

of them. All God's judgments set themselves in battle-array against the disobedient. (1.) Temporal judgments, Lev. xxvi. 15, 16. (2.) Eternal. 'Christ comes in flames of fire, to take vengeance on them that obey not,' 2 Theff. i. 8. Such as break the golden chain of God's commands, God hath iron chains to hold them; chains of darkness, in which the devils are held, Jude 6. As long as there is eternity, God hath time enough to reckon with all the wilful breakers of his commandments.

Qu. *How shall we do to keep God's commandments?*

Ans/. Beg the Spirit of God. We cannot do it in our own strength; 'The Spirit must work in us both to will and to do,' Phil. ii. 13. When the loadstone draws, the iron moves; when God's Spirit draws, then we run in the way of God's commandments.

OF THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

EXOD. xx. 7. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

THIS commandment has two parts: *First*, A negative expressed, That we must not take God's name in vain, viz. Cast any reflection and dishonour on God's name. *Secondly*, An affirmative implied, That we should have a care to reverence and honour his name; but that I shall speak to more fully, when I come to the first petition in the Lord's prayer, 'Hallowed be thy name.' I shall now speak of the negative expressed in this commandment, or the prohibition 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.' The tongue is an unruly member, all the parts and organs of the body are defiled with sin, as every branch of wormwood is bitter; 'But the tongue is full of deadly poison,' James iii. 8. There is no one member of the body doth more break forth into God's dishonour, than the tongue; therefore this commandment is a bridle for the tongue, it is to bind the tongue to its good behaviour; 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; and this prohibition is backed with a strong reason, 'For the Lord will not hold him guiltless:' that is, he will not hold him innocent. Men of place and eminency take it heinously to have their names abused, and will inflict heavy penalties on the offenders. 'The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain;' God looks upon him as a criminal person, and he will severely punish him. Well then, the thing to be insist-

ed on, is, That great care must be had, that the holy and reverend name of God be not profaned by us, or taken in vain.

Qu. *How many ways may we be said to take God's name in vain?*

Ans. I. We take God's name in vain, when we speak slightly and irreverently of his name, Deut. xxviii. 58. 'That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God.' David speaks of God with reverence, Psal. l. 1. 'The Lord even the most mighty God,' Psal. lxxxiii. 18. 'That men may know, that thou whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most High over all the earth.' And the disciples, speaking of Jesus, did hallow his name, Luke xxiv. 19. 'Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people.' When we mention the names of kings, we give them some title of honour, as 'excellent majesty;' so should we speak of God with such sacred reverence, as is due to the infinite Majesty of heaven. When we speak slightly of God or his works, God interprets it to be a contempt, and it is a taking his name in vain.

II. When we profess God's name, but do not live answerably to it, it is a taking his name in vain, Titus i. 16. 'In words they profess Christ, but in works they deny him.' When men's tongues and lives cross one another; when, under a mask of profession, men will lie and cozen, and be unclean, these make use of God's name to abuse him, they take his name in vain: *Simulata sanctitas duplex iniquitas*, Rom. ii. 24. 'The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you,' When the heathen saw the Jews, who professed to be God's people, to be scandalous, this made them speak evil of God, and hate the true religion for their sakes.

III. We take God's name in vain, when we use God's name in idle discourse. God is not to be spoken of but with an holy awe upon our hearts; and to bring in God's name at every turn when we never think of God, to say, O God! or, O Christ! or, As God shall save my soul; this is taking God's name in vain. And, how many are guilty in this kind! though they have God in their mouths, they have the devil in their hearts. It is a wonder that fire doth not come out from the Lord and consume them, as it did Nadab and Abihu, Lev. x. 2.

IV. We take God's name in vain, when we worship him with our lips, but not our hearts, this is to abuse God. 'Tis the heart which God calls for, Prov. xxxiii. 26. 'My son, give me thy heart.' The heart is the chief thing in religion; it draws the will and affections after it, as the *Primum mobile* draws the other orbs along with it. The heart is the incense that perfumes our holy things, it is the altar that sanctifies the offering.

Now, when we seem to worship God, but withdraw our heart from him, we take his name in vain, Isa. xxix. 13. 'This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips they do honour me, but they have removed their heart from me.'

1st Hypocrites take God's name in vain, their religion is a lie; they seem to honour God, but they do not love him: their hearts go after their lusts, Hof. iv. 8. 'They set their hearts on their iniquity.' Their eyes are lifted up to heaven, but their hearts are rooted in the earth, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. These are devils in Samuel's mantle, they take God's name in vain.

