

themselves to commit iniquity :’ and are not God’s commands more easy to obey ? Chrysoftom faith, virtue is easier than vice ; temperance is less burdesome than drunkenness. Some have gone with less pains to heaven, than others have to hell.

Consideration 2. God commands nothing but what is beneficial, Deut. x. 12, 13. ‘ O Israel, what doth the Lord require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and to keep his statutes, which I command thee this day, for thy good ?’ To obey God, is not so much our duty as our privilege : his commands carry meat in the mouth of them. He bids us repent ; and why ? that our sins may be blotted out, Acts ii. 19. He commands us to believe ; and why ? that we may be saved, Acts xvi. 31. There is love in every command : as if a king should bid one of his subjects dig in a gold mine, then take the gold to himself.

2. *Earnest supplication.* Implore the help of the Spirit to carry us on in obedience : God’s Spirit makes obedience easy and delightful. If the load-stone draw the iron, now it is not hard for the iron to move : If God’s Spirit quicken and draw the heart, now it is not hard to obey. When a gale of the Spirit blows, now we go full sail in obedience. Turn that promise into a prayer, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. ‘ I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.’ The promise encourageth us, the Spirit enables us to obedience.

OF LOVE.

THE rule of obedience being the moral law, comprehended in the Ten Commandments, the next question is,

Qu. XLII. *What is the sum of the Ten Commandments ?*

Ans. The sum of the Ten Commandments is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and our neighbour as ourselves.

Deut. vi. 5. ‘ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.’ The duty called for, is love, yea, the strength of love, ‘ with all thy heart :’ God will lose none of our love. Love is the soul of religion, and that which goes to the right constituting a Christian : love is the queen of the graces ; it shines and sparkles in God’s eye, as the precious stones did on the breast-plate of Aaron.

Qu. 1. *What is love ?*

Ans. It is an holy fire kindled in the affections, whereby a Christian is carried out strongly after God as the supreme God.

Q. 2. *What is the antecedent of love to God?*

Ans. The antecedent of love is knowledge: the Spirit shines upon the understanding, and discovers these orient beauties in God, his wisdom, holiness, mercy; and these are the *lenocinium*, the load-stone to entice and draw the love to God. *Ignoti nulla cupido*: such as know not God cannot love him; if the sun be set in the understanding, there must needs be night in the affections.

Qu. 3. *Wherein doth the formal nature of love consist?*

Ans. The nature of love is in delighting in the objects: *Complacentia amantis in amato*, Aquin. This is our loving God, our taking delight in him, Pf. lxxiii. 4. 'Delight thyself in the Lord;' as a bride delights herself in her jewels. Grace changeth a Christian's aims and delights.

Qu. 4. *How must our love to God be qualified?*

Ans. 1. If it be a sincere love, we must love God with all our heart: in the text, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God [Heb. *Becol leuanca*] with all thy heart.' God will have the whole heart; we must not divide our love between God and sin? the true mother would not have the child divided, nor will God have the heart divided; it must be the whole heart.

2. We must love God *propter se*, for himself, for his own intrinsic excellencies: we must love him for his loveliness: *Meretricius est amor plus annulum quam sponsum amare*; "It is an harlot's love, to love the portion more than the person." Hypocrites love God because he gives them corn and wine: we must love God for himself; for those shining perfections which are in him. Gold is loved for itself.

3. We must love God with all our might; in the Hebrew text, our vehemency; we must love God, *quoad posse*, as much as we are able. Christians should be like Seraphims burning in holy love: we can never love God so much as he deserves; the angels in heaven cannot love God so much as he deserves.

4. Love to God must be active in its sphere: love is an industrious affection, it sets the head a studying for God, hands a working, feet a-running in the ways of his commandments; it is called the labour of love, 1 Theff. i. 3. Mary Magdalene loved Christ, and poured her ointments on him. We think we never do enough for the person whom we love.

