

Use 3. Honour and praise him for this in word and deed: Ps. cxviii. 1, 'O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good.' You all have tasted of the goodness of God, now what shall be done to the Lord for this? Certainly we should be good, and do good, that we might imitate our heavenly Father.

SERMON III.

Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honour thy father and mother.—MARK X. 19.

IN former discourses upon this context, you have heard of a necessary question asked, and that by a young man, concerning the way to eternal life. He doth not put it upon good words, or anything less than good works really to be done, 'What good thing must I do that I may inherit eternal life?' Yet, because he spoke in a legal sense, Christ accommodates his answer thereunto. First he gives answer to his compellation, 'Good Master,' and now to his question, to convince his conscience, and bring him to brokenness of heart, and now remitteth him to his rule.

1. He mindeth him of his pattern, 'Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, which is God.' This young man had too high a conceit of his own goodness, therefore Christ shows him that originally and absolutely that title belongeth to God only.

2. He refers him to his rule. Though we be not so perfect as God is perfect, yet if we answer our rule, the law given to us, it is enough for us creatures, and therefore the young man is put upon that trial. Thou art not good as God is good, so thou canst not be, for God alone is good; yet 'thou knowest the commandments, do not commit adultery,' &c. Observe here—

[1.] Christ directeth him to the commandments for an answer to his question. The question was, 'What must I do that I may inherit eternal life?' Christ saith, 'Thou knowest the commandments,' &c. That here is a direct answer to the question appeareth by comparing the evangelists; for we see, Mark xix. 17, 18, it is drawn dialogue-wise thus, 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery,' &c. If thou lookest to be saved by doing, keep the law perfectly.

[2.] For the particular commandments, he instanceth in those commandments for his trial which were more apt to convince him of his sin and of his imperfection: and here it is notable that they are all of the second table, 'Do not kill, do not commit adultery,' &c. And there is one clause, 'defraud not,' that is left out in Luke; and in Matthew instead thereof there is put this general clause, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' Mat. xix. 19.

Three questions then are necessary for explication—

(1.) Why Christ refers him to the commandments ?

(2.) Why the commandments of the second table are only mentioned ?

(3.) Why, seeing it is plain that the six commandments of the second table are alluded unto, 'defraud not' is put for the last commandment, 'Thou shalt not covet ?' for of the method wherein they are recited we need not move any doubt, for Christ beginneth with the negatives, and the affirmative precept is put last, as a thing not accurately to be stood upon.

Quest. 1. Why Christ refers him to the commandments ? The reason of the doubt is this, because the fallen creature can never be justified or saved by his own works : Rom. iii. 20, 'Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight ;' Titus iii. 5, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us ;' 2 Tim. i. 9, 'Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace ;' Eph. ii. 8, 9, 'For by grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast.' The scripture doth always run in this strain ; yea, Christ himself puts salvation upon another score, upon believing in him : John iii. 16, 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Why then doth Christ refer him to the commandments ? I answer—Christ speaketh not this as if any man could be saved and justified by the works of the law. It was far from our Saviour's meaning to foment such an error ; but the scope of his speech is to show that it is in vain to inquire for the way to heaven while men trust to their own righteousness ; and therefore good works and obedience to the law are proposed to convince him of his impotency, to humble him in the sense of his guilt, to drive him out of himself, and to draw him to seek salvation by a better covenant, or if not, to leave him without excuse. That this was Christ's aim, to show him his sin, and miserable condition, and disability to be justified by the law, will appear by these following considerations—

It was necessary this man should be treated in this way, for the many errors wherewith he was tainted required it ; as (1.) To draw him again to the service of God from those traditions and human observances in which the pharisees placed most of their religion and piety ; and therefore Christ mentions not 'the traditions of the elders,' but 'the commandments of God.' (2.) To draw him from the law ceremonial, which was to be abolished, to the law moral. He mentioneth not the ceremonial law, which the Jews strictly observed, but moral duties. (3.) To beat down his presumption, whereby he believed that the law was easy for him to accomplish. Such as seek justification and eternal life by works must be taught that to keep the whole law in all points without the least sin is the only way to heaven by works, which way to every man now polluted by sin is impossible. There was no better course to humble a pharisee than by referring him to his own covenant rightly understood, to let him see the perfection and spiritual sense of it, and so to bring him to a knowledge of sin, that he might learn to seek God's favour by the Mediator, who is the 'end of the law for