2dly, Superstitious persons take God's name in vain. They bring God a few ceremonies which he never appointed; they bow at Christ's name and cringe to the altar, but hate and persecute God's image; these take his name in vain.

V. We take God's name in vain, when we pray to him, but do not believe in him. Faith is the great grace that honours God, Rom. iv. 20. 'Abraham being strong in faith, gave glory to God;' but when we pray to God, but do not mix faith with our prayer, we take his name in vain. I may pray, (faith a Christian) but I shall be never the better; I question whether God doth hear, or whether he will grant. This is to dishonour God, and take his name in vain; this is to make God either an idol, that he hath ears and hears not; or a liar, who promiseth mercy to the penitent, but will not make good his word, John v. 10. 'He that believeth not, hath made God a liar.' When the apostle saith, 'How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?' Rom. v. 34. the meaning is, How shall they call on God aright, and not believe in him? but how many do call on God who do not believe in him? they ask for pardon, but unbelief in whispers, their sins are greater than can be forgiven. Thus to pray and not believe, is to take God's name in vain, and is an high dishonouring of God, as if he were not such a God as the word represents him. 'Plenteous in mercy to all that call upon him,' Psal. lxxxvi. 7.

VI. We take God's name in vain, when we in any kind profane and abuse his word. Now the word of God is profaned, *First*, In general when profane men meddle with it. It is unseemly and unbecoming a wicked man to talk of sacred things, of God's providence, and the decrees of God and heaven; it was very distasteful to Christ, to hear the devil quote scripture, 'It is written.' To hear a wicked man that wallows in sin, talk of God and religion, is offensive: it is the taking of God's name in vain. When the word of God is in the drunkard's mouth, it is like a pearl hung upon a hog. Under the law the lips of the leper were to be covered, Lev. xii. 45. The lips of a profane, drunken minister ought to be covered, he is unfit to speak of God's word, because he takes God's name in vain.

But, *2dly*, more particularly they profane God's word, and take his name in vain,

1. That speak scornfully of God's word, 2 Pet. iii. 4. Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.' As if they had said, here is much ado the preachers make about the day of judgment, when all must be called to account for their works; but where is the appearing of that day? we see things keep their course, and continue as they were since the creation; thus they speak scornfully of scripture, and take God's name in vain. If sentence be not speedily executed, men scorn and deride; but, Prov. xix. 29. 'Judgments are prepared for scorers.'

2. That speak jestingly. Such are they who sport and play with scripture; 'tis playing with fire. Some cannot be merry, unless they make bold with God; they make the scriptures an harp to drive away the spirit of sadness, Eusebius relates of one who took a piece of scripture to jest with, God struck him with frenzy. To play with scripture shews a very profane heart. Some will rather lose their souls, than lose their jests; these are guilty of taking God's name in vain. Tremble at it; such as mock at scripture, God will mock at their calamity, Prov. i. 26.

3. They abuse God's word, and take his name in vain, that bring scripture to countenance any sin. The word, which was written for the suppressing of sin, some bring it for the defending of sin. For instance, *First*, If we tell a covetous man of his sin, that covetousness is idolatry, he will bring scripture to maintain his sin; hath not God bid me live in a calling? 'Six days shalt thou labour.' Hath not God said that 'he who provides not for his family is worse than an infidel?' Thus he goes to support his covetousness with scripture, *Ans.* It is true, God hath bid thee take pains in a calling, but not hurt thy neighbour; he hath bid thee provide for thy family, but not by oppression, Lev. xxv. 14. 'Ye shall not oppress one another.' He hath bid thee look after a livelihood, but not with the neglect of thy soul; he hath bid thee lay up thy treasure in heaven, Matth. vi. 20. He hath commanded thee to lay out, as well as lay up: to sow seeds of charity on the backs and bellies of the poor, which perhaps thou neglectest; so that to bring scripture to uphold thee in thy sin, is an high profaning of scripture, and a taking of God's name in vain. *Second* instance, if we tell a man of his inordinate passions, That he may be drunk as well with rash anger, as wine; he will bring scripture to justify it: doth not the word say, 'Be angry and sin not,' Eph. iv. 26. 'Tis true, that anger is good, which is mixed with zeal; then anger is without sin, when it is against sin: but thou dost sin in thine anger; thou speakest unad-

vifedly with thy lips ; thy tongue is fet on fire of hell : and to bring fcripture to defend thy fin, is to profane fcripture, and to take God's name in vain.

