

Sermon 1 (22)

Sermon 2 (23)

SERMON XXII.

P s A L. 119. 96.

I have seen an end of all Perfection: But thy Commandment is exceeding broad.

C Concerning this *Psalms* in general; I must not say much: Yet this, That if St. *Austine* 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 aperiior, 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 saith 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 list 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

Ambrose.

Hilar.

Ver. 122

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 taderet eum mutabilitatis hominum*, (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 *Epiphonema* 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 Perfection, 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 ſcantneſs 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 Martyrdome; many of the *Latine* Fathers, Chriſt. The *Greek*, whom our later Divines in this uſually follow, by this *all Perfection* underſtand either all this inferiour 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 dazled 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 ſaith, he *haſt 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 choiſe of *all Perfections*. And, 2. Not one of them, or ſome, or few, but *all's* and yet through them all ſomething beſide: *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 *ſeeſt an end*, a Period of thoſe lower and fading Per-

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fections; 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.*

Doct.

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*, saith *David*. And sure, what he by the Spirit saith 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-sight 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, *Advenerat mane, sed etiam nox 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 goodliness thereof as the Flower of the Field. The Grass withereth, and the Flower fadeth: 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 ostentimes (as they think) are spinning a

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fair Thread, either it comes to the end, or (as תצ (the word in the Text) comes of תצ, which signifieth to cut off,) the Hand of God cuts either it or us off; as Hezekiah complains, Isa 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 as 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 Begger 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 he prolong the Perfection thereof upon the Earth*, saith Eliphaz, Job 15. 29. The word מנלה there, and only there used in Scripture, is by the Hebrew Writers, as by us generally, expounded *Perfection*: But the Septuagint there expresses 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 תכלה used in the Text, and no where else, seemeth also to imitate some such thing as coming from כלה that signifieth *Deficere*, as well as *Perficere*. Such defective Perfections, 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 יתר which is used in this kind, seem in its signification to promise longer Continuance; yet Eliphaz cuts it short too, Job 4. ult. *Doth not the excellency (תרם) the word is) Doth 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. כל-הבל כל-אדם בכב, *Every Man is all vanity*; and that in his

his best, or most *settled* estate, as the word signifieth. So that when he is *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 fraught sink in Havens mouth? How often have you seen Men so long in cutting out their Fortune, that at length they marr 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 Fabrick 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 fowl and deep, as in *Winter* we find them. It's so in our *Summer*-weather of Prosperity. Our *Perfections* 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*, Lam. 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*, Lam. 1. 9. Such and so brittle are the best of these lower *Perfections*, 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*, saith *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 ever-lasting Subject; yet, *We see that Wise Men die as well as Fools*, Psal. 49. 10. and sometimes their Wisdom before them. *David* had seen

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Ahitobel'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. Disuse can make the most expert forgetful. The *Plague at Athens*, and many *Diseases* since could deprive the *Wiseit* of *Understanding* and *Memory* at once. And if all fail, yet *Old-age* (as they said of *Saturn*) most commonly devours that *Wisdom*, which it begets: Or rather, like an *Unthrif*, in a short time spends what his *Predecessors* were a long time in getting. So that the *Ancients that teach Wisdom*, as *Elibu* 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. Austine* said before me, *Quanam est ista salus Corporis, qua morte premitur, que aegritudine debilitatur, frivola, 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 *Infinitness* of imbred *Diseases*, so many outward occasions of *Distemper*, that few or none in our well days are perfectly free: However, *Old-age* comes limping 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 (saith 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 stay and go together. The same *Disease*, that hinders the

one, weakens the other. And so the lusty young Man often comes to say 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 *Plinies* 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 Men shall bow: When old Milo may look on his withered Arms, and weep and say, at hi 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, רַחֵם רַחֵם (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 the Paint of Beauty, which so many pride themselves in; and therefore if any shall trust in it, (as she 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 changeest his Countenance, and sendest him away, saith 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 flea'd 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 Post, this Ship, *Job 9. 25, 26.* soon past by: This Flower, *Job 14. 2.* soon withered; this Vapour, *James 4. 14.* soon vanisheth: This Smoak, *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-

determine 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 *Metuselah*, 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 flie upon that which is not?* saith *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 flie 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 flie 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 flie away, it may be never to return again. *Flie away as the Eagle towards Heaven*, and that's most swiftly: Witness that one Day, that saw *Job* both on the Throne, and on the Dung-hill; for God may blow, the Moth may fret, the Rust may canker, the Thief may break through, so that a *rich Man lieth down*, but either through Malice of some, or Carelesness 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* saith, *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 Distresses. 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*,

Pfal. 49. 12. Or if the Prophet *Daniel* had not seen such *Wings* as these *pluckt*, Dan. 7. 4. and the Prophet *Hosea* had not seen them flying away. *As for Ephraim, their Glory shall flie 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*, *Meneb, Meneb. &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 *Princes breath goeth forth, he returns to the Earth, and then all his thoughts perish*, 1 sal. 146. 4. מִשְׁתַּנֵּן, The word is, and according to the signification of the Verb from whence it comes, seems to signifie 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 *Severus* said of himself) but now are nothing: And so you have an *end* likewise 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 Tekosh* lamenting, that her *Husband is dead*; or a *David* bewailing the untimely death of a faithful *Jonathan*, or a beloved *Abalom*; 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 affectest, thou must know that it could not keep *Dives* from *Hell*. *Abasuerus* made a *Feast*, that lasted an *hundred and fourscore days*, Esth. 1. 3, 4. yet at last those *many days* were *expired*, ver. 5.