righteousness to every one that believeth,' Rom. x. 4. That is to say, the end of giving the law by Moses was that men might thereby be brought to the knowledge of their sins, and so be necessitated to fly for refuge to Christ and his righteousness, who hath perfectly fulfilled the law for us. If any man think that this consisted not with the simplicity of Christ's instruction, especially when such a serious question was proposed to him, 'What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' and that it may seem to countenance their error who sought righteousness by the law to refer such to the commandments: I answer—

1. Christ used the same method that God did in giving the law upon Mount Sinai. Why did God give it then but to break a stiff-necked people, trusting to their own strength, by this exact yoke of duty, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear? That, seeing their manifold guilt, in which all are inevitably involved by the violation of the law, they might be burdened and condemned in themselves, and so fly to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, as he was represented to them in the sacrifice and burnt-offering. That this was God's end in giving the law, see Rom. v. 20, 21, 'Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord;' and Gal. iii. 19, 'Wherefore then serveth the law? it was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.' Suitably here Christ having to do with a man that was puffed up with an opinion of his own righteousness and strength, as if he had already discharged the whole duty of the law, and was ready and able to do whatsoever should be further required of him in order to eternal life, to humble him, Christ referreth him to the commandments, and so layeth a groundwork of convincing him of base idolatry, in loving riches more than God and eternal life; so that his end was not to foster and increase his presumption, but by urging the law which he professed to stand to, to convince him of his own baseness, and the necessity of seeking another righteousness.

2. Practical conviction is best, and men never see their unworthiness so much as when they are held to their own covenant, and we are so far to condescend to the humours of men as to convince them and condemn them in their own way. As Festus told Paul, Acts xxv. 12, 'Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go.' As a presumptuous sick man, that is strongly conceited he is able to leave his bed and walk up and down, the best way to confute him is by trial. Or a phrenetic person, or a man that is distempered with melancholy fancies, wise physicians indulge the humour a little, that by dealing with them in their own way they may afterwards the better dispossess them of their vain conceits. If men will go to heaven by doing, let them know what doing is required: Gal. iv. 21, 'Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?' If men will betake themselves to stand to or fall by the sentence of the law or covenant of works, let them see how it will succeed with them.

3. It was a truth Christ spake, 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments;' but we must consider his intention. Though men's trusting in their own works is displeasing to God, yet good works are

not displeasing to him ; and therefore there can be no hurt in pressing men to these, yea, by the rewards propounded in the legal covenant. Therefore Christ might say, ' If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments ; ' the old legal proposal showing how valuable they are in their own nature, and the words being also capable of a gospel sense : Heb. xii. 14, ' Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord ; ' Eph. ii. 10, ' For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. '

Quest. 2. Why the commandments of the second table are only mentioned ? for since those duties which belong to the first table are more excellent, as concerning the worship of God, and they are more strict and inward, and therefore would seem to be fittest to bring the man to a sense of his condition, why doth Christ refer him to the second table ? I answer—

1. In these the pharisees conceived themselves to be most perfect, and yet these were a sufficient touchstone whereby to try and discover their unfruitfulness and their imperfection. Certainly if they be defective here, there is no standing by the law. If a man cannot go, surely he cannot run ; if he cannot spell, surely he cannot read ; if men be defective in the duties of the second table, certainly they are not able to keep the law.

2. These are most plain and easy to be understood, and the sins committed against them are most evident and apparent. The duties of the second table are of the lowest hemisphere, and wherein a man can do most if he can do anything ; these duties are more written in a man's heart than first table duties. Heathens were fools in worship, as the apostle represents them, Rom. i. 22, ' Professing themselves to be wise they became fools. ' Yet as to the duties of the second table, they were just, charitable, and temperate, and had a great command of their passions, though they were very sottish in their worship : for the benefit of human society God hath left second-table notions more clear upon man's heart.

