Concerning this Psalm in general, I must not say much: Yet this, That if St. Austin had it presented to him sleeping, in the likeness of the Tree of Life, in the midst of the Paradise (as some say he had) I think it was a Vision, and no Dream: And if another compare it set amongst the Psalms to the Sun in the midst of the rest of the Planets, in some respect the Comparison will suit well. Or if a third tell us that it contains in it all the Precepts of Faith and Obedience, I think he said true. Quanto aperior, tanto profundior; it was Austin's Judgment of it; and if we will believe him that said it, if we should spend our whole lives in studying it (though we should not lose our labours, yet) we should not fully understand it, for it (as our Text faith the rest of God's Word is) is exceeding broad. If nothing else, yet the Author's Alphabetical disposing of it telleth us, there is something in it more than ordinary, as being worth his more artificial Penning, and our more diligent Endeavour to have it as ready in our Memory, as the very Letters of our Alphabet. The Author is either altogether unknown, or at least as Calvin thinks, uncertain. Yet me-thinks, their Opinion is very probable, who think, that it suits well with the strain of the sweet Singer of Israel, as being one of the sweetest Songs of Zion. But upon what occasion it was framed, and with what coherence of parts Interpreters generally say not, nor lift I to conjecture. Only this we may observe for both, that as his chief aim through the whole is to magnifie God's Word and Law (which therefore he maketh honourable mention of under different Titles in every Verse save one, as some observe, though I think four more may be excepted). And for Coherence, what-ever reference one Ogdoad hath to another, that in every one of them he speaks to some one thing
thing in general; which is particularly set out in the several Verses of it: A taste of both which we may have in this, out of which the Text is taken: In which the Author, whosoever he was, Tanquam tederet eum mutabilitatis bominum, (as he speaks) as it were now wearied with the Mutability of outward Occurrences, casts the Anchor of his Soul in the unchangeable Truth, and Word of God; which he found settled in Heaven, ver. 1. and in Earth, ver. 2. in all things, ver. 3. in his own Person and Occasions, (in the four following) and therefore with an heavenly Epiphanem he makes the first and last Verse sound both the same Note. There he begins, For ever, O Lord, thy Word is settled in Heaven: And he here ends with the same, I have seen an end of all Perfections; but thy Commandment is exceeding broad.

In which words the large Extent, and eternal Duration of God's Word is set out, by comparing it with the narrow sanctness and short continuance of all other Contentments. He had seen an end of all such Perfections: But none of God's Word, Thy Commandment is exceeding broad.

For the first words, (in which though contrary to my first purpose) my present Discourse must be bounded) this end of Perfection, some make Martyrdom; many of the Latine Fathers, Christ. The Greek, whom our later Divines in this usually follow, by this all Perfection understand either all this inferior and visible World, containing in it the divers Degrees and Perfections of things, and therefore called all Perfection: Or Metonymically by Perfection is meant, whatever particular thing either for Nature or Quality is most perfect and consummate, the sight of all which Satan thought would have dazzled our Saviour's, and therefore we might have thought would have easily blinded David's eyes: But by his wise Observation, and piercing Eye of Faith, he faith, he hath seen: If you ask, what? The words of the Text answer, but having a double Emphasis: 1. Not any meaner or ordinary Contentments, but the top and choice of all Perfections. And, 2. Not one of them, or some, or few, but all's and yet through them all something besides: He had seen an end of all Perfection. As though whatsoever he could see, he could see an end of it; and that end, as I take it, double; of length, of breadth; of length and continuance, that whereas God's Word is for ever settled in Heaven, ver. 1. He sees an end, a Period of those lower and fading Perfections,
sections; and of breadth and extent (as we may gather from the Opposition in the end of the Verse) they are too scant and narrow to cover all our Nakedness and Defects; but God's Word as for continuance, can reach to all Times, so for breadth and extent to all Persons and Wants. But thy Commandment is exceeding broad.

The Truth then, which from these first words I am now to handle, in full sense is plainly thus much:

That not any, not all the best of these things below will last, or can help always.

The first Vanity is, That they last not. I have seen an end of all Perfection, faith David. And sure, what he by the Spirit faith he saw, we may believe is true; for he was a Prophet of God, and they were called Seers; and whatever ours do in other Matters, certainly their Eye-light in such things as these never failed them. This our Seer therefore, having as it were got to the Top of some high Mountain (as Augustine expresseth it) from thence, as our Saviour, Mat. 4. 8. had a view of all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory, the Perfection of them. He saw all this, but withal something beside; and therefore as that Watchman, Isa. 21. 11, 12. being asked what he saw, answered, Ayrenicit mane, sed eiam non venit, (as Junius readeth it): There had been a lightsome Morning, but ended in a darksome Night. So our Watchman here being asked what he saw, answers, he had seen much, even all Perfection, but withal an end of all: I have seen an end of all Perfection, but thy Commandment is exceeding broad. Just the same with a part of the Vision of another of God's Seers, Isa. 40. 6, 8. The Voice said cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass; and all the goodness thereof as the Flower of the Field. The Grass is thereon, and the Flower faileth; But the Word of our God abideth for ever. In which words, I have a sufficient Draught of what I need speak in this particular. For hence we see, 1. That all things are but as Grass. 2. That all the Glory and Perfection of them, but as the Flower of Grass, and therefore both subject to decay; either to wither of themselves, or to be cut down, or pluckt up by others.

First, For all things in general, I only say this, that the round World is but like a round Ball wrapt up of broken Threads, amongst which there may be some ends of Gold and Silver: So that whilst Men oftentimes (as they think) are spinning a
fair Thread, either it comes to the end, or (as יָד (the word in the Text) comes of יָד, which signifies to cut off,) the Hand of God cuts either it or us off; as Hezekiah complains, 

Ifa 38. 10, 12. and so we are left in the Labyrinth, contrary to our former Expectation, and without hope of future recovery. All things in the Earth, as the Earth it self, are founded on nothing.

Secondly, But the Text calls me to view rather the Perfection of things, which is like the Flower of the Grass, and hath this above it, that it is more beautiful, so more subject to speedy Alteration: For how often have we seen Wisdom, and Strength, and Beauty, and Riches, and the like Perfections, gone before the Man that had them? How often have we seen Wisdom decayed, and the old Man left indeed, but left childishly doting? Riches flown away, as Solomon speaketh, but leaving a Beggar behind them? Strength and Beauty gone too, but so as leaving Weakness and Deformity in their room? So that if you should distil the Quintessence and Perfection of all things here, as it would be contained in a narrow room, so a short time will put a period to it's continuance. His Substance shall not continue, neither shall be prolong the Perfection thereof upon the Earth, saith Eliaphaz, Job 15. 29. The word בְּנֵי there, and only there used in Scripture, is by the Hebrew Writers, as by us generally, expounded Perfection: But the Septuagint there express it by σκιά, a Shadow: It may be thereby to set forth what kind of Perfections arise from outward things. We and they both, like Shadows, may shew greater than we are, and yet shadows still, that last not. And the word בְּנֵי used in the Text, and no where else, seemeth also to imitate some such thing as coming from that signifies Desicere, as well as Perficere. Such defects, and such spending and decaying Felicities are all such, as he that sees and finds the most, can find in outward Contentments. Or if a third word בְּנֵי which is used in this kind, seem in its signification to promise longer Continuance; yet Eliaphaz cuts it short too, Job 4. ult. Dost not the excellency (which is the word is) Dost not the excellency, which is in them, go away? And truly often so, as never to return more. But not to trouble you with Grammatical Speculations; in a word, if you would take the full length and breadth of all these Perfections, use no better Instrument than that of David, Psal. 39. יָד, Every Man is all vanity; and that in his
his best, or most settled estate, as the word signifieth. So that when he is יִשָּׁב so settled as with David, he thinks he shall never be removed; even oftentimes then he falls down head-long. For how often after many dangers past at sea doth a ship now fairly fraughted sink in havens mouth? How often have you seen Men so long in cutting out their fortune, that at length they mar all, winding up themselves to the highest peg, and then crack? And labouring to frame I know not what Castles in the air, and when the whole fabric is well nigh reared up, and they on the top of it, then one pin slips, or one pillar, on which it stands, is suddenly taken away, and so all prove Castle-come-downs. Thus finis consummationis, and Interitus, often take one another by the heel; or at the best, it is with outward estates as it is with our high-ways in summer-time, they are then so fair and firm, that we think it well nigh impossible, that ever they should prove so foul and deep, as in winter we find them. It's so in our summer-weather of prosperity. Our perfection so high (we think) as above all winter-showres and tempests: the kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed, that the adversary should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem, Lamen. 4. 12. They would not believe it, nor (which was worst) would she. She remembered not her latter end. But mark what follows: Therefore she came down wonderfully, Lamen. 1. 9. Such and so brittle are the best of these lower perfection, like glasses shine bright, but even then are broken; like flashes, give some light for the time, but are soon out; or like so many bubbles that are higher indeed, than the rest of the water; and some remain a shorter, and some a longer time: But yet it's not long before they all vanish. For I have seen, faith David, the end of all perfection.

