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THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Thomas Watson

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The Ten Comandments

by Thomas Watson

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OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S REVEALED WILL

DEUT. 27:9, 10. Take heed and hearken, O Israel, this day thou art become the people of the Lord thy God; thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do his commandments.

QUEST. XXXIX. WHAT is the duty that God requireth of man?

ANS. Obedience to his revealed will.

It is not enough to hear God's voice, but we must obey. Obedience is a part of that honour we owe to God, Mal. 1:6., "If I be a Father, where is my honour?" Obedience carries in it the life-blood of religion. "Obey the voice of the Lord God, and do his commandments." Obedience without knowledge is blind, and knowledge without obedience is lame. Rachel was fair to look upon, but, being barren, said, "Give me children, or I die:" so, if knowledge doth not bring forth the child of obedience, it will die, 1 Sam. 15:22., "To obey is better than sacrifice." Saul thought it was enough for him to offer sacrifices, though he disobeyed God's command: no, "to obey is better than sacrifice." God disclaims sacrifice, if obedience be wanting, Jer. 7:22., "I spake not to your fathers concerning burnt-offerings, but this thing commanded I them, saying, obey my voice." Not but that God did enjoin those religious rites of worship; but the meaning is, God looked chiefly at obedience, without which, sacrifice was but devout folly. The end why God hath given us his laws, is obedience, Lev. 18:4., "Ye shall do my judgments, and keep my ordinances." Why doth a king publish an edict, but that it may be observed?

QUEST. 1. What is the rule of obedience?

Ans. The written word; that is proper obedience which the word requires; our obedience must correspond with the word, as the copy with the original. To seem to be zealous, if it be not according to the word, is not obedience, but will-worship. Popish traditions, which have no footing in the word, are abominable; and God will say, *Quis quæsit hęc?* "Who hath required this at your hand?" Isa. 1:12. The apostle condemns the worshipping of angels, which had a show of humility, Col. 2:18. The Jews might say they were loath to be so bold as to go to God in their own persons,—they would be more humble, and prostrate themselves before the angels, and desire them to

present their petitions to God: this show of humility was hateful to God, because there was no word to warrant it.

QUEST. 2. What are the right ingredients in our obedience to make it acceptable? How must it be qualified?

Ans. 1. Obedience must be *cum animi prolubio*,—free and cheerful, else it is penance, not sacrifice, Isa. 1:19., "If ye be willing and obedient." Though we serve God with weakness, let it be with willingness. You love to see your servants go cheerfully about your work. Under the law, God would have "a free-will offering," Deut. 16:10. Hypocrites obey God grudgingly, and against their will; they do *facere bonum*, but not *velle*. Cain brought his sacrifice, but not his heart. 'Tis a true rule, *Quicquid cor non facit, non fit*,—'what the heart doth not do, is not done.' Willingness is the soul of obedience; God sometimes accepts of willingness without the work, but never of the work without willingness. Cheerfulness shews that there is love in the duty; and love doth to our services, as the sun doth to the fruit, mellow and ripen them, and make them come off with a better relish.

A. 2. Obedience must be devout and fervent, Rom. 12:11., "Fervent in spirit," &c. *Quæ ebullit præ ardore*—it alludes to water that boils over—so the heart must boil over with hot affections in the service of God. The glorious angels—who, for their burning in fervour and devotion, are called Seraphims—these God chooseth to serve him in heaven. The snail under the law was unclean, because a dull slothful creature: obedience without fervency is like a sacrifice without fire. Why should not our obedience be lively and fervent? God deserves the flower and strength of our affections. Domitian would not have his statue carved in wood or iron, but in gold: lively affections make golden services. It is fervency makes obedience acceptable. Elijah was fervent in spirit, and his prayer opened and shut heaven; and

again he prayed, and fire fell on his enemies, 2 Kings 1:10. Elijah's prayer fetched fire from heaven, because, being fervent, it carried fire up to heaven; *quicquid decorum ex fide proficitur*, AUG.

A. 3. Obedience must be extensive,—it must reach to all God's commands, Ps 119:6., "Then shall I not be ashamed, (or, as it is in the Hebrew, *lo ehosh*, blush) when I have respect to all thy commandments." *Quicquid propter Deum fit æqualiter fit*. There is a stamp of divine authority upon all God's commands; and, if I obey one precept because God commands, I must obey all. True obedience runs through all duties of religion, as the blood through all the veins, or the sun through all the signs of the zodiac. A good Christian makes gospel-piety and moral equity kiss each other. Herein some discover their hypocrisy, they will obey God in some things which are more facile, and may raise their repute, but other things they leave undone, Mark 10:21., "One thing thou lackest,"—*unum deest*. Herod would hear John Baptist, but not leave his incest; some will pray, but not give alms; others will give alms, but not pray, Mat. 23:23., "Ye pay tithe of mint and annise, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith." The badger hath one foot shorter than the other: so these are shorter in some duties than in others. God likes not such partial servants, that will do some part of the work he sets them about, and leave the other undone.

A. 4. Obedience must be sincere, viz. We must aim at the glory of God in it. *Finis specificat actionem*,—in religion the end is all. The end of our obedience must not be to stop the mouth of conscience, or to gain applause or preferment, but that we may grow more like God, and bring more glory to God, 1 Cor. 10:31., "Do all to the glory of God." That which hath spoiled many glorious actions, and made them lose their reward, is, when men's aims have been wrong; the Pharisees gave alms, but blew a trumpet that they might have glory

of men, Mat. 6:2., alms should shine, but not blaze. Jehu did well in destroying the Baal-worshippers, and God commended him for it; but, because his aims were not good, (he aimed at settling himself in the kingdom,) therefore God looked upon it as no better than murder, Hos. 1:4., "I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu." O let us look to our ends in obedience! It is possible the action may be right, and not the heart, 2 Chron. 25:2., "Joash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord," but not with a perfect heart. Two things are chiefly to be eyed in obedience, the principle and the end: a child of God though he shoots short in his obedience yet he takes a right aim.

A. 5. Obedience must be in and through Christ, Eph. 1:6., "He made us accepted in the beloved." Not our obedience, but Christ's merits, procure acceptance; we must, in every part of worship tender up Christ to God in the arms of our faith; unless we serve God thus, in hope and confidence of Christ's merits, we do rather provoke God, than please him. As, when king Uzziah would offer incense without a priest, God was angry with him, and struck him with leprosy, 2 Chron. 26:16., so when we do not come to God in and through Christ, we offer up incense to God without a priest; and what can we expect but severe rebukes?

A. 6. Obedience must be constant, Ps. 106:3., "Blessed is he who doth righteousness at all times." True obedience is not like an high colour in a fit, but it is a right sanguine; it is like the fire on the altar, which was always kept burning, Lev. 6:13. Hypocrites' obedience is but for a season; it is like plastering work, which is soon washed off; but true obedience is constant; though we meet with affliction, we must go on in our obedience, Job 17:9., "The righteous shall hold on his way." We have vowed constancy; we have vowed to renounce the pomp and vanities of the world, and to fight under Christ's banner to death.

When a servant hath entered into covenant with his master, and the indentures are sealed, then he cannot go back, he must serve out his time: there are indentures drawn in baptism, and in the Lord's supper the indentures are renewed and sealed on our part, that we will be faithful and constant in our obedience, therefore we must imitate Christ, who became obedient to the death, Phil. 2:8. The crown is set upon the head of perseverance, Rev. 2:26, 28., "He that keeps my words unto the end, to him will I give" "the morning star."

Use 1st. This indicts such who live in a contradiction to this text: they have cast off the yoke of obedience, Jer. 44:16., "As for the word which thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee." God bids men pray in their family,—they live in the total neglect of it: he bids them sanctify the sabbath,—they follow their pleasures on that day: God bids them abstain from the appearance of sin,—they do not abstain from the act, they live in the act of revenge, in the act of uncleanness. This is an high contempt of God; it is rebellion, and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

QUEST. Whence is it that men do not obey God? They know their duty yet do it not?

Ans. 1. The not obeying of God is for want of faith, Isa. 53:1., *Quis credidet?* "Who hath believed our report?" Did men believe sin were so bitter that hell followed at the heels of it, would they go on in sin? Did they believe there were such a reward for the righteous that godliness were gain, would they not pursue it? But they are atheists, not fully captivated into the belief of these things; hence it is they obey not. This is Satan's master-piece,—his draw-net by which he drags millions to hell, by keeping them in infidelity; he knows, if he can but keep them from believing the truth, he is sure to keep them from obeying it.

A. 2. The not obeying God is for want of self-denial. God commands one thing, and men's lusts command another, and they will rather die than deny their lusts; now, if lust cannot be denied, God cannot be obeyed.

Use 2d. Obey God's voice. This is the beauty of a Christian.

QUEST. What are the great arguments or incentives to obedience?

Ans. 1. Obedience makes us precious to God; we shall be his favourites, Exod. 19:5., "If ye will obey my voice, ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people;" you shall be my portion, my jewels, the apple of mine eye, "I will give Egypt for thy ransom," Isa. 43:3.

A. 2. There is nothing lost by obedience. To obey God's will is the way to have our will. 1. Would we have a blessing in our estates, let us obey, Deut. 28:1, 3., "If thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord, to do all his commandments, blessed shalt thou be in the field: blessed shall be thy basket and thy store." To obey, is the best way to thrive in our estates.—2. Would we have a blessing in our souls, let us obey, Jer. 7:23., "Obey my voice, and I will be your God." My Spirit shall be your guide, sanctifier, and comforter, Heb. 5:9., "Christ became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." While we please God, we please ourselves; while we give him the duty, he gives us the dowry. We are apt to say, as Amaziah, 2 Chron. 25:9., "What shall we do for the hundred talents?" You see you lose nothing by obeying; the obedient son hath the inheritance settled on him. Obey, and you shall have a kingdom, Luke 12:32., "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Use 3d. What a sin disobedience is! 1st, It is an irrational sin. (1.) We are not able to stand it out in defiance against God, 1 Cor. 10:22.,

"Are we stronger than he?" Will the sinner go to measure arms with God? He is the Father Almighty, who can command legions: if we have no strength to resist him, it is irrational to disobey him. (2.) It is irrational, as it is against all law and equity: we have our daily subsistence from God; in him we live and move, is it not equal, that as we live by him, we should live to him? that as God gives us our allowance, so we should give him our allegiance?

2dly, It is a destructive sin, 2 Thess. 1:7, 8., "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that obey not the gospel." He who refuseth to obey God's will in commanding, shall be sure to obey his will in punishing. The sinner, while he thinks to slip the knot of obedience twists the cord of his own damnation; he perisheth without excuse; he hath no plea or apology to make for himself, Luke 12:47., "The servant which knew his lord's will, but did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." God will say why did you not obey? You knew how to do good, but did it not; therefore your blood is upon your own head.

QUEST. What means shall we use that we may obey?

Ans. 1. Serious consideration. Consider, God's commands are not grievous: he commands nothing unreasonable, 1 John 5:3. It is easier to obey the commands of God than sin; the commands of sin are burthensome; let a man be under the power of any lust, how doth he tire himself? What hazards doth he run, even to the endangering of his health and soul, that he may satisfy his lusts? What tedious journies did Antiochus Epiphanes take in persecuting the Jews? Jer. 9:5., "They weary themselves to commit iniquity;" and are not God's commands more easy to obey? Chrysostom saith, virtue is easier than vice, temperance is less burdensome 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. 10:12, 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 3:19. He commands us to believe: and why? that we may be saved, Acts 16:31. 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.

A. 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. 36:27., "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,

QUEST. 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. 6:5., "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.

QUEST. 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 Good.

QUEST. 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 loadstone to entice and draw out 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.

QUEST. 3. Wherein doth the formal nature of love consist?

Ans. The nature of love is in delighting in the object: *Complacentia amantis in amato*, AQUIN. This is our loving God, our taking delight in him, Ps. 37:4., "Delight thyself also in the Lord;" as a bride delights herself in her jewels. Grace changeth a Christian's aims and delights.

QUEST. 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 leuauca*] 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.

A. 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.

A. 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.

A. 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 Thess. 1:3. Mary Magdalene loved Christ, and poured her ointments on him. We think we never do enough for the person whom we love.

A. 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 hunger, gave him suck with her own breasts. But our love to God must be above father and mother, Mat. 10:37. 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. 8:2.

A. 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. 8:7., "Many waters cannot quench love;" not the waters of persecution. Eph. 3:17., "Rooted in love." A branch withers that doth not grow on a root; that love may not die, it must be well rooted.

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

Ans. 1. If we love God, then our desire is after him, Isa. 26:8., "The desire of our soul is to thy name." He who loves God, breathes after communion with him, Ps. 42:2., "My soul thirsteth 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 souls love, we have God's smiles and whispers, and some foretastes of heaven. Such as have no desire after ordinances, have no love to God.

A. 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, Ps. 43:5. 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.

A. 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, Ps. 119:128., "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.

A. 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, Ps. 119:136., "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes," &c. Some speak of the 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?

A. 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. 5:11. His head is as the most fine gold. True love to God cannot be silent; it will be eloquent in setting forth God's renown; no better sign of loving God, than by making him appear lovely, and so drawing proselytes to him.

A. 6. The sixth visible sign: he who loves God, weeps bitterly for his absence. Mary comes weeping, "They have taken away the Lord," John 20:2. 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 meat but no cheer, Job 30:28., "I went mourning without the sun." If Rachel mourned so for the loss of her children, what veil 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." '

A. 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. 1st, 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 slights his commands. 2dly, He submits to God's will; if God will have him suffer for him, he doth not dispute, but obey, 1 Cor. 13:7., Love "endureth all things." Love made Christ suffer 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. 4:6., "I am now 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. 12:11. 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 1st. 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 2d. 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 inquires most after, John 21:15., "Simon 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. 56:6. 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 lie 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. 23:26. 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. 2:9., "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, Hos. 2:19., "I will betrothe thee unto me for ever, in loving-kindness and mercies;" Zeph. 3:17., "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 1:12.

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. 13:8. How shall 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 4:19., "We love him because he first loved us." By nature we have no love to God; we have hearts of stone, Ezek. 36:1. 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.

QUEST. 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.

A. 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 3:10. 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.

A. 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. 2:4., "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. 20:1, 2. And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, &c.

QUEST. XLIII. 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."

1. 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 1:70., but here God spake in his own person.

QUEST. 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. 1st, 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 9:4.; he hath a monopoly of wisdom, 1 Tim. 1:17., "The only wise God." Therefore he is the fittest to enact and constitute laws. 2dly, The second thing requisite in a lawgiver is authority. If a subject make laws, though never so wise, yet they want the stamp of authority. God hath the supreme power in his hand; he derives a being to all; and he who gives men their lives, hath most right to give them their laws.

2. The law itself, "all these words;" that is, all the words of the moral law, which is usually styled the decalogue or ten commandments. It is called the moral law, because it is the rule of life and manners.

St. Chrysostom compares the scripture to a garden,—the moral law is a chief flower in it; the scripture is a banquet,—the moral law the chief dish in it.

(1.) The moral law is perfect, Ps. 19:7., "The law of the Lord is perfect." It is an exact model and platform of religion; it is the standard of truth, the judge of controversies, the pole star to direct us to heaven. Prov. 6:23., "The commandment is a lamp." Though the moral law be not a Christ to justify us, yet it is a rule to instruct us.

(2.) The moral law is unalterable; it remains still in force. Though the ceremonial and judicial law are abrogated, yet the moral law, delivered by God's own mouth is to be of perpetual use in the church.

Therefore the law was written in tables of stone, to shew the perpetuity of it.

(3.) The moral law is very illustrious and full of glory. God did put glory upon it in the manner of the promulgation of it. 1. The people, before the moral law was delivered were to wash their clothes, Exod. 19:10., whereby as by a type, God required the sanctifying of their ears and hearts to receive the law.—2. There were bounds set that none might touch the mount, Exod. 19:12., which was to breed in the people reverence to the law.—3. God wrote the law with his own finger, Exod. 31:18., which was such an honour put upon the moral law as we read of no other written. God did by some mighty operation make the law legible in letters, as if it had been written with his own finger.—4. God's putting the law in the ark to be kept, was another signal mark of honour put upon it. The ark was the cabinet in which God put the ten commandments, as ten jewels.—5. At the delivery of the moral law, there was the attendance of many angels, Deut. 32. Here was a parliament of angels called, and God himself was the speaker.

Use 1st. Here we may take notice of God's goodness who hath not left us without a law: therefore the Lord doth often set it down as a demonstration of his love, in giving his commandments: Ps. 147:20., "He hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for his judgments they have not known them;" Neh. 9:13., "Thou gavest them true laws, good statutes and commandments." What a strange creature would man be if he had no law to direct him! There would be no living in the world; we should have none born but Ishmaels, every man's hand would be against his neighbour. Man would grow wild, if he had not affliction to tame him, and the moral law to guide him. The law of God is an hedge to keep us within the bounds of sobriety and piety.

Use 2d. If God spake all these words of the moral law, then it condemns, 1st, The Marcionites, and Manichces, who speak slightly, yea, blasphemously of the moral law: they say, it is below a Christian, it is carnal, which the apostle confutes, when he saith, "The law is spiritual, but I am carnal," Rom. 7:14. 2dly, The Antinomians, who will not admit the moral law to be a rule to a believer. We say not he is under the curse of the law, but the command; we say not the moral law is a Christ, but it is a star to lead one to Christ; we say not it doth save, but it doth sanctify. They who cast God's law behind their backs, God will cast their prayers behind his back; they who will not have the law to rule them, shall have the law to judge them. 3dly, The papists, who (as if God's law were imperfect, and when he spake all these words he did not speak enough) add their canons and traditions to the moral law. This is to tax God's wisdom, as if he knew not how to make his own law. And surely it is an high provoking sin, Rev. 22:18., "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book." As it is a great evil to add any thing to a man's sealed will, so much more to add any thing to that law God himself spake, and wrote with his own fingers.

Use 3d. If God spake all these words, viz. of the moral law, then this presseth upon us several duties: 1. If God spake all these words, then we must hear all these words. The words which God speaks are too precious to be lost. As we would have God hear all our words when we pray, so we must hear all his words when he speaks. We must not be as the deaf adder which stoppeth her ears: he that stops his ears when God cries, shall cry himself, and not be heard.

2. If God spake all these words, then we must attend to them with reverence. Every word of the moral law is an oracle from heaven; God himself is the preacher; this calls for reverence. If a judge gives a charge upon the bench, all attend with reverence. In the moral law

God himself gives a charge, "God spake all these words." Therefore, with what veneration should we attend? Moses put off his shoes from his feet, in token of reverence when God was about to speak to him, Exod. 3:5, 6.

3. If God spake all these words of the moral law, then we must remember them. Sure all God speaks is worth remembering. Those words are weighty which concern salvation, Deut. 32:47., "It is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life." Our memory should be like the chest in the ark where the law was kept: God's oracles are ornaments, and shall we forget them? Jer. 2:32., "Can a maid forget her ornaments?"

4. If God spake all these words, then believe them. See the name of God written upon every commandment. The heathens, that they might gain credit to their laws, reported that they were inspired by the gods at Rome. The moral law fetcheth its pedigree from heaven: Ipse dixit,—God spake all these words. Shall we not give credit to the God of heaven? How would the angel confirm the women in the resurrection of Christ, Mat. 28:7., "Lo, (saith he) I have told you;" I speak in the word of an angel. Much more should the moral law be believed, when it comes to us in the word of God. "God spake all these words." Unbelief enervates the virtue of God's word, and makes it prove abortive, Heb. 4:2., "The word did not profit them, not being mixed with faith." Eve gave more credit to the devil when he spake, than she did to God.

5. If God spake all these words, then love the commandments, Ps. 119:97., "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." "Consider how I love thy precepts," Ps. 119:159. The moral law is the copy of God's will,—our spiritual directory; it shews us what sins to avoid, what duties to pursue; the ten commandments are a chain of

pearls to adorn us, they are our treasury to enrich us, they are more precious than lands of spices, or rocks of diamonds, Ps. 119:72., "The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver." The law of God hath truth and goodness in it, Neh. 9:13. Truth, for God spake it; and goodness, for there is nothing the commandment enjoins, but is for our good. O then let this command our love!

6. If God spake all these words, then teach your children the law of God, Deut. 6:7., "These words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children." He who is godly, is both a diamond and a load stone; a diamond for the sparkling of his grace, and a loadstone for his attractive virtue in drawing others to the love of God's precepts, *vir bonus magis aliis prodest quam sibi*. You that are parents, discharge your duty; though you cannot impart grace to your children, yet you may impart knowledge. Let your children know the commandments of God, Deut. 11:19., "Ye shall teach them to your children." You are careful to leave your children a portion; leave the oracles of heaven with them; instruct them in the law of God; if God spake all these words, you may well speak them over again to your children.

7. If God spake all these words, then the moral law must be obeyed. If a king speaks, his word commands allegiance, much more, when God speaks, all his words must be subscribed to. Some will obey partially, obey some commandments, not others,—like a plough, which when it comes to a stiff piece of earth, makes a baulk,—but God that spake all the words of the moral law, will have all obeyed: God will not dispense with the breach of one law. Indeed princes, for special reasons, dispense sometimes with penal statutes, and will not take the severity of the law: but God, who spake all these words, binds men with a subpœna to yield obedience to every law.

This condemns the church of Rome, who instead of obeying the whole moral law, blot out one commandment, and dispense with others.—1. They leave out the second commandment out of their catechises, because it makes against images; and to fill up the number often, they divide the tenth commandment into two. Thus they run themselves into that dreadful premunire, Rev. 22:19., "If any man shall take away from the words of this book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life."—2. As they blot out one commandment, and cut that knot which they cannot untie, so they dispense with other commandments; they dispense with the sixth commandment, making murder meritorious, in case of propagating the catholic cause; they dispense with the seventh commandment, wherein God forbids adultery,—the pope dispenseth with the sin of uncleanness, yea, incest, only paying such fines and sums of money into his coffer. No wonder the pope takes men off from their loyalty to kings and princes, when he teacheth them disloyalty to God! Some of the papists say expressly in their writings, that the pope hath power to dispense with the laws of God, and can give men a license to break the commandments of the Old and New Testament. That such a religion ever get foot in England, the Lord in mercy prevent! If God spake all the commandments, then we must obey all; he who breaks this hedge of the commandments, a serpent shall bite him.

OBJ. But what man alive can obey all God's commandments?

Ans. To obey the law in a legal sense, viz. to do all the law requires, no man alive can; sin hath cut the lock of original righteousness, where our strength lay; but, in a true gospel-sense, we may so obey the moral law, as to find acceptance. Which gospel-obedience consists in a real endeavour to observe the whole moral law, Ps. 119:166., "I have done thy commandments;" not, I have done all I should do, but I have done all I am able to do; and wherein our

obedience comes short, we look up to the perfect righteousness and obedience of Christ, and hope for pardon through his blood; this is evangelically to obey the moral law, which, though it be not to satisfaction, yet it is to acceptance. Thus I have done with the first, the preface to the preface, "God spake all these words:" I should now come to the second, the preface itself to the commandments, 'I am the Lord thy God,' &c.

EXOD. 20:2. I am the Lord thy God, &c.

II. The preface itself, which consists of three parts: 1. "I am the Lord thy God;" 2. "Which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt;" 3. "Out of the house of bondage."

First, "I am the Lord thy God" Where we have a description of God, 1. By his essential greatness, "I am the Lord;" 2. By his relative goodness, "thy God." 1st, By his essential greatness, "I am the Lord," or, as it is in the Hebrew, JEHOVAH. By this great name God sets forth his majesty. Sanctius habitum fuit, saith Buxtorf. The name of Jehovah was had in more reverence among the Jews than any other name of God, it signifies God's self-sufficiency, eternity, independency, immutability, Mal. 3:6.

Use 1st. If God be Jehovah,—the fountain of being, who can do what he will,—let us fear this great Lord, Deut. 28:58., "That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, Jehovah."

Use 2d. If God be Jehovah, the supreme Lord, then it condemns the blasphemous papists, who speak after this manner, 'Our Lord God the Pope.' Is it a wonder the pope lifts his triple crown above the head of kings and emperors, when he usurps God's title, "shewing himself that he is God?" 2 Thess. 2:4. The pope goes to make himself Lord of heaven,—for he will canonize saints there; Lord of earth,—for

with his keys he doth bind and loose whom he pleaseth; Lord of hell, —for he can free men out of purgatory: but God will pull down these plumes of pride; he will "consume this man of sin with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming." 2 Thess. 2:8.

2dly, God is described by his relative goodness, "thy God." Had God only called himself Jehovah, it might have terrified us, and made us flee from him, but when he said, "thy God," this may allure and draw us to him; this, though a preface to the law, is pure gospel. This word Eloeha, 'thy God,' is so sweet, that we can never suck out all the honey in it. 'I am thy God,' not only by creation, but by election. This word, "thy God," though it was spoken to Israel, yet is a charter belongs to all the saints. For the further explication, here are three questions.

QUEST. 1. How God comes to be our God?

Ans. Through Jesus Christ. Christ is a middle person in the Trinity; he is Emmanuel, 'God with us:' he brings two different parties together; he makes our nature lovely to God, and God's nature lovely to us; he, by his death, causeth friendship, yea, union; he brings us within the verge of the covenant, and so God becomes our God.

QUEST. 2. What doth this imply, God being our God?

Ans. It is comprehensive of all good things. God is our strong tower, —our fountain of living water,—our salvation. More particularly, God being our God implies the sweetest relation.

1. The relation of a father, 2 Cor. 6:18., "I will be a Father unto you." A father is full of tender care for his child: whom doth he settle the inheritance upon, but his child? God being our God, will be a father

to us: a "Father of mercy," 1 Cor. 1:3.; "The everlasting Father," Isa. 9:6. If God be our God, we have a Father in heaven that never dies.

2. It imports the relation of a husband, Isa. 54:5., "Thy Maker is thy husband." If God be our husband, he esteems us precious to him, as the apple of his eye, Zech. 2:8. He imparts his secrets to us, Ps. 25:14. He bestows a kingdom upon us for our dowry, Luke 12:32.

QUEST. 3. How may we come to know this covenant union, that God is our God?

Ans. 1. By having his grace planted in us. Kings' children are known by their costly jewels: it is not having common gifts which shews we belong to God, many have the gifts of God without God, but it is grace gives us a true genuine title to God. In particular, faith is vinculum unionis,—the grace of union; by this we may spell out our interest in God. Faith doth not, as the mariner, cast its anchor downwards, but upwards; it trusts in the mercy and blood of God, and trusting in God, engageth him to be our God; other graces make us like God, faith makes us one with him.

A. 2. We may know God is our God by having the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts, 2 Cor. 1:22. God often gives the purse to the wicked, but the Spirit only to such as he intends to make his heirs. (1.) Have we had the consecration of the Spirit? If we have not had the sealing work of the Spirit, have we had the healing work? 1 John 2:20., "Ye have an unction from the holy One." The Spirit, where it is, stamps the impress of its own holiness upon the heart; it embroiders and bespangles the soul, and makes it all glorious within. (2.) Have we had the attraction of the Spirit? Cant. 1:4., "Draw me, we will run after thee." Hath the Spirit, by its magnetic virtue, drawn our hearts to God? Can we say, as Cant. 1:7., "O thou whom my soul loveth!" Is God our paradise of delight? our Segullah, or chief treasure! Are our

hearts so chained to God, that no other object can enchant us, or draw us away from him? (3.) Have we had the elevation of the Spirit? Hath it raised our hearts above the world? Ezek. 3:14., "The Spirit lifted me up." Hath the Spirit made us *suprema anhelare*? seek the things above where Christ is. Though our flesh is on earth, is our heart in heaven? Though we live here, trade we above? Hath the Spirit thus lifted us up? By this we may come to know, that God is our God: where God gives his Spirit for an earnest, there he gives himself for a portion.

A. 3. We may know God is our God, if he hath given us the hearts of children. Have we obediential hearts? Ps. 27:8. Do we subscribe to God's commands, when his commands cross our will? A true saint is like the flower of the sun: it opens and shuts with the sun, he opens to God, and shuts to sin. If we have the hearts of children then God is our father.

A. 4. We may know God is ours, and we have an interest in him, by our standing up for his interest. We will appear in his cause, and vindicate his truth, wherein his glory is so much concerned. Athanasius was the bulwark of truth; he stood up for it, when most of the world were Arians. In former times the nobles of Polonia, when the gospel was read, did lay their hands upon their swords, signifying that they were ready to defend the faith, and hazard their lives for the gospel: no better sign of our having an interest in God, than by our standing up for his interest.

A. 5. We may know God is ours, and we have an interest in him, by his having an interest in us, Cant. 2:16., "My beloved is mine, and I am his." When God saith to the soul, "Thou art mine;" the soul answers, "Lord I am thine; all I have is at thy service; my head shall be thine to study for thee; my tongue shall be thine to praise thee." If

God be our God by way of donation, we are his by way of dedication; we live to him, and are more his than we are our own. And thus we may come to know that God is our God.

Use 1st. Above all things let us get this great charter confirmed, that God is our God. Deity is not comfortable without propriety. Tolle Deum, et tolle Deum, AUG. O let us labour to get sound evidences, that God is our God! We cannot call health, liberty, estate, ours; O let us be able to call God ours, and say as the church, Ps. 67:6., "God, even our own God shall bless us!" Let every soul here labour to pronounce this Shibboleth, 'My God.' And that we may endeavour after this to have God for our God; consider, 1. The misery of such as have not God for their God. In how sad a condition are they, when an hour of distress comes? This was Saul's case, 1 Sam. 28:15., "I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and the Lord is departed from me." A wicked man, in time of trouble, is like a vessel tossed on the sea without an anchor, it falls on rocks or sands; a sinner, not having God to be his God, though he make a shift while health and estate last, yet, when these crutches which he leaned upon are broken his heart sinks. It is with a wicked man as it is with the old world, when the flood came; the waters at first came to the valleys, but then the people would get to the hills and mountains, but when the waters came to the mountains, then there might be some trees on the high hills, and they would climb up to them; ay, but then the waters did rise up to the tops of the trees,—now all hopes of being saved were gone, their hearts failed them. So it is with a man that hath not God to be his God: if one comfort be taken away, he hath another,—if he lose a child, he hath an estate,—ay, but when the waters rise higher death comes and takes away all; now he hath nothing to help himself with, no God to go to, he must needs die despairing. 2. How great a privilege it is to have God for our God? Ps. 144:15., "Happy are the people whose God is the Lord." Beatitude

hominis est Deus, AUG. That you may see the privilege of this charter;

1. If God be our God, then, though we may feel the stroke of evil, yet not the sting. He must needs be happy who is in such a condition that nothing can hurt him; if he lose his name,—it is written in the book of life; if he lose his liberty,—his conscience is free; if he lose his estate,—he is possessed of the pearl of price; if he meets with storms,—he knows where to put in for harbour; God is his God, and heaven is his haven.

2. If God be our God, then our soul is safe. The soul is the jewel, it is a blossom of eternity, Dan. 7:15., "I was grieved in the midst of my body;" in the Chaldee it is "in the midst of my sheath." The body is but the sheath; the soul is the princely part of man which sways the sceptre of reason; it is a celestial spark, as Damascene calls it. If God be our God, the soul is safe, as in a garrison. Death can do no more hurt to a virtuous heaven-born soul, than David did to Saul, when he cut off the lap of his garment; the soul is safe, being hid in the promises,—hid in the wounds of Christ,—hid in God's decree. The soul is the pearl, and heaven is the cabinet where God will lock it up safe.

3. If God be our God, then all that is in God is ours: the Lord saith to a saint in covenant, as the king of Israel to the king of Syria, 1 Kings 20:4., "I am thine, and all that I have." So saith God, "I am thine." How happy is he who not only inherits the gift of God, but inherits God himself! All that I have shall be thine; my wisdom shall be thine, to teach thee; my power shall be thine, to support thee; my mercy shall be thine, to save thee. God is an infinite ocean of blessedness, and there is enough in him to fill us. If a thousand vessels be thrown into the sea, there is enough in the sea to fill them.

4. If God be our God, he will entirely love us: propriety is the ground of love. God may give men kingdoms, and not love them; but he cannot be our God, and not love us. He calls his covenanted saints, Jediduth Naphshi, "The dearly beloved of my soul," Jer. 12:7. He rejoiceth over them with joy, and rests in his love, Zeph. 3:17.; they are his refined silver, Zech. 13:9.; his jewels, Mal. 3:17.; his royal diadem, Isa. 62:3. He gives them the cream and flower of his love; he not only opens his hand and fills them, Ps. 145:16., but opens his heart and fills them.

5. If God be our God, he will do more for us than all the world besides can. What is that? 1. He will give us peace in trouble: when a storm without, he will make music within. The world can create trouble in peace, but God can create peace in trouble; he will send the Comforter, who, as a dove, brings an olive-branch of peace in his mouth, John 14:16. 2. God will give us a crown of immortality: the world can give a crown of gold, but that crown hath thorns in it, and death in it: but God will give "a crown of glory that fadeth not away," 1 Pet. 5:4. The garland made of the flowers of paradise never withers.

6. If God be our God, he will bear with many infirmities. God may respite sinners a while, but long forbearance is no acquittance; he will throw them to hell for their sins; but if God be our God, he will not for every failing destroy us; he bears with his spouse as with the weaker vessel; God may chastise, Ps. 89:32., he may use the rod and the pruning-knife, but not the bloody axe, Numb. 23:21., "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob:" he will not see sin in his people, so as to destroy them; he sees their sins so as to pity them; he sees them as a physician sees a disease in his patient, to heal him, Isa. 57:18., "I have seen his ways, and I will heal him." Every failing doth not break the marriage-bond asunder. The disciples had great failings, they all forsook Christ and fled; but this did not break off their interest in

God, therefore saith Christ, at his ascension, "Tell my disciples, I go to my God and to their God."

7. If God be once our God, he is so for ever, Ps. 48:14., "This God is our God for ever and ever." Whatever worldly comforts we have are but for a season, Heb. 11:25.; we must part with all. As Paul's friends did accompany him to the ship, and there left him, Acts 20:28., so all our earthly comforts will but go with us to the grave, and there leave us. You cannot say you have health, and shall have it for ever; you have a child, and shall have it for ever; but if God be your God, you shall have him for ever; "This God is our God for ever and ever." If God be our God, he will be a God to us as long as he is a God! "You have taken away my gods," saith Micah, Judges 18:24. But it cannot be said to a believer, that his God is taken away; he may lose all things else, but cannot lose his God. God is ours from everlasting in election, and to everlasting in glory.

8. If God be our God, we shall enjoy all our godly relations with him in heaven. The great felicity on earth, is to enjoy relations; a father sees his own picture in a child; a wife sees a piece of herself in her husband; we plant the flower of love among our relations, and the loss of them is like the pulling off a limb from the body. But if God be ours, with enjoying God we shall enjoy all our pious relations in glory. The gracious child shall see his godly father, the virtuous wife shall see her religious husband in Christ's arms: and then there will be a dearer love to relations than ever was before, though in a far different manner; then relations shall meet and never part: "And so shall we be ever with the Lord," 1 Thess. 4:17.

EXOD. 20:2. I am the Lord thy God, &c.

To all such as can make out this covenant union, it exhorts to several things.

1st. If God be our God, let us improve our interest in him,—cast all our burdens upon him,—the burden of our fears, wants, sins, Ps. 55:22., "Cast thy burden upon the Lord." Wicked men, who are a burden to God, have no right to cast their burden upon him; but such as have God for their God, are called upon to cast their burden on him. Where should the child case all its cares but in the bosom of its parent? Judges 19:20., "Let all thy wants lie upon me." So God seems to say to his children, 'Let all your wants lie upon me.' Christian, what doth trouble thee? Thou hast a God to pardon thy sins, to supply thy wants,—therefore roll your burden on the Lord: 1 Pet. 5:7., "Casting all your care on him." Whence are Christians so disquieted in their mind? They are taking care, when they should be casting care away.

2d. If God be our God, let us learn to be contented, though we have the less of other things. Contentment is a rare jewel; it is the cure of care. If we have God to be our God, well may we be contented. "I know whom I have believed," 2 Tim. 1:12.: there was Paul's interest in God; 2 Cor. 6:10., "As having nothing, yet possessing all:" there was his content. That such who have covenant-union with God may be filled with contentation of spirit, consider what a rich blessing God is to the soul.

1. God is bonum sufficiens,—a sufficient good. He who hath God hath enough. If a man be thirsty bring him to a spring, and he is satisfied; in God there is enough to fill the heaven-born soul; "He gives grace and glory," Ps. 84:11. There is in God not only a sufficiency, but a redundancy; he is not only full as a vessel but as a spring. Other things can no more fill the soul than a mariner's breath can fill the sails of a ship; but in God is a cornucopia, an infinite fulness; he hath enough to fill the angels, therefore enough to fill us. The heart is a triangle, which only the Trinity can fill.

2. God is *bonum sanctificans*,—a sanctifying good. 1. He sanctifies all our comforts, and turns them into blessings. Health is blessed, estate is blessed, he gives with the venison a blessing, Ps. 132:15., "I will abundantly bless her provision." He gives us that life we have *tanquam arhabo*,—as an earnest of more. He gives the little meal in the barrel, as an earnest of the royal feast in paradise. 2. He sanctifies all our crosses; they shall not be destructive punishments, but medicines,—they shall corrode and eat out the venom of sin,—they shall polish and refine our grace. The more the diamond is cut it sparkles the more. God's stretching the strings of his viol, is to make the music better.

3. God is *bonum selectum*,—a choice good. All things, *sub sole*, are but *bona scabelli*, as Austin, the blessings of the footstool; but to have God himself to be ours, is the blessing of the throne. Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines, but he settled the inheritance upon Isaac: Gen. 25:5., "Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac." God may send away the men of the world with gifts, a little gold and silver; but, in giving us himself, he gives us the very quintessence, his grace, his love, his kingdom; here is the crowning blessing.

4. God is *bonum summum*,—the chief good, in the chief good there must be, First, *delectability*, it must have something that is delicious and sweet: and where can we suck those pure quintessential comforts, which ravish us with delight, but in God? *In Deo quadam dulcedine delectatur anima, imo rapitur*; "At God's right hand are pleasures," Ps. 16:11. Secondly, In the chief good there must be *transcendency*, it must have a surpassing excellency. Thus God is infinitely better than all other things; it is below the Deity to compare other things with it. Who would go to weigh a feather with a mountain of gold? God is *fons et origo*,—the spring of all entities, and the cause is more noble than the effect. It is God that bespangles the

creation,—that puts light into the sun,—that fills the veins of the earth with silver; creatures do but maintain life, God gives life; God infinitely outshines all sublunary glory; he is better than the soul, than angels, than heaven. Thirdly, In the chief good, there must be not only fulness, but variety; where variety is wanting we are apt to nauseate; to feed only on honey, would breed loathing; but in God is all variety of fulness, Col. 1:19. He is an universal good, commensurate to all our wants; he is bonum in quo omnia bona, a son, a portion, an horn of salvation; he is called the "God of all comfort," 2 Cor. 1:3. There is a complication of all beauties and delights in him; health hath not the comfort of beauty, nor beauty of riches, nor riches of wisdom, but God is the God of all comfort. Fourthly, In the chief good there must be eternity. God is a treasure that can neither be drawn low, nor drawn dry. Though the angels are still spending on him, he can never be spent; he abides for ever. Eternity is a flower of his crown. Now, if God be our God, here is enough to let in full contentment into our souls. What though we want torch-light, if we have the sun? What if God deny us the flower, if he hath given us the jewel? How should this rock a Christian's heart quiet? If we say God is our God, and we are not content, we have cause to question our interest in him.

3d. If we can clear up this covenant-union that God is our God, let this cheer and revive us in all conditions. To be content with God, is not enough, but to be cheerful. What greater cordial can you have, than union with Deity? When Jesus Christ was ready to ascend, he could not leave a richer consolation with his disciples than this, Tell them, "I go to my God and your God," John 20:17. Who should rejoice, if not they, who have an infinite, all-sufficient, eternal God to be their portion, who are as rich as heaven can make them? What though I want health? I have God "who is the health of my countenance, and my God," Ps. 42:11. What though I am low in the

world? if I have not the earth, I have him that made it. The philosopher comforted himself with this, though he had no music or vine-trees, yet here are the household gods with me: so, though we have not the vine or fig-tree, yet we have God with us. I cannot be poor, saith St. Bernard, as long as God is rich: for his riches are mine. O let the saints rejoice in this covenant-union! To say God is ours, is more than to say heaven is ours; heaven would not be heaven without God. All the stars cannot make day without the sun; all the angels, those morning-stars, cannot make heaven without Christ the Sun of Righteousness. And as to have God for our God is matter of rejoicing in life, so especially it will be at our death. Let a Christian think thus, I am going to my God. A child is glad when he is going home to his father. This was Christ's comfort, when he was leaving the world, John 20:17., "I go to my God." And this is a believer's death-bed cordial, I am going to my God; I shall change my place, but not my kindred; I go to my God and my Father.

4th. If God be our God, then let us break forth into doxology and praise, Ps. 118:28., "Thou art my God, and I will praise thee." O infinite, astonishing mercy, that God should take dust and ashes into so near a bond of love as to be our God! As Micah said, Judges 18:24., "What have I more?" so, what hath God more; what richer jewel hath he to bestow upon us than himself? what hath he more? That God should put off most of the world with riches and honour,—that he should pass over himself to us by a deed of gift, to be our God, and by virtue of this settle a kingdom upon us,—O let us praise him with the best instrument, our heart; and let this instrument be screwed up to the highest pitch; let us praise him with our whole heart! See how David riseth by degrees, Ps. 32:11., "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, and shout for joy." "Be glad," there is thankfulness; "Rejoice," there is cheerfulness "Shout," there is triumph. Praise is called incense, because it is so sweet a sacrifice. Let the saints be

choristers in God's praises. The deepest springs yield the sweetest water; the more deeply sensible we are of God's covenant-love to us, the sweeter praises we should yield. We should begin here to eternize God's name, and do that work on earth which we shall be always doing in heaven, Ps. 146:2., "While I live, will I praise the Lord."

5th. Let us carry ourselves as those who have God to be our God; that is, when we walk so, that others may see there is something of God in us. Live holily; what have we to do with sin? Is it not this, that if it doth not break, yet it will weaken the interest? Hos. 14:8., "What have I to do any more with idols?" So would a Christian say, "God is my God; what have I to do any more with sin, with lust, pride, malice! Bid me commit sin! as well bid me drink poison! Shall I forfeit my interest in God? Let me rather die, than willingly offend him who is the crown of my joy, the God of my salvation!"

EXOD. 20:2. The land of Egypt, &c.

The second part of the preface, "which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Egypt and the house of bondage are the same; only they are represented to us under a different expression, or notion. I begin with the first expression, "Which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt."

QUEST. Why doth the Lord mention this deliverance of Israel out of Egypt?

Ans. 1 Because of the strangeness of the deliverance. God delivered his people Israel by strange signs and wonders,—by sending plague after plague upon Pharaoh,—blasting the fruits of the earth,—killing all the first-born in Egypt, Exod. 12:29. And when Israel marched out of Egypt, God made the waters of the sea to part and become a wall to his people, while they went on dry ground; and as he made the sea

a causeway to Israel, so a grave to Pharaoh and his chariots. Well might the Lord mention his bringing them out of the land of Egypt, because of the strangeness of the deliverance! God wrought miracle upon miracle for their deliverance.

A. 2. God mentions Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, because of the greatness of the deliverance. God delivered Israel from the pollutions of Egypt; Egypt was a bad air to live in, it was infected with idolatry; the Egyptians were gross idolaters, they were guilty of that which the apostle speaks of, Rom, 1:23., "They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." The Egyptians worshipped instead of the true God, First, corruptible man; they deified their king Apis, forbidding all, under pain of death, to say that he was a man. 2dly, They were worshippers of birds, they worshipped the hawk. 3dly, They were worshippers of beasts, they worshipped the ox: thus they made the image of a beast to be their god. 4thly, They were worshippers of creeping things, they worshipped the crocodile, and the Indian mouse. Therefore God mentions this as a memorable and signal favour to Israel, that he brought them out of such an idolatrous country; "I brought thee out of the land of Egypt."

The thing I would note is this, That it is no small blessing to be delivered from places of idolatry. God speaks of it no less than ten times in the Old Testament, "I brought you out of the land of Egypt;" an idolatrous place. Had there been no iron furnace in Egypt, yet there being so many altars there, and false gods, it was a great privilege to Israel to be delivered out of Egypt. Joshua reckons it among the chief and most memorable mercies of God to Abraham, that he brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees, where Abraham's ancestors served strange gods, Josh. 24:2, 3. It is well for the plant

that is set in a bad soil, to be transplanted to a better, where it may grow and flourish: so when any are planted among idolaters, it is a mercy when they are removed and transplanted into Zion, where are the silver drops of God's word to make them grow in holiness.

QUEST. Wherein doth it appear that it is such a great blessing to be delivered from places of idolatry?

Ans. 1. It is a great mercy, because our nature is so prone to idolatry. Israel began to be defiled with the idols of Egypt, Ezek. 22:3. Dry wood is not more prone to take fire, than our nature is to idolatry. The Jews made cakes to the queen of heaven, that is the moon, Jer. 7:18.

QUEST. Whence is it that we are so prone to idolatry?

Ans. 1. Because we are led much by visible objects, and love to have our senses pleased. Men naturally fancy a god that they may see; though it be such a god that cannot see them, yet they would see it. The true God is invisible; this makes the idolater worship something that he may see.

A. 2. It is a mercy to be delivered from idolatrous places, because of the greatness of the sin of idolatry. It is giving that glory to an image, which is due to God. All divine worship God doth appropriate to himself; it is a flower of his crown. The fat of the sacrifice God laid claim to, Lev. 3:3.: divine worship is the fat of the sacrifice which God reserves for himself. The idolator devotes this worship to his idol, which the Lord will by no means endure, Isa. 42:8., "My glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." Idolatry is spiritual adultery, Ezek. 23:37., "With their idols have they committed adultery." To worship any other than God is to break wedlock; this makes the Lord disclaim his interest in a people, Hos.

2:2., "Plead with your mother, plead she is not my wife." And Exod. 32:7., "Thy people have corrupted themselves;" no more my people, but thy people. God calls idolatry, blasphemy, Ezek. 20:27, 31., "In this your fathers have blasphemed me." Idolatry is devil-worship, Deut. 32:17., "They sacrificed to devils, not unto God; to new gods." These new gods were old devils, Lev. 17:7., "And they shall no more offer their sacrifice unto devils;" the Hebrew word lashegnirim, is 'the hairy ones,' because the devils were hairy, and appeared in the forms of satyrs and goats. How dreadful a sin is idolatry; and what a signal mercy is it to be snatched out of an idolatrous place, as Lot was snatched by the angels out of Sodom!

A. 3. It is a mercy to be delivered out of idolatrous places, because idolatry is such a silly irrational religion. I may say, as Jer. 8:9., "What wisdom is in them?" Is it not folly to refuse the best, and choose the worst? The trees in the field of Jotham's parable, despised the vine-tree which cheers both God and man, and the olive which is full of fatness, and the fig-tree which is full of sweetness, and chose the bramble to reign over them; this was a foolish choice, Judg. 9: so, for us to refuse the living God, who hath power to save us, and to make choice of an idol, that hath eyes and sees not, feet but walks not, Ps. 115:5, 7., what a prodigy of madness is this? Therefore to be delivered from committing such folly, is a mercy.

A. 4. It is a mercy to be delivered from idolatrous places, because of the sad judgments inflicted upon idolaters. This is a sin which enrageth God, and makes the fury come up in his face, Ezek. 38:18. Search through the whole book of God, and you shall find no sin God hath followed with more plagues than idolatry, Ps. 16:4., "Their sorrows shall be multiplied, that hasten after another god." Ps. 78:58, 59., "They moved him to jealousy with their graven images." When God heard this, "he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel;"

ver. 60., "So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh." Shiloh was a city belonging to the tribe of Ephraim; there God set his name, Jer. 7:12.; but, for their idolatry God forsook that place, gave his people up to the sword, caused his priests to be slain, his ark to be carried away captive, and it never returned to Shiloh any more. How severe was God against Israel, for worshipping the golden calf? Exod. 32:27. The Jews say, that in every misery that befalls them, there is uncio aurei vituli,—an ounce of the golden calf in it. Rev. 18:4., "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Idolatry, lived in, cuts men off from heaven, 1 Cor. 6:9.: so then it is no small mercy to be delivered out of idolatrous places.

Use 1st. See the goodness of God to our nation, who hath brought us out of mystical Egypt, delivering us from popery, which is Romish idolatry, and hath caused the light of his truth to break forth gloriously among us. In former times, and more lately in the Marian days, England was overspread with idolatry,—we worshipped God after a false manner, that is idolatry, not only to worship a false God, but the true God in a false manner,—this was our case formerly, we had purgatory, indulgencies, the idolatrous mass, the Scriptures locked up in an unknown tongue, invocation of saints and angels, image-worship. Images are teachers of lies, Hab. 2:18. Wherein do they teach lies? Because they represent God in a bodily shape, whereas he cannot be seen, Deut. 4:12., "But saw no similitude, only ye heard a voice." Quod invisibile est, pingi non potest, AMBR. God cannot be pictured out by any finger; you cannot picture the soul being a spirit, much less God, Isa. 40:18., "To whom then will ye liken God?" The papists say, they worship God by the image; which hath a great absurdity in it, for if it be absurd to bow down to the picture of a king, when the king himself is present, then much more to bow down to the image of God, when God himself is present, Jer.

23:24. What is the popish religion, but a bundle of ridiculous ceremonies? Their wax, flowers, pixes, agnus Dei, cream and oil, beads, crucifixes,—what are these but Satan's policy to dress up a carnal worship, fitted to carnal minds? O what cause have we to bless God, for delivering us from popery! It was a mercy to be delivered from the Spanish invasion and the powder-treason; but a far greater to be delivered from the popish religion, which would have made God give us a bill of divorce.

Use 2d. If it be a great blessing to be delivered from Egypt, popish idolatry; then it shews their sin and folly, who, being brought out of Egypt, are willing to return into Egypt again; having put off the yoke of Rome, would fain put it on again. The apostle saith, "Flee from idolatry," 1 Cor. 10:14. But these rather flee to idolatry; herein we are like the people of Israel, who, notwithstanding all the idolatry and tyranny of Egypt, yet longed to go back to Egypt, Numb. 14:4., "Let us make a captain and let us return into Egypt." But how shall they go back into Egypt? How shall they have food in the wilderness? Will God rain down manna any more upon such rebels? How will they get over the red sea? Will God divide the water again by miracle, for such as leave his service, and go into idolatrous Egypt? Yet say they, Let us make a captain. And are there not such spirits amongst us, who say, "Let us make a captain, and go back to the Romish Egypt again?" And if we do, what shall we get by it? I am afraid the leeks and onions of Egypt will make us sick. Do we ever think, if we drink in the cup of fornication, we shall drink in the cup of salvation? O that any should so forfeit their reason, as to enslave themselves to the see of Rome! That they should be willing to hold a candle to a mass-priest, and bow down to a strange god! Let us not say we will make a captain; but rather say as Ephraim, Hos. 14:8., "What have I to do any more with idols?"

Use 3d. If it be a mercy to be brought out of Egypt, then it is not desirable or safe to plant one's self in an idolatrous place where it may be a capital crime to be seen with a Bible in one's hand. Some for secular gain thrust themselves among idolaters, and think there is no danger to live where Satan's seat is: but do you pray God would not lead you into temptation, and do you lead yourselves. You are in great danger of being polluted; it is hard to be as the fish, which keeps fresh in salt waters. A man cannot dwell among the blackamoors, but he will be discoloured; you will sooner be corrupted by idolaters, than they will be converted by you; Joseph got no good by living in an idolatrous court; he did not teach Pharaoh to pray, but Pharaoh taught him to swear, Ps. 106:35., they "were mingled among the heathen, and served their idols." I fear this hath been the undoing of many; they have seated themselves amongst idolaters, for advancing their trade, and at last have not only traded with them in their commodities, but in their religion.

Use 4th. Is it a mercy to be brought out of the land of Egypt,—places which are defiled, and where sin reigns? then it reproaches such parents as shew little love to the souls of their children, whether it be in putting them out to service, or matching them.—1. In putting them out to service: their care is chiefly for their bodies, that they may be provided for, but care not what becomes of their souls; their souls are in Egypt, in houses where there is drinking, swearing, sabbath-breaking, and where God's name is every day dishonoured.—2. In matching their children, they look only at money, 2 Cor. 6:14., "Be not ye unequally yoked:" if their children be equally yoked for estate, they care not whether they be unequally yoked for religion: now, to such parents, (1.) Think how precious the soul of your child is; it is immortal, it is capable of communion with God and angels: and will you let this soul be lost, by placing it in a bad family? If you had an horse you loved, you would not put him into a stable with other

horses that were sick and diseased; and do you not love your child better than your horse? (2.) God hath intrusted you with the souls of your children, you have a charge of souls. God saith, as 1 Kings 20:39., "Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then thy life shall be for his life." So saith God, 'If the soul of thy child miscarry by thy negligence, his blood will I require at thy hand.' Think of this, all ye parents; take heed of placing your children in Egypt, in a wicked family; do not put them in the devil's mouth: find out a sober, religious family, such a family as Joshua's, chap. 24:15., "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord." Such a family as Cranmer's, which was *palæstra pietatis*,—a nursery of piety; such a family as is a Bethel, of which it may be said, as Col. 4:15., "The church which is in his house."

Use 5th. Let us pray that God would keep our English nation from the defilements of Egypt, that it may not be again overspread with superstition and idolatry. O sad religion! not only to have our estates, our bodies enslaved, but our conscience. Pray that the true protestant religion may still flourish among us, that the sun of the gospel may still shine in our horizon. The gospel lifts a people up to heaven, it is *columna et corona regni*,—'the crown and glory of the kingdom;' if this be removed, then *Ichabod*, the glory is departed! The top of the beech-tree being cut off, the whole body of the tree withers apace: the gospel is the top of all our blessings, if this top be cut, the whole body politic will soon wither. O pray that the Lord will continue the visible tokens of his presence among us, his ordinances, that England may be called, *Jehovah Shammah*, "The Lord is there!" Ezek. 48:35. Pray that righteousness and peace may kiss each other, that so glory may dwell in our land!

EXOD. 20:2. Out of the House of Bondage.

III. "EGYPT," and "the house of bondage," are the same, only they are expressed under a different notion. By Egypt is meant a place of idolatry and superstition; by the house of bondage, is meant a place of affliction. Israel, while they were in Egypt, were under great tyranny; they had cruel task-masters set over them, who put them to hard labour, and set them to make brick, yet allowed them no straw; therefore Egypt is called the iron furnace, Deut. 4:20., and here the house of bondage. From this expression, "I brought thee out of the house of bondage," two things are to be noted: 1. God's children may sometimes be under sore afflictions, "In the house of bondage." That God will in his due time bring them out of their afflicted state, "I brought thee out of the house of bondage."

1st. God's children may sometimes be under sore afflictions, In domo servitutis,—'in the house of bondage.' God's people have no right of case granted them,—no charter of exemption from trouble in this life; while the wicked are kept in sugar, the godly are oft kept in brine. And indeed, how could God's power be seen in bringing them out of trouble, if he did not sometimes bring them into it? or how should God wipe away the tears from their eyes in heaven, if on earth they shed none? Doubtless God sees there is need that his children should be sometimes in the house of bondage, 1 Pet. 1:6., "If need be, ye are in heaviness;" the body sometimes doth more need a bitter potion than a julap.

QUEST. 1. Why God lets his people be in the house of bondage, in an afflicted state?

Ans. He doth it, 1. For probation or trial: Deut. 8:16., "Who led thee through that terrible wilderness, that he might humble thee and prove thee." Affliction is the touch-stone of sincerity, Ps. 66:10, 11., "Thou O God, hast proved us; thou hast tried us as silver: thou laidst

affliction upon our loins." Hypocrites may embrace the true religion in prosperity, and court this queen while she hath a jewel hung at her ear, but he is a good Christian who will keep close to God in a time of suffering, Ps. 44:17., "All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee." To love God in heaven, is no wonder: but to love God when he chastiseth us, this discovers sincerity.

2. For purgation: to purge our corruption. Ardet palea, purgatur aurum, Isa. 27:9., "And this is all the fruit, to take away his sin." The eye, though it be a tender part, yet when it is sore, we put sharp powders and waters into it, to eat out the pearl: though the people of God are dear to him, yet, when corruption begins to grow in them, he will apply the sharp powder of affliction, to eat out the pearl in the eye. Affliction is God's flail to thrash off our husks; it is a means God useth to purge out sloth, luxury, pride and love of the world. "God's fire is in Zion," Isa. 31:9. This is not to consume, but to refine; what if we have more affliction, if by this means we have less sin.

3. For augmentation: to increase the graces of the Spirit. Grace thrives most in the iron furnace; sharp frosts nourish the corn, so do sharp afflictions grace; grace in the saints is often as fire hid in the embers, affliction is the bellows to blow it up into a flame. The Lord makes the house of bondage a friend to our grace; now faith and patience act their part; the darkness of the night cannot hinder the brightness of a star, so, the more the diamond is cut the more it sparkles, and the more God afflicts us, the more our graces cast a sparkling lustre.

4. For preparation: to fit and prepare the saints for glory, 2 Cor. 4:17. These stones which are cut out for a building are first hewn and squared: the godly are called 'living stones,' 1 Pet. 2:5. And God doth first hew and polish them by affliction that they may be fit for the

heavenly building; the house of bondage prepares for the "house not made with hands," 2 Cor. 5:1. The vessels of mercy are seasoned with affliction, and then the wine of glory is poured in.

QUEST. 2. How do the afflictions of the godly differ from the afflictions of the wicked?

Ans. 1. These are but castigations,—those on the wicked are punishments; these come from a father,—those from a judge.

A. 2. Afflictions on the godly are fruits of covenant-mercy, 2 Sam. 7:14. But afflictions on the wicked are effects of God's wrath, Eccl. 5:17., "He hath much wrath with his sickness." Afflictions on the wicked are the pledge and earnest of hell; they are like the pinioning of a malefactor, which doth presage his execution.

A. 3. Afflictions on the godly make them better, but afflictions on the wicked make them worse; the godly pray more, Ps. 130:1., the wicked blaspheme more, Rev. 16:9., "Men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God." Afflictions on the wicked make them more impenitent; every plague upon Egypt increased the plague of hardness in Pharaoh's heart. To what a prodigy of wickedness do some persons come after great sickness? Affliction on the godly is like bruising of spices, which are most sweet and fragrant; affliction on the wicked is like stamping of weeds with a pestle, which makes them more unsavoury.

Use 1st. It shews us, that we are not to wonder to see Israel in the house of bondage, 1 Pet. 4:12. The holiness of the saints will not excuse them from sufferings. Christ was the holy one of God, yet he was in the iron furnace: Christ's spouse is a lily among thorns, Cant. 2:2. His sheep, though they have the ear-mark of election upon them, yet may have their wool fleeced off; the godly have some good in

them, therefore the devil afflicts them, and some evil in them, therefore God afflicts them. While there are two seeds in the world, expect to be under the black rod. The gospel tells us of reigning, but first of suffering, 2 Tim. 2:12.

Branch 2. It informs us, that affliction is not always the sign of God's anger. Israel, the apple of God's eye, a peculiar treasure to him above all people, Exod. 19:5., yet these were in the house of bondage. We are apt to judge and censure them who are in an afflicted state. When the Barbarians saw the viper on Paul's hand, they said, "No doubt this man is a murderer," Acts 28:4., so, when we see the viper of affliction fasten upon the godly, we are apt to censure them, and say, these are greater sinners than others, and God hates them; this rash censuring is for want of wisdom. Were not Israel in the house of bondage? Jeremiah in the dungeon? Paul a night and a day in the deep? God's afflicting is so far from evidencing hatred, that his not afflicting is, Hos. 4:14., "I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom." Deus maxime irascitur cum non irascitur, BERN. God punisheth most when he doth not punish; his hand is heaviest when it seems to be lightest; the judge will not burn him in the hand whom he intends to execute.

Branch 3. If God's own Israel may be in the house of bondage, then afflictions do not of themselves demonstrate a man miserable, indeed sin unrepented of, makes one miserable; but the cross doth not. If God hath a design in afflicting his children, to make them happy, then they are not miserable; but God's afflicting them is to make them happy, therefore they are not miserable, Job 5:17., "Happy is the man whom God correcteth." The world counts them happy who can keep out of affliction; but the scripture calls them happy who are afflicted.

QUEST. How are they happy?

Ans. 1. Because they are more holy, Heb. 12:10.—2. Because they are more in God's favour, Prov. 3:12. The goldsmith loves his gold when in the furnace.—3. Because they have more of God's sweet presence, Ps. 91:15. And they cannot be unhappy that have God's powerful presence in supporting, his gracious presence in sanctifying their affliction. 4. Because, the more affliction they have, the more degrees of glory they shall have; the lower they have been in the iron furnace, they shall sit upon the higher throne of glory: the heavier their crosses, the heavier shall be their crown. So then, if afflictions make a Christian happy, they cannot denominate him miserable.

Branch 4. See the merciful providence of God to his children: though they may be in the house of bondage, and smart by affliction, yet they shall not be hurt by affliction. What hurt doth the fan to the corn? only separates the chaff from it. Or, the lance to the body? only lets out the imposthume. The house of bondage doth that which sometimes ordinances will not do; it doth humble and reform, Job 36:8, 10., "If they be held in cords of affliction, he openeth their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity." O what a merciful providence is this, though God bruise his people, yet, while he is bruising them, he is doing them good? As if one should throw a bag of money at another, and a little bruise him, yet it doth enrich him. Affliction enricheth the soul, and yields the sweet fruits of righteousness, Heb. 12:11.

Branch 5. If Israel be in the house of bondage, if the Lord deals so with his own children, then, how severely will he deal with the wicked? If God be so severe with them he loves, how severe will he be with them he hates? If it be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? If they that pray and mourn for sin be so severely

dealt with, what will become of them that swear and break the sabbath, and are unclean? If Israel be in the iron furnace, the wicked shall lie in the fiery furnace of hell. It should be the saddest news to wicked men, to hear that the people of God are afflicted, let them think how dreadful will the case of sinners be, 1 Pet. 4:17., "Judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel?" If God thrash his wheat, he will burn the chaff. If the godly suffer castigation, the wicked shall suffer condemnation. If he mingle his people's cup with wormwood he will mingle the wicked's cup with fire and brimstone.

Use 2d. If Israel be in the house of bondage, then, 1st, Do not entertain too hard thoughts of affliction. Christians are apt to look upon the cross and the iron furnace as frightful things, and do what they can to shun them. Nay, sometimes, to avoid affliction, they run themselves into sin. But do not think too hardly of affliction; do not look upon it as through the multiplying-glass of fear; the house of bondage is not hell. Consider, first, Whence doth affliction come? even from a wise God, who prescribes whatever befalls us. Persecutions are but like apothecaries. They give us that physic which God prescribes. Secondly, Affliction hath its light side, as well as its dark. God can sweeten our afflictions, candy our wormwood, 2 Cor. 1:5., "As our sufferings abound, so doth also our consolation." Argerius dated his letters from the pleasant garden of the Leonine prison. God doth sometimes so revive his children in trouble, that they had rather bear their afflictions than want their comforts. Why then should Christians entertain such hard thoughts of afflictions? Do not look at its grim face, but at the message it brings, which is to enrich us both with grace and comfort.

2dly, If Israel be sometimes in the house of bondage, in an afflicted state, then think beforehand of affliction; say not as Job 29:18., "I

shall die in my nest." In the house of mirth, think of the house of bondage; you that are now Naomi, may be Marah, Ruth 1:20. How quickly may the scene turn, and the hyperbole of joy end in a catastrophe! All outward things are upon the tropics, given to change. The forethoughts of affliction would make us sober and moderate in the use of lawful delight; it would cure a surfeit. Christ at a feast mentions his burial,—a good antidote against a surfeit. The forethoughts of affliction would make us prepare for it; it would take us off the world, it would put us upon a search of our evidences,—We should see what oil we have in our lamp, what grace we can find, that we may be able to stand in the evil day. That soldier was imprudent who had his sword to whet, when he was just going to fight. He who forecasts sufferings, will have the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit ready, that he may not be surprised.

3dly, If afflictions do come, let us labour to deport ourselves wisely as Christians, that we may adorn our sufferings; that is, let us endure with patience; James 5:10., "Take my brethren the prophets for an example of enduring affliction and patience." Satan labours to take advantage of us in affliction, by making us either faint or murmur, he blows the coals of passion and discontent, and then warms himself at the fire. Patience adorns sufferings. A Christian should say as Jesus Christ, "Lord, not my will but thy will be done." And indeed, it is a sign the affliction is sanctified, when the heart is brought to a sweet submissive frame, and then God will remove the affliction; he will take us out of the iron furnace. And that brings me to the second thing, God's deliverance of his people Israel, "I brought you out of the house of bondage."

EXOD. 20:2. Which brought thee out of the house of bondage.

We may consider these words, "Which brought thee out of the house of bondage;" either, 1. Literally; or, 2. Spiritually, and mystically. 1st. In the letter, "I brought thee out of the house of bondage;" that is, I delivered you out of the misery and servitude you sustained in Egypt, where you were in the iron furnace. 2d. Spiritually and mystically, "I brought thee out of the house of bondage." So it is a type of our deliverance by Christ from sin and hell.

First, Literally, in the letter, "I brought thee out of the house of bondage," viz. out of great misery and slavery in the iron furnace. The thing I note hence is, though God bring his people sometimes into trouble, yet he will bring them out again, Israel was in the house of bondage, but at last I brought you out of bondage. 1. That God doth deliver out of trouble. 2. In what manner. 3. When are the seasons. 4. Why God delivers. 5. How the deliverances of the godly and wicked out of trouble differ.

1st, That God doth deliver his children out of troubles, Ps. 22:4., "Our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted, and thou didst deliver them;" 2 Tim. 4:17., "And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion," viz. from Nero; Ps. 66:11, 12., "Thou laidst affliction upon our loins, but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place;" Ps. 30:5., "Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." God brought Daniel out of the lion's den, Zion out of Babylon. God, in his due time, gives an issue out of trouble, Ps. 68:20. The tree which in the winter seems dead, in the spring revives: *Post nubila Phoebus*. Affliction may leap on us as the viper did on Paul, but at last this viper shall be shaken off. It is called a cup of affliction, Isa. 51:17. The wicked drink a sea of wrath, the godly drink only a cup of affliction, and God will say shortly, 'Let this cup pass away.' God will give his people a gaol-delivery.

2dly, QUEST. In what manner doth God deliver his people out of trouble?

