the severity of his justice punishing them, cannot have good thoughts of him, but will fret at his power and justice, which they cannot get free of, though it is like, after their sentence is past, this is to be considered, as a part of their cursed estate, and doth in-

crease meritoriously their judgment, as blasphemy in the way did.

These ways of breaking this command spoken unto are more gross and extraordinary; we should now speak a word to such as are more common in our practice, and these are of two sorts.

The 1. is more gross, when the name of God, or any thing bearing the name of God, as his ordinances, word, sacraments, prayer, &c. are prophaned, out of duty. This is done, 1. When these are mocked or scorned, which is a high degree of prophaning his name. 2. When the scripture-phrases, expressions, or terms are basted to speak so) to our sinful scoffing, jeibing and geiring of others, though we do not directly mock or geir at the scripture itself. 3. When in ordinary discourse, and unnecessarily God's name is used, though we intend not swearing, neither think that we do swear. 4. When ordinarily upon such and such occasions, the Lord's name is used in irreverent, and unwarrantable exclamations; as, *O Lord O God*, what is this, or that, &c. *I hope in God*, or *trust in God* to see such a thing, &c. And possibly sometimes in passion. 5. When it is used in way of by-word, or of certain irreverent prayers, when a person is troubled and grieved, and would express that passion at something that falleth out not desired, *God help me*, *God save me*, what is that? what mean ye? *God forgive me*, *God bless me*, for God's blessing do such a thing: *I God will*, in God's strength, and *I trust in God*, &c. *I shall do such and such a thing*: for God's sake do this or that, &c. 6. When it is used in meer compliments, *God keep you*, *God be with you*, *God bless you*, &c. which, with many, are too ordinary compliments. 7. When it is used lightly, in way of asseveration and indirect swearing, *God a bit*, *God have me*, if I do so, &c. 8. When it is used in a senseless and superstitious custom, upon such and such particular occasions, as when men say *O, God be blessed*, and *God bless*, at sternutation or neesing (which Plinius reporteth to have been used by heathens, and particularly by Tyberius, who was none of the most religious men,) *God be here*, *God be in this house*, when one entereth into a house; or when the clock striketh.

The 2. way (which is less gross, but more ordinary) whereby we fail in reference to this command, is in lawful and necessary duties of worship, by sinful and unprofitable discharging of these; whereby the name of God is often taken in vain, and his holiness which he loveth, prophaned: this fault and failing is two ways fallen into.

1. In respect of the manner of going about such ordinances or duties of worship, 1. When the Lord is not sanctified in them, nor the rule and manner prescribed by him, kept. This way sinned Nadab, and Abihu, Lev. 10. by their offering of strange fire. The Lord complaineth of Israel as guilty of this, Isa. xxix. 13. compared with Matth. xv. 8, 9. *While they drew near with their lips, and their hearts were far away, they worshipt me in vain, saith the Lord, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* 2. When men use not such ordinances, and perform not such duties profitably, when prayer, reading of the scripture, sacrament, sermons, &c. want their native fruit, then his name is taken in vain, and in that respect his ordinances frustrated and made, as if they had not been used or performed, so 2 Cor. vi. 1. *To receive the grace of God in vain*, is to miss or let go the benefit of it, and to frustrate and disappoint ourselves of the native end and use of it: This is the first way in respect of which our duties are in vain as to God, so as he will not regard them.

The second way is as to ourselves, and here again we may consider the taking of the Lord's name in vain, in ordinances in duties two ways, either, 1. Simply, where there is no honesty at all in them, nor fruit from them, but mere hypocrisy, or at least hypocrisy in such particular acts. Or 2. When it is comparative, that is, though there may be some reality and fruit, yet considering what it should be; yea, considering what means the person hath, there is a great defect as to that which should and might have been; thus were the Hebrews challanged, Heb. v. 12. not that they were altogether fruitless, but that they were not so fruitful as under, and by such means they might have been, and that therefore they had in a great part used them, and received them in vain: This may and often doth befall even those who have some measure of sincerity, yet fall far short what they might have attained of the knowledge of God, and of other blessed fruits, by the right improvement of the means they had.

We may add a third way how his name is taken in vain, and that in respect of itself, or of the ordinance or duty; what indeed it is, and in respect of what it appeareth to be when the shew is much more than the substance; and when the sincerity and reality, and inward reverence and esteem of our heart, in naming God, keepeth no just proportion with the words of our mouth, and our large external profession. Thus did the Pharisees, and thus do all hypocrites take and bear God's name in vain, not being at all answer-
able

able to what they seem to be : this may be also in others comparatively, in respect, 1. Of the law. 2. In respect of the means we have. 3. In respect of our profession.

That our conviction may be the clearer, let us see what belongeth to the right going about of duty, or to the suitable mentioning of the Lord's name, the want whereof, or any part thereof maketh us more or less guilty of taking it in vain. 1. Then there is a necessity that we propose a good and right end, and aim singly at it; for if all things should be done to God's glory, this of the naming of the Lord should be in a special manner so : This is a mans call to pray, preach, hear, &c. to wit, the concernment of God's name, that is, 1. That God may be honoured. 2. That we ourselves, or others may be edified. 3. That a command may be obeyed in the conscience of duty. Those then who adventure to profess or name God, or to go about any ordinance, seeking themselves, and not the Lord, as is supposed men may do, 2 Cor. iv. 5, 2. out of envy as they did of whom Paul speaketh, Phil. i. 15, 16. 3. To be honoured of men, as the Pharisees designed by their long prayers. 4. For the fashion, or out of mere custom. 5. For making peace with God, by mentioning his name so often in ordinances, mis-regarding and taking no notice of the Mediator in the mean time : These I say and such like will meet with that sad word, *In vain do ye worship me.*

2. There is a necessity of a good principle in naming the Lord (to speak so) both of a moral and physical principle : the moral, is conscience, and not custom, which falleth in with the end, the physical is the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xii. 3. *No man calleth Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.* 2. A renewed heart, thus duties must be done with the Spirit, as well as with the understanding. 3. Sincerity, as to the exercise even of the natural faculties : Thus whatever unrenewed men speak in duty, without the spirits influence and exercise of grace, they make themselves guilty in it; and, when they say, what in sincerity they think not.