If costly *Apparel*, know that *as thou comest 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 seatest 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 so 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 pluckt 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 summ'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*, *Concupiscentia* 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 saith, (*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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End is perfect, and the sowre Grape is ripening in the Flower, he shall cut off the Sprigs with pruning-hooks, 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 Sbaron is like a Wilderness, and Bashan and Carmel shake off their Fruit. When Babel is most stately, 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 Brooks, 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)

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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 *Nabob'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 wherein the King hath 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*, *Ezth.* 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. 5. speaks in a like case: *Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: How much less when the Fire hath 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 patcht Garment of all these outward *Perfections*; a goodly Suit, I confess, it would seem, and be as highly esteemed 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 *Abſolom'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 mightiest 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.*

Use.

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 *Achan* upon the *Wedge of Gold*, and goodly *Babylonish Garment*, lest, as it was with him, they *steal away our Hearts* and Happiness 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 desire 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 Happiness, 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 overwrestle, 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 set 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 *Belsazzar*, and with those drunken Prophets, *Isa. 56. 12. say, Come, I will fetch Wine,*
 E c c
 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 at Noon, 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 *Flesh 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 sit loose in our Affections from these outward things, that sit so loose from us. And therefore let not our Affections be more constant than the things, and if they be finite, 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 admirest and lovest, *ὅν χύτταν, ὅτι χύτταν*. If it be God that thou lovest, 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 casts are so disconsolate, and sometimes desperate, because we

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.

Vide in hanc rem Chrysost. in 2. ad Corin. hom. α. ἡθι-
κόν.

1. Against the Insolency 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 remain 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 destructions are come to a perpetual end. And if we would but observe God's dealing now in this kind, we should often see such *Lions* teeth broken; either their Power weakned, or their Counsels disappointed, or themselves taken away. Or if they continue and prosper some longer time, yet be sure, as God saith, *Deut.* 32. 35. Their foot shall slide in due time. And so an end of their *Perfection* often puts an end to the Church's Persecution. 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 Argument of Comfort.

2. A second from this Ground is, by comparing that *Perfection*, 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 happy one; and therefore *Psal.* 22. 26. Their hearts live for ever. Well fare therefore every true Christian, that in his worst takings can yet say thus much, My flesh and my heart faileth me;

There's *an end of all outward Perfection.* But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever, Psal. 73. 26. Εὐ τὰ ἑὸς 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, saith the Apostle James, Chsp. 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 wax not old, a Treasure in the Heavens, 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 ultimum finem 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 inferiour Being, *Aliquid secundum motum proprium*, and, *Aliquid secundum matum naturæ superioris*: So let not all our Perfection be placed only in that, in which we do but equal other Men, or not exceed inferiour 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 satisfy us.

Now

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 everlastingly 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 barere 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 queritur 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, *ἐἰς τὸ πάντελός*, 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.

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 applyeth 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 preceptis? Tene lignum. Voluit 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 no 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 savingly wrought is so firmly established, that all the Popish Arminian subtilties, 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 wast perfect in thy way, till Iniquity was found in thee*, Ezek. 28. 15. And for it self, 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 Happiness 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 *Sarmenta 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, *ἐν ἔξει τῆλος, ἐν ὁδῷ πέρας*, saith *S. Chrysostom*, *Love never faileth*, 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. *You have your fruit unto 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 with-draw 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 *Clothed 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 my self 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 *perfected*, but never ended.

SER-

SERMON XXII.

P S A L. 119. 96.

At Boston, at
Mr. Francis
Empson's
Daughters
Funeral.

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 Scantiness 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 Scantiness 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.*

DoB.

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 *Psalme* (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.*

Vide Calv. Bucer. Heresback & alios in prefat. suis in hunc Psalmum. etc. Tho. Cartwright. in Prov. 19. 20.

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 signifieth, or a Threat, or a Promise, 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 Occasion) 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 inelegant, read *Latum nimis*, *Too broad*. And indeed it's too broad for us poor shallow weak Creatures, fully either to comprehend, or fulfil; And so the *Hebrew* word **רָחֵב** signifieth an *Excess* in whatever thing it's added to; and accordingly our Translators, 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*.

Vide Martini-
um, lib. 2.
Cum nomine
adjectivo efficit
superlativum.
Schinler in vo-
ce רָחֵב.