Ans. He doth it like a God, in wisdom.—1. He doth it sometimes suddenly. As the angel was caused to fly swiftly, Dan. 9:21., so God sometimes makes a deliverance fly swiftly, upon the wing, and on a sudden he turns the shadow of death into the light of the morning. As God gives us mercies above what we can think, Eph. 3:20., so sometimes before we can think of them, Ps. 126:1., "When the Lord turned the captivity of Sion, we were like them that dream;" we were in a dream, we never thought of it. Joseph could not have thought of such a sudden alteration, to be the same day freed out of prison, and made the chief ruler in the kingdom. Mercy sometimes does not stick long in the birth, but is brought forth on a sudden.—2. God sometimes delivers his people strangely. Thus the whale which swallowed up Jonah was the means of bringing him safe to land. God sometimes delivers his people in that very way they think he will destroy; in bringing Israel out of Egypt, God stirred up the heart of the Egyptians to hate them, Ps. 105:24., and that was the means of their deliverance. He brought Paul to shore by a contrary wind, and upon the broken pieces of the ship, Acts 27:44.

3dly, QUEST. When are the times and seasons that God usually delivers his people out of the bondage of affliction?

Ans. 1. When they are in the greatest extremity. When Jonah was in the belly of hell, then, chap. 2:5., "Thou hast brought up my life from corruption." When there is but an hair's breadth between the godly and death, then God ushers in deliverance. When the ship in the gospel was almost covered with waves, then Christ awoke and rebuked the wind. When Isaac was upon the altar, and the knife going to be put to his throat, then comes the angel, "Lay not thy hand

upon the child." When Peter began to sink, then Christ took him by the hand. Cum duplicanter lateres, venit Moses,—'when the tale of brick was doubled, then comes Moses' the temporal saviour. When the people of God are in the greatest danger, then appears the morning-star of deliverance. When the patient is ready to faint, then the cordial is given.

A. 2. The second season is, when affliction hath done its work upon them: when it hath effected that which God hath sent it for. As, 1. When it hath humbled them, Lam. 3:19, 20., "Remembering my affliction, the wormwood and gall, my soul is humbled in me." When God's corrosive hath eaten out the proud flesh. 2. When it hath tamed their impatience. Before, they were proud and impatient, like froward children that would struggle with their parents, but when their cursed hearts are tamed, and they say as Micah 7:9., "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him;" and as Eli, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good:" Let him hedge me with thorns, if he will plant me with grace.

A. 3. When they are more partakers of God's holiness, Heb. 12:10., they are more full of heavenly-mindedness. When the sharp frost of affliction hath brought forth the spring-flowers of grace, now the cross is sanctified, and God will bring them out of the house of bondage, Luctus in lætitiā vertetur, cineres in corollas. When the metal is refined, then it is taken out of the furnace; when affliction hath healed us, then God takes off the smarting plaster.

4thly, QUEST. Why doth God bring his people out of the house of bondage?

Ans. Hereby he makes way for his own glory, God's glory is dearer to him than any thing besides; it is a crown-jewel. God by raising his

people, raiseth the trophies of his own honour; he glorifies his attributes; his power, goodness, and truth, do all ride in triumph.

1. His power. If God did not sometimes bring his people into trouble, how would his power be seen in bringing them out? He brought Israel out of the house of bondage, with miracle upon miracle; he saved them with an outstretched arm, Ps. 114:5., "what aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest?" &c. It is spoken of Israel's march out of Egypt, "When the sea fled, and the waters were parted each from other." Here was the power of God set forth, Jer. 32:27., "Is there any thing too hard for me?" God loves to help when things seem past hope; he creates deliverance, Ps. 124:8. He brought Isaac out of a dead womb, and the Messiah out of a virgin's womb. O how doth his power shine forth, when he overcomes seeming impossibilities, and works a cure when things look desperate!

2. His truth. God hath made promises to his people, when they are under great pressures, to deliver them; and his truth is engaged in his promise, Ps. 50:15., "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee." Job 5:19., "He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea in seven." How is the scripture bespangled with these promises as the firmament is with stars? Either God will deliver them from death, or by death; he will make a way to escape, 1 Cor. 10:13. When promises are verified, God's truth is magnified.

3. His goodness. God is full of compassion to such as are in misery. The Hebrew word, racham, for mercy, signifies bowels. God hath "sounding of bowels," Isa. 63:15. And this sympathy stirs up God to deliver, Isa. 63:9., "In his love and pity he redeemed them." This makes way for the triumph of God's goodness. For he is tender-hearted, he will not over afflict; he cuts asunder the bars of iron, he

breaks the yoke of the oppressor. Thus all his attributes ride in triumph, in saving his people out of trouble.

5thly, QUEST. How the deliverance of the godly and wicked out of trouble, differ?

Ans. 1. The deliverances of the godly are preservations; of the wicked are reservations, 2 Pet. 2:9., "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly, and to reserve the unjust to be punished." A sinner may be delivered from dangerous sickness, and out of prison; but all this is but a reservation to some greater evil.

A. 2. God delivers the wicked (or rather spares them) in anger. Deliverances to the wicked are not given as pledges of God's love, but symptoms of displeasure, as quails were given to Israel in anger; but deliverances of the godly are in love, 2 Sam. 22:20., "He delivered me because he delighted in me." Isa. 38:17., "Thou hast, in love to my soul, delivered me from the pit of corruption;" or as in the Hebrew, Chashiacta Naphshi,—thou hast loved me from the pit of corruption. A wicked man may say, Lord, thou hast delivered me out of the pit of corruption; but a godly man may say, Lord, thou hast loved me out of the pit of corruption. It is one thing to have God's power deliver us, and another thing to have his love deliver us. O, saith Hezekiah, "Thou hast in love to my soul, delivered me from the pit of corruption."

QUEST. How may it be known that a deliverance comes in love?

Ans. 1. When a deliverance makes our heart boil over in love to God, Ps. 116:1., "I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice." It is one thing to love our mercies, another thing to love the Lord; then a deliverance is in love, when it causeth love.

A. 2. Then a deliverance is in love, when we have hearts to improve it for God's glory. The wicked instead of improving their deliverance for God's glory, improve their corruption; they grow worse after, as the metal when it is taken out of the fire grows harder; but then our deliverance is in love, when we improve it for God's glory. God raiseth us out of a low condition, and we lift him up in our praises, and honour him with our substance, Prov. 3:9. He recovers us from sickness, and we spend ourselves in his service. Mercy is not as the sun to the fire to dull it and put it out; but as oil to the wheel, to make it move faster.

A. 3. Then a deliverance comes in love, when it makes us more exemplary in holiness; our lives are walking bibles. A thousand praises and doxologies do not honour God so much as the mortifying of one lust, Obadiah 17., "On mount Zion there shall be deliverances and holiness." When these two go together,—deliverance and holiness,—when being made monuments of mercy, we are patterns of piety,—now a deliverance comes in love, and we may say as Hezekiah, "Thou hast in love to my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption."

Use 1st. If God brings his people out of bondage, then let none despond in trouble. Say not "I shall sink under this burden;" or as David, "I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul." God can make this text good, personally and nationally; to bring his people out of the house of bondage when he sees a fit season, he will put forth his arm and save them; and he can do it with ease, 2 Chron. 14:11., "It is nothing with thee, Lord, to help." He that can turn tides, can turn the times; he that raised Lazarus when he was dead, can raise thee when thou art sick, Isa. 63:5., "I looked, and there was none to help; therefore my own arm brought salvation." Do not despond; believe in God's power; faith sets God on work to deliver us.

Use 2d. Labour (if you are in trouble) to be fitted for deliverance; many would have deliverance, but are not fitted for it.

QUEST. When are we fitted for deliverance?

Ans. When we are, by our afflictions, conformed to Christ: namely, when we have learned obedience; Heb. 5:8., "Yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;" that is, he learned sweet submission to his Father's will. Luke 22:42., "Not my will but thine be done." When we have thus learned obedience by our sufferings, we are willing to do what God would have us to do, and be what God would have us be. Now we are conformed to Christ, and are fitted for deliverance.

Use 3d. If God hath brought you at any time out of the house of bondage, out of great and eminent troubles, be much in doxology and praise. Deliverance calls for praise, Ps. 30:11, 12., "Thou hast put off my sackcloth: and girded me with gladness: to the end that my glory may sing praise to thee." "My glory," that is, my tongue, which is the instrument of glorifying thee. The saints are temples of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. 3:16. Where should God's praises be sounded but in his temple? Beneficium postulat eficium,—the deepest springs yield the sweetest water, and hearts deeply sensible of God's deliverances yield the sweetest praises. Moses tells Pharaoh, when he was going out of Egypt, "We will go with our sheep and our cattle," Exod. 10:9.: why so, because he might have sacrifices of thanksgiving ready to offer to God for their deliverance. To have a thankful heart for deliverance is a greater blessing than the deliverance itself, Luke 17:15., one of the lepers, "when he saw he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God." The leper's thankful heart was a greater blessing than to be healed of his leprosy. Have any of you here been brought out of the house of bondage,—out of prison,

sickness, or any death-threatening danger? do not forget to be thankful; be not graves, but temples. And, that you may be the more thankful, observe every emphasis and circumstance in your deliverance; as to be brought out of trouble when you were in articulo mortis, there was but an hair's breadth between you and death; or to be brought out of affliction, without sin, you did not purchase your deliverance by the ensnaring of your consciences; or, to be brought out of trouble upon the wings of prayer; or, that those who were the occasions of bringing you into trouble, should be the instruments of bringing you out; these circumstances, being well weighed, do heighten a deliverance, and should heighten our thankfulness. The cutting of a stone may be of more value than the stone itself; and the circumstancing of a deliverance may be greater than the deliverance itself.

QUEST. 2. But how shall we praise God in a right manner for deliverance?

Ans. 1. Be holy persons. In the sacrifice of thanksgiving, whosoever did eat thereof, with their uncleanness upon them, were to be cut off, Lev. 7:20.; to typify how unpleasing their praises and thank-offerings are who live in sin.

A. 2. Praise God with humble hearts, acknowledge how unworthy you were of deliverance. God's mercies are not debts, but legacies; and that you should have a legacy given you, be humble, Rev. 11:16., "The elders fell upon their faces (an expression of humility) and worshipped and praised God."

A. 3. Praise God for deliverances cordially, Ps. 111:1., "I will praise the Lord with my whole heart." In religion there is no music but in concert, when heart and tongue join.

A. 4. Praise God for deliverances constantly, Ps. 146:2., "While I live will I bless the Lord;" some will be thankful while the memory of a deliverance is fresh, and then they leave off, like the Carthaginians, who used at first to send the tenth of their yearly revenue to Hercules; but by degrees they grew weary, and left off sending. But we must be constant in our eucharistical sacrifice or thank-offering; the motion of our praise must be like the motion of our pulse, which beats as long as life lasts, Ps. 146:2., "I will sing praises to my God while I have a being."

EXOD. 20:2. Out of the house of bondage.

Secondly, THESE words are to be understood mystically and spiritually. By Israel's deliverance from the house of bondage, is typified their spiritual deliverance from sin, Satan, and hell.

I. From sin. The house of bondage was a type of Israel's deliverance from sin. Sin is the true bondage, it enslaves the soul. *Nihil durius servitute*, Cicero. "Of all conditions, servitude is the worst." "I was held before conversion (saith Austin) not with an iron chain, but with the obstinacy of mine own will." Sin is the enslaver; sin is called a law, Rom. 7:23., because it hath such a binding power over a man; and it is said to reign, Rom. 6:12., because it exerciseth a tyrannical power; and men are said to be the servants of sin, Rom. 6:17., because they are so enslaved by it. Thus sin is the house of bondage. Israel was not so enslaved in the iron furnace as the sinner is by sin; those are worse slaves and vassals who are under the power of sin, than those who are under the power of earthly tyrants.

1. Other slaves have the tyrants only ruling over their bodies,—but the sinner hath his soul tyrannized over; the soul, that princely thing, which sways the sceptre of reason, and was once crowned with

perfect knowledge and holiness, this prince now goes on foot; it is enslaved, and made a lackey to every base lust.

2. Other slaves have some pity shewn them,—the tyrant gives them meat, and lets them have hours for their rest; but sin is a merciless tyrant, it will let men have no rest. Judas had no rest until he had betrayed Christ, and after that, he had less rest in his conscience. How doth a man hackney himself out in the service of sin, waste his body, break his sleep, distract his mind? A wicked man is every day doing sin's drudgery-work.

3. Other slaves, though they are set about servile work, yet about lawful: it is lawful to work in the galley, tug at the oar; but all the laws and commands of sin are unlawful. Sin saith to one man, defraud; to another, be unchaste; to another, take revenge; to another, take a false oath. Thus all sin's commands are unlawful; we cannot obey sin's law, but by breaking God's law.

4. Other slaves are forced against their will; Israel groaned under slavery, Exod. 2:23.; but sinners are content to be under the command of sin,—they are willing to be slaves,—they love their chains,—they will not take their freedom; they "glory as in their shame," Phil. 3:19. They wear their sins, not as their fetters, but their ornaments; they rejoice in iniquity, Jer. 11:15.

5. Other slaves are brought to correction, but sin's slaves are, without repentance, brought to condemnation; other slaves lie in the iron furnace, sin's slaves lie in the fiery furnace. What freedom of will hath a sinner to his own confusion, when he can do nothing but what sin will have him? He is enslaved. Thus sinners are in the house of bondage, but God takes his elect out of this house of bondage; he beats off the chains and fetters of sin; he rescues them from their slavery; he makes them free, by bringing them into the glorious

liberty of the children of God, Rom. 8. The law of love now commands, not the law of sin. Though the life of sin be prolonged, yet not the dominion: as those beasts in Daniel had their lives prolonged for a season, but their dominion was taken away, Dan. 7:12. The saints are made spiritual kings, to rule and conquer their corruptions,—to "bind these kings in chains," Ps. 149:8. This is matter of the highest praise and thanksgiving, to be thus taken out of the house of bondage, to be freed from enslaving lusts and made kings to reign in glory for ever.

II. The bringing Israel out of the house of bondage was a type of their deliverance from Satan. Thus men naturally are in the house of bondage, they are enslaved to Satan. Satan is called the prince of this world, John 14:30., and the god of this world, 2 Cor. 4:4., because he hath such power to command and enslave them. Though Satan shall one day be a close prisoner in chains, yet now he doth insult and tyrannize over the souls of men; sinners are under the rule of Satan, he exerciseth over them such a jurisdiction as Cæsar did over the senate. The devil fills men's heads with error, and their hearts with malice, Acts 5:3., "Why hath Satan filled thine heart?" A sinner's heart is the devil's mansion-house, Mat. 12:44., "I will return into mine house." And sure that must needs be an house of bondage, which is the devil's mansion-house. Satan is a perfect tyrant:—1. He rules men's minds, he blinds them with ignorance, 2 Cor. 4:4., "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not."—2. He rules their memories; they shall remember that which is evil, and forget that which is good; their memories are like a scarcer or strainer, that lets go all the pure liquor, and retains only the dregs.—3. He rules their wills: though the devil cannot force the will yet he draws it, John 8:34., "The lusts of your father you will do." He hath pot your hearts, and him you will obey; his strong temptations do more to draw men to evil, than all the promises of God can draw

them to good. This is the state of every man by nature, he is in the house of bondage, the devil hath him in his power; a sinner grinds in the devil's mill, he is at the command of Satan, as the ass is at the command of the driver. No wonder to see men oppress and persecute! These slaves must do what the god of this world will have them. How could those swine but run, when the devil entered into them? Mat. 8:32. When the devil tempted Ananias to tell a lie, he could not but speak what Satan had put in his heart, Acts 5:3. When the devil entered into Judas, and bid him betray Christ, Judas would do it, though he hanged himself. This case is sad and dismal, to be thus in the house of bondage, under the power and tyranny of Satan. When David would curse the enemies of God, how did he pray against them? That Satan might be at their right hand, Ps. 109:6. He knew he could lead them into any snare. If Satan be at the sinner's right-hand, let the sinner take heed he be not set on God's left hand. Is not this a case to be bewailed, to see men taken captive by Satan at his will? 2 Tim. 2:26. he leads sinners as slaves before him in triumph; he possesseth them. If people should see but their beasts bewitched and possessed of the devil, they would be much troubled; yet their souls are possessed by Satan, but they are not sensible. What can be worse than to be in the house of bondage,—to have the devil hurry men on in their lust to perdition? Sinners are willingly enslaved to Satan; they love their gaoler; are content to sit quietly under Satan's jurisdiction; they choose this bramble to rule them, though within a while, fire will come out of this bramble to devour them, Judges 9. Now, what an infinite mercy of God is it, when he brings poor souls out of this house of bondage,—when he gives them a gaol-delivery from the prince of darkness! JESUS CHRIST redeems captives,—he ransoms sinners by price, and rescues them by force. As David took a lamb out of the lion's mouth, 1 Sam. 17:34., so Christ rescues souls out of the mouth of this roaring lion. O what a mercy is it to be brought out of the house of bondage, to be taken from being

made captives to the prince of the power of the air, and to be made subjects of the Prince of Peace! And this is done by the preaching of the word, Acts 26:18., "To turn them from the power of Satan unto God."

III. The bringing of Israel out of the house of bondage was a type of their being delivered from hell. Hell is *domus servitutis*,—an house of bondage; an house built on purpose for sinners to lie in.

1. That there is such an house of bondage where the damned lie, Ps. 9:17., "The wicked shall be turned into hell." Mat. 23:33., "How can ye escape the damnation of hell?" If any one shall ask where this house of bondage is,—where is the place of hell? I wish you may never know feelingly. "Let us not so much (saith Chrysostom) labour to know where hell is, as how to escape it." Yet to satisfy curiosity, hell is *locus subterraneus*,—some place beneath, Prov. 15:24., "Hell beneath." Hesiod saith, "Hell is as far under the earth, as heaven is above it." Luke 8:31., "The devils besought Christ that he would not command them to go into the deep." Hell is in the deep.

2. QUEST. Why there must be this house of bondage? why a hell?

Ans. Because there must be a place for the execution of divine justice; earthly monarchs have their prison for malefactors, and shall not God have his; sinners are criminal persons, they have offended God; and it would not consist with God's holiness and justice, to have his laws infringed, and not appoint penalties for the transgressors.

3. The dreadfulness of this place. Could you but for one hour hear the groans and shrieks of the damned, it would confirm you in this truth, that hell is an house of bondage; hell is the emphasis of misery. Besides the *pœna damni*,—the punishment of loss, which is the exclusion of the soul from the glorified sight of God, which divines

think the worst part of hell, I say besides this, there will be *poena sensus*,—the punishment of sense. If, when God's wrath is kindled but a little, and a spark of it flies into a man's conscience in this life, it is so terrible—as in the case of Spira—then what will hell itself be? That I may describe this house of bondage,

1. In hell there will be a plurality of torments: 1. "Bonds and chains," 2 Pet. 2:4. 2. The worm, Mark 9:44. This is the worm of conscience: and the lake of fire, Rev. 20:15. Other fire is but painted to this.

2. This house of hell is haunted with devils, Mat. 25:41. Anselm hath a saying, "I had rather endure all torments, than see the devil with bodily eyes." Such as go to hell must not only be forced to behold the devil, but must be shut up in the den with this lion; they must keep the devil company; the devil is full of spite against mankind; this red dragon will spit fire in men's faces.

3. The torments of hell abide for ever, Rev. 14:11., "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever," Mark 9:44. Time cannot finish it, tears cannot quench it; the wicked are salamanders, who live always in the fire of hell, and are not consumed; after sinners have lain millions of years in hell, their punishment is as far from ending, as it was at the beginning. If all the earth and sea were sand, and every thousandth year a bird should come, and take away one grain of this sand, it would be a long time ere that vast heap of sand were emptied; yet, if after all that time the damned might come out of hell, there was some hope; but this word **EVER** breaks the heart.

QUEST. But how doth this seem to stand with God's justice, for a sin committed in a moment to punish it with eternal torment?

Ans. 1. Because there is an eternity of sin in man's nature. 2. Because sin is *crimen læsæ majestatis*,—it is committed against an infinite majesty; therefore the sin is infinite, and proportionably the punishment must be infinite. Now because a finite creature cannot bear infinite wrath, therefore he must be eternally satisfying what he cannot satisfy at once. Now then, if hell be such an house of bondage, what infinite cause have they to bless God, who are delivered from it? 1 Thess. 1:10., "Jesus delivered us from the wrath to come." Jesus Christ suffered the torments of hell in his soul, that believers should not suffer them. If we are thankful, when we are ransomed out of prison, or delivered from fire, O how should we bless God to be preserved from the wrath to come! And that which may cause the more thankfulness, is because the most part go into this house of bondage, the most part go to hell; therefore to be of the number of those few that are delivered from it, is matter of infinite thankfulness. I say most go to this house of bondage when they die; most go to hell, Mat. 7:13., "Broad is the way which leadeth unto destruction, and many there be that go in thereat." The greatest part of the world lies in wickedness, 1 John 5:19. Divide the world, saith Brerewood, into thirty-one parts,—nineteen parts of it are possessed by Jews and Turks,—seven parts by Heathens: so that there are but five parts of Christians, and among these Christians so many seduced papists on the one hand, and so many formal protestants on the other, that we may conclude the major part of the world goes to hell.—1. The scripture compares the wicked to briars, Isa. 10:17. There are but few lilies in your fields, but in every hedge thorns and briars.—2. To "the mire in the streets," Isa. 10:6. Few jewels or precious stones in the street, but you cannot go a step but you meet with mire. The wicked are as common as the dirt in the street. Look into the generality of people, how many drunkards for one that is sober?—how many adulterers for one that is chaste?—how many hypocrites for one that is sincere?—The devil hath the harvest, and God only a

few gleanings. O then, such as are delivered from the house of bondage, hell, have infinite cause to admire and bless God! How should the vessels of mercy run over with thankfulness? When most are carried prisoners to hell, they are delivered from wrath to come.

QUEST. How shall I know I am delivered from hell?

Ans. 1. Those whom Christ saves from hell he saves from sin, Mat. 1:21., "He shall save his people from their sins." Hath God delivered you from the power of corruption, from pride, malice, lust? If he hath delivered you from the hell of sin, then he hath delivered you from the hell of torment.

A. 2. If you have got an interest in Christ,—prizing, confiding, loving him,—then you are delivered from hell and damnation, Rom. 8:1., "No condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." If you are in Christ, then he hath put the garment of his righteousness over you, and hell-fire can never singe this garment. Pliny observes, nothing will so soon quench fire as salt and blood; the salt tears of repentance and the blood of Christ will quench the fire of hell that it shall never kindle upon you.

OF THE COMMANDMENTS

EXOD. 20:3. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Before I come to the commandments, I shall premise some things about the moral law: viz. answer questions, and lay down rules.

QUEST. 1. What is the difference between the moral law and the gospel?

Ans. 1. The law requires that we worship God as our Creator; the gospel requires that we worship God in and through Christ. God in Christ is propitious; out of Christ we may see God's power, justice, holiness,—in Christ we see his mercy displayed.

A. 2. The moral law requires obedience, but gives no strength—as Pharaoh required brick but gave no straw—but the gospel gives strength; the gospel bestows faith on the elect; the gospel sweetens the law, it makes us serve God with delight.

QUEST. 2. Of what use then is the moral law to us?

Ans. The law is a glass to shew us our sins, that so, seeing our pollution and misery, we may be forced to flee to Christ to satisfy for former guilt, and save from future wrath, Gal. 3:24., "The law was our school-master to bring us to Christ."

QUEST. 3. But is the moral law still in force to believers; is it not abolished to them?

Ans. In some sense it is abolished to believers. 1. In respect of justification; they are not justified by their obedience to the moral

law. Believers are to make great use of the moral law—as I shall shew—but they must trust only to Christ's righteousness for justification; as Noah's dove made use of her wings to fly, but trusted to the ark for safety. If the moral law could justify, what need were there of Christ's dying?—2. The moral law is abolished to believers, in respect of the malediction of it; they are freed from the curse and damnatory power of it, Gal. 3:13., "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

QUEST. 4. How was Christ made a curse for us?

Ans. Christ may be considered, 1. As the Son of God, and so he was not made a curse.—2. As our pledge and surety, Heb. 7:22., and so he was made a curse for us: this curse was not upon his Godhead, but upon his manhood. This curse was the wrath of God lying upon him; and thus Christ hath taken away from believers the curse of the law, by being made a curse for them. But though the moral law is thus far abolished, yet it remains a perpetual rule to believers; though the moral law be not their Saviour, yet it is their guide; though it be not *foedus*, a covenant of life, yet it is *norma*, a rule of living; every Christian is bound to conform to the moral law, and write, as exactly as he can, after this copy, Rom. 3:31., "Do we then make void the law through faith, God forbid." Though a Christian is not under the condemning power of the law, yet he is under the commanding power: to love God, to reverence and obey him, this is a law always binds and will bind in heaven. This I urge against the Antinomians, who say the moral law is abrogated to believers; which, as it contradicts scripture, so it is a key to open the door to all licentiousness. They who will not have the law to rule them, shall never have the gospel to save them. Having answered these questions, I shall in the next place, lay down some general rules for the right understanding of the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments:

these rules may serve to give us some light into the sense and meaning of the commandments.

Rule 1. The commands and prohibitions of the moral law reach the heart.—1. The commands of the moral law reach the heart: the commandments require not only outward actions but inward affections,—they require not only the outward act of obedience, but the inward affection of love, Deut. 6:5., "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart."—2. The threats and prohibitions of the moral law reach the heart; the law of God forbids not only the act of sin, but the desire and inclination; not only doth it forbid adultery, but lusting, Mat. 5:28. Not only stealing, but coveting, Rom. 7:7. *Lex humana ligat manum, lex divina comprimet animam*,—'man's law binds only the hands, God's law binds the heart.'

Rule 2. In the commandments there is a *synecdoche*, more is intended than is spoken. 1. Where any duty is commanded, there the contrary sin is forbidden, &c. When we are commanded to keep the sabbath-day holy, there we are forbidden to break the sabbath; when we are commanded to live in a calling, "Six days shalt thou labour," there we are forbidden to live idly, and out of a calling.—2. Where any sin is forbidden, there the contrary duty is commanded. When we are forbidden to take God's name in vain, the contrary duty is commanded, that we should reverence his name, Deut. 28:58., "That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God." Where we are forbidden to wrong our neighbour, there is the contrary duty included, that we should do him all the good we can, by vindicating his name and supplying his wants.

Rule 3. Where any sin is forbidden in the commandment, there the occasion of it is also forbidden. Where murder is forbidden, there envy and rash anger are forbidden, which may occasion it. Where

adultery is forbidden in the commandment, there is forbidden all that may lead to it,—as wanton glances of the eye,—or coming into the company of an harlot, Prov. 5:8., "Come not nigh the door of her house;" he who would be free from the plague, must not come near the infected house. Under the law the Nazarite was forbidden to drink wine; nor might he eat grapes of which the wine was made.

Rule 4. In relatio subintelligitur correlatum,—where one relation is named in the commandment, there another relation is included. Where the child is named, there the father is included; where there is the duty of children to parents mentioned, there is included also the duty of parents to children; where the child is commanded to honour the parent, there is implied that the parent is also commanded to instruct, to love, to provide for the child.

Rule 5. Where greater sins are forbidden, there lesser sins are also forbidden. Though no sin in its own nature is little, yet comparatively one may be less than another; where idolatry is forbidden, there is forbidden superstition, or bringing any innovation into God's worship, which he hath not appointed. As the sons of Aaron were forbidden to worship an idol, so to sacrifice to God with strange fire, Lev. 10:1. Mixture in sacred things, is like a dash in the wine, which though it gives a colour, yet doth but debase and adulterate it. It is highly provoking to God to bring any superstitious ceremony into his worship which he hath not prescribed; it is to tax God's wisdom, as if he were not wise enough to appoint the manner how he will be served.

Rule 6. The law of God is copulative. *Lex est copulativa*. The first and second tables are knit together,—piety to God, and equity to our neighbour, these two tables which God hath joined together must not be put asunder. Try a moral man by the duties of the first table,—

piety to God,—and there you will find him negligent; try an hypocrite by the duties of the second table,—equity to his neighbour,—and there you will find him tardy. He who is strict in the second table but neglects the first, or he who is zealous in the first table, but neglects the second, his heart is not right with God. The Pharisees were the highest pretenders to the first table, zeal and holiness; but Christ detects their hypocrisy, Mat. 23:23., "Ye have omitted judgment, mercy and faith." They were bad in the second table; they omitted judgment, that was, being just in their dealing; mercy, in relieving the poor; and faith, that is faithfulness in their promises and contracts with men. God wrote both the tables, and our obedience must set a seal to both.

Rule 7. God's law forbids not only the acting of sin in our own persons, but being accessory to, or having any hand in the sins of others.

QUEST. How and in what sense may we be said to partake of, and have an hand in the sins of others?

Ans. 1. By decreeing unrighteous decrees, and imposing on others that which is unlawful. Jeroboam made the people of Israel to sin; he was accessory to their idolatry, by setting up golden calves; so David though he did not in his own person kill Uriah, yet because he wrote a letter to Joab, to set Uriah in the fore-front of the battle, and it was done by his command, therefore he was accessory to Uriah's death, and the murder of him was laid to David's charge by the prophet, 2 Sam. 12:9., "Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword."

A. 2. We become accessory to the sins of others by not hindering them when it is in our power, *Qui non prohibet cum potest, judet*. If a master of a family see his servant break the sabbath, or hear him swear, and let him alone, doth not use the power he hath to suppress

him, he becomes accessory to his sin. Eli, for not punishing his sons when they made the offering of the Lord to be abhorred, made himself guilty, 1 Sam. 3:14. He that suffers an offender to pass unpunished, makes himself an offender.

A. 3. By counselling, abetting, or provoking others to sin. Ahithophel made himself guilty of the fact, by giving counsel to Absalom to go in and defile his father's concubines, 2 Sam. 16:21. He who shall tempt or solicit another to be drunk though himself be sober, yet being the occasion of another's sin, he is accessory to it, Hab. 2:15., "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him."

A. 4. By consenting to another's sin. Saul did not cast one stone at Stephen, yet the scripture saith, "Saul was consenting to his death," Acts 8:1. Thus he had a hand in it. If several did combine to murder a man, and they should tell another of their intent, and he should give his consent to it, he were guilty: though his hand were not in the murder, yet his heart was in it; though he did not act it, yet he did approve it, so it became his sin.

A. 5. By example, *vivitur exemplis*. Examples are powerful and cogent; setting a bad example occasions another to sin, and so a person becomes accessory. If the father swears, and the child by his example learn to swear, the father is accessory to the child's sin; he taught him by his example. As there are diseases hereditary, so there are sins.

Rule 8. The last rule about the commandments is this, that though we cannot, by our own strength, fulfil all these commandments, yet doing *quoad posse*,—what we are able, the Lord hath provided encouragement for us. There is a threefold encouragement.

1. That though we have not ability to obey any one command, yet God hath, in the new covenant, promised to work that in us, which he requires, Ezek. 36:27., "I will cause you to walk in my statutes." God commands us to love him. Alas how weak is our love! it is like the herb that is yet only in the first degree; but God hath promised to circumcise our hearts, that we shall love him, Deut. 30:6. He that doth command us, will enable us. God commands us to turn from sin, but alas! we have not power to turn; therefore God hath promised to turn us,—to put his Spirit within us, and turn the heart of stone into flesh, Ezek. 36:26. There is nothing in the command, but the same is in the promise. Therefore, Christian, be not discouraged, though thou hast no strength of thy own, yet God will give thee this strength. The iron hath no power to move, but when the loadstone draws it, it can move, Isa. 26:12., "Thou also hast wrought all our works in us."

2. Though we cannot exactly fulfil the moral law, yet God will, for Christ's sake, mitigate the rigour of the law, and accept of something less than he requires. God in the law requires exact obedience, yet he will accept of sincere obedience; he will abate something of the degree, if there be truth in the inward parts; God will see the faith, and pass by the failing; the gospel remits something of the severity of the moral law.

3. Wherein our personal obedience comes short, God will be pleased to accept us in our surety, Eph. 1:6., "He hath made us accepted in the beloved." Though our obedience be imperfect, yet, through Christ our surety, God looks upon it as perfect. And that very service which God's law might condemn, God's mercy is pleased to crown, by virtue of the blood of our Mediator. Having given you these rules about the commandments, I shall come next to the direct handling of them.

OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:3. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

QUEST. XLV. WHY doth the commandment run in the second person singular, Thou? Why doth not God say, You shall have no other gods, but, Thou?

Ans. Because the commandment concerns every one, and God would have you take it as spoken to you by name. Though we are forward to take privileges to ourselves, yet we are apt to shift off duty from ourselves to others: therefore the commandment runs in the second person, Thou and Thou, that every one may know, that the commandment is spoken to him, as it were, by name. And so I come to the commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." This commandment may well lead the van, and be set in the front of all the commandments, because it is the foundation of all true religion. The sum of this commandment is, that we should sanctify God in our hearts, and give him a precedency above all created beings. There are two branches of this commandment: 1. That we must have one God. 2. That we must have but one. Or thus, 1. That we must have God for our God. 2. That we must have no other.

1. That we must have God for our God: it is manifest that we must have a God, and "who is God save the Lord?" 2 Sam. 22:32. The Lord Jehovah (one God in three persons) is the true, living, eternal God; and him must we have for our God.

QUEST. 1. What is it to make God to be a God to us?

Ans. 1. To make God to be a God to us, is to acknowledge him for a God; the gods of the heathens are idols, Ps. 96:5., and we "know that an idol is nothing," 1 Cor. 8:4., that is, it hath nothing of Deity in it; if we cry, "Help, O Idol!" an idol cannot help; the idols were themselves carried into captivity, Isa. 46:2., so that an idol is nothing; vanity is ascribed to it, Jer. 14:22., we do not acknowledge it to be a God. But this is to make God to be a God to us, when we do, ex animo, acknowledge him to be God, 1 Kings 18:39., All the people fell on their faces and said, "The Lord he is the God! the Lord he is the God!" Yea, we acknowledge God to be the only God, 2 Kings 19:15., "O Lord God of Israel which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone!" Deity is a jewel that belongs only to his crown. Yet further, we acknowledge that there is no God like him, 1 Kings 8:22, 23., "And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord; and he said Lord God of Israel, there is no god like thee." Ps. 89:6., "For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord." In the Chaldee it is, Who among the angels. None can do as God: he brought the world out of nothing, "and hangeth the earth upon nothing," Job 26:7. This is to make God to be a God to us, when we are persuaded in our hearts, and confess with our tongues, and subscribe with our hand, that God is the only true God, and that there is none comparable to him.

A. 2. To make God to be a God to us, is to choose him, Josh. 24:15., "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord:" that is, we will choose the Lord to be our God. It is one thing for the judgment to approve of God, and another for the will to choose him. Religion is not a matter of chance, but choice.

QUEST. What is antecedent to, or goes before this choice?

Ans. 1. Before this choosing God for our God, there must be knowledge; we must know God, before we can choose him; before one choose the person he will marry, he must first have some knowledge and cognizance of the person: so we must know God, before we can choose him for our God, 1 Chron. 28:9., "Know thou the God of thy fathers." We must know God in his attributes, glorious in holiness, rich in mercy, faithful in promises. We must know God in his Son; as in a glass a face is represented; so in Christ, as in a transparent glass, we see God's beauty and love shine forth. This knowledge must go before our choosing of God. Lactantius said, all the learning of the philosophers was without a head, because it wanted the knowledge of God.—2. Wherein our choosing of God consists. It is an act of mature deliberation; a Christian having viewed the superlative excellencies in God, and being stricken into an holy admiration of his perfections, he singles out God from all other objects, to set his heart upon; he saith as Jacob, Gen. 28:21., "The Lord shall be my God."—3. The effect of choosing God: the soul that chooseth God, devotes himself to God, Ps. 119:38., "Thy servant who is devoted to thy fear." As the vessels of the sanctuary were consecrated and set apart from common to holy uses, so the soul who hath chosen God to be his God, hath dedicated and set himself apart for God, and will be no more for profane uses.

A. 2. To make God to be a God to us, is to enter into a solemn covenant with him, that he shall be our God: after choice follows the marriage-covenant. As God makes a covenant with us, Isa. 55:3., "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David:" so we make a covenant with him, 2 Chron. 15:12., "They entered into covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers." And Isa. 44:5., "One shall say, I am the Lord's: and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord;" like soldiers, that subscribe their names in the muster-roll. This covenant, "That God shall be our

God," we have often renewed in the Lord's supper; and it is like a seal to a bond, to bind us fast to God, and to keep us that we do not depart from him.

A. 3. To make God to be a God to us, is to give him adoration: which consists, 1. In reverencing of him, Ps. 89:7., "God is to be had in reverence of all them that are about him." The seraphims, who stood about God's throne covered their faces, Isa. 6 and Elijah wrapt himself in a mantle, when the Lord passed by, in token of reverence. This reverence shews the high esteem we have of God's sacred majesty.—2. Adoration is in bowing to him, or worshipping him, Ps. 29:2., "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." Neh. 8:6., "They bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground." Divine worship is the peculiar honour belonging to the Godhead: this God is jealous of, and will have no creature share in, Isa. 42:8., "My glory will I not give to another." Magistrates may have a civil respect or veneration, God only a religious adoration.

A. 4. To make God to be a God to us, is to fear him, Deut. 28:58., "That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God." This fearing of God is, 1. To have God always in our eye, Ps. 16:8., "I have set the Lord always before me." And Ps. 25:15., "Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord." He who fears God, imagines, that whatever he is doing, God looks on, and, as a judge, weighs all his actions. 2. To fear God, is, when we have such an holy awe of God upon our hearts, that we dare not sin, Ps. 4:4., "Stand in awe and sin not." The wicked sin and fear not; the godly fear and sin not, Gen. 39:9., "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Bid me sin, bid me drink poison. It is a saying of Anselm, "If hell were on one side, and sin on the other, I would rather leap into hell, than willingly sin against my God." (1.) This glorious and fearful name: he who fears God will not sin, though it be never so secret,

Lev. 19:14., "Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God." Suppose you should curse a deaf man, he cannot hear you curse him; or if you lay a block in a blind man's way, and make him fall, he cannot see you lay it; ay, but the fear of God will make you forsake these sins which can neither be heard nor seen by men. (2.) Where the fear of God is, it destroys the fear of man; the three children feared God, therefore they feared not the king's wrath, Dan. 3:16. The greater noise drowns the less; the noise of thunder drowns the noise of a river; so when the fear of God is superintendent in the soul, it drowns all other carnal fear. This is to make God to be a God to us, when we have an holy filial fear of him; "That thou mayest fear."

A. 5. To make God to be a God to us, is to trust in him, Ps. 141:8., "Mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord: in thee is my trust." 2 Sam. 22:3., "The God of my rock, in him will I trust." There is nothing we can trust in but God; all the creatures are a refuge of lies, —they are like the Egyptian reed, too weak to support us, but strong enough to wound us, *Omnis motus fit super immobili*. God only is a sufficient foundation to build our trust upon; and then, when we trust, we make him a God to us; else we make him an idol, if we do not trust in him. Trusting in God is when we rely on his power as a Creator, and on his love as a Father. Trusting in God is, when we commit our chief treasure to him; our soul is our chief treasure, we commit our soul to him, Ps. 31:5., "Into thy hands I commit my spirit." As the orphan trusts his estate with his guardian, so we trust our souls with God; this is to make him a God to us.

QUEST. 1. How shall we know that we trust in God aright?

Ans. If we trust in God aright, then we will trust in God at one time as well as another, Ps. 62:8., "Trust in him at all times." Can we trust

God. 1. In our straits? when the fig-tree doth not flourish,—when our earthly crutches are broken,—can we now lean upon God's promise? When the pipes are cut off that used to bring us comfort, can we live upon God, in whom are all our fresh springs? When we have no bread to eat but the bread of carefulness, Ezek. 19:8.,—when we have no water to drink unless tears, Ps. 80:5., "Thou givest them tears to drink in great measure,"—can we now trust in God's providence to make supply for us? A good Christian believes that if God feed the ravens, he will feed his children; he lives upon God's all-sufficiency, not only for grace, but food; he believes if God will give him heaven, he will give daily bread; he trusts God's bond, Ps. 37:3., "Verily thou shalt be fed." 2. Can we trust God in our fears? fear is the age of the soul. When adversaries begin to grow high, can we now display the banner of faith? Ps. 56:3., "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." Faith cures the trembling at the heart: faith gets above fear, as the oil swims above the water. This is to trust in God, and it is to make him to be a God to us.

A. 6. To make God to be a God to us, is to love him; in the godly, fear and love kiss each other.

A. 7. To make him a God to us, is to obey him. But I forbear to speak of these, because I shall be large upon them in the second commandment; "Shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."

QUEST. Why must we cleave to the Lord as our God?

Ans. 1. From the equity of it: it is but equal we should cleave to him as our God, from whom we receive our being; who can have a better right to us than he that gives us our breath? Ps. 100:3., "For it is he that made us, and not we ourselves." It is unequal, yea ungrateful, to give away our love or worship to any but God.

A. 2. From the utility. If we cleave to the Lord as our God; then, 1. He will bless us, Ps. 67:6., "God, even our own God, will bless us." He will bless us, (1.) In our estate, Deut. 28:4, 5., "Blessed shall be the fruit of thy ground: blessed shall be thy basket and thy store;" we shall not only have our sack full of corn, but it shall be blessed: here is money in the mouth of the sack. (2.) He will bless us with peace, Ps. 29:11., "The Lord will bless his people with peace:" outward peace, which is the nurse of plenty, Ps. 147:14., "He maketh peace in thy borders:" inward peace, a smiling conscience; this is sweeter than the dropping honey. 2. God will turn all evils to our good, Rom. 8. He will make a treacle of poison. Joseph's imprisonment was a means for his advancement, Gen. 50:20. Out of the bitterest drug God will distil his glory and our salvation. In short, God will be our guide to death, our comfort in death, our reward after death. So then the utility of it may make us cleave to the Lord as our God, Ps. 144:15., "Happy is that people who have the Lord for their God."

A. 3. From the necessity. 1st, If God be not our God, he will curse our blessings; Mal. 2:2., and God's curse blasts wherever it comes. 2dly, If God be not our God, we have none to help us in misery; will God help his enemies; will he assist them who disclaim him? 3dly, If we do not make God to be our God, he will make himself to be our judge; and if he condemns, there is no appealing to a higher court. So that there is a necessity of having God for our God, unless we intend to be eternally espoused to misery.

Use 1st. If we must have one God, and the Lord Jehovah for our God, it condemns the Atheists who have no God, Ps. 14:1., The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." There is no God he believes in, or worships; such Atheists were Diogoras and Theodorus. When Seneca had reproved Nero for his impieties, saith Nero, "Dost thou think I believe there is any God, when I do such things?" The duke of Silesia

was so infatuated, that he affirmed, *Neque inferos, neque superos esse*,—'that there was neither God nor devil.' We may see God in the works of his fingers. The creation is a great volume, in which we may read a Godhead, and he must needs put out his own eyes, that denies a God. Aristotle, though an heathen, did not only acknowledge God, when he cried out, "Thou Being of beings, have mercy on me!" but he thought, he that did not confess a Deity, was not worthy to live. They who will not believe a God, shall feel him. Heb. 10:31., "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Use 2d. It condemns Christians, who profess to own God for their God, yet they do not live as if he were their God. 1. They do not believe in him as a God; when they look upon their sins, they are apt to say, can God pardon? when they look upon their wants, can God provide? can he prepare a table in the wilderness?—2. They do not love him as a God; they do not give him the cream of their love, but are apt to love other things more than God; they say they love God, but will part with nothing for him.—3. They do not worship him as a God; they do not give him that reverence, nor pray with that devotion, as if they were praying to a God. How dead are their hearts? If not dead in sin, yet dead in duty. 'Tis as if praying to a god that hath eyes and sees not,—ears, and hears not. In hearing the word, how much distraction, what regardless hearts have many? they are thinking of their shops and drugs. Would a king take it well at our hands, if, when he is speaking to us, we should be playing with a feather? when God is speaking to us in his word, and our hearts are taken up with thoughts about the world, is not this playing with a feather? O how may this humble most of us, we do not make God to be a God to us? We do not believe in him, love him, worship him as a God. Many heathens have worshipped their false gods with more seriousness and devotion than some Christians do the true God. O let us chide ourselves! Did I say chide? let us abhor ourselves for our

deadness and formality in religion,—how we have professed God, yet we have not worshipped him as God! So much for the first, "We must have God for our God:" I should come to the second, "We must have no other God."

EXOD. 20:3. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

1. That we must have "no other god:" "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

QUEST. What is meant by this word, Before me?

Ans. That is, before my face,—in conspectu meo,—in my sight: Deut. 27:15., "Cursed be he that makes a graven image, and puts it in a secret place." Some would not bow to the idol where others might see, but they would secretly bow to it; but though this was out of man's sight, it was not out of God's sight: "Cursed therefore (saith God) be he that puts the image in a secret place." "Thou shalt have no other gods." 1. There is really no other god. 2. We must have no other.

1. There is really no other God. The Valentinians held there were two Gods, the Polytheists that there were many; the Persians worshipped the sun; the Egyptians, the ox and elephant; the Grecians, Jupiter; but there is no other than the true God, Deut. 4:39., "Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none other," For, 1. There is but one First Cause, that hath its being of itself, and on which all other beings depend; as in the heavens the Primum Mobile moves all the other orbs, so God is the Great Mover, he gives life and motion to every thing existent.—2. There is but one Omnipotent Power. If there be two omnipotents, then we must always suppose a contest between these two; that which one would do, the other

Power, being equal, would oppose, and so all things would be brought into a confusion. If a ship should have two pilots of equal power, one would be ever crossing the other; when one would sail, the other would cast anchor; here were a confusion, and the ship must needs perish. The order and harmony in the world, the constant and uniform government of all things, is a clear argument that there is but one Omnipotent, one God that rules all: Isa. 44:6., "I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God."

2. We must have no other God. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me:" this commandment forbids, 1. Serving a false God, and not the true, Jer. 2:27., "saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth." Or, 2. Joining a false god with a true, 2 Kings 17:33., "They feared the Lord, and served their own gods." Both these are forbidden in the commandment; we must adhere to the true God, and no other; "God is a jealous God," and he will endure no co-rival. A wife cannot lawfully have two husbands at once: nor may we have two Gods, Exod. 34:14., "Thou shalt worship no other god, for the Lord is a jealous God." Ps. 16:4., "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god." The Lord interprets it a 'Forsaking of him,' to espouse any other god, Judges 2:12., "They forsook the Lord," and followed other gods. God would not have his people so much as make mention of idol gods, Exod. 23:13., "Make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth." God looks upon it as a breaking of the marriage-covenant, to go after other gods. Therefore, when Israel committed idolatry with the golden calf, God disclaims his interest in them, Exod. 32:7., "Thy people have corrupted themselves." Before, God called Israel his people; but when they went after other gods, "Now (saith the Lord to Moses) they are no more my people but thy people." Hos. 2:2., "Plead with your mother, plead; for she is not my wife." She doth not keep faith with me; she hath stained herself with

idols, therefore I will divorce her; "she is not my wife." To go after other gods, is what God cannot bear; it makes the fury rise up in his face, Deut. 13:6, 8, 9., "If thy brother, or thy son, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, let us go and serve other gods, thou shalt not consent unto him, neither shall thine eye pity him; but thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people."

QUEST. But what is it to have other gods besides the true God? I fear upon search, we have more idolaters among us than we are aware of.

Ans. To trust in any thing more than God, is to make it a god. 1. If we trust in our riches, then we make riches our god: we may take comfort, not put confidence in them. It is a foolish thing to trust in them. (1.) They are deceitful riches, Mat. 13:2., and it is foolish to trust to that which will deceive us. 1st, They have no solid consistency, they are like landscapes or golden dreams, which leave the soul empty when it awakes or comes to itself. 2dly, They are not what they promise; they promise to satisfy our desires, and they increase them; they promise to stay with us, and they take wings. (2.) They are hurtful, Eccl. 1:18., "Riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt." It is foolish to trust to that which will hurt one: who would take hold of the edge of a razor to help him? They are oft fuel for pride and lust, Ezek. 28:5., Jer. 5:7. So that it is folly to trust in our riches: but some do, and so make money their god, Prov. 10:15., "The rich man's wealth is his strong tower." He makes the wedge of gold his hope, Job 31:24. God made man of the dust of the earth, and man makes a god of the dust of the earth. Money is his creator, redeemer, comforter: his creator; if he had money, now he thinks he is made: his redeemer; if he be in danger, he trusts to his money to redeem him: his comforter; if he be sad, money is the golden harp to

drive away the evil spirit. Thus, by trusting to money, we make it a god.

2. If we trust in the arm of flesh, we make it a god, Jer. 17:5., "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." The Syrians trusted in their army, which was so numerous that it filled the country, 1 Kings 20:27., but this arm of flesh withered, v. 29. What we make our trust, God makes our shame. The sheep run to the hedges for shelter and they lose their wool: we have run to second causes to help us, and we have lost much of our golden fleece,—they have not only been reeds to fail us, but thorns to prick us. We have broken our parliament-crutches, by leaning too hard upon them.

3. If we trust in our wisdom, we make it a god, Jer. 9:23., "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom!" Glorifying is the height of confidence. Many a man doth make an idol of his wit and parts; he deifies himself, but how oft doth God take the wise in their own craftiness, Job 6:13. Ahithophel had a great wit,—his counsel was as the oracle of God,—but his wit brought him to the halter, 2 Sam. 17:23.

4. If we trust in our civility, we make it a god. Many trust to this, none can charge them with gross sin. Civility is but nature refined and cultivated; a man may be washed, and not changed; his life may be civil, yet there may be some reigning sin in his heart; the Pharisee could say, "I am no adulterer," Luke 18:11., but he could not say, I am not proud. To trust to civility, is to trust to a spider's web.

5. If we trust to our duties to save us, we make them a god, Isa. 64:6., "Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;" they are fly-blown with sin. Put gold in the fire, and there comes out much dross; our most golden duties are mixed with infirmity; we are apt either to neglect duty, or idolize it. Use duty, but do not trust to it; for then you make it a god. Trust not to your praying and hearing; these are the means

of salvation, but they are not saviours. If you make duties bladders to trust to, you may sink to hell with these bladders.

6. If we trust in our grace, we make a god of it. Grace is but a creature; if we trust to it, we make it an idol. Grace is imperfect, we cannot trust to that to save us which is imperfect, Ps. 26:1., "I have walked in my integrity: I have trusted also in the Lord." David did walk in his integrity; but did not trust in his integrity: "I have trusted also in the Lord." If we trust in our graces, we make a Christ of them. They are good graces, but bad Christs. To love any thing more than God, is to make it a god.

1st, If we love our estate more than God, then we make it a god. The young man in the gospel loved his gold better than his Saviour; the world lay nearer his heart than Christ, Mat. 19:22. Fulgens hoc auram præstringit oculos, VAR. Hence it is, the covetous man is called an idolater, Eph. 5:5. Why so? Because he loves his estate more than God, and so he makes it his god; though he doth not bow down to an idol, yet he worships the graven image in his coins; he is an idolater. That which hath most of the heart, that we make a god.

2dly, If we love our pleasures more than God we make a god of pleasure, 2 Tim. 3:4., "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." Many let loose the reins, and give themselves up to all manner of sensual delights; they idolize pleasure, Job 21:12, 13., "They take the timbrel, and the harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ; they spend their days in wealth." I have read of a place in Africa, where the people spend all their time in dancing, and making merry: and have not we many who make a god of pleasure, who spend their time in going to plays and visiting stews, as if God had made them like the leviathan, to play in the water? Ps. 104:26. In the country of Sardinia there is an herb like balm, that if one eat too much of it, he will die

laughing: such an herb is pleasure; if one feeds immoderately on it, he will go laughing to hell. Such as make a god of pleasure, let them read but two scriptures, Eccl. 7:4., "The heart of fools is in the house of mirth." And, Rev. 18:7., "How much she hath lived deliciously, so much torment give her." Sugar laid in a damp place turns to water; so all the sugared joys and pleasures of sinners will turn to the water of tears at last.

3dly, If we love our belly more than God, we make a god of it, Phil. 3:19., "Whose god is their belly." Clemens Alexandrinus writes of a fish that had its heart in its belly: an emblem of epicures, their heart is in their belly,—they do sacrificari lari,—their belly is their god, and to this god they pour drink-offerings. The Lord allows what is fitting for the recruiting of nature, Deut. 11:15., "I will send grass, that thou mayest eat and be full." But, to mind nothing but the indulging of the appetite, is idolatry; "Whose god is their belly." What pity is it, that the soul, that princely part, which sways the sceptre of reason and is a-kin to angels, should be enslaved to the brutish part!

4thly, If we love a child more than God, we make a god of it. How many are guilty in this kind? they think of their children, and delight more in them than in God; they grieve more for the loss of their first born, than for the loss of their first love. This is to make an idol of a child, and to set it in God's room. Thus God is oft provoked to take away our children. If we love the jewel more than him that gave it, God will take away the jewel, that our love may return to him again.

Use 1st. It reproves such as have other gods, and so renounce the true God. 1. Such as set up idols, Jer. 2:28., "According to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah." Hos. 12. 111, "Their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the field."—2. Such as seek to familiar spirits. This is a sin condemned by the law of God, Deut.

18:10, 11., "There shall not be found among you any that consult with familiar spirits." It is ordinary, that if people have lost any of their goods, they send to wizards and soothsayers, to know how they may come by their goods again: what is this but for people to make a god of the devil, by consulting with him, and putting their trust in him? What! because you have lost your goods, will you lose your souls too? 2 Kings 1:6. So, is it not because you think there is not a God in heaven, that you ask counsel of the devil? If any be guilty, be humbled.

Use 2d. It sounds a retreat in our ears. Let it call us off from the idolizing any creature; and renouncing other gods, let us cleave to the true God and his service. If we go away from God, we know not where to mend ourselves.

1. It is honourable serving of the true God; *Servire Deo est regnare*. It is more honour to serve God, than to have kings serve us.—2. Serving the true God is delightful, Isa. 56:7., "I will make them joyful in my house of prayer." God oft displays the banner of his love in an ordinance, and pours in the oil of gladness into the heart. All God's ways are pleasantness, his paths are strewed with roses, Prov. 3:17. 3. Serving the true God is beneficial; they have great gain here,—the hidden manna,—inward peace, and a great reward to come. They that serve God shall have a kingdom when they die, Luke 12:32., and shall wear a crown made of the flowers of paradise, 1 Pet. 5:4. To serve the true God is our true interest. God hath twisted his glory and our salvation together. He bids us believe; and why? that we may be saved. Therefore, renouncing all others, let us cleave to the true God.

2. You have covenanted to serve the true JEHOVAH, renouncing all others. When one hath entered into covenant with his master, and the indentures are drawn and sealed, then he cannot go back, but

must serve out his time. We have covenanted in baptism to take the Lord for our God, renouncing all others,—and renewed this covenant in the Lord's supper,—and shall we not keep our solemn vow and covenant? We cannot go away from God without the highest perjury, Heb. 10:38., "If any man draw back," as a soldier that steals away from his colours, 'my soul shall have no pleasure in him: I will pour vials of wrath on him, and make mine arrows drunk with blood.'

3. None ever had cause to repent of cleaving to God and his service: some have repented that they had made a god of the world. Cardinal Wolsey said, "Oh that I had served my God as I have served my king, he would never have left me thus!" None ever complained of serving God: it was both their comfort and crown on their death-bed.

OF THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:4. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,
&c.

In the first commandment is forbidden the worshipping a false god: in this, the worshipping the true God in a false manner.

1. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." This forbids not the making an image for civil use, Mat. 22:20., "Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, It is Cæsar's." But the commandment forbids setting up an image for religious use or worship.

2. "Nor the likeness of any thing," &c. All ideas, portraitures, shapes, images of God, whether by effigies or pictures, are here forbidden,

Deut. 4:15, 16., "Take heed lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make the similitude of any figure." God is to be adored in the heart, not painted to the eye.

3. "Thou shalt not bow down to them." The intent of making images and pictures, is to worship them. No sooner was Nebuchadnezzar's golden image set up, but all the people fell down and worshipped it, Dan. 3:7. Therefore God forbids the prostrating of ourselves before an idol. So then, the thing prohibited in this commandment is image-worship. To set up an image to represent God, is a debasing of the Deity, it is below God. If one should make images of snakes or spiders, saying he did it to represent his prince, would not the prince take this in high disdain? What greater disparagement to God, than to represent the infinite God by that which is finite,—the living God, by that which is without life, and the Maker of all, by a thing which is made?

1st. To make a true image of God is impossible. God is a spiritual essence, John 4:24.; and, being a Spirit, he is invisible, Deut. 4:15., "Ye saw no similitude in the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire." How can any paint the Deity? Can they make an image of that which they never saw? *Quod invisibile est, pigni non potest*, AMB. "Ye saw no similitude" It is impossible to make a picture of the soul, or to paint the angels, because they are of a spiritual nature; much less then can we paint God by an image, who is an infinite, uncreated Spirit.

2d. To worship God by an image, is both absurd and unlawful.

1. It is absurd and irrational; for, 1. The workman is better than the work, Heb. 3:3., "He who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house." If the workman be better than the work, and none bow to the workman, how absurd then is it to bow to the work of his

hands? 2. Is it not an absurd thing to bow down to the king's picture, when the king himself is present? more so to bow down to an image of God, when God himself is every where present.

2. It is unlawful to worship God by an image; for, 1. It is against the homily of the church; it runs thus; "The images of God, our Saviour, the Virgin Mary, are of all others the most dangerous; therefore the greatest care ought to be had that they stand not in temples and churches." So that image-worship is contrary to our own homilies, and doth affront the authority of the church of England. 2. Image-worship is expressly against the letter of scripture, Lev. 26:1., "Ye shall make no graven image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone, to bow down to it," Deut. 16:22., "Neither shalt thou set thee up any image which the Lord thy God hateth." Ps. 97:7., "Confounded be all they that serve graven images." Do we think to please God, by doing that which is contrary to his mind, and that which he hath expressly forbidden?—3. Image-worship is against the practice of the saints of old. Josiah, that renowned king, destroyed the groves and images, 2 Kings 23:24. Constantine abrogated the images set up in temples; the Christians destroyed images at Basil, Zurich, Bohemia; when the Roman emperors would have thrust images upon them, they chose rather to die than deflower their virgin-profession by idolatry; they refused to admit any painter or carver into their society, because they would not have any carved statue or image of God; when Seraphion bowed to an idol, the Christians excommunicated him, and delivered him up to Satan.

Use 1st. It reproves and condemns the church of Rome, who from the Alpha of their religion to the Omega, are wholly idolatrous. They make images of God the Father,—painting him in their church windows as an old man,—and an image of Christ on the crucifix; and, because it is against the letter of this commandment, therefore they

sacrilegiously blot out the second commandment out of their catechises, dividing the tenth commandment into two; now this image-worship must needs be very impious and blasphemous, because it is a giving that religious worship to the creature, which is only due to God. It is vain for papists to say, they give God the worship of the heart, and the image only the worship of the body; for the worship of the body is due to God, as well as the worship of the heart; and to give an outward veneration to an image, is to give that adoration to a creature, which only belongs to God, Isa. 42:8., "My glory will I not give to another."

OBJ. 1. The papists say, they do not worship the image, but only make use of it as a medium, to worship God by it. Ne imagine quidem Christi in quantum est lignum sculptum, ultra debetur reverentia, AQUINAS.

Ans. 1. Where hath God bidden them worship him by an effigy or image? Isa. 1:12., "Who hath required this at your hands?" The papists cannot say so much as the devil, Scriptum est,—'It is written.'

A. 2. The heathens may bring the same argument for their gross idolatry, as the papists do for their image-worship. Who of the heathens were so simple, as to think gold or silver, or the figure of an ox or elephant, were God? They were only emblems and hieroglyphics to represent him; they did worship the invisible God, by such visible things. To worship God by an image, God takes as done to the image itself.

OBJ. 2. But, say the papists, images are laymen's books, and they are good to put us in mind of God. One of the popish councils affirmed, that we might learn more by an image, than by long study of the scriptures.

Ans. Hab. 2:18., "What profiteth the graven image, the molten image, and a teacher of lies?" Is an image a lay-man's book? See then what lessons this book teacheth, it teacheth lies; it represents God in a visible shape, who is invisible. For the papists to say they make use of an image to put them in mind of God, is as if a woman should say, she keeps company with another man, to put her in mind of her husband.

OBJ. 3. But did not Moses make the image of a brazen serpent? Why then may not images be set up?

Ans. That was done by God's special command, Numb. 21:8., "Make thee a fiery serpent;" and there was a special use of it, both literal and spiritual. But what! doth the setting up of this image of the brazen serpent justify the setting up of images in churches? What! because Moses did make an image by God's appointment, may we therefore set up an image of our own devising?—because Moses made an image to heal them that were stung, is it lawful therefore to set up images in churches, to sting them that are whole? This doth not all follow. Nay, that very brazen serpent which God himself commanded to be set up, when Israel did look upon it with too much reverence, and began to burn incense to it, Hezekiah defaced that image, and called it Nehushtan, (mere brass); and God commended him for so doing, 2 Kings 18:4.

OBJ. 4. But is not God represented as having hands, and eyes, and ears? Why then may we not make an image to represent him by, and help our devotion?

Ans. Though God is pleased to stoop to our weak capacities, and set himself out in scripture by eyes, to signify his omniscieny, and hands to signify his power, yet it is very absurd from metaphors and figurative expressions to bring an argument for images and pictures;

for, by that rule, God may be pictured by the sun and the element of fire, and by a rock; for God is set forth by these metaphors in scripture: and sure the papists themselves would not like to have such images made of God.

QUEST. 1. If it be not lawful to make the image of God the Father, yet may we not make an image of Christ, who took upon him the nature of man?

Ans. No. Epiphanius seeing an image of Christ hanging in a church, brake it in pieces. It is Christ's Godhead, united to his manhood that makes him to be Christ; therefore to picture his manhood, when we cannot picture his Godhead, is a sin, because we make him to be but half Christ,—we separate what God hath joined,—we leave out that which is the chief thing, which makes him to be Christ.

QUEST. 2. But how then shall we conceive of God aright, if we may make no image or resemblance of him?

Ans. We must conceive of God spiritually, viz. 1. In his attributes,—his holiness, justice, goodness, which are the beams by which his divine nature shines forth. 2. We must conceive of him as he is in Christ Christ is the "image of the invisible God," Col. 1:15., as in the wax we see the print of the seal. Set the eyes of your faith on Christ-God-man, John 14:9., "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."

Use 2d. Take heed of idolatry, viz. image-worship. Our nature is prone to this sin, as dry wood to take fire; and indeed, what needs so many words in the commandment, "Thou shalt not make any graven image, or the likeness of any thing" in heaven, earth, water, sun, moon, stars, male, female, fish,—"thou shalt not bow down to them:" I say, what needed so many words, but to show how subject we are to this sin of false worship? It concerns us therefore to resist this sin.

Where the tide is apt to run with greater force, there we had need to make the banks higher and stronger; the plague of idolatry is very infectious, Ps. 106:35, 36., "They were mingled among the heathen, and served their idols." It is my advice to you to avoid all occasions of this sin.

1. Come not into the company of idolatrous papists; dare not to live under the same roof with them, else you run into the devil's mouth. John the divine would not be in the bath where Cerinthus the heretic was.

2. Go not into their chapels to see their crucifixes, or hear mass; as the looking on an harlot draws to adultery, so the looking on the popish gilded picture may draw to idolatry. Some care not though they go and see their idol-worship: indeed, a vagrant that hath nothing to lose, cares not though he goes among thieves; such as have no goodness in them, care not into what idolatrous places they come, or what temptations they cast themselves upon; but you who have a treasure about you, good principles, take heed the popish priests do not rob you of your principles, and defile you with their images.

3. Dare not to join in marriage with image-worshippers. Solomon, though a man of wisdom, yet his idolatrous wives drew away his heart from God. The people of Israel entered into an oath and curse that they would not give their daughters in marriage to the idolaters, Neh. 10:30. For a protestant and papist to marry, is to be unequally yoked, 2 Cor. 6:14.; and there is more danger that the papist will corrupt the protestant, than hope that the protestant will convert the papist. Mingle wine and vinegar, the vinegar will sooner sour the wine, than the wine will sweeten the vinegar.

4. Avoid superstition, which is a bridge leads over to Rome. Superstition is the bringing in any ceremony, fancy, or innovation into God's worship, which he never appointed. This is very provoking to God, because it reflects much upon his honour, as if he were not wise enough to appoint the manner of his own worship. God hates all strange fire to be offered in his temple, Lev. 10:1. A ceremony may in time bring to a crucifix. They who contend for the cross in baptism, why may they not as well have the oil, salt, and cream, the one being as ancient as the other? Such as are for altar-worship, they who will bow to the east, may in time bow to the host. Take heed of all occasions of idolatry; idolatry is devil-worship, Ps. 106:37., and if you search through the whole Bible, there is no one sin that God hath more followed with plagues, than idolatry; the Jews have a saying, that in every evil that befalls them, there is uncia aurei vituli,—an ounce of the golden calf in it. Hell is a place for idolaters, Rev. 22:15., "For without are idolaters." Senesius calls the devil a rejoicer at idols, because the image-worshippers help to fill hell. That you may be preserved from idolatry and image-worship,

1. Get good principles, that you may be able to oppose the gainsayer. Whence doth the popish religion get ground? not from the goodness of their cause, but from the ignorance of their people.

2. Get love to God. The wife that loves her husband is safe from the adulterer; and the soul that loves Christ is safe from the idolater.

3. Pray that God will keep you. Though it is true, there is nothing in an image to tempt—for if we pray to an image, it cannot hear, and if we pray to God, by an image, he will not hear: I say, there's nothing to tempt—yet we know not our own hearts, or how soon we may be drawn to vanity, if God leave us; therefore pray that you be not enticed by false worship, or receive the mark of the beast in your

right hand or forehead. Pray, Ps. 119:117., "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." Lord, let me neither mistake my way for want of light nor leave the true way for want of courage.

4. Let us bless God, who hath given us the knowledge of his truth; that we have tasted the honey of his word, and our eyes are enlightened. Bless him that he hath shewn us the pattern of his house,—the right mode of worship; that he hath discovered to us the forgery and blasphemy of the Romish religion. Let us pray, that God will preserve pure ordinances, and powerful preaching among us: idolatry came in at first by the want of good preaching,—then the people began to have golden images, when they had wooden priests.

EXOD. 20:5. For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.

I. "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." The first reason why Israel must not worship graven images is, because the Lord is a jealous God, Exod. 34:14., "The Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." Jealousy is taken, 1. In a good sense, and so God is jealous for his people. 2. In a bad sense, and so God is jealous of his people.

1. In a good sense; and so God is jealous for his people, Zech. 1:14., "Thus saith the Lord, I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion, with a great jealousy." God hath a dear affection for his people, they are his Hephzibah, or delight, Isa. 62:4. The apple of his eye, Zech. 2:8. To express how dear they are to him, and how tender he is of them,—*Nihil charius pupillâ oculi*, DRUSIUS. They are his spouse, adorned with jewels of grace; they lie near to his heart. He is jealous for his spouse, therefore he will be avenged on them who go to wrong her, Isa. 42:13., "The Lord shall stir up jealousy like a man of war; he shall roar, he shall prevail against his enemies." What is done to the saints,

God takes as done to himself, 2 Kings 19:22., and the Lord will undo all them that afflict Zion, Zeph. 3:19., "I will undo all that afflict thee."—2. Jealousy is taken in a bad sense, and so God is jealous of his people: and so it is taken in this commandment, 'I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.' I am jealous lest you should go after false gods, or worship the true God in a false manner; lest you defile your virgin-profession by images. God will have his spouse to keep close to him, and not go after other lovers, Hos. 3:3., "Thou shalt not be for another man." God cannot bear a co-rival: our conjugal love, viz. a love joined with adoration and worship, must be given only to God.