3. In the externals of the first table the Jews seemed very zealous, but negligent they were of the second ; and herein they commonly fail who hypocritically make fair shows of devotion and outward respect to God in worship ; as Isa. i. 11, ' To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me, saith the Lord ? I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats ; ' when they neglected judgment and justice. So Isa. lxvi. 3, ' He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man ; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck ; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood ; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. ' So Micah vi. 7, 8, when they talked of ' rivers of oil, and thousands of rams, ' the prophet tells them, ' He hath showed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ? ' that they should make conscience of justice and equity in their dealings, and be merciful and charitable. Second-table duties are of greater value than outward ceremonies ; therefore, when Christ would convince such a man as this, he refers him to the second-table duties.

Quest. 3. Why *μη αποστερήσης*, 'Defraud not,' and 'deprive not,' is put for the last commandment, 'Thou shalt not covet?' Certainly that is intended, as is evident to any that shall consider Christ's answer; it fitly shows what kind of coveting is forbidden in the last commandment, namely, such covetings as tend to another's loss. It is a question that hath exercised some how to state the sin forbidden and the duty enjoined in the law.

1. The sin forbidden is coveting, by which is not meant the whole corrupt inclination of our nature, for that is not forbidden in any one commandment but in the whole law; nor all the first stirrings of that corruption neither, for a great part of them are opposite to religion, and they are forbidden in the first table; nor all those stirrings of corruption which tend to the loss and hurt of our neighbour, for when they proceed to a deliberate consent and purpose, they are forbidden in other commands, of not killing, not stealing, &c. But those first lustings by which the soul is urged to desire any good thing that is our neighbour's, though at first we have not a set purpose to get it by unlawful means, yet when we have a lustful desire of anything that may tend to our neighbour's loss, as Ahab had a lustful desire of Naboth's vineyard as a conveniency, though he promised to give him a better in the room of it, or to give him the worth of it in money; he would have it upon a valuable consideration, by sale or exchange, 1 Kings xxi. 2. So here, an inordinate desire to have some good thing out of our neighbour's hand, that is the sin forbidden by 'defraud not,' or 'deprive not,' when we would mend our own portion with the diminution of his.

2. The duty of the law is to rest contented or satisfied with our own portion, or the lot which God hath afforded us, so as not to desire to increase it, or to have anything to ourselves with the loss of another. It is notable that instead of what is here said, 'Defraud not,' it is, Mat. xix. 19, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' which, though it be a general that runs through the whole second table, yet it hath a special regard to the tenth commandment, and shows we are to desire the good of others as well as our own, and to think our neighbour as fit to enjoy anything that belongs to him as to think ourselves fit to enjoy that which is our own; to have a full complacency with our own, without a lustful wishing we had anything that is theirs. Not coveting their goods, or desiring any advantage by their loss, or lessening, is the sin forbidden.

Well, now, out of all we may conclude thus: The young man, as to the present posture and frame of his heart, was not fit to be taught faith in Christ, nor the doctrine of the gospel; being conceited of perfection by the works of the law, he was not fit to be sent to the gospel. In effect Christ saith to him thus: Examine thyself truly, whether thou hast or canst keep the law, for till that point be over, thou art not fit for other things. Go take the second table, the easier part of the law, art thou not defective there?

The point that may be observed from hence will be this—

Doct. That the best way to convince justiciaries or self-righteous men is by holding them to their own covenant, or the covenant of works. Or thus: The true way to prepare men for Christ is to cause them to see their misery and impotency by the law.

To evidence this I will show—(1.) What is the covenant of works ; (2.) I will prove that all men by nature are under this covenant ; (3.) This is that covenant which natural conscience sticks to ; (4.) This covenant, rightly understood, is the most ready way to convince a justiciary, or to prepare men for Christ.

First, What is the covenant of works? I answer—It is the covenant made with Adam in innocency, in which life was promised under the condition of perfect obedience to be performed by a man by his own natural strength.