But this universal (All) seems to require an induction, to prove it by particulars. In which, that I may not fetch too large a compass, I follow only that ordinary division of perfection, of mind, of body, of outward estate, and but glance at some of the chief, without troubling you with a full view of any.

Now for the perfections of the mind, let them (in gross) be understanding, and wisdom: Which, though I confess, have the start of all that follow, as being seated in an everlasting subject; yet, we see that wise men die as well as fools, Psal. 49. 10; and sometimes their wisdom before them. David had seen
Abiophel's Wisdom ending in Foolishness. And we have read of Nebuchadnezzar's Understanding changed into Brutishness. God can make the Judges fools, Job 12. 17. Difuse can make the most expert forgetful. The Plague at Athens, and many Diseases since could deprive the Wit of Understanding and Memory at once. And if all fail, yet Old-age (as they tain of Saturn) most commonly devours that Wisdom, which it begers: Or rather, like an Unthrift, in a short time spends what his Predecessors were a long time in getting. So that the Ancients that teach Wisdom, as Elisha speaks, Job 32. 7. sometimes prove childish: Old Men often dote before they die, and though their Soul be ready to take its flight, yet the Strength of Understanding takes leave first, and prevents it. In a word, if it be no more than the Wisdom of the World, or of the Princes of the World, it (as the Apostle, 1 Cor. 2. 6. telleth us they do) will come to nought, and so you see an end of that Perfection.

And if it fare so with the Soul, we cannot think that the Perfection of the Body, which comes so short of it in worth, can exceed it in continuance; for it's but an House of Clay; and therefore all the Paint and Varnish it can have must decay either with it, or before it. See it in the particulars, which especially are three, Health, Strength, and Beauty.

For Health, I need say no more, than what St. Augustine said before me, Quam est ista salus Corporis, quae morte premitur, que agitundine debilitatur, fivola, mortalis, fluxa? In a word, let him that never hath been sick, and is sure never shall be, say that Health will last always. But our Experience teacheth us, that the Physician who often restores our Health, cannot always maintain his own; that there is such contrariety of Humours, such well-nigh Infitness of imbred Diseases, so many outward occasions of Distemper, that few or none in our well days are perfectly free: However, Old-age comes limiting on apace, which will bring more Diseases, than we can beforehand provide Remedies. Or it may be before that, as it was observed, that grievous Plague at Athens followed upon a most healthful fore-going year; so our most healthful years may be overtaken with untimely Deaths. And thus one dieth (faith Job) in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet, Chap. 21. 23. And so an end of that Perfection. And when Health is gone, we cannot think that Strength will stay behind; for they always lay and go together. The same Disease, that hinders the
one, weakens the other. And so the lusty young Man often comes to lay with the Psalmist, Psal. 102. 23. He hath weakened my strength in the way. But if not so, be sure it will begin to faint in the end of the Journey. If Plutarch's Miracle were true, that one Xenophilus lived one hundred and five years without any Disease, yet I cannot believe that he was another Moses, that his natural force was not abated; for in ordinary course that part of Solomon's description of Old-age is true, Eccles. 12. 3. The time will come, when the strong Man shall bow: When old Milo may look on his withered Arms, and weep and say, ali quidem mortui jam sunt.

Thus the strong Mountains fall and come to nought, Job. 14. 18, &c. Huzzab, (or that which is most established) is led away Captive, Nahum. 2. 7. And (to add no more) in the third Chapter of the same Prophecy, at the ninth Verse, Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite, אשור יתניא (that is) and there was no end: The same word almost both there and here, so that you might begin to think of a Contradiction, but if we shall read on, we shall find none; and therefore it's added, for all her infinite strength, she was carried away; She went into Captivity, ver. 10. And there we see an end of that Perfection.

And if these more substantial Perfections so soon vanish, we may well think, the least Breath will blow off all thePaint of Beauty, which so many pride themselves in; and therefore if an, shall stand in it, (as he did, Ezek. 16. 15.) they shall certainly find that true, Prov. 31. 30. Favour is a lie, and Beauty is vain: Any sickness can spoil it for the time, and some for altogether. Or if it miss them, be sure it will consume in the Grave, Psal. 49. 14. Thou changest his Countenance, and sendest him away, faith Job, Chap. 14. v. 20. And David had seen his ruddy Complexion and beautiful Countenance altered, and so an end of that Perfection. A poor one, that's only in the outward Skin, which if it's off, leaves a deformed Anatomy.

Life is yet behind, a Perfection arising from Body and Soul united; but yet this Shadow (1 Chron. 29. 15.) soon gone, this Past; this Ship, Job 9. 25, 26. soon past by: This Flower, Job 14. 2. soon withered; this Vapour, James 4. 14. soon vanished: This Swoak, Psal. 102. 3. soon blown away; of it self it would be gone; and therefore we have those Phrases of God's keeping our soul in Life, Psal. 66. 9. And withholding it from Death, Psal. 78. 50. But if we consider all that continually either under-
dermine or assault it, the liveliest Man in his best Health may say with David, 1 Sam. 20. 3. There is but a step between me and death. Or if he live longer, and it may be longer than he hath comfort, yet Meshulah, that went the fairest of any for Eternity, after he had lived 969 years, yet he died, Gen. 5. 27. And so, as the Lord speaks, Ezek. 24. 16. with a stroke, even with this one stroke God takes away both Life and all besides, and so with it an end of all Perfections.

So that I need not now speak any thing of that third kind of Perfections without us, which, as they are of less Worth, so also of less Continuance. If Riches be the Perfection thou aimest at, let me tell thee, that as it is but low, so it is not lasting; for the Gospel tells us, that The rich Man died, and was buried. And, Wilt thou cause thine eyes to flow upon that which is not? faith Solomon, Prov. 23. 5. A strange kind of Speech we would think, that use to call our Riches our Goods and Substance. He thinks them to be neither, but calls them plain Non-entia; or if they have any being, yet so uncertain, that he would not have us fly so eagerly upon them in our desires, as the Eagle upon the Prey, (in the beginning of the Verse) which use to make themselves Wings, and fly away as the Eagle towards Heaven; as he shews in the end of it. It's not good therefore to have our Treasure in a Jewel, hanged about such an Eagle's neck, which may soon fly away, it may be never to return again. Fly away as the Eagle towards Heaven, and that's most swiftly: Witnsest that one Day, that saw Job both on the Throne, and on the Dung-hill; for God may blow, the Moth may fret, the Ruit may canker, the Thief may break through, so that a rich Man liest down, but either through Malice of some, or Carelessness of others, when he opens his eyes, he is not, namely what he was. Or, there is nothing, as some read that place, Job 27. 19. Thus the Golden City ceaseth, Isa. 14. 4. and though in one sense, there be no end of thy Riches, as it is Isa. 2. 7. Yet assuredly either they will vanish, or, as St. James faith, Thou wilt vanish in them. Only take heed, that the end of them bring not an end to thy Comfort. Take heed of Simon Magus his Doom, Thy Money perish with thee, both thou and it together. But it may be thou wilt say, that Honour and Promotion will lift thee up, as upon Eagles wings, above all such Disasters. And I would believe thee, if I were not bound to believe God rather, who hath said it in his Word, that Man being in Honour abideth not.
Psal. 49. 12. Or if the Prophet Daniel had not seen such Wings as these pluck, Dan. 7. 4. and the Prophet Hosea had not seen them flying away. As for Ephraim, their Glory shall fly away as a Bird, Chap. 9. 11. If I had not heard that Voice from Heaven to Nebuchadnezzar, Thy Kingdom is departed from thee: If I had not seen an Hand-writing before Belshazzar on the Wall, Menab. 1 &c God hath numbered thy Kingdom, and finished it. Thus the Royal City is taken, 2 Sam. 12. 26. Oftentimes those that have been in highest places, after a while have been cast aside, as a Vessel, in which there is no pleasure: Yea, even Prince breath goeth forth, he returns to the Earth, and then all his thoughts perish, i. e. 146. 4. The word is, and according to the signification of the Verb from whence it comes, seems to signify all those goodly fine Thoughts, that great Men please themselves in. Now all these perish, and often their Glory with them. It shall not descend after him, saith the Psalmist. Only this you may find on his Grave-stone, (and there the poor Man may tread on him, on whom before he durst not look) This is Pharaoh, and all his multitude, Ezek. 31. 18. Which if you would but take up, and look into the Graves and Tombs of those Chief ones of the Earth, (as the Prophet calls them) when nothing else is left, their very Bones would speak and say, We have been something, yea, all things, (as dying Servus said of himself,) but now are nothing: And so you have an end-like wise of that Perfection.

What should I now speak further of multitude of Friends, whose Friendship usually ends with our Wealth, and themselves often before? Where ever we come, either a Widdow of Tekah lamenting, that her Husband is dead; or a David-bewailing the untimely death of a faithful Jonathan, or a beloved Absalom; or a Centurion seeking for the Health of a Servant: that is dear to him; but now ready to die, do all cry aloud, that there is an end of that Perfection.