Use 1st. Let us give God no just cause to be jealous. A good wife will be so discreet and chaste as to give her husband no just occasion of jealousy. Let us avoid all sin, especially this sin of idolatry, or image-worship; it is heinous, after we have entered into a marriage-covenant with God, now to prostitute ourselves to an image. Idolatry is spiritual adultery, and God is a jealous God, he will avenge it; image-worship makes God abhor a people, Ps. 78:58, 59., "They moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel." Image-worship enrageth God, Prov. 6:34., "Jealousy is the rage of a man;" it makes God divorce a people, Hos. 2:2., "Plead with your mother, plead; for she is not my wife." Cant. 8:6., "Jealousy is cruel as the grave." As the grave devours men's bodies, so God will devour image-worshippers.

Use 2d. If God be a jealous God, let it be a word to such whose friends are popish idolaters, and they are hated by their friends because they are of a different religion, and perhaps they cut off their maintenance from them. O remember, God is a jealous God! Better move your parents to hatred, than move God to jealousy; their anger cannot do you so much hurt as God's; if they will not provide for you,

God will, Ps. 27:10., "When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

II. The second reason against image-worship, "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." There is a twofold visiting: 1. There is God's visiting in mercy, Gen. 50:25., "God will surely visit you;" that is, he will bring you into the land of Canaan, the type of heaven. Thus God hath visited us with the sun-beams of his favour; he hath made us swim in a sea of mercy; this is an happy visitation.—2. There is God's visiting in anger, Jer. 5:9., "Shall I not visit for these things?" that is, God's visiting with the rod: and Isa. 10:3., "What will ye do in the day of visitation?" that is, in the day when God shall visit with his judgments. Thus God's visiting is taken here, in this commandment, "visiting iniquity," that is, punishing iniquity. Observe here three things.

Observe 1. That sin makes God visit; "Visiting iniquity." Sin is the cause why God visits with sickness, poverty, Ps. 89:31, 32., "If they break my statutes, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod." Sin twists the cords which pinch us; sin creates all our troubles,—it is the gall in our cup, and the gravel in our bread; *Flagitum et flagellum, sunt sicut oculus et silum*. Sin is the Trojan horse,—the Phæton that sets all on fire; it is the womb of our sorrows, and the grave of our comfort. God visits for sin.

Observe 2. One special sin God visits for, is idolatry and image-worship. "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers." Most of God's envenomed arrows have been shot among idolaters, Jer. 7:12., "Go now into my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it." God, for Israel's idolatry suffered their army to be routed,—their priests slain,—the ark taken captive; and

we never read that the ark returned to Shiloh any more. Jerusalem was the most famous metropolis of the world; there was the temple, Ps. 122:4., "Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord." Yet, for their high places and images, their city was besieged and taken by the Chaldean forces, 2 Kings 25:4. When images were set up in Constantinople, the chief seat of the Eastern empire, this city—which was in the eye of the world impregnable—was taken by the Turks, and many cruelly massacred. Then the Turks in their triumphs reproached the idolatrous Christians, causing an image or crucifix to be carried through the streets in contempt, and throwing dirt upon it, cried, "This is the God of the Christians!" Here was God's visitation for their idolatry. God hath set special marks of his wrath upon idolaters; at a place called Epoletium, there perished by an earthquake 350 persons, while they were offering sacrifice to idols. Idolatry hath brought misery upon the Eastern churches, it removed the golden candlesticks of Asia. This iniquity God visits for.

Observe 3. Idolatrous persons are enemies not only to their own souls, but to their children: 'Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon their children.' As an idolatrous father entails his land of inheritance, so he entails God's anger and curse upon them. A jealous husband, finding his wife hath stained her integrity, may justly cast off her and her children too, because they are none of his. If the father be a traitor to his prince, no wonder if all the children suffer. God may visit the iniquity of image-worshippers upon their children.

QUEST. But is it not said, "Every one shall die for his own sin; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father?" How then doth God say, He "will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children?"

Ans. Though the son be not damned for his father's sin, yet he may be severely punished, Job 21:19., "God layeth up his iniquity for his

children;" that is, God lays up the punishment of his iniquity for his children; the child smarts for the father's sin. Jeroboam thought to have established the kingdom by idolatrous worship, but it brought ruin upon him and all his posterity, 1 Kings 14:10. Ahab's idolatry wronged his posterity, they lost the kingdom, and were all beheaded, 2 Kings 10:7., "They took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons." There God visited the iniquity of the father upon the children. As a son catcheth an hereditary disease from his father, the stone or gout; so he catcheth misery from him, his father's sin ruins him.

Use 1st. If so, then how sad is it to be the child of an idolater? It had been sad to have been one of Gehazi's children, who had leprosy entailed upon them, 2 Kings 5:27., "The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to thee and to thy seed for ever." So it is sad to be a child of an idolater, or image-worshipper; his seed are exposed to God's heavy judgments in this life; "God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon their children." Methinks I hear God speak, as, Isa. 14:21., "Prepare slaughter for his children, for the iniquity of their fathers."

Use 2d. See what a privilege it is to be the children of good parents; the parents are in covenant with God, and God lays up mercy for their posterity, Prov. 20:7., "The just man walketh in his integrity, his children are blessed after him." A religious parent doth not procure wrath, but helps to keep off wrath from his child; he seasons his child with religious principles, he prays down a blessing on his child; he is a loadstone drawing his child to Christ by good counsel and example. O what a privilege is it to be born of godly religious parents! St. Austin saith, that his mother Monica travailed with greater care and pains for his new birth than for his natural. Wicked idolaters entail misery on their posterity; God "visits the iniquity of the fathers upon their children;" but religious parents procure a blessing upon their children; God reserves mercy for their posterity.

III. The third reason against image-worship, "Of them that hate me." This is a reason against image-worship, 'tis hating God; the papists, who worship God by an image, hate God. Image-worship is a pretended love to God, but God interprets it an hating of him; Quæ diligit alienum odit sponsum,—'She that loves another man, hates her own husband.' An image-lover is a God-hater. Idolaters are said to go a-whoring from God, Ezek. 34:15. How can they love God? I shall show that image-worshippers hate God, whatever love they pretend.

1. They who go contrary to God's express will, hate him. God saith, you shall not set up any statue, image, nor picture, to represent me; these things I hate, Deut. 16:22., "Neither shalt thou set up any image which the Lord thy God hateth." Yet the idolater will set up images, and worship them. This God looks upon as an hating of him. How doth that child love his father, who doth all he can to cross him?

2. They who turned Jephthah out of doors, hated him, therefore they laboured to shut him out of his father's house, Judges 11:7. The idolater shuts the truth out of doors,—he blots out the second commandment,—he makes a shape of the invisible God,—he brings a lie into God's worship: which is a clear proof he hates God.

3. Idolaters, though they love the false image of God in a picture, yet they hate the true image of God in a believer: they pretend to honour Christ in a crucifix, yet persecute Christ in his members: these hate God.

Use 1st. This may confute those who plead for image-worshippers. They are very devout people,—they adore images,—they set up the crucifix, kiss it, light candles to it: they love God. Nay, but who shall be judge of their love? God saith, they hate him; they give religious adoration to a creature. These hate God, and God hates them, and

they shall never live with God, whom God hates; he will never lay such vipers in his bosom; heaven is kept as paradise, with a flaming sword, that they shall not enter in, and Deut. 7:10., "He repayeth them that hate him, to their face." God will shoot all his destroying pieces among idolaters; all the plagues and curses in the book of God shall befall the idolater; the Lord repays him that hates him, to his face.

Use 2d. Let it exhort us all to flee from Romish idolatry; let us not be among God-haters, 1 John 5:21., "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." As you would keep your bodies from adultery, so keep your souls from idolatry. Take heed of images, they are images of jealousy to provoke God to anger; they are damnable; you may as well perish by false devotions as by real scandal; by image-worship, as drunkenness and whoredom. A man may as well die by poison, as pistol; we may as well go to hell by drinking poison in the Romish cup of fornication, as by being pistoled with gross and scandalous sins. To conclude, "God is a jealous God," who will admit of no co-rival; "he will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon their children;" he will entail a plague upon the posterity of idolaters. He interprets idolaters to be such as hate him; he that is an image-lover is a God-hater. Therefore keep yourselves pure from Romish idolatry; if you love your souls, keep yourselves from idols.

EXOD. 20:6. Shewing mercy unto thousands, &c.

This is another argument against image-worship, because such as do not provoke God with their images, he is merciful to them, and will entail mercy upon their posterity; "shewing mercy unto thousands."

1. Here is the golden sceptre of God's mercy displayed.—2. The persons interested in God's mercy; such as love him, and keep his commandments.—1. The golden sceptre of God's mercy displayed,

"shewing mercy to thousands." The heathens thought they praised Jupiter enough, when they called him good and great: both these excellencies meet in God, majesty and mercy. Mercy is that innate propenseness in God to do good to distressed sinners. God shewing mercy, makes his Godhead appear full of glory. When Moses said to God, "I beseech thee shew me thy glory;" "I will"—saith God—"shew mercy," Exod. 33:18. His mercy is his glory. Mercy is the name by which God will be known, Exod. 34:6., "The Lord passed by, and proclaimed,—'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious!' " Mercy proceeds primarily, and originally from God; he is called, the "Father of mercies," 2 Cor. 1:3., because he begets all those mercies and bowels which are in the creature. Our mercies compared with God's are scarce so much as a drop to the ocean.

QUEST. What are the qualifications?

Ans. 1. The spring of mercy which God shews, is free and spontaneous. To set up merit, is to destroy mercy; nothing can deserve mercy or force it; we cannot deserve mercy, because of our enmity, nor force it; we may force God to punish us, not to love us. Hos. 14:4., "I will love them freely." Every link in the golden chain of salvation is wrought and interwoven with free grace. Election is free, Eph. 1:5., "He hath chosen us in him according to the good pleasure of his will." Justification is free, Rom. 3:24., "Being justified freely by his grace." Say not then, I am unworthy; for mercy is free. If God should shew mercy only to such as deserve it, he must shew mercy to none at all.

A. 2. The mercy God shews is powerful. How powerful is that mercy which softens an heart of stone? Mercy changed Mary Magdalen's heart, out of whom seven devils were cast: she who was an inflexible adamant, mercy made her a weeping penitent! God's mercy works

sweetly, yet irresistibly; it allures, yet conquers. The law may terrify, mercy doth mollify. Of what sovereign power and efficacy is that mercy which subdues the pride and enmity of the heart, and beats off those chains of sin in which the soul is held!

A. 3. The mercy which God shews is superabundant, Exod. 34:6, 7., "Abundant in goodness, keeping mercy for thousands." God visits iniquity only "to the third and fourth generation," Exod. 20:5., but he shews mercy to a thousand generations. The Lord hath treasures of mercy lying by, therefore he is said to be "plenteous in mercy," Ps. 86:5., and "rich in mercy," Eph. 2:4. The vial of God's wrath doth but drop, but the fountain of his mercy runs. The sun is not so full of light, as God is of love.

God hath mercy, First, Of all dimensions; he hath depth of mercy,—it reacheth as low as sinners; and height of mercy,—it reacheth above the clouds.

Secondly, God hath mercies for all seasons: mercies for the night, he gives sleep; nay, sometimes he gives a song in the night, Ps. 42:8. And he hath mercies for the morning, Lam. 3:23., "His compassions are new every morning."

Thirdly, God hath mercies for all sorts. Mercies for the poor, 1 Sam. 2:8., "He raiseth the poor out of the dust;" mercies for the prisoner, Ps. 69:33., "He despiseth not his prisoner;" mercies for the dejected, Isa. 54:8., "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee." God hath old mercies, Ps. 25:6., "Thy mercies have been ever of old;" and new mercies, Ps. 40:3., "He hath put a new song in my mouth." Every time we draw our breath, we suck in mercy. God hath mercies under heaven, and those we taste of; and mercies in heaven, and those we hope for. Thus God's mercies are superabundant.

A. 4. The mercy God shews is abiding, Ps. 103:17., "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting." God's anger to his children lasts but a while, Ps. 102:9., but his mercy lasts for ever. God's mercy is not like the widow's oil, which ran a while, and then ceased, 2 Kings 4:6. Over-flowing, ever-flowing. God's mercy, as it is without bounds, so without bottom, Ps. 136, "His mercy endureth for ever." God never cuts off the entail of mercy from the elect.

QUEST. 2. How many ways is God said to shew mercy?

Ans. 1. We are all living monuments of God's mercy. God shews mercy to us in daily supplying us.—1. He supplies us with health: health is the sauce which makes our life relish sweeter. How would they prize this mercy, who are chained to a sick-bed!—2. God supplies us with provisions, Gen. 48:15., "The God which fed me all my days." Mercy spreads our tables, it carves us every bit of bread we eat; we never drink but in the golden cup of mercy.

A. 2. God shews mercy in lengthening out our gospel-liberties, 1 Cor. 16:9. "There are many adversaries;" many would stop the waters of the sanctuary that they should not run; we enjoy the sweet seasons of grace,—we hear joyful sounds,—we see the goings of God in his sanctuary,—we enjoy sabbath after sabbath,—the manna of the word yet falls about our tents, when in divers parts of the land they have no manna. Here is God's shewing mercy to us, he spins out our forfeited liberties.

A. 3. God shews mercy to us in preventing many evils from invading us, Ps. 3:3., "Thou O Lord art a shield for me." God hath restrained the wrath of men, and been a screen between us and danger; when the destroying angel hath been abroad, and shot his deadly arrow of pestilence, God hath kept off the arrow that it hath not come near us.

A. 4. God shews mercy in delivering us, 2 Tim. 4:17., "And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion," viz. Nero. God hath restored us from the grave. May we not write the writing of Hezekiah, Isa. 38:9., "When he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness?" When we thought the sun of our life had been setting God hath made it return to its former brightness.

A. 5. God shews mercy in restraining us from sin; lusts within, are worse than lions without. The greatest sign of God's anger is to give men up to their sins, Ps. 81:12., "So I gave them up to their own hearts' lusts;" let them sin themselves to hell, but God hath laid the bridle of restraining grace upon us. As God said to Abimelech, Gen. 20:6., "I withheld thee from sinning against me;" so God withheld us from those exorbitancies which might have made us a prey to Satan, and a terror to ourselves.

A. 6. God shews mercy in guiding and directing us. Is it not a mercy for one that is out of the way to have a guide? First, There is a providential guiding: God guides our affairs for us,—chalks out a way he would have us to walk in,—he resolves our doubts, unties our knots, appoints the bounds of our habitation, Acts 17:26. Secondly, A spiritual guiding, Ps. 73:24., "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel." As Israel had a pillar of fire to go before them, so God guides us with the oracles of his word, and the conduct of his Spirit. He guides our head, keeps us from error; and he guides our feet, keeps us from scandal. O what mercy is it to have God to be our guide and pilot! Ps. 31:3., "For thy name's sake lead me and guide me."

A. 7. God shews mercy in correcting us. God is angry in love; he smites that he may save. God's rod is not a rod of iron to break us, but a fatherly rod to humble us, Heb. 12:10., "He, for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." Either God will mortify some

corruption, or exercise some grace. Is there not mercy in this? Every cross, to a child of God is like Paul's cross wind, which though it broke the ship, it brought Paul to shore upon the broken pieces, Acts 27:44.

A. 8. God shews mercy in pardoning us, Mic. 7:18., "Who is a God like thee, that pardonest iniquity?" 'Tis mercy to feed us, rich mercy to pardon us; this mercy is spun out of the bowels of free grace; this is enough to make a sick man well: Isa. 33:24., "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." Pardon of sin is a mercy of the first magnitude; God seals the sinner's pardon with a kiss. This made David put on his best clothes, and anoint himself; his child newly dead, and God had told him the sword should not depart from his house, yet now he falls anointing himself; the reason was, God had sent him his pardon by the prophet Nathan, 2 Sam. 12:13., "The Lord hath put away thy sin." Pardon is the only fit remedy for a troubled conscience. What can give ease to a wounded spirit but pardoning mercy? Offer him the honours and pleasures of the world; 'tis as if you bring flowers and music to one that is condemned.

QUEST. How may I know my sins are pardoned?

Ans. Where God removes the guilt, he breaks the power of sin, Mic. 7:19., "He will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities." With pardoning love God gives subduing grace.

A. 9. God shews his mercy in sanctifying us, Lev. 20:8., "I am the Lord that sanctify you." This is the partaking of the divine nature, 2 Pet. 1:4. God's Spirit is a spirit of consecration, though it sanctify us but in part, yet in every part, 1 Thess. 5:23. This is such a mercy that God cannot give it in anger; if we are sanctified, then we are elected, 2 Thess. 2:13., "God hath chosen you to salvation, through

sanctification." This doth disponere ad catum; it prepares for happiness, as the seed prepares for harvest. When the virgins had been anointed and perfumed, then they were to stand before the king, Esth. 2:12., so, when we have had the anointing of God, then we shall stand before the King of heaven.

A. 10. God shews mercy in hearing our prayers, Ps. 4:1., "Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer." Is it not a favour, when a man puts up a petition to the king, and hath it granted? When we pray for pardon, adoption, the sense of God's love, to have God give a gracious answer,—what a signal mercy is this? God may sometimes delay an answer, when he will not deny. You do not presently throw a musician money, because you love to hear his music: God loves the music of prayer, therefore doth not presently let us hear from him, but in due season he will give an answer of peace, Ps. 66:20., "Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me." If God doth not turn away our prayer, then he doth not turn away his mercy.

A. 11. God shews mercy in saving us, Titus 3:5., "According to his mercy he saved us." This is the top-stone of mercy, and it is laid in heaven. Now mercy displays itself in all its orient colours; now mercy is mercy indeed, when God shall perfectly refine us from all the lees and dregs of corruption. Our bodies shall be made like Christ's glorious body, and our souls like the angels. Saving mercy is crowning mercy; it is not only to be freed from hell, but enthroned in a kingdom. In this life we do rather desire God than enjoy him, but what rich mercy will it be to be fully possessed of God, to see his smiling face, and to have God lay us in his bosom? This will fill us with "joy unspeakable and full of glory;" Ps. 17:15., "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

Use 1st. As an argument against despair: see what a great encouragement here is to serve God,—he shews mercy to thousands. Who would not be willing to serve a prince who is given to mercy and clemency? God is represented with a rainbow round about him, Rev. 4:3., an emblem of his mercy. Acts of severity are rather forced from God; judgment is his strange work, Isa. 28:21. Therefore the disciples, who are not said to wonder at the other miracles of Christ, yet did wonder when the fig-tree was cursed and withered, because it was not Christ's manner to put forth acts of severity. God is said to delight in mercy, Mic. 7:18. Justice is God's left hand, mercy is his right hand; God useth his right hand most; he is more used to mercy than to justice,—*tardior est Deus ad parcendum quam ad puniendum*. God is said to be "slow to anger," Ps. 103:8., but "ready to forgive," Ps. 86:5. This may encourage us to serve God. What argument will prevail, if mercy will not? Were God all justice, it might fright us from him; but his mercy may be a loadstone to draw us to him.

Use 2d. Branch 1. Hope in God's mercies, Ps. 147:11., "The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear him, and hope in his mercy." God counts it his glory to be scattering pardons among men.

OBJ. But I have been a great sinner, and sure there is no mercy for me.

Ans. No, not if thou goest on in sin, and art so resolved; but, if thou wilt break off thy sins, the golden sceptre of mercy shall be held forth to thee, Isa. 55:7., "Let the wicked forsake his way, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him." And Christ's blood is "a fountain set open for sin and uncleanness," Zech. 13:1. Mercy doth more overflow in God, than sin in us; God's mercy can drown great sins, as the sea covers great rocks. Some of those Jews who had

their hands imbrued in Christ's blood, were saved by that blood: God loves to magnify his goodness, to display the trophies of free grace, and to set up his mercy above you, in spite of sin,—therefore hope in God's mercy.

Branch 2. If God shew mercy to thousands, labour to know that his mercy is for you, Ps. 59:17., "he is the God of my mercy." A man that was ready to drown, saw a rainbow: saith he, 'What am I the better, though God will not drown the world, if I drown?' so, what are we the better God is merciful, if we perish? Let us labour to know God's special mercy is for us.

QUEST. How shall we know it belongs to us?

Ans. 1. If we put an high value and estimate upon God's mercy. God will not throw away his mercy on them that slight it; we prize health, but we prize adopting mercy above it. This is the diamond in the ring, it outshines all other comforts.

A. 2. If we are fearers of God, we have a reverend awe upon us; we tremble at sin, and flee from it, as Moses did from his rod turned into a serpent, Luke 1:50., "His mercy is on them that fear him."

A. 3. If we take sanctuary in God's mercy, we trust in it, Ps. 52:8. As a man is saved by catching hold of a cable; God's mercy is a great cable let down from heaven to us; now taking fast hold of this cable by faith, we are saved, Ps. 52:8., "I trust in the mercy of God for ever." As a man trusteth his life and goods in a garrison, so we trust our souls in God's mercy.

QUEST. What shall we do to get a share in God's special mercy?

Ans. 1. If we would have mercy, it must be through Christ; out of Christ no mercy is to be had. We read in the old law, First, None might come into the holy of holies, where the mercy-seat stood, but the high-priest; signifying, we have nothing to do with mercy, but through Christ our high priest. 2dly, The high priest might not come near the mercy-seat without blood, Lev. 16:14., to shew that we have no right to mercy, but through the expiatory sacrifice of Christ's blood. 3dly, The high priest might not upon pain of death come near the mercy-seat without incense, Lev. 16:13. No mercy from God without the incense of Christ's intercession: so that if we would have mercy, we must get a part in Christ. Mercy swims to us through Christ's blood.

A. 2. If we would have mercy, we must pray for it, Ps. 85:7., "Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation." Ps. 25:16., "Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me." Lord put me not off with common mercy; give me not only mercy to feed and clothe me, but mercy to pardon me; not only sparing mercy, but saving mercy. Lord, give me the cream of thy mercies; let me have mercy and loving-kindness, Ps. 103:4., "Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercy."

Be earnest suitors for mercy; let your wants quicken your importunity; then we pray most fervently, when we pray most feelingly.

EXOD. 20:6. Of them that love me, &c.

God's mercy is for them that love him. Love is a grace that shines and sparkles in God's eye, as the precious stone did upon Aaron's breast-plate. Love is an holy expansion or enlargement of soul, whereby it is carried with delight after God, as the chief good; so Aquinas defines love, *complacentia amantis in amato*; love is a complacential

delighting in God, as in our treasure; love is the soul of religion; it is a grace highly momentous. If we had knowledge as the angels, or faith of miracles, yet without love it would profit nothing, 1 Cor. 13:2. "This is the first and great commandment," Mat. 22:38. It is so, because, if this be wanting, there can be no religion in the heart; there can be no faith, for "faith worketh by love," Gal. 5:6. All else is but pageantry, or a devout compliment.

2. Because love doth meliorate and sweeten all the duties of religion; it makes them savoury meat, else God cares not to taste of them.

3. It is the first and great commandment, in respect of the excellency of this grace. Love is the queen of the graces; it outshines all the others, as the sun the lesser planets. In some respect it is more excellent than faith; though in one sense faith be more excellent, *virtute unionis*, as it unites us to Christ,—faith puts upon us the embroidered robe of Christ's righteousness, which is a brighter robe than any of the angels wear,—yet in another sense love is more excellent, *respectu durationis*, in respect of the continuance of it; it is the most durable grace; faith and hope will shortly cease, but love will remain. When all the other graces, like Rachel, shall die in travail, love shall revive. The other graces are in the nature of a lease, only for term of life; love is as a freehold, it continues for ever. Thus love carries away the garland from all the other graces,—it is the most long-lived grace,—it is a bud of eternity,—this grace alone shall accompany us in heaven.

QUEST. 1. How must our love to God be qualified?

Ans. 1. Love to God must be pure and genuine; he must be loved chiefly for himself; this the schoolmen call *amor amicitæ*. We must love God, not only for his benefits, but for those intrinsic excellencies wherewith he is crowned; we must love God not only for the good

which flows from him, but the good which is in him. True love is not mercenary; a soul that is deeply in love with God, needs not to be hired with rewards; he cannot but love God for the beauty of his holiness: not but that it is lawful to look at God's benefits,—Moses had an eye to the recompense of reward, Heb. 11:27., but we must not love God only for his benefits, for then it is not love of God but self-love.

A. 2. Love to God must be with all the heart, Mark 12:30., "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." We must not love God a little,—give God a drop or two of our love,—but the main stream of our love must run after him; the mind must think of God, the will choose him, the affections pant after him; the true mother would not have the child divided, nor God will not have the heart divided; we must love him with our whole heart. Though we may love the creature, yet it must be a subordinate love: love to God must be highest, as the oil swims above the water.

A. 3. Love to God must be flaming; to love coldly is all one as not to love. The spouse is said to be *amore percussa*, "sick of love," Cant. 2:5. The seraphims are so called, from their burning: love turns saints into seraphims, it makes them burn in holy love to God; and "many waters cannot quench this love."

QUEST. 2. How may we know whether we love God?

Ans. 1. He that loves God, desires his sweet presence; lovers cannot be long asunder, they have their fainting fits, they want a sight of the object of their love. A soul deeply in love with God, desires the enjoyment of him in his ordinances, in word, prayer, sacraments. David was ready to faint away and die when he had not a sight of God, Ps. 84:2., "My soul fainteth for God;" such as care not for

ordinances, but say, When will the sabbath be over? plainly discover want of love to God.

A. 2. He who loves God, doth not love sin, Ps. 97:10., "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." The love of God and the love of sin can no more mix together than iron and clay; every sin loved, strikes at the being of God, but he who loves God, hath an antipathy against sin; he who would part between two lovers, is an hateful person: God, and the believing soul are two lovers,—sin comes to part between them,—therefore the soul is implacably set against sin. By this try your love to God. How could Delilah say she loved Samson, when she entertained correspondence with the Philistines who were his mortal enemies? How can he say he loves God, who loves sin which is God's enemy?

A. 3. He who loves God is not much in love with any thing else; his love is very cool to worldly things; his love to God moves as the sun in the firmament, swiftly; his love to the world moves as the sun on the dial, very slow. The love of the world eats out the heart of religion; it chokes good affections, as the earth puts out the fire. The world was a dead thing to Paul, Gal. 6:14., "I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me." In Paul we might see both the picture and pattern of a mortified man; he that loves God, useth the world, but chooseth God; the world is his pension, but God is his portion, Ps. 119:57. The world doth busy him, but God doth delight and satisfy him. He saith as David, Ps. 43:4., "God my exceeding joy,"—the gladness or cream of my joy.

A. 4. He who loves God cannot live without him. Things we love we know not how to be without; a man can want music or flowers, but not food; a soul deeply in love with God looks upon himself as undone without him, Ps. 143:7., "Hide not thy face from me, lest I be

like them that go down into the pit." He saith, as Job, chap. 30:28., "I went mourning without the sun." I have star-light,—I want the Sun of Righteousness,—I enjoy not the sweet presence of my God. Is God our chief good that we cannot live without? Alas, how do they demonstrate they have no love to God, who can make a shift well enough to be without him! Let them have but corn and oil, and you shall never hear them complain of the want of God!

A. 5. He who loves God will be at any pains to get him. What pains doth the merchant take, what hazards doth he run, to have a rich return from the Indies! *Extremos currit mercator ad Indos.* Jacob loved Rachel, and he could endure the heat by day, and the frost by night, that he might enjoy her. A soul that loves God, will take any pains for the fruition of him, Ps. 63:8., "My soul follows hard after God." Love is *pondus animæ*, AUG. It is as the weight which sets the clock a-going. The soul is much in prayer, weeping, fasting he strives as in agony that he may obtain him whom his soul loves. Plutarch reports of the Gauls, an ancient people of France, after they had tasted the sweet wine of Italy, they never rested till they had arrived at that country: he who is in love with God never rests till he hath gotten a part in him, Cant. 3:2., "I sought him whom my soul loveth." How can they say they love God, who are not industrious in the use of means to obtain him? Prov. 19:24., "A slothful man hides his hand in his bosom." He is not in agony, but lethargy; if Christ and salvation would drop as a ripe fig into his mouth, he could be content to have them, but he is loath to put himself to too much trouble. Doth he love his friend that will not make a journey to see him?

A. 6. He that loves God, prefers him before estate and life.—1. Before estate, Phil. 3:8., "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things." Who that loves a rich jewel, would not part with a flower for it? Galeacius, marquis of Vico, parted with a fair estate to enjoy God in

his pure ordinances. When a Jesuit persuaded him to return to his popish religion in Italy, promising him a huge sum of money, saith he, "Let their money perish with them, who esteem all the gold in the world worth one day's communion with Jesus Christ and his Holy Spirit."—2. Before life, Rev. 12:11., "They loved not their lives to the death." Love to God carries the soul above the love of life and the fear of death.

A. 7. He who loves God, loves his favourites, viz. the saints, 1 John 5:1. *Idem est motus animi in imaginem et rem.* To love a man for his grace, and the more we see of God in him the more we love him, is the infallible sign of love to God. The wicked pretend to love God, but hate and persecute his image. Doth he love his prince, who abuseth his statue, or tears his picture? Indeed they seem to show great reverence to the saints departed; they have a great reverence for St. Paul, and St. Stephen, and St. Luke; they canonize dead saints, but persecute living saints; and do these love God? Can it be imagined he should love God, who hates his children because they are like him? If Christ were alive again, he would not escape a second persecution.

A. 8. If we love God, as we cannot but be fearful of dishonouring him (the more a child loves his father, the more he is afraid to displease him) so we weep and mourn when we have offended him. Peter "went out and wept bitterly," Matth. 26:75. When Peter thought how dearly Christ loved him—he took him up to the mount where he was transfigured,—Christ showed him the glory of heaven in a vision—now, that he should deny Christ, after he had received such signal tokens of Christ's love, this broke his heart with grief, "he wept bitterly." Are our eyes limbeck's dropping tears of grief for sin against God? A blessed evidence of our love to God; and such shall find mercy! "He shews mercy to thousands of them that love him."

Use. Let us be lovers of God. We love our food, and shall we not love him that gives it? All the joy we hope for in heaven, is in God; and shall not he who shall be our joy, be our love? It is a saying of St. Austin, *Annon pœne satis magna est non amare te?* 'Is it not punishment enough, Lord, not to love thee?' And again, *Animan meam in odia haberem:* I would hate my own soul, if I did not find it loving of God.

QUEST. What are the incentives to provoke and inflame our love to God?

Ans. 1. God's benefits bestowed on us. A prince who bestows continual favours on a subject, if that subject hath any ingenuity, he cannot but love his prince. God is constantly heaping benefits upon us, "Filling our hearts with food and gladness," Acts 14:17. As the lock followed Israel, whithersoever they went streams of water out of the rock followed them, so God's blessings follow us every day; we swim in a sea of mercy. That heart is hard, that is not prevailed with by all God's blessings, to love him. *Magnus amoris amor.* Kindness works on a brute; the ox knows his owner.

A. 2. Love to God would make duties of religion facile and pleasant. I confess to him that hath no love to God religion must needs be a burden; and I wonder not to hear him say, "What a weariness is it to serve the Lord?" It is like rowing against the tide. But love oils the wheels, it makes duty a pleasure. Why are the angels so swift and winged in God's service, but because they love him? Jacob thought seven years but little for the love he did bear to Rachel. Love is never weary; he who loves money is not weary of telling it, and he who loves God is not weary of serving him.

A. 3. It is advantageous. There is nothing lost by our love to God, 1 Cor. 2:9., "Eye hath not seen, &c. the things which God hath

prepared for them that love him." Such glorious rewards are laid up for them that love God, "that (as St. Austin saith) they do not only transcend our reason, but faith itself is not able to comprehend them." A crown is the highest ensign of worldly glory, and God hath promised a "crown of life to them that love him," James 1:12. And it is a never-fading crown, 1 Pet. 5:4.

A. 4. By our loving God, we may know that he loves us, 1 John 4:19., "We love him, because he first loved us." If the ice melts, it is because the sun hath shined upon it; if the frozen heart melts in love, it is because the Sun of Righteousness hath shined upon it.

QUEST. What means may be used to excite our love to God?

Ans. 1. Labour to know God aright. The schoolmen say true, *Bonum non amatur quod non cognoscitur*,—we cannot love that which we do not know. God is the most eligible good; all the excellencies which lie scattered in the creature are united in God; he is *Optimus maximus*. Wisdom, beauty, riches, love, do all centre in God. How fair was that tulip which had the colours of all tulips in it? all perfections and sweetnesses are eminently in God. Did we know God more, and by the eye of faith see his orient beauty, our hearts would be fired with love to him.

A. 2. Make the scriptures familiar to you. St. Austin saith, before his conversion he took no pleasure in scripture, but after conversion it was his chief delight. The book of God discovers God to us, in his holiness, wisdom, veracity and truth; it represents God rich in mercy, encircled with promises. St. Austin calls the scripture a golden epistle, or love-letter sent from God to us: by reading this love-letter, we shall be the more enamoured with love to God, as by reading lascivious books, comedies, romances, &c. lust is provoked.

A. 3. Meditate much of God, and this will be a means to love him, Ps. 39:3., "While I was musing, the fire burned." Meditation is the bellows of the affections. Meditate on God's love in giving us Christ, John 3:16., "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," &c. That God should give Christ to us, and not to the angels that fell,—that the Sun of righteousness should shine in our horizon,—that he is revealed to us and not to others,—what wonderful love is this! Prov. 6:28., "Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?" Who can meditate on God's love? who can tread on these hot coals, and his heart not burn in love to God? Beg an heart to love God: the affection of love is natural, but not the grace of love, Gal. 5:22. This fire of love is kindled from heaven; beg that it may burn upon the altar of your heart. Sure this request is pleasing to God, and he will not deny such a prayer: "Lord, give me an heart to love thee!"

EXOD. 20:6. And keep my commandments, &c.

Love and obedience, like two sisters, must go hand and hand; indeed this is a good evidence of our loving God, John 14:15., "If ye love me, keep my commandments." *Probatio delectionis est exhibitio operis.* The son that loves his father will obey him. Obedience pleaseth God, 1 Sam. 15:22., "To obey is better than sacrifice." In sacrifice, only a dead beast is offered,—in obedience, a living soul; in sacrifice, only a part of the fruit is offered,—in obedience, fruit and tree and all; a man offers himself up to God. "Keep my commandments." It is not said, God shews mercy to thousands that know his commandments, but that keep them. The knowing God's commandments, without keeping them, doth not entitle any to mercy. The commandment is not only a rule of knowledge, but duty. God gives us his commandments, not only as a landscape to look upon, but as his will and testament which we are to perform. A good Christian is like the sun, which doth not only send forth light, but goes its circuit round

the world: so he hath not only the light of knowledge, but goes his circuit too, and moves in the sphere of obedience.

QUEST. In what manner must we keep God's commandments?

Ans. 1. Our keeping the commandments must be fiducial. Our obedience to God's commandments, must profluere a fide,—spring from faith; therefore it is called "the obedience of faith," Rom. 16:26. "Abel by faith offered up a better sacrifice than Cain," Heb. 11:4. Faith is a vital principle; without it all our services are opera mortua,—dead works, Heb. 6:1. Faith doth meliorate and sweeten our obedience, and make it come off with a better relish.

QUEST. But why must faith be mixed with obedience to the commandment?

Ans. Because faith eyes Christ in every duty, and so both the person and offering are accepted. The high-priest under the law laid his hand upon the head of the beast slain, which did point to the Messiah, Exod. 29:10.: so faith in every duty lays its hand upon the head of Christ. His blood doth expiate the guilt, and the sweet odour of his intercession perfume our works of obedience, Eph. 1:6., "He hath made us accepted in the beloved."

A. 2. Our keeping the commandments must be uniform. We must make conscience of one commandment as well as another, Ps. 119:6., "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments." Every commandment hath a jus divinum,—the same stamp of divine authority upon it; and if I obey one precept because God commands, by the same reason I must obey all. Some obey the commands of the first table but are careless in the duties of the second; and so, e contra. Physicians have a rule, when the body sweats in one part, but is cold in another, it is a sign of a distemper:

so when men seem zealous in some duties of religion, but are cold and frozen in others, it is a sign of hypocrisy. We must have respect to all God's commandments.

QUEST. But who can keep all his commandments?

Ans. There is a fulfilling of God's commands, and a keeping of them; though we cannot fulfil all, yet we may be said to keep them in an evangelical sense. We may *facere*, though not *perficere*. We keep the commandments evangelically, 1st. Where we make conscience of every command; though we come short in every duty, yet we dare not neglect any duty. 2d. Our desire is to keep every commandment, Ps. 119:5., "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" What we want in strength we make up in will. 3d. We grieve that we can do no better; when we fail, we weep; we prefer bills of complaint against ourselves, and judge ourselves for our failings, Rom. 7:24. 4th. We do *elicere conatum*,—we endeavour to obey every commandment, Phil. 3:14., "I press toward the mark." We strive as in agony; and, if it lay in our power, we would fully comport with every commandment. 5th. When we fall short, and are unable to come up to the full latitude of the law, we look to Christ's blood to sprinkle our imperfect obedience, and, with the grains of his merits cast into the scales, to make it pass current; this is in an evangelical sense to keep all the commandments, and though it be not to satisfaction, yet it is to acceptance.

A. 3. Our keeping God's commandments must be willing, Isa. 1:19., "If ye be willing and obedient." God was for a "free-will offering," Deut. 16:10. David will run the way of God's commandments, Ps 19:8., that is, freely and cheerfully. The lawyers have a canon, adverbs are better than adjectives: it is not the *bonum*, but the *bene*,—not the doing much, but the doing well. A musician is not

commended for playing long, but for playing well; it is obeying God willingly is accepted; *virtus nolentium nulla est*,—the Lord hates that which is forced, it is rather paying a tax than an offering. Cain served God grudgingly; he brought his sacrifice not his heart. To obey God's commandments unwillingly is like the devils who came out of the men possessed, at Christ's command, but with reluctancy, and against their will, Mat. 8:29. *Obedientia præst and non est a timore poenæ sed amore Dei*; good duties must not be pressed nor beaten out of us as the waters came out of the rock, when Moses smote it with his rod, but must freely drop from us, as myrrh from the tree, or honey from the comb. If a willing mind be wanting, there wants that flower which should perfume our obedience, and make it a sweet smelling savour to God. That we may keep God's commandments willingly, let these things be well-weighed:

I. Our willingness is more esteemed than our service; therefore David counsels Solomon not only to serve God, but with a willing mind, 1 Chron. 28:9. The will makes sin to be worse, and makes duty to be better. To obey willingly shows we do it with love; and this crowns all our services.

II. There is that in the law-giver, which may make us willing to obey the commandments, viz. God's indulgence to us.

(1.) God doth not require the *summum jus*, as absolutely necessary to salvation and expects not perfect obedience, only requires sincerity. Do but act from a principle of love, and aim at honouring God in your obedience, and it is accepted.

(2.) In the times of the gospel a surety is admitted. The law would not favour us so far; but now God doth so indulge us, that what we cannot do of ourselves, we may do by proxy. "Jesus Christ is a surety of a better testament," Heb. 7:22. We fall short in every thing, but

God looks upon us in our surety; and Christ having fulfilled all righteousness, it is as if we had fulfilled the law in our own persons.

(3.) God gives strength to do what he requires. The law called for obedience; but though it required brick, it gave no straw; but in the gospel, God, with his commands, gives power, Ezek. 18:31., "Make you a new heart." Alas! it is above our strength; we may as well make a new world, Ezek. 36:26., "I will give you a new heart." God commands us to cleanse ourselves, Isa. 1:16., "Wash you, make you clean." "But who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" Job 14:4. Therefore the precept is turned into a promise, Ezek. 36:25., "From all your filthiness will I cleanse you." When the child cannot go, the nurse takes it by the hand, Hos. 11:3., "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms."

III. There is that in God's commandments, which may make us willing; they are not burdensome.

1st. For a Christian (so far as he is regenerate) consents to God's commands, Rom. 7:16., "I consent to the law that it is good." What is done with consent, is no burden; if a virgin gives her consent the match goes on cheerfully; if a subject consent to his prince's laws (as seeing the equity and rationality of them) then they are not irksome. A regenerate person in his judgment approves, and in his will consents to God's commandments, therefore they are not burdensome.

2dly. God's commandments are sweetened with joy and peace. Cicero questions whether that can properly be called a burden which one carries with delight and pleasure: *Utrum onus appellatur quod lætitiâ fertur*. If a man carries a bag of money given him, it is heavy, but the delight takes off the burden: when God gives inward joy, that makes the commandments delightful, Isa. 56:7., "I will make them

joyful in my house of prayer." Joy is like oil to the wheels, which makes a Christian run in the way of God's commandments, so that it is not burdensome.

3dly. God's commandments are advantageous. 1. The commandments are preventative of evil; a curb-bit to check us from sin. What mischiefs would we not run into, if we had not afflictions to humble us, and the commandments to restrain us? God's commandments are to keep us within bounds; the yoke keeps the beast from straggling; we are to be thankful to God for precepts: had not he set his commandments as an hedge or bar in our way, we might have run to hell, and never stopt.

2. There is nothing in the commandments but what is for our good: Deut. 10:13., "To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee for thy good." (1.) God commands us to read his word; and what hurt is in this? God bespangles the word with promises; as if a father should bid his son read his last will and testament, wherein he makes over a fair estate to him. (2.) God bids us pray: and he tells us, if we "ask, it shall be given," Mat. 7:7. Ask power against sin,—ask salvation,—and it shall be given. If you had a friend should say, "Come when you will to me, I will supply you with money," would you think it a trouble to visit that friend often? (3.) God commands us to fear him, Lev. 25:43., "But fear thy God." And there is honey in the mouth of this command, Luke 1:50., "His mercy is upon them that fear him." (4.) God commands us to believe, and why so? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and ye shall be saved," Acts 16:31. Salvation is the crown set upon the head of faith: good reason then we obey God's commands willingly,—they are for our good, they are not so much our duty as our privilege.

3. God's commandments are ornamental: *Omnia quæ præstari jubet Deus, non onerant nos sed ornant: SALVIAN.* God's commandments do not burden us, but adorn us. It is an honour to be employed in a king's service: and so to be employed in God's, "by whom kings reign." To walk in God's commandments, proclaims us to be wise, Deut. 4:5, 6., "Behold I have taught you statutes, keep, therefore, and do them, for this is your wisdom." And to be wise is an honour: I may say of every commandment of God, as Prov. 4:9., It "shall give to thy head an ornament of grace."

4. The commands of God are infinitely better than the commands of sin, these are intolerable. Let a man be under the command of any lust, how doth he tire himself? What hazards doth he run to the endangering his health and soul, that he may satisfy his lust? Jer. 9:5., "They weary themselves to commit iniquity." And are not God's commandments more equal, facile, pleasant, than the commands of sin? Chrysostom saith true, "To act virtue is easier than to act vice." Temperance is less troublesome than drunkenness; meekness is less troublesome than passion and envy. There is more difficulty in the contrivement and pursuit of a wicked design, than in obeying the commandments of God. Hence a sinner is said to travail with iniquity, Ps. 7:14. A woman while she is in travail, is in pain; to shew what pain and trouble a wicked man hath in bringing forth sin. Many have gone with more pains to hell, than others have to heaven. This may make us obey the commandments willingly.

5. Willingness in obedience makes us resemble the angels. The cherubims—types representing the angels—are described with wings displayed, to shew how ready the angels are to serve God. God no sooner speaks the word, but they are ambitious to obey. How are they ravished with joy, while they are praising God! In heaven we shall be as the angels; by our willingness to obey God's

commandments, we shall be like them here. This is what we pray for, that God's will may be done by us on earth, as it is in heaven: is it not done willingly there? We must keep God's commandments constantly, Ps. 106:3., "Blessed is he who doth righteousness at all times." Our obedience to the command must be as the fire of the altar which never went out, Lev. 6:9. It must be as the motion of the pulse, always beating. The wind blows off the fruit, our fruits of obedience must not be blown off by the wind of persecution, John 15:16., "I have chosen you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

Use. It reproveth them who live in a wilful breach of God's commandments,—in malice, uncleanness, intemperance,—they walk antipodes to the commandment. To live in a wilful breach of the commandment is,

1st. Against reason. Are we able to stand it out against God? 1 Cor. 10:22., "Do we provoke the Lord, are we stronger than he?" Can we measure arms with God? Can impotency stand against omnipotency? A sinner, in acting sin, acts against reason.

2dly, It is against equity. We have our being from God; and, is it not equal we should obey him who gives us our being? We have all our subsistence from God; and is it not fitting, that as God gives us our allowance we should give him our allegiance? If a general gives his soldier pay, he is to march at his command: so that to live in the breach of his commands, is against equity.

3dly, It is against nature. Every creature in its kind obeys God's law: 1. Animate creatures obey him. God spake to the fish, and it set Jonah a-shore, Jonah 2:10.—2. Inanimate creatures; "the wind and the sea obey him," Mark 4:41. The very stones, if God give them a commission, will cry out against the sins of men, Hab. 2:11., "The

stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it." None disobey God but wicked men and the devil; and can we find none to join with else?

4thly, It is against kindness. How many mercies have we to allure us to obey? Miracles of mercy; therefore the apostle joins these two together,—disobedient and unthankful, 2 Tim. 3:2., and this dyes a sin of a crimson colour. And, as the sin is great, (for it is a contempt of God, a hanging out of the flag of defiance against God, and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft) so the punishment will be proportionable; such cut themselves off from mercy. God's mercy is for them that keep his commandments, but no mercy to them that live in a wilful breach of them. All God's judgments set themselves in battle-array against the disobedient. (1.) Temporal judgments, Lev. 26:15, 16. (2.) Eternal. "Christ comes in flames of fire, to take vengeance on them that obey not God," 2 Thess. 1:8. 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.

QUEST. 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. 2:13. 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. 20:7. 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 reflections 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 3:8. 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 insisted 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.

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

Ans. 1. We take God's name in vain when we speak slightly and irreverently of his name, Deut. 28:58., "That thou mayest fear this

glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God." David speaks of God with reverence, Ps. 50:1., "The Lord even the most mighty God." Ps. 83:18., "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 24:19., "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.

A. 2. When we profess God's name, but do not live answerably to it, it is a taking his name in vain, Titus 1:16., 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. 2:24., "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you." When the heathens 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.

A. 3. 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 God's name in 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. 'Tis a wonder that fire doth not come out from the Lord and consume them, as it did Nadab and Abihu! Lev. 10:2.

A. 4. 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. 23:26., "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. 29:13., "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, Hos. 4:8., "They set their hearts on their iniquity." Their eyes are lifted up to heaven, but their hearts are rooted in the earth, Ezek. 33:31. 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.

A. 5. 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. 4:20. 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, (saith 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, 1

John 5:10., "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. 10:14., 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 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," Ps. 86:5.

A. 6. 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 a drunkard's mouth it is like a pearl hung upon a swine. Under the law, the lips of the leper were to be covered, Lev. 13:45.: 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. 3:4., "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. 19:29., "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 scripture 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 laugh at your calamity! Prov. 1:26.

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. 25:14., "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, Mat. 6:20. 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. 4:26. '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 unadvisedly with thy lips,—thy tongue is set on fire of hell, and to bring scripture to defend thy sin is to profane scripture, and to take God's name in vain.

4. They abuse the word, and take God's name in vain, who adulterate the word, and wrest it in a wrong sense. Such are heretics, who put their own gloss upon scripture, and make it speak that which the Holy Ghost never meant. For instance, first, when we expound those texts literally which are meant figuratively. Thus the Pharisees were guilty, when God said in the law, "Thou shalt bind the commandments for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes," Deut. 6:8. The Pharisees took it in a literal sense; they got two scrolls of parchment, whereon they wrote the two tables, putting one on their left arms, and binding the other to their eyebrows, thus they wrested the scripture and took God's name in vain. That scripture was to be understood spiritually and by a figure: God meant, by binding his laws upon their hands that they should meditate on his law, and put it in practice; and so the papists expound that scripture, "This is my body," literally, of the very body of Christ; then, when Christ gave the bread, he should have had two bodies, one in the bread, and the other out of the bread, whereas Christ meant it figuratively, it is a sign of my body. Thus they, by wresting the scripture to a wrong sense, profane it, and take God's name in vain. 2dly, When we expound those scriptures figuratively and allegorically which the Holy Ghost means literally. For example, Christ said to Peter, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught," Luke 5:4. This text is spoken in a plain, literal sense of launching out the ship; but the papists take it in a mystical and allegorical. This text proves, say they, that the pope—which is

Peter's successor—shall launch forth, and catch the ecclesiastical and political power over the west parts of the world. This, say they, was meant when Christ bade Peter launch out into the deep. But I think the papists have launched out too far beyond the meaning of the text. When men strain their wits to wrest the word to such a sense as pleaseth them, they do profane God's word, and highly take his name in vain.

A. 7. We take God's name in vain, when we swear by his name. Many seldom name God's name but in oaths; for this sin the land mourns. Mat. 5:34., "Swear not at all," that is, rashly and sinfully, so as take God's name in vain; not but that in some cases it is lawful to take an oath before a magistrate, Deut. 6:13., "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God and serve him, and swear by his name,"—Heb. 6:16., "an oath for confirmation is to them the end of all strife;" but when Christ saith, "swear not at all," he forbids such a swearing as takes God's name in vain. There is a threefold swearing forbidden:

I. 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 men's 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 men's 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 men's 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. Though 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. Though 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? 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 it is here; therefore all excuses for the sin of vain-swearing are taken away. Dare not to live in this sin, it is a taking of God's name in vain.

II. 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 natural son, and all his estate he bequeathed to him. The father being dead; the executors set up his corpse against a tree, and delivered 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 though 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 23:12., 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 God's name, and is as it were to call God to approve our sin.

III. Forswearing: this is an heaven-daring sin, Lev. 19:12., "Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God." 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. 4:2., "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 of 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. 5:4. 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!

A. 8. 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. 15:7., "I pray, (saith Absalom) let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord in Hebron." This pretence of paying his vow made to God, was only to colour over his treason, ver. 10., "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 bulls 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.

A. 9. 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.

A. 10. 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, Ps. 66:13., "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 11:31, 34. He did ill to make the vow, and worse to keep it he became guilty of the breach of the third and sixth commandments.

A. 11. When we speak evil of God, now we take his name in vain, Ps. 78:19., "They spake against God." QUEST. How do we speak against God? Ans. When we murmur at his providences, as if he had dealt hardly with us. Murmuring is the accusing of God's justice, Gen. 18:25., "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. 14:27., "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation that murmur against me?"

A. 12. 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. 2dly, Blasphemy. He who did blaspheme God, the Lord caused him to be stoned to death, Lev. 24:11, 23., "The Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the Lord and cursed. And Moses spake to the children of Israel, that they should bring forth him that had cursed out of the camp, 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 Cod 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 gaoler, 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. 10:31., "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:8. 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 man-servant, 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 word.

I. Here is a solemn command, "Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy."

II. Many cogent arguments to induce us to observe the command.

I. In the command, (1.) The matter of it, viz. The sanctifying of the sabbath, which sabbath-sanctification consists in two things:—1. In

resting from our own works.—2. In a conscientious discharge of our religious duty.

(2.) The persons to whom the command of sanctifying the sabbath is given: 1st, Either superiors, and they are, 1. More private, as parents and masters. Or, 2. More public, as Magistrates. Or, 2dly, Inferiors. 1. Natives, as children and servants, "Thy son, and thy daughter, thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant." 2. Foreigners, "The stranger that is within thy gates."

II. The cogent arguments to obey this command of keeping holy the sabbath, 1. From the rationality of it, "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work." As if God had said: 'I am not an hard master, I do not grudge thee time to look after thy calling, and to get an estate. I have given thee six days,—six to do all thy work in,—and have taken but one day for myself: I might have reserved six days for myself, and allowed thee but one, but I have given thee six days for the works of thy calling, and have taken but one day for my own service: therefore it is equal and rational, that thou shouldest set this day in a special manner apart for my worship."

2. The second argument for sanctifying the sabbath, is taken from the justice of it. "The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God." As if God had said: "The sabbath-day is my due, I challenge a special right in it, and none hath any thing to do to lay claim to it. He who robs me of THIS DAY, and puts it to common uses, is a sacrilegious person,—he steals from the crown of heaven, and I will in no wise hold him guiltless."

3. The third argument for sanctifying the sabbath is taken from God's own pattern, he "rested the seventh day." As if the Lord should say: "Will you not follow my pattern? Having finished all my works of creation, I rested the seventh day: so you having done all your

secular work on the six days, you should now cease from the labour of your calling, and dedicate the seventh day to the Lord, as a day of holy rest."

4. The fourth argument for sabbath-sanctification, is taken *ab utili*,—from the benefit which redounds, from a religions observation of the sabbath: "The Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it." It is not only a day of God's appointment, God did not only appoint the seventh day, but he blessed the seventh day. The sabbath-day is not only a day of honour to God, but a day of blessing to us; it is not only a day wherein we give God worship, but a day wherein he gives us grace; on this day a blessing drops down from heaven. This is a great argument for the keeping the sabbath-day holy. God is not benefited by it, we cannot add one cubit to his essential glory,—but we ourselves are advantaged; the sabbath-day, religiously observed, entails a blessing upon our souls, our estate, our posterity, as the not keeping this day holy, brings a curse, Jer. 17:27. God curseth a man's blessings, Mal. 2:2. The bread which he eats is poisoned with a curse; so the conscientious observation of the sabbath, brings all manner of blessings with it. These are the arguments to induce sabbath-sanctification. And so I have divided the commandment into its several parts and explained the sense of it.

The thing I would have you observe is, That this commandment about keeping the sabbath was not abrogated with the ceremonial law, but it is purely moral, and the observation of the sabbath is to be continued to the end of the world. Where can we shew that God hath given us a discharge from keeping one day in seven? So that I say, this fourth commandment is moral, and obligeth Christians to the perpetual commemoration and sanctification of the sabbath.

QUEST. Why God hath appointed a sabbath?

Ans. 1. In respect of himself. It is requisite that God should reserve one day in seven for his own immediate service, that hereby he might be acknowledged to be the Great Plenipotentiary or Sovereign Lord, who hath power over us both to command worship, and appoint the time when he will be worshipped.

2. In respect of us. The sabbath-day makes for our interest,—it promotes holiness in us; the business on the week-day makes us too forgetful of God and our souls,—the sabbath brings God into our remembrance. When the dust of the world falling hath clogged the wheels of our affections that they would scarce move towards God, the sabbath comes, and oils the wheels of our affections, and now they move swiftly in religion, therefore God hath appointed a sabbath to ripen our holiness. On this day the thoughts contemplate heaven,—the tongue speaks of God, and is as the pen of a ready writer,—now the eyes drop tears,—now the soul burns in love. When the heart was all the week frozen, now on the sabbath it is melted with the word. The sabbath is a friend to religion,—it files off the rust of our graces, it is a spiritual jubilee, wherein the soul is set to converse with its Maker.

I should in the next place, show you the modus, or manner how we should keep the sabbath-day holy. But before I come to that, I shall propound a great question, viz.

QUEST. How comes it to pass that we do not keep the seventh-day sabbath, as it was in the primitive institution, but have changed it to another day?

Ans. The old seventh-day sabbath (which was the Jewish sabbath) is abrogated, and in the room of it the first day of the week (which is the Christian sabbath) succeeds. The morality or substance of the fourth commandment doth not lie in keeping the seventh day

precisely, but in keeping one day in seven, which God hath appointed.

QUEST. But how comes the first day in the week to be substituted in the room of the seventh day?

Ans. Not by ecclesiastic authority. The church (saith Mr. Perkins) hath no power to ordain a sabbath. But,

I. The change of the sabbath from the last day of the week to the first, was by Christ's own appointment. Christ is "Lord of the sabbath," Mark 2:28. And who shall appoint a day but he who is Lord of it? He made this day, Ps. 118:24., "This is the day which the Lord hath made." Arnobius, and the current of expositors, understand it of our Christian sabbath, and it is called the "Lord's day," Rev. 1:10. As it is called the "Lord's supper," because of the Lord's instituting the bread and wine, and setting it apart from a common to a more special and sacred use: so it is called the Lord's day, because of the Lord's instituting it, and setting it apart from common days to his special worship and service. Christ arose on the first day of the week out of the grave, and appeared twice on this day to his disciples, John 20:19, 26., which was to intimate to the disciples (say Austin and Athanasius) that he transferred the Jewish sabbath to the Lord's day.

2. The keeping of the first day (which is the Lord's day) was the practice of the apostles, 1 Cor. 16:2; Acts 20:7., "On the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." Here was both preaching and breaking of bread on this day. Austin, and Inocentius, and Isidore, make the keeping of our gospel-sabbath to be an apostolical sanction, and affirm, that by virtue of the apostles' practice, this Lord's day is to be sequestered and set apart for divine worship. What the apostles did,

they did it by divine authority, for they were inspired by the Holy Ghost.

3. Besides, the primitive church had the Lord's day—which we now celebrate—in high estimation; it was a great badge of their religion to observe this day. Ignatius the most ancient father, who lived in the time of St. John the apostle, hath these words, "Let every one that loveth Christ, keep holy the first day of the week, the Lord's day." This day hath been observed by the church of Christ, above sixteen hundred years, as learned Bucer notes. Thus you see how the seventh-day sabbath comes to be changed to the first-day sabbath.

Now there is a grand reason for changing of the Jewish sabbath to the Lord's day, because this puts us in mind of the "Mystery of our redemption by Christ." The reason why God did institute the old sabbath was, because God would have it kept as a memorial of the creation; but the Lord hath now brought the first day of the week in the room of it, in memory of a more glorious work than creation, and that is redemption.

Great was the work of creation, but greater was the work of redemption. As it was said, Hag. 2:9., "The glory of the second temple was greater than the glory of the first temple: so the glory of the redemption was greater than the glory of the creation. Great wisdom was seen in the curious making us,—but more miraculous wisdom in saving us. Great power was seen in bringing us out of nothing,—but greater power in helping us when we were worse than nothing. It cost more to redeem us than to create us. In the creation there was but 'speaking a word,' Ps. 148:5.; in the redeeming us, there was shedding of blood, 1 Pet. 1:19. The creation was the work of God's fingers, Ps. 8:3.; redemption was the work of his arm, Luke 1:5. In the creation, God gave us ourselves; in the redemption, he gave us

himself. By creation, we have a life in Adam; by redemption, we have a life in Christ, Col. 3:3. By creation, we had a right to an earthly paradise; by redemption, we have a title to an heavenly kingdom. So that well Christ might change the seventh day of the week into the first, because this day puts us in mind of our redemption, which is a more glorious work than the creation.

Use. The use I shall make, is, that we should have this Christian sabbath we now celebrate in high veneration. The Jews called the sabbath, "The desire of days, and the Queen of days;" it is a day of sweet rest. This day we must call a "delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable," Isa. 58:13. Metal that hath the king's stamp upon it is honourable, and of great value. God hath set his royal stamp upon the sabbath; it is the sabbath of the Lord, this makes it honourable. This day we should look upon as the best day in the week. What the Phoenix is among the birds,—what the sun is among the planets,—that the Lord's day is among other days. "This is the day which the Lord hath made," Ps. 118:24. God hath made all the days, but he hath blessed this. As Jacob got the blessing from his brother, so the sabbath got the blessing from all the other days in the week. The sabbath is a day in which we converse in a special manner with God. The Jews called the sabbath "a day of light;" on this day the Sun of Righteousness shines upon the soul. The sabbath is the market-day of the soul,—the cream of time; this is the day of Christ's rising out of the grave, and the Holy Ghost's descending upon the earth; this day is perfumed with the sweet odour of prayer, which goes up to heaven as incense; this day the manna falls, that angels' food; this is the soul's festival-day; on this day the graces act their part; the other days of the week are most employed about earth, this day about heaven,—then you gather straw, now pearl. Now Christ takes the soul up into the mount, and gives it transfiguring sights of glory; now Christ leads his spouse into the wine-cellar, and displays the banner

of his love; now he gives her his spiced wine, and the juice of the pomegranate, Cant. 2:8. The Lord doth usually reveal himself more to the soul on this day. The apostle John "was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," Rev. 1:10.; he was carried up in divine raptures towards heaven. This day a Christian is in the altitudes,—he walks with God, and takes as it were a turn with him in heaven, 1 John 1:3. On this day holy affections are quickened,—the stock of grace is improved,—corruptions are weakened; on this day Satan falls like lightning before the majesty of the word. Christ wrought most of his miracles upon the sabbath: so he doth now; the dead soul is raised, the heart of stone is made flesh. How should this day be highly esteemed, and had in reverence? This day is more precious than rubies; God hath anointed this day with the oil of gladness above its fellows. On the sabbath we are doing angels' work, our tongues are tuned to God's praises. This sabbath on earth is a shadow and type of that glorious rest and eternal sabbath we hope for in heaven, when God shall be the temple, and the Lamb shall be the light of it, Rev. 21:22, 23.

EXOD. 20:9, 10. 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 do no manner of work, &c.

"Six days shalt thou labour." God would not have any live out of a calling; religion seals no warrant for idleness. 'Tis as well a duty to labour six days as to keep holy rest on the seventh day: "Six days shalt thou labour." 2 Thess. 3:11, 12., "We hear there are some among you, who walk disorderly, working not at all. Now, them that are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread." A Christian must not only mind heaven, but his calling. While the pilot hath his eye to the star, he hath his hand to the helm. Without labour the pillars of a commonwealth will dissolve, and the earth will be like the sluggard's

field, over-run with briars, Prov. 24:31. Adam in innocency, though he was the monarch of the world, yet God would not have him idle, but he must dress and till the ground, Gen. 2:15. Piety doth not exclude industry. "Six days shalt thou labour." Standing water putrifies. The inanimate creatures are in motion,—the sun goes its circuit, the fountain runs, the fire sparkles: and animate creatures,—Solomon sends us to the ant and pismire to learn labour, Prov. 6:6., chap. 30:25. The bee is the emblem of industry; some of the bees trim the honey, others work the wax, others frame the comb, others lie sentinel at the door of the hive to keep out the drone. And shall not man much more inure himself to labour? That law in paradise was never yet repealed, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," Gen. 3:19. Such professors are to be disliked who talk of living by faith but live out of a calling; they are like the lilies which toil not neither do they spin, Mat. 6:28. 'Tis a speech of holy and learned Mr. Perkins, "Let a man be endowed with excellent gifts, and hear the word with reverence, and receive the sacrament, yet if he practise not the duties of his calling, all is but hypocrisy." What is an idle person good for? What benefit is there of a ship that lies always on the shore, or of armour that hangs up and rusts? To live out of a calling, exposeth a person to temptation. Melancthon calls idleness the devil's bath, because he bathes himself with delight in an idle soul. We do not use to sow seed in ground when it lies fallow; but Satan sows most of his seed of temptation in such persons as lie fallow, and are out of a calling. Idleness is the nurse of vice. Seneca, an old heathen, could say, *Nullus mihi per otium dies exit*,—'No day passeth me without some labour.' An idle person stands for a cipher in the world, and God writes down no ciphers in the book of life. We read in scripture of eating the "bread of idleness," Prov. 31:27., and drinking the "wine of violence," Prov. 4:17. It is as well a sin "to eat the bread of idleness," as to "drink the wine of violence." An idle person can give no account of his time. Time is a talent to trade with,

both in our particular and general calling: the slothful person "hides his talent in the earth,"—he doth no good,—his time is not lived but lost; an idle person lives unprofitably,—he cumpers the ground; God calls the slothful servant "wicked," Mat. 25:26., "Thou wicked and slothful servant." Draco, whose laws were written in blood, deprived them of their life who would not work for their living. In Hetruria, they caused such persons to be banished. Idle persons live in the breach of this commandment, "Six days shalt thou labour." Let them take heed they be not banished heaven. A man may as well go to hell for not working in his calling, as for not believing. So I pass to the next,

"But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt do no manner of work."

Having spoken already of the reasons of sanctifying the sabbath, I come now to that question,

QUEST. In what manner we are to sanctify the sabbath?

Ans. 1. Negatively. We must do no work in it; that is expressed in the commandment, "In it thou shalt do no manner of work." God hath enclosed this day for himself, therefore we are not to lay it common by doing any civil work. As Abraham, when he went to sacrifice, left his servants and the ass at the bottom of the hill, Gen. 22:5., so, when we are to worship God this day, we must leave all worldly business behind,—leave the ass at the bottom of the hill. And as Joseph, when he would speak with his brethren, thrust out the Egyptians, so, when we would converse with God this day, we must thrust out all earthly employments. The Lord's day is a day of holy rest; all secular work must be forborne and suspended, it is a profaning the day, Neh. 13:15, 17., "In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, as also wine-grapes and figs,

and all manner of burdens which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath-day; and I testified against them. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, 'What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath-day?' " It is sacrilege to rob that time for civil work which God hath dedicated and set apart for his worship. He that converts any time of the sabbath for worldly business, is a worse thief than he who robs on the highway; for such a thief does but rob man, but this thief robs God, he robs him of his day. The Lord forbade manna to be gathered on the sabbath, Exod. 16. One would think that might have been dispensed with, for manna was the 'staff of their life;' and the time when manna fell was early, between five and six in the morning; so that they might have gathered it betimes, and all the rest of the sabbath they might have employed in God's worship; and besides, they needed not to have taken any great journey for manna, for it was but stepping out of their doors, and it fell about their tents; yet they might not gather manna on the sabbath; and but for purposing to gather it, God was very angry, Exod. 16:27, 28., "There went out some of the people on the seventh day to gather, and they found none: and the Lord said, 'How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?' " Surely the anointing Christ when he was dead, was a commendable work; but Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, though they had prepared sweet ointments to anoint the dead body of Christ, yet they came not to the sepulchre to embalm him, till the sabbath was past, Luke 23:56., "They rested on the sabbath-day according to the commandment." The hand cannot be busied on the Lord's day, but the heart will be defiled. The very heathens, by the light of nature, would not do any secular work, in that time which they had set apart for the worship of their false gods. Clemens Alexandrinus reports of one of the emperors of Rome, that on the day of set worship for his gods, he did forbear warlike affairs, and did spend that time in his devotion. To do servile work on the sabbath, shews an irreligious

heart, and highly affronts God; to work servile work on this day, is to follow the devil's plough, it is to debase the soul. God hath made this day on purpose to raise the heart up to heaven, to converse with God, to do angel's work; and to be employed in earthly work, is to degrade the soul of its honour. God will not have his day intrenched upon, or defiled in the least thing; the man that gathered sticks on the sabbath, God would have him stoned, Numb. 15. One would think it a small thing to pick up a few sticks to make a fire, but God would not have this day violated in the smallest matters. Nay, that work which had a reference to a religious use, might not be done on the sabbath, as the hewing of stones for the building of the sanctuary: Bezaleel, who was to cut the stones, and carve the timber out for the sanctuary, yet he must forbear it on the sabbath, Exod. 31:15. A temple is the place of God's worship, but it were a sin to build a temple on the Lord's day. This is keeping the sabbath-day holy negatively, in doing no servile work. Yet caution: not but that works of necessity and charity may be done on this day,—God, in these cases, will have mercy and not sacrifice. 1. 'Tis lawful to take the necessary recruits of nature; food is to the body, as oil to the lamp. 2. 'Tis lawful to do works of mercy, as helping our neighbour when either life or estate are in danger. Herein the Jews were too nice and precise, they would not suffer works of charity to be done on the sabbath; if a man were sick, they thought on this day they might not use means for his recovery. Christ chargeth them with this, that they were angry that he had wrought a cure on the sabbath, John 7:23. If an house were on fire, the Jews thought they might not bring water to quench it; if a vessel did run, they thought that on this day they might not stop it. These were 'righteous overmuch;' here was seeming zeal, but it wanted discretion to guide it. But unless in these two cases of necessity and charity, all secular work is to be suspended and laid aside on the Lord's day: "In it thou shalt do no manner of work." Which justly doth arraign and condemn many among us who

do too much foul their fingers with work on that day,—some dressing great feasts,—others in opening their shop-doors, and selling meat on the sabbath, which I have seen. The mariner will not set to sea but on the sabbath, and so runs full-sail into the breach of this commandment. Others work on this day though privately; they put up their shop-windows, but follow their trade within doors; but though they think to hide their sin under a canopy, God sees it, Ps. 139:7., "Whither shall I flee from thy presence?" ver. 12., "The darkness hideth not from thee." These persons do profane this day, and God will have an action of trespass against them.