The parties contracting in this covenant are, God on the one side, and man created in the perfection of nature on the other side, God and Adam with all his posterity ; and the terms of this covenant are perfect and unsinning obedience, and this perfect obedience to be performed by us by our own strength : Gal. iii. 12, ‘The law is not of faith, but the man that doeth them shall live in them ;’ that is, the law covenant only promiseth life to him that observeth what the law prescribes, and so hath perfect inherent righteousness of his own ; it offers life upon no easier terms than constant, universal, perfect obedience. Now the sanction and confirmation of this covenant is by a terrible curse explained by the apostle : Gal. iii. 10, ‘As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse ; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.’ The law pronounceth a curse upon every man who fulfils it not in every tittle and every jot of it, and who continues not so to do from the first minute of his life to the hour of his death, which fallen man can never do ; and therefore as long as he is under this covenant, he remains under God’s curse and wrath. If he omit anything that is required, or commit anything that is forbidden, so that though he should but once sin, he is under the curse.

Secondly, I shall prove that all men by nature are under this covenant till they be reconciled to God by Christ. This covenant concerns all Adam’s children until they have a new claim in the second Adam, for God contracted with Adam as a public person, representing all his posterity, and so it concerns not him only, but all his heirs. Take them in their infancy, they are under this covenant, therefore they are said ‘to be by nature children of wrath as well as others,’ Eph. ii. 3. All men are under the deserved curse of the law by reason of sin. Or take them in their grown estate : John iii. 18, ‘He that believeth not is condemned already, because he believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God ;’ that is, because he is not freed from the covenant of works and the curse of the law by the Son of God. Every unbeliever is condemned already by the sentence of the law, which they lie still under before they lay hold upon Christ, the only remedy for their deliverance. The sentence of the law stands in force till you get it repealed by Christ. And some men will find that this covenant is in force against them at the day of judgment, for then there will be proceedings against them according to it. All the world are judged according to one of these two covenants : James ii. 12, 13, ‘Some shall be judged according to the law of liberty, others shall have judgment without mercy.’ Impotency doth not free any of Adam’s sons from this covenant, because this impotency was contracted by our own sin,

and doth not make void God's right; as a creditor doth not lose his right by the debtor's inability to pay him. If a man bind himself and his heirs to pay such a sum of money, and he will vainly spend his patrimony, and so render himself unable to pay it, he and his heirs are still liable to a process as long as the debt remaineth unpaid or unremitted. We and all ours are bound to perfect obedience for the future, and to make satisfaction for sin past, which we, that are poor creatures, sold under sin, are never able to do. Therefore this covenant doth absolutely put us into such a state as that there is no remedy for us but by flying to Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, This covenant is that which natural conscience worketh on, and seemeth most so to do; so that when we urge men with this covenant, we do but beat them with their own weapons. When the covenant of works was made with Adam, all mankind were then in his loins; it was made with him in their name; and therefore men by nature do still retain a deep impression of this covenant, as appeareth in that as soon as conscience is awakened, it judgeth men according to this covenant; as Rom. i. 32, the apostle speaks of the heathens, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.' The benumbed consciences of heathens, when they came to themselves, they were afraid of judgment according to the tenor of this covenant; and the same is seen in the endeavour of a natural conscience to do something that may make a show of good works, and a tolerable plea by this covenant; as in that pharisee's plea, Luke xviii. 11, 12, 'I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.' Christ speaks it of those that trusted in their own righteousness; the pharisee brings a little trash, a few inconsiderable things, 'I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess;' and this is his righteousness. Again, that natural conscience works towards this covenant seems plain by the strange affectation of the righteousness of works which is in all men's hearts, and unwillingness to hear of any other: Rom. x. 3, 'They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.' A man would fain have a personal inherent righteousness in himself; he is loath to be beholden to any other; he would patch up any righteousness of his own, and is prone to trust in it; a proud creature will not submit. Nay, even the regenerate, God's own children, though they are well instructed in the righteousness of faith, and sufficiently see the impossibility of a righteousness of works, though they have been under brokenness of heart, yet they are ever lingering after this covenant, with a natural desire of it, and to rest in their own duties; and that was the reason of that expression of Luther, Every one of us hath a pope in his own belly; something that pleads there for the merit of works.