4. They abufe the word, and take God's name in vain, who adulterate the word, and wreat it in a wrong fenfe. Such are heretics, who put their own glofs upon fcripture, and make it fpeak that which the Holy Ghofl never meant. For inftance, *First*, When we expound thofe texts literally, which are meant figuratively. Thus the Pharifees were guilty, when God faid in the law, ' Thou fhalt bind the commandments for a fign upon thy hand, and they fhall be as frontlets between thine eyes,' Deut. vi. 8. The pharifees took it in a literal fenfe ; they got two fcrolls of parchment, wherein they wrote the two tables, putting one on their left-arms, and binding the other to their eye-brows : thus they wreat the fcripture, and took God's name in vain. That fcripture was to be underftood fpiritually, and by a figure : God meant, by binding his laws upon their hands, that they fhould meditate on his law, and put it in practice ; and fo the papifts expound that fcripture, " This is my body," literally, of the very body of Chrift ; then, when Chrift gave the bread, he fhould have had two bodies, one in the bread, and the other out of the bread ; whereas Chrift meant it figuratively, it is a fign of my body. Thus they, by wreat the fcripture to a wrong fenfe, profane it, and take God's name in vain. *2dly*, When we expound thofe fcriptures figuratively and allegorically, which the Holy Ghofl means literally. For example, Chrift faid to Peter, ' Launch out into the deep, and make a draught,' Luke v. 4. This text is fpo-ken in a plain, literal fenfe of launching out the fhip ; but the papifts take it in a myftical and allegorical : this text proves, fay they, that the pope : which is Peter's fucceffor, fhall launch forth and catch the ecclefiaftical and political power over the weft parts of the world ; this, fay they, was meant when Chrift bade Peter launch out into the deep : but I think the papifts have launched out too far beyond the meaning of the text. When men ftrain their wits, to wreat the word to fuch a fenfe as pleafeth them, they do profane God's word, and highly take his name in vain.

VII. We take God's name in vain, when we fwear by his name. Many feldom name God's name but in oaths ; for this fin the land mourns, Matth. v. 34. ' Swear not at all,' that is, rashly and finfully, fo as to take God's name in vain ; not but that in fome cafes it is lawful to take an oath before a magiftrate, Deut. vi. 13. ' Thou fhalt fear the Lord thy God and ferve him, and fwear by his name.' Heb. vi. 16. ' An oath for confirmation is the end of all ftrife :' but when Chrift

faith, 'swear not at all;' he forbids such a swearing as takes God's name in vain. There is a threefold swearing forbidden;

1. Vain-swearing; when men in their ordinary discourse let fly oaths. Some will go to excuse their swearing. It is a coarse wool that will take no dye, and a bad sin indeed that hath no excuse.

Excuse 1. I swear little trifling oaths; as *Faith*, or, *By the Mass*. *Ans.* The devil hath two false glasses, which he sets before mens eyes; the one is a little glass, in which the sin appears so small, that it can hardly be seen; this glass the devil sets before mens eyes when they are going to commit sin; the other is a great magnifying glass, wherein sin appears so big, that it cannot be forgiven; the devil sets this before mens eyes when they have sinned. Thou that sayest, sin is small, when God shall open the eye of thy conscience, then thou wilt see it great, and be ready to despair. But to answer this plea, thou sayest, they are but small oaths; but Christ forbids vain oaths, 'Swear not at all:' If God will reckon with us for idle words, shall not idle oaths be put in the account-book?

Excuse 2. But I swear to the truth. See how this harlot-sin would paint itself with an excuse. *Ans.* 1. Tho' it be true, yet if it be a rash oath, 'Tis sinful. Besides, 2. He that swears commonly, it cannot be avoided but sometimes he must swear more than is true: as, where much water runs, some gravel or mud will pass along with the water; so, where there is much swearing some lies will run along with the oaths.

Excuse 3. But I shall not be believed, unless I seal up my words with an oath. *Ans.* 1. A man that is honest will be believed without an oath; his bare word carries authority with it, and is as good as letters testimonial. 2. I answer, He who swears, the more he swears, the less others will believe him. *Juris credit minus:* thou art a swearer. Another thinks an oath weighs very light with thee, thou carest not what thou swearest; and the more thou swearest the less he believes thee. He will trust thy bond, but not thy oath.

Excuse 4. But it is a custom of swearing I have gotten, and I hope God will forgive me. *Ans.* Tho' among men custom carries it, and is pleadable in law; yet it is not so in the case of sin, custom here is no plea. Thou hast got an habit of swearing, and canst not leave it; is this an excuse? it is a thing well done, because it is commonly done? this is so far from being an excuse, that it is an aggravation of sin. As if one that had been accused for killing a man, should plead with the judge to spare him, because it was his custom to murder: this is an aggravation of the offence, so is it here; therefore all excuses for this sin of vain swearing are taken away. Dare not to live in this sin, it is a taking of God's name in vain.