5. Love to God must be superlative. God is the quintessence of beauty, a whole paradise of delight; and he must have a priority in our love. Our love to God must be above all things besides, as the oil swims above the water: we must love God above estate, relations. Great is the love to relations: there is a story in the French Academy, of a daughter, who, when her father was condemned to die by a famine, gave him suck with her own breasts. But our love to God must be above father and

mother, Matth. x. 37. We may give the creature the milk of our love, God must have the cream; the spouse keeps the juice of her pomegranates for Christ, Cant. viii. 2.

6. Our love to God must be constant, like the fire the Vestal virgins kept in Rome, which did not go out: love must be like the motion of the pulse, it beats as long as there is life, Cant. viii. 7. 'Many waters cannot quench love,' not the waters of persecution, Eph. iii. 17. 'Rooted in love.' A branch withers that doth not grow on a root; that love may not die, it must be well rooted.

Qu. 5. *What are the visible signs of our love to God?*

Ans. 1. If we love God, then our desire is after him, Isa. xxvi. 8. 'The desire of our soul is to thy name.' He who loves God, breathes after communion with him, Psal. xlii. 2. My soul thirsts for the living God.' Persons in love desire to be often conferring together; he who loves God, desires to be much in his presence; he loves the ordinances, they are the glass where the glory of God is resplendent; in the ordinances we meet with him whom our soul loves, we have God's smiles and whispers, and some foretastes of heaven. Such as have no desire after ordinances, have no love to God.

2. The second visible sign: he who loves God, cannot take contentment in any thing without him. An hypocrite who pretends to love God, give him but corn and wine, and he can be content without God: but a soul fired with love to God, cannot be without him: lovers faint away, if they have not a sight of the object loved. A gracious soul can want health, but not want God, who is the health of his countenance, Pf. xliii. 5. If God should say to a soul that entirely loves him, take thy ease, swim in pleasure, solace thyself in the delights of the world, but thou shalt not enjoy my presence; this would not content the soul. Nay, if God should say, I will let thee be taken up to heaven, but I will retire into a withdrawing-room, and thou shalt not see my face; this would not content the soul, it is an hell to want God. The philosopher saith, there can be no gold without the influence of the sun: there can be no golden joy in the soul without God's sweet presence and influence.

3. The third visible sign: he who loves God, hates that which would separate between him and God, and that is sin. Sin makes God hide his face; it is like an incendiary, which parts chief friends: therefore the keenness of a Christian's hatred is set against sin, Pf. cxix. 128. 'I hate every false way.' Antipathies can never be reconciled: one cannot love health, but he must hate poison; so we cannot love God but we must hate sin, which would destroy our communion with him.

4. The fourth visible sign is sympathy; friends that love, do grieve for the evils which befall each other. Homer describing

Agamemnon's grief, when he was forced to sacrifice his daughter, brings in all his friends weeping with him, and accompanying him to the sacrifice in mourning: lovers grieve together; if we have true love in our heart to God, we cannot but grieve for those things which grieve him: we shall lay to heart his dishonours; the luxury, drunkenness, contempt of God and religion, Psal. cxix. 136. 'Rivers of tears run down mine eyes,' &c. Some speak of sins of others, and make a laughing at them; sure they have no love to God, who can laugh at that which grieves his Spirit. Doth he love his father, who can laugh to hear him reproached?

5. The fifth visible sign: he who loves God, labours to render him lovely to others; he not only admires God; but speaks in his praises, that he may allure and draw others to be in love with God. She that is in love will commend her lover: the love-sick spouse extols Christ, she makes a panegyric oration of his worth, that she might persuade others to be in love with him, Cant. v. 11. 'His head is as the most fine gold.' True love to God cannot be silent, it will be elegant in setting forth God's renown: no better sign of loving God, than by making him appear lovely, and so drawing profelytes to him.