Fourthly, This is the most ready way to convince a justiciary, and to prepare men for Christ by a sight and sense of their own sin and misery and impotency by this covenant; and this for several reasons—

Reason 1. Because every man is apt to flatter himself with a spurious covenant of works of his own making, which is the main let and hindrance to keep him from Christ and salvation. There is a twofold

covenant of works—one genuine and true, and of God's own institution ; another apocryphal and feigned, a bastard covenant of works, and of man's invention ; namely, that which a creature unable to perform the duty of the law, or to get from under the curse thereof, frameth out of his own brain, as by doing something in order to our acceptation with God, though not doing all that is required ; and to make recompense for the defects in the weighty things by abounding in externals. There is a covenant man makes of himself, by a short exposition of the law, that he may have a large opinion of his own righteousness. It is not for the interest of their quiet and peace that the ell should be longer than the cloth, therefore, because they know they are not able to stand by the true genuine covenant of God's making, they make a covenant of their own, that so a blameless conformity to the outward letter of the law may make a recompense for their other defects, abounding in human inventions and observances of vain rites, as if this would make them acceptable with God. This is the great thing which keeps him off from submitting to the gospel way of faith and repentance, and humbling himself before the Lord.

Reason 2. It must needs be a powerful instrument to prepare men for Christ, because this covenant shuts up a sinner without any hope of relief, unless Christ and grace open the door to him. There are three places of scripture which speak fully to this purpose : Rom. iii. 19, ' That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God ; ' ὑπόδικος τῷ Θεῷ, liable to his process and wrath, nothing to say for themselves, no plea to make by the first covenant : Rom. xi. 32, speaking of the Jews, he saith, ' For God hath concluded them all in unbelief. ' By this covenant they are as it were shut up in prison, with no way to escape unless grace and mercy open the door. So Gal. iii. 22, ' The scripture ' (that is, the law covenant) hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. ' This covenant accusing, convincing, and condemning all mankind for sin, it doth as it were shut them up under the fearful curse, as a malefactor is shut up in prison ; so that a man is forced to lay aside all confidence of any righteousness in himself, and fly for refuge to the promises ; and to the righteousness of Christ. Let us see how this covenant shuts men up, and inevitably concludes them lost and undone. If this could be powerfully and thoroughly done, the work of conversion would not be at such a stand. Though all men be in such a cursed condition, yet it is a matter of no small difficulty to convince men of it, or to affect their hearts sensibly with it. Therefore if there were any way to shut them up without all hope, where there is not the least wicket or door open for escape from deserved wrath, then the work would powerfully go on, and they would be necessitated to fly to Christ. Let us see then how this law shuts men up, because the duty of it is impossible, and the penalty intolerable.

1. The duty is impossible. So full and exact is that righteousness that is required by the law covenant in order to life, that it is impossible for the fallen creature ever to perform it : Rom. viii. 3, ' What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh. ' The law promiseth no good to sinners, but only to the innocent ; it reveals no way of taking away sin past, but only of punishing sin, no way for

man once a sinner ever to recover himself; therefore it is become weak, that is, impossible, through our flesh. The weakness of the flesh will not permit it to be fulfilled in that exactness which is required of us. If it could be exactly fulfilled for the future, yet there would be no hopes of life, because of sin past; therefore, to hope our good meanings, good intentions, and endeavours should help us, is to no purpose. A man must, from the first moment of life to the last minute thereof, be perfectly exact with God. Now man, that could not keep himself in innocency, it cannot be thought that he can recover himself when lost.

2. The penalty is intolerable: Gal. iii. 10, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' The law is a mouth that speaketh terrible things, it curseth a man in his person, comforts, basket, store, in all things that he hath; all the miseries of this life are included in this curse: Lam. iii. 39, 'Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?' Death itself is part of it; it is 'the wages of sin,' Rom. vi. 23, and the pains of hell: Mark xxv. 41, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.' When the law shall take a sinner by the throat, and say, Pay me what thou owest, alas! what can a poor creature do to avoid the curse or overcome it? Every one of us, in thought, word, and deed, have broken the law of God; now wherewith shall we appease his wrath? We have nothing to give God, or that he will accept at our hands; we cannot hide or withdraw ourselves from the presence of the Lord, for we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. We cannot abide this curse, for who can dwell with devouring burnings? Oh! what shall we do then to escape this horrible curse? There is no way but by flying from the sentence of the law to the throne of grace for mercy and pardon. There is no other hope left us, for they that do not betake themselves to the covenant of grace must stand or fall by the sentence of the law; so that this is the most powerful engine to awaken men's consciences, and prepare them for Christ. Therefore for good reason Christ sends this confident young man to the law, 'Thou knowest the commandments.'