2. Vile swearing, horrid prodigious oaths not to be named.

Swearers, like mad-dogs, fly in the face of heaven; and when they are angered spue out their blasphemous venom on God's sacred Majesty. Some in gaming, when things go cross, and the dice run against them, their tongues run as fast against God in oaths and curses: and tell them of their sin, go to bring home these asses from going astray, and it is but pouring oil on the flame, they will swear the more. St. Austin saith, "They do no less sin who blaspheme Christ now in heaven, than the Jews did, who crucified him on earth." Swearers profane Christ's blood, and tear his name. An harlot told her husband, that of her three sons, there was but one of them his: the father dying, desired the executors to find out which was the true and natural son, and all his estate he bequeathed to him. The father being dead: the executors set up his corpse against a tree, and delivering to every one of these three sons a bow and arrows, telling them, that he who could shoot nearest the father's heart should have all the estate. The two bastard-sons shot as near as they could to his heart, but the third did feel nature so work in him, that he refused to shoot at his father's heart: whereupon the executors judged him to be the true son, and gave all the estate to him. Such as are the true children of God fear to shoot at him; but such as are bastards, and not sons, care not tho' they shoot at him in heaven with their oaths and curses. And that which makes swearing yet more heinous is when men have resolved upon any wicked action, they bind themselves with an oath to do it, such were they, Acts xxiii. 12. who bound themselves with an oath and curse to kill Paul. To commit sin is bad enough; but to swear we will commit sin, is an high profaning of God's name, and is as it were to call God approve our sin.

3. *Forswearing*: this is an heaven-daring sin, Lev. xix. 12. 'Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shall ye profane my name.' Perjury is a calling God to witness to a lie. It is said of Philip of Macedon, he would swear and unswear, as might stand best with his interest. Jer. iv. 2. 'Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.' In righteousness, therefore it must not be an unlawful oath. In judgment, therefore, it must not be a rash oath. In truth, therefore it must not be a false oath. Among the Scythians, if a man did forswear himself, he was to have his head stricken off: because if perjury were allowed, there would be no living in a commonwealth; it would take away all faith and truth from among men. The perjurer is in as bad a case as the witch; for by a false oath, he binds his soul fast to the devil. In forswearing or taking a false oath in a court, there are many sins linked together; *plurima peccata in uno*: for besides the taking God's name in vain, the perjurer is a thief; by

his false oath he robs the innocent of his right : he is a perverter of justice ; he doth not only sin himself, but occasions the jury to give a false verdict, and the judge to pass an unrighteous sentence ; and sure God's judgments will find him out. When God's flying roll or curse goes over the face of the earth, into whose house doth it enter ? ' Into the house of him who swears falsely ; and it shall consume the timber and stones of his house,' Zech. v. 4. Beza relates of a perjurer, that he had no sooner taken a false oath, but he was immediately struck with an apoplexy, and never spake more, but died. O tremble at such horrid impiety !

VIII. We highly take God's name in vain, when we prefix God's name to any wicked action. I say the mentioning of God to a wicked design, is taking his name in vain. 2 Sam. xv. 7. ' I pray, (saith Absalom) let me pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord in Hebron.' This pretence of paying his vow made to God, was only to cover over his treason, v. 20. ' When ye hear the sound of the trumpet, ye shall say Absalom reigneth.' When any wicked action is baptized with the name of religion, this is taking God's name in vain. Herein the Pope is highly guilty, when he sends out his bills of excommunication or curses against the Christian ; he begins with, *In nomine Dei*, in the name of God. What a provoking sin is this ? It is to do the devil's work, and put God's name to it.

IX. We take God's name in vain, when we use our tongues any way to the dishonour of God's name ; as when we use railing, or curse in our passions ; especially, when we wish a curse upon ourselves if a thing be not so, when we know it to be false. I have read of one who wished his body might rot, if that which he said, was not true ; and soon after his body rotted, and he became a loathsome spectacle.

X. We take God's name in vain, by rash and unlawful vows. There is a good vow when a man binds himself by a vow to do that which the word binds him to ; as, if he be sick, he vows, if God restore him, he will live a more strict holy life, Pf. lxxvi. 13. ' I will pay thee my vows which my lips have uttered when I was in trouble.' But *Voveri non debet quod Deo displicet* : Such a vow should not be made, as is displeasing to God ; as to vow voluntary poverty, as your friars ; or, to vow to live in nunneries. Jephtha's vow was rash and unlawful ; he vowed to the Lord to sacrifice that to him which he met with next, and it was his daughter, Judges xi. 31. He did ill to make the vow, and worse to keep it ; he became guilty of the breach of the third and sixth commandments.