A. 2. Positively. We keep the sabbath-day holy, by "consecrating and dedicating" this day to the "service of the high God." 'Tis good to rest on the sabbath-day from the works of our calling; but if we rest from labour and do no more, the ox and the ass keep the sabbath as well as we, for they rest from labour. We must dedicate the day to God; we must not only "keep a sabbath," but "sanctify" a sabbath. This sabbath-sanctification consists in two things: 1st. The solemn preparation for it. 2d. The sacred observation of it.

1. The solemn preparation for it. If a prince were to come to your house, what preparation would you make for his entertainment,—sweep the house, wash the floor, adorn the room with the richest tapestry and hangings, that there might be something suitable to the state and dignity of so great a person? On the blessed sabbath, God intends to have sweet communion with you; he seems to say to you, as Christ to Zaccheus, Luke 19:5., "Make haste and come down, for this day I must abide at thy house." Now, what preparation should you make for entertaining this King of glory? Now this preparation for the sabbath is First, When the evening of the Saturday approacheth, sound a retreat; call your minds off from the world and summon your thoughts together, to think of the great work of the day

approaching. Secondly, Purge out all unclean affections which may indispose you for the work of the sabbath. Evening-preparation will be like the tuning of the instrument, it will fit the heart the better for the duties of the ensuing sabbath.

2. The sacred observation of it; touching which these things are to be practised: (1.) Rejoice at the approach of this day, as being a day wherein we have a prize for our souls, and enjoy much of God's presence, John 8:56., Abraham saw my day, and rejoiced. So, when we see the light of a sabbath shine, we should rejoice, Isa. 58:13., "Thou shalt call the sabbath a delight;" this is the queen of days, which God hath crowned with a blessing. As there was one day in the week on which God did rain manna twice as much as upon any other day, so God rains down the manna of heavenly blessings twice as much on the sabbath as on any other. This is the day wherein Christ carries the soul into the house of wine, and displays the banner of love over it; now the dew of the Spirit falls on the soul, whereby it is revived and comforted. How many may write the Lord's day, the day of their new birth! This day of rest is a pledge and earnest of that eternal rest in heaven; and shall not we rejoice at the approach of it? That day on which the Sun of Righteousness shines, should be a day of gladness.

(2.) Get up betimes on the sabbath-morning. Christ rose early on this day before the sun was up, John 20:1. Did Christ rise early to save us, and shall not we rise early to worship and glorify him? Ps. 63:1., "Early will I seek thee." Can we be up betimes on other days? The husbandman is early at his plough,—the traveller riseth early to go his journey,—and shall not we when we are on this day travelling to heaven? Certainly did we love God as we should, we would rise on this day betimes, that we may meet with him whom our soul loveth.

Such as sit up late at work on the night before, will be so buried in sleep that they will hardly be up betimes on a sabbath-morning.

(3.) Having dressed our bodies, we must dress our souls for the hearing of the word. As the people of Israel were to wash themselves before the law was delivered to them, Exod. 19:10., so we must wash and cleanse our souls, and that is, by reading, meditation and prayer.

I. By reading the word. The word is a great means to sanctify the heart, and bring it into a sabbath-frame, John 17:17., "Sanctify them through thy truth," &c. And read the word not carelessly, but with seriousness and affection; it is the oracle of heaven,—the well of salvation,—the book of life. David, for the preciousness of God's word, esteemed it above gold; and for the sweetness, above honey, Ps. 19:10. By reading the word aright, our hearts, when they are dull, are quickened,—when they are hard, are mollified,—when cold and frozen, are inflamed; and we can say as the disciples, "Did not our hearts burn within us?" Some step out of their bed to hearing. The reason why many get no more good on a sabbath by the word preached, is because they did not breakfast with God in the morning by reading of his word.

II. Meditation. Get upon the mount of meditation, and so converse with God. Meditation is the soul's retiring of itself, that, by a serious and solemn thinking upon God, the heart may be raised up to divine affections.—Meditation is a work fit for the morning of a sabbath. Meditate on four things:

1. On the works of creation. That is expressed here in the commandment, "The Lord made heaven and earth, the sea," &c. The creation is a looking-glass in which we see the wisdom and power of God gloriously represented. God produced this fair structure of the world without any pre-existent matter, and with a word, Ps. 33:6.,

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made." The disciples wondered that Christ could with a word calm the sea, Mat. 8:26.; but it was far more with a word to make the sea. Let us on a sabbath meditate on the infiniteness of our Creator. Look up to the firmament, there we may see "God's wonders in the deep," Ps. 107:24. Look into the earth, there we may behold the nature of minerals, the power of the loadstone, the virtue of herbs, the beauty of flowers. By meditating on these works of creation, so curiously embroidered, we come to admire God and praise him, Ps. 104:24., "O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all!" By meditating on the works of creation, we come to confide in God. He who can create, can provide; he that could make us when we were nothing, he can raise us when we are low; Ps. 124:8., "Our help stands in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth."

2. Meditate on God's holiness, Ps. 111:9., "Holy and reverend is his name." Hab. 1:13., "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." God is essentially, originally, and efficiently holy; all the holiness in men and angels is but a crystal stream that runs from this glorious ocean. God loves holiness because it is his own image: a king cannot but love to see his own effigies stamped on coin. God counts holiness his glory, and the most sparkling jewel of his crown, Exod. 15:11., "Glorious in holiness." Here is a meditation fit for our first entrance into a sabbath, God's holiness; the contemplation of this would work in us such a frame of heart as is suitable to an holy God; it would make us then reverence his name, hallow his day; while we are musing of the holiness of God's nature, we begin to be transformed into his likeness.

3. Meditate on Christ's love in redeeming us, Rev. 1:5. Redemption exceeds creation; the one is a monument of God's power, the other of his love. Here is fit work for a sabbath. O the infinite stupendous love

of Christ in raising poor lapsed creatures from a state of guilt and damnation! (1.) That Christ who was God should die,—that this glorious Sun of Righteousness should be in an eclipse,—we can never enough admire this love, no, not in heaven. (2.) That Christ should die for sinners,—not sinful angels, but sinful mankind. That such clods of earth and sin should be made bright stars of glory: O the amazing love of Christ! This was illustre amore, Christi mnemosynium, BRUGENSIS. (3.) That Christ should not only die for sinners, but die as a sinner, 2 Cor. 5:21., "He was made sin for us." He who was among the glorious persons of the Trinity, "was numbered among transgressors," Isa. 53:12. Not that he had sin, but he was like a sinner, having our sins imputed to him. Sin did not live in him, but it was laid upon him. Here was an hyperbole of love, enough to strike us into astonishment. (4.) That Christ should redeem us, when he could not look to gain any thing, or be advantaged at all by us. Men will not lay out their money upon purchase, unless it will turn to their profit: but what benefit could Christ expect in purchasing and redeeming us? We were in such a condition, that we could neither deserve nor recompense Christ's love. First, We could not deserve it; for we were in our blood, Ezek. 16:6. We had no spiritual beauty to tempt Christ. Nay, we were not only in our blood, but we were up in arms, Rom. 5:8., "When we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" when he was shedding his blood, we were spitting out poison. Secondly, As we could not deserve, so neither could we recompense Christ's love: for, 1. After he had died for us, we could not so much as love him, till he made us love him. 2. We could give Christ nothing in lieu of his love, Rom. 11:35., "Who hath first given to him?" We were fallen to poverty. If we have any beauty, it is from Christ, Ezek. 16:14., "It was perfect through my comeliness which I put upon thee." If we bring forth any good fruit, it is not of our own growth, it comes from Christ, the true vine, Hos. 14:8., "From me is thy fruit found." So that it was nothing

but pure love for Christ to lay out his blood to redeem such as he could not expect to be really bettered by. (5.) That Christ should die so willingly, John 10:17., "I lay down my life" The Jews could not have taken it away, if he had not laid it down; he could have called to his Father for a legion of angels to be his life-guard; but what needed that, when his Godhead could have defended him from all assaults? But he "laid down his life;" the Jews did not so much thirst for Christ's death, as he thirsted for our redemption, Luke 12:50., "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?" Christ called his sufferings a baptism: he was to be baptized and sprinkled with his own blood, and Christ thought the time long before he suffered, "How am I straitened till it be accomplished." Therefore to shew Christ's willingness to die, his sufferings are called 'an offering,' Heb. 10:10., "By the offering of the body of Jesus;" his death was a free-will-offering. (6.) That Christ should not grudge nor think much of all his sufferings; his being scourged and crucified, (we grudge him a light service) but that he should be well contented with what he hath done; and, if it were to do again, he would do it, Isa. 53:11., "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." As the mother, though she hath hard labour, yet when she sees a child brought forth, she doth not repent of her pangs, but is well contented: so Christ, though he had hard travail upon the cross, which put him into an agony, yet he doth not think much,—he is not troubled, but thinks his sweat and blood well bestowed, because he sees the man-child of redemption brought forth into the world. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." (7.) That Christ should make redemption effectual to some and not to others: here is the quintessence of love. Though there is a sufficiency in Christ's merit to save all, yet only some partake of its saving virtue; all do not believe. John 6:64., "There are some of you that believe not." Christ doth not pray for all, John 17:9. Some refuse Christ, Ps. 118:22., "This is the stone which the builders

refused." Others deride him, Luke 16:14. Others throw off his yoke, Luke 19:14., "We will not have this man to reign over us." So that all have not the benefit of salvation by him. Here in appears the distinguishing love of Christ, that the virtue of his death should reach some and not others, 1 Cor. 1:26., "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." That Christ should pass by many of birth and parts, and that the lot of free grace should fall upon thee; that he should sprinkle his blood upon thee; "O the depth of the love of Christ!" (8.) That Christ should love us with such an entire transcendant love. The apostle calls it a 'Love which passeth knowledge,' Eph. 3:19. That he should love us more than the angels; he loves them as his friends, believers as his spouse. He loves them with such a kind of love as God the Father bears to him, John 15:9., "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." O what an hyperbole of love doth Christ shew in redeeming us! (9.) That Christ's love in our redemption should be everlasting, John 13:1., "Having loved his own, he loved them to the end." As Christ's love is matchless, so endless; the flower of Christ's love is sweet, and that which makes it sweeter, it never dies. Christ's love is eternized, Jer. 31:3. He will never divorce his elect spouse. The failings of his people cannot quite take off his love; they may eclipse his love, not wholly remove it; their failings may make Christ angry with them, but not hale them. Every failing doth not break the marriage-knot. Christ's love is not like the saints' love; sometimes they have strong affections towards Christ,—at other times the hot fit is off, and they can find little or no love stirring in them,—but it is not so with Christ's love to the saints, it is a love of eternity. When the sun-shine of Christ's electing love is once risen upon the soul, it never sets finally. Death may take away our life from us, but not Christ's love. Behold here a rare subject in a sabbath-morning to meditate upon! The meditation of Christ's wonderful love in redeeming us, would work in us a sabbath-frame of hear

First, It would melt us in tears for our spiritual unkindnesses,—that we should sin against so sweet a Saviour,—that we should be no more affected with his love, but requite evil for good, like the Athenians, who, notwithstanding all the good service Aristides had done them, banished him out of their city,—that we should grieve Christ with our pride, rash anger, our unfruitfulness, animosities, strange factions. Have we none to abuse but our friend? Have we nothing to kick against but the bowels of our Saviour? Did not Christ suffer enough upon the cross, but we must needs make him suffer more? Do we give him more 'gall and vinegar to drink?' O if any thing can dissolve the heart in sorrow, and broach the eyes with tears, it is disingenuity and unkindness offered to Christ! When Peter thought of Christ's love to him, how he had made him an apostle, and revealed his bosom-secrets to him, and taken him to the mount of transfiguration, and that he should deny Christ, it broke his heart with sorrow; "he went out and wept bitterly," Mat. 26:75. What a blessed thing is it to have the eyes dropping tears on a sabbath! And nothing would sooner fetch tears, than to meditate on Christ's love to us, and our unkind requitals.

Secondly, The meditating on a Lord's day morning of Christ's love would kindle love in our hearts to Christ. How can we look on Christ's bleeding and dying for us, and our hearts not to be warmed with love to him? Love is the soul of religion,—the purest affection; it is not rivers of oil, but sparks of love that Christ values. And sure, as David said, "While I was musing the fire burned," Ps. 39:3., so, while we are musing of Christ's love in redeeming us, the fire of our love will burn towards Christ; and then is a Christian in a blessed sabbath-frame, when he is like a seraphim burning in love to Christ.

4. On a sabbath-morning meditate on the glory of heaven. Heaven is the extract and quintessence of happiness. It is called a kingdom,

Mat. 25:34. A kingdom for its riches and magnificence; it is set out by "precious stones, gates of pearl," Rev. 21. There is all that is truly glorious,—transparent light,—perfect love,—unstained honour,—unmixed joy; and that which crowns the joy of the celestial paradise is eternity. Suppose earthly kingdoms were more glorious than they are,—their foundations of gold,—their walls of pearl,—their windows of sapphire,—yet they are corruptible: but the kingdom of heaven is eternal,—those rivers of pleasure "run for evermore," Ps. 16:11. And that wherein the essence of glory consists, and makes heaven to be heaven, is the immediate sight and fruition of the blessed God, Ps. 17:15., "When I awake I shall be satisfied with thy likeness." O think of this Jerusalem above! This is proper for a sabbath!

1. The meditation of heaven would raise our hearts above the world. O how would these things disappear and shrink into nothing, if our minds were mounted above the visible orbs, and we had a prospect of glory!

2. How would the meditation of heaven make us heavenly in our sabbath-exercises! It would quicken affection,—it would add wings to devotion,—it would make us to be "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," Rev. 1:10. How vigorously doth he serve God who hath a crown of glory always in his eye!

III. We dress our souls on a sabbath-morning, by prayer, Mat. 6:6., "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet," &c. Prayer sanctifies a sabbath.

1. The things we should pray for in the morning of the sabbath.—Beg a blessing upon the word which is to be preached,—that it may be a savour of life to us,—that by it our minds may be more illuminated, our corruptions more weakened, our stock of grace more increased; pray that God's special presence may be with us,—that our hearts

may burn within us while God speaks; pray that we may receive the word into meek, humble hearts, James 1:21.,—that we may submit to it, and bring forth the fruits of it. Nor should we only pray for ourselves, but for others.

First, For him who dispenseth the word; that his tongue may be touched with a coal from God's altar; that God would warm his heart who is to help to warm others. Your prayers may be a means to quicken the minister. Some complain, they find not that benefit by the word preached: perhaps they did not pray for their minister as they should. Prayer is like the whetting and sharpening of an instrument, which makes it cut the better.

Secondly, Pray with and for your family; yea, pray for all the congregations that meet this day in the fear of the Lord,—that the dew of the Spirit may fall with the manna of the word,—that some souls may be converted, and others strengthened,—and that gospel-ordinances may be continued, and have no restraint put upon them. These are the things we should pray for. The tree of mercy will not drop its fruit unless it be shaken by the hand of prayer.

2. The manner of our prayer. It is not enough to say a prayer; to pray in a dull, cold manner, which teacheth God to deny; but we must pray with reverence, humility, fervency, hope in God's mercy, Luke 22:44. Christ prayed more earnestly. And that we may pray with more fervency, we must pray with a sense of our wants. He who is pinched with wants, will be earnest in craving alms. He prays most fervently, who prays most feelingly. This is to sanctify the morning of a sabbath, and it is a good preparatory for the word preached. When the ground is broken up by the plough, now it is fit to receive the seed; when the heart hath been broken by prayer, now it is fit to

receive the seed of the word preached. Thus you see how to dress your souls on a sabbath-morning. There are other duties remaining.

IV. Having thus dressed your souls in a morning for the further sanctification of the sabbath, address yourselves to the hearing of the word preached.

1. And when you are set down in your seat,—Lift up your eyes to heaven for a blessing upon the word to be dispensed; for, you must know the word preached doth not work as physic, by its own inherent virtue, but by a virtue from heaven, and the co-operation of the Holy Ghost; therefore put up a short ejaculatory prayer for a blessing upon the word, that it may be made effectual to you.

2. The word being begun to be preached, set yourselves in a right manner,—With reverence and holy attention, Acts 16:14., "A certain woman, named Lydia, attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." Constantine the emperor was noted for his reverent attention to the word. Luke 19:48., "Christ taught daily in the temple: and all the people were attentive to hear him." In the Greek, 'they hung upon his lip.' Could we tell men of a rich purchase, they would diligently attend; and shall they not much more, when the gospel of grace is preaching unto them? Now, that we may sanctify and hallow the sabbath, by attentive hearing, take heed of two things in hearing, viz. 1st. distraction; 2d. drowsiness.

1st. Distraction. 1 Cor. 7:35., "That ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction." It is said of St. Bernard, that when he came to the church-door, he would say, 'Stay here all my earthly thoughts:' so should we say to ourselves, when we are at the door of God's house, "Stay here all my worldly cares, and wandering cogitations; I am now going to hearken what the Lord will say to me." Distraction hinders devotion. Distraction in hearing is when the mind is tossed with vain

thoughts and diverted from the business in hand. It is hard to make the quicksilver heart fix. St. Hierom complained of himself: "Sometimes (saith he) when I am about God's service, per porticos diambulo,—I am walking in the galleries, and sometimes casting up accounts." So, oft in hearing of the word, the thoughts dance up and down; and, when our eye is upon the minister, our mind is upon other things. Distracted hearing is far from sanctifying the sabbath. It must needs be very heinous to give way to vain thoughts at this time; because, when we are hearing the word, we are now in God's special presence. To do any treasonable action in the king's presence is high impudence, Jer. 23:11., "Yea, in my house have I found their wickedness." So may the Lord say, "In my house, while they are hearing my word, I have found wickedness; they have wanton eyes, and their soul is set on vanity." This enhanceth and aggravates the sin.

QUEST. Whence do these roving distracted thoughts in hearing come?

Ans. 1. Partly from Satan. The devil is no recusant, he will be sure to be present in our assemblies: if he cannot hinder us from hearing, he will hinder us in hearing: Job 1:6., "When the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them." The devil sets vain objects before the fancy, to cause a diversion. Satan's great design is to render the word we hear fruitless. As when one is writing, another jogs him that he cannot write even, so when we are hearing, the devil will be jogging us with a temptation, that we should not attend to the word preached, Zech. 3:1., "He shewed me Joshua the high-priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him."

A. 2. These wandering thoughts in hearing come partly from ourselves. We must not lay all the blame upon Satan.

(1.) They come from the eye. A wandering eye causeth wandering thoughts. A thief may be let into the house at a window: so vain thoughts are let in at the eye. So that, as we are bid to keep our feet when we enter into the house of God, Eccl. 5:1., so we had need make a covenant with our eyes when we are in the house of God, Job 31:1., that we be not distracted by beholding other objects.

(2.) Wandering thoughts in hearing rise out of the heart. These sparks come out of our own furnace. Vain thoughts are the mud which the heart (as a troubled sea) casts up, Mark 7:21., "For," from within, "out of the heart" of men, "proceed evil thoughts." It is the foulness of the stomach sends up fumes into the head; and the corruption of the heart sends up evil thoughts into the mind.

(3.) Distracted thoughts in hearing proceed from an evil custom. We inure ourselves to vain thoughts at other times, therefore we cannot forbear them on a sabbath. Custom is a second nature, Jer. 13:23., "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil?" He that is used to bad company, knows not how to leave it; such as have vain thoughts keeping them company all the week, they know not how to get rid of them on the sabbath. Let me show you how evil these vain distracting thoughts in hearing are.

First, To have the heart distracted in hearing, is a disrespect to God's omniscieny. God is an all-seeing spirit; and thoughts speak louder in his ears, than words do in ours, Amos 4:13., "He declareth unto man what is his thought." Therefore, to make no conscience of wandering thoughts in hearing, is the affronting of God's

omniscieny, as if he knew not our heart, or did not bear the language of our thoughts.

Secondly, To give way to wandering thoughts in hearing is hypocrisy. We pretend to hear what God saith, and our mind is quite upon another thing. We present God with our bodies, but do not give him our hearts, Hos. 7:11. This hypocrisy God complains of, Isa. 29:13., "This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their hearts far from me." This is to prevaricate and deal falsely with God.

Thirdly, Vain thoughts in hearing discover much want of love to God. Did we love God we should listen to his words as oracles, "and bind them upon the table of our heart," Prov. 3:3. When a friend whom we love speaks to us, and gives us advice, we mind it with seriousness, and suck in every word. The giving our thoughts leave to ramble in holy duties shows the defect of our love to God.

Fourthly, Vain impertinent thoughts in hearing defile an ordinance; they are as dead flies in the box of ointment. When a string of the lute is out of tune, it spoils the music: distraction of thought puts our mind out of tune, and makes our services sound harsh and unpleasant. Wandering thoughts poison a duty, and turn it into sin, Ps. 109:7., "Let his prayer become sin." What can be worse than to have a man's praying and hearing of the word become sin? Were it not sad when the meat we eat should increase bad humours? So when the hearing of the word, which is the food of the soul, should be turned into sin.

Fifthly, Vain thoughts in hearing, anger God. If the king were speaking to one of his subjects, and he should not give heed to what the king saith, but be thinking on another business, or playing with a feather, would not this provoke the king? So, when we are in God's

presence, and God is speaking to us in his word, and we minding not much what he saith, but our hearts go after covetousness, Ezek. 33:31. Will not this anger God, to be thus slighted? God hath pronounced a curse upon such, Mal. 1:14., "Cursed be the deceiver which hath in his flock a male, and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing." To have strong lively affections to the world, here is a male in the flock; but to hear the word with distraction,—to give God duties fly-blown with vain thoughts,—this is to offer to the Lord a corrupt thing; this brings a curse, "cursed be the deceiver."

Sixthly, Vain thoughts in hearing (when allowed and not resisted) make way for hardening the heart. A stone in the heart, is worse than in the kidneys. Distracted thoughts in hearing, do not better the heart, but harden it. Vain thoughts take away the holy awe of God which should be upon the heart; they make conscience less tender, and hinder the efficacy the word should have upon the heart.

Seventhly, Vain distracting thoughts rob us of the comfort of an ordinance. A gracious soul oft meets with God in the sanctuary, and can say, as Cant. 3:4., "I found him whom my soul loveth." He is like Jonathan, who having tasted the honey on the rod, his eyes were enlightened. But vain thoughts hinder the comfort of an ordinance, as a black cloud hides the warm comfortable beams of the sun from us. Will God speak peace to us when our minds are wandering and our thoughts are travelling to the ends of the earth? Prov. 17:24. If ever you would hear the word with attention, do as Abraham, he drove away the fowls from the sacrifice, Gen. 15:11.: so when we find these excursions, and sinful wanderings in hearing, labour to drive away the fowls,—get rid of these vain thoughts, they are vagrants, and we must not give them entertainment.

QUEST. But how shall we get help against these vagabond thoughts?

Ans. 1. Pray and watch against them. 2. Let the sense of God's omniscient eye overawe your hearts. The servant will not sport in his master's presence. 3. Labour for an holy frame of heart. Were the heart more spiritual, the mind would be less feathery. 4. Bring more love to the word. That which we love we fix our minds upon; he that loves his pleasures and recreations, his mind is fixed upon them, and he can follow them without distraction. Were our love more set upon the word preached, our minds would be more fixed upon it and surely there is enough to make us love the word preached; for it is the word of life, the inlet to knowledge,—the antidote against sin,—the quickener of holy affections: It is the true manna which hath all sorts of sweet tastes in it; it is the pool of Bethesda, in which the rivers of life spring forth to heal the broken in heart; it is a sovereign elixir or cordial to revive the sorrowful spirit. Get love to the word preached, and you will not be so distracted in hearing. What the heart delights in, the thoughts dwell upon.

2d. If you would sanctify the sabbath by diligent attentive hearing, take heed of drowsiness in hearing; drowsiness shews much irreverence. How lively are many when they are about the world, but in the worship of God how drowsy, as if the devil had given them some opium to make them sleep! A drowsy temper is (now) very absurd and sinful. Are not you in prayer asking pardon of sin? Will the prisoner fall asleep when he is begging his pardon? In the preaching of the word, is not the bread of life broken to you,—and will a man fall asleep at his food? Which is worse, to stay from a sermon, or sleep at a sermon? While you slept, perhaps the truth was delivered, which might have converted your souls. Besides, sleeping is very offensive in these holy assemblies: it is not only a grieving the Spirit of God, but a making the hearts of the righteous sad, Ezek. 13:22. It troubles them to see any show such a contempt of God and his worship; to see them busy in the shop, but drowsy in the temple.

Therefore, as Christ said, Mat. 26:40., "Could ye not watch one hour?" so, can ye not wake one hour? I deny not but that a child of God may sometimes through weakness and indisposition of body drop asleep at a sermon, but it is not voluntary or ordinary. The sun may be in an eclipse, but not often; if sleeping be customary and allowed, it is a very bad sign, and a profaning of the ordinance. A good remedy against drowsiness is to use a spare diet upon this day. Such as indulge their appetite too much on a sabbath, are fitter to sleep on a couch, than pray in the temple. Now, that you may throw off distracting thoughts and drowsiness on the Lord's day, and may hear the word with reverent attention, consider,

1. It is God that speaks to us in his word; therefore the preaching of the word is called the "breath of his lips," Isa. 11:4. And Christ is said now "to speak to us from heaven," Heb. 12:25., as a king speaks in his ambassador. Ministers are but as the pipes and organs, it is the Spirit of the living God breathes in them. When we come to the word, we should think thus with ourselves: God speaks in this preacher. The Thessalonians heard the word Paul preached as if God himself had spoken unto them, 1 Thess. 2:13., "When ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God." When Samuel knew it was the Lord that spake to him, he lent his ear, 1 Sam. 3:10. If we do not regard God when he speaks to us, he will not regard us when we pray to him.

2. Consider how serious and weighty the matters delivered to us are. As Moses said, Deut. 30:19., "I call heaven and earth to record this day, that I have set before you life and death." Can men be regardless of the word, or drowsy when the weighty matters of eternity are set before them? We preach of faith, and holiness of life, and the day of judgment and the eternal recompenses; here is life and death set

before you, and doth not all this call for serious attention? If a letter were read to one of special business, wherein his life and estate were concerned, would not he be very serious in listening to that letter? In the preaching of the word your salvation is concerned; and if ever you would attend, it should be now, Deut. 32:47., "It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life."

3. To give way to vain thoughts, and drowsiness in hearing, doth much gratify Satan. He knows that not to mind a duty is all one as not to do a duty in religion. "What the heart doth not do, is not done." Therefore Christ saith of some, "Hearing they hear not," Mat. 13:13. How could that be? Because, though the word sounded in their ear, yet they minded not what was said to them,—their thoughts were upon other things,—therefore it was all one as if they did not hear. "Hearing, they hear not;" and doth not this please Satan, to see men come to the word, and as good stay away? They are haunted with vain thoughts; they are taken off the duty while they are in it; their body is in the assembly, their heart in their shop: "Hearing, they hear not."

4. It may be the last sabbath that ever we shall keep; we may go from the place of hearing to the place of judging; and shall not we give reverent attention to the word, did we think thus when we come into God's house: Perhaps this will be the last time that ever God will counsel us about our souls; before another sermon, death's alarm will sound in our ears; with what attention and devotion should we come hither, and our affections would be all on fire in hearing?

5. You must give an account for every sermon you hear, Luke 16:2., Redde rationem,—"Give an account of thy stewardship." So will God say, Give an account of thy hearing. Hast thou been affected with the word? Hast thou profited by it? And how can we give an account, if

we have been distracted in hearing, and have not taken notice what hath been said to us? The Judge to whom we must give an account, is God. Were one to give an account to man, he might falsify his accounts; but we must give an account to God. *Nec donis corrumpitur, nec blanditiis fallitur*, BERN. "He is so just a God that he cannot be bribed, and so wise, that he cannot be deceived." Therefore, going to give an account to such an impartial Judge, how should we observe every word preached, remembering the account? Let all this make us shake off distraction and drowsiness in hearing, and have our ears chained to the word.

EXOD. 20:8. Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy, &c.

2d. If you would hear the word aright, lay aside those things which may render the word preached ineffectual: As,

1. Curiosity. Some come to the word preached, not so much to get grace, as to enrich themselves with notions: "Itching ears," 2 Tim. 4:3. Austin confesseth that before his conversion, he went to hear St. Ambrose, rather for his eloquence, than for the spirituality of the matter. Ezek. 33:32., "Thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument." Many come to the word only to feast their ears; they like the melody of the voice, the mellifluous sweetness of the expression, the newness of the notion, Acts 17:21. This is to love the garnishing of the dish more than the food; this is to desire to be pleased, rather than edified. Like a woman that paints her face, but neglects her health: so they paint and adorn themselves with curious speculations, but neglect their soul's health. This hearing doth neither sanctify the heart, nor the sabbath.

2. Lay aside prejudice. 1. Prejudice against the truths preached. The Sadducees were prejudiced against the doctrine of the resurrection,

Luke 20:27.—2. Prejudice against the person preaching: 1 Kings 22:8., "There's one Michaiah by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him." This hinders the virtue of the word. If a patient hath an ill opinion of his physician, he will not take any of his recipes though never so good. Prejudice in the mind is like an obstruction in the stomach which hinders the nutritive virtue of the meat. Prejudice poisons the word, and makes it lose its efficacy.

3. Lay aside covetousness. Covetousness is not only getting the world unjustly, but loving it inordinately; this is a great hinderance to the word preached. The seed which fell among thorns was choked, Mat. 13:22.: an emblem of the word being preached to a covetous hearer. The covetous man is thinking on the world when he is hearing; his heart is in his shop, Ezek. 33:31., "They sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." A covetous hearer derides the word, Luke 16:14., "The Pharisees, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him."

4. Lay aside partiality. Partiality in hearing is, when we like to hear some truths preached, but not all. We love to hear of heaven, but not of self-denial; of reigning with Christ, but not of suffering; of the more facile duties of religion, but not them which are more knotty and difficult,—as mortification,—laying the axe to the root, and hewing down their beloved sin: Isa. 30:10., "Prophesy smooth things,"—such as may not grate upon our conscience. Many like to hear of the love of Christ, but not of loving their enemies; they like the comforts of the word, but not the reproofs. Herod heard John Baptist gladly; he liked many truths, but not when he spake against his incest. Lay aside partiality.

5. Lay aside censoriousness. Some, instead of judging themselves for sin, sit as judges upon the preacher; either his sermon had too much gall in it, or it was too long. These will sooner censure a sermon than practise it. God will judge the judger, Mat. 7:1.

6. Lay aside disobedience. Rom. 10:21., "All the day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient people." 'Tis spoken of the Jews; God stretched out his hands in the preaching of the word, but they rejected Christ. Let there be none among you that wilfully refuse the counsels of the word; it is sad to have an adder's ear, an adamant heart, Zech. 7:11, 12. If, when God speaks to us in his word, we are deaf; when we speak to him in prayer, he will be dumb.

3d. If you would hear the word aright, have good ends in hearing; "come to the word to be made better." Some have no other end in hearing, but because it is in fashion, or to gain repute, or stop the mouth of conscience; but come to the word to be made more holy. There's a great deal of difference between one that goes to a garden for flowers to wear in her bosom, and another that goes for flowers to make syrups and medicines of. We should go to the word for a medicine to cure us, as Naaman the Syrian went to Jordan to be healed of his leprosy: 2 Pet. 2:2., "Desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Come to the word to be changed into the similitude of it; as the seal leaves its print upon the wax, so labour that the word preached may leave the print of its own holiness upon your heart; labour that the "word" may have such a virtue upon you, as the water of jealousy, to kill and make fruitful, Numb. 5:27. That it may kill your sins, and make your souls fruitful in grace.

4th. If you would hear the word aright, come to it with delight. The word preached is a feast of fat things: with what delight do men come to a feast? The word preached anoints the blind eye; mollifies the

rocky heart; it beats off our fetters, and turns us from the "power of satan to God," Acts 26:18. The word is the seed of regeneration, James 1:18., the engine of salvation. Hear the word with delight and complacency, Jer. 15:16., "Thy words were found, and I did eat them. Thy word was unto me the rejoicing of my heart." Ps. 119:103., "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth." Yea, love that word which comes most home to the conscience; bless God when your corruptions have been met with, when the sword of the Spirit hath divided between you and your sins. Who cares for that physic which will not work.

5th. If you would hear the word aright, mix it with faith. Believe the verity of the word preached, that it is that word by which you must be judged; not only give evidence to the word preached, but learn to apply it to your own souls; faith concocts the word, and turns it into spiritual nourishment. Many hear the word, but it may be said of them, as Ps. 106:24., "They believed not his word." As Melancthon once said to some of the Italians, "Ye Italians worship God in the bread, when ye do not believe him to be in heaven:" so, many hear God's words, but do not believe that God is; they question the truth of his oracles. If we do not mix faith with the word, it is like leaving out the chief ingredient in a medicine, which makes it ineffectual; unbelief hardens men's hearts against the word, Acts 19:9., "Divers were hardened, and believed not." Men hear many truths delivered concerning the preciousness of Christ,—the beauty of holiness,—the felicity of a glorified estate,—but, if through unbelief and atheism they question these truths, we may as well speak to the stones and pillars of the church as to them. That word which is not believed, can never be practised. *Ubi male creditur, ibi nec bene vivitur*, HIEROM. Unbelief makes the word preached of no effect: Heb. 4:2., "The word preached did not profit, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." The word to an unbeliever is like dioscordium put into a

dead man's mouth, which loseth all its virtue. If there be any unbelievers in our congregations, what shall ministers say to God at the last day? "Lord, we have preached to the people thou sentest us to,—we showed them our commission,—we declared unto them the whole counsel of God,—but they believed never a word we spake; we told them what would be the fruit of sin, but they would drink their sugared draught, though there was death in the cup; Lord, we are free from their blood." God forbid that ever ministers should make this report to God of their people! But this they must be forced to do, if people live and die in unbelief. Would you sanctify a sabbath in hearing the word aright? hear the word with faith. The apostle puts these two together, "belief and salvation," Heb. 10:39., "We are of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

6th. If you would hear the word aright, hear it with meek spirits: James 1:21., "Receive the word in mansuetudine,—with meekness." Meekness is a submissive frame of heart to the word; contrary to this meekness is fierceness of spirit, when men rise up in a rage against the word, as if the patient should be angry with the physician when he gives him a recipe to purge out his bad humours: Acts 7:54., "When they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and gnashed on Stephen with their teeth." 2 Chron. 16:10., "Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison-house." Pride and guilt make men fret at the word. What made Asa storm so, but pride? he was a king, and thought he was too good to be told of his sin. What made Cain so angry, when God said to him, "Where is Abel thy brother?" Saith he, "Am I my brother's keeper?" What made him so touchy, but guilt? He had imbrued his hands in his brother's blood. If you would hear the word aright, lay down your passions,—"receive the word with meekness,"—get humble hearts to submit to the truths delivered. God takes the meek person to be his scholar, Ps. 25:9., "The meek will he teach his way." Meekness makes the word preached to be an

"ingrafted word," James 1:21. A good scion grafted in a bad stock changeth the nature of it and makes it bear good and generous fruit; so, when the word preached is grafted into men's hearts, it sanctifies them and makes them bring forth the sweet fruits of righteousness. By meekness it becomes an ingrafted word.

7th. If you would hear the word aright, be not only attentive, but retentive. Lay the word up in your memories and hearts, Luke 8:15., "The seed on the good ground are they, who having heard the word, keep it." The Greek word for "to keep," signifies to hold the word fast, that it do not run from us. If the seed be not kept in the ground, but is presently washed away, it is sown to little purpose: so if the word preached be not kept in your memories and hearts, it is preached in vain. Many people have memories like leaky vessels. If the word goes out as fast as it comes in, how can it profit? If a treasure be put in a chest and the chest be not locked, it may easily be taken out: a bad memory is like a chest without a lock, the devil can easily take out all the treasure, Luke 8:12., "Then comes the devil and takes away the word out of their hearts." Labour to keep in memory the truths you hear; the things we esteem we are not so apt to forget. 'Will a bride forget her jewels?' Jer. 2:32., "Can a maid forget her ornaments?" Did we prize the word more, we should not so soon forget it; if the meat doth not stay in the stomach, but comes up as fast as we eat it, it cannot nourish: so, if the word stays not in the memory, but is presently gone, it can do the soul but little good.

8th. If you would hear aright, practise what you hear. Practice is the life of all: Rev. 22:14., "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life." Bare hearing will be no plea at the day of judgment. "Lord, I have heard so many sermons." But God will say, "What fruits of obedience have ye brought forth?" The word we preach is not only to inform you but reform you; not

only to mend your sight, but to mend your pace in the way to heaven; a good hearer is like the heliotropium, &c. it opens and shuts with the sun,—to God against sin. Now that you may sanctify a sabbath by hearing:

1. If you do not hear the word aright, you lose all your labour. How many a weary step have you taken; your body hath been crowded, your spirit faint; if you are not bettered by hearing,—if you are as proud, as vain, as earthly as ever, all your hearing is lost. You would be loath to trade in vain, and why not as well to hear sermons in vain? Job 9:29., "Why then labour I in vain?" Put this question to your own soul: "Why labour I in vain? Why do I take all this pains to hear, yet have not the grace to practise it? I am as bad as ever! why then labour I in vain?"

2. If you hear the word, and are not bettered by it, you are like the salamander in the fire, not hotter; your hearing will increase your condemnation, Luke 12:47., "That servant which knew his Lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." We pity such as know not where to hear; it will be worse with such as care not how they hear. To graceless disobedient hearers, every sermon will be a faggot to heat hell; it is sad to go loaded to hell with ordinances. O beg the Spirit to make the word preached effectual! Ministers can but speak to the ear,—the Spirit speaks to the heart: Acts 10:44., "While Peter spake, the Holy Ghost fell upon all them that heard the word."

9th. Having heard the word in an holy and spiritual manner, for the further sanctification of the sabbath, confer of the word. We are forbidden on this day to speak our own words, Isa. 58:14., but we must speak of God's word. Speak of the sermons as you sit together; this is one part of sanctifying the sabbath. Good discourse brings holy truths into our memories, and fastens them upon our hearts:

Mal. 3:17., "Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another." There is a great power and efficacy in good discourse, Job 6:25., "How forcible are right words?" By holy conference on a sabbath, one Christian helps to warm another when he is frozen, to strengthen another when he is weak. Latimer confessed he was much furthered in religion, by having conference with Mr. Bilny the martyr. Ps. 119:172., "My tongue shall speak of thy word." One reason why preaching the word on a sabbath doth no more good, is, because there is so little good conference. Few speak of the word they have heard: as if sermons were such secrets that they must not be spoken of again, or as if it were a shame to speak of that which will save us.

10th. Shut up the sabbath-evening with repetition, reading, singing of psalms, and prayer; beg that God would bless the word you have heard. But I hope your practice herein will prevent my further speaking. Could we but thus spend a sabbath, we might be "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," Rev. 1:10.; our souls might be nourished and comforted; and this sabbath which we now keep, would be an earnest of that everlasting sabbath which we shall celebrate in heaven.

EXOD. 20:8. Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy.

Use 1st. See here a Christian's duty, "To keep the sabbath-day holy."

1. The whole sabbath is to be dedicated to God. It is not said, Keep a part of the sabbath holy, but the whole day must he religiously observed. If God hath given us six days and taken but one to himself, shall we grudge him any part of that day? It were sacrilege! The Jews kept a whole day to the Lord; and we are not to abridge or curtail the sabbath (saith St. Austin) more than the Jews did. The very heathens, by the light of nature, did set apart a whole day in the

honour of their false gods; and Scœvola the high-priest did affirm that the wilful transgression of that day could have no expiation or pardon. Whoever robs any part of the sabbath for servile work or recreation, Scœvola the high-priest of the heathenish gods shall rise up in judgment against such Christians, and condemn them. And they who say, that to keep a whole sabbath is too Judaical, let them shew where God has made any abatement of the time of worship; where he has said, you shall keep but a part of the sabbath; and if they cannot shew that, it argues much boldness to go to rob God of his due. That a whole day be designed and set apart for God's special worship, is a perpetual statute, while the church remains upon the earth, saith Pet. Martyr. Of this opinion also were Theodoret, Austin, Iræneus, and the chief of the fathers.

2. As the whole sabbath is to be dedicated to God, so it must be kept holy; you see the manner of sanctifying the Lord's day, by reading, meditation, prayer, hearing of the word, and by singing of psalms to make melody to the Lord. Now, besides what I have said for the keeping this day holy, let me make a short comment or paraphrase on that scripture, Isa. 58:13., "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thy own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:" Here is a description of the right sanctifying a sabbath.

(1.) "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath." That may be understood either literally, or spiritually.—First, literally, "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath," that is, if thou withdrawest thy foot from taking long walks or journeys on the sabbath-day: So the Jewish doctors expound it. Or, secondly, spiritually, "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath," that is, if thou turn away thy

affections (the feet of thy soul) from inclining to any worldly business.

(2.) "From doing thy pleasure on my holy day." That is, thou must not do that which may please the carnal part, as sports and pastimes: this is to do the devil's work on God's day.

(3.) "And call the sabbath a delight." Call it a delight, that is, esteem it so: though the sabbath be not a day for carnal pleasure, yet holy pleasure is not forbidden. The soul must take pleasure in the duties of a sabbath. The saints of old counted the sabbath a delight; the Jews called the sabbath *dies lucis*,—'a day of light.' The Lord's day, on which the Sun of Righteousness shines, is both a day of light and delight. This is the day of sweet intercourse between God and the soul. On this day a Christian makes his sallies out to heaven; his soul is lifted above the earth; and can this be without delight? The higher the bird flies, the sweeter it sings. On a sabbath the soul acts its love to God; and where the love is, there is the delight. On this day a believer's heart is melted, q. d. quickened, enlarged in holy duties; and how can all this be, and not a secret delight go along with it? On a sabbath a gracious soul can say, as Cant. 2:3., "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." How can a spiritual heart choose but call the sabbath a delight? Is it not delightful to a queen to be putting on her wedding-ropes in which she shall meet the king her bridegroom? When we are about sabbath-exercises, we are dressing ourselves, and putting on our wedding-ropes in which we are to meet our heavenly bridegroom the Lord Jesus: and is not this delightful? On the sabbath God makes a feast of fat things, he feasts the ear with his word, and the heart with his grace. Well then may we call the sabbath a delight; and to find this holy delight, is to "be in the Spirit on the Lord's day."

(4.) "The holy of the Lord honourable." In the Hebrew, it is glorious. To call the Sabbath honourable, is not to be understood so much of an outward honour given to it, by wearing richer apparel, or having better diet on this day, as the Jewish doctors corruptly gloss: this is the chief honour some give to this day; but by calling the sabbath honourable, is meant that honour of the heart which we give to this day, reverencing it, and esteeming it the queen of days. We are to count the sabbath honourable, because God hath honoured it. All the persons in the Trinity have honoured it,—God the Father blessed it,—God the Son rose upon it,—God the Holy Ghost descended on this day, Acts 2:1. And indeed this day is to be honoured of all good Christians, and had in high veneration. It is a day of renown. On this day a golden sceptre of mercy is held forth. The Christian sabbath is the very crepusculum and dawning of the heavenly sabbath. It is honourable, because this day 'God comes down to us and visits us.' To have the king of heaven present in a special manner in our assemblies, makes the sabbath-day honourable. Besides, the work that is done on this day makes it honourable; the six days are filled up with servile work, which makes them lose much of their glory; but on this day sacred work is done. The soul is employed wholly about the worship of God; it is praying, hearing, meditating; it is doing angels' work, praising, and blessing God. Again, the day is honourable by virtue of a divine institution; silver is of itself valuable, but when the royal stamp is put upon it, it is honourable: so God hath put a sacred stamp upon this day,—the stamp of divine authority, and the stamp of divine benediction,—this makes it honourable; this is a sanctifying the sabbath, to call it a delight, and honourable.

(5.) "Not doing thy own ways." That is, thou shalt not defile the day by doing any servile work.

(6.) "Nor finding thy own pleasure." That is, not gratifying the fleshly part, by walks, visits, or pastimes.

(7.) "Nor speaking thy own words." That is, words heterogeneous and unsuitable for a sabbath,—vain, impertinent words,—discourses of worldly affairs. Here is the sanctifying of a sabbath described.

Use 2d. If the sabbath-day be to be kept holy, it reproves them who, instead of sanctifying the sabbath, profane it. They take that time which should be dedicated wholly to God, and spend it in the service of the devil and their lusts. The Lord hath enclosed this day for his own worship, and they lay this day common. God hath set an hedge about this commandment, 'remember;' and they break this hedge; but "whoso breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him," Eccl. 10:8. The sabbath-day in England lies bleeding: and oh that our parliament would pour in some balm into the wounds which the sabbath hath received! How is this day profaned, by sitting idle at home, by selling meat, by vain discourse, by sinful visits, by walking in the fields, by using sports. The people of Israel might not gather manna on the sabbath, and may we use sports and dancings on this day? Truly it should be matter of grief to us to see so much sabbath-profanation! When one of Darius's eunuchs saw Alexander setting his feet on a rich table of Darius's, he fell a-weeping: Alexander asked him why he wept? He said it was to see the table which his master so highly esteemed to be now made a footstool. So we may weep to see the sabbath-day, which God so highly esteems, and hath so honoured and blessed, to be made a footstool, and to be trampled upon by the feet of sinners. To profane the sabbath, is a sin of an high nature; it is a wilful contempt of God; it is not only a casting God's law behind our back, but a trampling it under foot. God saith 'keep the sabbath holy,' but men will pollute it: this is to despise God, to hang out the flag of defiance, to throw down the gauntlet, and challenge God

himself. Now, how can God endure to be thus saucily confronted by proud dust? God will not suffer this high impudence to go unpunished. This will draw God's curses upon the sabbath-breaker; and God's curse will blast where it comes, though the law of the land lets sabbath-breakers alone. No sooner did Christ curse the fig-tree, but it withered. To rob a man of his purse, shall be punished with death; but to rob God of his day, shall not be punished with death. But God will take the matter into his own hand; he will see after the punishing of sabbath-violation: and how doth he punish it?

1. With spiritual plagues. He gives up sabbath-profaners to hardness of heart, and a seared conscience. Spiritual judgments are sorest: Ps. 81:12., "So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts." A sear in the conscience is a brand-mark of reprobation.

2. God punisheth this sin of Sabbath-breaking, by giving them up to commit other sins. God, to revenge the breaking of his sabbath, suffers men to break open houses, and so come to be punished by the magistrate. How many such confessions have we heard from thieves going to be executed! They never regarded the sabbath, and so God suffered them to commit those heinous sins, for which now they are to die.

3. God punisheth sabbath-breaking, by sudden visible judgments on men for this sin; God punisheth them in their estates, and in their persons. One carrying corn into his barn on the Lord's day, both house and corn were consumed with fire from heaven. In Wiltshire there was a dancing-match appointed upon the Lord's day; and one of the company, as he was dancing, fell down dead suddenly, and so was made a spectacle of God's justice. The 'Theatre of God's Judgments' relates of one, who used every Lord's day to hunt in sermon-time, and he had a child by his wife with a head like a dog,

and it cried like a hound. His sin was monstrous, and it was punished with a monstrous birth. The Lord threatened the Jews that if they would not hallow the sabbath-day, he would kindle a "fire in their gates," Jer. 17:27. The dreadful fire which brake out in London, began on the sabbath-day; as if God would tell us from heaven, he was then punishing us for our sabbath-profanation. Nor doth God punish it only in this life with death, but with damnation. Such as break God's sabbath, let them see if they can break those chains of darkness, in which they and the devils shall be held.

Use 3d. It exhorts us to sabbath-holiness.

1. Make conscience of keeping this day holy. The other commandments have only an affirmative in them or a negative; this fourth commandment hath both an affirmative in it and a negative; "Thou shalt keep the sabbath-day holy," and, "thou shalt not do any manner of work in it;" to show how carefully God would have us observe this day. Not only must you keep this day yourselves, but have a care that all under your charge keep it; "thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant;" that is, thou who art a superior, a parent or a master, thou must have a care that not only thyself sanctify the day, but those who are under thy trust and tuition. To blame are those masters of families, who are careful that their servants serve them, but have no care that they serve God; they care not though their servants should serve the devil, so long as their bodies do them service. That which St. Paul saith to Timothy, 1 Tim. 1:11., *Serva depositum*,—"Keep that which is committed to thy trust," is of large extension. Not only have a care of thy own soul, but have a care of the souls thou art entrusted with. See that they who are under thy charge sanctify the sabbath. God's law provided, that if a man met with an ox or an ass going astray, he should bring him back again: much more, when thou seest the soul

of thy child or servant going astray from God, and breaking his sabbath, thou shouldest bring him back again to a religious observation of this day. Now that I may press you to sabbath-sanctification, consider,

(1.) God hath promised great blessings to the strict observers of this day.—1. A promise of joy. If this be a delight, Isa. 58:14., "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord." Delighting in God is both a duty, Ps. 37:4., and a reward. In this text it is a reward, "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord:" as if God had said, "If thou keep the sabbath conscientiously, I will give thee that which will fill thee with delight; if thou keep the sabbath willingly, I will make thee keep it joyfully; I will give thee those enlargements in duty, and that inward comfort, which shall abundantly satisfy thee; thy soul shall overflow with such a stream of joy, that thou shalt say, 'Lord, in keeping thy sabbath there is great reward!' "—2. Of honour. And, "I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth." That is, I will advance thee to honour,—*ascendere faciem*,—so Munster interprets it. Some, by the 'high places of the earth,' understand Judea,—so Grotius. I will bring thee into the land of Judea, which is higher situated than the other countries adjacent.—3. Of earth and heaven. "And I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob;" that is, "I will feed thee with all the delicious things of Canaan, and afterwards I'll translate thee to heaven, whereof Canaan was but a type." And another promise, Isa. 56:2., "Blessed, is the man that doth this, that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it." "Blessed is the man;" in the Hebrew, it is, *blessedness*. To him that keeps the sabbath holy, here is *blessedness* upon *blessedness* belongs to him; he shall be blessed with the upper and nether springs; he shall be blessed in his name, estate, soul, progeny. Who would not keep the sabbath from polluting it, that shall have so many blessings entailed upon him and his posterity after him?

(2.) A conscientious keeping the sabbath, seasons the heart for God's service all the week after. Christian, the more holy thou art on a sabbath, the more holy thou wilt be on the week following.

OF THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:12. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land, which the Lord, thy God giveth thee.

Having done with the first table, I am next to speak of the duties of the second table. The commandments may be likened to Jacob's ladder; the first table, as the top of his ladder, reacheth to heaven,—it respects God; the second table, as the foot of the ladder, rests on the earth,—it respects superiors and inferiors. By the first table we walk religiously towards God; by the second we walk religiously towards man. He cannot be good in the first table that is bad in the second. "Honour thy father and thy mother."

In this, 1st. A command, "honour thy father and thy mother."—2d. A reason annexed to it, "that thy days may be long in the land."

I. The command, "Honour thy father."

QUEST. Who is meant here by father?

Ans. Father is taken several ways; the Political, Ancient, Spiritual, Economical, Natural.

1. The Political father, the magistrate. He is the father of his country; he is to be an encourager of virtue, a punisher of vice, a father to the widow and orphan; such a father was Job, ch. 29:16., "I was a father

to the poor; and the cause which I knew not, I searched out." And, as magistrates are fathers, so especially the king who is the head of magistrates, is a political father; he is placed as the sun among the lesser stars. The scripture calls kings 'father:' Isa. 49:23., "Kings shall be thy nursing-fathers." They are to nurse up their subjects in piety, by their good edicts and examples: and to nurse them up in peace and plenty. Such nursing-fathers were David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Constantine, Theodosius. It is happy for a people who have such nursing-fathers, whose breasts milk comfort to their children. These fathers are to be honoured; for,

(1.) Their place deserves honour. God hath set these political fathers to preserve order and harmony in a nation, and to prevent those state convulsions which otherwise might ensue: Judges 17:6., When "there was no king in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own eyes." A wonder, Prov. 30:27.

(2.) God hath promoted kings, that they may promote justice. As they have a sword in their hand, to signify their power, so a sceptre, an emblem of justice. It is said of Marcus Aurelius, emperor, that he allotted one hour of the day to hear the complaints of such as were oppressed. Kings place judges as cherubims about the throne, for distribution of justice. These political fathers are to be honoured: "Honour the king," 1 Pet. 2:17. And this honour is to be shewn by a civil respect to their persons, and a cheerful submission to their laws, so far as they agree and run parallel with God's law. Kings are to be prayed for, which is a part of that honour we give them, 1 Tim. 2:1, 2., "I exhort that supplications, prayers, intercessions, be made for kings, that we may lead a quiet, peaceable life under them, in all godliness and honesty." We are to pray for kings, that God would honour them to be blessings; that under them we may enjoy the gospel of peace, and the peace of the gospel. How happy was the

reign of Numa Pompilius, when the swords were beaten into ploughshares, and the bees made their hives of the soldiers' helmets!

2. There is the grave ancient father who is venerable for old age, whose grey hairs are resembled to the white flowers of the almond-tree, Eccl. 12:5. There are fathers for seniority, on whose wrinkled brows, and in the furrows of whose cheeks is pictured the map of old age. These fathers are to be honoured: Lev. 19:32., "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man." Especially, those are to be honoured who are fathers not only for their seniority, but their piety; whose souls are flourishing, when their bodies are a-decaying. 'Tis a blessed sight to see the springs of grace in the autumn of old age,—to see men stooping towards the grave, yet going up the hill of God,—to see them lose their colour, yet keep their savour. Such, whose silver hairs are crowned with righteousness, are worthy of double honour; they are to be honoured, not only as pieces of antiquity, but as patterns of virtue. If you see an old man fearing God, whose grace shines brightest when the sun of his life is setting, O honour him as a father, by reverencing and imitating him!

3. There are spiritual fathers, as pastors and ministers. These are the instruments of 'the New-birth,' 1 Cor. 4:15., "Though ye have ten thousand instructors, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." The spiritual fathers are to be honoured.

1. In respect of their office. Whatever their persons are, their office is honourable; they are the "Messengers of the Lord of Hosts," Mal. 2:7. They represent no less than God himself, 2 Cor. 5:20., "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ." Jesus Christ was of this calling; he had

his mission and sanction from heaven, John 8:18., and this crowns the ministerial calling with honour.

2. Ministers, these spiritual fathers, are to be "honoured for their work's sake;" they come, like the dove, with an olive-branch in their mouth: they preach glad tidings of peace;" their work is "to save souls." Other callings have only to do with men's bodies or estates, but the minister's calling is employed about the souls of men. Their work is to redeem spiritual captives, and turn men "from the power of Satan to God, Acts 26:18. Their work is "to enlighten them who sit in the region of darkness," and make them "shine as stars in the kingdom of heaven." These spiritual fathers are to be "honoured for their work's sake;" and this honour is to be shewn three ways:

(1.) By giving them respect, 1 Thess. 5:12, 13., "Know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." I confess, the scandalous lives of some ministers have been a great reproach, and have made the "offering of the Lord to be abhorred," in some places of the land. The leper in the law was to have his lip covered: such as are angels by office, but lepers in their lives, ought to have their lips covered, and to be silenced. But though some deserve 'no honour,' yet such as are faithful, and make it their work to bring souls to Christ, are to be revered as spiritual fathers. Obadiah honoured the prophet Elijah, 1 Kings 18:16. Why did God reckon the tribe of Levi for the first-born? Numb. 3:13. Why did he appoint that the prince should ask counsel of God by the priest? Numb. 27:21. Why did the Lord shew, by that miracle of "Aaron's rod flourishing," that he had chosen the tribe of "Levi to minister before him?" Num. 17. Why doth Christ call his apostles 'the lights of the world?' Why doth he say to all his ministers, "Lo, I am with you to the end of the world;" but because he would have these spiritual fathers revered? In ancient

times the Egyptians chose their kings out of their priests. They are far from shewing this respect and honour to their spiritual fathers who have slight thoughts of such as have the charge of the sanctuary, and do minister before the Lord. "Know them," saith the apostle, "which labour among you." Many can be content to know their ministers in their infirmities, and are glad when they have any thing against them, but do not know them in the apostle's sense, so as to give them "double honour." Surely, were it not for the ministry, you would not be a vineyard, but a desert; were it not for the ministry, you would be destitute of the two seals of the covenant,—baptism and the Lord's supper; you would be infidels: "For faith comes by hearing; and how shall they hear without a preacher," Rom. 10:14.

(2.) Honour the ministers, these spiritual fathers, by becoming advocates for them, and wiping off those slanders and calumnies which are unjustly cast upon them, 1 Tim. 5:19. Constantine was a great honourer of the ministry; he vindicated them; he would not read the envious accusations brought in against them, but did burn them. Do the ministers open their mouths to God for you in prayer, and will not you open your mouths in their behalf? Surely, if they labour to preserve you from hell, you should preserve them from slander; if they labour to save your souls, you ought to save their credit.

(3.) Honour them by conforming to their doctrine. This is the greatest honour you can put upon your spiritual fathers, by believing and obeying their doctrine. He is an honourer of the ministry, who is not only a hearer, but a follower of the word. As disobedience reproacheth the ministry, so obedience honoureth it. The apostle calls his Thessalonians his crown, 1 Thess. 2:19., "What is our crown of rejoicing? are not ye?" A thriving people are a minister's crown; when there is a metamorphosis, a change wrought,—when people

come to the word proud, but go away humble,—they come earthly, but they go away heavenly,—they come, as Naaman to Jordan, lepers, but they go away healed,—this is an honour to the ministry. 2 Cor. 3:1., "Need we, as some others, epistles of commendation?" Though other ministers might need letters of commendation, yet Paul needed none: for, when men should hear of the obedience of these Corinthians, which was wrought in them by Paul's preaching; this was a sufficient certificate for him, that God had blessed his labours. The Corinthians were a sufficient honour to him: they were his letters-testimonial. You cannot honour your spiritual fathers more, than by thriving under their ministry, and living upon those sermons which they preach.

4. There is the economical father, that is the master; he is pater familias,—the father of the family, therefore Naaman's servants called their master, 'father,' 2 Kings 5:13. And the centurion calls his servant, 'son,' Mat. 8:6. The servant is to honour his master, as the father of the family. Though the master be not so exactly qualified as he should, yet the servant must not neglect his duty, but shew some kind of honour to him.

(1.) In obeying his master in licitis et honestis,—in things that are lawful and honest, 1 Pet. 2:18., "Servants, be subject to your masters; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." God hath no where given a charter of exemption to free you from your duty. You cannot disobey your earthly master, but you disobey your master in heaven. Think not that birth, or high parts, no, nor yet your grace, will exempt you from obedience to your master; to obey him, is an ordinance of God, and the apostle saith, "Whosoever resisteth the ordinance, shall receive to themselves damnation," Rom. 13:2.

(2.) The servant's honouring of his master, (his economical father) is seen in being diligent in his service. Apelles painted a servant with his hands full of tools,—an emblem of diligence. The loitering servant is a kind of thief; though he doth not steal from his master's goods, yet he steals that time which he should have employed in his master's service. The slothful servant is called a "wicked servant," Mat. 25:26.

(3.) The servant is to honour his master, who is his family-father, by being faithful, Mat. 24:45., "Who then is a faithful and wise servant?" Faithfulness is the chief thing in a servant. This faithfulness in a servant is seen in six things: 1st, In tenaciousness in concealing the secrets your master hath intrusted you with; if those secrets are not sins, you ought to promise privacy. What is whispered in your ear you are not to publish on the house-top; such servants are spies. Who would keep a glass that is cracked? Who would keep a servant that hath a crack in his brain, and cannot keep a secret? 2dly, Faithfulness in a servant is seen in designing the master's advantage. A faithful servant esteems his master's good as his own. Such a good servant had Abraham; when his master sent him to transact business for him, he was as careful about it, as if it had been his own, Gen. 24:12., "O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham!" Doubtless Abraham's servant was as glad he had got a wife for his master's son, as if he had got a wife for himself. 3dly, Faithfulness in a servant is seen in standing up for the honour of his master. When he hears him spoken against, he must vindicate him. As the master is careful of the servant's body, so the servant should be careful of the master's name; when the master is unjustly reproached, the servant cannot be excused if he be possessed with a dumb devil. 4thly, Faithfulness is, when a servant 'is true to his word.' He dares not tell a lie, but will speak the truth, though it be against himself. A lie doubles the sin: Ps. 101:7., "He that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my

sight." A liar is near a-kin to the devil, John 8:44. And who would let any of the devil's kindred live with him? The lie that Gehazi told his master Elisha, entailed leprosy on Gehazi and his seed for ever, 2 Kings 5:27. A faithful servant, his tongue is the true index of his heart. 5thly, Faithfulness is, when a servant is against impropriation. He dares not convert his master's goods to his own use, Tit. 2:10., "Not purloining." What a servant filcheth from his master, is damnable gain. The servant who enricheth himself by stealing from his master, stuffs his pillow with thorns, and his head will lie very uneasy when he comes to die. 6thly, Faithfulness is in preserving the master's person, if unjustly in danger. Banister who betrayed his master the duke of Buckingham, in King Richard the Third's reign,—it is remarkable how the judgments of God befell that traitorous servant: his eldest son ran mad,—his daughter, of a singular beauty, was suddenly struck with leprosy,—his younger son was drowned, and he himself arraigned, and had been executed, had he not been saved by his clergy. That servant who is not true to his master, will never be true to God or his own soul.

(4.) The servant is to honour his master, by serving him, as with love, (for willingness is more than the work), so with silence, that is, without repining, and without replying: Tit. 2:9., "Exhort servants to be obedient to their masters, not answering again;" Greek, 'not giving cross answers.' Some servants are quick at speech, though slow at work, and instead of being sorry for a fault, they provoke by unbecoming language: were the heart more humble, the tongue would be more silent. They are the apostle's words, "not answering again." And to those servants who do thus honour their masters, or family-fathers, by submission, diligence, faithfulness, love, and humble silence, for their encouragement let them take that, "Servants, obey in all things your masters, according to the flesh, not with eye-service, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward

of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ," Col. 3:24. In serving your masters, you serve Christ, and he will not let you lose your labour, ye shall receive the "reward of the inheritance." From serving on earth, you shall be taken up to reign in heaven, and shall sit with Christ upon his throne, Rev. 3:21.

EXOD. 20:12. Honour thy Father and thy Mother, &c.

If we are not just, we cannot be holy. Having shown you how servants are to honour their masters, the fathers of families; I shall next show how masters are to carry it towards their servants, that they may gain honour from them.

1. In general, masters must remember that they have a master in heaven, who will call them to account, Eph. 6:9., "Knowing that your master also is in heaven."

2. More particularly.

(1.) Masters must have a care to provide for their servants; as they cut them out work, so they must give them their meat in due season, Luke 17:7. And the food should be wholesome and sufficing. It is an unworthy thing in some governors of families, to lay out so much upon their own back, as to pinch their servants' bellies.

(2.) Masters should encourage their servants in their work, by commending them when they do well; though a master is to tell a servant of his faults, yet he is not always to beat upon one string, but sometimes take notice of that which is praiseworthy. This makes a servant more cheerful in his work, and gains the master love from his servant.

(3.) Masters must not overburden their servants, but proportion their work to their strength; if you lay too much load on a servant he will faint under it. Christianity teacheth compassion.

(4.) Masters must endeavour the spiritual good of their servants; they must be seraphims to kindle their love to religion; they must be monitors to put them in mind of their souls; they must bring them to the pool of the sanctuary, waiting till the angel stir the waters, John 5:4. They must seek God for them, that their servants may be his servants; they must allow them time convenient for secret devotion. Some masters are cruel to the souls of their servants; they look that they do the work about the house, but abridge them of the time they should employ in working out their salvation.

(5.) Masters should use mild gentle behaviour towards servants, Eph. 6:9., "Forbearing threatening," Lev. 25:43., "Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour, but fear thy God." It requires wisdom in a master to know how to keep up his authority, yet lay down his austerity: we have a good copy to write after,—our Master in heaven is "slow to anger, and of great mercy," Ps. 145:8. Some masters are so harsh and implacable, that they are enough to spoil a good servant.

(6.) Be very exact and punctual in the compacts and agreements you make with your servants; do not prevaricate, keep not back any of their wages, nor deal deceitfully with them, as Laban did with Jacob, changing his wages, Gen. 31:7. Falseness in promise is as bad as false weights.

(7.) Be careful of your servants, not only in health but in sickness. They have got their sickness in your service; use what means you can for their recovery; be not like the Amalakite, who 'forsook his servant when he was sick,' 1 Sam. 30:13., but be as the good centurion, who kept his sick servant, and sought to Christ for a cure, Mat. 8:6. If you

have a beast that falls sick, you will not turn it off, but have it looked to, and pay for its cure; will you be kinder to your horses than to your servants? Thus should masters (the fathers of the family) carry themselves prudently and piously, that they may gain honour from their servants, and may give up their accounts to God with joy.

5. The natural father, the father of the flesh, Heb. 12:9., Honour thy natural father. This is so necessary a duty, that Philo the Jew placed the fifth commandment in the first table, as though we had not performed our whole duty to God, till we had paid this debt of honour to our natural parents. Children are the vineyard of the parent's planting, and honour done to the parent is some of the fruit of the vineyard.

QUEST. Wherein are children to show their honour to their parents?