3. It is necessary that the principle act in the right manner, that is, 1. Sincerely, Josh. xxiv. 14. 2. In fear and reverence, Eccl. v. 1, 2. 3. With faith and respect to Jesus Christ, Heb. xi. 6. 4. With judgment and understanding. To speak of him, not knowing what we say or to whom we speak, wrongeth him : Thus ignorant, passionate, rash, irreverent and inadvertent mentioning of God, or meddling with any ordinance or duty, wrongeth him, and is a bringing of vain oblations, which he expressly forbiddeth, Isa. i. 13.

4. When-

4. Whenever we make mention of God, we should study to be in case to mention him as ours, as our God and father in Christ, in all ordinances and duties, that is, 1. Taking up our natural distance. 2. Looking to Christ for removing of it. 3. Resting on him, and making use of him for that end. 4. Delighting in the mentioning of God as ours. 5. With thanksgiving and blessing, whenever he is named, as the apostle often doth.

5. It is required in respect of the use, fruit, and effect, that something which is profitable may remain and stick with us, according to the nature of the duty which is gone about, or the way of mentioning God, such as some conviction and testimony of the conscience. 1. That God's honour; 2. The edification of others in way of instruction, or conviction or of reproof, or of comfort, &c. 3. My own edification or spiritual advantage, or, 4. My own exoneration and peace, as to the performance of such a duty, were in some measure of singleness aimed at and endeavoured; and as there is a missing of any of these, repentance should be exercised, and faith for pardon; some fruit, some sense, some lesson, some discoveries, some convictions, &c. would be sought after to remain. When these or any of these (if all the rest of them can be altogether without one) are wanting, this command is simply broken; if in part they be wanting, it is comparatively more or less broken.

Let us then take a view in particulars. 1. Look to our profession, Oh! what emptiness is there, much more appearance and shew, than reality and substance? Yea, what desiring to seem something, rather than to be? if our professions (who are least in them) were met and measured by our reality, O how lamentably vast a disproportion would be found? the one would be quickly found much broader and longer than the other, the outer-half much bagged as it were, being a great deal larger than the inner, even where there is most sincerity and reality.

2. Look thro' public duties, if there be not much taking of God's name in vain, in hearing, praying, praising, using the sacraments, &c. and if so, O what a libell might be drawn up against us from every sabbath, prayer, sermon, &c. whereof we often cannot tell what fruit remaineth, except it be sin, guilt, and hardness; and therefore doubtless his name is much taken in vain in them.

3. Look through private duties in families, reading, praying singing, conferring catechising, saying grace, or seeking a blessing, and giving thanks at a table; how little regard

regard is often had to the name of the Lord in these? and how little care and pains taken to walk by the former rules in them?

4. Look through head duties, betwixt God and you, how ye pray in secret before God: ah! often so, as ye would be ashamed to pray before men; how do ye pray, meditate, &c. in secret how do ye join in prayer with others? which in some respect is secret; God knoweth how poorly we acquit ourselves in these ordinarily, and how much we take his name in vain in them.

5. Look thro' occasional duties, wherein ye have occasion to make mention of God with, or to others, as when upon any emergent of providence, we will say, It is God's will, God hath done it, God is good and merciful, &c. or in any particular duty of Christian communion, in instructing, comforting, admonishing, or convincing of others, or debating with them; how often when the scripture, and the name of God will be in our mouths, in these, and the matter of debate may fall to be some of his ordinances, will there be but very little reverence and respect to God in our hearts?

6. Consider how this sin of taking his name in vain is fallen in by writing, not only when treatises are written, but almost in every epistle or letter, there will be found some prayer or wish, for fashion-sake, where there is but little conscience made to have the heart joining in it; how much irreverent using of the scripture and of God's name, is there in writing of letters, particularly of burial letters, thus. It hath pleased the Lord, it hath seemed good to God, it hath pleased God or the Almighty, &c. I am not condemning the thing simply, but our way of abusing it.

7. Look through accidental mentionings of God (if we may say so) in salutations, God save you, God be with you; in prayers for children, evidencing rather our fondness on them thereby, than our love and reverence to the name of God; for such as are in any present hazard, God save; for any favour, courtesy or compliment; God bless; these are good (as the apostle saith of the law) if used lawfully, but they are often sinfully, rashly ignorantly, yea, prophanely abused, we have often more respect to them we speak unto, than unto God. I would not condemn the use of them being duties, but exhort you to guard against the abuse, and to use a grave, reverent understanding, and sensible way of expressing them, or of any thing like them.

8. Consider narrations of scripture-stories, or other stories, questions, tales, &c. wherein the name of God is mentioned, and possibly when we tell them, to make a sport of them, to make merry with them: How often is his blessed
name

name taken in vain in them? certainly the mentioning of his name were often better forborn than so irreverently used.

9. Consider the usurping of God's attributes, or of an interest in him, rashly, as when men confidently, yet without all warrant, assert God is mine; I trust in his mercy, sweet Christ my Saviour, my Mediator, Ah! how often is this, which is the very crown of grace, to wit, in God's doing good and shewing mercy, abused and prophaned most sinfully and shamefully!

There is one particular, which yet remaineth to be spoken of on this third command, which concerneth lots, omens superstitious observations, and such like, whereby the name of God is wronged, in being not only slighted, contemned, and taken in vain in these events (which yet are guided by him) but the disposal of things which is due to God, is denied to him, and attributed to chance, luck, fortune and such like.