* XI. When we speak evil of God, now we take his name in vain, Numb. xxii. 5. ' They spake against God.' Qu. *How do we speak against God ?* Ans. When we murmur at his pro-

vidences, as if he had dealt hardly with us. Murmuring is the accusing of God's justice, Gen. xviii. 26. 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' Murmuring springs from a bitter root, it comes from pride and discontent; it is a reproaching of God, and a high taking his name in vain. It is such a sin as God cannot bear, Numb. xiv. 27. 'How long shall I bear with this people that murmur against me?'

XII. And *lastly*, We take God's name in vain, when we falsify our promise; to say, if God spare us life we will do this, and never intend it. Our promise should be sacred and inviolable; but, if we make no reckoning to make a promise, and mention God's name in it, yet never intend to keep it, it is a double sin; it is telling a lie, and taking God's name in vain. I should come now to the affirmative implied; but hereafter—

Use. Take heed of taking God's name in vain any of these ways. Remember this commination and threatening in the text, 'The Lord will not hold him guiltless.' Here is a *meiosis*; less is said, and more intended; 'He will not hold him guiltless;' that is, he will be severely avenged on such an one. 'The Lord will not hold him guiltless.' Here the Lord speaks after the manner of a judge, who holds the court of assize; the judge here, is God himself; the accusers, Satan, and a man's own conscience; the matter of fact is, 'Taking God's name in vain;' the malefactor accused is found guilty, and condemned; 'The Lord will not hold him guiltless.' Methinks, these words, 'The Lord will not hold him guiltless,' may set a lock upon our lips, and make us afraid of speaking any thing that may redound dishonour upon God, or may be a taking his name in vain: 'The Lord will not hold him guiltless.' It may be men may hold such guiltless, when they curse, swear, speak irreverently of God: men may hold them guiltless, let them alone, not punish them. If one takes away another's good name, he shall be sure to be punished; but if he takes away God's good name, where is he that doth punish him? he that robs another of his goods, shall be put to death; but he that robs God of his glory, by oaths and curses, he is spared; but God himself will take the matter into his own hand, and he will punish him who takes his name in vain.

1. Sometimes God punishes swearing and blasphemy in this life. *1st*, Swearing. In the country of Samurtia there arose a great tempest of thunder and lightning: a soldier burst forth into swearing; but the tempest tearing up a great tree by the root, it fell upon him, and crushed him to pieces. The German history relates of a youth, who was given to swearing, and did use to invent new oaths; the Lord sent a canker into his mouth, which did eat out his tongue, whereupon he died. *2^{dly}*, blasphemy. He who did blaspheme God, the Lord caused him

to be stoned to death, Lev. xxiv. 11, 23. 'The Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed. And Moses spake to the people of Israel, that they should bring forth him that had cursed, and stone him with stones.' Olympias, an Arian bishop, reproached and blasphemed the sacred Trinity; whereupon he was suddenly struck with three flashes of lightning, which burned him to death. Felix, an officer of Julian, seeing the holy vessels which were used in the sacrament, said, in scorn of Christ, "See what precious vessels the Son of Mary is served withal." Soon after he was taken with a vomiting of blood out of his blasphemous mouth, whereof he died.

2. Or, if God should not execute judgment on the profaners of his name in this life, yet their doom is to come; God will not remit their guilt, but deliver them to Satan the goaler, to torment them for ever. If God justify a man, who shall condemn him? But if God condemn him, who shall justify him? If God lay a man in prison, where shall he get bail or main-prize? God will take his full blow at the sinner in hell, Heb. x. 31. 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'

OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. xx. 8. Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy Work: But the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any Work, thou, nor thy Son, nor thy Daughter, thy Manservant, nor thy Maid-servant, nor thy Cattle, nor thy Stranger that is within thy Gates: For in Six Days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that in them is, and rested the Seventh Day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

THIS commandment was engraven in stone by God's own finger, and it will be our comfort to have it engraven in our hearts.

The sabbath day is set apart for God's solemn worship; it is God's enclosure, and it must not be alienated to common uses. The Lord hath set a preface before this commandment, he hath put a *memento* to it, 'Remember to keep the sabbath-day holy.' This word 'remember,' shews that we are apt to forget sabbath-holiness; therefore we need a *memorandum* to put us in mind of sanctifying this day.

I shall explain the words.