Reason 3. There is none passeth into the new covenant till he be driven by the old, and therefore certainly this is the way to prepare a man for Christ, to have some sense and feeling of it in our own heart, and we see we are cursed and undone creatures, and so lie at God's feet with brokenness of heart: Rom. viii. 15, 'Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' There is a spirit that goes along with every covenant; the spirit of bondage begets fear in all that are under the first covenant, and the spirit of adoption begets hope in all that are under the second covenant: Gal. ii. 19, 'I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.' Before we can lay hold of the second covenant, we must be dead to the law. Men are slight and careless until the curse of the law puts them so hard to it, that they are made to despair of getting heaven and salvation by obedience to it. Oh! then, they think of a new life and a new claim. The curse of the law follows them close, makes them utterly despair in themselves; then they are fit to live unto God. The apostle tells us

this is the great use for which the law now serveth: Rom. v. 20, 'The law entered, that the offence might abound;' Gal. iii. 19, 'Wherefore then serveth the law? it was added because of transgression;' that is, to convince sinners of their lost estate, that men might be sensible of their sins, and so forcibly constrained to make after another righteousness. None pass from one covenant to another but they have a taste of the first.

Use 1. To inform us how the two covenants agree, and are subservient to one another; for these two are not contrary, being both truths revealed by God; they have a mutual respect. The law serveth to make sin known: Rom. iii. 20, 'For by the law is the knowledge of sin;' and the gospel holdeth forth the remedy of sin: John i. 29, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' The law points out our need of Christ, 'who is the end of the law for righteousness,' Rom. x. 4. The gospel maketh an offer of Christ, that in him we may have what we could not attain by the law: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'For of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' The law discovers those duties wherein a man made righteous ought to walk and testify his thankfulness: Eph. iv. 1, 2, 'I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness,' &c. The gospel furnisheth him with spiritual strength to walk in those duties which the law prescribeth: 2 Cor. iii. 6, 'The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.' *Lex jubet gratia juvat*—The law commands, but grace helps us. Thus they fairly agree, and are mutually useful.

Use 2. To awaken our consciences to consider upon what terms we stand with God, and by what covenant we can plead with him, by the covenant of works, or by the covenant of grace. If we be yet under the covenant of works, and have not got the sentence of the law repealed, O miserable creatures! there is no hope: Ps. cxxx. 3, 4, 'If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? but there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' If God should deal with us in a way of strict justice, according to the tenor of the law and the covenant of works, no man can escape condemnation and the curse. There is another covenant, but how will you decline judgment according to the first covenant?

1. There is no hope of your pleading another covenant till you own the first covenant to be just, and with brokenness of heart you look upon yourselves as shut up under the curse, and you acknowledge yourselves lost and undone sinners. The great thing that this young man wanted was brokenness of heart, and therefore Christ would have him see himself in the law. The heirs of promise are described to be those 'that have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them,' Heb. vi. 18. It is an allusion to those that fled for their life. If one had killed a man by chance, and not out of malice prepense, there was a city of refuge appointed; and if he fled there before the avenger of blood, the next of kin, seized upon him, the man was safe. None are brought in to Christ, but they come as those that have the avenger of blood following them: they are driven, and must away from the first covenant by a deep sense of their misery. Men that are heart-

whole, and have only doctrinal notions about the two covenants, without feeling the force of either, and being driven out of themselves to lie at God's feet for mercy, they as yet remain under the old covenant, and need be prepared by this breaking work. Indeed, degrees are different, but all feel some trouble, some great horror and despair, but others with anxiousness and solicitude; the curse is at their heels, therefore they desire to be found in Christ. Now have you felt anything of the spirit of bondage? The deepness of the wound is not to be looked after, but the soundness of the cure; but yet some wound there will be. And therefore, till there be some grief, and shame, and sorrow, and bitter remorse because of sin, a smiting upon the thigh because of the indignation of the Lord, and humbling ourselves before God, we are not fit for mercy. We are not heirs of the promise if we do not hasten to the hope set before us.