We shall then: 1. Shew what lotting or lottery is. 2. How it concerneth this command. 3. Distinguish lots, into several sorts. 4. Shew what are lawful, and when they are lawful. 5. What are unlawful.

A lot or lotting is, The committing, of the decision of something, in an immediate way to divine providence, without the interveening causalities, or influence, of any second cause, to sway in that decision: so that when the thing falleth out, and is decided, there can be no reason given, Why it is so in mens part, but that the Lord was pleased to dispose. As it was in that instance of lotting, about the election of the twelfth apostle, in Judas his room, Acts i. So from Prov. xvi. 33. It is clear that that is a lot *whereof the whole disposal is of God*: And therefore it is said, chap. xviii. 18. *To cause contentions to cease, and to part betwixt the mighty*; Because none can quarrel, concerning that which man hath no hand in.

A lot may be many ways appointed, either by the throw of a dice, or the like; or by some other mean putting difference betwixt one and other, even as men shall appoint: as when it is; By what beast they shall first see, by what saying, or by what book they first hear, or look on, &c. Only we think lots differ from omens, or superstitious observations, thus: 1. Lots are to decide betwixt two; the other are collections, which one may make concerning himself. 2. Lots follow on some appointment that is mutual and are free; the other may be other-ways.

That lots in the use of them, concerning this command; these things will make it out several ways. 1. That which

putteth God to it, and in an immediate way, concerneth this command, especially; I mean, whatever putteth him to declare his mind or reveal himself; that putteth him to it, and is a special implicate invoking of him: But lots or lotting, putteth him to it, in an immediate way; For, 1. None other can dispose them but he, Prov. xvi. 33. 2. What is discovered by those lots, is either God's mind or the Devils, or is by chance; but it cannot be any of the latter two, therefore it is the first. 3. It is the putting him to it, more than he is by prayer; Because, 1. It is by an extraordinary way, and often added to prayer. 2. It is for the manifesting of a secret decree; For by it we are to understand, what God has appointed, and eternally decreed, concerning such an event. Hence it is, that in scripture, prayer is so often, if not always joined with it; and therefore it must in a special manner belong to this command: Yea, if God be slighted in it, he is wronged: If acknowledged according to his interest, he is in a special manner concerned, where he wholly ordereth the thing.

2. It is either a mean, appointed to him to understand his mind or not; if appointed by him, then it is in so far his ordinance and his name is concerned in it; if not, then it is abused.

3. The meddling with God's secret, or with his will, or way of revealing it in his providence, must belong to this command; but this especially, meddleth with all these: therefore, &c.

4. That which cannot be gone about, but the name of the Lord is either wronged or honoured, in it; must necessarily, belong to this command, for that is the scope of it: for none can lot without either depending on God, for the ordering of, and acknowledging of him in it, when it is done; and so without honouring him, or neglecting him, and taking his name in vain. 1. By miskenning his providence, and thinking to get that decided some other way. 2. By irreverent going about it. 3. By attributing it to some other thing. 4. By not acknowledging God in it, nor submitting to it, when done so. So then, these three ways men fall, and take God's name in vain. 1. Before the lot. 2. In the time of it. 3. After it is past.

Lots, are ordinarily divided into three sorts. 1. Divine, which are from extraordinary warrants. 2. Devilish, wherein the Devil is often invoked, or in circumstances, the decision is put to him, and guided by him. 3. Humane which are ordinarily gone about amongst men.

Again, They are divided, 1. In Divinatory. 2. Consultatory, whereby men find out somewhat that is secret, as

Saul found out Jonathan; or are led to some duty. 3. Divisory, By such the land of Canaan was divided, Josh. xii. 6. 4. Lufury, or, for play: This division is large and comprehensive, and hath several steps, according to the weight of the things, as they are greater or smaller, or indifferent.

Concerning them we say; That all consultatory, and divinatory lots, except by an extraordinary warrant are unlawful and a tempting of God, who has now given us other ways and means, to direct us in what is meet for us to do.

2 Concerning those Devilish lots, there is no question of the abominableness of them such as foretelling of fortunes, horoscopes, or deaths; the finding of things lost by nameing all suspected persons, turning the riddle, &c.

Yet 3. We dare not condemn all divisory lots, if rightly gone about.

Because, they are frequently made use of in the scripture, Josh. vii. 13. 14 and 15. *etc.* Acts 1. Yeathey seem to be, from the light of nature, Jonah i. 2. The use of them, is moral and perpetual, Prov. xviii. 18. To cause contentions to cease, and to part between the mighty. 3. When they are rightly gone about, they are a honouring of God, and are a manifest acknowledging of his providence. I say, rightly gone about: Where, 1. The matter should be weighty, or of some consequence; that is, It should either be weighty in itself; or it should be so by some consequence, or inconveniency; making a light thing in itself weighty, otherwise it is (as swearing is, in a matter of no moment) but a baffling of his ordinance.

2. It should be necessary, that is a thing that without many inconveniences, cannot be in another way decided. otherwise to put God to reveal his mind, in an extraordinary way, when there is an ordinary at hand, is a tempting of God; even at, to leap over a wall is, while there is an ordinary passage to go through by.

3. It should be with a due respect to God, acknowledging him, to be the decisor, calling on his name in the use of it, and looking to him for the decision, as we see almost in all lottings, and even of those heathens, Jonah i.

4. It should be gone about in the right manner. 1. With reverence, as if we were to hear God pronounce the sentence and speak his mind; as while Saul is a-taking, the people stand before the Lord, 1 Sam. x. 19, 21. 2. In the faith that God guideth it; and so, without anxiety and fear. 3. In singleness, committing it to him, even in heart as well as in appearance; abstaining from all fraud or tricks, or any

thing which may have influence, as a second cause, to mar or cast the decision; this were a high way of mocking God, to put the decision to him, and yet to endeavour to give the answer ourselves.