Ans. 1. In a reverential esteem of their persons,—they must 'give them a civil veneration.' Therefore when the apostle speaks of fathers of our bodies, he speaks also of 'giving them reverence,' Heb. 12:9. This veneration or reverence must be shewn,

1. Inwardly, by fear mixed with love, Lev. 19:3., "Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father." In the commandment the father is named first, here the mother is named first, (1.) Partly to put the honour upon her the mother, because, by reason of many weaknesses incident to her sex, she is apt to be more slighted by children. And, (2.) partly, because the mother endures more for the child; therefore, here God gives the mother the priority, names her first, "Ye shall fear every one his mother and his father."

2. Reverence must be shown to parents outwardly, viz. In word and gesture.

(1.) In word, and that either in speaking to parents, or speaking of them.

First, Reverence in speaking to parents: children must speak to parents respectfully, and in decent language, 1 Kings 2:20., "Ask on, my mother," said king Solomon to his mother Bathsheba.

Secondly, Reverence in speaking of parents: children must speak of their parents honourably,—they ought to speak well of them, if they deserve well, Prov. 31:28., "Her children rise up, and call her blessed." And, in case a parent bewrays weakness and indiscretion, the child should make the best of it, and, by his wise apologies for his father, cover his father's nakedness.

(2.) In gesture. Children are to shew their reverence to their parents by submissive behaviour,—by uncovering the head,—bending the knee. Joseph, though he was a great prince, and his father grown poor, yet he bowed to him, and behaved himself as humbly, as if his father had been the prince, and he the poor man, Gen. 48. And king Solomon, when his mother came to him, rose off his throne, and "bowed himself to her," 1 Kings 2:19. Among the Lacedemonians, if a child had carried himself arrogantly or saucily to his father, it was lawful for the father to appoint whom he would to be his heir. O how many children are far from thus giving reverence to their parents! They despise their parents; they carry themselves with that pride and malapertness towards them, that they are a shame to religion, and bring their parents' grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Deut. 27:16., "Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother." If all that set light by their parents are cursed, how many children in our age are under a curse! If such as are disrespectful to their parents live to have children, they will be thorns in their sides, and God will make them read their sins in their punishment.

A. 2. The second way of shewing honour to parents, is in careful obedience: Col. 3:20., "Children obey your parents in all things." Our Lord Christ herein set a pattern to children, Luke 2:52., he was subject to his parents. He to whom angels were subject, yet was subject to his parents. This obedience to parents is shown three ways:

(1.) In hearkening to their counsel, Prov. 1:8., "Hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." Parents are, as it were in the room of God; if they would teach you the fear of the Lord, you must listen to their words as oracles, and not be as the deaf adder to stop your ears. Eli's sons hearkened not to the voice of their father, 1 Sam. 2:25., but they were called "sons of belial," ver. 12. And children must hearken to the counsel of their parents, as in spiritual matters, so in other affairs which relate to this life; as in the choice of a calling, and in case of entering into marriage. Jacob would not dispose of himself in marriage (though he was forty years old,) without the advice and consent of his parents, Gen. 28:1, 2. Children are as it were the parents' proper goods and possession, and it is high injustice in a child to give away herself without the parents' leave. If parents should indeed counsel a child to a match with one that is irreligious or popish, I think the case is plain, and many of the learned are of opinion, that here the child may have a negative voice, and is not obliged to be ruled by the parent. Children are to "marry in the Lord," 1 Cor. 7:39.—Therefore not with persons irreligious, for that is not to marry in the Lord.

(2.) Obedience to parents is shown in subscribing to their commands. A child should be the parents' echo: when the father speaks, the child should echo back obedience. The Rechabites were forbidden by their father to drink wine; and they did obey him, and were commended for it, Jer. 35:6. And children must obey their

parents in all things, Col. 3:20. Things that are more against the grain, and which they have most reluctance to, yet they must obey their parents. Esau would obey his father, when he commanded him to fetch him venison, because it is probable he took pleasure in hunting; but refused to obey him in a matter of greater concernment, namely, in the choice of a wife. But though children must obey their parents 'in all things,' yet *restringitur ad licita et honesta*,—it is with this limitation, 'things just and honest.' 'Obey in the Lord,' Eph. 6:1., that is so far as the commands of parents agree with, and are consonant to God's commands. If they command against God, then they lose their right of being obeyed, but in this case we must unchild ourselves.

(3.) Honour is to be shewn to parents, in relieving their wants. Joseph cherished his father in his old age, Gen. 47:12. It is but paying the just debt. Parents have brought up children when they were young, and children ought to nourish their parents when they are old. The young storks, by the instinct of nature, bring meat to the old storks, when by reason of age they are not able to fly, *PLINY. Lex pelargica*. The memory of Eneas was honoured, for carrying his aged father out of Troy when it was on fire. I have read of a daughter, whose father being condemned to be starved to death, she did in prison give him suck with her own breasts, which being known to the governors, procured his freedom out of prison. To blame are such, shall I say children or monsters, who are ashamed of their parents when they are old, and fallen to decay; when parents' tears and lean cheeks may plead pity, yet children have no compassion; when they ask for bread, they give them a stone. When houses are shut up, we say the plague is there: when children's hearts are shut up against their parents, the plague is in those hearts. Our blessed Saviour took great care for his mother; when he was on the cross, he charged his disciple John to take her home to him as his mother, and see that she

wanted nothing, John 19:26, 27. The reasons why children should honour their parents, are,

1. It is a solemn command of God, "honour thy father," &c. As God's word is the rule, so his will must be the reason of our obedience.

2. They deserve honour, in respect of that great love and affection which they bear to their children; and that love is evidenced both by their care and cost. (1.) Their care in bringing up their children; a sign their hearts are full of love, because their hearts are so full of care. Parents often take more care of their children than for themselves. They take care of them when they are tender, lest like wall-fruit they should be nipt in the bud. And as children grow older, so the care of parents grows greater; they are afraid of their children falling when young, and of worse falls when they are older. (2.) Their love is evidenced by their cost, 1 Cor. 12:14. They lay up, and they lay out for their children; they are not like the raven or ostrich, Job. 39:14., which are cruel to their young. Parents sometimes do impoverish themselves to enrich their children: all this calls for honour from the children. Children can never parallel or equal parents' love; parents are the instruments of life to their children, children cannot be so to their parents.

3. To honour parents, "is well-pleasing to the Lord," Col. 3:20. As it is joyful to the parents, so it is pleasing to the Lord. Children, is it not your duty to please God? In honouring and obeying your parents, you please God, as well as when you repent and believe. And, that you may see how well it pleaseth God, he bestows a reward upon it, "That thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Jacob would not let the angel go till he had blessed him; nor God would not part with this commandment till he had blessed it. Here is the blessing, "that thy days may be long in the land," &c. St.

Paul calls this "the first commandment with promise," Eph. 6:2. The second commandment hath a general promise of mercy; but this is the first commandment that hath a particular promise made to it, "That thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Long life is mentioned as a blessing, Ps. 128:6., "Thou shalt see thy children's children." It was a great favour of God to Moses, that though he was an hundred and twenty years old, he needed no spectacles; "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated," Deut. 34:7. God threatened it as a curse to Eli, that there should not be an old man in his family, 1 Sam. 2:31. Since the flood, life is much abbreviated and cut short; some, the womb is their tomb,—others exchange their cradle for their grave,—others die in the flower of their age,—death serves its warrant every day upon one or other. Now, when death lies in ambush continually for us, if God satisfy us with long life, Ps. 91:16., "With long life will I satisfy him," this is to be esteemed a blessing. It is a blessing that God gives a long time to repent, and a long time to do service, and a long time to enjoy the comforts of relations; and upon whom is this blessing of long life entailed, but obedient children? "Honour thy father that thy days may be long." Nothing sooner shortens life than disobedience to parents. Absalom was a disobedient son who sought to deprive his father of his life and crown, and he did not live out half his days; the mule he rode upon, as being weary of such a burden, left him hanging in the oak betwixt heaven and earth, as not fit to tread upon the one, or to enter into the other. Obedience to parents spins out thy life,—"that thy days may be long." Nor doth obedience to parents only lengthen life but sweeten it: therefore it follows, "that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." To live long, and not to have a foot of land, is a misery; but obedience to parents settles land of inheritance upon the child. "Hast thou but one blessing, O my father?" said Esau. Behold, God hath more blessings for an obedient child than one; not only shall he have a long life, but

a fruitful land; and not only shall he have land, but land given in love,—“the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” Thou shalt have thy land not only with God's leave, but with his love. All which are cogent arguments to make children honour and obey their parents.

EXOD. 20:12. Honour thy Father ——

Use 1st. If we are to honour our fathers on earth, then much more our Father in heaven: Mal. 1:6., “If then I be a father, where is my honour?” A father is but the instrument of conveying life, but God is the original cause of our being, Ps. 100:3., “It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves.” Honour and adoration is a pearl which belongs only to the crown of heaven. And,

1. We shew honour to our heavenly Father, by obeying him. Thus Christ honoured his Father, John 6:38., “I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.” This he calls honouring of God, John 8:29., “I do always those things that please him,” v. 49., “I honour my father.” The wise men did not only bow the knee to Christ, but presented him with “gold and myrrh,” Mat. 2:11.: so we must not only bow the knee, give God adoration, but bring him presents, give him golden obedience.

2. We shew honour to our heavenly Father, by appearing advocates in his cause, and standing up for his truth in an adulterous generation. That son honours his father who stands up in his defence, and vindicates him when he is calumniated and reproached. Do they honour God who are ashamed of him? John 12:42., “Many believed on him, but did not confess him,” They are bastard-sons who are ashamed to own their heavenly Father; such as are born of God, are steeled with courage for his truth, they are like the rock which no waves can break,—like the adamant which no sword can

cut. Basil was a champion for truth in the time of the emperor Valens; and Athanasius, when the world was Arian, appeared for God.

3. We show honour to our heavenly Father, by ascribing the honour of all we do to him, 1 Cor. 15:10., "I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." If a Christian hath any assistance in duty, any strength against corruption, he rears up a pillar and writes upon it, "hitherto hath the Lord helped me." As Joab, when he had fought against Rabbah, and had like to have taken it, sent for king David, that he might carry away the honour of the victory, 2 Sam. 12:27., so, when a child of God hath any conquest over Satan, he gives all the honour to God. Hypocrites (whose lamp is fed with the oil of vain-glory) while they do any eminent service for God, seek themselves; and so their very serving of him is a dishonouring him.

4. We show honour to our heavenly Father, by celebrating his praise, Ps. 71:8., "Let my mouth be filled with thy praise, and with thy honour all the day." Rev. 5:13., "Blessing, honour, glory and power, be unto him that sits upon the throne" Blessing God is honouring of God; it lifts him up in the eyes of others; it spreads his fame and renown in the world. In this manner the angels, the choristers of heaven, are now honouring God, they trumpet forth his praise; in prayer, we act like saints, in praise like angels.

5. We shew honour to our heavenly Father, by suffering dishonour, yea, death for his sake. St. Paul did bear in his body the "marks of the Lord Jesus," Gal. 6:17. As they were the marks of honour to him, so trophies of honour to the gospel. The honour which comes to God, is not by bringing that outward pomp and glory to him, which we do to kings, but it comes in another way, by the suffering of his people;

they let the world see what a good God they serve, and how they love him, and will fight under his banner to the death. Thus you see how we are to honour our heavenly Father: God is "worthy of honour," Ps. 104:1., "Thou art clothed with honour and majesty." What are all his attributes but glorious beams shining from this sun? He deserves more honour than men or angels can give him. 2 Sam. 22:4., "I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised." God is worthy of honour. Oftentimes we confer honour upon them that do not deserve it; many noble persons we give titles of honour to, who are sordid and vicious, they do not deserve honour, but God is worthy of honour. Neh. 9:5., "Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessings and praise!" He is above all the acclamations and triumphs of the archangels. O then, let every true child of God honour his heavenly Father! Though the wicked dishonour him by their flagitious lives, yet let not his own children dishonour him. Sins in you are worse than in others; a fault in a stranger is not so much taken notice of, as a fault in a child; a spot in black cloth is not so much observed, but a spot in scarlet, every one's eye is upon it; a sin in the wicked is not so much wondered at, it is a spot in black, but a sin in a child of God, here is a spot in scarlet; this is more visible, and brings an odium and dishonour upon the gospel. The sins of God's own children go nearer to his heart: Deut. 32:19., "When the Lord saw it he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons and of his daughters." O forbear doing any thing that may reflect dishonour upon God! Will you disgrace your heavenly Father? Let not God complain of the provocations of his sons and daughters; let him not cry out, as Isa. 1:2., "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." So much for the first; if our earthly father be to be honoured, then much more our heavenly.

Use 2d. Exhortation. First Branch. Doth God, command, "honour thy father and thy mother?" Then let it exhort children to put this great

duty in practice; be living commentaries upon this commandment. Honour and reverence your parents; not only obey their commands, but submit to their rebukes; you cannot honour your Father in heaven, unless you honour your earthly parents; to deny obedience to parents, entails God's judgments upon children, Prov. 30:17., "The eye that mocketh at his Father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Eli's two disobedient sons were slain, 1 Sam. 4:11. God made a law that the rebellious son should be stoned: the same death the blasphemer had, Lev. 24:14; Deut. 21:18., "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother; then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of the city, and all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die." A father once complaining, 'Never had a father a worse son than I have:' 'Yes,' said the Son, 'my grandfather had,'—a prodigy of impudence that can hardly paralleled. Manlius, when he was grown old and poor, and had a son very rich, the old father desired some food of him, but the son denied him relief, yea, disclaimed him from being his father, and sent him away with reproachful language. The poor old father let tears fall (as witnesses of his grief.) But God, to revenge this disobedience, struck this unnatural son with madness, of which he could never be cured. Disobedient children stand in the place where all God's arrows fly.

Second Branch. Let parents so carry it, as they may gain honour from their children.

QUEST. How may parents so carry towards their children, that their children may willingly pay the debt of honour and reverence to their parents?

Ans. If you would have your children honour you,

1. Be careful to bring them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord: Eph. 6:4., "Bring them up in the admonition of the Lord." You conveyed the plague of sin to them, therefore endeavour to get them healed and sanctified. Austin saith, his mother Monica travelled more for his spiritual birth than his natural. Timothy's mother instructed him from a child, 2 Tim. 3:15. She did not only give him her breast-milk, but "the sincere milk of the word." Season your children with good principles betimes, that they may, with Obadiah, 'fear the Lord from their youth,' 1 Kings 18:12. When parents instruct not their children, they seldom prove blessings. God oft punisheth the carelessness of parents with undutifulness in their children. It is not enough that in baptism your child is dedicated to God, but it must be educated for God. Children are young plants which you must be continually watering with good instruction, Prov. 22:6., "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The more your children fear God, the more they will honour you.

2. If you would have your children honour you, keep up parental authority over your children; be kind, but do not cocker them; if you let them get too much a-head, they will contemn you instead of honouring you. The rod of discipline must not be withheld: Prov. 23:14., "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." A child indulged and humoured in wickedness, will be a thorn in the parents' eye. David cockered Adonijah, 1 Kings 1:6., "His father had not displeased him at any time, in saying, Why hast thou done so?" And he afterwards was a grief of heart to his father, and was false to the crown, v. 7, 9. Keep up your authority, and you keep up your honour.

3. Provide for your children what is fitting, both in their minority, and when they come to maturity, 2 Cor. 12:14., "The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children." They are your own flesh, and, as the apostle saith, "No man ever yet hated his own flesh," Eph. 5:29. The parents' bountifulness will cause dutifulness in the child. If you pour water into a pump, the pump will send water again out freely; so, if parents pour in something of their estate to their children, children (if ingenuous) will pour out obedience again to their parents.

4. When your children are grown up, put them to some lawful calling, wherein they may serve their generation. And it is good to consult the natural genius and inclination of a child; forced callings do as ill, sometimes, as forced matches. To let a child be out of a calling, is to expose him to temptation. Melancthon, *Otium balneum diaboli*. A child out of a calling is like fallow-ground; and what can you expect should grow up but weeds of disobedience?

5. Carry it lovingly to your children; in all your counsels and commands let them read love. Love will command honour: and how can a parent but love the child who is his living picture, nay part of himself? The child is the father in the second edition.

6. Carry it prudently towards your children. A great point of prudence, is, when a parent doth not provoke his children to wrath, Col. 3:21., "Fathers provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."

QUEST. How many ways may a parent provoke his children to wrath?

Ans. 1. By giving them opprobrious terms, 1 Sam. 20:30., "Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman," said Saul to his son Jonathan.

Some parents use imprecations and curses to their children: this is to provoke them to wrath. Would you have God bless your children, and do you curse them?

2. Parents provoke children to wrath, when they strike their children without a cause; or when the correction exceeds the fault. This is rather to be a tyrant than a father. Saul cast a javelin at his son to smite him, 1 Sam. 20:33., and his son was provoked to anger, v. 34., "So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger." In filium pater obtinet non tyrannicum imperium, sed basilicum. DAVENANT.

3. When parents deny their children conveniences; they will not let them have that which may cherish or cover nature. Some have thus provoked their children; they have stunted them, and kept them so short, that they have forced them upon indirect courses, and made them put forth their hands to iniquity.

4. When parents carry it unequally towards their children, shewing more kindness to one than to another, this sometimes breeds bad blood. Though a parent hath a greater love to one child, yet discretion should guide affection, that he should not show more love to one than to another. Jacob shewed more love to Joseph than all his children, and what did it procure, but envy of his brethren, Gen. 37:3, 4., "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, and when his brethren saw that, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him."

5. When a parent doth any thing which is sordid and unworthy, that which casts disgrace upon himself and his family—as to cozen or take a false oath—this is to provoke the child to wrath. As the child should honour his father, so the father should not dishonour the child.

6. When parents lay such commands upon their children, as their children cannot perform without wronging their conscience. Saul commanded his son Jonathan to bring David to him, 1 Sam. 20:31., "Fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die." Jonathan could not do this with a good conscience; but was provoked to anger, v. 34., "Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger." Now, the reason why parents should show their prudence in not provoking their children to wrath is set down, Col. 3:21., "Lest they be discouraged." This word discouraged implies three things: (1.) Grief. The parents' provoking the child, the child so takes it to heart, that it causeth immature death. (2.) Despondency: the parents' austerity dispirits the child, and makes it unfit for service; like members of the body stupified, which are unfit for work. (3.) Contumacy and refractoriness: the child being provoked by the cruel and unnatural carriage of the parent, grows desperate, and oft studies to irritate and vex his parents, which, though it be evil in the child, yet the parent is accessory to it, as being the occasion of it.

7. If you would have honour from your children, pray much for them. Not only lay up a portion for them, but lay up a stock of prayer for them. Monica prayed much for her son Austin; and it was said, it was impossible a son of so many prayers and tears should perish. Pray that your children may be preserved from the contagion of the times; pray that as your children bear your images in their faces, they may bear God's image in their hearts; pray they may be instruments and vessels of glory. This may be one fruit of prayer, that the child may honour a praying parent.

8. Encourage that which you see good and commendable in your children. *Virtus laudata crescit*. Commending that which is good in your children, makes them more in love with virtuous actions; and is like the watering of plants, which makes them grow more. Some

parents discourage the good they see in their children, and so nip virtue in the bud, and help to damn their children's souls. They have their children's curses.

9. If you would have honour from your children, set them a good example; it makes children despise the parents, when the parents live in a contradiction to their own precepts; when they bid their children be sober, yet they themselves will be drunk; they bid their children fear God, yet are themselves loose in their lives. Oh! if you would have your children honour you, teach them by an holy example. A father is a looking-glass, which the child oft dresseth himself by; let the glass be clear, and not spotted. Parents should observe a good decorum in their whole carriage, lest they give occasion to their children to say to them, as Plato's servant, "My master hath made a book against rash anger, but he himself is passionate;" or, as a son once said to his father, "If I have done evil, I have learned it of you."

OF THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:13. Thou shalt not kill.

In this commandment, 1st. Is a sin forbidden, viz. murder, "Thou shalt not kill." 2d. A duty implied, "To preserve our own life, and the life of others."

I. The sin forbidden, murder: 'Thou shalt not kill.' Where two things are to be understood, 1st. The not injuring another. 2d. Ourselves.

1st. In this, "Thou shalt not kill," is meant the not injuring another. 1. We must not injure him in his name. 2. In his body. 3. In his soul.

1. We must not injure another in his name. "A good name is a precious balsam;" it is a great cruelty to murder a man in his name. We injure others in their name when we calumniate and slander them. 'Twas David's complaint, Ps. 35:11., "They laid to my charge things that I knew not." The primitive Christians were traduced for incest, and killing their children, as Tertullian, *Dicimur infanticidii, incestus rei*. This is to behead others in their good name; this is an irreparable injury; no physician can heal the wounds of the tongue.

2. We must not injure another in his body. The life is the most precious thing: and God hath set this commandment as a fence about it, to preserve it, "Thou shalt not kill." God made a statute which was never to this day repealed, Gen 9:6., "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." In the old law, had a man killed another unawares, he might take sanctuary; but if he had killed him willingly, though he did flee to the sanctuary, the holiness of the place was not to defend him, Exod. 21:14., "If a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die." Now in this commandment, "Thou shalt do no murder," all those sins are forbidden which lead to it, and are the occasions of it: As,

(1.) Unadvised anger. Anger boils up the blood in the veins, and oft produceth murder, Gen. 49:6., "In their anger they slew a man."

(2.) Envy. Satan envied our first parents the robe of innocence, and the glory of paradise; therefore never left off till he had procured their death. Joseph's brethren envied him, because his father loved him, and gave him a "coat of many colours:" therefore took "counsel to slay him," Gen. 37:20. Envy and murder are near akin, therefore

the apostle puts them together, Gal. 5:21., "Envyings, murders." Envy is a sin breaks both the tables at once; it begins in discontent against God, and ends in injury against man, as we see in Cain, Gen. 4:6, 8. Envious Cain was first discontented with God,—there he broke the first table; and then he fell out with his brother and slew him,—there he broke the second table. Anger is sometimes 'soon over,' like fire kindled in straw, which is quickly out; but envy is a radicated thing, and will not quench its thirst without blood, Prov. 27:4., "Who is able to stand before envy?"

(3.) Hatred. The Pharisees hated Christ, because he excelled them in gifts, and had more honour among the people than they; therefore they never left till they had nailed him to the cross, and taken away his life Hatred is a vermin lives upon blood, Ezek. 35:5., "Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel." Haman hated Mordecai, because he did not bow to him, and he presently sought revenge, he got a bloody warrant sealed for the destruction of the whole race and seed of the Jews, Esther 3:9. Hatred is ever cruel. All these sins are forbidden in this commandment, which lead the van, and are oft the occasions of this sin of murder.

QUEST. How many ways is murder committed?

Ans. We may be said to murder another, twelve ways: 1. With the hand: as Joab killed Abner and Amasa, 2 Sam. 20:10., "He smote him in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels."—2. Murder is committed with the mind. Malice is mental murder, 1 John 3:15. "Whoso hateth his brother is a murderer." To malign another, and wish evil against him in the heart, is a murdering him.—3. Murder is committed with the tongue, by speaking to the prejudice of another, and causing him to be put to death. Thus the Jews killed the Lord of

life, when they inveighed against him, and accused him falsely to Pilate, John 18:30.—4. Murder is committed with the pen. So David killed Uriah in writing to Joab, "ye set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle," 2 Sam. 11:15. Though the Ammonites' sword cut off Uriah, yet David's pen was the cause of his death; therefore the Lord tells David by the prophet Nathan, 2 Sam. 12:9., "Thou hast killed Uriah."—5. Murder is committed by plotting another's death. Thus Jezebel, though she did not lay hands herself upon Naboth, yet because she contrived his death, and caused two false witnesses to swear against him, and bring him within the compass of treason, she was a murderer, 1 Kings 21:10.—6. Murder is committed by instilling poison into potions. Thus the wife of Commodus the emperor killed her husband, by poisoning the wine which he drank. So, many kill the children they go with, by taking such medicines, or strong purges, as prove the death of the child.—7. By witchcraft and sorcery; a thing forbidden under the law, Deut. 18:10., "There shall not be found among you an enchanter, or a witch, or a consulter with familiar spirits."—8. By having an intention to kill another; as Herod would, under a pretence of worshipping Christ, have killed him, Mat. 2:8, 13. So Saul when he made David go as captain against the Philistines, designing thereby that the Philistines should have killed him, 1 Sam. 18:17., "Saul said, Let not my hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him." Here was intentional murder, and it was in God's account as bad as actual murder.—9. By consenting to another's death; so Saul to the death of Stephen, Acts 22:20., "I also was standing by and consenting to his death." He that gives consent is accessory to the murder.—10. By not hindering the death of another when in our power. Pilate knew Christ was innocent, "I find no fault in him;" but he did not hinder his death; therefore he was guilty. It was not washing his hands in water, could wash away the guilt of Christ's blood.—11. By unmercifulness. (1.) By taking away that which is necessary for the sustentation of life: as to

take away those tools or utensils whereby a man gets his living, Deut. 24:6., "No man shall take the upper or the nether millstone to pledge, for he taketh a man's life." (2.) By not helping him when he is ready to perish. You may be the death of another, as well by not relieving him, as by offering him violence. Simon pareris, occidisti, AMB. If thou dost not feed him that is starving, thou killest him. And then, how many are guilty of the breach of this commandment.—12. By not executing the law upon capital offenders. A felon having committed six murders, the judge may be said to be guilty of five of them, because he did not execute the felon for his first offence.

The next thing I shall speak to, is, to shew the aggravations of this sin of murder: As,

1. To shed the blood of another causeless; as to kill another in an humour or frolic. A bee will not sting unless provoked, but many when they are not provoked, will take away the life of another. This makes the sin of blood more bloody. The less provocation to a sin the greater sin.

2. To shed the blood of another contrary to promise. Thus, after the princes of Israel had sworn to the Gibeonites, that they should live, Josh. 9:15., Saul slew them, 2 Sam. 21:1. Here were two sins twisted together,—breach of oath, and murder.

3. To take away the life of any public person enhanceth the murder, and makes it greater; as, (1.) To kill a judge upon the bench, because he represents the king's person. (2.) To murder a person whose office is sacred, and comes on the King of heaven's embassy: the murdering of him may be the murdering of many. Herod added this sin above all, that he shut up John Baptist in prison, Luke 3:20., then much more to behead John in prison. (3.) To stain one's hands with royal blood. David's heart smote him, because he did but cut off the

lap of king Saul's garment, 1 Sam. 24:5. How would David's heart have smitten him, if he had cut off Saul's head?

4. To shed the blood of a near relation, aggravates the murder, and dyes it of a deeper crimson. For a son to kill his Father is horrid. Parricides are monsters in nature. Qui occidit patrem, plurima committit peccato in uno. CICERO. 'He who takes away his father's life, committeth many sins in one;' he is not only guilty of murder, but of disobedience, ingratitude, ostracism, and diabolical cruelty. Exod. 21:15., "He who smiteth his father or mother, shall be surely put to death." Then how many deaths is he worthy of that destroys his father or mother? Such a monster was Nero, who caused his mother Agrippina to be slain.

5. To shed the blood of any righteous person, aggravates the sin. (1.) Hereby justice is perverted. Such a person, being innocent, is unworthy of death. (2.) A saint being a public blessing, he lies in the breach to turn away wrath; so that to destroy him, is to go to pull down the pillars of a nation. (3.) He is precious to God, Isa. 15:3, 4. He is a member of Christ's body; therefore what injury is offered to him is done to God himself, Acts 9:4.

Caution 1st. Though this commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," forbids private persons to shed the blood of another, (unless in their own defence) yet such as are in office must punish public offenders, yea, with death, else they sin. To kill an offender is not murder, but justice. A private person sins, if he draws the sword; a public person sins, if he puts up the sword. A magistrate ought not to let the sword of justice rust in the scabbard. As the magistrates should not let the sword be too sharp by severity, so neither should the edge of it be blunted by too much lenity.

Caution 2d. Neither doth this commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," prohibit a just war. When men's sins grow ripe, and long plenty hath bred surfeit, then God saith, "Sword, go through the land," Ezek. 14:17. God did abet the war between the tribes of Israel and Benjamin; when the iniquity of the Amorites was full, then God sent Israel to commence a war against them, Judges 11:21.

Use 1st. Lamentation, That this land is so defiled with blood, Numb. 35:33. How common is this sin in this Hectoring age! England's sins are written in letters of blood. Some make no more of killing men than sheep, Jer. 2:34., "In thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents." Junius reads it, in alis; and so in Hebrew, 'in thy wings' is found the blood of innocents. It alludes to the birds of prey, which stain their wings with the blood of other birds. May not the Lord justly take up a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because "blood toucheth blood?" Hos. 4:2. There is a concatenation, —a plurality of murders. And that which may increase our lamentation is, that not only man's blood is shed among us, but Christ's blood. Such as are profane flagitious sinners are said to "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh," Heb. 6:6. (1.) They swear by his blood, and so do, as it were, make his wounds bleed afresh. (2.) Crucify Christ in his members, Acts 9:4., "Why persecutest thou me?" The foot being trodden on, the head crieth out. (3.) If it lay in their power, were Christ alive on earth they would nail him again to the cross; thus men crucify Christ afresh; and, if man's blood doth so cry, how loud will Christ's blood cry against sinners?

Use 2d. Beware of having your hands imbrued in the blood of others.

OBJ. But such an one hath wronged me by defamation, or otherwise; and if I spill his blood, I do but revenge my own quarrel.

Ans. If he hath done you wrong, the law is open; but take heed of shedding blood. What! because he hath wronged you, will you therefore wrong God? Is it not a wrong to God, to take his work out of his hand? He hath said "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay," Rom. 12:19. But you will take upon you to revenge yourself; you will be both plaintiff, and judge, and executioner, yourself. This is an high wrong done to God, and he will not hold him guiltless. Now, to deter all from having their hands defiled with blood, consider what a sin murder is.

1. A God-affronting sin: it is a breach of his commandment, trampling upon God's royal edict. It is a wrong offered to God's image, Gen. 9:6., "In the image of God made he man." It is tearing God's picture, and breaking in pieces the king of heaven's broad seal. Man is the temple of God, 1 Cor. 6:19., "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" So that the man-slayer destroys God's temple; and will God endure to be thus confronted by proud dust?

2. It is a crying sin. *Clamitat in cœlum vox sanguinis*. There are three sins in scripture said to cry. (1.) Oppression, Ps. 12:5. (2.) Sodomy, Gen. 18:24. (3.) Blood-shed. This cries so loud, that it drowns all the other cries, Gen. 4:10., "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Abel's blood had as many tongues as drops, to cry aloud for vengeance. This sin of blood lay heavy on David's conscience; though he had sinned by adultery, yet what he cried out of most, was, this crimson sin of blood, Ps. 51:14., "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God!" Though the Lord visits for every sin, yet he will in a special manner make "inquisition for blood," Ps. 9:12. If a beast did kill a man, the beast was to be stoned, "and his flesh shall not be eaten," Exod. 21:28. If God would have a beast stoned that killed a man, who had not the use of reason to restrain him, then

much more will he be incensed against those who go both against reason and conscience in spoiling the life of a man.

3. Murder is a diabolical sin. It makes a man the devil's first born; he was a murderer from the beginning, John 8:44. By saying to our first parents, "Ye shall not die," he brought in death to the world.

4. It is a cursed sin. If there be a curse for him that smites his neighbour secretly, Deut. 27:24., then he is doubly cursed that kills him. The first man that was born was a murderer, Gen. 4:11., "And now art thou cursed from the earth." He was an excommunicated person,—banished from the place of God's public worship. God set a mark upon bloody Cain, Gen. 4:15. Some think it was horror of mind, which (above all sins) doth accompany the sin of blood. Others think this mark was a continual shaking and trembling in his flesh, which was a mark of infamy God set upon him. He carried a curse along with him.

5. It is a wrath-procuring sin, 2 Kings 24:4. (1.) It procures temporal judgments. Phocas, to get the empire, put to death all the sons of Mauritius the emperor, and then slew him; but this Phocas was pursued by his son-in-law Priscus, who cut off his ears and feet, and then killed him. Charles IX. who caused the massacre of so many Christians at Paris, blood issued out at several parts of his body, of which he died. Albonia killed a man and then made a cup of his skull to drink in: afterwards his own wife caused him to be murdered in his bed. Vengeance as a blood-hound pursues the murderer; "bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days," Ps. 55:23.

(2.) It brings eternal judgments. It binds men over to hell. The papists make nothing of massacres; theirs is a bloody religion; they dispense with men for murder, so it be to propagate the catholic cause. If a cardinal put his red hat upon the head of a murderer going

to execution, he is saved from death. But let all impenitent murderers read their doom, Rev. 21:8., "Murderers shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone;" this 'is the second death.' We read of "fire mingled with blood," Rev. 8:7. Such as have their hands full of blood must undergo the wrath of God. Here is fire mingled with blood, and this fire is inextinguishable, Mark 9:44. Time will not finish it, tears will not quench it.

EXOD. 20:13 Thou shalt not kill.

3. We must not injure another's soul. This is the greatest murder of all, because there is more of God's image in the soul than in the body. The soul, though it cannot be annihilated, is said to be murdered, because it misseth of happiness, and is for ever in torment. Now, how many are soul-murderers?

1. Such as corrupt others by bad example. The world is led by example; especially the examples of great ones are very pernicious. We are apt to do as we see others before us, especially above us. Such as are placed in high power are like the pillar of cloud; when that went, Israel went; when great ones move in their sphere, others will follow them, though it be to hell. Evil magistrates, like the tail of the dragon, draw the "third part of the stars after them."

2. Such as entice others to sin. The harlot by curling her hair, rolling her eyes, laying open her breasts, doth what in her lies to be both a tempter and a murderer; such an one was Messalina, wife to Claudius the emperor: Prov. 7:7, 10, 13., "I discerned a young man, and there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot; so she caught him and kissed him." Better are the reproofs of a friend, than the kisses of an harlot.

3. Ministers are murderers, who either starve, or poison, or infect souls.

(1.) That starve souls, 1 Pet. 5:2., "Feed the flock of God which is among you." These feed themselves, and starve the flock; either through non-residing, they do not preach, or through insufficiency they cannot. There are many in the ministry (a shame to speak it) so ignorant, that they had need to be taught the "first principles of the oracles of God," Heb. 5:12. Was not he fit to be a preacher in Israel, (think ye) who being asked something concerning the decalogue, answered he never saw any such book?

(2.) That poison souls. Such are heterodox ministers, who poison people with error; the basilisk poisons herbs and flowers, by breathing on them: the breath of heretical ministers, like the basilisk's breath, poisons souls. The Socinian, that would rob Christ of his Godhead,—the Arminian, that by advancing the power of the will, would take off the crown from the head of free-grace,—the Antinomian, who denies the use of the moral law to a believer, as if it were antiquated and out of date,—these poison men's souls. Error is as damnable as vice, 2 Pet. 2:1., "There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them."

(3.) That infect souls, viz. by their scandalous lives, Exod. 19:22., "Let the priests which come near to the Lord sanctify themselves." Ministers, who by their places are nearer to God, should be holier than others. The elements, the higher they are, the purer; the air is purer than the water; the fire is purer than the air. The higher men are by office, the holier they should be; John Baptist was a shining lamp. But there are many who infect their people with their bad life; they preach one thing, and live another,—Qui curios simulant et

bacchanalia vivunt. They, like Eli's sons, are in white linen, but they have scarlet sins. Some say, that Prester John, the lord of Africa, caused to be carried before him a golden cup full of dirt,—a fit emblem of such ministers as have a golden office, but are dirty and polluted in their lives. They are murderers and the blood of souls will cry against them at the last day.

(4.) Such as destroy others, by getting them into bad company, and so making them proselytes to the devil. *Vitia in proximum quemque transiliunt*, SEN. A man cannot live in the Ethiopian climate but he will be discoloured with the sun; nor he cannot be in bad company but he will partake of their evil. One drunkard makes another; as the prophet speaks in another sense, Jer. 35:5., "I set before the sons of the house of the Rachabites pots full of wine and cups, and said unto them, drink ye wine;" so the wicked set pots of wine before others, and make them drink till reason be stupified, and lust inflamed. These are guilty of the breach of this commandment, they are murderers of souls. How sad will it be with these, who have not only their own sins, but the blood of others, to answer for? So much for the first thing forbidden in the commandment, the injuring of others.

2d. The second thing forbidden in it is, the injuring one's self. "Thou shalt not kill:" thou shalt do no hurt to thyself.

1. Thou shalt not hurt thy own body. One may be guilty of self-murder, either, 1st, indirectly and occasionally; or, 2d, directly and absolutely.

(1.) Indirectly and occasionally; as,

First, When a man thrusts himself into danger which he might prevent; as if a company of archers were shooting, and one should go and stand in the place where the arrows fly, if the arrow did kill him,

he is accessory to his own death. In the law, God would have the leper shut up, to keep others from being infected, Lev. 13:4. Now, if any would be so presumptuous as to go in to the leper, and get the plague of leprosy, he might thank himself, he occasioned his own death.

Secondly, A person may be in some sense guilty of his own death, by neglecting the use of means. If sick, and use no physic,—if he hath received a wound and will not apply balsam,—he hastens his own death. God appointed Hezekiah to lay a "lump of figs upon the boil," Isa. 38:21. If he had not used the lump of figs, he had been the cause of his own death.

Thirdly, By immoderate grief, 2 Cor. 7:10., 'the sorrow of the world worketh death;' when God takes away a dear relation, and one is swallowed up with sorrow. How many weep themselves into their graves! Queen Mary grieved so excessively for the loss of Calais, that it broke her heart.

Fourthly, By intemperance, excess in diet. Surfeiting shortens life; *plures periere crapulâ, quam gladio*; many dig their grave with their teeth; too much oil chokes the lamp; the cup kills more than the cannon. Excessive drinking causeth untimely death.

(2.) One may be guilty of self-murder, directly and absolutely.

First, By envy. Envy is *tristitia de bonis alienis*,—a secret repining at the welfare of another. *Invidus alterius rebus macrescit opimis*. An envious man is more sorry at another's prosperity, than at his own adversity; he never laughs, but when another weeps. Envy is a self-murder, a fretting canker. Cyprian calls it *vulnus occultum*,—'a secret wound;' it hurts a man's self most. Envy corrodes the heart, dries up the blood, rots the bones, Prov. 14:30., "Envy is the rottenness of the

bones." It is to the body, as the moth to the cloth, it eats it, and makes its beauty consume; envy drinks its own venom. The viper—which leaped on Paul's hand, thought to have hurt Paul, but fell herself into the fire, Acts 28:3. So, while the envious man thinks to hurt another, he destroys himself.

Second, By laying violent hands on himself, and thus he is *felo de se*; as Saul fell upon his own sword and killed himself. And because I see so many in the bills of mortality, who make away themselves, let me a little expatiate. It is the most unnatural and barbarous kind of murder for a man to butcher himself and imbrue his hands in his own blood. A man's self is most near to him, therefore this sin of self-murder breaks both the law of God, and the bonds of nature. The Lord hath placed the soul in the body, as in a prison; now it is a great sin to break prison, till God by death open the door. Self-murderers are worse than the brute-creatures: they will tear and gore one another, but no beast will go to destroy itself. Self-murder is occasioned usually from discontent; discontent is joined with a sullen melancholy. The bird that beats herself in the cage, and is ready to kill herself, is the true emblem of a discontented spirit. And this discontent ariseth, 1. From pride. A man that is swelled with an high opinion of himself, thinks he deserves better than others; and if any cross befall him, he is discontented, and now in a sudden passion will make away himself. Ahithophel had high thoughts of himself, his words were esteemed oracles; and to have his wise counsel rejected, he was not able to bear it, 2 Sam. 17:23., "He put his household in order, and hanged himself."—2. From poverty. Poverty is a sore temptation, Prov. 30:8., "Give me not poverty." Many by their sin have brought themselves to poverty: and when a great estate is boiled away to nothing, then they are discontented, and think better to die quickly, than languish in misery: hereupon the devil helps them to dispatch themselves.—3. From covetousness. Avarice is a dry

drunkenness, an horse-leech that is never satisfied. The covetous man is like Behemoth, Job 40:23., "Behold he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not." The covetous miser hoards up corn; and if he hears the price of corn begins to fall, then he is troubled, and there is no cure for his discontent but an halter.—4. From horror of mind. A man hath sinned a great sin, he hath swallowed down some pills of temptation the devil hath given him, and these pills begin to work in his conscience, and the horror is so great, that he chooseth strangling. Judas having betrayed innocent blood, he was in that agony, that he hanged himself to quiet his conscience; as if one should, to avoid the stinging of a gnat, endure the biting of a serpent. This self-murder, is an high breach of this commandment; it is an execrable sin. I can see no ground of hope for such as make away themselves; for they die in the very act of sin and cannot have time to repent.

2. Here is forbidden hurting one's own soul, "thou shalt not kill." Many who are free from other murders, yet are guilty here; they go about to murder their own souls; they are wilfully set to damn themselves, and throw themselves into hell.

QUEST. Who are they that go about desperately to murder their own souls.

Ans. 1. Such wilfully go about to murder their souls, who have no sense of God, or the other world; they are "past feeling," Eph. 4:19. Tell them of God's holiness and justice, they are not at all affected, Zech. 7:12., "They made their hearts like an adamant." The adamant saith Pliny is insuperable, the hammer cannot conquer it. Sinners have adamantine hearts. The altar of stone, when the prophet spake to it, 'rent asunder,' 1 Kings 13:5.; but sinners' hearts are so hardened in sin, that nothing will work upon them,—neither ordinances nor

judgments; they do not believe a Deity; they laugh at hell; these go about to murder their own souls, they are throwing themselves as fast as they can into hell.

A. 2. Such as are set wilfully to murder their own souls, are they who are resolved upon their lusts, let what will come of it The soul may cry out, "I am killing! I am murdering!" Eph. 4:19., "They have given themselves over to work all uncleanness with greediness." Let ministers speak to them about their sins,—let conscience speak,—let affliction speak,—yet they will have their lusts, though they go to hell for them. Are not these resolved to murder their souls? As Agrippina, mother to Nero said, *occidat modo imperet*,—'let my son kill me, so he may reign; so many say in their hearts, let our sins damn us, so they may but please us. Herod will have his incestuous lust, though it cost him his soul; men will, for a drop of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath. Are not these about to massacre and damn their own souls.

A. 3. They murder their souls, who avoid all means of saving their souls. They will go to plays, to drunken meetings, but will not set their foot within God's house, or come near the sound of the gospel-trumpet; as if one that is diseased should shun the bath, for fear of being healed. These do wilfully damn their souls, and are as great murderers of themselves, as he, who having means of cure offered him, chooseth death rather than physic.

A. 4. They do voluntarily murder their souls, who suck in false prejudices against religion; as if religion were so strict and severe, that they who espouse holiness, must live a melancholy life, like hermits and anchorites, and drown all their joy in tears. This is a slander which the devil hath east upon religion: for there is no true joy but in believing, Rom. 15:13. No honey so sweet as that which drops from a promise. Some men have foolishly taken up a prejudice

against religion; they are resolved rather never to go to heaven, than to go thither through the strait gate. I may say of prejudice, as Paul to Elymas, Acts 13:10., "O full of subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness," how many souls hast thou damned!

A. 5. They are wilfully set to murder their own souls, who will neither be good themselves, nor suffer others to be so, Mat. 23:13., "Ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in." Such are those that persecute others for their religion. Drunken meetings shall escape punishments; but, if men meet to serve God, then let all severity be used. These are resolved to shipwreck others, though they themselves are cast away in the storm. Oh! take heed of this, of murdering your own souls; no creature but man doth willingly kill itself. So I have done with the first, the sin forbidden in this commandment, 'thou shalt not kill.'

EXOD. 20:13. Thou shalt not kill.

II. The duty implied is, that we should do all the good we can to ourselves and others.

1st. In reference to others: we should endeavour to preserve the lives and souls of others. 2d. In reference to ourselves: to preserve our own life and soul.

1st. In reference to others. 1. To preserve the life of others. Comfort them in their sorrows,—relieve them in their wants,—be as the good Samaritan, pour wine and oil into their wounds: Job 29:16., "I was a father to the poor; v. 13. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me." This is a great means of preserving the life of another, by relieving him when he is ready to perish. Pompey, when there was a great dearth in Rome, provided corn for their relief; and

when the mariners were backward to sail thither in a tempest, said he, "It is not necessary that we should live, but it is necessary that Rome be relieved." Grace makes the heart tender,—it causeth sympathy and charity; as it melts the heart, in contrition towards God, so in compassion towards others, Ps. 112:9., "He hath dispersed,—he hath given to the poor." This the commandment implies, that we should be so far from ruining others, that we should do all we can to preserve the lives of others. When we see the picture of death drawn in their faces, administer to their necessities,—be temporal saviours to them,—draw them out of the waters of affliction with a silver cord of charity. That I may persuade you to this, let me lay before you arguments:

First. Works of charity evidence grace.

1. Faith. James 2:18., "I will show thee my faith by my works." Works are faith's letters of credence to show. We judge of the health of the body by the pulse where the blood stirs and operates: Christian, judge of the health of thy faith by the pulse of charity: the word of God is the rule of faith, and good works are the witnesses of faith.

2. Love. Love loves mercy: it is a noble bountiful grace. Mary loved Christ, and how liberal was her love! She bestowed on Christ her tears, kisses, costly ointments. Love, like a full vessel, will have vent; it vents itself in acts of liberality.

Secondly. To communicate to the necessities of others, is not arbitrary (it is not left to our choice whether we will or no) but it is a duty incumbent, 1 Tim. 6:17, 18., "Charge them that are rich in this world that they do good, that they be rich in good works." This is not only a counsel, but a charge. If God should lay a charge upon the inanimate creatures, they would obey; if he would charge the rocks, they would send forth water; if he should charge the clouds, they

would melt into showers; if he should charge the stones, they would become bread. And shall we be harder than the stones not to obey God, when he chargeth us to "be rich in good works?"

Thirdly. God supplies our wants, and shall not we supply the wants of others? "We could not live without mercy." God makes every creature helpful to us; the sun doth enrich us with its golden beams, —the earth yields us its increase, veins of gold, crops of corn, store of flowers. God opens the treasury of his mercy; he feeds us every day out of the alms-basket of his providence: "Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing," Ps. 145:16. Now, doth God supply our wants, and shall not we minister to the wants of others? Shall we be only as a sponge to suck in mercy, and not as breasts to milk it out to others?

Fourthly. Herein we resemble God, to be doing good to others. It is our excellency to be like God: 'godliness is God-likeness.' And wherein are we more like to him, than in acts of bounty and munificence? Ps. 119:68., "Thou art good, and doest good." "Thou art good,"—there is God's essential goodness; and "doest good,"—there is his communicative goodness. The more helpful we are to others, the more like we are to God; we cannot be like God in omniscieny or in working miracles, but we may be like him in doing works of mercy.

Fifthly. God remembers all our deeds of charity, and takes them kindly at our hands: Heb. 6:10., "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which you have shewed towards his name, in that you have ministered unto the saints." The chief butler may forget Joseph's kindness, but the Lord will not forget any kindness we shew to his people: Mat. 25:35., "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink." Christ takes the kindness done to his saints, as done to himself. God, that hath a

bottle for your tears, hath a book to write down your alms, Mal. 3:16., "A book of remembrance was written before him." Tamerlane had a register to write down all the names and good services of his soldiers: so, God hath a book of remembrance to write down all your charitable works, and at the day of judgment there shall be an open and honourable mention made of them in presence of the angels.

Sixthly. Hard-heartedness to them in misery reproacheth the gospel. When men's hearts are like pieces of rocks, or as the scales of the leviathan, "shut up together as with a close seal," Job 41:15., you may as well extract oil of flint, as the golden oil of charity out of their hearts. These unchristian themselves. Unmercifulness is the sin of the heathen, Rom. 1:31. Without mercy. It eclipseth the glory of the gospel. Doth the gospel teach uncharitableness? Doth it not bid us "draw out thy soul to the hungry?" Isa. 58:10; Tit. 3:8., "These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works." While you relieve not such as are in want, you walk antipodes to the gospel; you cause it to be evil spoken of, and lay it open to the lash and censure of others.

Seventhly. There is nothing lost by relieving the necessitous. The Shunamite woman was kind to the prophet, she welcomed him to her house, and she received kindness from him another way; he restored her dead child to life, 2 Kings 4:35. Such as are helpful to others, shall "find mercy to help in time of need." Such as pour out the golden oil of compassion to others, God will pour out the golden oil of salvation to them; for "a cup of cold water" they shall have "rivers of pleasure." Nay, God will make it up some way or other in this life, Prov. 11:25., "The liberal soul shall be made fat;" as the loaves in breaking multiplied; or, as the widow's oil increased in pouring out, 1 Kings 17:10. An estate may be imparted, yet not impaired.

Eighthly. To do good to others in necessity, keeps up the credit of religion. Works of mercy adorn the gospel, as the fruit adorns the tree; when 'our light so shines that others see our good works,' this glorifies God, crowns religion, silenceth the lips of gainsayers. Basil saith, nothing rendered the true religion more famous in the primitive times, and made more proselytes to it, than the bounty and charity of the Christians.

Ninthly, and lastly. The evil that doth accrue by not preserving the lives of others, and helping them in their necessities: God sends oft a secret moth into their estate, Prov. 11:24., "There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty," Prov. 21:13., "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard," James 2:13., "He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy." Dives denied Lazarus a crumb of bread, and Dives was denied a drop of water, Mat. 25:41, 42., "Depart from me, ye cursed; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat." Christ saith not ye took away my meat; but "ye gave me no meat;" ye did not feed my members, therefore, "depart from me." By all this, be ready to distribute to the necessities of others. This is included in the commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill.' Not only thou shalt not destroy his life, but thou shalt preserve it by ministering to his necessities.

2. It is implied, that we should endeavour to preserve the souls of others; counsel them about their souls,—set life and death before them,—help them to heaven. In the law, if one met his neighbour's ox or ass going astray, he must bring him back again, Exod. 33:4.; much more, if we see our neighbour's soul going astray, we should use all means to bring him back to God by repentance.

2d. In reference to ourselves. The commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," requires that we should preserve our own life and soul.—1. It is engraven upon every creature, that we should preserve our own natural life. We must be so far from self-murder, that we must do all we can to preserve our natural life; we must use all means of diet, exercise and lawful recreation, which is like oil to preserve the lamp of life from going out. Some have been under temptation; Satan has suggested they are such sinners as do not deserve a bit or bread, and so they have been ready to starve themselves: this is contrary to this sixth commandment, "thou shalt do no murder;" it is implied, we are to use all means for the preservation of our own life, 1 Tim. 5:23., "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake." Timothy was not by drinking too much water to overcool his stomach, and weaken nature, but we must use means for self-preservation, 'drink a little wine,' &c.

2. This commandment requires, that we should endeavour (as to preserve our own life, so especially) to preserve our own souls.—

Omnia perdas animam servare memento. It is engraven upon every creature, as with the point of a diamond, that it should look to its own preservation. If the life of the body must be preserved, then much more the life of the soul. If he who doth not provide for his own house is worse than an infidel, 1 Tim. 5:8., then much more he who doth not provide for his own soul. This is a main thing implied in the commandment, a special care for the preserving our souls; the soul is the jewel, the soul is a diamond set in a ring of clay; Christ puts the soul in balance with the world, and it outweighs, Mat. 16:26. The soul is a glass, in which some rays of divine glory shine; it hath in it some faint idea and resemblance of a Deity; it is a celestial spark lighted by the breath of God. The body was made of the dust, but the

soul is of a more noble extract and original, Gen. 2:7., "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."

1. The soul is excellent in its nature. It is a spiritual being,—'it is a kind of angelical thing,'—the mind sparkles with knowledge, the will is crowned with liberty, and all the affections are as stars shining in their orb. The soul being spiritual, (1.) It is of quick operation. How quick are the motions of a spark! How swift the wing of a cherubim! So quick and agile is the motion of the soul. What is quicker than a thought? How many miles can the soul travel in an instant! (2.) The soul, being spiritual, moves upward,—it contemplates God and glory, Ps. 73:25., "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" The motion of the soul is upward; only sin hath put a wrong bias upon the soul, and made it move too much downward. (3) The soul being spiritual, hath a self-moving power; it can subsist and move when the body is dead, as the mariner can subsist when the ship is broken. (4.) The soul, being spiritual, is immortal, *æternitatis gemma*,—'a bud of eternity.'
SCALIGER.

2. As the soul is excellent in its nature, so in its capacities. It is capable of grace,—it is fit to be an associate and companion of angels. It is capable of communion with God,—of being Christ's spouse, 2 Cor. 12:15., That I might espouse your virgin souls to Christ. It is capable of being crowned with glory for ever. O then, carrying such precious souls about you, created with the breath of God, redeemed with the blood of God, what endeavours should you use for the saving of these souls! Let not the devil have your souls. Heliogabalus fed his lions with pheasants: the devil is called a roaring lion, feed him not with your souls. Besides the excellency of the soul, which may make you labour to get it saved, consider how sad it will be not to have the soul saved; it is such a loss as there is none like it; because, in losing the soul you lose a great many things with it. A

merchant in losing his ship, loseth many things with it; he loseth money, jewels, spices, &c. so, he that loseth his soul loseth Christ, the company of angels in heaven; it is an infinite loss, and it is an irreparable loss; it can never be made up again. Two eyes but one soul, CHRYS. O what care should be taken of the immortal soul! I would request but this of you, that you would but take as much care for the saving of your souls, as you do for the getting of an estate: nay, I will say this, do but take as much care for the saving your souls as the devil doth for destroying them. O how industrious is Satan to damn souls! How doth he play the serpent in his subtle laying of snares to catch souls! How doth he shoot fiery darts; the devil is never idle; the devil is a busy bishop in his diocese, he "walketh about seeking whom he may devour," 1 Pet. 5:8. Now, is not this a reasonable request, to take but as much care for the saving of your souls, as the devil doth for the destroying of them?

QUEST. How shall we do to get our souls saved?

Ans. By having them sanctified. Only the "pure in heart shall see God." Get your souls inlaid and enamelled with holiness, 1 Pet. 1:16. It is not enough that 'we cease to do evil,' (which is all the evidence some have to shew) this is to lose heaven by short shooting; but we must be inwardly sanctified; not only the 'unclean spirit' must go out, but we must be filled with the 'Holy Ghost,' Eph. 5:18. This holiness must needs be, if you consider God is to dwell with you here, and you are to dwell with him hereafter.

First. God is to dwell with you here God takes up the soul for his own lodging, Eph. 3:17., "That Christ may dwell in your heart." Therefore the soul must be consecrated. A king's palace must be kept clean, especially his presence-chamber. "The body is the temple of the Holy

Ghost," 1 Cor. 6:19. then the soul is the sanctum sanctorum: how holy ought that to be?

Secondly. You are to dwell with God. Heaven is an holy place, 1 Pet. 1:4., "An inheritance undefiled." And how can you dwell with God till you are sanctified? We do not put wine into a musty vessel: God will not put the new wine of glory into a sinful heart. O then, as you love your souls, and would have them saved eternally, endeavour after holiness! By this means you will have an identity and fitness for the kingdom of heaven, and your souls will be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

OF THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:14. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

God is a pure, holy spirit, and hath an infinite antipathy against all uncleanness. In this commandment he hath entered his caution against it, *non mæchaberis*,—"Thou shalt not commit adultery." The sum of this commandment is, the preservation of corporal purity. We must take heed of running on the rock of uncleanness, and so making shipwreck of our chastity. In this commandment there is something tacitly implied, and something expressly forbidden.

I. Something tacitly implied, viz. That the ordinance of marriage should be observed.

II. Something expressly forbidden, viz. The infecting ourselves with bodily pollutions, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

I. Something implied,—that the ordinance of marriage should be observed, 1 Cor. 7:2., "Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled," Heb. 13:4. God did institute marriage in paradise; he brought the woman to the man, Gen. 2:22. He did it as it were give them in marriage. And Jesus Christ did honour marriage with his presence, John 2:2. The first miracle he wrought was at a marriage, when he turned the water into wine. Marriage is a type and resemblance of the mystical union between Christ and his church, Eph. 5:32. Concerning marriage,

1st. There are general duties.—1. The general duty of the husband is to rule, Eph. 5:23., "The husband is the head of the wife." The head is

the seat of rule and government; but he must rule with discretion. He is head, therefore must not rule without reason.—2. The general duty on the wife's part is submission. Eph. 5:22., "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." It is observable the Holy Ghost passed by Sarah's failings, he doth not mention her unbelief, but he takes notice of that which was good in her, her reverence and obedience to her husband, 1 Pet. 3:6., "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord."

2d. Special duties belonging to marriage are love and fidelity.—1. Love, Eph. 5:25., Love is the marriage of the affections. There is as it were but one heart in two bodies; love lines the yoke and makes it easy; love perfumes the marriage relation, without which it is not conjugium but conjurgium; it is like two poisons in one stomach, one is ever sick of the other.—2. Fidelity. In marriage there is mutual promise of living together faithfully according to God's holy ordinance. Among the Romans, on the day of marriage, the woman presented to her husband fire and water: fire refines metal, water cleanseth,—hereby signifying, that she would live with her husband in chastity and sincerity. This is the first thing in the commandment implied, that the ordinance of marriage should be purely observed.

II. The thing forbidden in the commandment, i.e. infecting ourselves with bodily pollution and uncleanness. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." The fountain of this sin is lust. Since the fall, holy love is degenerated to lust. Lust is the fever of the soul. There is a two-fold adultery: 1. Mental, Mat. 5:28., "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." As a man may die of an inward bleeding, so he may be damned for the inward boilings of lust, if they be not mortified.—2. Corporal adultery,—when sin hath conceived, and brought forth in the act. This is expressly forbidden under a sub pœna, "Thou shalt not

commit adultery." This commandment is set as an hedge to keep out uncleanness; and they that break this hedge a serpent shall bite them. Job calls adultery an heinous crime, Job. 31:11. Every failing is not a crime; and every crime is not an heinous crime; but adultery is flagitium,—an heinous crime. The Lord calls it villany, Jer. 29:23., "They have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives."

QUEST. Wherein appears the heinousness of this sin of adultery?

Ans. 1. In that adultery is the breach of the marriage-oath. When persons come together in a matrimonial way they bind themselves by covenant each to other, in the presence of God, to be true and faithful in the conjugal relation. Unchastity is a falsifying this solemn oath; and herein adultery is worse than fornication, because it is a breach of the conjugal bond.

A. 2. The heinousness of adultery lies in this, That it is such an high dishonour done to God. God saith, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." The adulterer sets his will above God's law, tramples upon God's command, affronts him to his face; as if a subject should tear his prince's proclamation. The adulterer is highly injurious to all the persons in the Trinity. 1. To God the Father. Sinner, God hath given thee thy life, and thou dost waste the lamp of thy life, the flower of thy age in lewdness; he hath bestowed on thee many mercies, health and estate, and thou spendest all on harlots. Did God give thee wages to serve the devil? 2. Injurious to God the Son, two ways. First, As he hath purchased thee with his blood, 1 Cor. 6:20., "Ye are bought with a price." Now, he who is bought is not his own; it is a sin for him to go to another, without consent from Christ, who hath 'bought him with a price.' Secondly, By virtue of baptism thou art a Christian, and professest that Christ is thy head, and thou art a member of Christ;

therefore, what an injury is it to Christ, to take the members of Christ, and make them the "members of a harlot?" 1 Cor. 6:15. 3. It is injurious to God the Holy Ghost; for the body is his temple, 1 Cor. 6:19., "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" And what a sin is it to defile his temple!

A. 3. The heinousness of adultery lies in this, that it is committed with mature deliberation. First, there is the contriving the sin in the mind, then consent in the will, and then the sin is put forth into act. To sin against the light of nature, and to sin deliberately, is like the dye to the wool, it gives sin a tincture, and dyes it of a crimson colour.

A. 4. That which makes adultery so heinous, is, that it is a sin after remedy. God hath provided a remedy to prevent this sin, 1 Cor. 7:2., "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife." Therefore after this remedy prescribed, to be guilty of fornication or adultery, is inexcusable; it is like a rich thief, that steals when he hath no need. This doth enhance and accent the sin, and make it heinous.

Use 1st. It condemns the church of Rome, who allow the sin of fornication and adultery. They suffer not their priests to marry, but they may have their courtezans. The worst kind of uncleanness, incest with the nearest of kin, is dispensed with for money. It was once said of Rome, *Urbs est jam toot lupanar*,—Rome is become a common stew. And no wonder, when the pope could for a sum of money give them a license and patent to commit uncleanness; and, if the patent were not enough, he would give them a pardon! Many of the papists judge fornication venial. God condemns the very lusting, Mat. 5:28. It God condemns the thought, how dare they allow the fact of fornication? You see what a cage of unclean birds the church of Rome is; they call themselves the Holy Catholic Church, but, how

can they be holy, who are so steeped and parboiled in fornication, incest, sodomy, and all manner of uncleanness?

Use 2d. It is matter of lamentation to see this commandment so slighted and violated among us. Adultery is the reigning sin of the times, Hos. 7:4., "They are all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker." The time of K. Henry VIII. was called the golden age, but this may be called the unclean age, wherein whore-hunting is common: Ezek. 24:13., "In thy filthiness is lewdness." Luther tells of one who said, if he might but satisfy his lust, and be carried from one whore-house to another, he would desire no other heaven; afterwards he breathed out his soul betwixt two notorious strumpets. This is to be the right seed of Adam, to love the forbidden fruit, to love to drink of stolen waters: Ezek. 8:8, 9., "Son of man, dig now in the wall; and when I had digged, behold a door; and he said unto me, Go in and behold the wicked abominations that they do here." Could we, as the prophet, dig in the walls of many houses, what vile abominations should we see there! In some chambers we might see fornication; dig further, and see adultery; dig further, and we may may see incest, &c. And may not the Lord go from his sanctuary; as Ezek. 8:6., "Seest thou the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary?" God might remove his gospel, and then we might write Ichabod on this nation, 'The glory is departed.' Let us mourn for what we cannot reform.

Use 3d. It exhorts us to keep ourselves from this sin of adultery, "Let every man have his own wife," saith Paul, 1 Cor. 7:2., not his concubine, nor his courtesan. Now, that I may deter you from adultery, let me shew you the great evil of it.

First, It is a thievish sin. Adultery is the highest sort of theft; the adulterer steals from his neighbour that which is more than his

goods and estate,—he steals away his wife from him, 'who is flesh of his flesh.'

Secondly, Adultery debaseth a person; it makes him resemble the beasts; therefore the adulterer is described like an horse neighing, Jer. 5:8., "Every one neighed after his neighbour's wife." Nay, this is worse than brutish; for some creatures that are void of reason, yet, by the instinct of nature, observe a kind of decorum of chastity. The turtle-dove is a chaste creature, and keeps to its mate; the stork, wherever he flies, comes into no nest but his own. Naturalists write, if a stork, leaving his own mate, joineth with any other, all the rest of the storks fall upon him, and pull his feathers from him. Adultery is worse than brutish, it degrades a person of his honour.

Thirdly, Adultery doth pollute and befilthy a person. The devil is called an "unclean spirit," Luke 11:24. The adulterer is the devil's first-born; he is unclean,—he is a moving quagmire,—he is all over ulcerated with sin,—his eyes sparkle with lust,—his mouth foams out filth,—his heart burns like mount Etna, in unclean desires,—he is so filthy that if he die in this sin all the flames of hell will never purge away his uncleanness. And, as for the adulteress, who can paint her black enough? The scripture calls her "a deep ditch," Prov. 23:27. She is a common sewer; whereas a believer, his body is a living temple, and his soul a little heaven bespangled with the graces as so many little stars. The body of an harlot is a walking dung-hill, and her soul a lesser hell.

Fourthly, Adultery is destructive to the body, Prov. 5:11., "And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed." It brings into a consumption. Uncleanness turns the body into an hospital,—it wastes the radical moisture, rots the skull, eats the beauty of the face. As the flame wastes the candle, so the fire of lust

consumes the bones. The adulterer hastens his own death, Prov. 7:23., "Till a dart strike through his liver." The Romans had their funerals at the gate of Venus's temple, to signify that lust brings death. Venus is lust.

Fifthly, Adultery is is a purgatory to the purse: as it wastes the body, so the estate, Prov. 6:26., "By means of a whorish woman, a man is brought to a piece of bread." Whores are the devil's horse-leeches,—sponges that will soon suck in all one's money. The prodigal had soon spent his portion when once he fell among harlots, Luke 15:30. King Edward III. his concubine, when he lay a-dying, got all she could from him, and plucked the rings off his fingers, and so left him. He that lives in luxury, dies in beggary.

Sixthly, Adultery blots and eclipseth the name, Prov. 6:32, 33., "Whoso committeth adultery with a woman, a wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away." Some while they get wounds, get honour. The soldier's wounds are full of honour; the martyr's wounds for Christ are full of honour; these get honour while they get wounds: but the adulterer gets wounds in his name, but no honour: "His reproach shall not be wiped away." The wounds of the name no physician can heal. The adulterer, when he is dead, his shame lives. When his body rots under ground, his name rots above ground. His base-born children will be the living monuments of his shame.

Seventhly, This sin doth much eclipse the light of reason,—it steals away the understanding,—it stupifies the heart, Hos. 4:11., "Whoredom takes away the heart." It eats out all heart for good. Solomon besotted himself with women, and they enticed him to idolatry.

Eighthly, This sin of adultery ushers in temporal judgments. The Mosaical law made adultery death, Lev. 20:10., "The adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death;" and the usual death was stoning, Deut. 22:24. The Saxons commanded the persons taken in this sin to be burnt. The Romans caused their heads to be stricken off. This sin like a scorpion carries a sting in the tail of it. The adultery of Paris and Helena, a beautiful strumpet, ended in the ruin of Troy, and was the death both of Paris and Helena. "Jealousy is the rage of a man;" and the adulterer is oft killed in the act of his sin. Adultery cost Otho the emperor, and pope Sixtus IV. their lives. 'Lætus venire Venus tristis abire solet.' I have read of two citizens in London, 1583, who defiling themselves with adultery on the Lord's day, were immediately struck dead with a fire from heaven. If all that were now guilty of this sin should be punished in this manner, it would rain fire again, as on Sodom.

Ninthly, Adultery (without repentance) damns the soul, 1 Cor. 6:9., "Neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate," shall enter into the kingdom of God. The fire of lust brings to the fire of hell, Heb. 13:4., "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Though men may neglect to judge them, yet God will judge them. But will not God judge all other sinners? Yes. Why then doth the apostle say, 'Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge?' The meaning is, 1. He will judge them assuredly; they shall not escape the hand of justice. 2. He will punish them severely, 2 Pet. 2:9., "The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished, but chiefly them that walk in the lust of uncleanness." The harlot's breast keeps from Abraham's bosom, *Momentaneum est quod delectat, æternum quod cruciat.* Who would, for a cup of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath? Prov. 9:18., "Her guests are in the depths of hell." A wise traveller, when he comes to his inn, though many pleasant dishes are set before him, yet he forbears to taste,

because of the reckoning which will be brought in: we are here all travellers to Jerusalem above, and though many baits of temptation are set before us, yet we should forbear, and think of the reckoning which will be brought in at death. With what stomach could Dionysius eat his dainties, when he imagined there was a naked sword hung over his head as he sat at meat? While the adulterer feeds on strange flesh, the sword of God's justice hangs over his head. Causinus speaks of a tree that grows in Spain, that is of a sweet smell, and pleasant to the taste, but the juice of it is poisonous: the emblem of an harlot,—she is perfumed with powders, and fair to look on, but poisonous and damnable to the soul, Prov. 7:26., "She hath cast down many wounded, yea, many strong men have been slain by her."