But still you will ask, But 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 *Hebrew*, *Greek*, and vulgar *Latine* 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 *Pigbius* 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

* Climacus.
Talmudici
fixerunt
quemlibet lo-
cum posse 70
modis narra-
ri. Bucer.

See Baucrofts
Sermon at P.
Cross.

in as broad and large a Sense, as (all things considered) it will bear. And if I do so in expounding this place, it self will bear me out in it; for it saith, 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 Begger.

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.

It's Life, v. 93. Comfort of Life, v. 50. End of Life, v. 17. the Way, v. 35. Rule, v. 30. Counsellor, v. 24. a chief Gift, v. 29. *Better than thousands of Gold and Silver*, v. 72.

It's our Love, v. 47, 48. Joy, v. 14. Delight, v. 16. Choise, v. 30. Desire, v. 20, 40. Hope, v. 43. Trust, v. 42. Fear, v. 120, 161. that which he longs for, v. 40, 82. seeks after, v. 45, 94. cleaves to. v. 31. It's his All.

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* *ζῶν ἡ ἐνεργής*, *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, *Nondum, in-* to whom he wrote. But now it might be some would say: *quit, mortua* But why trouble you us with a command of *David*, so long time *est vex illa* since spoken to the Men of his Generation, and now by this *Dei vocantis* time out of Date and antiquated? Which kind of Objection *nos, Hodie,* the Apostle takes away, as though he should say; Nay, but do *&c. Pareus in* 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 Acl's* 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, *¶* 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 as 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 *¶* (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 stedfast 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 it self 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 saith of God himself, *Isa.* 46. 4. *And even to Old-age I am he, 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 knowledge 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.

II. 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.

There I shall have full peace to entertain my self, a plentiful store of Ingredients to every Malady, to quiet every doubt, &c. as Dr. Hammond paraphraseth the Text.

I. 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 stinking 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 Plaster useth not to cover many Sores; and truly for outward Matters, scarce any Man hath a Plaster 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 Oyntment 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 slanderous 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 perished 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 *Catbolicon*, one Receipt for all. *Thy Law* in the singular number: But what of it? What can one Law do to so many Evils? He tells you it's *יְשׁוּעָה*. 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, *Isa. 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's a deadly Wound; yea, and can heal those which we had got, when carelessly we had not it about

*Delectationes
in plurali, sig-
nificant nullum
esse genus
doloris, cui non
inveniatnr in
verbo Dei re-
medium.
Mollerus.*

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 Margent *Restoring*: But the same Phrase in the Original is used, Lam. 1. 16. מְבַרֵךְ מְשִׁיב נַפְשִׁי, 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 *convert*; 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. Proportionable 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 it בעש משיבת 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 סוף of it. For the Reason of it:

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

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 fore-see 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 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 infinitely impropportionable (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, saith in the Superlative רחבה מאד *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 *furnished from him*. Well then, this is the End of God's Word, perfectly to furnish and supply us all in our righteous, and chearful 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

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 saith, 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.

Use. 1.

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.

Use. 2.

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* לב רחב largeness or broadness of heart, (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 said, 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*, *Physick*, *Law-studies*, or the like ; would they but hear

Use. 3.

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me, I should now shew them a Field broad and large enough, in which they might expatiate. *En latifundium!* 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 *poysoned 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 *Luther* 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 Gods Word will.

1. *Biblia sepo-
volvare.* 2. *Se-
rio orare.*
3. *Semper esse
discipulum.*

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 *Carlostadius*, that he was nine years a Doctor, before he had read the Scripture. I my self 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 saith, that they scarce read any other Book than the Scripture. I would not straiten Christians so in either kind; but truly I should desire you all to

*Anima in
Antibarb.*

Dryfini.

Sands.

inlarge

enlarge 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 Handfuls, 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 *ἐχωρεῖ* 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 saith

in another case, 2 Cor. 6. 12. We are *straitned in our own Bowels*, in our own Hearts. The more the pity, and the more our loss, that so much precious Liqueur 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 Carelesness, it will be *Lata negligentia*.

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 loss 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 unstedfast as Waters; and as it is said in another kind, *the face* of such Waters is soon *straitned*. 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 straitned, 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 saith is so *exceeding broad*. As, Hath God straitned me in my estate? Take that out of the *breadth of Gods 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 straitned 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 Gods *Commandment is exceeding broad*, *Vſe 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 Gods love *passing knowledge*, *Ephes.* 3. 18, 19. And there is such a breadth and extent in Gods promises that they can cover our greatest sores, reach the furthest out-liers if they would but come in. Boaz hath a *skirt* to cast upon Ruth, though a poor *band-*

No cogitemus ad nos non persinere promissionem: sicut enim perpetuo durat expectatio verbum (quod primum erat) ita latum est valde i.e. unicuique ad omnia tempora, & aeternitas & ad omnes homines, qui fide hanc doctrinam amplectuntur, se extendit. M.

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 *profaness* that *Esau* had, thou cryest *bless 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.

ne cogitemus fieri posse, ut nos in medio cursu deficiamus. Molerus.

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.*