If it be delicate Fare thou affeet, thou must know that it could not keep Dives from Hell. Absuerus made a Feast, that lasted an hundred and fourscore days, Estb. 13. 4. yet at last those many days were expired, ver. 5.

If costly Apparel, know that as thou camest in, so thou must go out of the World naked. Or if thy Friends will vainly spend as much on thy Carcase, when thou art dead, as thou dost on it now when thou art alive, yet be sure (as Jupiter in Plato said he would have it) thou shalt be Judged naked.
To add no more. If they be goodly Buildings in which thou settest thy Self and thy Perfection, yet (as Luke 21. 5, 6.) the left Ruines of such vast Edifices do plainly witness, that, if there were no Lightning to consume, nor Wind to overturn, nor Cannon to beat down, yet Time would undermine the strongest. I will smite the Winter-House, and the Summer-House, and the Houses of Ivory shall perish, and the great Houses (shall have an end, saith the Lord, Amos 3. 15. And to an end of that Perfection.

Thus we have seen some of this All; which (that I may return to my first Draught) are (we see) but as Grass, or the Flower of the Field; and, as they have a double end, which I must now briefly point at, either wither of themselves, or are pluck'd up or cut down by others.

First, I say, Of themselves they will wither; compared to Summer-Fruits, Amos 8. 2. which are pleasant, but last not, represented by Wheels in Ezekiel's Vision, and therefore ever turning, and by the Moon, Rev. 12. 1. and therefore often decaying. All that I would say in this particular, we have sum'm'd up, 1 John 2. 17. And the World passeth away, and the Lust thereof. The whole World, that is now grown old, shall shortly have an end, (which is the end, as some think, in the Text, which David by Faith foresaw) and the Lust thereof, whether you take it passively with Calvin, Concupiscence for Quicquid concupiscitur, for that which is most desirable, and so the same with Perfection in the Text: Or, actively with others for our Desire and Affection after it; though the World should continue, yet both it's Desirableness, and our Desire of it, will pass away. This Flower of the Field often loseth its sweet Smell before its Beauty. The best of the former Perfections, often cease to please and content, before they cease to be; and that either from a Satiety, which they bring, and so often the young Man is weary of his Lust, and partly from a Weakness and Indisposition in us; and so the old Man faith, (Eccles 12. 1.) I have no pleasure in them. And so we see, if left to themselves, there will be this way an end of all Perfection.

Secondly, But how often (in the second place) is this Flower pluckt in the Bud, before it be fully blown? And the Grass cut down, before it come to it's full height? How often are these outward Contentments taken away, before either they, or our desire, come to the Perfection? For before the Harvest, when the...
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Bud is perfect, and the sour Grape is ripening in the Flower, he shall cut off the Sprigs with pruning-books, and take away the Branches, Isa. 18. 5. Yea, How often, when these Perfections and our Desires have grown up together, and are now married, they affording, and we receiving most Contentment, are they violently pluckt asunder? Thus, Isa. 33. 9. Lebanon is ashamed and cut down, and Sharon is like a Wilderness, and Bashan and Carmel shake off their Fruits. When Babel is most flately, and Nebuchadnezzar admiring, I know not whether it, or himself more, and saying, Is not this great Babel? &c. Even while the word was in his Mouth, there fell a Voice from Heaven, saying, O King Nebuchadnezzar, To thee, even to thee it's spoken; the Kingdom is now departed from thee. Thus the Psalmist saw the Wicked flourishing: And that you may think is not much, because Autumn might be at hand, and then such flourishing Trees left bare and naked; but it's added as a green Bay tree. And that seemeth to promise Continuance, against which the Winter frosts do not usually prevail. He saw it, but it was but once, for he looked again and sought it, but it could not be found, Psal. 37. 35, 36. And all that he then saw, was this in the Text, An end of all Perfection.

And thus, in both these respects, we see plainly, that all the fore-named and the like Perfections are indeed but like Puddles or Shallow Waters, in which you may, as you think, see the Sun and Moon, and conceive them as deep as the Heaven is high, which if you shall try, you shall find far otherwise: And that, as a Shower made them, so the next Sun-shine will dry them up. These outward Contentments make a show of having more Depth and Solidity, than upon trial we shall find in them. They are but Puddles for Swine to wallow in, impure, unconstant; so that what was said of Elijah's, 1 Kings 17. 7. After a while the Brook dried up, may be said of all these broken Cisterns, and deceitful Brookes, as Job called his Friends, At the end of a few days (as the phrase there is). We all that are present here, all that are any where alive, shall be laid low; and at the end of some few years, there will come a last end of all, (take it as large as you will) an universal end of all Perfection. And so we have done with the first Vanity; the end of Length and Continuance, they will not last always.

Secondly, The other end, which David saw, is of Breadth and Extent. Whereas God's Word is exceeding broad, (that is)
reaching to all Persons, and all their Occasions and Wants; these lower Perfections are but narrow and scant, and therefore (as I said) cannot help always: And that will appear in these two Cases.

First, In the want of any one of them. For though (as I shall shew afterward) all together cannot perfectly cover us, yet the Want of any one of them will leave that part of a Man bare (as they feign of Achilles his Heel) in which a Man may be wounded, and that mortally, though it be but between the joints of Abab's Harness; who though he had a Kingdom, if he have not Nebob's Vineyard, is heavy, and discontented. And Haman, though he can make a Business of it to send for, and tell his Wife and Friends (I doubt not like a jolly Man) of the Glory of his Riches, and the Multitude of his Children, and all the things whereby in the King bath promoted him, well-nigh as large as his all Perfection in the Text; yet, All this doth not avail him, as long as Mordecai sits in the King's Gate, and will not rise up to him, Esth. 5. 11, 13. So, if a Man have Riches, but with Disgrace, he is but like a Fool in a Velvet coat: Or if both without Health, but like a gouty Leg upon a Velvet Cushion. If he have not all, he hath not enough; and to have all, is more than ever any could yet attain to. One of the Graces ever use to look from us. And therefore, as Ezekiel, Chap. 15. speaks in a like case: Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: How much less when the Fire bath devoured it, or any part of it? So let me here; If all Perfections taken together will not cover all, much less will they be able, when any one or more of them are wanting.

2. But suppose any Man so happy, that he thinks he can say with the Church of Laodicea, I am Rich, and increased in Goods, and have need of nothing. Suppose a Man should have such Skill, as to make up a pauch Garment of all these outward Perfections; a goodly Suit, I confess, it would seem, and be as highly esteem'd by most, as those party-coloured Coats were in former time: Though, I think, none ever yet wore it; yet suppose, I say, that any should, yet I must say with the Prophet, Isa. 28. 20. That this Covering is narrower, than that a Man can wrap himself in it. His Soul is larger than all this can reach to. There is an inward Man, which all this while they see not; that is yet all naked and bare. There is a Conscience, which, it may be, they now feel not, but which one day they will feel, and find fearfully wound-
wounded: And to a Man in such a case, these outward Coverings will be but like a silken Suit to a Body, that hath all the Bones out of joynt. There will one day come an Hour of Death, when all our Riches cannot purchase either Delivery, or Reprieve; and at last there will be a day of Arraignment and Judgment, which our greatest state now, cannot then exempt from. At such times all these Perfections oftentimes are as so many Daggers at our Hearts. Either they, or our bad use of them, wound then deep and deadly. Then Abolom's Hair is his Halter, and Sampson's Strength his Ruine. Then Men's former Glory their Shame, and their Riches like a Horse to a Traveller, which may help in the way; but they now find troublesome and chargeable at the Journey's end. Thrice happy then the mightest Potentate, if he had but Authority then left him, as to command his Conscience silence: And happy then the covetous Wretch, whose only Perfection here is to be covered and buried in Gold and Silver; if all the Shillings and Pounds, which he had got by Usury and Extortion, laid all then together could but cover that one sin, or buy but One drop of Water to cool his Tongue, when he is tormented in the flame.

And thus at last we have seen these All Perfections, as for Length they last not for all Times, so for Breadth they reach not to our inward and greatest Wants; and so in both Senses, an end of all Perfection.