2. They that do as yet trust to their good meanings and endeavours, and seek salvation by their own doing, must yield perfect obedience to the law of God, or else they cannot obtain eternal life; we make this to be our covenant, by sticking to any one work of ours: Gal. v. 2, 3, 'Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing; for I testify again to every one that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.' If another man had spoken this, possibly you would have judged him rash and uncircumspect; but 'I Paul say unto you;' I that have an apostolical authority, I that know the mind of Christ, I testify this again and again, that observing any one ceremony, as part of a man's righteousness necessary to salvation, cuts off the observer from all benefit by Christ; he is a debtor to the duty of the whole law, he obligeth himself to perfect obedience, without which the law cannot justify any; he saith it again and again, that man might take heed. This trust in his own righteousness in effect is a renouncing the gospel covenant. Christ must be our whole righteousness, and a complete Saviour, or not at all. If we rely upon anything besides him, or jointly with him as a meritorious cause of salvation, we lose all hope and comfort by Christ. This is the great concernment of the soul, therefore to be inculcated with such seriousness and earnestness.

3. By living in any known, allowed, reigning sin, shows we have no claim to the second covenant. Saith David, Ps. xix. 13, 'Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; so shall I be upright, and shall be innocent from the great transgression.' Our qualification under the second covenant is not a soul exactly perfect, but a soul sincere. Now, if any sin hath dominion over us, our sincerity is gone: Rom. vi. 14, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.' There were no cogency in the argument if men under grace could live under the dominion of any one sin; they are shut up by the curse. We must look to Christ, and give up ourselves to him. This man in the text had the love of the world reigning in his heart, and Christ turns him away, and afterwards it is said, 'He went away sad.'

Use 3. To instruct us, if we would be prepared for Christ, what we must do; we must study the law, the purity of it, and the binding force it hath on all under it.

1. We must be able to understand it. Christ saith to the young man, 'Thou knowest the commandments;' he appealeth to him as to one that had some knowledge of the law. Those that live in the church should not be ignorant of the commandments or law of God, but well acquainted with them. God complaineth, Hosea viii. 12, 'I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.' To be strangers to the word of God, little conversant in it, and to make little use of it, is a great affront done to God. We should acquaint ourselves not with the letter only, as little children learn it by rote, but with the sense and purpose of it.

2. Meditate often thereupon: Ps. i. 2, 'His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.' Deep and ponderous thoughts have most efficacy; without a study of the law men are without the law while they have it: Rom. vii. 9, 'I was alive without the law once.' Who more zealous for the law than Paul? Gal. i. 14, 'I profited in the Jew's religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers;' but while he did not ponder of it, he was without the law.

3. Judge yourselves by it. One great use for which the moral law serveth is to bring men to a sight and sense of their sins and imperfections, and humble them before God: Rom. vii. 7, 'I had not known sin but by the law, for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet;' and to undeceive them of conceits of their own goodness and righteousness. Look into thy bill, what owest thou?

4. Beg the light of the Spirit to show thee thy sin and misery: Rom. vii. 9, 'When the commandments came;' in the light and evidence of the Holy Spirit, 'sin revived and I died.' Men that have the letter of the law may be without the light and power of it. Without the Spirit we guess confusedly concerning things, as the man that saw men like trees walking, and have but general, cursory, confused thoughts.

SERMON IV.

And he answered, and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.—MARK X. 20.

You have heard of a necessary question propounded by a noble young man to Christ, 'What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' We have spoken to Christ's answer. Now in this verse we have the young man's reply, 'All these have I observed from my youth;' wherein there is expressed, or pretended at least—

1. An universality of respect to the will of God, 'All these have I observed.'

2. An early beginning to do so, 'From my youth.' He was still a