Lastly, After the lot, there should be a reverent acknowledging of God's mind, without fretting or grumbling, and a chearful submitting to it, as we see in all the cases instanced in scripture. These rules being observed, we think for dividing of stations or charges; or of portions, which cannot be otherwise done, without offence or prejudice; lots may be used.

Yet, I would say these few things, for caution here: 1. Ye should not in petty things use them, when the matter is of no value at all, or of very small value; so that ye are indifferent, how it falls out: Or when it is not of that weight, that ye would give an oath in it; but rather quit it, (and there would be here a proportion kept,) ye should rather in such a case hazard some loss, than put to a lot, out of that reverence ye owe to God's name: All the cases in scripture are weighty: In your ordinary merchandize, I desire you to remember this;

2. Ye should not fail to use your reason, and honest skill, more in sharings and divisions, for preventing of a lot. Folks sometimes, betake themselves to this for ease, when yet their reason rightly made use of, might bring to a satisfying decision. God hath not given reason to man in vain, or for nought: when reason then may do it; essay it, and forbear a lot.

3. Let it be in such a matter, and so used, as ye may seek God in it, and in-call his name by prayer: to lot in a thing, that folks will not, or dare not pray in, agreeth not with scripture examples, nor with that tenderness which a believer should have at such a time: It should then be in a thing respecting a promise.

On the contrary, we may see how men fail here, 1. In weighty things, by not keeping the right manner before the lot, in the time of it, and after it is past, when it endeth not strife. 2. In trivial things, by making this too customary; so that folk use the lot almost in every thing, making that which is extraordinary to become ordinary, contrary to the nature thereof. It is an ultimate judge and decider, even as an oath is for ending all controversies: It is like unto Moses (as one saith,) the great matters should be reserved to it; yea it is greater than Moses, its God himself, thus in his providence passing a decision; the lesser things would be otherwise decided.

3. We may gather from what is said, what is to be thought of such games and pastimes as run to lottery (having that for the very foundation of them) and have an immediate dependence on providence for the issue of them.

1. That they are lottery cannot be denied, for they have all that is in lotting; there is in them a putting of things to a doubtful event as to us; and that event is guided either by God, or by some other, and which ever of the two, we say, it will be a breach of this command: so trivially for our pleasure to take the name of God in vain, as many formally do; for none can tell, how such a thing will come to pass by any reason.

2. That to do so, or to use a lot in this case is a sin, may also be made out clearly, 1. Because it is against the end of lots, which is to divide or decide where there is controversy and so it intervverteth their end, and becometh sinful; even as swearing where no controversy is, is a sin. 2. There is either no necessity at all to take that away, or there is but a made-necessity of our own, it must therefore be a tempting of God: as suppose this to be the end of lotting to know in the upshot whether so much money should belong to you, or to me; no doubt that point of right to whom the money belongeth, may be decided as well at the entry; therefore this way of decision is in vain.

3. That lotting which hath in it no reverence to God, but baffleth his name; nor is consistent with the right manner of lotting; cannot be lawful; but this is such: for it is not only, *de facto* contrary to the former rules, but in its own nature is inconsistent with them; this is clear, 1. From the great frequency of lotting in these games. 2. In the little dependence on God for the event that is in them; and indeed a spiritual frame of dependence on him, cannot well if at all consist with them. 3. From its inconsistency with serious prayer; what! can or dare men pray in earnest for God's guiding in these things, in every throw of the dice, or shuffling of the cards? or in faith expect still the revealing of his decree that way? or when it is done and past, can they suitably acknowledge him in it? Men dare not look so seriously on these things, yea they know they dare not.

4. That way of lotting which cannot but occasion the wronging of the name of the Lord, and his providence, cannot be right; but this is such: for we must say, that either God's hand is not at all in such things, and so we deny his providence: or we must say that he may be put to it by this common and coarse way, and that in our sport, and for our pleasure in his immediate providence to declare his mind; which is a notable baffling (to say so) and prophanation of his

his name; hence it is, the men so often swear, curse, fret, and exclaim in these games at cards, dice, &c. (wherein chance, luck, fortune, &c. are so much looked to, and in a manner desired) and altogether overlook and mis-regard the majesty of God, as if he had no providence at all in such things.

5. What is done without warrant of either scripture precept or practice, cannot be done in faith? Now there can be no such warrant drawn from scripture for such plays or games, the very foundation whereof is lottery, and not only accidentally and rarely incident to them, as may be on the matter to other lawful recreations, if that can be called lottery at all, which is rather an undesigned, unexpected surprising incident of providence; whereas in the other, the decision by a lot is designed, waited for, and all along the game referred unto, and hung upon: yea it is unsuitable and inconsistent with the scripture-way of using lots, which is always in most grave and important things; but this way of using them is manifestly to abuse them.

6. That which hath a native tendency to make any ordinance of God vile and contemptible, cannot be warrantable; Now that lotting in these games hath such a tendency to make the ordinance of a lot, and of prayer, which should at least be joined with it, contemptible; is obvious to any serious and impartial considerer of it, neither can it in reason be thought that, That which is in so sacred a manner, and with prayer to God, to be gone about in one thing, and is by him appointed for such an end as an oath is; can warrantably be used in a manner, and for ends so vastly different from the former in an other thing.

7. If lots belong at all to this command, then these lotting-games are unlawful: for they cannot with any religious reason be supposed to be commanded in it, and therefore they must be forbidden. And if in trivial things lots may be unlawful, much more in such games which end not strife and contentions, but often and ordinarily begin them, and bring them to a height: and therefore do the ancients declaim against this as a sacrificing to devils, and invented by idolaters.