Tenthly, The adulterer doth not only wrong his own soul, but doth what in him lies to destroy the soul of another, and so kill two at once. And thus the adulterer is worse than the thief; for, suppose a thief rob a man, yea, take away his life, yet that man's soul may be happy, he may go to heaven as well as if he had died in his bed. But he who commits adultery endangers the soul of another, and deprives her of salvation so far as in him lies. Now, what a fearful thing is it to be an instrument to draw another to hell!

Eleventhly, The adulterer is abhorred of God, Prov. 22:14., "The mouth of strange women is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein." What can be worse than to be abhorred of God? God may be angry with his own children; but for God to abhor a man, is the highest degree of hatred.

QUEST. But how doth the Lord show his abhorrence of the adulterer?

Ans. In giving him up to a reprobate mind, and a seared conscience, Rom. 1:28. And now he is in such a condition that he cannot repent. This is to be abhorred of God; such a person stands upon the threshold of hell, and when death gives him a jog, he tumbles in. All which may sound a retreat in our ears, and call us off from the pursuit of so damnable a sin as uncleanness. I will conclude with two scriptures, Prov. 5:8., "Come not nigh the door of her house;" Prov. 7:27., "Her house is the way to hell."

Twelfthly, Adultery is a sower of discord; it destroys peace and love, the two best flowers which grow in a family Adultery sets husband against wife, and wife against husband; and so it causeth the 'joints of the same body to smite one against another.' And this division in a family works confusion; for "A house divided against a house falleth," Luke 11:17.,. Omne divisibile est corruptibile.

QUEST. How may we abstain from this sin of adultery?

Ans. I shall lay down some directions, by way of antidote, to keep you from being infected with this sin.—1. Come not into the company of a whorish woman; avoid her house, as a seaman doth a rock, Prov. 5:8., "Come not near the door of her house." He who would not have the plague, must not come near houses infected; every whore-house hath the plague in it. Not to beware of the occasion of sin, and yet pray, "Lead us not into temptation," is, as if one should put his finger into the candle, and yet pray that it may not be burnt.—2. Look to your eyes. Much sin comes in by the eye, 2 Pet. 2:14., "Having eyes full of adultery." The eye tempts the fancy, and the fancy works upon the heart. A wanton amorous eye may usher in sin. Eve first saw the tree of knowledge, and then she took, Gen. 3:6. First she looked and then she loved. The eye oft sets the heart on fire; therefore Job laid a law upon his eyes, Job 31:1., "I made a covenant with my eyes, why

then should I think upon a maid?" Democritus the philosopher plucked out his eyes because he would not be tempted with vain objects: the scripture doth not bid us do so, but set a watch before our eyes.—3. Look to your lips. Take heed of any unseemly word that may enkindle unclean thoughts in yourselves or others, 1 Cor. 15:33., "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Impure discourse is the bellows to blow up the fire of lust. Much evil is conveyed to the heart by the tongue, Ps. 141:3., "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth."—4. Look in a special manner to your heart, Prov. 4:23., "Keep thy heart with all diligence." Every one hath a tempter in his own bosom, Mat. 15:19., "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts." And thinking of sin makes way for the act of sin. Suppress the first risings of sin in your heart. As the serpent, when danger is near, keeps his head; so keep your heart, which is the spring from whence all lustful motions do proceed.—5. Look to your attire. We read of "the attire of a harlot," Prov. 7:10. A wanton dress is a provocation to lust. Curlings and towerings of the hair, a painted face, naked breasts, are allurements to vanity. Where the bush is hung out, people will go in and taste of the liquor. Hierom saith, such as by their lascivious attire endeavour to draw others to lust, though no evil follow, yet these tempters shall be punished, because they offered poison to others though they would not drink.—6. Take heed of evil company. *Serpunt vitia et en proximum quemque transiliunt, SEN.* Sin is a disease very catching; one man tempts another to sin, and hardens him in sin. There are three cords to draw men to adultery: the inclination of the heart,—the persuasion of evil company,—and the embraces of the harlot; and this threefold cord is not easily broken, Ps. 106:18., "A fire was kindled in their company." I may allude to it, the fire of lust is kindled in bad company.—7. Beware of going to plays. A play-house is oft a preface to a whore-house,—*Ludi præbent semina nequitiaë.* We are bid to avoid all appearance of evil: are not plays the appearance of evil? Such sights

are there as are not fit to be beheld with chaste eyes. Both Fathers and Councils have shewn their dislike of going to plays. A learned divine observes, that many have on their death-beds, confessed with tears, that the pollution of their bodies hath been occasioned by going to plays.—8. Take heed of mixed dancing. Instrumenta luxuria tripudia. From dancing, people come to dalliance one with another, and from dalliance to uncleanness. There is, saith Calvin, for the most part, some unchaste behaviour in dancing. Dances draw the heart to folly by wanton gestures, by unchaste touches, by lustful looks. St. Chrysostom did inveigh against mixed dancing in his time. "We read (saith he) of a marriage-feast, and of virgins going before with lamps," Mat. 25:10., 'but of dancing there we read not.' Many have been ensnared by dancing; as the duke of Normandy and others. *Saltatio ad adulteras non pudicas pertinet*, AMB. Chrysostom saith, where dancing is, there the devil is: I speak chiefly of mixed dancing. And, whereas we read of dances in scripture, Exod. 15, those were sober and modest. They were not mixed dances, but pious and religious, being usually accompanied with singing praises to God.—9. Take heed of lascivious books, and those pictures that provoke to lust. (1.) Books. As the reading of the scripture doth stir up love to God, so reading of bad books doth stir up the mind to wickedness. I could name one who published a book to the world full of effeminate, amorous, and wanton expressions: before he died, he was much troubled for it, and did burn that book, which did make so many burn in lust. (2.) And to lascivious books, I may add lascivious pictures, which bewitch the eye, and are the incendiaries of lust. They secretly convey poison to the heart. *Qui aspicit innocens aspectu fit nocens*. Popish pictures are not more prone to stir up idolatry, than unclean pictures are to stir up to concupiscence.—10. Take heed of excess in diet. When gluttony and drunkenness lead the van, chambering and wantonness bring up the rear. *Vinum fomentum libidinis*; any wine inflames lust; and fulness of bread is

made the cause of Sodom's uncleanness, Ezek. 16:49. The rankest weeds grow out of the fattest soil; uncleanness proceeds from excess, Jer. 5:8., When they were fed to the full, "every one neighed after his neighbour's wife." Get the 'golden bridle of temperance.' God allows recruits of nature, and what may fit us the better for his service; but beware of surfeit. Excess in the creature clouds the mind, chokes good affections, provokes lust. St. Paul did keep under his body, 1 Cor. 9:27. The flesh pampered is apt to rebel,—Corpus impinguatam recalcitrat.—11. Take heed of idleness. When a man is out of a calling, now he is fit to receive any temptation. We do not use to sow seed in fallow-ground: but the devil sows most seed of temptation in such as lie fallow. Idleness is the cause of sodomy and uncleanness, Ezek. 16:49. When David was idle on the top of his leads, then he espied Bathsheba, and took her to him, 2 Sam. 11:4. Hierom gave his friend this counsel, to be always well-employed in God's vineyard; that when the devil came, he might have no leisure to listen to a temptation.—12. To avoid fornication and adultery, let every man have a chaste, entire love to his own wife. Ezekiel's wife was the desire of his eyes, chap. 24:16. When Solomon had dissuaded from strange women, he prescribes a remedy against it, Prov. 5:18., "Rejoice with the wife of thy youth." It is not the having a wife, but the loving a wife, makes a man live chastely. He who loves his wife—whom Solomon calls his fountain—will not go abroad to drink of muddy, poisoned waters. Pure conjugal love is a gift of God, and comes from heaven; this, like the vestal fire, must be cherished, that it do not go out. He who loves not his wife, is the likeliest person to embrace the bosom of a stranger.—13. Labour to get the fear of God into your hearts, Prov. 16:6., "By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil." As the banks keep out the water, so the fear of the Lord keeps out uncleanness. Such as want the fear of God, want the bridle that should check them from sin. How did Joseph keep from his mistress's temptation? The fear of God pulled him back, Gen. 39:9.,

"How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" St. Bernard calls holy fear, *janitor animæ*,—'the door-keeper of the soul.' As a nobleman's porter stands at the door, and keeps out vagrants, so the fear of God stands and keeps out all sinful temptations from entering.—14. Get a delight in the word of God, Ps. 119:103., "How sweet are thy words to my taste!" St. Chrysostom compares God's word to a garden. If we walk in this garden, and suck sweetness from the flowers of the promises, we shall never care to pluck the 'forbidden fruit.' *Sint castæ deliciæ meæ scripturæ*, AUG. The reason why persons seek after unchaste, sinful pleasures, is, because they have no better. Cæsar riding through a city, and seeing the women play with dogs and parrots, said, 'Sure they have no children:' so they that sport with harlots, it is because they have no better pleasures. He that hath once tasted Christ in a promise, is ravished with delight; and how would he scorn a motion to sin! Job said, the word was his "necessary food," Job 23:12. No wonder then he made 'a covenant with his eyes.'—15. If you would abstain from adultery, use serious consideration. Consider,

(1.) God sees thee in the act of sin. He sees all thy curtain wickedness. He is *totus oculus*,—all eye, AUG. The clouds are no canopy, the night is no curtain to hide thee from God's eye. Thou canst not sin, but thy judge looks on, Jer. 13:27., "I have seen thy adulteries and thy neighings," Jer. 29:23., "They have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives;" even I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord.

(2.) Few that are entangled in the sin of adultery recover out of the snare, Prov. 2:19., "None that go to her return again." That made some of the ancients conclude that adultery was an unpardonable sin; but not so. David repented, and Mary Magdalene was a weeping penitent; her amorous eyes that had sparkled with lust, she seeks to be revenged of them, she washed Christ's feet with her tears: so that

some have recovered out of the snare. But "none that go to her return," that is, 'very few;' it is rare to hear of any who are enchanted and bewitched with this sin of adultery, that recover out of it, Eccles. 7:26., "Her heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands." "Her heart is snares," that is, she is subtle to deceive those who come to her; and, "her hands as bands," that is, her embraces are powerful to hold and entangle her lovers. Plutarch said of the Persian kings, 'They were captives to their concubines;' they were so inflamed, that they had no power to leave their company. This consideration may make all fearful of this sin; 'none that go to her return again.' Soft pleasures harden the heart.

(3.) Consider what the scripture saith, and it may ponere obicem,—lay a bar in the way to this sin, Mal. 3:5., "I will be a swift witness against adulterers." It is good when God is a witness 'for us,' when he witnesseth for our sincerity, as he did for Job: but it is sad to have God a 'witness against us.' 'I (saith God) will be a witness against the adulterer.' And who shall disprove his witness? And he is both witness and judge, Heb. 13:4., "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

(4.) Consider the sad farewell this sin of adultery leaves: it leaves an hell in the conscience, Prov. 5:3, 4., "The lips of a strange woman drop as an honey-comb, but her end is bitter as wormwood." The goddess Diana was so artificially drawn, that she seemed to smile upon those that came into her temple, but frown on those that went out. So the harlot smiles on her lovers as they come to her, but at last comes the frown and sting. "A dart strikes through their liver," Prov. 7:23. "Her end is bitter." When a man hath been virtuous, the labour is gone, but the comfort remains; but when he hath been vicious and unclean, the pleasure is gone, but the sting remains. Delectat in momentum, cruciat in æternum, JEROM. When the senses have

been feasted with unchaste pleasures, the soul is left to pay the reckoning. Stolen waters are sweet; but, as poison, though it be sweet in the mouth, it torments the bowels. Sin always ends in a tragedy. Memorable is that which Fincelius reports of a priest in Flanders, who enticed a maid to uncleanness. She objected how vile a sin it was; he told her, by authority from the pope he could commit any sin; so at last he drew her to his wicked purpose. But when they had been together a while, in came the devil, and took away the harlot from the priest's side, and, notwithstanding all her crying out, carried her away. If all that are guilty of bodily uncleanness in this nation, should have the devil come and carry them away, I fear more would be carried away than would be left behind.

16. Pray against this sin. Luther gave a lady this advice, that when any lust began to rise in her heart, she should go to prayer. Prayer is the best armour of proof; prayer quencheth the wild fire of lust. If prayer will "cast out the devil," why may it not cast out those lusts that come from the devil?

Use ult. If the body must be kept pure from defilement, much more the soul of a Christian must be kept pure. This is the meaning of the commandment, not only that we should not stain our bodies with adultery, but that we should keep our souls pure. To have a chaste body but an unclean soul, is like a fair face with bad lungs; or a gilt chimney-piece, that is all soot within, 1 Pet. 1:16., "Be ye holy, for I am holy." The soul cannot be lovely to God, till it hath Christ's image stamped upon it, which image consists in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. 4:14. The soul must especially be kept pure, because it is the chief place of God's residence, Eph. 3:17. A king's palace must be kept clean, especially his presence-chamber. If the body is the temple, the soul is the 'holy of holies,' this must be consecrated. We

must not only keep our bodies from carnal pollution, but our souls from envy and malice.

QUEST. How shall we know our souls are pure?

Ans. 1. If our souls are pure, then we flee from the appearance of evil, 1 Thess. 5:22. We will not do that which looks like sin. When Joseph's mistress did court and tempt him, he "left his garment in her hand, and fled," Gen. 39:12. It was suspicious to be near her. Polycarp would not be seen in company with Marcion the heretic, because it would not be good report.

2. If our souls are pure, this light of purity will shine forth. Aaron had 'Holiness to the Lord' written upon his golden plate: where there is sanctity in the soul, there 'Holiness to the Lord' is engraven upon our life; we are adorned with patience, humility, good works, and shine as "lights in the world," Phil. 2:15. Carry Christ's picture in your conversation, 1 John 2:6 O let us labour for this soul purity! Without it there is no 'seeing of God,' Heb. 12:14: 'What communion hath light with darkness?' And that we may keep our souls pure, (1.) Have recourse to the blood of Christ; this is the "fountain set open for sin and uncleanness," Zech. 13:1. A soul steeped in the brinish tears of repentance, and bathed in the blood of Christ, is made pure. (2.) Pray much for pureness of soul, Ps. 51:10., "Create in me a clean heart, O God." Some pray for children, others for riches; but pray for soul-purity. Say, "Lord, though my body is kept pure, yet, Lord, my soul is defiled, I pollute all I touch. O purge me with hyssop, let Christ's blood sprinkle me, let the Holy Ghost come upon me and anoint me! O make me evangelically pure, that I may be translated to heaven, and placed among the cherubims, where I shall be as holy as thou wouldest have me to be, and as happy as I can desire to be!"

OF THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:13. Thou shalt not steal.

As the holiness of God sets him against uncleanness, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," so the justice of God sets him against rapine and robbery, "Thou shalt not steal." The thing forbidden in this commandment is, meddling with another man's property, "Thou shalt not steal." The civil lawyers define furtum, stealth or theft, to be "the laying hands unjustly on that which is another's,"—the invading another's right.

QUEST. 1. Whence doth theft arise?

Ans. 1st. The internal causes are: 1. Unbelief. A man hath an high distrust of God's providence: "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" Ps. 78:19. So saith the unbeliever, "Can God spread a table for me? No, he cannot." Therefore he is resolved he will spread a table for himself, but it shall be at other men's cost, and both first and second course shall be served in with stolen goods.—2. Covetousness. The Greek word for covetousness signifies 'an immoderate desire of getting,'—this is the root of theft. A man covets more than his own, and this itch of covetousness makes him scratch what he can from another. Achan's covetous humour made him steal the wedge of gold, which wedge did cleave asunder his soul from God, Joshua 7:21.

A. 2. The external cause of theft is, Satan's solicitation: Judas was a thief, John 12:6. How came he to be a thief? "Satan entered into him," John 13:27. The devil is the great master-thief, he robbed us of our coat of innocency, and he persuades men to take up his trade; he tells men how bravely they shall live by thieving, and how they may

catch an estate. And as Eve listened to the serpent's voice, so do they; and, as birds of prey, live upon spoil and rapine.

QUEST. 2. How many sorts of thefts are there?

Ans. 1. There is stealing from God; and so they are thieves, who rob any part of God's day from him. "Remember to keep holy the sabbath day." Not a part of the day only, but the whole day must be dedicated to God. And lest any should forget this, the Lord hath prefixed a memento, "remember." Therefore to cut God short, and, after morning-sacrifice, to spend the other part of the sabbath in vanity and pleasure, this is spiritual thievery,—'tis to rob God of his due,—and the very heathens will rise up in judgment against such Christians; for the heathens (as Macrobius notes) did observe a whole day to their false gods.

A. 2. There is a stealing from others: 1st. A stealing away their souls; and so heretics are thieves, by robbing men of the truth, they rob them of their souls. 2dly, A stealing away their money and goods from them; and under this head of stealing away other's money, there may be several arraigned for thieves.

1. The highway thief who takes a purse contrary to the letter of this commandment, Lev. 19:13., "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour." Mark 10:19., "Do not steal." This is not the violence which takes the "kingdom of heaven," Mat. 11:12.

2. The house-thief, who purloins and filcheth out of his master's cash, or steals his wares and drugs. The apostle saith, "Some have entertained angels unawares," Heb. 13:2., but many masters have entertained thieves into their houses unawares. The house-thief is an hypocrite, as well as a thief; he hath demure looks, and pretends he is helping his master, when he only helps to rob him.

3. The thief that shrouds himself under law, as the unjust attorney or lawyer, who prevaricates and deals falsely with his client. This is to steal from the client. By deceit and prevarication the lawyer robs the client of his land, and may be the means to ruin his family; he is no better than a thief in God's account.

4. The church-thief or pluralist, who holds several benefices, but seldom or never preacheth to the people; he gets the golden fleece, but lets his flock starve, Ezek. 34:2., "Wo be to the shepherds of Israel!" v. 8., "They feed themselves, and feed not my flock." These ministers will be indicted for thieves at God's bar.

5. The shop-thief, he steals in selling, 1. Who useth false weights and measures, and so steals from others what is their due. Amos 8:5., "Making the ephah small." The ephah was a measure the Jews used in selling; they made the ephah small, gave scant measure, which was plain stealing, Hos. 12:7., "The balances of deceit are in his hand." Men by making their weights lighter, make their accounts heavier.—2. He steals in selling who puts excessive prices on his commodities. He takes thrice as much for a commodity as it cost him, or as it is worth; to over-reach others in selling, is to steal men's money from them, Lev. 19:13., "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him." To defraud him is to rob him; this over-reaching others in selling—which is a cunning way of stealing—is both against law and gospel. (1.) It is against the law of God, Lev. 25:14., "If thou sell ought to thy neighbour, ye shall not oppress one another." And, (2.) against gospel, 1 Thess. 4:6., "Let no man go beyond, and defraud his brother." It is stealing.

6. The usurer who takes of others even to extortion; he seems to help another by letting him have money in his necessity, but gets him into bonds, and sucks out h very blood and marrow. I read of a woman

whom Satan had bound, Luke 13:16. And truly he is almost in as bad a condition whom the usurer hath bound: the oppressing usurer is a robber. An usurer once asked a prodigal, when he would leave spending? Saith the prodigal, "Then I will leave spending what is my own, when thou leavest off stealing from others." Zaceheus was an extortioner, and after his conversion he made restitution, Luke 19:3. He thought all he got by extortion was theft.

7. The feoffe in trust, who hath the orphan's estate committed to him; he is deputed to be his guardian, and manage his estate for him, and he curtails the estate, and gets a fleece out of it for himself, and wrongs the orphan. This is a thief; this is worse than taking a purse, because he betrays his trust, which is the highest piece of treachery and injustice.

8. The borrower, who borrows money from others, with an intention never to pay them again, Ps. 37:21., "The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again." What is it but thievery to take money and goods from others, and not restore them again? The prophet Elisha bade the widow sell her oil, and pay her debts, and then live upon the rest, 2 Kings 4:7.

9. The last sort of theft is the receiver of stolen goods. The receiver, if he be not the principal, yet he is accessory to the theft, and the law makes him guilty. The thief steals the money, and the receiver holds the sack to put it in. The root would die if it were not watered, and thievery would cease if it were not encouraged by the receiver. I am apt to think he who doth not scruple to take stolen goods into his house would as little scruple to take a purse.

QUEST. What are the aggravations of this sin of stealing?

Ans. 1. To steal when one has no need. To be a rich thief.

A. 2. To steal sacreligiously. To devour things set apart to holy uses, Prov. 20:25., "It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy." Such an one was Dionysius, who robbed the temple, and took away the silver vessels.

A. 3. To commit the sin of theft against checks of conscience, and examples of God's justice; this is like the dye to the wool, it doth dye the sin of a crimson colour.

A. 4. To rob the widow and orphan, Exod. 22:22., "Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child;" peccatam clamans,—'If they cry unto me, I will surely hear them.'

A. 5. To rob the poor. How did David disdain that the rich man should take away the poor man's lamb! "As the Lord liveth, the man who hath done this thing shall surely die," 2 Sam. 12:5. What is the enclosing of commons, but robbing of the poor?

3d. There is a stealing from a man's self. A man may be a thief to himself.

QUEST. How so?

Ans. 1. By niggardliness. The niggard is a thief; he steals from himself, in that he doth not allow himself what is fitting; he thinks that lost which is bestowed upon himself; he robs himself of necessaries, Eccl. 6:2., "A man to whom God hath given riches, yet God gives him not power to eat thereof." He gluts his chest, and starves his belly; he is like the ass that is loaded with gold, but feeds upon thistles; he robs himself of that which God allows him. This is indeed to be punished with riches,—to have an estate, and want an heart to take the comfort of it,—this man is a thief to himself.

A. 2. A man may be a thief to himself, and rob himself by prodigality, viz. wasting his estate. The prodigal lavisheth gold out of the bag; he is like Crates the philosopher who threw his gold into the sea. The prodigal boils a great estate to nothing; this is to be a thief to a man's self, to spend away that estate from himself which might conduce to the comfort of life.

A. 3. He is a thief to himself, by idleness, when he mispends his time. To spend one's hours in pleasure and vanity, this is to rob himself of that precious time which God hath given him to work out salvation. Time is a rich commodity, because on the well-spending this present time an happy eternity depends. He that spends his time idly and vainly, is a thief to himself; he robs himself of his golden seasons, and by consequence, of salvation.

A. 4. A man may be a thief to himself by suretiship, Prov. 22:26., "Be thou not one of them that are sureties for debt." The creditor comes upon the surety for debt, and so by paying another's debt he is a thief to himself, he undoes himself. Let not any man say, he should have been counted unkind if he had not entered into bonds for his friend: better thy friend count thee unkind, than all men count thee unwise. Lend another what you can spare, nay, give him if he needs, but never be a surety; it is no wisdom for a man so to help another as to undo himself This is to rob himself and his family.

Use 1st. It confutes the doctrine of community that all things are common, and one man hath a right to another's estate. The scripture confutes it, Deut. 23:25., "When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour's, thou shalt not move a sickle into thy neighbour's corn." Property must be observed. God hath set this eighth commandment as a hedge about a man's estate, and this hedge

cannot be broken without sin. If all things be common, then there is no stealth, and so this commandment were in vain.

Use 2d. It reproveth such as live upon stealing. Instead of living by faith, they live by their shifts. The apostle exhorteth, that every man eat his own bread, 2 Thess. 3:12. The thief doth not eat of his own bread, but of another's. If there be any who are guilty of this sin, let them labour to recover out of the snare of the devil by repentance, and let them show their repentance by restitution. Non remittitur peccatum nisi restituatur ablatum, AUG. 'Without restitution, no remission,' Luke 19:8., "If I have taken away any thing from any man unjustly, I restore him fourfold." It may suffice to restore ill-gotten goods by one's own hand, or by proxy. Better a thousand times restore goods unlawfully gotten, than to stuff one's pillow with thorns, and have guilt trouble one's conscience upon a death-bed.

Use 3d. Exhortation to all to take heed of this sin of thieving; it is a sin against the light of nature. Some may go to excuse this sin; hear the thief's plea; it is a coarse wool will take no dye, and a bad sin indeed that hath no excuse. "I am (saith one) grown low in the world, and trading is bad, and I have no other way to a livelihood."

Ans. 1. This shews a great distrust of God, as if he could not provide for thee without thy sin.—2. This shows sin is gotten to a great height, that, because a man is grown low in the world, therefore he will Acheronta movere, go to the devil for a livelihood. Abraham would not have it said, that 'the king of Sodom had made him rich,' Gen. 14:22. O let it never be said that the devil hath made thee rich! —3. Thou oughtest not to undertake any action which thou canst not pray for a blessing upon; but, if thou livest on thieving, thou canst not pray for a blessing upon stolen goods; therefore take heed of this sin,—lucrum in arcu, damnum in conscientia, AUG. Take heed of

getting the world with the loss of heaven. To dissuade all from this horrid sin, consider,

(1.) Thieves are the caterpillars of the earth,—enemies to civil society.

(2.) God hates them. In the law, the cormorant was unclean, Lev. 11:17., because a thievish, devouring creature, a bird of prey; by which God showed his hatred of this sin.

(3.) The thief is a terror to himself, he is always in fear, Ps. 53:5., "There were they in great fear;" true of the thief. Guilt breeds fear, if he hears but the shaking of a tree, his heart shakes. It is said of Cataline, he was afraid of every noise. If a briar doth but take hold of a thief's garment, he is afraid it is the officer to apprehend him; and "fear hath torment," 1 John 4:18.

(4.) The judgments that follow this sin, 'Achan the thief was stoned to death,' Josh. 7 and Zech. 5:2., "What seest thou? And I answered, a flying roll;" v. 3., "This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth; I will bring it forth, saith the Lord, and it shall enter into the house of the thief." Fabius, a Roman censor, condemned his own son to die for theft. Thieves die with ignominy, the ladder is their preferment; and there is a worse thing than death,—while they rob others of money, they rob themselves of salvation.

QUEST. What is to be done to avoid stealing?

Ans. 1. Live in a calling, Eph. 4:28., "Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands," &c. Such as stand idle, the devil hires them, and puts them to the pilfering trade. An idle person tempts the devil to tempt him.

A. 2. Be content with the estate God hath given you: Heb. 13:5., "Be content with such things as ye have." Theft is the daughter of avarice; study contentment. Believe that condition best God hath carved out to you. God can bless that little meal in the barrel. We shall not need these things long; we shall carry nothing out of the world with us but our winding-sheet; if we have but enough to bear out our charges to heaven, it is sufficient.

OF THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:16. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

The tongue which at first was made to be an organ of God's praise, is now become an instrument of unrighteousness. This commandment binds the tongue to its good behaviour. God hath set two fences to keep in the tongue,—the teeth and lips; and this commandment is a third fence set about it, that it should not break forth into evil; "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." This commandment hath a prohibitory, and a mandatory part; the first is set down in plain words, the other is clearly implied.

1. The prohibitory part of the commandment, or, what it forbids in general. It forbids any thing which may tend to the disparagement or prejudice of our neighbour. More particularly, two things are forbidden in this commandment, 1st. Slandering. 2d. False witness

1st. Slandering our neighbour. This is a sin against the ninth commandment. The scorpion carries his poison in his tail; the slanderer carries his poison in his tongue. Slandering is to report

things of others unjustly. Ps. 35:11., "They laid things to my charge which I knew not." It is usual to bring in a Christian beheaded of his good name; they raised a slander of Paul, that he should preach, men might do evil, that good might come of it, Rom. 3:8., "We be slanderously reported; and as some affirm that we say, let us do evil, that good may come." Eminency is commonly blasted by slander. Holiness itself is no shield from slander. The lamb's innocency will not preserve it from the wolf. Christ was the most innocent upon earth, yet was reported to be a friend of sinners; John Baptist was a man of a holy austere life, yet they said of him, "he hath a devil," Mat. 11:18. The scripture calls slandering, smiting with the tongue, Jer. 18:18., "Come, and let us smite him with the tongue." You may smite another and never touch him. *Majora sunt linguæ vulnera quam gladii*, AUG. The wounds of the tongue no physician can heal; and to pretend friendship to a man, yet slander him, is most odious. St. Hierom speaks thus: "The Arian faction made a show of kindness; they kissed my hands, but slandered me, and sought my life." And, as it is a sin against this commandment, to raise a false report of another, so it is a sin to receive a false report before we have examined it, Ps. 15:1., "Lord, who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" *Quis ad cœlum?* v. 3., "He that backbiteth not, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour." We must not only not raise a false report, but not take it up. He that raiseth a slander, carries the devil in his tongue; and he that receives it, carries the devil in his ear.

2d. The second thing forbidden in this commandment, is false witness. Here three sins are condemned: 1. Speaking. 2. Witnessing. 3. Swearing that which is false *contra proximum*.

1. Speaking that which is false, Prov. 12:22., "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." To lie, is to speak that which one knows to be an untruth. There is nothing more contrary to God than a lie. The

Holy Ghost is called the "Spirit of Truth." 1 John 4:5, 6. Lying is a sin that doth not go alone; it ushers in other sins; Absalom told his father a lie, that he was going to pay his vow at Hebron, 2 Sam. 15:7., and this lie was a preface to his treason. Where there is a lie in the tongue, it shows the devil is in the heart, Acts 5:3., "Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie?" Lying is such a sin as unfits men for civil society. How can you converse or bargain with him that you cannot trust a word he saith? This is a sin which highly provokes God. Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for telling a lie, Acts 5:5. The furnace of hell is heated for liars, Rev. 22:15., "Without are sorcerers, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." O abhor this sin! Quicquid dixeris justum putes, HIEROM. When thou speakest, let thy word be as authentic as thy oath. Imitate God who is the pattern of truth. Pythagoras being asked what made men like God? answered, Cum vere loquunter,—when they speak truth. It is made the character of a man that shall go to heaven, Ps. 15:2., "He speaketh the truth in his heart."

2. That which is condemned in the commandment is, witnessing that which is false; "thou shalt not bear false witness." (1.) There is a bearing of false witness for another. (2.) A bearing false witness against another.

(1.) A bearing false witness for another. When we do give our testimony for a person that is criminal and guilty, we justify him as if he were innocent, Isa. 5:23., "Which justify the wicked for a reward." He that goes to make a wicked man just, makes himself unjust.

(2.) There is a bearing false witness against another, i.e. when we accuse another in open court falsely. This is to imitate the devil who is the 'accuser of the brethren.' Though the devil is no adulterer, yet he is a false witness. Solomon saith, Prov. 25:18., "A man that

beareth false witness against his neighbour, is a maul and a sword;" in his face he is hardened like an hammer; he cannot blush, he cares not what lie he witnesseth to; and he is a sword,—his tongue is a sword to wound him he witnesseth against in his goods or life: thus, 1 Kings 21:13., "There came in two men, children of Belial, and witnessed against Naboth, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king:" and their witness took away his life. The queen of Persia being sick, the magicians accused two godly virgins that they had by charms procured the queen's sickness; whereupon she caused these virgins to be sawn asunder. A false witness doth pervert the place of judicature; he corrupts the judge by making him pronounce a wrong sentence, and causes the innocent to suffer. Vengeance will find out the false witness, Prov. 19:4., "A false witness shall not be unpunished." Deut. 19:18, 19., "If the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother, then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother;" i.e. If he had thought to have taken away his life, his own life shall go for it.

3. That which is condemned in the commandment is, swearing that which is false. When men take a false oath, and by that take away the life of another. Zech. 8:17., "Love no false oath." Chap. 5:2., "What seest thou?" I answered, a flying roll." v. 3, 4., "This is the curse that goeth forth, and it shall enter, saith the Lord, into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name; and it shall consume his house, with the timber thereof and stones thereof." The Scythians made a law, when a man did bind two sins together, a lie with an oath, he was to lose his head, because this sin did take away all truth and faith from among men. The devil hath taken great possession of such who dare swear to a lie. This is a manifest breach of this commandment.

Use 1st. Branch 1. It reproves the church of Rome, who will dispense with a lie, or a false oath, if it be to promote the Catholic cause. They

approve of an officious lie; they hold some sins to be lawful; they may as well hold some lies to be lawful. God hath no need of our lie. It is not lawful to tell a lie propter Dei gloriam,—if we were sure to bring glory to God by it,—as Austin speaks

Branch 2. It reproves those who make no conscience of slandering others; they come under the breach of this commandment, Ps. 50:20., "Thou sittest and slanderest thy own mother's son." Jer. 20:10., "Report, say they, and we will report." Ezra 4:15., "This city (i.e. Jerusalem) is a rebellious city, and hurtful to kings and provinces." Paul was slandered as a mover of sedition, and the head of a faction, Acts 24:5. The same word signifies both a slanderer and a devil, 1 Tim. 3:11., "Not slanderers:" in the Greek, "Not devils." Some think it is no great matter to misrepresent and slander others; know that this is to act the part of a devil. Clipping a man's credit to make it weigh lighter, is worse than clipping of coin. The slanderer wounds three at once; he wounds him that he slanders; and he wounds him to whom he reports the slander, by causing uncharitable thoughts to arise up in his mind against the party slandered; and he wounds his own soul, by reporting that of another which is false. This is a great sin; and I would, I could not say, it is common. You may kill a man as well in his name as in his person. Some are loath to take away their neighbour's goods; conscience would fly in their face; but better take away their corn out of their field,—their wares out of their shop,—than take away their good name. This is a sin you can never make them reparation for; a blot in a man's name, being like a blot on white paper, which will never be got out. Surely God will visit for this sin. If idle words shall be accounted for, shall not unjust slanders? The Lord will make inquisition one day, as well for names as for blood. O therefore take heed of this sin! It is a breach of the ninth commandment. Was it not a sin under the law to defame a virgin, Deut. 22:19., and, is it not a greater sin to defame a saint, who

is a member of Christ! The heathens by the light of nature abhorred this sin of slandering. Diogenes used to say, "Of all wild beasts, a slanderer is the worst." Antonius made a law, that, if a person could not prove the crime he reported another to be guilty of, he should be put to death.

Branch 3. It reproves them who are so wicked as to bear false witness against others. These are monsters in nature, unfit to live in a civil society. Eusebius relates of one Narcissus, a man famous for piety, who was accused by two false witnesses of unchastity; and, to prove their accusation, they bound it with oaths and curses after this manner: one said, "If I speak not true, I pray God I may perish by fire,"—the other said, "If I speak not true, I wish I may be deprived of my sight;" it pleased God that the first witness who foreswore himself, his house being set on fire, he was burned in the flames; the other witness, being troubled in conscience, confessed his perjury, and continued so long weeping, that he wept himself blind. Jezebel, who suborned two false witnesses against Naboth, she was thrown down out of a window, and 'the dogs licked her blood,' 2 Kings 9:33. O tremble at this sin! A perjured person is the devil's excrement He is cursed in his name, and seared in his conscience. Hell gapes for such a wind-fall.

Use 2d. Branch 1. It exhorts all to take heed of the breach of this commandment, of lying, slandering, and bearing false witness; and to avoid these sins,

1. Get the fear of God. Why doth David say, "the fear of the Lord is clean?" Ps. 19:9., Because it cleanseth the heart of malice,—it cleanseth the tongue of slander. "The fear of the Lord is clean:" it is to the soul as lightning to the air, which cleanseth it.

2. Get love to your neighbour, Lev. 21:18. If we love a friend, we will not speak or attest any thing to his prejudice. Men's minds are cankered with envy and hatred; hence comes slandering and false-witnessing. Love is a lovely grace; "love thinketh no evil," 1 Cor. 13:5. It makes the best interpretation of another's words. Love is a well-wisher, and it is rare to speak ill of him we wish well to. Love is that which cements Christians together; it is the healer of division, and the hinderer of slander.

Branch 2. To such whose lot it is to meet with slanderers and false accusers, 1. Labour to make a sanctified use of it. When Shimei railed on David, David made a sanctified use of it, 2 Sam. 16:10., "The Lord hath said to him, curse David." So, if you are slandered, or falsely accused, make a good use of it. See if you have no sin unrepented of for which God may suffer you to be calumniated and reproached. See if you have not at any time wronged others in their name, and said that of them which you cannot prove; then lay your hand on your mouth, and confess the Lord is righteous to let you fall under the scourge of the tongue.—2. If you are slandered, or falsely accused, but know your own innocency, be not too much troubled, let this be your rejoicing, the witness of your conscience. *Murus aheneus esto nil conscire sibi.* A good conscience is a wall of brass, that will be able to stand against a false witness. As no flattery can heal a bad conscience, so no slander can hurt a good. God will clear up the names of his people, Ps. 37:6., "He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light." God, as he will wipe away tears from the eyes, so he will wipe off reproaches from the name. Believers shall come forth out of all their slanders and reproaches, as 'the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.'

Branch 3. It should exhort such to be very thankful to God, whom God hath preserved from slander and false witness. Job calls it "the

scourge of the tongue," chap. 5:21. As a rod doth scourge the back, so the slanderer's tongue doth scourge the name. It is a great mercy to be kept from the scourge of the tongue; a mercy, that God stops malignant mouths from bearing false witness. What mischief may not a lying report or a false oath do? One destroys the name, the other the life. It is the Lord who muzzles the mouths of the wicked, and keeps those dogs that snarl at us, from flying upon us, Ps. 31:20., "Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion, from the strife of tongues." It is, I suppose, an allusion to kings, who being resolved to protect their favourites against the accusations of men, take them into their bed-chamber, or bosom, where none may touch them: so God hath a pavilion, or secret hiding place for his favourites, where he preserves their credit and reputation untouched,—he keeps them from the "strife of tongues." This is a mercy we ought to acknowledge to God.

II. The mandatory part of this commandment implied: that is, "that we stand up for others and vindicate them, when they are injured by lying lips." This is the sense of the commandment, not only that we should not slander or falsely accuse others, but that we should witness for them, and stand up in their defence, when we know them to be traduced. A man may wrong another as well by silence as by slander when he knows him to be wrongfully accused, yet doth not speak in his behalf. If others cast false aspersions on any, we should wipe them off. The apostles (who were filled with the wine of the Spirit) being charged with drunkenness, Peter was their compurgator, and openly cleared their innocency, Acts 2:15., "These are not drunken, as ye suppose." Jonathan knowing David to be a worthy man, and all those things Saul said of him to be slanders, vindicated David, 1 Sam. 19:4, 5., David hath not sinned against thee, but his works to thee-ward have been very good: "Wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, and slay David without a

cause?" When the primitive Christians were falsely accused for incest, and killing their children, Tertullian made a famous apology in their vindication. This is to act the part both of a friend and of a Christian, to be an advocate for another, when he is wronged in his good name.

OF THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20:17. Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife, nor his Man-servant, nor his Maid-servant, nor his Ox, nor his Ass, nor any thing that is thy Neighbour's.

This commandment forbids, 1st. Covetousness in general, "Thou shalt not covet." 2d. In particular, "Thy neighbour's house, thy neighbour's wife," &c.

I. It forbids covetousness in general, "Thou shalt not covet." It is lawful to use the world, yea, and to desire so much of it as may: 1. Keep us from the temptation of poverty, Prov. 30:8. Give me not poverty, lest I steal, and take the name of my God in vain.—2. As may enable us to honour God with works of mercy, Prov. 3:9., "Honour the Lord with thy substance." But all the danger is, when the world gets into the heart. The water is useful for the sailing of the ship; all the danger is when the water gets into the ship; so the fear is, when the world gets into the heart, "Thou shalt not covet."

QUEST. What is it to covet?

Ans. There are two words in the Greek, which set forth the nature of covetousness: 1. Pleonexia, which signifies an 'insatiable desire of getting the world.' Covetousness is a dry dropsy. Austin defines covetousness, *Plus velle quam sat est*,—to desire more than enough,—to aim at a great estate,—to be like the daughters of the horse-leech, crying, "Give, give," Prov. 30:15.,—or like Behemoth, Job 40:23., "He trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth,"—2. Phylarnyria, which signifies an 'inordinate love of the world.' The world is the idol; it is so loved, that a man will not part with it to any good use; this is to come under the indictment of covetousness. He may be said to be covetous, not only who gets the world unrighteously, but who loves the world inordinately.

But, for a more full answer to the question, "What is it to covet?" I shall shew you in six particulars, when a man may be said to be given to covetousness.

1. When his thoughts are wholly taken up about the world. As a good man's thoughts are still in heaven; he is thinking of Christ's love and eternal recompense, Ps. 139:18., "When I awake, I am still with thee," that is divine contemplation, so a covetous man is still with the world; his mind is wholly taken up about it; he can think of nothing but his shop or farm. The fancy is a mint-house, and most of the thoughts a covetous man mints are worldly; he is always plotting and projecting about the things of this life; like a virgin that hath all her thoughts running upon her suitor.

2. A man may be said to be given to covetousness when he takes more pains for the getting of earth, than for the getting of heaven. He will turn every stone, break his sleep, take many a weary step for the world; but will take no pains for Christ or heaven. The Gauls, who were an ancient people of France, after they had tasted of the sweet

wine of the Italian grape, they inquired after the country, and never rested till they had arrived at it; so a covetous man having had a relish of the world, pursues after it, and never leaves till he hath got it; but he neglects the things of eternity. He could be content if salvation would drop into his mouth as a ripe fig drops into the mouth of the eater, Nahum 3:12. But he is loath to put himself to too much sweat or trouble to obtain Christ or salvation. He hunts for the world,—he wisheth only for heaven.

3. A man may be said to be given to covetousness, when all his discourse is about the world; John 3:31., "He that is of the earth, is earthly and speaketh of the earth." As it is a sign of godliness to be still speaking of heaven,—to have the tongue turned to the language of Canaan, Eccl. 10:12., "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious,"—he speaks as if he had been already in heaven; so, a sign of a man given to covetousness, he is speaking of secular things, his wares and drugs. A covetous man's breath, like a dying man's, smells strong of the earth. As they said to Peter, "thy speech bewrayeth thee," Mat. 26:73.: so a covetous man's speech bewrayeth him; he is like the fish in the gospel, which had a piece of money in the mouth, Mat. 17:27. *Verba sunt speculum mentis.* BERN. 'Words are the looking-glass of the heart,'—they shew what is within. *Ex abundantia cordis.*

4. A man is given to covetousness when he doth so set his heart upon worldly things, that for the love of them, he will part with heavenly; for the "wedge of gold," he will part with the "pearl of great price." The young man in the gospel, when Christ said, "Sell all and come and follow me;" abiit tristis,—"he went away sorrowful," Mat. 19:21, 22., He would rather part with Christ than with all his earthly possessions. Cardinal Bourbon said, he would forego his part in Paradise, if he might keep his cardinalship in Paris. When it comes to

a critical point, that men must either relinquish their estate or Christ, and they will rather part with Christ, and a good conscience, than with their estate,—it is a clear case they are possessed with the devil as covetousness.

5. A man is given to covetousness when he overloads himself with worldly business He hath many irons in the fire; he is in this sense a pluralist, he takes so much business upon him, that he cannot find time to serve God; he hath scarce time to eat his meat, but no time to pray. When a man doth overcharge himself with the world, and as Martha, cumber himself about many things, that he cannot have time for his soul, sure he is under the power of covetousness.

6. He is given to covetousness whose heart is so set upon the world, that, to get it, he cares not what unlawful indirect means he useth,—he will have the world per fas et nefas,—he will wrong and defraud, and raise his estate upon the ruins of another, Hos. 12:7, 8., "The balances of deceit are in his hand, he loveth to oppress." And Ephraim said, "yet I am become rich." Pope Sylvester II. did sell his soul to the devil for a popedom.

Use. 'Take heed and beware of covetousness,' Luke 12:15. It is a direct breach of this tenth commandment. Covetousness is a moral vice, it infects and pollutes the whole soul. The sin.

(1.) It is a subtle sin, a sin that many do not so well discern in themselves: as some have the scurvy, yet do not know it. This sin can dress itself in the attire of virtue. It is called the 'cloak of covetousness,' 1 Thess. 2:5. Covetousness is a sin that wears a cloak, it cloaks itself under the name of frugality and good husbandry. It hath many pleas and excuses for itself, more than any other sin; as the providing for one's family. The more subtle the sin is, the less discernable.

(2.) Covetousness is a dangerous sin, it checks all that is good. It is an enemy to grace; it damps good affections, as the earth puts out the fire. The hedge-hog, in the fable, came to the cony-burrows, in stormy weather, and desired harbour; but when once he had gotten entertainment, he set up his prickles, and did never cease till he had thrust the poor conies out of their burrows; so covetousness, by fair pretences, winds itself into the heart; but, as soon as you have let it in, it will never leave till it hath choked all good beginnings, and thrust all religion out of your hearts. 'Covetousness hinders the efficacy of the word preached.' In the parable, the thorns (which Christ expounded to be the care of this life) choked the good seed, Mat. 13:7.: many sermons lie dead, buried in earthly hearts. We preach to men, to get their hearts in heaven; but where covetousness is predominant, it chains them to the earth, and makes them like the woman which Satan had bowed together, that she could not lift up herself, Luke 13:11. You may as well bid an elephant fly in the air, as a covetous man live by faith. We preach to men to give freely to Christ's poor; but covetousness makes them to be like him in the gospel who had "a withered hand," Mark 3:1. They have a withered hand, and cannot stretch it out to the poor. It is impossible to be earthly-minded and charitably-minded. Thus covetousness obstructs the efficacy of the word, and makes it prove abortive. Such whose hearts are rooted in the earth will be so far from profiting by the word, that they will be ready rather to deride it, Luke 16:14., The Pharisees, who were covetous, "derided him."

(3.) Covetousness is a mother-sin,—a radical vice, 1 Tim. 6:10., "The love of money is the root of all evil."

—Quid non mortalia pectora cogit auri sacra fames?—HOR.

He who hath an earthly itch, a greedy desire of getting the world, hath in him the root of all sin. Covetousness is a mother sin. I shall make it appear that covetousness is a breach of all the ten commandments.—1. It breaks the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods but me." The covetous man hath more gods than one; mammon is his god. He hath a god of gold, therefore he is called an idolater, Col. 3:5.—2. Covetousness breaks the second commandment, "Thou shalt not make any graven image, thou shalt not bow down thyself to them." A covetous man bows down, though not to the graven image in the church, yet to the graven image in his coin.—3. Covetousness is a breach of the third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Absalom's design was to get his father's crown, there was covetousness; but he talks of paying his "vow to God," there he took God's name vain.—4. Covetousness is a breach of the fourth commandment, "Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy." A covetous man doth not keep the sabbath holy; he will ride to fairs on a sabbath: instead of reading in the Bible, he will cast up his accounts.—5. Covetousness is a breach of the fifth commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother." A covetous person will not honour his father, if he doth not feed him with money; nay, he will get his father to make over his estate to him in his lifetime, and so the father shall be at the son's command.—6. Covetousness is a breach of the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." Covetous Ahab killed Naboth, to get his vineyard, 1 Kings 21:13. How many have swimm'd to the crown in blood?—7. Covetousness is a breach of the seventh commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Covetousness causeth uncleanness; you read of the "hire of a whore," Deut. 23:18. An adulteress for money sets both conscience and chastity to sale.—8. Covetousness is a breach of the eighth commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." Covetousness is the root of theft; covetous Achan stole the wedge of gold. Therefore thieves and covetous are put together, 1 Cor. 6:10.—9. Covetousness is a breach

of the ninth commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." What makes the perjurer take a false oath but covetousness? he hopes for a dividend.—And, 10. It is plainly a breach of the last commandment, "Thou shalt not covet." The mammonist covets his neighbour's house and goods, and endeavours to get them into his own hands. Thus you see how vile a sin covetousness is,—it is a mother-sin,—it is a plain breach of every one of the ten commandments.

(4.) Covetousness is a sin dishonourable to religion. For such as say their hopes are above, yet their hearts are below; for them who profess to be above the stars, to 'lick the dust' of the serpent,—to be born of God, yet buried in the earth,—how dishonourable is this to religion! The lapsing wears a little coronet on its head, yet feeds on dung: an emblem of such as profess to be crowned kings and priests unto God, yet feed immoderately on these terrene dunghill comforts, Jer. 45:5., "And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not." What, thou Baruch, who art ennobled by the new-birth, and art illustrious by thy office, a Levite, dost thou seek earthly things, and seek them now? When the ship is sinking, art thou trimming thy cabin? O do not so degrade thyself, nor blot thy scutcheon! "Seekest thou great things? seek them not." The higher grace is, the less earthly should Christians be; the higher the sun is, the shorter always is the shadow.

1. Covetousness exposeth us to God's abhorrency: Ps. 10:3., "The covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth." A king abhors to see his statue abused: God abhors to see that man, made in his image, should have the heart of a beast given to him. Who would live in such a sin as makes him abhorred of God? Whom God abhors he curseth, and God's curse blasts wherever it comes.

2. Covetousness precipitates men to ruin; it shuts them out of heaven, Eph. 5:5., "This ye know, that no covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." What should a covetous man do in heaven? God can no more converse with him, than a king can converse with a swine. 1 Tim. 6:9., "They that will be rich fall into a snare, and many hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition." A covetous man is like a bee, that gets into a barrel of honey, and there drowns itself; he is like a ferryman, that takes in so many passengers to increase his fare, that he sinks his boat: so a covetous man takes in so much gold to the increasing of his estate, that he drowns himself in perdition. I have read of some inhabitants near Athens, who lived in a very dry, barren island, and they took much pains to draw a river to this island to water it and make it fruitful; but when they had opened the passages, and brought the river to it, the water broke in with such a force, that it drowned the land, and all the people in it: an emblem of a covetous man. he labours to draw riches to him, and at last they come in in such an abundance, that they drown him in hell and perdition. How many, to build up an estate, pull down their souls? Oh, therefore, flee from covetousness! I shall next prescribe some remedies against covetousness.

EXOD. 20:17. Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife, &c.

I am, in the next place, to resolve a question, How we may do to cure this itch of covetousness?

Ans. For answer to this, I shall prescribe some remedies and antidotes against this sin:

1st. Faith, 1 John 5:4., "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." The root of covetousness is the distrust of God's

providence; faith believes God will provide,—God who feeds the birds, will feed his children,—he who clothes the lilies, will clothe his lambs,—and so faith overcomes the world. Faith is the cure of care; faith not only purifies the heart but satisfies the heart; faith makes God our portion, and so in him we have enough, Ps. 16:5, 6., "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." Faith, by a divine chemistry, extracts its chief comfort out of God. A little with God is sweet. Thus faith is a remedy against covetousness; faith overcomes, not only the fear of the world, but the love of the world.

2d. The second remedy is, judicious consideration.

1. What poor things these things below are, that we should covet them.—1. They are below the worth of the soul, which carries in it an idea and resemblance of God. The world is but the workmanship of God, the soul is the image of God.—2. You covet that which will not satisfy you, Eccl. 5:10., "He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver." Solomon had put all the creatures in a limbeck, and stilled out the quintessence, and behold, "All was vanity," Eccl. 2:11. Covetousness is a dry dropsy; the more a man hath, the more he thirsts. 'Quo plus sunt potæ, plus sitiuntur aquæ.'—3. Worldly things cannot remove trouble of mind. King Saul being perplexed in conscience, all his crown-jewels could not administer comfort to him, 1 Sam. 28:15. The things of the world will no more ease a troubled spirit, than a gold cap will cure the headach.—4. The things of the world, if you had more of them, cannot continue with you. The creature hath a little honey in its mouth, but it hath wings to fly away. These things either go from us, or we from them: what poor things are these to covet?

2. Second consideration: the frame and contexture of the body; God hath made the face to look upward towards heaven.

Os homini sublime dedit, cœlumque lueri Jussit. —

OVID.

Anatomists observe, that whereas other creatures have but four muscles to their eyes, man hath a fifth muscle, by which he is able to look up to heaven; and as for the heart, it is made like a glass vial, narrow and contracted downwards, but wide and broad upwards. And as the frame and contexture of the body teacheth us to look to things above, so especially the soul is planted in the body, as a divine sparkle to ascend upwards. Can it be imagined that God gave us intellectual, immortal souls, to covet only earthly things? What wise man would fish for gudgeons with golden hooks? Did God give us glorious souls, only to fish for the world? Sure our souls are made for an higher end,—to aspire after the enjoyment of God in glory.

3. Third consideration: the examples of those who have been contemners and despisers of the world. The primitive Christians,—as Clemens Alexandrinus observes,—were sequestered from the world, and were wholly taken up in converse with God; they lived in the world above the world,—like the birds of paradise, who soar above in the air, and seldom or never touch with their feet upon the earth. Luther saith, that he was never tempted to this sin of covetousness. The saints of old though they did live in the world, they did trade in heaven; Phil. 3:20., "Our conversation is in heaven:" the Greek word signifies, our commerce, or traffic, or burgher-ship is in heaven. "Enoch walked with God," Gen. 5:24. His affections were sublimated, he did take a turn in heaven every day. The righteous are compared to a palm-tree, Ps. 92:12. Philo observes that whereas all other trees have their sap in their root, the sap of the palm-tree is towards the

top: the emblem of the saints, whose hearts are above in heaven, where their treasure is.

3d. The third remedy: covet spiritual things more, and you will covet earthly things less. Covet grace; grace is the best blessing, it is the seed of God, 1 John 3:9., the angels' glory. Covet heaven; heaven is the region of happiness, it is the most pleasant climate. Did we covet heaven more, we should covet earth less. They that stand on the top of the Alps, the great cities of Campania seem but as small villages in their eyes: if we could have our hearts more fixed upon the Jerusalem above, how would all worldly things disappear, and be as nothing in our eyes! We read of an angel coming down from heaven, who did tread with his right foot on the sea, and with his left foot on the earth, Rev. 10:2., had we but once been in heaven, and viewed the superlative glory of it, how might we, in an holy scorn, trample with one foot upon the earth, and with the other foot upon the sea! O covet after heavenly things! There is the tree of life,—the mountains of spices,—the rivers of pleasure,—the honey-comb of God's love dropping,—the delights of angels,—the flower of joy fully ripe and blown. There is the pure air to breathe in; no fogs nor vapours of sin arise to infect that air, but the Sun of Righteousness enlightens that horizon continually with his glorious beams. O let your thoughts and delights be always taken up about the city of pearl, the paradise of God! Did we covet heavenly things more, we should covet earthly things less. It is reported after Lazarus was raised from the grave, he was never seen to smile or he delighted with the world after: were our hearts raised by the power of the Holy Ghost, up to heaven, we should not be much taken with earthly things.

4th. The fourth remedy: pray for an heavenly mind. "Lord, let the loadstone of thy Spirit draw my heart upward! Lord, dig the earth out of my heart.—teach me how to possess the world, and not love it,

—how to hold it in my hand, and not let it get into my heart! So much for the commandment in general. "Thou shalt not covet."

II. I shall speak of it more particularly: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife," &c. Observe here the holiness and perfection of God's law; it forbids the *motus primo primi*,—the first motions and risings of sin in the heart: "Thou shalt not covet." The laws of men take hold of the actions, but the law of God goes further, it forbids not only the actions, but the affections, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house." It is not said, thou shalt not take away his house; but "Thou shalt not covet it." These lustings and desires after the forbidden fruit are sinful, Rom. 7:7., "The law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Though the tree bears no bad fruit, it may be faulty at the root; though a man doth not commit any gross sin, yet who can say his heart is pure? There may be a faultiness at the root, there may be sinful covetings and lustings in the soul.

Use. Let us be humbled for the sin of our nature, the risings of evil thoughts, coveting that which we ought not. Our nature is a seed-plot of iniquity; it is like charcoal that is ever sparkling; the sparkles of pride, envy, covetousness, arise in the mind. How should this humble us? If there be not sinful actings, there are sinful covetings. Let us pray for mortifying grace which may be like the water of jealousy to make the thigh of sin to rot. But to come to the words more clearly, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, nor thy neighbour's wife," &c.

QUEST. Why is the house put before the wife? in Deuteronomy the wife is put first, Deut. 5:21. Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house. Here the house is put first?

Ans. In Deuteronomy, the wife is set down first, in respect of her value. She (if a good wife) is of far greater value and estimate than the house, Prov. 31:10., "Her price is far above rubies." She is the furniture of the house, and this furniture is more worth than the house. When Alexander had overcome king Darius in battle, Darius seemed not to be much dismayed; but when he heard his wife was taken prisoner, now his eyes, like spouts, did gush forth water, as valuing his wife dearer than his life. But yet in this place in Exodus, the house is put before the wife; the reason is, because the house is first in order,—the house is erected before the wife can live in it,—the nest is built before the bird is in it,—the wife is first esteemed, but the house must be first provided.

1. Then, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house." How depraved is man since the fall! man knows not how to keep within bounds, but is coveting more than his own. Ahab, one would think, had enough; he was a king, and one would suppose his crown-revenues should have contented him; but still he was coveting more; Naboth's vineyard was in his eye, and stood near the smoke of his chimney, and he could not be quiet till he had it in possession. Were there not so much coveting, there would not be so much bribing: one man pulls away another's house from him. It is only the prisoner lives in such a tenement as he may be sure none will go about to take from him.

2. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife." This commandment is a bridle to check the inordinancy of brutish lusts: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife." It was the devil that 'sowed another man's ground,' Mat. 13:25. But how is the hedge of this commandment trodden down in our times! There be many who do more than covet their neighbour's wives, they take them: Deut. 27:20., "Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; and all the

people shall say, Amen." If it were to be proclaimed "Cursed be he that lieth with his neighbour's wife," and all that were guilty should say, Amen, how many would curse themselves!

3. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's man-servant, nor his maid-servant." Servants, when faithful, are a treasure. What a true and trusty servant had Abraham! He was his right hand; how prudent and faithful was he in the matter he was intrusted with, in getting a wife for his master's; son! Gen. 24:9. And surely it would have gone near to Abraham, to have had any one entice away his servant from him. But this sin of coveting servants is common; if one hath a better servant, others will be inveigling and laying baits for him, and endeavour to draw him away from his master. This is a sin against the tenth commandment. To steal away another's servant by enticement, is no better than thievery.

4. "Nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's." Were there not coveting of ox and ass, there would not be so much stealing; first men break the tenth commandment by coveting, and then they break the eighth commandment by stealing. It was an excellent appeal that Samuel made to the people, 1 Sam, 12:3., "Witness against me before the Lord, whose ox have I taken, or whose ass, or whom have I defrauded." And it was a brave speech of St. Paul, Acts 20:33., "I have coveted no man's gold, or silver, or apparel."

QUEST. But what means may we use, to keep us from coveting that which is our neighbour's?

Ans. The best remedy is contentment. If we are content with our own, we shall not covet that which is another's. St. Paul could say, "I have coveted no man's gold or silver:" whence was this? It was from contentment, Phil. 4:11., "I have learned, in whatever state I am,

therewith to be content." Content saith, as Esau, Gen. 33:9., "I have enough;" I have a promise of heaven, and have sufficient to bear my charges thither; I have enough. And he who hath enough, will not covet that which is another's. Be content: and the best way to be contented, is, 1. Believe that condition best which God carves out to you by his providence. If God had seen it fit for us to have more, we should have had it; but his wisdom sees this best for us. Perhaps we could not manage a great estate; it is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and a full estate without sinning. Great estates may be snares; a boat may be overturned by having too great a sail. The believing that estate best God carves for us, makes us content; and being contented, we will not covet that which is another's. 2. The way to be content with such things as we have, and not to covet another's, is to consider the less estate we have, the less account we shall have to give at the last day. Every person is a steward, and must be accountable to God. They who have great estates have the greater reckoning; God will say, what good have you done with your estates? Have you honoured me with your substance? Where are the poor you have fed and clothed? If you cannot give a good account, it will be sad. This may make us contented with a less portion, to consider,—the less estate, the less account we have to give,—the less riches, the less reckoning. This is the way to have contentment; and no better antidote against coveting that which is another's than being content with that which is our own.

So much for the commandments.

MAN'S INABILITY TO KEEP THE MORAL LAW

QUEST. LXXXII. IS any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

ANS. No mere man, since the fall, is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them, in thought, word, and deed.

James 3:2., "In many things we offend all." Man in his primitive state of innocency was endowed with ability to keep the whole moral law; Adam had rectitude of mind, sanctity of will, perfection of power; Adam had the copy of God's law written on his heart; no sooner did God command, but he did obey; as the key is suited to all the wards in the lock, and can open them, so Adam had a power suited to all God's commands, and could obey them. Adam's obedience did exactly run parallel with the moral law, as a well-made dial goes exactly with the sun. Man in innocence was like a well-tuned organ, he did sweetly tune to the will of God; he was adorned with holiness as the angels, but not confirmed in holiness as the angels; Adam was holy but mutable; he fell from his purity, and we with him. Sin cut the lock of original righteousness where our strength lay; sin hath brought such a languor and faintness into our souls, and hath so weakened us, that we shall never recover our full strength till we put on immortality. The thing I am now to demonstrate, is, that we cannot yield perfect obedience to the moral law: "In many things we offend all."

1st. The case of an unregenerate man is such, that he cannot perfectly obey all God's commands; he may as well touch the stars, or span the ocean, as yield exact obedience to the law. A person unregenerate cannot act spiritually,—he cannot pray in the Holy Ghost,—he cannot live by faith,—he cannot do duty out of love to duty,—and if he cannot do duty spiritually, then much less perfectly. Now, that a

natural man cannot yield perfect obedience to the moral law, is evident: 1. Because he is spiritually dead, Eph. 2:1. And being so, how can he keep the commandments of God perfectly? A dead man is not fit for action. A sinner hath the symptoms of death upon him: (1.) He hath no sense; a dead man hath no sense; he hath no sense of the evil of sin, of God's holiness and veracity; therefore he is said to be without feeling, Eph. 4:19. (2.) He hath no strength, Rom. 5:6. What strength hath a dead man? A natural man hath no strength to deny himself, to resist temptation; he is dead, and can a dead man fulfil the moral law?—2. A natural man cannot perfectly keep all God's commandments because he is so interlarded with sin; he is born in sin, Ps. 51:5; Job 15:16., "Which drinketh iniquity like water." All the imaginations of his thoughts are evil, and only evil, Gen. 6:4. Now the least evil thought is a breach of the royal law; and, if there be defection, there cannot be perfection. And, as a natural man hath no power to keep the moral law, so he hath no will. He is not only dead, but worse than dead; a dead man doth no hurt, but there is a life of resistance against God goes along with the death of sin. A natural man not only cannot keep the law through weakness, but he breaks it through wilfulness, Jer. 44:17., "We will do whatsoever goeth forth out of our mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven."

2d. As the unregenerate cannot keep the moral law perfectly, so neither the regenerate: Eccl. 7:20., "There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not;" nay, that "sins not in doing good." There is that in the best actions of a righteous man that is damnable, if God should weigh him in the balance of justice. Alas, how are his duties fly-blown! He cannot pray without wandering, nor believe without doubting: Rom. 7:18., "To will is present with me, but how to perform I find not." In the Greek it is, "How to do it thoroughly I find not." Paul, though a saint of the first magnitude, was better at willing than at performing. Mary asked where they had

laid Christ: she had a mind to have carried him away, but she wanted strength: so the regenerate have a will to obey God's law perfectly, but they want strength; their obedience is weak, and sickly; the mark they are to shoot at, is perfection of holiness; but though they take a right aim, yet do what they can, they shoot short: Rom. 7:19., "The good that I would, I do not." A Christian, while he is serving God, is hindered; like a ferryman, that plies the oar, and rows hard, but a gust of wind carries him back again: so saith Paul, "The good that I would, I do not,"—I am driven back by temptation. Now, if there be any failure in our obedience, we cannot make a perfect commentary upon God's law; no Christian alive can write a copy of holiness without blotting. The Virgin Mary's obedience was not perfect, she needed Christ's blood to wash her tears. Aaron was to make atonement for the altar, Exod. 29:37., to shew that the most holy offering hath defilement in it, and needs atonement to be made for it.

QUEST. 1. But if a man hath no power to keep the whole moral law, then why doth God require that of man which he is not able to perform? How doth this stand with his justice?

Ans. Though man hath lost his power of obeying, God hath not lost his right of commanding. If a master intrusts a servant with money to lay out, and the servant spends it dissolutely, may not the master justly demand this money? God gave us a power to keep the moral law; we, by tampering with sin, lost it; but may not God still call for perfect obedience? Or, in case of default, justly punish us?

QUEST. 2. But why doth God suffer such an impotency to lie upon man that he cannot perfectly keep the law?

Ans. The Lord doth it, 1. To humble us. Man is a self-exalting creature; and, if he hath but any thing of worth, he is ready to be puffed up; but when he comes to see his deficiencies and failings, and

how far short he comes of the holiness and perfection God's law requires, this is a means to pull down his plumes of pride, and lay them in the dust; he weeps over his impotency,—he blusheth over his leprous spots,—he saith, as Job, "I abhor myself in dust and ashes."—
2. God lets this impotency and infirmness be upon us, that we may have recourse to Christ, to obtain pardon for our defects, and to sprinkle our best duties with his blood. When a man sees himself indebted, he owes perfect obedience to the law, but he hath nothing to pay; this makes him flee to Christ to be his friend, and answer all the demands and challenges of the law, and set him free in the court of justice.

Use 1st. Is matter of humiliation for our fall in Adam. In the state of innocency we were perfectly holy; our minds were crowned with knowledge, and our wills, as a queen, did sway the sceptre of liberty; but now we may say, as Lam. 5:16., "The crown is fallen from our head." We have lost that power which was inherent in us. When we look back to our primitive glory when we shone as earthly angels, we may take up Job's words, chap. 29:2., "O that I were as in months past!" O that it were with us as at first, when there was no stain upon our virgin nature, when there was a perfect harmony between God's law and man's will! But, alas! how the scene is altered; our strength is gone from us,—we tread awry every step,—we come below every precept,—our dwarfishness will not reach the sublimity of God's law,—we fail in our obedience,—and, while we fail, we forfeit. This may put us in close mourning, and spring a leak of sorrow in all our souls.

Use 2d. Of Confutation. 1. It confutes the Arminians, who cry up the power of the will; they hold they have a will to save themselves, but by nature, we not only want strength, Rom. 5:9., but we want will to that which is good. The will is not only full of impotency, but obstinacy, Ps. 81:11., "Israel would none of me." The will hangs forth

a flag of defiance against God. Such as speak of the sovereign power of the will, forget Phil. 2:13., "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do." If the power be in the will of man, then what needs God work in us to will? If the air can enlighten itself, what needs the sun to shine? Such as talk of the power of nature, and the ability they have to save themselves, they disparage Christ's merits. I may say, as Gal. 5:4., "Christ is become of no effect to them." This I affirm, such as advance the power of their will in matters of salvation, without the medicinal grace of Christ, do absolutely put themselves under the covenant of works. And now I would ask them, can they perfectly keep the moral law? *Malum oritur ex quolibet defectu*. If there be but the least defect in their obedience, they are gone; for one sinful thought, the law of God curseth them, and the justice of God arraigns them. Confounded be their pride, who cry up the power of nature, as if, by their own inherent abilities, they could rear up a building, the top whereof should reach to heaven!