The sixth visible sign: he who loves God, weeps bitterly for his absence. Mary comes weeping, 'They have taken away my Lord,' John xx. 2. One cries, my health is gone; another, my estate is gone; but he who is a lover of God, cries out, my God is gone, I cannot enjoy him whom I love. What can all worldly comforts do, when once God is absent? It is like a funeral banquet, where there is much meet but no cheer, Job xxx. 28. 'I went mourning without the fun.' If Rachel mourned so for the loss of her children, what vail or pencil can shadow out the sorrow of that Christian who hath lost God's sweet presence? such a soul pours forth floods of tears, and, while it is lamenting, seems to say thus to God, Lord, thou art in heaven, hearing the melodious songs and triumphs of angels; but I sit here in the valley of tears, weeping because thou art gone. O when wilt thou come to me, and revive me with the light of thy countenance? Or, Lord, if thou wilt not come to me, let me come to thee, where I shall have a perpetual smile of thy face in heaven, and shall never more complain, *My beloved hath withdrawn himself.*

7. The seventh visible sign: he who loves God, is willing to do and suffer for him. He subscribes to God's commands; he submits to his will. *First,* He subscribes to God's commands: if God bids him mortify sin, love his enemies, be crucified to the world; he obeys. It is a vain thing for a man to say he loves God, and flights his commands. *Secondly,* He submits to God's will: if God will have him suffer for him, he doth not

dispute, but obey, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. 'Love endureth all things.' Love made Christ fuller for us, and love will make us suffer for him. It is true, every Christian is not a martyr, but he hath a spirit of martyrdom in him; he hath a disposition of mind to suffer, if God call him to it, 2 Tim. iv. 6. 'I am ready to be offered up:' not only the sufferings were ready for Paul, but he was ready for the sufferings. Origen choosed rather to live despised in Alexandria, than with Plotinus to deny the faith, and be great in the prince's favour, Rev. xii. 11. Many say they love God but will not suffer the loss of any thing for him. If Christ should have said to us, I love you well, you are dear to me, but I cannot suffer for you, I cannot lay down my life for you; we should have questioned his love very much: and may not the Lord question ours, when we pretend love to him, but will endure nothing for his sake?

Use 1. What shall we say to them who have not a drachm of love in their hearts to God? they have their life from him, yet do not love him. God spreads their table every day, yet they do not love him: sinners dread God as a judge, but do not love him as a father. All the strength in the angels cannot make the heart love God; judgments will not do it; only omnipotent grace, can make a stony heart melt in love. How sad is it to be void of love to God? when the body is cold, and hath no heat in it, it is a sign of death: he is spiritually dead, who hath no heat of love in his heart to God. Shall such live with God, that doth not love him? will God lay an enemy in his bosom? Such as will not be drawn with cords of love, shall be bound in chains of darkness.

Use 2. Let us be persuaded to love God with all our heart and might: O let us take our love off from other things, and place it upon God. Love is the heart of religion, the fat of the offering: it is the grace which Christ enquires most after, John xxi. 15. 'Peter, lovest thou me?' Love makes all our services acceptable, it is the musk that perfumes them. It is not so much duty, as love to duty, God delights in; therefore serving and loving God are put together, Isa. lvi. 6. It is better to love him, than to serve him; obedience without love, is like wine without the spirit. O then, be persuaded to love God with all your heart and might. To persuade to this virgin affection of love.

1. It is nothing but your love God desires. The Lord might have demanded your children to be offered in sacrifice: he might have bid you cut and lance yourselves, or lain in hell a while; but he only desires your love, he would only have this flower. Is this an hard request, to love God? was ever any debt easier paid than this? is it any labour for the wife to love her husband? love is delightful. *Non potest amor esse, et dulcis non esse*, Bern.

What is there in our love, that God should desire it? Why should a king desire the love of a woman that is in debt and diseased? God doth not want our love. There are angels enough in heaven to adore and love him. What is God the better for our love? It adds not the least cubit to his essential blessedness. God doth not need our love, yet seeks it. Why doth God desire us to give him our heart? Prov. xxiii. 26. Not that he needs our heart, but that he may make it better.