If it be said here, That these things are thought but very little of by men; *Answ.* It is true, and no great wonder; for most men use but to think little of the breach of this command, yet are there breaches sinful notwithstanding; as many take God's name in their mouth lightly, and think but little of it, and yet that maketh not their doing so, cease to be a sin. God hath added this certification here the more peremptorily for that very end, that men may not think little,

tle, or lightly of the very least breach of this command (to let pass more gross breaches of it.)

If it be further objected here, Why may not such plays or games be used as well as other playes, wherein sometimes chance or fortune (as they call it) will cast the ballance? *Ans* 1. Though in those other, chance may now and then occasionally occur, yet that is but accidental; these are simply, or at least mostly guided by lotting, and immediate providences, and cannot be prevented or made to be otherways by the best art and skill of men. 2. In these other games there is an intervention of second causes, and an use of mens parts, natural and moral, for obtaining such an end ultimate (in some respect) and immediate; as for example, when men strike a ball with a club, or throw a boul to a hole, they are guided therein rationally, as they are in coming down a stair; and they act therein, as in other things by second causes and use of means, whether of body or mind; but in these lotting games it is not so, for all is cast and hung upon extraordinary providence, even as if a man, who cannot, would betake himself to swimming in, or walking upon the water, when an other betaketh himself to a bridge or a boat.

In summe; As lots and oaths are much for one end, to wit, the ending of controversy and strife, Heb. vi. 16. Prov. xviii. 18. So ought the same rules almost to be observed in them both. Then 1. Before the lot, we should look to and follow God's call and depend on him in it. 2. In the time of lotting, we should act reverently. 3. After the lot we should reverence the Lord, and submit to the event of it as to his mind, even though our frame has not been so right: As an oath bindeth when taken in lawful matter, though there hath been rashness as to the manner, by virtue of God's name which is interposed; so do lots, because, however we be as to our frame, it is he who decideth as to the event; therefore ought that decision to be looked on as most sacred: God having thought good beside the general rules in his word to give evidence of his mind by lots, as to some particular events; and though these games at dice or cards may in the compleat frame of them require some skill, how to manage such throws or such particular cards when a man hath gotten them; yet that, that throw is such, casting up so many blacks and no more, that such a man hath such cards and no other, that is meerly by immediate providence, and so must of necessity be a lot; or it is by some other means which would (if assaid) wrong God also very much; and though skill may possibly influence the event as to the upshot of the-game, yet in these throwings or shufflings,

flings there is no skill, or if there be any thing that is accounted art or skill, it is but deceit, seeing the scope is by these to leave it to providence in its decision.

This doctrine concerning such games, was the doctrine of the ancients, who did vehemently inveigh against this sort of lottery, see Cyprian de aleatoribus, who fathereth it on Zabulus and calleth it the snare of the devil, and compareth it with idolatry, so Ambrose de Tobia, page 590. It was also in some councils condemned, Can. apost. canon 42. Con. Trull canon 50.

This hath been the constant ordinary judgment of protestant writers on this command, and some of them have written peculiar treatises to this purpose, particularly Dancæus; wherein he proveth that such lottery is unlawful in itself, and most prejudicial to men, this is likewise the doctrine of the school-men, though none of the most rigid casuists, yea it is the doctrine of our own church, these being as unlawful games condemned of old; and of late, to wit, Anno 1638. by the general assembly of Glasgow, according to a former act of an assembly held at Edinburgh, Anno. 1596.

Lastly, Consider for scarring from such games, these two things 1. The contrary events (that follow most ordinarily on such lottery :) strifes and contentions are occasioned, if not caused by them, which are ended by the other, so very different are the events. 2. Consider that most men, who use them fall often into gross prophaning of God's name, or into high passions at best.

An omen, or sign, or token is, When men propose to and resolve with themselves, that if they meet with such and such a thing they will construct so and so of it, or when they seek it from God for that end; Thus Abraham's servant did at the well, seek to know the mind of the Lord, and accordingly drew conclusions about it, concerning a wife to his master's son, Gen. xxiv. So did Jonathan about his assaulting of the Philistines, 1 Sam. xiv. So likewise did Gideon about his success against the Midianites, Judg. vi. And Mary for confirmation of her faith concerning what was told her by the angel, Luke i. 34. This is still to be understood as to some particular fact or event, and not in a common tract, or for the determination of a general truth; as for example, Mary believed that Christ was to be born, but knew not that she was to be his mother; but Zacharias John the baptist's father, did (it seemeth) doubt of God's power, or of the event or truth of what was told to him; and therefore he sinned in seeking a sign when the other did not; The Philistines sinned most grossly, when they sent back the ark and did hang the decision of that question, whether,

ther their plagues came from the hand of God, or by chance, upon the motion of the kine? 1 Sam. vi. And it is always a sinful tempting of God, when men out of curiosity from unbelief, or needlessly, put him to give a sign that they may thereby know his power, will, or wisdom.

An observation is, when we gather such a thing from such a providence that occureth without any fore-casting of ours, or determining with ourselves before hand about it, being a meerly surprising unexpected emergent: we shall only say in general concerning omens and observations, that when they agree not with the word, and our duty revealed and enjoined therein, they are not to be adventured on nor regarded, but utterly slighted, because then certainly they degenerate and become extravagant; neither are the examples of such who being led by an extraordinary spirit have used them, to be followed by others who have not the same spirit; doubtless it is safe for us to take heed to the more sure word of prophecy, and to follow the unerring rule of the word of God, and not extraordinary examples for which we have no warrant.