2. It confutes a sort of people that brag of perfection, and according to that principle, they can keep all God's commandments perfectly. I would ask these, has there at no time a vain thought come into their minds? If there has, then they are are not perfect. The virgin Mary was not perfect; though her womb was pure, (being overshadowed with the Holy Ghost) yet her soul was not perfect; Christ doth tacitly imply a failing in her, Luke 2:49. And, are they more perfect than the blessed Virgin was? Such as hold perfection, need not confess sin. David confessed sin, Ps. 32:5., and Paul confessed sin, Rom. 7:25.; but they are got beyond David and Paul; they are perfect,—they never transgress,—and where there is no transgression, what needs confession?—2dly, If they are perfect they need not ask pardon; they can pay God's justice what they owe; therefore what need they pray, "Forgive us our debts?" Oh that the devil should rock men so fast asleep as to make them dream of perfection! And whereas they bring

that, Phil. 3:15., "Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded." Answer, perfection there, is meant of sincerity. God is best able to interpret his own word. He calls sincerity, perfection; Job 1:8., "A perfect and an upright man." But who is exactly perfect? A man full of diseases may as well say he is healthful, as a man full of sin say he is perfect!

Use 3d. To regenerate persons. Though you fail in your obedience, and cannot keep the moral law exactly, yet be not discouraged.

QUEST. What comfort may be given to a regenerate person under the failures and imperfections of his obedience?

Ans. 1. That a believer is not under the covenant of works, but under the covenant of grace. The covenant of works, requires perfect, personal, perpetual obedience; but in the covenant of grace, God will make some abatements, he will accept of less than he required in the covenant of works.

(1.) In the covenant of works God required perfection of degrees,—in the covenant of grace, he accepts perfection of parts; there he required perfect working,—here he accepts sincere believing; in the covenant of works, God required us to live without sin,—in the covenant of grace, God accepts of our combat with sin.

(2.) Though a Christian cannot, in his own person, perform all God's commandments, yet Christ, as his surety, and in his stead, hath fulfilled the law for him, and God accepts of Christ's obedience, which is perfect, to satisfy for that obedience which is imperfect. Christ being made a curse for believers, all the curses of the law have their sting pulled out.

(3.) Though a Christian cannot keep the commands of God to satisfaction, yet he may to approbation.

QUEST. How is that?

Ans. 1. He gives his full assent and consent to the law of God: Rom. 7:12., "The law is holy and just;" there was assent in the judgment; Rom. 7:16., "I consent to the law;" there was consent in the will.

A. 2. A Christian mourns that he cannot keep the commandments fully; when he fails, he weeps; he is not angry with the law because it is so strict, but he is angry with himself because he is so deficient.

A. 3. He takes a sweet complacential delight in the law: Rom. 7:22., "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." Gr. [Synedomai,] 'I take pleasure in it.' Ps. 119:97., "O how love I thy law!" Though a Christian cannot keep God's law, yet he loves his law; though he cannot serve God perfectly, yet he serves him willingly.

A. 4. It is his cordial desire to walk in all God's commands, Ps. 119:5., "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" Though his strength fails, yet his pulse beats.

A. 5. He doth really endeavour to obey God's law perfectly; and wherein he comes short he runs to Christ's blood to make supply for his defects. This cordial desire, and real endeavour, God esteems as perfect obedience, 2 Cor. 8:12., "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted." "Let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice," Cant. 2:14. Though the prayers of the righteous are mixed with sin, yet God sees they would pray better; God picks out the weeds from the flowers; he sees the faith and winks at the failing. The saint's obedience, though he falls short of legal perfection, yet having sincerity in it, and Christ's merits mixed with it, finds gracious acceptance. When the

Lord sees endeavours after perfect obedience, this he takes well at our hands; as a father that receives a letter from his child, though there be blots in the letter, and false spellings, yet the father takes all in good part. O what blottings are there in our holy things! but God is pleased to take all in good part. Saith God, "It is my child, and he would do better if he could; I will accept it."

ALL SINS NOT EQUALLY HEINOUS

QUEST. LXXXIII. ARE all transgressions of the law equally heinous?

ANS. Some sins, in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

John 19:11., "He that delivered me unto thee, hath the greater sin." The Stoic philosophers held that all sins were equal: but this scripture clearly holds forth that there is a gradual difference in sin; some are greater than others; some are 'mighty sins,' Amos. 5:12., and 'crying sins,' Gen. 18:21. Every sin hath a voice to speak, but some sins cry. As some diseases are worse than others, and some poisons more venomous, so some sins are more heinous. Ezek. 16:47; Jer. 16:12., "You have done worse than your fathers,"—your sins have exceeded theirs. Some sins have a blacker aspect than others: to clip the king's coin is treason, but to strike his person is a higher degree of treason. A vain thought is a sin, but a blasphemous word is a greater sin. That some sins are greater than others, appears, 1. Because there was difference in the offerings under the law,—the sin-offering was greater than the trespass offering.—2. Because some sins are not capable of pardon as others are, therefore they must needs be more heinous, as the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,

Mat. 12:31.—3. Because some sins have a greater degree of punishment than others, Mat. 23:14, 24., "Ye shall receive the greater damnation." Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? God will not punish one more than another, but that his sin is greater. It is true, 'all sins are equally heinous in respect to the object,' or the person against whom sin is committed, viz. the infinite God; but, in another sense, all sins are not alike heinous; some sins have more bloody circumstances in them, which are like the dye to the wool, to give it a deeper colour.

QUEST. What sins may be said to be more heinous than others?

Ans. 1. Such sins as are committed without any occasion offered; a man swears or is angry, and hath no provocation. The less the occasion of sin is, the greater is the sin.

A. 2. Such sins are more heinous, that are committed presumptuously. Under the law there was no sacrifice for presumptuous sins, Numb. 15.

QUEST. What is it to sin presumptuously, which doth heighten and aggravate sin, and make it more heinous?

Ans. To sin presumptuously, is to sin against convictions and illuminations, or an enlightened conscience, Job 24:13., "They are of those that rebel against the light." Conscience, like the cherubim, stands with a flaming sword in its hand to deter the sinner; yet he will sin. Did not Pilate sin against conviction, and with an high hand in condemning Christ? He knew that of envy the Jews had delivered him, Mat. 27:18.; he confessed he found "no fault with him," Luke 23:14.; and his wife sent to him, saying, "have thou nothing to do with that just man," Mat. 27:19.; yet for all this, he gave the sentence of death against Christ. Here he sinned presumptuously,—against an

enlightened conscience. To sin ignorantly doth something extenuate and pair off the guilt, John 15:22., "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin," that is, their sin had been less; but to sin against illuminations and convictions, doth enhance and accent men's sins. These sins make deep wounds in the soul; other sins fetch blood, these are a stab at the heart.

QUEST. How many ways does a man sin against illuminations and convictions?

Ans. 1. When he lives in the total neglect of duty. He is not ignorant that it is a duty to read the word, yet he lets the Bible lie by as rusty armour, that he seldom makes use of; he is convinced that it is a duty to pray in his family, yet he can go days and months, and God never hear of him; he calls God father, but never asks his blessing. Neglect of family-prayer doth, as it were, uncover the roof of men's houses, and make way for a curse to be rained down upon their table.

A. 2. When a man lives in the same sins he condemns in others, Rom. 2:1., "Thou that judgest, doest the same thing." As Austin saith of Seneca, 'He wrote against superstition, yet he worshipped those images which he reprov'd.' One man condemns another for rash censuring, yet lives in the same sin himself; a master reproves his apprentice for swearing, yet he himself swears. The snuffers of the tabernacle were of pure gold; they who reprove and snuff the vices of others, had need themselves to be free from those sins. The snuffers must be of gold.

A. 3. When a man sins after vows, Ps. 56:12., "Thy vows, O God, are upon me." A vow is a religious promise made to God, to dedicate ourselves to him. A vow is not only a purpose, but a promise. Every votary makes himself a debtor, he binds himself to God in a solemn

manner. Now to sin after a vow, to vow himself to God, and give his soul to the devil, must needs be against the highest convictions.

A. 4. When a man sins after counsels, admonitions, warning, he cannot plead ignorance; the trumpet of the gospel hath been blown in his ears, and sounded a retreat to call him off from his sins; he hath been told of his injustice, living in malice, keeping bad company, yet he would venture upon sin; this is to sin against conviction,—it aggravates the sin, and is like a weight put into the scale, to make his sin weigh the heavier. If a sea-mark be set up to give warning that there are shelves and rocks in that place, yet if the mariner will sail there, and split his ship, it is presumption; and, if he be cast away, who will pity him?

A. 5. When a man sins against express comminations and threatenings. God hath thundered out threatenings against such sins, Ps. 68:21., "God shall wound the hairy scalp of such an one as goes on still in his trespasses." Yet, though God set the point of his sword to the breast of a sinner, yet he will commit sin. The pleasure of sin doth more delight him, than the threatenings affright him; he, like the leviathan, laughs at the shaking of a spear, Job 41:29. Nay, he derides God's threatenings, Is. 5:19., "Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it;" we have heard much what God intends to do, and of judgment approaching, we would fain see it. For men to see the flaming sword of God's threatenings brandished, yet to strengthen themselves in sin, is in an high manner to sin against illumination and conviction.

A. 6. When a man sins under affliction. God doth not only thunder by threatening, but hath let his thunderbolt fall; he hath inflicted judgments on a person; he may read his sin in his punishment, yet he sins. His sin was uncleanness; he hath wasted his strength, as well as

his estate. He hath had a fit of apoplexy; yet, though he feels the smart of sin, he retains the love of sin. This is to sin against conviction, 2 Chron. 28:22., "In his distress did he trespass yet more: this is that king Ahaz." This doth enhance and make the sin greater than other sins: for sinning against an enlightened conscience: 1. Is full of obstinacy and pertinaciousness; men give no reason, make no defence for their sins, yet they are resolved to hold fast iniquity. This is desperate wilfulness; and, voluntas est regula et mensura actionis, the more of the will in a sin, the greater the sin: Jer. 18:12., "We will walk after our own devices." Though there be death and hell every step, we will march on under Satan's colours. This made the sin of the apostate angels so great, because it was wilful; they had no ignorance in their mind,—no passion to stir them up,—there was no tempter to deceive them, but they sinned obstinately, and out of choice.

A. 7. To sin against convictions and illuminations, is joined with slighting and contempt of God. It is bad for a sinner to forget God, but it is worse to contemn him. Ps. 10:13., "Wherefore do the wicked contemn God?" An enlightened sinner knows that by his sin he disobligeth and angers God; but he cares not whether God be pleased or not, he will have his sin; therefore such an one is said to reproach God, Numb. 15:30., "The soul that doeth ought presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord." Every sin displeaseth God, but sins against an enlightened conscience reproach the Lord. To contemn the authority of a prince, is a reproach done to him.—2. It is accompanied with impudency. Fear and shame are banished, the veil of modesty is laid aside, Zeph. 3:5., "The unjust knoweth no shame." Judas knew Christ was the Messiah; he was convinced of it by an oracle from heaven, and by the miracles he wrought, and yet he impudently goes on in his treason; nay, when Christ said, "He that dips his hand with me in the dish, he shall betray me," and Judas

knew Christ meant him. And when Judas was going about his treason, Christ pronounced a woe to him, Luke 22:22., yet, for all that, he proceeded in his treason. Thus to sin presumptuously, against an enlightened conscience, dyes the sin of a crimson colour, and makes it greater than other sins.

A. 8. Such sins are more heinous than others, which are sins of continuance. The continuing of sin is the enhancing of sin. He who plots treason, makes himself a greater offender. Some men's heads are the devil's mint-house, they are minting of mischief, Rom. 1:30., "Inventors of evil things." Some invent new oaths, others new snares; such were those presidents that invented a decree against Daniel, and got the king to sign it, Dan. 6:9.

A. 9. Those sins are greater which proceed from a spirit of malignity. To malign holiness is diabolical. 'Tis a sin to want grace, 'tis worse to hate it. In nature there are antipathies, as between the vine and laurel. Some have an antipathy against God, because of his purity, Isa. 30:11., "Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." Sinners, if it lay in their power, would not only un-throne God, but un-be God; if they could help it, God should no longer be God. Thus sin is boiled up to a greater height.

A. 10. Those sins are of a greater magnitude, which are mixed with ingratitude. God cannot endure of all things to have his kindness slighted. God's mercy is seen in relieving men so long,—in wooing them by his Spirit and ministers to be reconciled,—incrowning them with so many temporal blessings: now, to abuse all this love, when God hath been filling up the measure of his mercy, that men should fill up the measure of their sins, this is high ingratitude, and doth make their sins of a deeper crimson. Some are worse for mercy. The vulture (saith Aelian) draws sickness from perfumes: so the sinner

contracts evil from the sweet perfumes of God's mercy. The English Chronicle reports of one Parry, who being condemned to die, queen Elizabeth sent him his pardon; and after he was pardoned, he conspired and plotted the queen's death: just, so some deal with God; he bestows mercy, and they plot treason against him, Isa. 1:2., "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." The Athenians, in lieu of the good service Themistocles had done them, banished him their city. The snake, in the fable, being frozen, stung him that gave it warmth. Certainly sins against mercy are far more heinous.

A. 11. Those sins are more heinous than others, which are committed with delectation. A child of God may sin through a surprisal, or against his will, Rom. 7:19., "The evil which I would not, that do I." Like one that is carried down the stream involuntarily; but, to sin with delight, doth heighten and greaten the sin; a sign the heart is in the sin, Hos. 4:8., "They set their heart on their iniquity," as a man follows his gain with delight: Rev. 22:15., "Without are dogs, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." To tell a lie, is a sin; but to love to tell a lie, is a greater sin.

A. 12. Those sins are more heinous than others, which are committed under a pretence of religion. To cozen and defraud is a sin, but to do it with a Bible in one's hand, is a double sin. To be unchaste, is a sin; but to put on a mask of religion to play the whore, makes the sin greater: Prov. 7:14, 18., "I have peace-offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows: come let us take our fill of love." She speaks as if she had been at church, and had been saying her prayers: who would ever have suspected her of dishonesty? But, behold her hypocrisy; she makes her devotion a preface to adultery, Luke 20:47., "Who devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers." The sin was not in making long prayers, (for Christ was a whole night

in prayer), but to make long prayers, that they might do unrighteous actions, did make their sin more horrid.

A. 13. Sins of apostasy are more heinous than others. Demas forsook the truth, 2 Tim. 4:10., and afterwards became a priest in an idol-temple, saith Dorotheus. To fall, is a sin; but to fall away, is a greater sin. Apostates cast a disgrace upon religion. The apostate (saith Tertulian) seems to put God and Satan in the balance, and having weighed both their services, prefers the devil's service, and proclaims him to be the best master. In which respect the apostate is said to put Christ to "open shame," Heb. 6:6. This dyes a sin in grain, and makes it greater. It is a sin not to profess Christ, but it is a greater to deny him; not to wear Christ's colours is a sin, but to run from his colours is a greater sin. A pagan sins less than a baptized renegado.

A. 14. To persecute religion, makes sin greater, Acts 7. To have no religion, is a sin; but to endeavour to destroy religion is a greater. Antiochus Epiphanes took more tedious journies, and ran more hazards, to vex and oppose the Jews, than all his predecessors had done in obtaining victories. 'Herod added yet this above all, that he put John in prison," Luke 3:20. He sinned before by incest; but, by imprisoning the prophet, this added to his sin, and made it greater. Persecution fills up the measure of sin, Mat. 23:32., "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers." If you pour in a porringer of water into a cistern, that adds something to it; but pour in a bucketfull or two, and that fills up the measure of the cistern; so persecution fills up the measure of sin, and makes it greater.

A. 15. To sin maliciously makes sin greater. Aquinas and other of the schoolmen place the sin against the Holy Ghost in malice. The sinner doth all he can to vex God, and despite the Spirit of grace, Heb. 10:29. Thus Julian, who threw up his dagger in the air, as if he would

have been revenged upon God. This swells sin to its full bigness, it cannot be greater. When a man is once come to this, blasphemously to despise the Spirit, there is but one step lower he can fall, and that is to hell.

A. 16. et ult. It aggravates sin, and makes it greater, when a man not only sins himself, but endeavours to make others sin. 1. Such as teach errors to the people, who decry Christ's deity, or deny his virtue, making him only a political head, not an head of influence,—who preach against the morality of the sabbath, or the immortality of the soul,—these men's sins are greater than others. If the breakers of God's law sin, what do they that teach men to break them? Mat. 5:19. —2. Such as destroy others by their bad example. The swearing father hath taught his son to swear, and damned him by his example. These men's sins are greater than others, and they shall have an hotter place in hell.

Use. You see all sins are not equal; some are more grievous than others, and bring greater wrath; therefore especially take heed of these sins, Ps. 19:13., "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins." The least sin is bad enough; you need not aggravate your sins, and make them more heinous. He that hath a little wound will not make it deeper. O beware of these bloody circumstances which greaten your sin, and make it more heinous! The higher a man is in sinning, the lower he shall lie in torment.

WHAT SIN DESERVETH

QUEST. LXXXIV. WHAT doth every sin deserve?

Ans. God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come. Mat. 25:41., "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Man having sinned, is like a favourite turned out of the king's favour, and deserves the wrath and curse of God.

1st. God's curse, Gal. 3:10. As when Christ cursed the fig-tree, it withered, Mat. 21:19., so, when God curseth any, he withers in his soul. God's curse blasts wherever it comes.

2d. God's wrath, which is nothing else but the execution of God's curse.

I. What this wrath is? In this wrath there is, 1. Something that is privative; that is, the being deprived of the smiles of God's face. It is hell enough to be excluded God's presence; in whose presence is fulness of joy, Ps. 16:11. God's smiling face hath that splendour and oriency of beauty shining in it, as ravisheth the angels with delight. This is the diamond in the ring of glory. And, if it were such a misery for Absalom that he might not see the king's face, 2 Kings 14:22., what will it be for the wicked to be shut out from beholding God's pleasant face! *Privatio Divinæ visionis omnium suppliciorum summum.*—2. God's wrath hath something in it positive. That is, his frown and enraged fury; which is "wrath come upon them to the uttermost," 1 Thess. 2:16. Here take three positions or maxims;

1. God's wrath is irresistible, Ps. 90:11., "Who knows the power of thine anger?" Sinners may oppose God's ways, but not his wrath. Shall the briars contend with the fire? Shall finite contend with infinite? Job 40:9., "Hast thou an arm like God?"

2. God's wrath is terrible. The Spanish proverb is, 'The lion is not so fierce as he is painted.' We are apt to have slight thoughts of God's wrath; but it is very tremendous and dismal, as if scalding lead

should be dropt into one's eye. The Hebrew word for wrath, signifies heat. To show that the wrath of God is hot, therefore it is compared to fire in the text. Fire, when it is in its rage, is dreadful, (as we saw in the flames of this city): so the wrath of God is like fire, it is the terrible of terribles. Other fire is but painted to this. If when God's wrath is kindled but a little, and a spark of it flies into a wicked man's conscience in this life, it is so terrible, what will it be when God "stirs up all his wrath?" Ps. 78:38. How sad is it with a soul in desertion! Now God dips his pen in gall, and 'writes bitter things;' now his poisoned arrows stick fast in the heart, Ps. 88:15, 16., "While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted; thy fierce wrath goeth over me." Luther, in desertion, was in such horror of mind, that *Nec calor, nec sanguis super esset*,—he had no blood seen in his face, but he lay as one dead. Now, if God's wrath be such towards them whom he loves, what will it be towards them whom he hates? If they who sip of the cup find it so bitter, what will they do who drink the dregs of the cup? Ps. 75:8. Solomon saith, "The king's wrath, is as the roaring of a lion," Prov. 19:12. What then is God's wrath! When God musters up all his forces, and sets himself in battalia against a sinner, how can his heart endure? Ezek. 22:14. Who is able to lie under mountains of wrath? God is the sweetest friend, but the sorest enemy. To set forth the fearfulness of this wrath:

1st. The wrath of God shall seize upon every part of a sinner: 1. Upon the body. The body, which was so tender it could not bear heat or cold, shall be tormented in the winepress of God's wrath; those eyes, which before could behold amorous objects, shall be tormented with the sight of devils; the ears, which before were delighted with music, shall be tormented with the hideous shrieks of the damned. 2. The wrath of God shall seize upon the soul of a reprobate. Ordinary fire cannot touch the soul; when the martyrs' bodies were consuming, their souls did triumph in the flames: but God's wrath burns the soul.

(1.) The memory shall be tormented to remember what means of grace have been abused. (2.) The conscience shall be tormented with self-accusations. The sinner shall accuse himself for presumptuous sins,—for mis-spending his precious hours,—for resisting the Holy Ghost.

2d. The wrath of God is without intermission. Hell is an abiding-place, but no resting-place; there's not a minute's rest. Outward pain hath some abatement; if it be the stone or cholic, the patient hath sometimes ease; but the torments of the damned have no intermission; he that feels God's wrath, never saith, "I have ease."

3d. The wrath of God is eternal. So saith the text, "Everlasting fire." No tears can quench the flame of God's anger; no, though we could shed rivers of tears. In all pains of this life, men hope for a cessation, the suffering will not continue long; either the tormentor dies, or the tormented; but the wrath of God is always feeding upon a sinner. The terror of natural fire is, that it consumes what it burns; but this makes the fire of God's wrath terrible, that it doth not consume what it burns. *Sic morientur damnati ut semper vivant*, BERN. The sinner shall ever be in the furnace; after innumerable millions of years, the wrath of God is as far from ending, as it was at the beginning. If all the earth and sea were sand, and every thousand years a bird should come and take away one grain of this sand, it would be a long while ere that vast heap of sand were emptied; but, if after all that time, the damned might come out of hell, there were some hope; but this word ever breaks the heart.

QUEST. But how doth it seem to consist with God's justice to punish sin (which perhaps was committed in a moment) with eternal fire?

Ans. In respect of the heinous nature of sin. Consider the person offended; it is *Crimen Læsœ majestis*: Sin is committed against an

infinite majesty; therefore the sin is infinite, and so the punishment must be infinite. Now, because the nature of man is but finite, and a sinner cannot at once bear infinite wrath, therefore he must in eternity of time be satisfying what he cannot satisfy at once.

4th. While the wicked lie scorching in the flames of wrath, they have none to commiserate them. It is some ease of grief, to have some condole with us; but the wicked have wrath and no pity shown them. Who should pity them? God will not pity them. They derided his Spirit, and now he will laugh at their calamity, Prov. 1:26. The saints will not pity them. They persecuted the saints upon earth, therefore they will rejoice to see God's justice executed on them, Ps. 58:10., "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance."

5th. The sinner under wrath hath none to speak a good word for him. An elect person, when he sins, hath one to intercede for him, 1 John 2:1., "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Christ will say, "It is one of my friends, one for whom I have shed my blood; Father, pardon him." But the wicked (that die in sin) have none to solicit for them; they have an accuser, but no advocate; Christ's blood will not plead for them; they slighted Christ, and refused to come under his government, therefore Christ's blood cries against them.

3. God's wrath is just. The Greek word for vengeance signifies justice. The wicked shall drink a sea of wrath, but not one drop of injustice. 'Tis just God's honour be repaired, and how can that be but by punishing offenders? Having shewn you what this wrath of God is, I shall shew you, 2. That we have deserved the curse and wrath of God; he who infringeth the king's laws, deserves the penalty. Mercy goes by favour, punishment by desert, Dan. 9:8., "To us belongeth

confusion of face." Wrath is that which belongeth to us as we are sinners; it is as due to us as any wages that are paid.

Use 1st. Of information. 1st. It justifies God in condemning sinners at the last day. Sinners deserve wrath, and it is no injustice to give them that which they deserve. If a malefactor deserves death, the judge doth him no wrong in condemning him.

2d. See what a great evil sin is, which exposeth a person to God's wrath for ever. You may know the lion by his paw; and you may know what an evil thing sin is, by the wrath and curse it brings. When you see a man drawn upon a hurdle to execution, you conclude he is guilty of some capital crime that brings such a punishment: when a man lies under the torrid zone of God's wrath, and roars out in flames, then say, "How horrid an evil sin is!" They who now see no evil in swearing, or sabbath-breaking, they will see it look black in the glass of hell-torments.

3d. See here an handwriting upon the wall; here is that which may check a sinner's mirth. He is now brisk and frolicsome, he chants "to the sound of the viol, and invents instruments of music," Amos 6:5. He drinks 'stolen waters,' and saith, 'they are sweet.' Oh! but let him remember, that the wrath and curse of God hangs over him, which will shortly (without repentance) be executed on him. Dionysius thought, as he sat at table, he saw a naked sword hang over his head: the sword of God's justice hangs over a sinner; and when the slender thread of life is cut asunder, the sword falls upon him. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth," Eccl. 11:9., "But know that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment." For a drop of pleasure, thou must drink a sea of wrath. Your pleasure cannot be so sweet as wrath is bitter; the delights of the flesh cannot countervail the horror of conscience;

better want the devil's honey, than be so stung with the wrath of God. The garden of Eden, which signifies pleasure, had a flaming sword placed at the east end of it, Gen. 3:24.: the garden of carnal and sinful delight is surrounded with the flaming sword of God's wrath.

Use 2d. Reproof. It reproves the stupidity of sinners, who are no more affected with the curse and wrath of God which is due to them, Isa. 44:19., "None considereth in his heart." If they were in debt, and were ready to have the sergeant arrest them, they would be affected with that: but though the fierce wrath of God is ready to arrest them, they remember not. A beast though he hath no shame, yet he hath fear; he is afraid of fire; but sinners are worse than brutish, they fear not the 'fire of hell,' till they are in it. Most have their conscience asleep, or seared; but when they shall see the vials of God's wrath dropping, then they will cry out as Dives, "I am tormented in this flame!" Luke 16:24.

Use 3d. Exhortation. 1st. Let us adore God's patience who hath not brought this wrath and curse upon us all this while. We have deserved wrath, yet God hath not given us our desert. We may all subscribe to that, Ps. 103:8., "The Lord is slow to anger; and v. 10., "He hath not rewarded us according to our iniquities." God hath deferred his wrath, and given us space to repent, Rev. 2:21. God is not like an hasty creditor, that requires the debt, and gives no time for the payment; he shoots off his warning-piece, that he may not shoot off his murdering-piece, 2 Pet. 3:9., "The Lord is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish." God adjourns the assizes to see if sinners would turn; he keeps off the storm of his wrath; but if men will not be warned, let them know that long forbearance is no forgiveness.

2d. Let us labour to prevent the wrath we have deserved. How careful are men to prevent poverty or disgrace! O labour to prevent God's eternal wrath, that it may not only be deferred, but removed!

QUEST. What shall we do to prevent and escape the wrath to come?

Ans. 1. By getting an interest in Jesus Christ. Christ is the only screen to stand betwixt us and the wrath of God; he did feel God's wrath, that they who believe in him should never feel it, 1 Thess. 1:10., "Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come." Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace was a type of God's wrath, and that furnace did not singe the garments of the three children, "nor had the smell of fire passed on them," Dan. 3:27. Jesus Christ went into the furnace of his Father's wrath; and those that believe in him, the smell of the fire of hell shall never pass upon them.

A. 2. If we would prevent the wrath of God, let us take heed of those sins which will bring the wrath of God. Edmund, successor of Anselm, had a saying, "I had rather leap into a furnace of fire, than willingly commit a sin against God." There are several fiery sins we must take heed of, which will bring the fire of God's wrath.

(1.) The fire of rash anger. Some who profess religion, yet cannot bridle their tongue; they care not what they say in their anger, they will curse their passions. St. James saith, "The tongue is set on fire of hell," chap. 3:6. O take heed of a "fiery tongue," lest it bring thee to "fiery torment!" Dives begged a drop of water to cool his tongue: St. Cyprian saith, he had offended most in his tongue, and now that was most set on fire.

(2.) Take heed of the fire of malice. Malice is a malignant humour, whereby we wish evil to one another,—it is a vermin lives on blood,—it studies revenge. Caligula had a chest where he kept deadly poisons

for them he had malice against. The fire of malice brings men to the fiery 'furnace of God's wrath.'

(3.) Take heed of the sin of uncleanness, Heb. 13:4., "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Such as burn in uncleanness, are in great danger to burn one day in hell. Let one fire put out another; let the fire of God's wrath put out the fire of lust.

3d. To you who have a well-grounded hope that you shall not feel this wrath which you have deserved, let me exhort you, 1. To be very thankful to God, who hath given his Son to save you from this tremendous wrath. "Jesus hath delivered you from wrath to come." The Lamb of God was scorched in the fire of God's wrath for you. Christ did feel the wrath which he did not deserve, that you may escape the wrath which you have deserved. Pliny observes that there is nothing better to quench fire than blood: Christ's blood hath quenched the fire of God's wrath for you. "Upon me, upon me be thy curse," said Rebekah to Jacob, Gen. 27:13. So said Christ to God's justice, "Upon me be the curse," that my elect may inherit the blessing. 2. Be patient under all the afflictions which you endure. Affliction is sharp, but this is not wrath, this is not hell. Who would not willingly drink in the cup of affliction, that knows he shall never drink in the cup of damnation? Who would not be willing to bear the wrath of men, that knows he shall never feel the wrath of God?

Christian, though thou mayest feel the rod, thou shalt never feel the bloody axe. Austin once said, "Strike, Lord, where thou wilt, if sin be pardoned." So say, "Afflict me, Lord, as thou wilt in this life, seeing I shall escape the wrath to come."

OF FAITH

QUEST. LXXXV. WHAT doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?

ANS. Faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us, the benefits of redemption.

I. I begin with the first, "Faith in Jesus Christ," Rom. 3:22, 25., "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." The great privilege in the text is to have Christ for a propitiation; which is not only to free us from God's wrath, but to ingratiate us into God's love and favour. And the means of having Christ to be our propitiation is, 'Faith in his blood.' There is a twofold faith, *Fides quæ creditur*, i.e. 'the doctrine of faith;' and *Fides quâ creditur*, i.e. 'the grace of faith.' The act of justifying faith lies in recumbency; we do rest on Christ alone for salvation. As a man that is ready to drown catcheth hold on the bough of a tree: so a poor trembling sinner, seeing himself ready to perish, catcheth hold by faith on Christ the tree of life, and so is saved. The work of faith is by the Holy Spirit; therefore faith is called the "fruit of the Spirit," Gal. 5:22. Faith doth not grow in nature, it is an outlandish plant, a fruit of the Spirit. This grace of faith is *sanctissimum humani pectoris bonum*,—of all others, the most precious rich faith, and most holy faith, and faith of God's elect. Hence it is called "precious faith," 2 Pet. 1:1. As gold is the most precious among the metals, so is faith among the graces. Faith is the queen of the graces; faith is the condition of the gospel; "Thy faith hath saved thee," Luke 7:50., not thy tears. Faith is the "vital artery of the soul," it animates it, Hab. 2:4., "The just shall live by faith." Unbelievers, though they breathe yet want life. Faith is (as Clemens Alexandrinus calls it) a mother-

grace; it excites and invigorates all the graces; not a grace stirs till faith sets it a work. Faith sets repentance a work; it is like fire to the still. Faith sets hope a work,—first we believe the promise,—then we hope for it. Did not faith feed the lamp of hope with oil, it would soon die. Faith sets love a work, Gal. 5:6., "Faith which worketh by love." Who can believe in the infinite merits of Christ, and his heart not ascend in a fiery chariot of love? Faith is a catholicon, or remedy against all troubles,—a sheet-anchor we cast out into the sea of God's mercy, and are kept from sinking in despair. Other graces have done worthily,—thou, O Faith, excellest them all! Indeed in heaven, love will be the chief grace; but, while we are here militant, love must give place to faith. Love takes possession of glory, but faith gives a title to it. Love is the crowning grace in heaven, but faith is the conquering grace upon earth, 1 John 5:4., "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Faith carries away the garland from all the other graces; other graces help to sanctify us, but it is faith only that hath the honour to justify; Rom. 5:1., "Being justified by faith."

QUEST. But how comes faith to be so precious?

Ans. Not as it is a more holy quality, or as if it had more worthiness than other graces, but respectu objecti,—"as it lays hold on Christ the blessed object," and fetcheth in his fulness, John 9:16. Faith in itself considered, is but manus mendica,—"the beggar's hand;" but as this hand receives the rich alms of Christ's merits, so it is precious, and doth challenge a superiority over the rest of the graces.

Use 1st. Of all sins beware of the rock of unbelief, Heb. 3:12., "Take heed lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief." Men think, as long as they are not drunkards or swearers, it is no great matter to be unbelievers. This is the gospel-sin, it dyes your other sins in grain.

(1.) Unbelief is a Christ-reproaching sin. Unbelief disparageth Christ's infinite merit, as if it could not save; unbelief makes the wound of sin to be broader than the plaster of Christ's blood. This is an high contempt offered to Christ, and is a deeper spear than that which the Jews thrust into his side.

(2.) Unbelief is an ungrateful sin. *Ingratus vitandus est ut dirum scelus, tellus ipsa fædius nihil creat.* Ingratitude is a prodigy of wickedness; unbelief is ungrateful, being against the richest mercy. Suppose a king should redeem a captive, and to redeem him should part with his crown of gold from his head; and when he had done this, should say to the man redeemed, "All I desire of thee in lieu of my kindness, is to believe that I love thee." Now, if he should say "No, I do not believe any such thing; or that thou carest at all for me:" I appeal to you were not this odious ingratitude? So is this case here: God hath sent his Son to shed his blood. God requires only to believe in him, that he is able and willing to save us. "No," saith unbelief, "his blood was not shed for me, I cannot persuade myself that Christ hath any purpose of love to me." Is not this horrid ingratitude? And this enhanceth a sin, and makes it of a crimson colour.

(3.) Unbelief is a leading sin. It is the breeder of sin. *Qualitas malæ vitæ initium sumit ab infidelitate.* Unbelief is a root-sin, and the devil labours to water this root, that the branches may be fruitful. (1.) Unbelief breeds hardness of heart; therefore they are put together, Mark 16:14., Christ upbraideth them with their unbelief and hardness of heart. Unbelief breeds the stone of the heart; he who believes not in Christ, is not affected with his sufferings, he melts not in tears of love. Unbelief freezeth the heart; first it defiles and hardens. (2.) Unbelief breeds profaneness; an unbeliever will stick at no sin,—neither at false weights, nor false oaths. He will swallow

down treason; Judas was first an unbeliever, and then a traitor, John 6:64. He who hath no faith in his heart will have no fear of God before his eyes.

(4.) Unbelief is a wrath-procuring sin; it is inimica salutis, BERN. John 3:18. Jam condemnatus est, dying so, he is as sure to be condemned as if he were so already, John 3:36., "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." He who believes not in the blood of the Lamb, must feel the wrath of the Lamb. The Gentiles that believe not in Christ will be as well damned as the Jews who blaspheme him. And if unbelief be so fearful and damnable a sin, shall we not be afraid to live in it?

2d. Above all graces, set faith a work on Christ: John 3:15., "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish." Eph. 6:16., "Above all, taking the shield of faith." Say as queen Esther, "I will go in unto the king: and if I perish, I perish." She had nothing to encourage her, —she ventured against law,—yet the golden sceptre was held forth to her. We have promises to encourage our faith, John 6:37., "He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Let us then advance faith by an holy recumbency on Christ's merits. Christ's blood will not justify without believing: they are both put together in the text, "Faith in his blood." The blood of God, without faith in Christ, will not save. Christ's sufferings are the plaster to heal a sin-sick soul, but this plaster must be applied by faith. It is not money in a rich man's hand, though offered to us, will enrich us, unless we receive it: so it is not Christ's virtues or benefits will do us good, unless we receive them by the hand of faith. Above all graces, set faith on work; remember this grace is most acceptable to God, and that upon many accounts.

(1.) Because it is a God-exalting grace; it glorifies God, Rom. 4:20., Abraham being strong in faith, gave glory to God. To believe that there is more mercy in God, and merit in Christ than sin in us,—and that Christ hath answered all the demands and challenges of the law, —and that his blood hath fully satisfied for us,—this is in a high degree to honour God. Faith in the Mediator brings more glory to God, than martyrdom, or the most heroic act of obedience.

(2.) Faith in Christ is so acceptable to God, because it is such a self-denying grace; it makes a man go out of himself, renounce all self-righteousness and wholly rely on Christ for justification. Faith is very humble, it confesseth its own indigence, and lives wholly upon Christ. As the bee sucks sweetness from the flower, so faith sucks all its strength and comfort from Christ.

(3) Faith is a grace so acceptable to God, because by faith we present a righteousness to God, which doth best please him; we bring the righteousness of Christ into the court, which is called the righteousness of God, 2 Cor. 5:21. To bring Christ's righteousness, is to bring Benjamin with us. A believer may say, "Lord, it is not the righteousness of Adam, or of the angels, but of Christ who is God-man, that I bring before thee." The Lord cannot choose but smell a sweet savour in Christ's righteousness.

Use 2d. Trial. Let us try our faith. There is something that looks like faith, and is not. Pliny saith, there is a Cyprian stone, which is in colour, like a diamond, but it is not of the right kind: there is a false spurious faith in the world. Some plants have the same leaf with others, but the herbalist can distinguish them by the root and taste; something may look like true faith, but it may be distinguished several ways.

(1.) True faith is grounded upon knowledge; knowledge carries the torch before faith. There is a knowledge of Christ's orient excellencies, Phil. 3:7. He is all made up of love and beauty. True faith is a judicious intelligent grace, it knows whom it believes, and why it believes. Faith is seated as well in the understanding as the will. It hath an eye to see Christ, as well as a wing to fly to him. Such therefore as are invailed with ignorance, or have only an implicit faith, to believe as the Church believes, have no true genuine faith.

(2.) Faith lives in a broken heart, Mark 9:24., "He cried out with tears, Lord, I believe." True faith is always in an heart bruised for sin: such therefore, whose hearts were never touched for sin, have no faith. If a physician should tell us, there were an herb would help us against all infections, but it always grows in a watery place,—if we should see an herb like it in colour, leaf, smell, blossom, but it grows upon a rock, we would conclude this were the wrong herb: so saving faith doth always grow in an heart humbled for sin; it grows in a weeping eye, watery conscience; therefore, if there be a shew of faith, but it grows upon a rock, an hard impenitent heart, this is not the true faith.

(3.) True faith is at first nothing but an embryo, it is minute and small; it is full of doubtings, temptations, fears; it begins in weakness. It is like the smoking-flax, Mat. 12:20. It smokes with desires, but doth not flame with comfort; it is at first so small that it is scarce discernible. Such as, at the first dash, have a strong persuasion that Christ is theirs, who leap out of sin into assurance, their faith is false and spurious: that faith, which is come to its full stature on its birth-day, is a monster. The seed that sprang up suddenly, withered, Mat. 13:5.

(4.) Faith is a refining grace, it consecrates and purifies. Moral virtue may wash the outside, faith washeth the inside, Acts 15:9. Having purified their hearts by faith, faith makes the heart a sacristy or temple with this inscription, 'holiness to the Lord;' such, whose hearts have legions of lusts in them, were never acquainted with the true faith. For one to say, he hath faith, yet live in sin, is as if one should say, he were in health, yet his vitals are perished. Faith is a virgin-grace; it is joined with sanctity, 1 Tim. 3:9., "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." The jewel of faith is always put in the cabinet of a pure conscience. The woman that touched Christ by faith, fetched an healing and cleansing virtue from him.

(5.) True faith is obediential, Rom. 16:26., "The obedience of faith." Faith melts our will into the will of God. If God commands duty, (though cross to flesh and blood) faith obeys; Heb. 11:8., "By faith Abraham obeyed." Faith doth not only believe the promise, but obey the command. It is not having a speculative knowledge will evidence you to be believers; the devil hath knowledge, but that which makes him a devil is, he wants obedience.

(6.) True faith is increasing, Rom. 1:17., "From faith to faith," i.e. From one degree of faith to another. Faith doth not lie in the heart, as a stone in the earth; but, as seed in the earth it grows. Joseph of Arimathea was a disciple of Christ, but afraid to confess him; afterwards he went boldly to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus, John 19:36. And a Christian's increase in faith is known two ways:

1. By steadfastness. He is a pillar in the temple of God, Col. 2:7., "Rooted and built up in him; and stablished in the faith." Unbelievers are sceptics in religion, they are unsettled; they question every truth, but, when faith is on the increasing hand, it doth stabilire animum, it doth corroborate a Christian; he is able to prove his principles; he

holds no more than he will die for; as that martyr-woman said, "I cannot dispute for Christ, but I can burn for him." An increasing faith is not like a ship in the midst of the sea, that fluctuates, and is tossed upon the waves, but like a ship at anchor which is firm and steadfast.

2. A Christian's increase in faith is known by his strength; he can do that now, which he could not do before. When one is man-grown, he can do that which he was not able to do when he was a child; he can carry an heavier burden; so a Christian can bear crosses with more patience.

OBJ. But I fear I have no faith, it is so weak?

Ans. If you have faith, though, but in its infancy, be not discouraged, for, 1st. a little faith is faith, as a spark of fire is fire; 2d. a weak faith may lay hold on a strong Christ. A weak hand can tie the knot in marriage, as well as a strong. She, in the gospel, who but touched Christ, fetched virtue from him. 3d. The promises are not made to strong faith, but to true. The promise doth not say, he who hath a giant faith, who can believe God's love through a frown,—who can rejoice in affliction,—who can work wonders, remove mountains, stop the mouth of lions,—shall be saved; but, whosoever believes, be his faith never so small. A reed is but weak, especially when it is bruised, yet the promise is made to it: Mat. 12:20., "A bruised reed will he not break." 4th. A weak faith may be fruitful. Weakest things multiply most. The vine is a weak plant, but it is fruitful. The thief on the cross, who was newly converted, was but weak in grace; but how many precious clusters grew upon that tender plant! Luke 23:40., he chides his fellow-thief, "Dost thou not fear God?" He judgeth himself, "We indeed suffer justly." He believes in Christ, when he said, "Lord." He makes a heavenly prayer, "Remember me when thou

comest into thy kingdom." Weak Christians may have strong affections. How strong is the first love, which is after the first planting of faith! 5th. The weakest believer is a member of Christ, as well as the strongest; and the weakest member of the body mystical shall not perish. Christ will cut off rotten members, but not weak members. Therefore, Christian, be not discouraged. God, who would have us receive them that are weak in faith, Rom. 14:1. will not himself refuse them.

II. The second means whereby we escape the curse and wrath due to sin, is by repentance.

OF REPENTANCE

ACTS 11:18. Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life.

Repentance seems to be a bitter pill to take, but it is to purge out the bad humour of sin. Repentance is by some Antinomian spirits cried down as a legal doctrine; but Christ himself preached it, Mat. 4:17., "From that time Jesus began to preach, and say, Repent," &c. And, in his last farewell, when he was ascending to heaven, he commanded that "Repentance should be preached in his name," Luke 24:47., Repentance is a pure gospel-grace. The covenant of works would not admit of repentance; it cursed all that could not perform perfect and personal obedience, Gal. 3:10. Repentance comes in by the gospel; it is the fruit of Christ's purchase, that repenting sinners shall be saved. Repentance is wrought by the ministry of the gospel, while it sets before our eyes Christ crucified. Repentance is not arbitrary, but necessary; there is no being saved without it; Luke 13:3., "Except ye

repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And we may be thankful to God, that he hath left us this plank after shipwreck.

1st. I shall show the counterfeits of repentance.

1. Natural softness and tenderness of spirit. Some have a tender affection, arising from their complexion, whereby they are apt to weep and relent when they see any object of pity. These are not repenting tears; for many weep to see another's misery, who cannot weep at their own sin.

2. Counterfeit, legal affrightments. A man has lived in a course of sin; at last he is made a little sensible; he sees hell ready to devour him, and he is filled with anguish and horror; but, within a while the tempest of conscience is blown over, and he is quiet; then he concludes he is a true penitent, because he hath felt some bitterness in sin: this is not repentance. Judas had some trouble of mind. If anguish and trouble were sufficient to repentance, then the damned would be most penitent, for they are most in anguish of mind. There may be trouble of mind, where there is no grieving for the offence against God.

3. Counterfeit, a slight superficial sorrow. When God's hand lies heavy upon a man, (he is sick or lame) he may vent a sigh or tear, and say, 'Lord, have mercy;' yet this is no true repentance. Ahab did more than all this, 1 Kings 21:27., "He rent his clothes, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly." His clothes were rent, but not his heart. The eye may be watery, and the heart flinty. An apricot may be soft without, but it hath an hard stone within.

4. Counterfeit, good motions arising in the heart. Every good motion is not repentance. Some think if they have motions in their hearts to break off their sins, and become religious, this is repentance. As the

devil may stir up bad motions in the godly, so the Spirit of God may stir up good motions in the wicked. Herod had many good thoughts and inclinations stirred up in him by John Baptist's preaching, yet he did not truly repent, for he still lived in incest.

5. Counterfeit, vows and resolutions. What vows and solemn protestations do some make in their sickness. If God recover them they will be new men, but afterwards are as bad as ever: Jer. 2:20., "Thou saidst, I will not transgress;" here was a resolution; but for all this, she ran after her idols; "Under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot."

6. Counterfeit, leaving off some gross sin. But that is a mistake: for, 1. A man may leave some sins, and keep others. Herod did reform many things amiss, but kept his Herodias. 2. An old sin may be left, to entertain a new. A man may leave off riot and prodigality, and turn covetous; this is to exchange a sin. These are the counterfeits of repentance. Now, if you find that yours is a counterfeit repentance, and you have not repented aright, mend what you have done amiss; as in the body, if a bone be set wrong, the chirurgion hath no way but to break it again, and set it aright: so must you do by your repentance; if you have not repented aright, you must have your heart broken again in a godly manner, and be more deeply afflicted for sin than ever.

2d. And that brings me to the second, to show wherein true repentance consists: it consists in two things;

1st, Humiliation, Lev. 26:41., "If their uncircumcised hearts be humbled." There is (as the schoolmen) a twofold humiliation, or breaking of the heart. 1. Attrition; as when a rock is broken in pieces. This is done by the law, which is an hammer to break the heart. 2. Contrition; as when ice is melted into water. This is done by the

gospel, which is as a fire to melt the heart, Jer. 23:9. It is the sense of abused kindness causeth contrition.

2d. Transformation, or change, Rom. 12:2., "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Repentance works a change in the whole man; as wine put into a glass where water is, the wine runs into every part of the water, and changeth its colour and taste: so true repentance doth not rest in one part, but doth diffuse and spread itself into every part.

1. Repentance causeth a change in the mind. Whereas, before a man did like well of sin, and say in defence of it, as Jonah, "I do well to be angry," chap. 4:9. So, I did well to swear, and break the sabbath. When once a man becomes a penitent, his judgment is changed, he now looks upon sin as the greatest evil. The Greek word for repentance, signifies after-wisdom; when, having seen how deformed and damnable a thing sin is, we change our mind. Paul, before conversion, verily "thought within himself, I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus," Acts. 26:9.; but, when he became a penitent, now he was of another mind, Phil. 3:8., "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." Repentance causeth a change of judgment.

2. Repentance causeth a change in the affections which move under the will as the commander in chief. Repentance doth metamorphose the affections. It turns rejoicing in sin into sorrow for sin; it turns boldness in sin into holy shame; it turns the love of sin into hatred. As Amnon hated Tamar more than ever he loved her, 2 Sam. 13:15.: so the true penitent hateth sin more than ever he loved it, Ps. 119:104., "I hate every false way."

3. Repentance works a change in the life. Though repentance begins at the heart, it doth not rest there, but goes into the life. I say, it

begins at the heart, Jer. 4:14., "O Jerusalem, wash thy heart." If the spring be corrupt, there can no pure stream run from it. But though repentance begins at the heart, it doth not rest there, but changeth the life. What a change did repentance make in Paul! It changed a persecutor into a preacher. What a change did it make in the jailor? Acts 16:33., He took the apostles, and washed their stripes, and set meat before them. What a change did it make in Mary Magdalene? She that before did kiss her lovers with wanton embraces, now kisseth Christ's feet; she that did use to curl her hair, and dress it with costly jewels, now she makes it a towel to wipe Christ's feet; her eyes that used to sparkle with lust, and with impure glances to entice her lovers, now she makes them a fountain of tears to wash her Saviour's feet; her tongue that used to speak vainly and loosely, now it is an instrument set in tune to praise God. And this change of life hath two things in it;

(1.) The terminus a quo,—a breaking off sin, Dan. 4:27., "Break off thy sins by righteousness." And this breaking off sin must have three qualifications, 1. It must be universal, a breaking off all sin. One disease may kill as well as more; one sin lived in may damn as well as more. The real penitent breaks off secret, gainful, complexion sins; he takes the sacrificing knife of mortification, and runs it through the heart of his dearest lusts.—2. Breaking off sin must be sincere; it must not be out of fear or design, but upon spiritual grounds. As, 1st, From antipathy and disgust.—2dly, From a principle of love to God. If sin had not such evil effects, yet a true penitent would forsake it out of love to God. The best way to separate things that are frozen, is by fire: when sin and the heart are frozen together, the best way to separate them is by the fire of love. Shall I sin against a gracious Father, and abuse that love which pardons me?—3. The breaking off sin must be perpetual, so as never to have to do with sin any more,

Hos. 14:8., "What have I to do any more with idols?" Repentance is a spiritual divorce, which must be till death.

(2.) Change of life hath in it, terminus ad quem,—a returning unto the Lord. It is called "repentance towards God," Acts 20:21. 'Tis not enough, when we repent, to leave old sins; but we must engage in God's service; as when the wind leaves the west, it turns into a contrary corner. The repenting prodigal did not only leave his harlots, but did arise and go to his father, Luke 15:18. In true repentance the heart points directly to God, as the needle to the north pole.

Use. Let us all set upon this great work of repentance; let us repent sincerely and speedily; let us repent of all our sins, our pride, rash anger, unbelief. "Without repentance no remission;" it is not consistent with the holiness of God's nature to pardon a sinner while he is in the act of rebellion. O meet God, not with weapons, but tears in your eyes! And, to stir you up to a melting, penitent frame,

1. Consider what is there in sin that you should continue in the practice of it. It is the "accursed thing," Josh. 7:11. It is the spirits of mischief distilled. (1.) It defiles the soul's glory; it is like a stain to beauty; 'tis compared to a plague-sore, 1 Kings 8:38. Nothing so changeth one's glory into shame, as sin. (2.) Without repentance, sin tends to final damnation. Peccatum transit, actu manet reatu. Sin at first shews its colour in the glass, but afterwards it bites like a serpent. Those locusts, Rev. 9:7., were an emblem of sin: "On their heads were crowns like gold, and they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions, and there were stings in their tails." Sin unrepented of ends in a tragedy. Sin hath the devil for its father, shame for its companion, and death for its wages, Rom.

6:23. What is there in sin then, that men should continue in it? Say not, it is sweet. Who would desire that pleasure which kills?

2. Repentance is very pleasing to God. No sacrifice like a broken heart, Ps. 51:17., "A contrite and a broken heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." St. Austin caused this sentence to be written over his bed when he was sick. When the widow brought empty vessels to Elisha, the oil was poured into them, 2 Kings 4:6.: bring God the broken vessel of a contrite heart, and he will pour in the oil of mercy. Repenting tears are the joy of God and angels, Luke 15. Doves delight to be about the waters; and surely God's Spirit (who once descended in the likeness of a dove) takes great delight in the waters of repentance. Mary stood at Jesus' feet weeping, Luke 7:38. She brought two things to Christ, tears and ointment,—her tears were more precious to Christ than her ointment.

3. Repentance ushers in pardon; therefore they are joined together, Acts 5:31., "Repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Pardon of sin is the richest blessing; it is enough to make a sick man well, Isa. 33:24., "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." Pardon settles upon us the richer charter of the promises. Pardoning mercy is the sauce that makes all other mercies relish the sweeter; it sweetens our health, riches, honour. David had a crown of pure gold set upon his head, Ps. 21:3. But that which David did most bless God for was, not that God had set a crown of gold upon his head, but that God set a crown of mercy upon his head: Ps. 103:4., "Who crowneth thee with mercies." But what was this crown of mercy? You may see, v. 3., "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities." David more rejoiced that he was crowned with forgiveness, than that he wore a crown of pure gold. Now, what is it makes way for pardon of sin, but repentance? When David's soul was humbled and broken, then the prophet Nathan

brought him that good news, 2 Sam. 12:13., "The Lord hath put away thy sin."

OBJ. But sure, my sins are so great, that if I should repent, God would not pardon them.

Ans. God will not go from his promise: Jer. 3:12., "Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful." If thy sins are as rocks, yet upon thy repentance, the sea of God's mercy can drown these rocks, Isa. 1:16., "Wash you, make you clean." Wash in the laver of repentance, v. 18., "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Manasseh was a crimson sinner; but when he humbled himself greatly, the golden sceptre of mercy was held forth; when his head was a fountain to weep for sin, Christ's side was a fountain to wash away sin. 'Tis not the greatness of sin, but impenitency, destroys. The Jews, some of them that had an hand in crucifying Christ, upon their repentance, the blood they shed was a sovereign balm to heal them. When the prodigal came home to his father, he had the robe and the ring put upon him, and his "father kissed him," Luke 15. If you break off your sins, God will become a friend to you; all that is in God shall be yours; his power shall be yours, to help you,—his wisdom shall be yours, to counsel you,—his Spirit shall be yours, to sanctify you,—his promises shall be yours, to comfort you,—his angels shall be yours, to guard you,—his mercy shall be yours, to save you.

4. There's much sweetness in repenting tears. The soul is never more enlarged and inwardly delighted than when it can melt kindly for sin. Weeping days are festival days. The Hebrew word to repent, *nicham*, signifies, *consolari*, 'to take comfort,' John 16:20., "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." Christ turns the water of tears into wine. David,

who was the great mourner in Israel, was the sweet singer; and the joy a true penitent finds, is a prelibation and foretaste of the joy of paradise. The wicked man's joy turns to sadness; the penitent's sadness turns to joy. Though repentance seems at first to be thorny and bitter, yet of this thorn a Christian gathers grapes. All which considerations may open a vein of godly sorrow in our souls, that we may both weep for sin, and turn from sin. If ever God restores comfort, it is to his mourners, Isa. 57:18. And when we have wept, let us look up to Christ's blood for pardon. Say, as that holy man, *lava Domine lachrymas meus*,—"Lord, wash my tears, in thy blood!" We drop sin with our tears, and need Christ's blood to wash them; and this repentance must be not only for a few days, like the mourning for a friend, which is soon over; but it must be the work of our lives; the issue of godly sorrow must not be stopt till death. After sin is pardoned, we must repent. We run afresh upon the score; "we sin daily, therefore must repent daily." Some shed a few tears for sin; and when their tears, like the window's oil, have run a while they cease. Many, if the plaster of repentance begin to smart a little, pluck it off; whereas this plaster of repentance must still lie on, and not be plucked off till death; when, as all other tears, so these of godly sorrow, shall be wiped away.

QUEST. What shall we do to obtain a penitential frame, of heart?

Ans. Seek to God for it. It is his promise to give an 'heart of flesh,' Ezek. 36, and to pour on us a spirit of mourning, Zech. 12:10. Beg God's 'Holy Spirit.' Ps. 147:18., "He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow." When the wind of God's Spirit blows upon us, then the waters of repentant tears will flow from us.

THE WORD READ AND PREACHED, HOW EFFECTUAL

III. The third way to escape the wrath and curse of God, and obtain the benefit of redemption by Christ, is, "The diligent use of ordinances," in particular, "the word, sacraments, and prayer."

I begin with the first of these ordinances.

1. The "word," 1 Thes. 2:13.,—"which effectually worketh in you that believe."

QUEST. What is meant, by the word's working effectually?

Ans. The word of God is said to work effectually, when it hath that good effect upon us for which it was appointed of God; namely, when the word works powerful illumination, and thorough reformation; Acts 26:18., "To open their eyes, and turn them from the power of Satan to God." The 'opening their eyes,' denotes illumination; and, 'turning them from Satan to God,' denotes reformation.

QUEST. 2. How is the word to be read and heard that it may become effectual to salvation?

This question consists of two branches.

1. How may the word be read effectually?

First, I shall begin with the first branch of the question, 'How is the word to be read that it may become effectual to salvation?'

Ans. That we may so read the word, that it may conduce effectually to our salvation,

1. Let us have a reverent esteem of every part of canonical scripture: Ps. 19:10., "More to be desired are they than gold." Value this book of God above all other books. It is a golden epistle, indited by the Holy Ghost, sent us from heaven. More particularly to raise our esteem, (1.) The scripture is a spiritual glass to dress our souls by; it shews us more than we can see by the light of a natural conscience; that may discover gross sins, but the glass of the word shews us heart-sins, vain thoughts, unbelief, &c. And it not only shews us our spots, but washeth them away. (2.) The scripture is a magazine out of which we may fetch our spiritual artillery to fight against Satan. When the devil tempted our Saviour, he fetched armour and weapons from scripture, "it is written," Mat. 4:4, 7. (3.) The holy scripture is a panacea, or universal medicine for the soul; it gives a recipe to cure deadness of heart, Ps. 119:50. Pride, 1 Pet. 5:5. Infidelity, John 3:36. It is a physic garden, where we may gather an herb or antidote to expel the poison of sin. The leaves of scripture, like the leaves of the tree of life, are for the "healing of the nations," Rev. 22:2. And may not this cause a reverent esteem of the word?

2. If we would have the word written effectual to our souls, let us peruse it with 'intenseness of mind:' John 5:39., "Search the scriptures." The Greek word [erynate] signifies to search as for a 'vein of silver.' The Bereans, Acts 17:11., "searched the scriptures daily." The word [anakrimontes] signifies to make a curious and critical search. And Apollos was mighty in the scriptures, Acts 18:24. Some gallop over a chapter in haste and get no good by it: if we would have the word effectual and saving, we must mind and observe every passage of scripture. And that we may be diligent in the perusal of scripture, consider,

First, The word written is norma cultus,—the rule and platform by which we are to square our lives; it contains in it all things needful to

salvation, Ps. 19:7., what duties we are to do, what sins we are to avoid. God gave Moses a pattern how he would have the tabernacle made; and he was to go exactly according to the pattern, Exod. 25:9. The word is the pattern God hath given us in writing for modelling our lives; therefore, how careful should we be in the pursuing and looking over this pattern?

Secondly, The written word, as it is our pattern, so it will be our judge, John 12:48., "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." We read of the opening of the books, Rev. 20:12. This is one book God will open, the book of the Scripture, and will judge men out of it. He will say, Have you lived according to the rule of this word? The word hath a double work, to teach, and to judge.

3. If we would have the word written effectual, we must bring faith to the reading of it,—believe it to be the word of the eternal Jehovah. The word written comes with authority,—it shews its commission from heaven, "Thus saith the Lord." It is of divine inspiration, 2 Tim. 3:16. The oracles of scripture must be surer to us than a voice from heaven, 1 Pet. 1:18. Unbelief enervates the virtue of scripture, and renders it ineffectual. First men question the truth of the scripture, and then fall away from it.

4. If we would have the word written effectual to salvation, we must delight in it as our spiritual cordial, Jer. 15:16., "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and the word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." All true solid comfort is fetched out of the word. The word (as Chrysostom saith) is a spiritual garden; and the promises are the fragrant flowers or spices in this garden. How should we delight to walk among these beds of spices? Is it not a comfort in all dubious perplexed cases, to have a counsellor to advise

us? Ps. 119:24., "Thy testimonies are my counsellors." Is it not a comfort to find our evidences for heaven? And where should we find them but in the word? 1 Thess. 1:4, 5. The word written is a sovereign elixir, or comfort in an hour of distress, Ps. 119:50., "This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me." It can turn all our "water into wine." How should we take a great complacency and delight in the word? They only who come to the word with delight, go from it with success.

5. If we would have the scripture effectual and saving, we must be sure, when we have read the word, to hide it in our hearts, Ps. 119:11., "Thy word have I hid in my heart." The word, locked up in the heart, is a preservative against sin. Why did David hide the word in his heart? In the next words, "That I might not sin against thee." As one would carry an antidote about him when he comes near a place infected, so David carried the word in his heart as a sacred antidote to preserve him from the infection of sin. When the sap is hid in the root, it makes the branches fruitful; when the seed is hid in the ground, then the corn springs up; so, when the word is hid in the heart, then it brings forth good fruit.

6. If we would have the word written effectual, let us labour not only to have the light of the word in our heads, but the power of the word in our hearts. Let us endeavour to have the word copied out, and written a second time in our hearts, Ps. 37:31., "The law of God is in his heart." The word saith, "Be clothed with humility," 1 Pet. 5:5.: let us be low and humble in our own eyes. The word calls for sanctity: Let us labour to partake of the divine nature, and to have something conceived in us which is of the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. 1:4. When the word is thus copied out into our hearts, and we are changed into the similitude of it, now the word written is made effectual to us, and becomes a savour of life.

7. et ult. When we read the holy scriptures let us look up to God for a blessing; beg the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that we may see the "deep things of God," 1 Cor. 2:10. Pray to God, that the same Spirit that wrote the scripture would enable us to understand it. Pray that God would give us that "savour of knowledge," 2 Cor. 2:14., that we may relish a sweetness in the word we read. David tasted it "sweeter than the honey-comb," Ps. 19:10. Let us pray that God would not only give us his word as a rule of holiness, but his grace as a principle of holiness.

2D BRANCH OF THE 2D QUESTION. How may we so hear the word, that it may be effectual and saving to our souls?

Ans. 1. Give great attention to the word preached; let nothing pass without taking special notice of it, Luke 19:48., "All the people were very attentive to hear him," they hung upon his lips. Acts 16:14., "Lydia a seller of purple, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul." Give attention to the word, as to a matter of life and death. And, to that purpose have a care, (1.) To banish vain impertinent thoughts, which will distract you, and take you off from the work in hand. These fowls will be coming to the sacrifice, Gen. 15:11., therefore we must drive them away. An archer may take a right aim; but if one stand at his elbow, and jog him when he is going to shoot, he will not hit the mark: Christians may have good aims in hearing; but take heed of impertinent thoughts which will jog and hinder you in God's service. (2.) Banish dulness. The devil gives many hearers a sleepy sop, they cannot keep their eyes open at a sermon; they eat so much on a Lord's day, that they are fitter for the pillow and couch, than the temple. Frequent and customary sleeping at a sermon, shows high contempt and irreverence of the ordinance; it gives a bad example to others; it makes your sincerity to be called

in question; it is the devil's seed-time, Mat. 13:25., "While men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares." O shake off drowsiness, as Paul shook off the viper! Be serious and attentive in hearing the word, Deut. 32:47., "For it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life." When people do not mind what God speaks to them in his word, God doth as little mind what they say to him in prayer.

A. 2. If you would have the word preached effectual, come with an holy appetite to the word, 1 Pet. 2:2. The thirsting soul is the thriving soul. In nature, one may have an appetite and no digestion; but it is not so in religion. Where there is a great appetite to the word, there is for the most part digestion; the word doth concoct and nourish. Come with hungerings of soul after the word; and therefore desire the word, that it may not only please you, but profit you. Look not more at the garnishing of the dish than at the meat,—at eloquence and rhetoric more than solid matter. It argues both a wanton palate, and surfeited stomach, to feed on sallads and kickshaws rather than wholesome food.

A. 3. If you would have the preaching of the word effectual, come to it with a tenderness upon your heart, 2 Chron. 13:7., Because thy heart was tender. If we preach to hard hearts, it is like shooting against a brazen wall, the word doth not enter; it is like setting a gold seal upon marble, which takes no impression. O come to the word preached with a melting frame of heart! It is the melting wax receives the stamp of the seal. When the heart is in a melting frame, it will better receive the stamp of the word preached. When Paul's heart was melted and broken for sin, then he cries, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do," Acts 9:6. Come not hither with hard hearts; who can expect a crop when the seed is sown upon stony ground?

A. 4. If you would have the word effectual, receive it with meekness, James 1:21., "Receive with meekness the ingrafted word." Meekness is a submissive frame of heart to the word,—a willingness to hear the counsels and reproofs of the word. Contrary to this meekness, is (1.) Fierceness of spirit, whereby men are ready to rise up in rage against the word. Proud men, and guilty, cannot endure to hear of their faults. Proud Herod put John in prison, Mark 6:17. The guilty Jews being told of their crucifying Christ, stoned Stephen, Acts 7:59. To tell men of sin, is to hold a glass to one that is deformed, who cannot endure to see his own face. (2.) Contrary to meekness is stubbornness of heart, whereby men are resolved to hold fast their sins, let the word say what it will, Jer. 44:17., "We will burn incense to the queen of heaven." O take heed of this! If you would have the word preached work effectually, lay aside fierceness and stubbornness, receive the word with meekness. By meekness the word preached comes to be ingrafted. As a good scion that is grafted, in a bad stock, doth change the nature of the fruit and make it taste sweet; so when the word comes to be ingrafted into the soul, it sanctifies it, and makes it bring forth the sweet fruit of righteousness.

A. 5. Mingle the word preached with faith, Heb. 4:2., "The word preached did not profit, not being mixed with faith." If you leave out the chief ingredient in a medicine, it hinders the operation: do not leave out this ingredient of faith. Believe the word, and so believe it as to apply it. When you hear Christ preached, apply him to yourselves; this is to put on the Lord Jesus, Rom. 13:14. When you hear a promise spoken of, apply it; this is to suck the flower of the promise, and turn it to honey.

A. 6. Be not only attentive in hearing but retentive after hearing: Heb. 2:1., "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we let them slip." Lest we should let

them run out, as water out of a sieve; if the ground doth not retain the seed sown into it, there can be no good crop. Some have memories like leaking vessels, the sermons they hear are presently gone, and then there is no good done. If meat doth not stay and concoct on the stomach, it will not nourish. Satan labours to steal the word out of our mind, Mark 4:15., "When they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown." Our memories should be like the chest of the ark where the law was put.

A. 7. Reduce your hearing to practice; live on the sermons you hear: Ps. 119:166., "I have done thy commandments." Rachel was not content that she was beautiful, but her desire was to be fruitful. What is a knowing head without a fruitful heart? Phil. 1:11., "Filled with the fruits of righteousness." It is obedience crowns hearing; that hearing will never save the soul, which doth not reform the life.

A. 8. Beg of God that he will accompany his word with his presence and blessing. The Spirit must make all effectual; ministers may prescribe physic, but it is God's Spirit must make it work. "He hath his pulpit in heaven that converts souls," AUSTIN. Acts 10:44., "While Peter yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard." It is said, the alchymist can draw oil out of iron: God's Spirit can produce grace in the most obdurate heart.

A. 9. If you would have the word work effectually to your salvation, make it familiar to you; discourse of the word you have heard when you come home, Ps. 119:172., "My tongue shall speak of thy word." That may be one reason why some people get no more good by what they hear, because they never speak one to another of what they have heard; as if sermons were such secrets, that they must not be spoken of again; or as if it were a shame to speak of matters of salvation,

Mal. 3:16., "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and a book of remembrance was written."