Yet The Application of all is; That we now would labour for David's Eyes, and use them as he did; that as with one we see these Perfections, so with another we would look at the end of them: Or rather with the same Eye of Faith, look through all this seeming Perfection to the end of all. Our Hearts and Eyes therefore should not be terminated in these Out-sides of things. We should not stand gazing with Achab upon the Wodge of Gold, and goodly Babylonish Garment, left, as it was with him, they steal away our Hearts and Happines together. I confess it is with many of our Worldly Men, as they say, it is with some of your devout Pilgrims to Mahomet's Tomb, who after that goodly sight use to pore so long on hot Iron, till they lose their Eye-sight. Ours (I do not say, Pilgrims and Strangers, unless it be from God and the Common-wealth of Israel) do use to gaze so long on the Lustre of outward Vanities, that they lose both Eyes and Hearts, by which they might discern and find more divine and lasting Perfections. Thus did not Job, Chap. 31. 26.
He beheld not the Sun when it shined, nor the Moon walking in brightness: (that is) The Glory of his outward Happines, as some from the Context expound it. And though David’s Eyes had once a mist cast before them, when he thought his Mountain so strong that he should never be moved; yet here he is now gotten, as we heard, upon another Mountain, and from thence seeth further than he did before, or others that lie groveling below can, even to an end of all this Perfection. He doth not now admire and adore this Glorious Light; but, as they tell us, they can with their Glasses discern Motes in the Sun: So he by Faith (the best Prospective) seeth Motes in this Sun, to even an end of all Perfection. And happy sure were his Eyes, that saw such things, which many other Kings and great Ones (I do not say, desire to see, but in truth) never saw, whose inward thought sometimes is, that their Houses shall continue for ever, and their Dwelling-places to all Generations, Psal. 49. 11. And it may be, as though they could either over-wrestle, or out-last the Almighty and Everlasting God, in their Hearts, say with them, Jer. 12. 4. He shall not see our last end. Or if God sometimes make them to see it, either by others Examples, or the inward light of their own Conscience, presently they shut their Eyes, and will not: They over-look it, at least they do not with David here, let themselves seriously to mark and consider it. They do not with him else-where pray, that God would teach them to number their days, Psal. 90. 12. And that he would make them to know their end, and how frail they are, Psal. 39. 4. Unless it be in a Passion, (as some think this later Speech of David was spoken) thoughts of their end never come welcome. You cannot do them a worse turn, than by putting them in mind of their Mortality. But it would be well that we with David here would be continually thinking of ours. And that

1. To keep us humble; that when we are in this kind perfect in our ways, as we have the Phrase of the Prince of Tyre, Ezek. 28. 15. we be not like him, lift up, and so grow contumelious to God or Man, lest we come to his end, which in that Chapter is excellently described; that with Jesurun, when we are grown fat, we kick not against God, or with those Idol-Shepherds, stamp upon and tread under foot his Children; that now in this joyful time, we do not revel it with Belshazzar, and with those drunken Prophets, Isa. 56. 12. say, Come, I will fetch Wine, and
and we will fill ourselves with strong Drink; to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant. For We know not what a day may bring forth. I am sure that very Night, a Hand wrote something on the Wall, that dash'd all Belshazzar's Jollity, and made an end of his Mirth and Monarchy together. And therefore when thou art the highest, be not high minded, but fear, that thy Sun may go down as Noah, that even then may come an end of all that thy Perfection.

2. Labour to see an end of all perfection; that so thence thou mayst learn a sanctified Moderation in the enjoying, and patient Contentedness in loosing any, or all of them. And here truly, we may admire God's Wisdom and Mercy towards us, in so ordering it, that these Perfections will not last, or help always: For if they could, such is the Atheism of our Hearts, that we should make Fleece our Arm; be so glued to these lower Contentments, as we should never look after more divine Perfections. But now that the Fashion of this World passeth away, 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30, 31. we are now to learn another Lesson, to rejoice as though we rejoiced not, and, to use this World, as though we used it not; to fit loose in our Affections from these outward things; that fit so loose from us. And therefore let not our Affections be more constant than the things, and if they be infinite, let not our desires after them be infinite; let's not bold fast Spiders webs, Job 8. 14, 15. And truly, how Incongruous is it for the covetous Worldling, to have no end of his Labour, Eccles. 4. 8. And, to enlarge his desires as Hell, for these Perfections, that are both short and narrow, that help not much nor long? And therefore their end should put an end to our longing desires, teach us an holy Weanedness from them, when we have them.

I added a contented Patience in their Loss: For in this I conceive the Stoicks Rule is good, Always to consider what thou admiresst and lovest, ἐὰν χύτραν, ὅπι χύτραν. If it be God that thou lovesst, think what God is, and that if thou lovest Him, thou lovest thy happiness, thyself; and that will keep thy Soul close to Him. But if it be a Wife, a Child, a Friend, think what they are, and that thou canst not lose more in their loss, than they come to, and that is but a mortal Creature. Hence on the contrary it was, that Micah's Mother did so fret and curse, when she lost her Silver, Judg. 17. 2. And that we oftentimes in such cases are so disconsolate, and sometimes desperate, because we only
only gaze and dote on these Perfections, and never look through
them to their end: Whereas David (as Wise Men use to do)
looking especially at Issues and Events, is before-hand prepared
for any, and can bid the worst welcome. And therefore when
the Amalekites, 1 Sam. 30. had carried away Wives, and Sons,
and Daughters, and all Captives, though he was greatly distressed,
yet he could encourage himself in God, ver. 6.

And therefore in the Third place, Let God's Children labour
to see an end of all Perfection for their own comfort: And that in
a double respect.

1. Against the Insolvency and Fury of all their Enemies, which,
I confess, may last as long as themselves, (and therefore we have
Ezek. 21. 29. themselves and their Iniquity ending together): And yet the Comfort is, that they themselves will not last long:
And it may be their Perfection gone before them, and they re-
main but like Bees that have lost their Stings, and so would hurt,
but cannot. Thus David comforted himself, when he rejoiced
over his Adversaries, Psal. 9. 6. O thou Enemy, thy destruc-
tions are come to a perpetual end. And if we would but observe God's
dealing now in this kind, we should often see such Li-ons teeth
broken; either their Power weakened, or their Counsels disap-
pointed, or themselves taken away. Or if they continue and
prosper some longer time, yet be sure, as God-faith, Deut. 32. 35.
Their foot shall slide in due time. And so an end of their Perfe-
tion often puts an end to the Church's Perfection. Presently
upon Herod's being eaten up of Worms, it's added, that the Word
of God grew and multiplied, Acts 12. 24. From which the
Church of God in these troublesome Times, may have one Ar-

2. A second from this Ground is, by comparing that Perfe-
tion, which God's Children in their lowest Ebb have, with all
that which wicked Men can have, when their Comforts flow in
to them in greatest abundance. The one we have heard hath
an end; but against their desire and expectation: But the end
of the other's Faith is their Salvation; and therefore called an
Expected end, Jer. 29. 11. And there is hope in it, Jer. 31. 17.
The one hath an end, and then as Nabal's, 1 Sam. 25. their
hearts die within them. The other have no end, or at least an hap-
pier one; and therefore Psal. 27. 26. Their hearts live for ever.
Well fare therefore every true Christian, that in his worst ta-
kings can yet say thus much, My flesh and my heart faileth me;

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There's
There's an end of all outward Perfection. But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever, Psal. 73. 26. ¶ And thus was that by which He encouraged his Souldiers to the Fight; and you have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen what end the Lord made, faith the Apostle James, Chsb. 5. 11. So happy, that it's as well worth our marking, as the end of other things was worth David's in the Text: For Mark the perfect Man, and behold the Upright, for the end of that Man is peace, Psal. 37. 37.

3. Labour to see an end of all these Perfections, that thou mayst thereby be stirred up, to do as much good with them, as thou canst, whilst they last; for we see, if we do not spend them, they will spend of themselves.

And therefore it would be our Wisdom to take them in season, and to put them over to God, who useth to restore them to us in a better kind. Let us therefore use our Authority, whilst we have it, for the maintaining of good Men, and good Causes; our Riches in maintaining our Ministry, and poor Brethren. Sell that you have, and give Alms to the Poor, and so provide your selves Bags, which was not old, a Treasure in the Heaven; that faileth not, Luke 12. 33. Such wise Merchants we should be for our Souls thus now to improve these fading Perfections, that one day we may have a return made us in the things of a more durable Substance.

4. And that's the last particular. Let us therefore labour to see an end of these Perfections, that so we may look out for something, which is more perfect, and which will abide with us for ever. If we indeed had our ends as soon, as these Perfections have theirs, we might better terminate our Desires and Affections in them. But it's an ordinary saying, Homo non habet alium num in hac vita vel termini vel consummationis. Man hath not his last end here: And therefore whatever else we provide for, let us have some pity of our Souls, which will last always; that, as the School-Men use to say, that two things do concur to make up the Perfection of an inferior Being, Aliquid secundum motum proprium, and, Aliquid secundum motum naturae superioris: So let not all our Perfection be placed only in that, in which we do but equal other Men, or not exceed inferior Creatures: But let us ascend somewhat higher, that as we have in us aliquid nihili, so we may have aliquid Dei, something so large and lasting, as may fully everlastingly content and satisifie us.
Now if you should ask, Where that’s to be found? The Text makes answer, But thy Commandment is exceeding broad. God’s Word is the Field, in which this Pearl is found, which will continue for all Times, and fully comfort thee in thy greatest Wants. He is never very Poor, in whom the Word of God dwells richly. But of this in the second part of the Text. For the present, that Perfection, which we shall find in it, and which will perfectly and eternally make us happy, is (as they use to distinguish it) either Objective, or Formal.