Superstitious observations are not so much about daily occurring providences, which all are obliged piously to mark and improve to the best spiritual advantage, and in the careful marking and suitable improving whereof, there lieth a special piece of spiritual wisdom, more especially of such providences which may from the Lord, help either to confirm a man in his duty, or deter him from a sin or snare; as they are about some set and marked actions of creatures, and these very feckless and silly too (though I deny not, but that simply they are providences also) which are reputed to be so many fixed rules and canons of natural wisdom, but really instituted spells, or freets, or the devils rudiments and grammar, (to say so) to sink mens minds into atheism. And observations are always superstitious when we collect and conclude that such and such events evil or good, will happen to us, or befall us from such and such occurring works and passages of providence, for which no reason can be drawn either out of the word of God, or out of the course of nature; in a word, for which there is neither scripture-warrant, nor can any natural cause or reason be assigned; as for instance, to think, it is unluckly to meet such and such persons first in the morning (which useth to be called an evil foot) for a woman with child to step over a hair-teather, for folks to neese putting on their shoes, for one to have salt falling toward him on the table (the fear whereof maketh some to suffer no salt to come to their table) to have a hare cross ones way, to burn in the right ear,

to bleed some drops of blood, &c. Again to think that it boadeth good luck for folks to have drink spilt on them, to find old iron, to burn on the left ear, to dream on such and such things, &c. There is a multitude of such freets and superstitious observations which many retain still, and but few without some and free of all; a sin from which it is to be feared the land hath never been throughly purged, since it was pagan, a sin very natural to men, and which hath amongst Christians its observable increase and decrease according to the more or less free course and success of the gospel; all Christians should abhor such freets, as smelling strong of much ignorance of God, of much atheism and paganism.

Of this sort, or very like them is, folks meeting with such a word in such a sermon, which may have some allusion, or seeming answerableness to a case, or particular, formerly dark or doubtful to them, which they take for clearing of them, or deciding of the thing without due examination thereof, according to the true meaning of the scripture, and the analogy of faith: And their having such a place of scripture brought to their mind, or at the first opening of the Bible cast up to them, which they look on as more befitting their condition, and that because so suggested and cast up, without pondering the word itself; and lay more weight on that word on that very account, for solving of such a doubt, and for clearing and determining them as to such a thing, than on any other having the same authority, and no less, and it may be much more suitableness to the the thing, without any further tender and serious scrutiny, as if that were a special and extraordinary revelation of God's mind to them thereabout; which is a most dangerous practice. And (as we discoursed before on the practical breaches of the second command) is to make a weed or a fortune book of the book of God, which he never appointed for such an end; again I say, a most dangerous practice, and yet too frequently incident to some religious persons, especially in their trouble and difficulty, whereof some stupendious instances might be given, which would fright all from ever daring any more to adventure on such a practice not bottomed on the word itself, which God hath certainly given to his people to be used by them with Christian prudence, according to its own principles, and not to be lotted with, or to have their state or condition, or the decision of what they are dark or doubtful about, at hap-hazard cast on it, according to their own groundless fancies and imaginations.

We come now to the threatning or certification wherewith; this command is pressed, *The Lord will not hold him guilt-*

guiltless that taketh his name in vain. In which, three things are contained: 1. The fearfulnes and terribleness of the judgment and punishment, whereby the Lord will avenge the breach of this command. 2. The extent of it, as to every particular individual person found guilty, *The Lord will not hold him guiltless*, him, whoever he be, whatever he be; if there were but one, he shall not escape; and if there be many, not one of them shall be missed or passed by in this reckoning. 3. There is the peremptoriness and infallible certainty of it, God will not be dissuaded from it, nor will he alter this sentence, but it must and shall stand against him. The punishment is implied in that, *Not to be holden guiltless*, wherein there is more contained than is expressed, implying these three: 1. That he shall not be forgiven nor absolved, and so shall never enjoy God's favour and friendship, which no man, who hath sinned, can without pardon, enjoy; thus the judgment is negatively to be understood, he shall never enter into heaven, nor see the face of God, if he repent not. 2. Positively, it implieth that he shall be found guilty; and shall be dealt with as a guilty person, that he shall be eternally condemned, shut out from God's presence, and cast into hell to be there tormented for ever and ever. 3. Eminently it implieth a very high degree of punishment, that the degree shall be eminent, and that in respect of other sins, this sin shall have a peculiar weight added unto its curse, and be ranked amongst those sins which shall be in the justice of God most severely punished; a particular instance and proof whereof, is in hypocrites, whose judgment shall be in hell amongst the forest; the hypocrites portion of wrath will be a large portion.

The peremptoriness is implied in these words, *The Lord will not hold him guiltless, the Lord will not*, &c. which implieth, 1. That sinners shall be reckoned with, and judged for sin; in which reckoning this sin shall be especially taken notice of. 2. That all sinners shall be summoned to appear before the judgment seat and tribunal of God, and have their particular libel and accusations of their particular sins, wherein this sin shall be particularly taken notice of, as a main article: 3. That there shall be a sentence and doom passed upon the guilty, and that whosoever shall be found guilty of this sin, shall find justice severely passing sentence upon them. 4. That there shall be a holy rigid execution of that sentence without mercy, by a high degree of wrath upon all who shall be so sentenced.

If any ask, How this threatening is to be understood? for *Ans.* We should distinguish betwixt such, who repenting for it, do by faith in Christ make peace with God, and o-