Use. Caution. Take heed, as you love your souls, that the word become not ineffectual to you. There are some to whom the word preached is ineffectual. (1.) Such as censure the word; instead of judging themselves judge the word. (2.) Such as live in contradiction to the word: Isa. 30:8. (3.) Such as are more hardened by the word, Zech. 7:12., "They made their hearts as an adamant." And when men harden their hearts wilfully, God hardens them judicially, Isa. 6:10., "Make their ears heavy." The word to these is ineffectual: were it not sad, if a man's meat should not nourish; nay, if it should turn to poison? O take heed that the word preached be not ineffectual and to no purpose! Consider three things.

(1.) If the word preached doth us no good, there is no other way by which we can be saved. This is God's institution, and the main engine he useth to convert souls, Luke 16:31., "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." If an angel should come to you out of heaven, and preach of the excellency of the glorified estate, and the joys of heaven, and that in the most pathetic manner,—if the word preached doth not persuade, neither would you be wrought upon by such an oration from heaven. If a damned spirit should come from hell, and preach to you in flames, and tell you what a place hell is, and roar out the torments of the damned, it might make you tremble, but it would not convert, if the preaching of the word would not do it.

(2.) To come to the word, and not be savingly wrought upon, is that which the devil is pleased with; he cares not though you hear frequently, if it be not effectually; he is not an enemy to hearing but profiting. Though the minister holds out the breasts of the

ordinances to you, he cares not as long as you do not suck the sincere milk of the word. The devil cares not how many sermon-pills you take, so long as they do not work upon your conscience.

(3.) If the word preached be not effectual to men's conversion, it will be effectual to their condemnation; the word will be effectual one way or other; if it doth not make your hearts better, it will make your chains heavier. We pity them who have not the word preached, but it will be worse with them who are not sanctified by it: dreadful is their case, who go loaded with sermons to hell. But I will conclude with the apostle, Heb. 6:9., "We are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation."

OF BAPTISM

MAT. 28:19, 20. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them —

We are still upon that question in the catechism,

What are the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?

Ans. They are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer.

I have spoken to the first, "The word read and preached." I now proceed to the second,

II. The way whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption, is, in the use of the sacraments.

QUEST. 1. What are sacraments in general?

Ans. They are visible signs of invisible grace.

QUEST. 2. Is not the word of God sufficient to salvation? What need then is there of sacraments?

Ans. We must not be wise above what is written: this may satisfy, it is God's will that his church should have sacraments; and it is God's goodness, thus by sacraments to condescend to weak capacities, John 4:48., "Except ye see signs, ye will not believe." God to strengthen our faith, confirms the covenant of grace, not only by promises but by sacramental signs.

QUEST. 3. What are the Sacraments of the New Testament?

Ans. Two: baptism and the Lord's supper.

QUEST. 4. But are there no more? The papists tell of five more, viz. confirmation, penance, matrimony, orders, and the extreme unction.

Ans. 1. There were but two sacraments under the law, therefore there are no more now, 1 Cor. 10:2, 3, 4.

A. 2. These two sacraments are sufficient: the one signifying our entrance into Christ, and the other our growth and perseverance in him.

I begin with the first sacrament, Baptism. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them"—'Go teach all nations:' the

Greek word is 'Make disciples of all nations. If it be asked, how should we make them disciples? It follows, 'Baptizing them and teaching them." In a heathen nation, first teach them, and then baptize them; but in a Christian church, first baptize them, and then teach them.

QUEST. 5. What is baptism?

Ans. In general, it is a matriculation, or visible admission of children into the congregation of Christ's flock. More particularly, 'Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing or sprinkling with water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

QUEST. 6. What is the meaning of the parent, in presenting his child, to be baptized?

Ans. The parent, in presenting his child to be baptized, doth, 1st. Make a public acknowledgment of original sin; that the soul of his child is polluted, therefore needs washing away of sin by Christ's blood and Spirit; both which washings are signified by the sprinkling of water in baptism. 2d. The parent by bringing his child to be baptized, doth solemnly devote his child to the Lord, and enrol him in God's family; and truly this may be a great satisfaction to a religious parent, that he hath given up his child to the Lord in baptism. How can a parent look with comfort on that child who was never yet dedicated to God?

QUEST. 7. What then is the benefit of baptism?

Ans. The party baptized hath, 1st. An entrance into the visible body of the church. 2d. The party baptized hath a right sealed to the

ordinances, which is a privilege full of glory, Rom. 9:4. 3d. The child baptized is under a more special providential care of Christ, who appoints the tutelage of angels to be the infant's life guard.

QUEST. 8. Is this all the benefit?

Ans. No. To such as belong to the election, baptism is a "seal of the righteousness of the faith," Rom. 4:11.,—a laver of regeneration, and a badge of adoption.

QUEST. 9. How doth it appear that children have a right of baptism?

Ans. Children are parties of the covenant of grace. The covenant was made with them, Gen. 17:7., "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee." And Acts 2:39., "The promise is unto you and to your children." The covenant of grace may be considered either, (1.) More strictly, as an absolute promise to give saving grace; and so none but the elect are in covenant with God. Or, (2.) More largely, as a covenant containing in it many outward glorious privileges, in which respects the children of believers do belong to the covenant of grace: the promise is to you and to your seed. The infant-seed of believers may as well lay a claim to the covenant of grace as their parents; and having a right to the covenant, they cannot justly be denied baptism, which is the seal. I would ask this question of them who deny infant baptism, it is certain the children of believers were once visibly in covenant with God, and did receive the seal of their admission into the church now where do we find this covenant-interest, or church membership of infants, was ever repealed or made void? Certainly Jesus Christ did not come to put believers and their children into a worse condition than they were in before. If the children of believers should not be baptized, they are in a worse condition now than they were in before

Christ's coming. Before I come to prove the baptizing of infants I shall answer the objections made against it.

OBJ. 1. The scripture is silent herein, and doth not mention infant-baptism.

Ans. Though there is not the word infant-baptism in scripture, yet there is the thing. There is not mention made in scripture of women's receiving the sacrament, but who doubts but the command, "Take, eat, this is my body," concerns them? Doth not their faith need strengthening as well as others? So the word Trinity is not to be found in scripture, but there is that which is equivalent, 1 John 5:7., "There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." So, though the word infant-baptism is not mentioned in scripture, yet the practice of baptizing infants may be drawn out of scripture by undeniable consequence.

QUEST. How is that proved?

Ans. The scripture mentions whole families baptized: as the household of Lydia, Crispus, and the jailor. Acts 16:33., "He was baptized, he and all his house." Wherein we must rationally imagine that there were some little children. If it be said, there is no mention there made of children: I answer, neither are servants named, yet it cannot be supposed but that, in so great a family, there were some servants.

OBJ. 2. But infants are not capable of the end of baptism: for baptism signifies the washing away of sin by the blood of Christ. Now infants cannot understand this; therefore, what benefit can baptism be to them?

Ans. Whereas it is said, infants cannot understand the mystery of baptism, neither could the child that was to be circumcised understand circumcision; yet the ordinance of circumcision was not to be omitted or deferred. An infant, though it understand not the meaning of baptism, yet it may partake of the blessing of baptism. The little children that Christ took in his arms, understood not Christ's meaning, but they had Christ's blessing, Mark 10:16., "He put his hands upon them and blessed them."

QUEST. But what benefit can the child have of baptism, if it understand not the nature of baptism?

Ans. It may have a right to the promise sealed up, which it shall have an actual interest in when it comes to have faith. A legacy may be of use to the child in the cradle, though it now understand not the legacy, yet when it is grown up to years, it is fully possessed of it. But it may be further objected:

OBJ. 1. The party to be baptised is to be engaged to God; but how can the child engage?

Ans. The parents can engage for it, which God is pleased to accept as equivalent to the child's personal engaging.

OBJ. 2. If baptism comes in the room of circumcision, only the males were circumcised, Gen. 17:27. Then what warrant is there for baptizing females?

Ans. The females were included, and were virtually circumcised in the males. What is done to the head is done to the body; the man therefore being the head of the woman, 1 Cor. 11:3. What was done to the male sex was interpretatively done to the female. Having

answered these objections, I come now to prove by argument, infant-baptism.

1st Argument. If children during their infancy are capable of grace, then they are capable of baptism; but children in their infancy are capable of grace, therefore they are capable of baptism. I prove the minor, that they are capable of grace, thus: if children in their infancy may be saved, then they are capable of grace; but children in their infancy may be saved; which is proved thus; if the kingdom of heaven may belong to them, then they may be saved, but the kingdom of heaven may belong to them, as it is clear from Mark 10:14., "Of such is the kingdom of God." Who then can forbid that the seal of baptism should be applied to them?

2d Arg. If infants may be among the number of God's servants, then there is no reason why they should be shut out of God's family; but infants may be in the number of God's servants, that is evident because God calls them his servants, Lev. 25:41, 42., "He shall depart from thee and his children with him, for they are my servants." Therefore children in their infancy being God's servants, why should they not have baptism, which is the tessera,—the mark or seal which God sets upon his servants?

3d Arg. Is from 1 Cor. 7:14., "But now are your children holy." Children are not called holy, as if they were free from original sin; but in the judgment of charity they are to be esteemed holy, and true members of the church of God, because their parents are believers. Hence that excellent divine Mr. Heldersam saith, "that the children of the faithful as soon as they are born, have a covenant-holiness, and so a right and title to baptism, which is the token of the covenant."

4th Arg. From the opinion of the fathers and the practice of the church. (1.) The ancient fathers were strong asserters of infant-baptism, Irenæus, Basil, Lactantius, Cyprian and Austin. (2.) It was the practice of the Greek church to baptize her infants. Erasmus saith, that infant-baptism hath been used in the church of God for above fourteen hundred years. And St. Austin, in his book against Pelagius, affirms, that it hath been the custom of the church in all ages to baptize infants. Yea, it was an apostolical practice; St. Paul affirms, that he baptized the whole house of Stephanus, 1 Cor. 1:16.

And as you have seen scripture-arguments for infant-baptism, so let us consider whether the practice of those who delay the baptizing of children till riper years, be warrantable. For my part, I cannot gather it from scripture. For though we read of persons adult and grown up to years of discretion, in the apostles' times, baptized, yet those were such as were converted from heathenish idolatry to the true orthodox faith; but that in a Christian church the children of believers should be kept unbaptized several years, I know neither precept nor example for it in scripture, but it is wholly apocryphal. The baptizing of persons grown up to maturity, we may argue against *ab effectu*,—from the ill consequence of it: they dip the persons they baptize over head and ears in cold water, and naked, which as it is indecent, so it is dangerous, and hath been oftentimes the occasion of chronical diseases, yea, death itself, and so it is a plain breach of the sixth commandment. And how far God hath given up many persons, who are for the deferring of baptism, to other vile opinions and vicious practices, is evident, if we consult with history, especially if we read over the acting of the anabaptists in Germany.

Use 1st. See the riches of God's goodness, who will not only be the God of believers, but takes their seed into covenant, Gen. 17:7., "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee,

to be a God unto thee and thy seed." A father counts it a great privilege, not only to have his own name, but his child's name put in a will.

Use 2d. It blames those parents who forbid little children to be brought to Christ: they withhold the ordinance. By denying their infants baptism, they exclude them from having a membership in the visible church, and so their infants are sucking pagans. Such as deny their children baptism, make God's institutions under the law more full of kindness and grace to children, than they are now under the gospel; which how strange a paradox it is, I leave you to judge.

Use 3d. Of exhortation. (1.) We that are baptized, let us labour to find the blessed fruits of baptism in our own souls; let us labour not only to have the signs of the covenant, but the grace of the covenant. Many glory in this, that they are baptized. The Jews gloried in their circumcision, because of their royal privileges; to them belonged the adoption, and the glory and the covenants, Rom. 9:4.; but many of them were a shame and reproach to their circumcision, Rom. 2:24., "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you." The scandalous Jews (though circumcised) were, in God's account, as heathens; Amos 9:7., "Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians to me? saith the Lord." Alas! What is it to have the name of Christ, and want his image? What is baptism of water, without the baptism of the Spirit? Many baptized Christians are no better than heathens. O labour to find the fruits of baptism,—that Christ is formed in us, Gal. 4:19., that our nature is changed, we are made holy and heavenly! This is to be baptized into Jesus, Rom. 6:3. Such as live unsuitable to their baptism, may go with baptismal-water on their faces, and sacramental bread in their mouths, to hell.

(2.) Let us labour to make a right use of our baptism.

First use of baptism. Let us use it as a shield against temptations. "Satan, I have given up myself to God by a sacred vow in baptism; I am not my own, I am Christ's; therefore I cannot yield to thy temptations, but I break my oath of allegiance which I made to God in baptism." Luther tells us of a pious woman, who when the devil tempted her to sin, she answered Satan, *Baptizata sum*,—"I am baptized;" and so beat back the tempter.

Second use of baptism. Let us use it as a spur to holiness. By remembering our baptism, let us be stirred up to make good our baptismal engagements; renouncing the world, flesh, and devil, let us devote ourselves to God and his service. To be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, implies a solemn dedication of ourselves to the service of all the three persons in the Trinity. It is not enough that our parents dedicate us to God in baptism, but we must dedicate ourselves to him; this is called a living to the Lord, *Rom. 14:8*. Our life should be spent in worshipping God, in loving God, in exalting God; we should walk as becomes the gospel, *Phil. 1:27*. Shine as stars in the world, and live as earthly angels.

Third use of baptism. Let us use it as an argument to courage. We should be ready to confess that holy Trinity into whose name we were baptized. With the conversion of the heart, must go the confession of the tongue, *Luke 12:8*., "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God." Peter openly confessed Christ crucified, *Acts 4:10*. Cyprian, a man of a brave spirit, was like a rock whom no waves could shake, like an adamant whom no sword could cut: he confessed Christ before the proconsul, and suffered himself to be proscribed, yea, chose death, rather than he would betray the truths of Christ. He that

dare not confess the holy Trinity, shames his baptism, and God will be ashamed to own him at the day of judgment.

Ult. use. See the fearfulness of the sin of apostasy! 'Tis a renouncing of our baptism. 'Tis damnable perjury to go away from God, after a solemn vow: 2 Tim. 4:10., "Demas hath forsaken me." He turned renegado, and afterwards became a priest in an idol-temple, saith Dorotheus. Julian the apostate (Gregory Nazianzen observes) bathed himself in the blood of beasts offered in sacrifice to heathen-gods; and so, as much as in him lay, washed off his former baptism. The case of such as fall away after baptism, is dreadful: Heb. 10:38., "If any man draw back,"—the Greek word, to draw back, alludes to a soldier that steals away from his colours—so, if any man steal away from Christ, and run over to the devil's side, "my soul shall have no pleasure in him;" that is, I will be severely avenged on him; I will make my arrows drunk with his blood. If all the plagues in the Bible can make that man miserable, he shall be so.

11. The second sacrament wherein Jesus Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption, is the Lord's supper.

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

MARK 14:22. And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, &c.

Having spoken to the sacrament of baptism, I come now to the sacrament of the Lord's supper. The Lord's supper is the most spiritual and sweet ordinance that ever was instituted: here we have to do more immediately with the person of Christ. In prayer, we draw nigh to God; in the sacrament we become one with him. In prayer we

look up to Christ; in the sacrament, by faith, we touch him. In the word preached, we hear Christ's voice; in the sacrament we feed on him.

QUEST. 1. What names and titles in scripture are given to the sacrament?

Ans. 1. It is called, 1. *Mensa Domini*,—the Lord's table, 1 Cor. 10:21. The Papists call it an altar, not a table. The reason is, because they turn the sacrament into a sacrifice, and pretend to offer up Christ corporally in the mass. It being the Lord's table, shews with what reverence and solemn devotion we should approach to these holy mysteries; the Lord takes notice of the frame of our hearts when we come to his table; Mat. 22:11., "The king came in to see the guests." We dress ourselves when we come to the table of some great monarch; we should think with ourselves, we are going to the table of the Lord, therefore should dress ourselves by holy meditation and heart-consideration. Many think it is enough to come to the sacrament, but mind not whether they come in "due order," 1 Chron. 15:13. Perhaps they had scarce a serious thought before, whither they were going: all their dressing was by the glass, not by the Bible. Chrysostom calls it, "The dreadful table of the Lord:" so it is to such as come unworthily.—2. The sacrament is called *Cæna Domini*,—the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. 11:20., to import, it is a spiritual feast. It is indeed a royal feast; God is in this cheer; Christ, in both natures, God and man, is the matter of this supper. 3. The sacrament is called a communion, 1 Cor. 10:16., "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" The sacrament being called a communion, shews,

1st. That this ordinance is only for believers, because none else can have communion with Christ in these holy mysteries. *Communio*

fundatur in unione: faith only gives us union with Christ, and by virtue of this we have communion with him in his body and blood. None but the spouse communicates with her husband; a stranger may drink of his cup, but she only hath his heart, and communicates with him in a conjugal manner: so strangers may have the sign, drink of the cup, but only believers drink of Christ's blood, and have communion with him in his privileges.

2dly, The sacrament being a communion, shews, that it is symbolum amoris,—a bond of that unity and charity which should be among Christians; 1 Cor. 10:17., "We being many are one body." As many grains make one bread, so many Christians are one body. A sacrament is a love-feast. The primitive Christians (as Justin Martyr notes) had their holy salutations at the blessed supper, in token of that dearness of affection which they did bear to each other. It is a communion, therefore there must be love and union. The Israelites did eat the passover with bitter herbs; so must we eat the sacrament with bitter herbs of repentance, but not with bitter hearts of wrath and malice. The hearts of the communicants should be knit together with the bond of love. "Thou braggest of thy faith (saith Austin) but shew me thy faith by thy love to the saints." For, as in the sun, light and heat are inseparable, so faith and love are twisted together inseparably. Where there are divisions, the Lord's supper is not properly a communion, but a disunion.

QUEST. 2. What is the Lord's supper?

Ans. It is a visible sermon, wherein Christ crucified is set before us. Or, it is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein by receiving the holy elements of bread and wine, our communion with Christ is signified and sealed up to us. Or thus, it is a sacrament divinely instituted, wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine, Christ's

death is shewed forth, and the worthy receivers are, by faith made partakers of his body and blood, and all the benefits flowing from thence.

For the further explaining of the nature of the Lord's supper, I shall look back to the institution.

1. "Jesus took bread." Here is the Master of the feast, or the institutor of the sacrament. The Lord Jesus he took bread. He only is fit to institute a sacrament, who is able to give virtue and blessing to it.

2. "He took bread." Christ's taking of the bread was one part of his consecration of the elements, and setting them apart for an holy use. And as Christ did consecrate the elements, so we must labour to have our hearts consecrated before we receive these holy mysteries in the Lord's supper. How unseemly a sight is it to see any come to these holy elements, having hearts leavened with pride, covetousness, envy! These do, with Judas, receive the devil in the sop, and are no better than crucifiers of the Lord of glory.

3. "And blessed it." This is another part of the consecration of the element, Christ blessed it; he blesseth, and it shall be blessed, viz. he looked up to heaven for a benediction upon this ordinance newly founded.

4. "And brake it." The bread broken, and the wine poured out, was to signify to us the agony and ignominy of Christ's sufferings,—the rending of Christ's body on the cross,—and that effusion of blood which was distilled from his blessed sides.

5. "And gave it to them." Christ's giving the bread, denotes Christ's giving of himself and all his benefits to us freely. Though Christ was sold, yet given; Judas did sell Christ, but Christ gave himself to us.

6. "He gave it to them;" viz. The disciples. This is children's bread; Christ doth not cast these pearls before swine. Whether Judas was present at the supper, is controverted; I rather incline to think he was not; for Christ said to the disciples, "This is my blood, which is shed for you," Luke 22:20. Christ knew his blood was never shed effectually and intentionally for Judas. In eating the passover, Christ gave Judas a sop, which was a bit of unleavened bread dipt in a sauce made with bitter herbs; Judas having received the sop, went immediately out, John 13:30. But, suppose Judas was there, though he received the elements, yet not the blessing.

7. "Take, eat." This expression, of eating, denotes four things: 1. The near mystical union between Christ and his saints. As the meat which is eaten incorporates with the body, and becomes one with it; so, by eating Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood spiritually, we partake of his merits and graces, and are mystically "one with him," John 17:23., "I in them."—2. "Take, eat." Eating shews the infinite delight the believing soul hath in Christ. Eating is grateful and pleasing to the palate: so feeding on Christ by a lively faith is delicious. *Nullus animæ suavior cibus, LACTANTIUS.* No such sweet feeding as on Christ crucified. This is "a feast of fat things, and wines on the lees well refined."—3. "Take, eat." Eating denotes nourishment." Meat, as it is delicious to the palate, so it is nourishing to the body: so eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood, is nutritive to the soul. The new creature is nourished at the table of the Lord to everlasting life, John 6:54., "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life."—4. "Take, eat," shows the wisdom of God, who restores us by the same means by which we fell. We fell by taking and eating the forbidden fruit, and we are recovered again by taking and eating; of Christ's flesh; we died by eating the tree of knowledge, and we live by eating the tree of life.

8. "This is my body." These words, Hoc est corpus meum, have been much controverted between us and the papists. "This is my body:" that is, by a metonymy: it is a sign and figure of my body. The papists hold transubstantiation, that the bread is, after consecration, turned into the very substance of Christ's body. We say, we receive Christ's body spiritually; they say, they receive Christ's body carnally: which is contrary to scripture. The scripture affirms, that the heavens must receive Christ's body "until the times of the restitution of all things," Acts 3:21.: Christ's body cannot be at the same time in heaven and in the host. Aquinas saith, "It is not possible by any miracle, that a body should be locally in two places at once." Besides, it is absurd to imagine that the bread in the sacrament should be turned into Christ's flesh, and that his body which was hung before, should be made again of bread. So that, "This is my body," is, as if Christ had said, "This is a sign and representation of my body."

9. "And he took the cup." The cup is put, by a metonymy of the subject for the adjunct, for the wine in the cup. It signifies the blood of Christ shed for our sins. The taking of the cup denotes the redundancy of merit in Christ, and the fulness of our redemption by him. He not only took the bread, but the cup.

10. "And when he had given thanks." Christ gave thanks that God had given these elements of bread and wine to be signs and seals of man's redemption by Christ. Christ's giving of thanks, shews his philanthropy, or love to mankind, who did so rejoice and bless God, that lost man was now in a way of recovery, and that he should be raised higher in Christ than ever he was in innocency.

11. He gave the cup to them. Why then dare any withhold the cup? This is to pollute and curtail the ordinance, and alter it from its primitive institution. Christ and his apostles administered the

sacrament in both kinds,—the bread and the cup, 1 Cor. 11:24, 25. And the cup was received in the ancient church for the space of 1400 years, as is confessed by two popish councils. Christ saith expressly, "Drink ye all of this." He doth not say, Eat ye all of this; but 'Drink ye all;' as foreseeing the sacrilegious impiety of the church of Rome in keeping back the cup from the people. The popish council of Constance speaks plainly but impudently, "That although Christ instituted and administered the sacrament in both kinds, the bread and the wine; yet the authority of the holy canons, and the custom of the mother-church, think good to deny the cup to the laity." Thus, as the popish priests make Christ but half a Saviour, so they administer to the people but half a sacrament. The sacrament is Christ's last will and testament: in the text, "This is my blood of the New Testament." Now, to alter or take away any thing from a man's will and testament, is a great impiety: What is it to alter and mangle Christ's last will and testament? Sure it is an high affront to Christ.

QUEST. 3. What are the ends of the Lord's supper?

Ans. It is an ordinance appointed to confirm our faith, John 4:48., "Except ye see signs ye will not believe." Christ sets the elements before us, that by these signs our faith may be strengthened. As faith cometh by hearing, so it is confirmed by seeing Christ crucified. The sacrament is not only a sign to represent Christ, but a seal to confirm our interest in him.

QUEST. But it is the Spirit confirms faith, therefore not the sacrament.

Ans. 1. This is not good logic. The Spirit confirms faith, therefore not the sacrament, is, as if one should say, God feeds our bodies, therefore bread doth not feed us; whereas God feeds us by bread; so the Spirit confirms our faith by the use of the sacrament.

A. 2. The end of the sacrament is to keep up the memory of Christ's death. 1 Cor. 11:25., "This do ye in remembrance of me." If a friend give us a ring at his death, we wear it to keep up the memory of our friend; much more then ought we to keep up the memorial of Christ's death in the sacrament; Christ's death lays a foundation for all the magnificent blessings which we receive from Christ. The covenant of grace was agreed on in heaven, but sealed upon the cross. Christ hath sealed all the articles of peace in his blood. Remission of sin flows from Christ's death, Mat. 26:28., "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins." Consecration, or making us holy, is the fruit of Christ's death, Heb. 9:14., "How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience?" Christ's intercession is made available to us by virtue of his death; Christ could not have been admitted an advocate, if he had not been first a sacrifice. Our entering into heaven is the fruit of Christ's blood, Heb. 10:19. Christ could not have prepared mansions for us, if he had not first purchased them by his death: so that we have a great deal of cause to commemorate Christ's death in the sacrament.

QUEST. In what manner are we to remember the Lord's death in the sacrament?

Ans. It is not only a historical remembrance of Christ's death and passion; thus Judas remembers Christ's death, and how he betrayed him; and Pilate remembers Christ's death, and how he crucified him; but our remembering Christ's death in the sacrament must be,

(1.) A mournful remembrance. We must not be able to look on Christ crucified with dry eyes, Zech. 12:10., "They shall look oil him whom they have pierced, and mourn over him." O Christian, when thou lookest on Christ in the sacrament, remember how oft thou hast

crucified him! The Jews did it but once, thou often. Every oath is a nail with which thou piercest his hands; every unjust sinful action, is a spear with which thou woundest his heart. O remember Christ with sorrow, to think thou shouldest make his wounds bleed afresh!

MARK 14:22, 23, 24. Jesus took Bread, &c.

(2.) It must be a joyful remembrance, John 8:56., "Abraham rejoiced to see my day." When a Christian sees a sacrament-day approach, he should rejoice. This ordinance of the supper is an earnest of heaven; 'tis the glass in which we see him whom our souls love; it is the chariot by which we are carried up to Christ. "When Jacob saw the waggons and the chariots which were to carry him to his son Joseph, his spirit revived," Gen. 45:27. God hath appointed the sacrament, on purpose to cheer and revive a sad heart. When we look on our sins, we have cause to mourn; but when we see Christ's blood shed for our sins, this may make us rejoice. In the sacrament our wants are supplied,—our strength is renewed,—here we meet with Christ, and doth not this call for joy? A woman that hath been long debarred from the society of her husband, how glad is she of his presence! At the sacrament the believing spouse meets with Christ: he saith to her, "All I have is thine; my love is thine, to pity thee; my mercy is thine, to save thee." How can we think in the sacrament on Christ's blood shed, and not rejoice? *Sanguis Chasti clavis paradisi*,—Christ's blood is the key which opens heaven, else we had been all shut out.

3. End of the sacrament is, to work in us an endeared love to Christ. When Christ bleeds over us, well may we say, Behold how he loved us! Who can see Christ die, and not be "sick of love?" That is an heart of stone whom Christ's love will not melt.

4. End of the sacrament, the mortifying of corruption. To see Christ crucified for us, is a means to crucify sin in us. Christ's death (like the

water of jealousy) makes the 'thigh of sin to rot," Numb. 5:27. How can a wife endure to see the spear which killed her husband? How can we endure those sins which made Christ veil his glory, and lose his blood? When the people of Rome saw Cæsar's bloody robe, they were incursed against them that slew him: sin hath rent the white robe of Christ's flesh, and died it of a crimson colour: the thoughts of this will make us seek to be avenged on our sins.

5. End, the augmentation and increase of all the graces, hope, zeal, patience. The word preached begets grace, the Lord's supper nourisheth it; the body by feeding increaseth strength, so doth the soul by feeding on Christ sacramentally. Cum defecerit virtus men calicem salutarem accipium, BERN. "When my spiritual strength begins to fail, I know a remedy, (saith Bernard), I will go to the table of the Lord; there will I drink and recover my decayed streimth." There is difference between dead stones and living plants. The wicked, who are stones, receive no spiritual increase; but the godly, who are plants of righteousness, being watered with Christ's blood, grow more fruitful in grace.

QUEST. 4. Why are we to receive this holy supper?

Ans. Because it is a duty incumbent, "Take, eat." And observe, it is a command of love. If Christ had commanded us some great matter, would not we have done it? 2 Kings 5:13., "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?" If Christ had enjoined, us to have given him thousands of rams, or to have parted with the fruit of our bodies, would we not have done it? Much more when he only saith, "Take," and "Eat:" Let my broken body feed you, let my blood poured out, save you. "Take", and "Eat". This is a command of love, and shall we not readily obey?

A. 2. We are to celebrate the Lord's supper, because it is a provoking of Christ to stay away. Prov. 9:2., Wisdom hath "furnished her table." So Christ hath furnished his table, set bread and wine (representing his body and blood) before his guests, and when they wilfully turn their backs upon the ordinance, Christ looks upon it as a slighting of his love, and that makes the fury rise up in his face, Luke 14:24., "For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." I will shut them out of my kingdom, I will provide them a black banquet, where weeping shall be the first course, and gnashing of teeth the second.

QUEST. 5. Whether the Lords supper be oft to be administered?

Ans. Yes: 1 Cor. 11:26., "As oft as ye eat of this bread." The ordinance is not to be celebrated once in a year, or once in our lives, but often. A Christian's owe. necessities may make him come often hither. His corruptions are strong, therefore he had need come often hither for an antidote to expel the poison of sin; and his graces are weak. Grace is like a lamp, Rev. 3:2., if it be not often fed with oil, it is apt to go out. How therefore do they sin against God, who come but very seldom to this ordinance? Can they thrive, who for a long time forbear their food? And others there are who do wholly forbear: this is a great contempt offered to Christ's ordinance. Men do as it were tacitly say, let Christ keep his feast to himself. What a crosgrained piece is man? He will eat when he should not, and he will not eat when he should. When God said, "Eat not of this forbidden fruit,"—then he will be sure to eat; when God saith, "Eat of this bread, and drink of this cup,"—then he refuseth to eat.

QUEST. 6. Are all to come promiscuously to this holy ordinance?

Ans. No; that were to make the Lord's table an ordinary. Christ forbids to "cast pearls before swine," Mat. 7:6. The sacramental

bread is children's bread, and it is not to be cast to the profane. As, at the giving of the law, God set bounds about the mount that none might touch it, Exod. 19:12.: so God's table should be guarded, that the profane should not come near. In the primitive times, after sermon was done, and they were going to celebrate the Lord's supper, an officer stood up and cried, "Holy things for holy men;" and then several of the congregation were to depart. "I would have my hand cut off (saith Chrysostom) rather than I would give Christ's body and blood to the profane." The wicked do not eat Christ's flesh but tear it, they do not drink his blood but spill it. These holy mysteries in the sacraments are tremenda mysteria,—mysteries that the soul is to tremble at. Sinners defile the holy things of God, they poison the sacramental cup. We read that the wicked are to be set at Christ's feet, Ps. 110, not at his table.

QUEST. 7. How may we receive the supper of the Lord worthily, that so it may become effectual to us?

Ans. That we may receive it worthily, and it may become efficacious,

1st. We must solemnly prepare ourselves before we come; we must not rush upon the ordinance rudely and irreverently, but come in due order. There was a great deal of preparation to the passover, 2 Chron. 30:18, 19., and the sacrament comes in the room of it.

QUEST. Wherein doth this solemn preparing for the ordinance consist?

Ans. 1. In examining ourselves.—2. In dressing our souls before we come, which is by washing in the water of repentance.—3. By exciting the habit of grace into exercise.—4. In begging a blessing upon the ordinance.

(1.) Solemn preparing for the sacrament consists in self-examining, 1 Cor. 11:28., "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat." It is not only a counsel, but a charge: "Let him examine himself." As if a king should say, "Let it be enacted." Jesus Christ having by his institution consecrated these elements in the supper to an high mystery, they represent his "body and blood:" therefore there must be preparation; and if preparation, then there must be first examining ourselves, without which there can be no preparation. Let us be serious in this examining ourselves, our salvation depends upon it. We are curious in examining other things; we will not take gold, till we examine it by the touch-stone; we will not take land, but we will examine the title; and shall not we be as exact and curious in examining the state of our souls?

QUEST. 1. What is required to this self-examining?

Ans. There must be a solemn retiring of the soul. We must set ourselves apart, and retire for some time from all secular employment, that we may be more serious in this work. There is no casting up of accounts in a crowd; nor can we examine ourselves when we are in a crowd of worldly business. We read, a man that was in a journey might not come to the passover, Num. 9:13., because his mind was full of secular cares, and his thoughts were taken up about his journey. When we are upon self-examining work, we had not need to be in a hurry, or have any distracting thoughts, but to retire and lock ourselves up in our closet, that we may be more intent in the work.

QUEST. 2. What is self-examination?

Ans. It is a setting up a court of conscience and keeping a register there, that by a strict scrutiny a man may see how matters stand between God and his soul. Self-examination is a spiritual inquisition,

an heart-anatomy, whereby a man takes his heart, as a watch, all in pieces, and sees what is defective there. It is a dialogue with one's self, Ps. 77:6., "I commune with my own heart." David called himself to account, and put interrogatories to his own heart. Self-examining is a critical descant or search; as the woman in the parable did light a candle, and search for her lost groat, Luke 15:8, so conscience is the candle of the Lord; search with this candle what thou canst find wrought by the Spirit in thee.

QUEST. 3. What is the rule by which we are to examine ourselves?

Ans. The rule or measure we must examine ourselves by, is the holy scripture. We must not make fancy, or the good opinion which others have of us, the rule by which we judge of ourselves. But as the goldsmith brings his gold to the touchstone, so must we bring our hearts to a scripture touchstone,—*"To the law, and to the testimony,"* Isa. 8:20. What saith the word? Are we divorced from sin? Are we renewed by the Spirit? Let the word decide whether we are fit communicants or not. We judge of colours by the sun, so we must judge of the state of our souls by the sun-light of scripture.

QUEST. 4. What are the cogent reasons why we must examine ourselves before we approach to the Lord's supper?

Ans. 1. It is a duty imposed; 'let him examine himself.' The passover was not to be eaten raw, Exod. 12:19. To come to such an ordinance slightly, without examination, is to come in an undue manner, and is like eating the passover raw.

A. 2. We must examine ourselves before we come, because it is not only a duty imposed, but opposed. There is nothing the heart naturally is more averse from than self-examination; we may know that duty is good which the heart opposeth. But why doth the heart

so oppose it? Because it doth cross the tide of corrupt nature; 'tis contrary to flesh and blood. The heart is guilty; and doth a guilty person love to be examined? The heart opposeth it: therefore the rather set upon it; that duty is good which the heart opposeth.

A. 3. Because self-examining is so needful a work; as appears, 1. Without self-examination, a man can never tell how it is with him, whether he hath grace or not; and this must needs be very uncomfortable. He knows not if he should die presently, what will become of him, or to what coast he shall sail, whether to hell or heaven; as Socrates said, "I am about to die, and the gods know whether I shall be happy or miserable." How needful therefore is self-examination, that a man by search may come to know the true state of his soul, and may guess how it will go with him to eternity!

2. Self-examination is needful in respect of the excellency of the sacrament. Let him eat *de illo pane*, "of that bread," 1 Cor. 11:28.,—that excellent bread, that consecrated bread, that bread which is not only the bread of the Lord, but the bread the I Lord. Let him drink *de illo pocula*, "of that cup,"—that precious cup which is perfumed and spiced with Christ's love,—that cup which holds the blood of God sacramentally. Cleopatra put a jewel in a cup which contained the price of a kingdom: this sacred cup we are to drink of, enriched with the blood of God, is above the price of a kingdom; it is more worth than heaven. Therefore coming to such a royal feast, having whole Christ, his divine and human nature to feed on, how should we examine ourselves before-hand, that we may be fit guests for such a magnificent banquet!

3. Self-examining is needful, because God will examine us. That was a sad question, Mat. 22:12., "Friend, how earnest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" Men are loath to ask themselves the

question, "O my soul! art thou a fit guest for the Lord's table? are there not some sins thou hast to bewail? are there not some evidences for heaven that thou hast to get?" Now, when persons will not ask themselves the question, then God will bring such a question as this to them, How came you in hither to my table not prepared,—how came ye in hither with an unbelieving or profane heart? It shall be such a question as will cause an heart-trembling. God will examine a man, as the chief captain did Paul, with scourging. Acts 22:24. 'Tis true, the best saint, if God should weigh him in the balance, would be found defective; but, when a Christian hath made an impartial search, and hath laboured to deal uprightly between God and his own soul, Christ's merits will cast in some grains of allowance into the scales.

4. Self-examining is needful, because of that secret corruption in the heart, which will not be found out without searching. There are in the heart *plangendæ tenebræ*, AUG., hidden pollutions. It is with a Christian, as with Joseph's brethren: when the steward accused them of having the cup, they were ready to swear they had not the cup in their sack, but upon search it was found there: little doth a Christian think what pride, atheism, uncleanness is in his heart till he searcheth. Therefore, if there be such hidden wickedness, like a spring that runs under ground, we had need examine ourselves, that finding out our secret sin, we may be humbled and repent. Hidden sins, if not searched out, defile the soul. If corn lie long in the chaff, the chaff defiles the corn; hidden sins lain long in, defile our duties. Needful therefore it is, before we come to the holy supper, to search out these hidden sins, as Israel searched for leaven before they came to the passover.

5. Self-examining is needful, because without it we may easily have a cheat put upon us, Jer. 17:9., "The heart is deceitful above all things."

Many a man's heart will tell him, he is fit for the Lord's table. As when Christ asked the sons of Zebedee, Mat. 20:22., "Are ye able to drink of the cup I shall drink of?" Can ye drink such a bloody cup of suffering? "They say unto him, we are able." So the heart will suggest to a man, he is fit to drink of the sacramental cup, he hath on the wedding-garment. Grande profundum est homo, AUG. "The heart is a grand impostor." It is like a cheating tradesman, which will put one off with bad wares: the heart will put a man off with seeming grace, instead of saving. A tear or two shed is repentance; a few lazy desires is faith; blue and red flowers that grow among the corn, look like good flowers, but they are but beautiful weeds. The foolish virgins' lamps looked as if they had had oil in them, but they had none. Therefore, to prevent a cheat, that we may not take false grace instead of true, we had need make a thorough, disquisition and search of our hearts before we come to the Lord's table.

6. Self-examining is needful, because of those false fears the godly are apt to nourish in their hearts, which make them go sad to the sacrament. As they who have no grace, for want of examining, presume; so they who have grace, for want of examining, are ready to despair. Many of God's children look upon themselves through the black spectacles of fear; they fear Christ is not formed in them, they fear they have no right to the promise; and these fears in the heart cause tears in the eye; whereas, would they but search and examine, they might find they had grace. Are not their hearts humbled for sin? and what is this but the bruised reed? Do not they weep after the Lord? and what are these tears but seeds of faith? Do they not thirst after Christ in an ordinance? what is this but the new creature crying for the breast? Here are, you see, seeds of grace; and, would Christians examine their hearts, they might see there is something of God in them, and so their false fears would be prevented, and they

might approach with comfort to these holy mysteries in the eucharist.

MARK 14:22. Jesus took breads, &c.

7. Self-examining is needful, in respect of the danger in coming unworthily without examination, 1 Cor. 11:27., "He shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." Par facit quasi Christian trucidaret, GROTIUS.—i.e. God reckons with him as with a crucifier of the Lord Jesus. He doth not drink Christ's blood, but sheds it; and so brings that curse upon him, as the Jews, "his blood be upon us and our children." The virtue of Christ's blood, nothing more comfortable; the guilt of it, nothing more formidable.

A. 4. We must examine ourselves before the sacrament, in respect of the difficulty of self-examining work. Difficulty raiseth a noble spirit. Self-examining is difficult, 1st. Because it is an inward work, it lies most with the heart. External acts of devotion are easy; to lift up the eye,—to bow the knee,—to read over a few prayers,—this is as easy as for the papists to tell over a few beads; but to examine a man's self,—to take the heart, as a watch, all in pieces,—to make a scripture-trial of our fitness for the Lord's supper,—this is not easy. Reflexive acts are hardest; the eye cannot see itself but by a glass; we must have the glass of the word and conscience to see our own hearts; it is easy to spy the faults of others, but it is hard to find out our own. 2d. Self-examination is difficult, in regard of self-love. As ignorance blinds, so self-love flatters; what Solomon saith of love, Prov. 10:12., "Love covereth all sins," is most true of self-love: a man looking upon himself in the glass of self-love—that flattering glass—his virtues appear greater than they are, and his sins lesser. Self-love makes a man rather excuse himself than examine himself; self-love makes one think the best of himself; and he who hath a good opinion of

himself doth not suspect himself; and not suspecting himself, he is not forward to examine himself. The work therefore of self-examination being so difficult, it requires the more impartiality and industry; difficulty should be a spur to diligence.

A. 5. We must examine ourselves before we come, because of the beneficialness of self-examination. The benefit is great which way soever things turn; if, upon examination, we find that we have no grace in truth, then the mistake is discovered, and the danger prevented; if we find that we have grace, we may take the comfort of it. He, who upon search, finds that he hath the minimum quod sit,—the least degree of grace,—he is like one that hath found his box of evidences, he is an happy man, he is a fit guest at the Lord's table, he is heir to all the promises, he is as sure to go to heaven as if he were in heaven already. These are the reasons why we must examine ourselves before we approach to the Lord's table.

QUEST. 5 What must we examine?

Ans. 1. Our sins. 2. Our graces.

First, Our sins. Search if any dead fly might spoil this sweet ointment. When we come to the sacrament, we should do as the Jews did before the passover; they searched for leaven, and having found it did burn it.—1. Let us search for the leaven of pride; this sours our holy things; we are born with a spiritual tympany. Will an humble Christ be received into a proud heart? Pride keeps Christ out. *Intus existens prohibet alienum*. Pride swells the heart, and Christ cannot come into the heart if it be full already. To a proud man Christ's blood hath no virtue; 'tis like dioscordium put into a dead man's mouth, which loseth its virtue. Let us search for this leaven of pride, and cast it away.—2. Let us search for the leaven of avarice. The Lord's supper is a spiritual mystery; it represents Christ's body and

blood; what should an earthly heart do here? The earth puts out the fire; earthliness quencheth the fire of holy love. The earth is *elementum gravissimum*,—it cannot ascend. A soul belimed with earth cannot ascend to heavenly cogitations. Col. 3:5., "Covetousness which is idolatry." Will Christ come into that heart where there is an idol? Search for this leaven before you come to this ordinance. How can an earthly heart converse with that God which is a spirit? Can a clod of earth kiss the sun?—3. Search for the leaven of hypocrisy, Luke 12:1., "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." Aquinas describes it *simulatio virtutis*;—hypocrisy is a counterfeiting of virtue. The hypocrite is a living pageant, he only makes a shew of religion; he gives God his knee, but no heart; and God gives him bread and wine in the sacrament, but no Christ. Oh let us search for this leaven of hypocrisy and burn it!

Secondly, We must examine our graces. I shall instance only in one, our knowledge.

1. Whether we have knowledge.
2. Whether it be rightly qualified.

First, We are to examine whether we have knowledge, else we cannot give God a reasonable service, Rom. 13:1. Knowledge is a necessary requisite in a communicant; without knowledge there can be no fitness for the sacrament; a person cannot be fit to come to the Lord's table who hath no goodness, but without knowledge the mind is not good, Prov. 19:2. Some say they have good hearts though they want knowledge; as if one should say, his eye is good, but it wants sight. Under the law, when the plague of leprosy was in a man's head, the priest was to pronounce him unclean. The ignorant person hath the plague in his head, he is unclean; ignorance is the womb of lust, 1 Pet. 1:4. Therefore it is requisite, before we come, to examine

ourselves what knowledge we have in the main fundamentals of religion. Let it not be said of us, that "to this day the vail is upon their hearts," 2 Cor. 3:15. But sure, in this intelligent age, we cannot but have some insight into the mysteries of the gospel. I rather fear, we are like Rachel, who was fair and well-sighted, but barren; therefore,

(2.) Let us examine whether our knowledge be rightly qualified.—1. Is it influential; doth our knowledge warm our heart. *Claritas intellectu parit adoram in effectu*. Saving knowledge doth not only direct, but quicken; it is the light of life, John 8:12.—2. Is our knowledge practical? We hear much; do we love the truths we know? That is the right knowledge which doth not only adorn the mind, but reform the life.

Secondly, This solemn preparing for the sacrament, as it consists in examining ourselves, so in dressing our souls before we come. And this soul-dress is in two things:

1. Washing in the laver of repenting tears; to come to this ordinance with the guilt of any sin unrepented of, makes the way for the further hardening of our heart, and giving Satan fuller possession of us, Zech. 12:10., "They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him." The cloud of sorrow must drop into tears. We must grieve as for the pollution, so for the unkindness in every sin. To sin against Christ's love who died for us. When Peter thought of Christ's love, who called him out of his unregeneracy, made him an apostle, and carried him up to the mount of transfiguration, where he saw the glory of heaven in a vision: and then, to think of his denying Christ, it broke his heart, "he went out and wept bitterly," Mat. 26:75. To think, before we come to a sacrament, of the sins against the bowels-mercies of God the Father,—the bleeding wounds of God the Son,—the blessed inspirations of God the Holy Ghost,—it

is enough to broach our eyes with tears, and put us into an holy agony of grief and compunction. And we must be so distressed for sin, as to be divorced from sin. The serpent before he drinks, casts up his poison; in this, we must be wise as serpents; before we drink of the sacramental cup, we must cast up the poison of sin by repentance. Ille vere plangit commissa, qui non committit plangenda, AUG. He doth truly bewail the sins he hath committed who doth not commit the sins he hath bewailed. And this is the dressing our souls before we come, washing in the waters of true repentance.

2. The soul-dress is the exciting and stirring up the habit of grace into a lively exercise, 2 Tim. 1:6., "I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee," i.e. the gifts and graces of the Spirit. The Greek word to stir up signifies to blow up grace into a flame. Grace is oft like fire in the embers, which needs blowing up; it is possible that even a good man may not come so well-disposed to this ordinance, because he hath not before taken pains with his heart to come in due order, he hath not stirred up grace into its vigorous exercise; and so, though he doth not eat and drink damnation, yet he doth not receive consolation in the sacrament. Thus you see what this dressing of our souls is, before we come.

Thirdly, This solemn preparing for the sacrament is in begging a blessing upon the ordinance. The sacrament is not like physic, which hath an inherent operative virtue; no; but the efficacy of the sacrament depends upon the co-operation of the Spirit, and a word of blessing. In the institution, Christ blessed the elements: "Jesus took bread and blessed it," in the text. The sacrament will no farther do us good, than as it is blessed to us. We ought then, before we come, to pray for a blessing on the ordinance, that the sacrament may be not only a sign to represent, but a seal to conform, and an

instrument to convey Christ and all his benefits to us. We are to pray that this great ordinance may be poison to our sins, and food to our graces. That, as it was with Jonathan, when he had tasted the honeycomb, his "eyes were enlightened," 1 Sam. 14:27., so that by our receiving this holy eucharist, our eyes may be so enlightened, as to 'discern the Lord's body.' Thus should we implore a blessing upon the ordinance, before we come. The sacrament is like a tree hung full of fruit; but none of this fruit will fall, unless shaken by the hand of prayer.

2d. That the sacrament may be effectual to us, as there must be a due preparing for it, so a right partaking of it; which right participation of the sacrament is in three things.

1. When we draw nigh to God's table in an humble sense of our unworthiness. We do not deserve one crumb of the bread of life; we are poor indigent creatures, who have lost our glory, and are like a vessel that is ship-wrecked; we smite on our breasts, as the publican, God be merciful to us sinners. This is a right partaking of the ordinance; it is part of our worthiness to see our unworthiness.

2. We rightly partake of the sacrament, when at the Lord's table we are filled with inhalations of soul and inflamed desires after Christ, and nothing can quench our thirst but his blood, Mat. 5:6., "Blessed are they that thirst." They are blessed not only when they are filled, but while they are thirsting.

3. A right participation of the supper is, when we receive in faith. Without faith we get no good; what is said of the word preached, It profiteth not, "not being mixed with faith," Heb. 4:2., is as true of the sacrament. Christ turned stones into bread; unbelief turns the bread into stones, that it doth not nourish. Then we partake aright when we come in faith. Faith hath a twofold act, an adhering, and an applying:

by the first act we go over to Christ, by the second act we bring Christ over to us, Gal. 2:20. This is the great grace we must set a-work, Acts 10 Philo calls it, *fides oculata*,—faith is the eagle-eye that discerns the Lord's body; faith causeth a virtual contact, it touched Christ. Christ said to Mary, "Touch me not," &c. John 20:17. She was not to touch him with the hands of her body; but he saith to us, "Touch me," touch me with the hand of your faith. Faith makes Christ present to the soul; the believer hath a real presence in the sacrament. The body of the sun is in the firmament, but the light of the sun is in the eye; Christ's essence is in heaven, but he is in a believer's heart by his light and influence, Eph. 3:17., "That Christ may dwell in your heart by faith." Faith is the palate which tastes Christ, 1 Pet. 2:3. Faith makes a concoction; it causeth the bread of life to nourish. *Crede et manducasta*, AUG. Faith causeth a coalition, it makes us one with Christ, Eph. 1:23. Other graces make us like Christ, faith makes us members of Christ.

Fourthly, Then we partake aright of the sacrament, when we receive in love.

1. Love to Christ. Who can see Christ pierced with a crown of thorns, —sweating in his agony,—bleeding on the cross,—but his heart must needs be endeared in love to him? "How can we but love him who hath given his life a ransom for us?" Love is the spiced wine and juice of the pomegranate which we must give Christ, Cant. 8:2. Our love to this superior and blessed Jesus must exceed our love to other things; as the oil runs above the water. Though we cannot with Mary bring our costly ointment to anoint Christ's body, yet we do more than this, when we bring him our love, which is sweeter to him than all ointments and perfumes.

2. Love to the saints. This is a love-feast: though we must eat this supper with the bitter herbs of repentance, yet not with the bitter herbs of malice. Were it not sad, if all the meat one eats should turn to bad humours? He who comes in malice to the Lord's table, all he eats is to his hurt: "He eats and drinks damnation to himself," 1 Cor. 11:29. Come in love. It is with love as it is with fire; you keep fire all the day upon the hearth, but upon special occasions you draw out the fire larger; so, though we must have love to all, yet to the saints, who are our fellow-members, here we must draw out the fire of our love larger; and we must shew the largeness of our affections to them, by prizing their persons, by choosing their company, by doing all offices of love to them, counselling them in their doubts, comforting them in their fears, supplying them in their wants. Thus one Christian may be an Ebenezer to another, and as an angel of God to him; the sacrament cannot be effectual to him who doth not receive in love. If a man drinks poison, and then takes a cordial, the cordial will do him little good; he who hath the poison of malice in his soul, the cordial of Christ's blood will do him no good; come therefore in love and charity. And thus we see how we may receive the supper of the Lord, that it may be effectual to our salvation.

Use 1st. From the whole doctrine of the sacrament learn, how precious should a sacrament be to us. It is a sealed deed to make over the blessings of the new covenant to us,—justification, sanctification, glory. A small piece of wax put to a parchment is made the instrument to confirm a rich conveyance or lordship to another: so these elements in the sacrament of bread and wine, though in themselves of no great value, yet being consecrated to be seals to confirm the covenant of grace to us, so they are of more value than all the riches of the Indies.

Use 2d. The sacrament being such an holy mystery, let us come to this holy mystery with holy hearts. There is no receiving a crucified Christ, but into a consecrated heart; Christ in his conception, lay in a pure virgin's womb, and, at his death, his body was wrapped in clean linen, and put into a new virgin-tomb, never yet defiled with rottenness. If Christ would not lie in an unclean grave, sure he will not be received into an unclean heart, Isa. 52:11., "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." If they who did carry the vessels of the Lord, were to be holy, then they who are to be the vessels of the Lord, and are to hold Christ's body and blood, ought to be holy.

Use 3d. Consolation. Christ's body and blood in the sacrament is a most sovereign elixir or comfort to a distressed soul. Christ having poured out his blood, now God's justice is fully satisfied. There is in the death of Christ enough to answer all doubts. What if sin is the poison, here is the flesh of Christ an antidote against it! What if sin be red as scarlet, is not Christ's blood of a deeper colour, and can wash away sin! If Satan strikes us with his darts of temptation, here is a precious balm comes out of Christ's wounds to heal us! Isa. 53:5. What though we feed upon the bread of affliction, as long as in the sacrament we feed upon the bread of life! So that Christ received aright sacramentally, is an universal medicine for the healing, and an universal cordial for the cheering of our distressed souls.

III. The benefits of our redemption are applied to us by prayer.

OF PRAYER

PSALM 109:4. But I give myself unto prayer:

I shall not expatiate upon prayer at large, being to speak more fully to it in the Lord's prayer. But to the words, "I give myself unto prayer." It is one thing to pray, and another thing to be given to prayer; he who prays frequently, is said to be given to prayer, as he who often distributes alms, is said to be given to charity. Prayer is a glorious ordinance; it is the soul's trading with heaven; God comes down to us by his Spirit, and we go up to him by prayer.

QUEST. 1. What is prayer?

ANS. "It is an offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ."

1st. "Prayer is an offering up of our desires." Therefore it is called a making known of our requests, Phil. 4:6. In prayer we come as humble petitioners, begging to have our suit granted.

2d. 'Tis "offering up our desires to God."—Prayer is not to be made to any but God. The papists pray to saints and angels, but they know not our grievances, Isa. 63:16., "Abraham be ignorant of us." And all angel-worship is forbidden, Col. 2:18, 19. We must not pray to any but whom we may believe in, Rom. 10:14., "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" But we cannot believe in an angel, therefore we must not pray to him.

QUEST. Why must prayer be made only to God?

Ans. 1. Because he only hears prayer, Ps. 65:2., "O thou that hearest prayer!" Hereby God is known to be the true God, in that he hears prayer, 1 Kings 18:37., "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God!"

A. 2. Because God only can help. We may look to second causes, and cry, as the woman did, 2 Kings 6:26, 27., "Help, my Lord, O King! And he said, if the Lord doth not help thee, whence shall I help thee?" If we are in outward distress, God must send from heaven and save; if we are in inward agonies, he only can pour in the oil of joy; therefore prayer is to be made to him only.

3d. "For things agreeable to his will." When we pray for outward things,—for riches or children,—perhaps God sees these things are not good for us; our prayers must comport with God's will. We may pray absolutely for grace: "for this is the will of God, our sanctification," 1 Thess. 4:3. There might be no strange incense offered, Exod. 30:9. When we pray for things which are not agreeable to God's will, it is offering strange incense.

4th. "In the name of Christ." To pray in the name of Christ, is not only to mention Christ's name in prayer, but to pray in the hope and confidence of Christ's merits, 1 Sam. 7:9., "Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered it," &c. We must carry the lamb Christ in the arms of our faith, and so we prevail in prayer. When Uzziah would offer incense without a priest, God was angry, and struck him with leprosy, 2 Chron. 26:16. When we do not pray in Christ's name, in the hope of his mediation, we offer up incense, without a priest; and what can we expect but to meet with rebukes, and to have God answer us by terrible things?

QUEST. 2. What are the parts of prayer?

Ans. 1st. There is the confessory part, which is the acknowledgment of sin. 2d. The supplicatory part, when we either deprecate and pray against some evil, or request the obtaining of some good. 3d. The gratulatory part, when we give thanks for mercies received, which is

the most excellent part of prayer. In petition, we act like men; in giving thanks, we act like angels.

QUEST. 3. What are the several sorts of prayer?

Ans. 1st. There is mental prayer in the mind, 1 Sam. 1:13. 2d. Vocal, Ps. 77:1. 3d. Ejaculatory, which is a sudden and short elevation of the heart to God, Neh. 2:4., "So I prayed to the God of heaven." 4th. Conceived prayer; when we pray for those things which God puts into our heart, Rom. 8:26. The Spirit helps us with sighs and groans. Both the expressions of the tongue, so far as they are right, and the impressions of the heart, are from the Spirit. 5th. Prescribed prayer; our Saviour hath set us a pattern of prayer. God prescribed a set form of blessing for the priests, Numb. 6:23. 6th. Public prayer; when we pray in the audience of others. Prayer is more powerful, when many join and unite their forces. Vis unita fortior, Mat. 18:19. 7th. Private prayer; when we pray by ourselves, Mat. 6:6., "Enter into thy closet."

QUEST. 4. What is that prayer which is most like to prevail with God?

Ans. When prayer is rightly qualified. That is a good medicine which hath the right ingredients; that prayer is good, and is most like to prevail with God, which hath these seven ingredients in it:

(1.) Prayer must be mixed with faith, James 1:6., "But let him pray in faith." Believe God hears, and will in his due time grant; believe God's love and truth; believe that he is love, therefore will not deny you; believe that he is truth, therefore will not deny himself. Faith sets prayer a-work. Faith is to prayer, as the feather is to the arrow: faith feathers the arrow of prayer, and makes it fly swifter, and pierce the throne of grace. Prayer that is faithless is fruitless.

(2.) A melting prayer, Ps. 51:17., "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." The incense was to be beaten to typify the breaking of the heart in prayer. "O!" saith a Christian, "I cannot pray with such gifts and elocution as others; as Moses said, 'I am not eloquent.' " But canst thou weep? Doth thy heart melt in prayer? Weeping prayer prevails. Tears drop as pearls from the eye. "Jacob wept and made supplication; and had power over the angel," Hosea 12:4.

(3.) Prayer must be fired with zeal and fervency, James 5:16., "Effectual fervent prayer prevails much." Cold prayers, like cold suitors, never speed. Prayer, without fervency, is like a sacrifice without fire. Prayer is called a pouring out of the soul, 1 Sam. 1:15., to signify vehemency. Formality starves prayer. Prayer is compared to incense, Ps. 141:2., "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense." Hot coals were to be put to the incense, to make it odoriferous and fragrant; fervency of affection is like coals put to the incense; it makes prayer ascend as a sweet perfume. Christ prayed with strong cries, Heb. 5:7. Clamor iste penetrat nubes, LUTHER. Fervent prayer, like a petard set against heaven's gates, makes them fly open. To cause holy fervour and ardour of soul in prayer, consider, 1. Prayer without fervency, is no prayer; it is speaking, not praying; lifeless prayer is no more prayer, than the picture of a man is a man. One may say, as Pharaoh, Gen. 41, "I have dreamed a dream;" it is a dreaming, not praying. Life and fervency baptizeth a duty, and gives it a name. 2. Consider in what need we stand of those things which we ask in prayer. We come to ask the favour of God; and if we have not his love, all we enjoy is cursed to us. We pray that our souls may be washed in Christ's blood; if he wash us not we have "no part in him," John 13:8. When will we be in earnest, if not when we are praying for the life of our souls? 3. It is only fervent prayer hath the promise of mercy affixed to it, Jer. 29:13., "Then shall ye find me, when ye search for me with all your heart." It is dead

praying without a promise; and the promise is made only to ardency. The Aediles among the Romans, had their doors always standing open, that all who had petitions might have free access to them: God's heart is ever open to fervent prayer.

(4.) Prayer must be sincere; sincerity is the silver thread which must run through the whole duties of religion. Sincerity in prayer is, when we have gracious holy ends in prayer; our prayer is not so much for temporal mercies as spiritual. We send out our prayer, as a merchant sends out his ship, that we may have large returns of spiritual blessings; our aim in prayer is, that our heart may be more holy, that we may have more communion with God; our design is, that by prayer we may increase the stock of grace. Prayer which wants a good aim, wants a good issue.

(5.) Prayer that will prevail with God, must have a fixation of mind, Ps. 57:7., "O God, my heart is fixed!" Since the fall, the mind is like quicksilver, which will not fix; it hath principium motus, but non quietus; the thoughts will be roving and dancing up and down in prayer, just as if a man that is travelling to such a place should run out of the road, and wander he knows not whither. In prayer, we are travelling to the throne of grace, but how often do we by vain cogitations, turn out of the road! Which is rather wandering than praying.

QUEST. But how shall we cure these vain impertinent thoughts, which do so distract us in prayer, and we may fear, hinder the acceptance!

Ans. 1. Be very apprehensive in prayer of the infiniteness of God's majesty and purity. God's eye is upon us in prayer, and we may say, as David, Ps. 56:8., "Thou tellest my wanderings." The thoughts of this would make us hoc agere,—mind the duty we are about. If a man

were to deliver a petition to an earthly prince, would he at that time be playing with a feather? Set yourselves, when you pray, as in God's presence; could you but look through the key-hole of heaven, and see how devout and intent the angels are in their worshipping of God, sure you would be ready to blush at your vain thoughts and vile impertinences in prayer.

A. 2. If you would keep your mind fixed in prayer, keep your eye fixed, Ps. 123:1., "Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens!" Much vanity comes in at the eye. When the eye wanders in prayer, the heart wanders. To think to keep the heart fixed in prayer, and yet let the eye gaze, is as if one should think to keep his house safe, yet let the windows be open.

A. 3. If you would have your thoughts fixed in prayer, get more love to God. Love is a great fixer of the thoughts. He who is in love, cannot keep his thoughts off the object. He who loves the world, his thoughts run undisturbedly upon the world. Did we love God more, our minds would be more intent upon him in prayer. Were there more delight in duty, there would be less distraction.

A. 4. Implore the help of God's Spirit to fix our minds, and make them intent and serious in prayer. The ship without a pilot rather floats than sails; that our thoughts do not float up and down in prayer, we need the blessed Spirit to be our pilot to steer us; only God's Spirit can bound the thoughts. A shaking hand may as well write a line steadily, as we can keep our hearts fixed in prayer without the Spirit of God.

A. 5. Make holy thoughts familiar to you in your ordinary course of life. David was oft musing on God, Ps. 139:18., "When I awake, I am still with thee." He who gives himself liberty to have vain thoughts out of prayer, will scarce have other thoughts in prayer.

A. 6. If you would keep your mind fixed on God, watch your hearts; not only watch them after prayer, but in prayer. The heart will be apt to give you the slip, and have a thousand vagaries in prayer. We read of angels ascending and descending on Jacob's ladder: so in prayer you shall find your hearts ascending to heaven, and in a moment descending upon earthly objects. O Christians, watch your hearts in prayer! What a shame is it to think, that when we are speaking to God in prayer, our hearts should be in the fields, or in our counting-house, or one way or other, running upon the devil's errand!

A. 7. Labour for more degrees of grace. The more ballast the ship hath, the better it sails: so the more the heart is ballasted with grace, the steadier it will sail to heaven in prayer.

(6.) Prayer that is likely to prevail with God must be argumentative: God loves to have us plead with him, and use arguments in prayer. See how many arguments Jacob used in prayer, Gen. 32:11., "Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother." The arguments he used, are, 1. From God's command, v. 9., "The Lord which saidst to me return to thy country;" as if he had said, I did not take this journey of my own head, but by thy direction therefore thou canst not but in honour protect me. And he useth another argument, v. 12., "Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good." Lord, wilt thou go back from thy own promise? Thus he was argumentative in prayer; and he got not only a new blessing but a new name, v. 28., "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God, and hast prevailed." God loves to be overcome with strength of argument. Thus, when we come to God in prayer for grace, be argumentative; Lord, thou callest thyself the God of all grace; and whither should we go with our vessel, but to the fountain? Lord, thy grace may be imparted, yet not impaired: hath not Christ purchased grace for poor indigent creatures? Every drachm of grace

cost a drop of blood. Shall Christ die to purchase grace for us, and shall not we have the fruit of his purchase? Lord, it is thy delight to milk out the breast of mercy and grace, and wilt thou abridge thyself of thy own delight? Thou hast promised to give thy Spirit to implant grace; can truth lie? can faithfulness deceive? God loves thus to be overcome with arguments in prayer.

(7.) Prayer that would prevail with God, must be joined with reformation, Job 11:13, 14., "If thou stretch out thy hands towards him; if iniquity be in thy hand, put it far away." Sin, lived in, makes the heart hard, and God's ear deaf. 'Tis foolish to pray against sin, and then sin against prayer, sin fly-blows our prayers, Ps. 66:18., "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." The loadstone loseth its virtue when bespread with, garlic; so doth prayer when polluted with sin. The incense of prayer must be offered upon the altar of an holy heart.

Thus you see what is that prayer which is most likely to prevail with God.

Use 1st. It reproveth, 1st. Such as pray not at all: 'Tis made the note of a reprobate, he calls not upon God, Ps. 144. Doth he think to have an alms, who never asks it? do they think to have mercy from God, who never seek it? Then God should befriend them more than he did his own Son, Heb. 5:7. Christ offered up prayers with strong cries. None of God's children are born dumb, Gal. 4:6.—2d. It reproveth such as have left off prayer, a sign they never felt the fruit and comfort of it. He that leaves off prayer, a sign he leaves off to fear God, Job 15:4., "Thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God." A man that hath left off prayer is fit for any wickedness. When Saul had given over inquiring after God, then he went to the witch of Endor.

Use 2d. Of exhortation. Be persons given to prayer. "I give myself (saith David) to prayer." Pray for pardon and purity; prayer is the golden key that opens heaven. The tree of the promise will not drop its fruit, unless shaken by the hand of prayer. All the benefits of Christ's redemption are handed over to us by prayer.

OBJ. But I have prayed a long time for mercy, and have no answer, Ps. 69:3., "I am weary of crying."

Ans. 1st. God may hear us, when we do not hear from him; as soon as prayer is made, God hears it, though he doth not presently answer. A friend may receive our letter, though he doth not presently send us an answer of it. 2d. God may delay prayer, yet not deny.

QUEST. But why doth God delay an answer of prayer.

Ans. 1. Because he loves to hear the voice of prayer, Prov. 15:8., "The prayer of the upright is his delight." You let the musician play a great while ere you throw him down money, because you love to hear his music, Cant. 2:14.

A. 2. God may delay prayer, when he will not deny, that he may humble us; perhaps God hath spoken to us a long time in his word to leave such sins, but we would not hear him; therefore he lets us speak to him in prayer and seems not to hear us.

A. 3. God may delay prayer when he will not deny, because he sees we are not yet fit for the mercy; perhaps we pray for deliverance, we are not fit for it; our scum is not yet boiled away, we would have God swift to deliver, and we are slow to repent.

A. 4. God may delay prayer, when he will not deny, that the mercy we pray for may be the more prized, and may be sweeter when it comes.

The longer the merchant's ships stay abroad, the more he rejoiceth when they come home laden with spices and jewels; therefore be not discouraged, but follow God with prayer: though God may delay, he will not deny. Prayer vincit invincibilem,—it overcomes the Omnipotent, Hos. 12:4. The Tyrians tied fast their god Hercules with a golden chain, that he should not remove: the Lord was held by Moses' prayer, as with a golden chain, Exod. 32:10., "Let me alone;" why; what did Moses? he only prayed. Prayer ushers in mercy. Be thy case ever so sad; if thou canst but pray, thou needest not fear, Ps. 10:17. Therefore give thyself to prayer.

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