First, The Objective Perfection is God and Christ, whose Nature and Work is perfect, Deut. 32. 4; to whom nothing is wanting, and therefore fully Perfect, and from whom all the Perfection of the Creature is derived, and in whom it is Eminently, Infinitely, and therefore Eternally perfect. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day and for ever, Heb. 13. 8. He indeed may well be called the End of all perfection; as you heard, that many Expounded those words of him. He is that Mountain, on which, I told you, St. Austin placed David, when he spake these words, Christus mons est, &c. Christ is the Mountain, from which only we may with David here descry the end of all other Perfections; for thou wilt never see an Emptiness in them, till thou hast found a Fulness, and All-sufficiency in Him. To this Hill therefore let us lift up our Hearts and Eyes, from whence comes our Help, our full, our everlasting Salvation. And seeing it’s the Perfection of all things, that are ordained to a further end, when they are brought to the Fruition of it, Noli berere in via, & non pervenire ad finem, as Austin speaks, Stay not below in these inferior and worse Perfections. Rest not till thou beest made partaker of Christ. And further, when (as the Philosopher tells us, that) Finis queritor in infinitum; media vero cum modo; let our Affections towards this End of Perfection, be constant and enlarged, as much as we can; if we could, infinitely. But seeing other perfections that have an end, are sometimes Hindrances, at the best but Helps; and it’s a part of our Imperfection that we stand so much in need of them, let not our desires be terminated in them. But whether with them, or without them, let us make sure of Christ, who hath an unchangeable Priesthood, and therefore is able to save us, εἰς τὸ ἐκκόλοθον, Heb. 7. 25. that is, evermore, (as you have it in the Margin) or to the utmost, (in the New) or Perfectly, (in the former Translation) and indeed Perfectly, because evermore; and to the utmost, and so...
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so supplies what we have seen other Perfections wanted, which did not always last, and therefore did not save always, and did not reach to our greatest Wants, and therefore could not save to the uttermost. But Christ doth both. And therefore, to this purpose, what David said of the Blessed Man, the Father applied to our Blessed Saviour, that he is the Tree planted by the Waters side. The Waters flow, but this Tree is rooted sure, on which if thou layest sure hold, thou art out of danger of drowning. And therefore let me speak to thee in his words, Raperis in praecps? Tene lignum. Volui te amor Mundi? Tene Christum. Lay strong hold on Christ, and thou shalt have strong Consolation; for he is a Priest for ever. And so no end that way: And for the other, whatever others tell us, what a ductile nature Gold is of, and how much Ground an ounce of it may be made to cover; yet we, that are bought with so such corruptible things as Silver and Gold, must believe that one drop of our dying Saviours Blood can and will cover, and purge all ours and all Believers Souls: And so it, as well as the Word, is exceeding broad. And that's the Objective Perfection we must aim at. The Formal is double, Grace, and Glory.

Secondly, For Grace: It's that, which sets the Soul in joynt again, and so makes the Man of God perfect; and being once savagely wrought is so firmly established, that all the Popish Arminian subtleties, or the Gates of Hell, shall never prevail against it. And therefore it would be well, if we were so wise as to reach out for this Perfection; and to know at last, whatever perfection we may conceive to be in sinful Courses, yet that, in truth, it's Sin only that dasheth all our Perfection: Thou shalt perfect in thy way, till Iniquity was found in thee, Ezek. 28. 15. And for it itself, that how ever it may please for the present, and promise more for the future, yet we shall find them to be deceitful Lusts; that they deprive us of endless Happines for the enjoyment of short and empty Contentments; that there will be a Time, when we shall hear, as in the Prophet, Jer. 51. 13. Thine end is come, and the measure of thy Covetousness: The same we may say of other sins, there will one day be an end of all, and that none of the best; for the end of those things is Death, Rom. 6. 21. And though I confess, sin and the punishment of it will never have end; and that's the sinners woe, because they are Samenta ad damnationem, non firmamenta ad salutem: Yet the contentment of sin is soon over, and ends the sooner, that the punishment
nishment thereof may last for ever. Otherwise in Grace, which as it is that heavenly Panoply of Breadth and Extent sufficient to cover the whole Man; there being no want, but some particular Grace or other, can make a Supply: So for Continuance, it resembles the Eternal Fountain from which it springs, ἐκ ηῶν ἐκεῖ ἄλος, ἐκ διόη πέζων, Faith. S. Chrysostom, Love never fail-eth, 1 Cor. 13.8. The Fear of the Lord endureth for ever, Psal. 19.9. This is that Way everlasting, Psal. 139.24. Which either hath no end, or a very happy one. Rom. 6.22. Thou hast your fruit into Holiness, and the end everlasting Life.

Thirdly, And that's the last Perfection, which is as Immortal as thy Soul and as Large as thine Appetite: When the Sun shall no more go down, neither the Moon withdraw her Light, but the Lord shall be thine everlasting Light: And the days of thy Mourning shall be ended, as the Prophet speaketh. This Perfection, I confess, is not here to be attained to. Paul acknowledged himself not to be already perfect, Phil. 3.12. But yet it's good now to prepare our selves for it, and to make sure of it; that when Death and Judgment shall come, and we stripped naked of all these fading Perfections, may not then be found altogether naked, but be Cloathed upon with our House from God, Eternal in the Heavens: That so, when many a wicked Man, that had his good things in this Life, will be constrained to say; I was, indeed, once rich, and honourable, and happy, as I myself thought, and others took me. I was, as that perhaps was the Cause of my present Misery, and the very thought of it now augments it. I had Wisdom, and Beauty, and Strength, and the rest; but now I see a woful end of all such Perfections: We on the contrary to our eternal Comfort; may say, something we have lost (though indeed no losers) we were sinful and miserable, but now we see an end of all that with Comfort: But withal, something we had, which we yet have and shall for ever. We were holy, and humble, and thankful, &c. And so we are now, and so shall remain to all Eternity, never to see an end of this Perfection. And therefore to conclude all in a word; Let us all so labour, with David here, to see and end of all these Perfections, that we may have that begun here, which we may have at that day fully per- fected, but never ended.

SER-
SERMON XXIII.

PsAL. 119. 96.

But thy Commandment is exceeding broad.

In this Verse we have the exceeding Perfection of God's Word set out, by comparing it with the fading Shortness and narrow Scantness of all other outward Perfections. I have seen an end of all Perfection: But thy Commandment is exceeding broad. Upon a like Occasion I have spoken of the Shortness and Scantness of other Perfections out of the First words, I have seen an end of all Perfection.

I come now to speak to that, which is especially intended in the Text; The large Extent and never-ended Length of God's Word: Thy Commandment is exceeding broad.

The Point is: That in the end of all other Perfections God's Commandment is; and a Child of God may find it exceeding broad. In which two things to be explained. 1. What is meant by God's Commandment. 2. What by it's Exceeding breadth.

First, For the first, What's meant by Commandment: You must remember, that God's Word in this Psalm (in which the Psalmist intended to set out the Glory of it to the full) is called by diverse Names; all which in themselves have their distinct Significations, as either signifying some distinct parts of the Word, or the same Word under different Notions and Considerations. So sometimes it's called his Law, Word, Truth, Way, Righteousness; his Precepts, Testimonies, Judgments, and here Commandment.

The distinct Opening of every which word would now be too long; and though useful even to you, yet so as would hinder Speech about that, which, at least at this time, may be more seasonable. It will be sufficient for our present Satisfaction that most agree, that all these Words in the main signify the same thing, namely, the Word of God in the Extent of it, whether Commands, or Promises, or Threats: And so in this Text, though called by the Name of a Commandment, yet he means the whole
whole word, or any part of it; whether a Commandment, as
the word here used properly signifies, or a Threat, or a Pre-
mise, for both are Virtual Commands: God's Threats virtually
command us to Fear, and his Promises virtually command us to
Believe. And so God's Word, his Commandments, his Threats
(especially in reference to the Psalmists present Meaning and Oc-
casion) his Promises are exceeding broad.

Secondly, What's then meant by this exceeding Breadth? What we translate exceeding broad, the Vulgar and the Antients
according to their usual Translation of this word, and not in-
elegant, read Latum nimi, Too broad. And indeed it's too broad
for us poor shallow weak Creatures, fully either to comprehend,
or fulfill; And so the Hebrew word יִנְדֹּא signifies an Excess
in whatever thing it's added to; and accordingly our Transla-
tors, as in the Comparative, read it exceeding Broad; indeed,
exceeding all length and breadth of other Perfections. But withal
we must know, that this same word in Hebrew Language, which
hath no such degrees of Comparison (as other Languages have)
expresseth not only the Comparative degree; as though God's
Commandment were only exceeding broad, that is, much broader
than other Perfections: But it's one of the ways by which they
express their Superlative degree, so that his meaning is, that it's
not only exceeding broad, broader in the Comparative, but that it
is exceeding broad, broadest of all, in the Superlative.

But still you will ask, How wherein consists this Comparative,
Superlative exceeding; yea, even Exceeding, exceeding breadth
of God's Word?