thers who continue in it without repentance: and so say,
 1. That it is not to be understood as if the breach of this command were declared to be simply unpardonable to any who shall be guilty of it; for that is neither consistent the with grounds of the gospel, nor with experience, whereby it is found that grace often extendeth itself to the pardoning even of such. 2. But that it is in itself a sin most hateful to God, and a sin that bringeth great wrath on all that are guilty of it, and shall be found to be so, before his judgment seat. 3. It saith that all who are guilty of it, while their peace is not made with God through Jesus Christ, yea in some respect thereafter, should look on themselves as thus highly guilty; and that all who are not pardoned, should account themselves to be liable to this stroke of wrath, and to be under this sentence of the law that standeth particularly pronouced against them. 4. It saith, That men do by this sin, exceedingly hazard their eternal salvation, and that their repentance is rare, and so likewise their pardon; it being found in experience, that men, habituated to this sin of taking God's name in vain, do but seldom get repentance. 5. That when repentance cometh, and is given, such as are guilty of it, will be in an especial manner challenged for it, and it found to be in a high degree, bitter unto them in all their after reflections upon it. 6. That it will very readily have much influence in marring a mans peace, and obstructing the intimation of God's favour, and the joy of his salvation, even when it is pardoned; as we see in David, who made the name of God to be blasphamed, and was therefore put, Psal. li. to cry and cry again for the joy of God's salvation; for removing (amongst other reasons) of that scandal. And withall, it bringeth on temporal judgments as it did on David. 2 Sam. xii. 7. That when it is pardoned, it will in the sad remembrance of it, make them lothe themselves, and walk humbly, softly, and in the bitterness of their souls; and withall, to think much of, and to magnify, and wonder at grace that did ever pardon such sinners, as it did Paul who lotheth himself, and highly exalteth grace on this account, That it pardoned him who was a blasphemer: As for such who never betake themselves for pardon, nor obtain mercy, it has in these effects;
 1. It maketh their conscience liable to the sore and grievous challenge of this sin, and to the plain and sharp threatening that is pronounced against it, which being despised, and God himself much wronged thereby, cannot but bite, nay, gnaw the conscience so much more. 2. Justice hath a clear ground to proceed upon against them, not only as sinners in general, but as guilty of this sin in particular, and so because

cause of it, in a special manner liable to wrath. 3. An eminent degree of wrath in hell; for as there are different degrees of torment in hell, so this sin, no doubt, will make those who are guilty of it, share of that torment in a high degree. 4. That it further hardeneth and incapacitateth for pardon (though not simply) the persons that are guilty of it.

If it be asked, Why this sin is so threatned and punished even beyond other sins?

Answer. Because it is accompanied with the most hainous aggravations, and so draweth on the greatest guilt; As, 1. It is a sin immediately against God himself, and is not, as sins of the second table, nay not as other particular sins of the first table, whereby men divert from God to idolatry, giving to idols what is his due, or turn their back on him, or slight his commanded worship, as in the first, second, and fourth commands; but this doth immediately and directly, and by commission terminate on God himself most daringly and presumptuously, as it were baffling and affronting him who has made himself known by his name. 2. It is the fruit sign, or symptome, yea and cause of the most gross atheism in the heart, and enmity against God; for it is his enemies property *to take his name in vain*, Psalm cxxxix. 20. It cannot be in the height, but atheism is, and the awe of God is not; and where there is much of it, there is proportionably much atheism, it speaketh forth plainly, that there is no right knowledge or faith of his greatness, holiness, power, justice, &c. which would make men fear him, and stand in awe of him; hence ordinarily those who are gross in this, are otherways gross in many other things; for it fitteth and disposeth for atheism, and it inureth and inhabituateth a man to contemn and despise God, whereas, on the contrary, if a man make conscience of any thing, it will be of this.

3. It is that which dishonoureth God most amongst others, and giveth them occasion to blaspheme, as David's sin did, and as those false prophets and seducers with their followers are said to do, 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2. and where this prevaieth, all religion is accounted, among such, but as a fancy and nothing, and therefore he will punish it severely.

4. It is often and most ordinarily the guilt of such as acknowledge God in profession, but in works deny him, and do not worship him as God: It is against light and convictions, yea, and professions of an interest in God; therefore, there is an emphasis here, *The name of the Lord thy God.*

5. It is not so of infirmity, as other sins which pleasure, or profit may push on men to; there is ordinarily here none
of

of these, but either simple atheism; or prophane custom that maketh it so much the worse, that it is customary.

The second reason why the Lord thus threatneth and punisheth that sin, is that he may thereby vindicate his own holiness, and imprint the awe and terribleness of this great and dreadful name *the Lord our God*, upon the hearts of all, it being one of the greatest benefits bestowed, or which can be bestowed on men, to wit, the manifestation of the name of God, when it cometh to be abused (being the abuse of the best thing, and so the greatest abuse) it is the more severely avenged, and thus one way or other the Lord will have his holiness and greatness known amongst all his creatures; and therefore, whosoever shall think little of his blessed and holy name here, and thereupon baffle and prophane it, God shall make them think more of it hereafter, when he riseth up to take vengeance.

3. He so threatneth and punisheth it, because men take a liberty and latitude in it, in formal praying, rash swearing, jestings, writings, tenents, disputes, plays, by lots, &c. and therefore he putteth the greater stamp of his indignation on it, either to restrain them from that liberty, or to make them smart for it; and men also but very seldom severely punish it, therefore he himself will.

If any should ask the cause, why men do ordinarily take so little notice of this command, and so generally sin against it? I confess it may be at the first wondred at, considering that it has such perempory threatnings, and is very often followed, even here in this world, and in the sight of men, with shame and visible judgments; and that there is ordinarily no profit, nor credit, nor any such satisfaction to carnal lusts or pleasures to tempt and push on to it, as are to other sins; and that yet notwithstanding all this, men should so frequently sin this way, must be also as wonderful as it is abominable. But we may conceive it to proceed from these causes

1. Much atheism, and the little heart-esteem that there is of God and of his majesty; the little faith that there is of his dreadful justice, and severe and peremptory execution of his threatnings; little of these within, maketh men careless to be watchful, and what wonder, if this break forth, when in his heart the man saith, *There is no God*; then this followeth, as is clear, Isa. xxxvii. in Sennacherib, who when once he saith, *Who is the Lord*, then he treadeth on his name.

2. There is a natural pride and stout-heartedness in men against God, flowing from the former, whereby they set their mouth against God, and think it is a piece of bravery

not to stand in awe of him; and (as Goliath did) to defy the living God, and to contemn and trample upon all religion and holiness which appears sooner and more clearly in nothing than in stout words against the Lord, Mal. iii. 13. and in prophaning of his name.