2. Great will be our advantage, if we love God. God doth not court our love, that we should lose it, 1 Cor. ii. 6. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' If you will love God, you shall have such a reward as exceeds your faith. God will betrothe you to himself in the dearest love, Hof. ii. 19. 'I will betrothe thee unto me for ever, in loving-kindness and mercies,' Zeph. iii. 17. 'The Lord thy God will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love.' If you love God, he will interest you in all his riches and dignities, he will give you heaven and earth for your dowry, he will set a crown on your head. Vespasian the emperor, gave a great reward to a woman who came to him, and professed she loved him; God gives a crown of life to them that love him, James i. 12.

3. Love is the only grace that shall live with us in heaven. In heaven we shall need no repentance, because we have no sin; no faith, because we shall see God face to face: but love to God shall abide for ever. 'Love never faileth,' 1 Cor. xiii. 8. How should we nourish this grace, which shall outlive all the graces, and run parallel with eternity!

4. Our love to God is a sign of his love to us, 1 John iv. 19. 'We love him, because he first loved us.' By nature we have no love to God; we have hearts of stone, Ezek. xxxvi. 1. And how can any love be in hearts of stone? Our loving him is from his loving us. If the glass burn, it is because the sun hath shined on it, else it could not burn: if our hearts burn in love, it is a sign the Sun of righteousness hath shined upon us.

Q. How shall we do, to love God aright?

Ans. 1. Wait on the preaching of the word. As faith comes by hearing, so doth love: the word sets forth God, in his incomparable excellencies; it doth decypher and pencil him out in all his glory, and a sight of his beauty inflames love.

2. Beg of God, that he will give you a heart to love him. When king Solomon asked wisdom of God, the speech pleased the Lord, 1 Kings iii. 10. So, when thou criest to God, *Lord, give me a heart to love thee, it is my grief I can love thee no more*; sure this prayer pleaseth the Lord, and he will pour out his Spirit upon thee, whose golden oil will make the lamp of thy love burn bright.

3. You who have love to God, keep it flaming upon the altar of your heart. Love, as fire, will be ready to go out, Rev. ii. 4. 'Thou hast left thy first love.' Through neglect of duty, or too much love of the world, our love to God will cool. O preserve your love to God: as you would be careful to preserve the natural heat in your body, so be careful to preserve the heat of love to God. Love is like oil to the wheels, it quickens us in God's service. When you find your love abate and cool, use all means for quickening: when the fire is going out, you throw on fuel: when the flame of love is going out, make use of the ordinances as sacred fuel to keep the fire of your love burning.

OF THE PREFACE TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

EXOD. xx. 1, 2. *And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, &c.*

Qu. XLII. *WHAT is the preface to the Ten Commandments?*

Ans. The preface to the Ten Commandments is, 'I am the Lord thy God.'

Where observe, 1. The preface to the preface, 'God spake all these words, saying,' 2. The preface itself to the commandments, 'I am the Lord thy God.'

I begin with the first, the preface to the preface, 'God spake all these words, saying,' &c. This is like the sounding of a trumpet before a solemn proclamation, [*God spake*] other parts of the Bible are said to be uttered by the mouth of the holy prophets, Luke i. 70. but here God spake in his own person.

Q. *How may we understand this [God spake] he hath no bodily parts or organs of speech?*

Ans. God made some intelligible sound, or formed a voice in the air, which was to the Jews as God's very speaking to them. In the text, 1. The lawgiver, God, [*God spake.*] 2. The law itself, [*all these words.*]

1. The lawgiver, [*God spake.*] There are two things requisite in a lawgiver. *First*, Wisdom. Laws are founded upon reason; and he must be wise that makes laws. God, in this respect, is most fit to be a lawgiver; 'he is wise in heart,' Job ix. 4. he hath a monopoly of wisdom, 1 Tim. i. 17. 'The only wise God.' Therefore he is the fittest to enact and constitute laws. *Secondly*, The second thing requisite in a lawgiver