Some* have conceived, that God's Word is here said to be
exceeding broad, by reason of the multiplicity of Senses that it
bears (as they say, and as the Papists urge) who make it not
only to have as many Senses, as there are Differences in the He-
brew, Greek, and vulgar Latin readings: But (which is worse
a great deal, and no better than Blasphemy) as many (if you will
believe their Cardinal Cusa) as the Church in several Ages and
upon several Occasions shall be pleased to put upon it, i. e. It shall
have as many Senses, as they Fancies and Fetches; and so justify
Rigbius his Blasphemy, who called it a Nose of Wax, which
they may draw out or put together, and alter and change as
they think good. I abhor, and so I know do you all, these
Blasphemies. God's Word is not so Broad. But yet I thus far
yield, that it's a safe way of interpreting Scripture, to take it

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* Vide Martini-

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Cum nomine

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adjectivo efficis

---

superlativum.

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Schinler in vo-

---

ce יִנְדֹּא.

---

Climacus.

---

Talmudici.

---

sinxerunt

---

quemlibet lo-

---

icum posse 70

---

modis narrati-

---

ri. Bucer.

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See Raucroft's

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Sermon at P.

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Crofts.
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in as broad and large a Sense, as (all things considered) it will bear. And if I do so in expounding this place, it will bear me out in it; for it faith, that God's Commandment is exceeding broad.

Exceeding broad therefore, because every way broad, reaching to all Persons; in its Commands awing the greatest Kings, and in it's Promises comforting the poorest Beggar.

Reaching all Conditions, Prosperity, v. 14, 72. Adversity, v. 54. All Sexes, Times, Places, all parts of body, faculties of Soul, Actions of both, and Circumstances of those Actions, I cannot exemplifie them all. If you will go no further than this Psalm, and but mark what's said of it in the several Verses, you shall find more than I say.


And if it be all this, and much more, then sure it's Exceeding broad.

But I cannot insist upon all these particulars: Only for more distinct Consideration of it, we must remember, that God's Word is here compared with all other Perfections, and its Breadth with their End.

Now therefore, as we heard before of all other best Perfections, there was a double End of them: Of Length, they lasted not alwayes:

And of Breadth, they reached not to all our Occasions and Wants:

So now on the contrary, there is an exceeding Breadth of God's Word:

I. Because it reacheth to all Times.

II. And to all our Wants in them, as able to be a Direction, and to make a Supply in all.

I. For the first, Therefore it is exceeding broad, because reaching to all Times. The place parallel to the Text fully proves it, Isa. 40, 6, 8. All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness of it as the Flower of the Field. The Grass withereth; and the Flower fadeth: But the Word of our God shall stand for ever. For ever,

That's
that's long; but to stand, or to be established for ever, as the word signifieth, is much more, and yet no more, than is true of every Word of God, whether a Command. I pray you mark that Expression, Heb. 4. 11, 12. Let us labour to enter into that rest, for the Word of God is quick and powerful, or, as the words are, living and active. It may be you'll ask, What's the strength of the Apostle's Reason? Strive to enter into this rest, for the Word of God is quick, &c. Why? Its from this Ground we are now upon. He had before spoken of an Exhortation of David's, Psal. 95. Of striving to enter into rest; which Exhortation the Apostle urgeth upon them in his time, to whom he wrote. But now it might be some would say: But why trouble you us with a command of David, so long time since spoken to the Men of his Generation, and now by this time out of Date and antiquated? Which kind of Objection the Apostle takes away, as though he should say; Nay, but do not think that David's word is dead with him: For it was not his word, but God's, and therefore as God never dies, nor grows old, no more doth his Word: But it's quick, or living still: It's not dead, no nor grown old and weak; but it's as active and powerful as ever: And therefore as much concerns you now, as it did them to whom David in Person spake it. And so we see in this respect, God's Commandment is exceeding broad, reacheth from David's time to Paul's. And so are his Threats. One reached from Doeg to Judas, compare Psal. 109. 8. with Acts 1. 20. Yea, one reached from Enoch the 7th. from Adam to the Day of Judgment, Jude, ver. 14, 15. And so are all his Promises, which David (as I said) in the Text principally intends. In the first Verse of this Ogdoad, he saith, For ever, O Lord, thy Word is settled in Heaven. A Word of a Promise is in Heaven, and settled, ἡ ἡμέρα, there, and that for ever; a most strong and full Expression, that, whereas if a Man look to these outward Contentments, there's nothing settled, or if settled, yet it's but poorly, not for ever, according to that strong Expression, Psal. 39. 5. Verily every Man at his best estate, is altogether vanity; or, as the Hebrew is, all Men are all vanity, even аться (the same word in both places) when most settled and established, yet he continues not so long: But when full of Riches, and happy in Children, and so in a seeming settledness, yet it's soon shaken.
Nay, further, whereas if a Man should look at God's Word and Promise, as it is in our unsettled hearts, we are ready to think that it's as ready to waver as our Hearts are; as the shadow of the Sun or Moon in the Water seems to shake as much as the Water doth which it shines in.

Yet for all this seeming shaking here below, the Sun and Moon go on in a steadfast Course in Heaven. So the Psalmist tells us, that however our Hearts stagger at a Promise through unbelief; nay, and our Unbelief makes us believe, that the Promise often is shaken withal, and when we are at our Wits-end, we are ready to think that God's Promise comes to an end too, as Psal. 77. 8. Yet God's Word is settled, though not in our Hearts, yet in Heaven; yea, and there for ever, as settled as Heaven itself is; yea, more than so, for Heaven and Earth may pass, but not one jot or tittle of the Law (and therefore of the Gospel) shall fail, Luke 16. 17.

And thus we see, that God's Commandment and Promise, in this respect, is Exceeding broad, reaching to all Times. Was a word of Command the Guide of thy youth? I assure thee, it will be as good a Staff of thine age. And I assure you, a good Promise is a good Nurse, both to the young Babe, and decrepit old Man. Your Apothecaries' best Cordials in time will lose their Spirits, and sometimes the stronger they are, the sooner. But hath a Promise cheared thee say, twenty, thirty, forty years ago? Taste it but now afresh, and thou shalt find it as fresh, and give thee as much Refreshment as ever. If it hath been thy greatest Joy in thy joyful Youth, I tell thee, it hath as much Joy in it for thy sad Old-age. That may be said of God's Word, which the Prophet faith of God himself, Isa. 46. 4. And even to Old-age I am be, and even to hoare hairs I will carry you. Doth not the Psalmist say as much in the 160. Verse of this Psalm, Thy Word is true from the Beginning. It's well, it begins well. But will it last as well? Yes: He adds, And every one of thy righteous Judgments endureth for ever. Answerable to which, is that other Expression, ver. 152. Concerning thy Testimonies, I have known of old, that thou hast founded them for ever. For ever, and founded for ever. O sweet Expression! O grounded Comfort! Brethren, get acquainted with God's Word and Promise as soon as you can, and maintain that Acquaintance everlastingly; and your knowledg of it shall not either go before, or go beyond its Truth. Know it as soon and as long as you will or can, and
you shall never find it tripping or failing: But you may after long Experience of God and it, say, I have known of old, that thou hast founded it for ever.

And so I have done with the First Breadth of God's Word, reaching to all Times.

11. There is a Second answerable to it, for God's Word and the New Jerusalem, Rev. 21. 16. in this are alike: Both the Length and Breadth of them are equal. God's Word and Promise as it reacheth to all Times, that's the first Breadth; so also to all Occasions and Wants: That's the Second. Just like the Israelites Garments in the Wilderness, which waxed not Old for Forty years: There's Length and Continuance. But withal, they they must grow too, as their Children did, or else they would not serve their turn. So truly here, a gracious Promise will be better than a good Garment, that will keep a poor Soul warm at heart Forty years together, and much longer than so. And which is the best of all, we cannot out-grow it. It will serve to lap the tender Babe in, and yet not leave the tallest Christian in any place bare, if he will but wear it. This is the Second Breadth. It will reach to all Needs and Wants; which may be further considered in two Particulars.

1. Some Word and Promise of God, or other, is able to reach to all our outward Wants and Evils, which no one outward Contentment can do. Health only cures Sickness, but as many a Man is healthful and poor together, it reacheth not to cure his Poverty: And Riches take away Poverty, but cannot sometimes buy Health. Honour perfumes a Man, and keeps him from flinking in Man's nostrils; but many a Man that is well esteemed of, may be poor enough. One Contentment helps usually but one Want, and one Plaister useth not to cover many Sores; and truly for outward Matters, scarce any Man hath a Plaister for every Sore: Say those of you that have most in this kind, Have you so much as you want nothing? Now truly, herein especially is seen the Exceeding breadth of God's Word and Promises. Had we but so much Skill as to go to every Box of precious Oynment in this Myrotheke, we might find certainly a Salve for every outward Sore: And had we but so much Faith but as to apply it, we should find it sovereign too. Here's a Promise that might heal that Wound, which a flanderous Tongue hath given me; there another, which might be my best Cordial on my Sick-bed; in another the poor Hunger-starved Body
Body might these hard Times meet with a good Meals; meat, yea, I assure you, and Dainties too. I name not more particulars, nor have I time to exemplifie any. But in general, consider only the 92. ver. of this Psalm, and think whether it speak not one word for all: Unless thy Law had been my delights, I had perish'd in mine Affliction. Affliction is a large word, and may contain under it many particular Evils. Now where's his Cure for all? Truly he hath one Catholic, one Receipt for all. Thrice Law in the singular number: But what of it? What can one Law do to so many Evils? He tells you it's יִנְצֵר. We read it, Unless it had been my delight: But the word in the Original is wonderfully significant in a double respect: its both. 1. In numero plurali. 2. Forma duplicata: In plural number Delights, and they doubled too. Is my Affliction sickness? In God's Word, had I but Faith, I might get Health and Health again. Is it Nakedness? I might get Clothes, yea, and double Clothing: And so of the rest. Brethren, did we but walk so in Obedience to the Word, that we were fit for Mercies, and then had but Faith to rely upon the Promise for them: in this one Bible we might find many Delights, and them doubled too. Health and Health by the Word, is double Health; Food and Food with and from a Promise, is double Food, both first and second Course too. So God's Word reacheth to all Wants of the outward Man, and in that respect is exceeding broad.