Hence it is to be observed, that where this sin reigneth, there is either a height of desperate security and stupid senselessness, or a devilish gallantry in contemning God, and all religion, all prayer and other spiritual exercises as not becoming pretty men, or men of spirits; as if forsooth, topping with God, and bidding a defiance to the Almighty, were true knowledge, and the grand proof of a brave and gallant spirit, and of a pretty man: O! what a dreadful length is this that men are come to say in effect, Who is the Lord, that I should reverence his name?

3. The Devil knowing well both these, taketh occasion to stir men up to it, and what by offering occasions of irritation to vent their passion, and what by habituating them to it from custom, and the example of others, whereby keeping them of some other sins which others may be guilty of, he is in God's righteous judgment permitted to harden them in this.

4. There may be also something in the nature of this sin, because it doth not ordinarily wrong others externally, or because it may be in a truth, or in profession of duty, or in worship; or because it may be fallen into inadvertantly without forethought or deliberation; therefore the Devil hath the greater advantage to drive men on to it, if not by swearing falsely, yet prophanely and rashly; if not by God, yet by some creature; or if not so, yet by formal and fruitless discharging of duties, or some other way; and because ordinarily there is no such evil that sticketh thereby to others, as to make them resent it, nor no ill meant to themselves, as they in their proud self-love, do conceit: Therefore they are the less afraid of before, and the less challenged for it afterward.

Let us make some use of all this in a few words 1. Then see, and gravely consider, what sin this is, what wrath it deserveth, how far, and how wide in its guilt it extendeth itself, and what severe reckoning will be for it? O then! what is your hazard, and what will be your sentence when this judgment shall be set, and when the judge cometh to pronounce it? tell me who of you will be able to purge yourselves of this guilt? This sentence may and will one day make many of you tremble, when the Lord will say, *Man, thou tookest my name in vain in such a company, at such a play and sport, in such a contest, in such an oath, yea in such a pray-*
er,

er, &c. Here is your sentence, *I will not hold you guiltless, but guilty for this cause*; This, this is the truth of God, if we believe his word, yea, whether we believe it or not.

Let me therefore speak two words further to all of you old and young, godly and prophane, rich and poor, &c. O take more notice of this sin, and be more watchful against it, think more of it, and look more to every way it may be fallen into; and by all means study to prevent it, fear to name *the great and dreadful name of the Lord our God* irreverently; tremble when ye heard it named; and when ye read, hear, pray, or do any duty, as ye would eschew this curse and threatening, and be found guiltless in the day of the Lord, eschew this sin of taking his name in vain.

For helps to this, let me commend unto you. 1. A serious endeavour to walk under the impression of God's greatness, and to have your heart filled with his awe; if his fear be in the heart, there will be expressions of reverence to his name in the mouth.

2. Believe, and be persuaded of the reality of this truth concerning the terribleness of the reckoning for this sin, and the fearful judgment that will certainly follow it.

3. Use and mention his name reverently in prayer, hearing conference, &c. For, habituating ourselves to formality in such duties, maketh way more ordinarily for more gross violations of this command; and study to be more affected even when narratively ye are telling something wherein his name is mentioned, than otherwise.

4. Tremble at this sin, and suitably resent it, when ye hear it in others, be affected with it, and labour to make them so, that ye may thus train yourselves to an abominating of that evil.

5. Let it never pass in yourselves, especially, without some special grave animadversion: Look back on all your life, and see if ye can remember when and where ye were grossly guilty; reflect on your worship, and observe omissions and defects, at least in respect of what ye might have been at, and learn to lothe yourselves for these, and to be in bitterness for them; especially if the escapes have been more late and recent, let them not sleep with you, lest ye be hardned, and the sentence stand in force unrepealed against you; what? will ye sleep and this word stand in the bible on record as a registered decree against you?

6. Seek for much of the Spirit, for none can call Jesus, Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xii. 3.

7. Frequently and seriously put up that petition to the Lord, *Hallowed be thy name*, Matth. vi. 9.

The other word of use is for what is past, I am sure, if

we could speak of it, and here it rightly, there is here that which might make us all to tremble, and evidence convincingly to us our hazard, and the necessity of repentance and flying to Christ: Tell me hearers, believe ye this truth that there is such hazard from this guilt? tell me (if ye remember what we spoke in the opening of it) is there any of you that lieth not under the stroak of it? If so, what will ye do? fly ye must to Christ, or lye still; and can there be any secure lying still for but one hour, under God's curse drawn out? O ye Atheists, that never trembled at the name of the Lord, and that can take a mouthful of it in your common discourse, and ye who make it your by-word, and mock, or jest, ye, whom no oaths can bind; and all ye hypocrites; who turn the pretended honouring of the name of the Lord, and the sanctifying of him in his ordinances into a real prophaning of it; let me give you these two charges under certification of a third, 1. I charge you to repent of this sin, and to fly to Christ for obtaining pardon; haste, haste, haste, the curse is at the door, when the sentence is past already; O sleep not, till this be removed. 2. I charge you to abstain from it in your several relations, all ye parents, masters, magistrates, church-officers, school-masters and teachers; I charge you to endeavour to prevent this sin in yourselves and others: It is said that the children of many are brought up in it, the most part live in it, our streets are more full of it than the streets of heathens: Advert to this charge, every soul: Or, 3. I charge you to appear before this great and dreadful God, who will not account any such guiltless, and to answer to him for it.



THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

EXODUS XX. Ver. 8, 9, 10, 11,

8. *Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy: 9. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work. 10. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, Thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattel, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. 11. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and ballowed it.*

THE Lord in his infinite wisdom and goodness hath so far consulted man's infirmity, as to sum up his duty