2. But secondly, it can reach to cover all the Nakedness, and heal all the Wounds of the inward Man; and if so, then sure it is exceeding, exceeding broad. In this respect, though a Man were so outwardly happy, that he were clothed and harnessed Cap-a-pe, as you say, from top to toe in regard of outward Man; yet for all this, as the Prophet speaks in a like Case, Is. 28. 20. This Covering may be narrower, than that a Man can wrap himself in it: Though harnessed from top to toe in this kind, yet truly this is not Armour of Proof. Brethren, a Man may have a poor naked Soul under all our warm and gay Clothes, and truly the Arrow of God's Wrath can wound the Soul through all such Clothes and Armour.

O Blessed then be God, who hath given us his Word, which as it can clothe the Body, so it can Cover the Soul too, that cannot only keep off many a heavy Stroke from the outward Man, but can keep the Conscience from man; a deadly Wound; yea, and can heal those which we had got, when carelessly we had not it about
about us. I, Brethren, herein is seen the infinite Breadth of God's Word, that one Promise of it can quiet, and heal, and refresh a weary wounded Conscience; which no finite Creature, not all the Creatures joyned together can. Well are those two joyned together, The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul. You read it Converting in the Text, and in the Margin Restoring: But the same Phrase in the Original is used, Lam. 1. 16. מלחים משיבי נפש, and it's taken for Comforting and Refreshing: The Comforter that should relieve, or refresh, or bring back my Soul, is far from me. If you please, you may take it in all those senses. The Law of the Lord is perfect converting, and so restoring, and so refreshing the Soul. Yea, this is a perfect Law indeed, that can thus comfort, and refresh the Soul. It's a Metaphor taken from one in a Swoon, to whom you give Hot-waters to recover them; and so that same Phrase, is taken, Lam. 1. 11. which you may compare with Lam. 2. 11, 12. The poor famished Infants for famine swoon in the streets, and pour out their Souls in their Mothers bosom. Propotionable to which Lam. 1. 11. it's said, they gave their pleasant things to relieve, or, as the word is, to bring back the Soul; which the other place said, was gone, and poured out. Just so is it sometimes with a poor hunger-starved Christian for his Soul, he Faints and Swoons; and you would think he would never be recovered more; and all his other desirable pleasant things, though he should give them all (with them, Lam. 1. 11.) will not recover him and bring his Soul back again. Oh! but God's Commandment is exceeding broad, his Law is perfect indeed, when its misery exceeds. When with some Promise or other, it can fetch again and refresh a fainting Soul, better than all your Hot-waters a swooning Body. In this respect I cannot but again say, The Law of the Lord is indeed perfect; when it can thus convert, and bring back, and refresh the wearied Soul. In this more than any thing God's Commandment appears to be exceeding broad.

I have done with the Opening and Proof of the Point in the first of it. For the Reason of it:

God's Commandment in the former Considerations and Respect must needs be thus exceeding broad.

1. Because it's God's Commandment: If thy Commandment, then exceeding broad. So you have the Reason of it in the very Text: Were it a Man's Commandment, it would fail in both these.
these Breadths. Your best Parliament-Statutes reach not to all Times, many antiquated, repealed, and now out of use: And whilst in force, yet they reach not to all Inconveniencies, and so fall short of the other Breadth also. And this from Man’s weakness, who cannot see all present Inconveniencies, much less foresee all that may afterward happen. Well, but God is Perfect, Mat. 5.48. and so his Work perfect, Deut. 32.4. and so his Word and Law perfect, Psal. 19.7. His both Works and Word have a Tincture of himself. He an Incomprehensible God, Job 11.7, 8, 9. Canst thou show by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection? The measure thereof is longer than the Earth, broader than the Sea. He without all Dimensions, and a proportionable, or infinitly improportionable (shall I say?) Latitude he hath made in his Creature. Hast thou perceived the breadth of the Earth? Declare if thou knowest it all, Job 38.18. And here for his Word, David knows not how broad; but he puts the greatest word he can to it, faith in the Superlative רחבי מאיין Exceeding, yea Exceeding, exceeding broad, broader than either Earth or Sea, than any Creature; because it is an Expression of God himself (and sometimes called God, as some have observed) and so Infinite. God an Eternal God, that fore-sees what will be in all Times, and therefore his Word shall reach to all Seasons. And God an All-sufficient God, and therefore his Word shall reach to all Needs and Wants, and therefore his Commandment in both respects exceeding broad.

2. As the former Reason was taken from the Author of the Word, so this from the End of it, expressed 2 Tim. 3.16. All Scripture is given by Inspiration, and is profitable for Doctrine, &c. That the Man of God may be Perfect, and thoroughly furnished to every good Work. I conceive that Man of God is especially to be meant of the Minister of God, whom the Word of God fully furnisheth for his Work. But if it be able so to furnish him, then also other Men, because they are furnishèd from him. Well then, this is the End of God’s Word, perfectly to furnish and supply us all in our righteous, and cheerful Walking. But were it not now thus exceeding broad in the former Particulars, this End would not be attained.

Did not a Promise reach to all Times, It might be that I might out-live a Promise, and so it fail me at the last in some needful time of trouble, when I stand most in need of it. Should
it sustain me all my Life-time, and but fail me at my Death, my comfort might die with my Life, and so I should be but poorly furnished, when I fail in the end of my Journey.

Or again, Did it cover my outward Man, and leave my inward Man bare, I should be but poorly clothed: And though it provided well for my Soul, but took no provision for my outward Man, I should not think my self thoroughly furnished. Did it not reach to all my Needs and Wants, though it should leave but one place bare, I might be as mortally wounded in it as in twenty. Should it arm me against Covetousness, and I be struck with the envenomed arrow of Pride; Should it fence me from Luke-warmness, and I yet be enflamed with Anger and Frowardness, or the like; One wound if Deadly, may speed me. If it should help me in many respects, and not supply me in all, I should not be so thoroughly furnished, as the Apostle there faith, the Word is able to do for me. And therefore that it might attain its end, it is (in the second place) that in both respects Gods Commandment is exceeding Broad.

Is it so exceeding broad that it reacheth to all Times? then sure the Moral Law is not as yet abrogated: Which though it be not wholly meant, yet is a special part of this Commandment. But against their Error which hold the contrary, I have already spoken upon another Occasion, and therefore now forbear.

Is it again so exceeding broad that it reacheth to all times? then Papists likewise may be hence confuted, which enlarge our abilities unto Works of supererrogation, as though we could exceed this Commandment, which is so exceeding broad: And on the other side they cut short and straiten the Law, in making some sins no sins, or venial, and some sins meritorious performances. Of Hell we grant, but of nothing else. But here also I forbear.

Is it so exceeding broad? let it therefore call upon us to study it, and search into it the more. Were I now to speak to Students, (as I do to some) I would, and do tell them, that had they Solomon's largeness or breadth of hearts, (as the word signifies) 1 Kings 4-29. Had they large broad hearts, even as the sand on the Sea-shore, as it's there laid, so large and broad, as mult needs expatiate into humane and divine Writers, of either more late or ancient standing, whose vast apprehensions and readings cannot be terminated in the large Volumns of Divinity, Phyfick, Law-Studies, or the like; would they but hear
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me, I should now shew them a Field broad and large enough, in which they might expatriate. En laisfundium! A Sea broad and deep enough, in which even such Leviathans may swim: it's no other than this Word of God, which the Text saith, is so exceeding Broad.

I confess, it would cut off a great deal of that Babel's superfluous Learning, but this you should be sure of, you should in this Field meet with 'no poxoned Fountains,' as you do in theirs.

The thing therefore I exhort all, especially such as are or may be Students, is that of Paul to Timothy, 1 Tim. 4. 13. To give attendance to Reading; even diligently and faithfully to read and study the Scriptures, a thing which Men of great note in the Church thought not too mean for them. They tell us of Basil and Nazianzen; that thirteen years together laying aside all other Studies, they set themselves to study the Scriptures; and Lamber makes it one of the things, which he would require of a Minister, often to turn over the Bible. These (belike) looked at this broad Commandment, as new Planters would at a huge broad Continent, which would require a great deal of both time and pains fully to discover it; I assure you God's Word will.

An Argument this is, which I should think necessary to enlarge my self in, were I in another place, where other Books (and it may be bad ones too) are more read and studied, than the Scripture. I read of Carofostadium, that he was nine years a Doctor, before he had read the Scripture. I myself have been present, when one answering his Act for the Degree next to a Doctor, could not find the Epistle to the Colossians; and was fain to excuse the matter by saying it was not in his Book: And knew of another, that had been seven years almost in the University, and had not had all that while a Bible in his study; but he afterward turned Papist; as indeed it well agrees with Popery, in which by their good wills, Scripture should be laid aside, and their Schoolmen and Decretals only studied. A Popish frame it is, to which I wish we even in this particular were not too much warping. Papists care not for Scripture; and Familists make Scripture-Learned as a term of Reproach. But the Jews (some tell us) dividing their time into three parts, would spend one of them in reading. And another faith, that they scarce read any other Book than the Scripture. I would not straiten Christians in either kind; but truly I should desire you all to inlarge
inlarge your selves in reading and studying this Commandment, which is so exceeding Broad. Sure in this broad Field you should find something worth getting.

Oh then with other Books, Debt-Books, and Law-Books, and Physick-Books, and other good Books you are reading, let God's Book be one especially. Be reading here, and gathering there; here this word of Direction, and there that promise for Comfort. And if only one Promise (as I have shewed) may be of so great and manifold use, what encouragement have we to gather, when there are so many? If that Field be worth going to, in which I may get but one ear of Corn to satisfy the hunger of my Soul; Oh then it is very good gleaning in a Boaz Field, where we may glean even among the Sheaves, and have whole handfuls let fall for us, Ruth 2, 15, 16. I mean in the Word of God, where we may not only pick by Corns, but gather by Handsfuls, even get Bundles of Promises to lay up against an harder Time: and therefore (as poor Folks you know will) let us glean and gather hard, especially seeing God hinders us not to glean among the Sheaves. As God said to Abraham in regard of Canaan his Inheritance, Gen. 13. 17. Go walk up and down in the length and breadth of it: So we, that are Heirs of the Promises, let us walk up and down in the breadth of this goodly Inheritance of ours, of this exceeding broad Commandment. As it is Rich, so let it dwell in us richly.

Is the Commandment exceeding broad? then search into it, as for Use. 4. Knowledge, so for Practice. I beseech you let us make room for it in our Hearts: for it comes with a breadth.

In this broad Commandment much to be done, and more to Motive. 1. be avoided. In it many particular Graces and Duties, &c. to be looked to. And as our Saviour in a like case said, Mat. 10. 23. so truly we shall not have gone over all this broad Field, till the Son of Man be come.

It's broad, and therefore not straitned: the way is narrow at first Motive. 2. entrance, but the Commandment is broad when once entred, that you may with enlarged Hearts walk in it. It was a complaint, which our Saviour took up against the Jews, John 8. 37. that his Word εὐαγγέλιον did not take place, or as the word is, could not find room there. Oh, Brethren, we have even strait hearts, God knows, for this broad Commandment. But oh that we were enlarged! Are we straitned? Sure it is not the Word's fault: It would enlarge us, did we but receive it, as Paul faith

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in another case, 2 Cor. 6. 12. We are strained in our own Bowels, in our own Hearts. The more the pitty, and the more our los, that so much precious Liquour runs beside. And let me add that also, and I pray, you therefore take heed, and remember what hath been said, that as the Command and Promise is broad, lasting to all Times, and (as Chrysostom expounds it) bringing the Obedient to eternal Life: so the Threat can reach as far to bring thee to endless Wo, if thou beest disobedient. The Promise broad, reaching to, and supplying of all our Wants: And the Curse can be as broad too, to cross thee in all thy Contentments, to wound thee both in Body and Soul, in every Joynt of the one, and Faculty of the other. See Zech. 5. 2, 3. The flying roll of the Curse was twenty Cubits long, and ten Cubits broad. Truly, God's Threat and Curse is as broad as all the miseries of this Life, nay, as broad as Hell. And therefore get not a broad Conscience, but a broad enlarged Heart in love and obedience, to entertain this exceeding broad Commandment. Else, as the Lawyers term extream Carelesnes, it will be Leae negligentius.

Use. 5. But in the next place, it's a word of both comfort and direction in the end of all other Perfections, that God's Commandment is exceeding broad.

I say, first, Comfort, that whereas all other imperfect Contentments are but short and narrow, if I have but my share in God's Word and Promise, I have that, which in the los of all them will reach me comfort to all Times, and in all Wants. Truly, Brethren, all outward Contentments, be they never so glorious and comfortable, they will not last long, nor reach far; not longer than Life, not so far as Heaven, no not so far as mine inward Man. Babylon's broad Walls are thrown down, Jer. 51. 58. they are unstir'd as Waters; and as it is said in another kind, the face of such Waters is soon strained. Fair large Estates soon brought into a narrow compass; great Families soon reduced to a small number. To speak to the present occasion, pretty little Children are like pretty little Books, in which a Parent sometimes reads much that very well likes him: But it may be he cannot read long for tears, when the Book is taken away; and at best he cannot read much because it is but a little one. But blessed be God, may a Child of God say, who is sure that he hath part in God and his Promise, that I have another Book of a larger Volume, of a far broader Page than all these outward comforts come to. They are but narrow Rivers at the best, and
and they soon dried up too: But God in his Word, in his Kingdom, hath broad Rivers that you read of, Isa. 33:21, and they deep ones too, in which I may bathe, and not be straitened, and out of which I may drink for ever, and yet they never dried up, but spring up to everlasting life.

This is a Christian's comfort in such cases, and it should be his direction too in them; that when he sees an end come of this perfection, and of that, to be still thinking that there will at last come an end of all; and yet, in the end of all even then, to look unto this Commandment and word and promise of God, which the Text faith is so exceeding broad. As, Hath God straitened me in my estate? Take that out of the breadth of God's Word. Hath he taken this pretty little child, this pretty little book, out of my hand, that I cannot read in it as formerly? Truly let us get a better, a bigger, a broader book into our hands, God's book, and see what we can read there; if not enough to make a full supply of all such wants, that whereas other men shuffle and shift, have this fetch and that reach, and (as they use to say) when the Lion's skin is not big enough to cover all, they sew the Fox skin to it to make it broad enough, and yet all will not do, because there will be an end of all perfection; a Christian is (or at least should be) able out of God's Word and promises, as out of a rich Treasury, to make a supply of all such wants. Here he gets a promise for himself, and there another for his friend. Here one for a live-dead parent, and there another for himself, though his child be dead.

In a word, that's it I call for; as much as we are straitened in outward comforts, let us labour to be so much enlarged in God: and as much as he takes from us of outward contentments, to get as much and more from him in this broad Commandment and large promises, and then we shall be no losers.

This one word also, that God's Commandment is exceeding broad, use 6. is ground of great comfort to other of God's children in other cases, as much satisfying them in two main doubts they stick at.

1. The first is, They are so sinful and so unworthy, and set so far off and estranged from God, that his mercy (they think) will never reach them. But let such think then of this exceeding broad Commandment. There is breadth and length and height and depth in God's love passing knowledge, Ephes. 3:18, 19. And there is such a breadth and extent in God's promises that they can cover our greatest stores, reach the furthest out-liers if they would but come in. Boaz hath a skirt to cast upon Ruth, though a poor band.
handmaid, Ruth 3. 9. And much more hath Christ to cover the nakedness of his poorest servants. Mens blessings and favours are strait, and when Jacob hath got away the blessing, Esau may cry bitterly, and say, bless me, even me also, O my father, and Isaac have it not for him. But God hath for all, that will unfeignedly ask and beg of him. He hath a blessing for me, and another for thee, and a third for a third, and even for them that are afar off, Acts 2. 38, 39. though never so far off, yet if with the like bitterness, but not the like profaneness that Esau had, thou-cryest blessing me, even me also, O my father: If thou canst but call him Father, thy Father hath a blessing for thee also: for his Commandment is exceeding broad to reach to all thy needs and wants and sins.

2. And to all times, and by that a second trouble is removed: for a child of God, though he hath gotten beyond the former doubt, that God hath had mercy for him to bring him at first to him, yet he sees his weakness such, and his lusts so strong, that he fears, he shall never hold out in grace to heaven, but that there will be as well an end of this, as of all other perfections: but let such remember, that however their strength reacheth not far, is scant, and soon spent, yet that God's promise and truth and mercy is of a far broader extent, and longer continuance: for God's Word, those that have had longest experience of it have yet cause to say, as vers. 152. Concerning thy testimonies, thy promises, I have known of old, that thou hast founded them for ever: and in the end of health and peace and strength and life to end all with this word last in his mouth, I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy Commandment is exceeding broad.