

THE LAW OF GOD

AS CONTAINED IN THE
TEN COMMANDMENTS,
EXPLAINED AND ENFORCED



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by William S. Plumer

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Chapter 1. Great Truths

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished." Jesus Christ.

"To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams. Samuel. The law of your mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver... A good understanding have all those who do his commandments." David.

"The commandment is a lamp and the law is light." Solomon.

"He will magnify the law and make it honorable.... The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king." Isaiah.

"The the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good... Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law." Paul.

"If you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.... There is one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy." James.

"Whoever commits sin, transgresses also the law." John.

"If we have not the spirit of grace, the law comes only to convict and slay us." Augustine.

"If even for one day I fail to compare my heart with the law of God, I am sensible of a decline in my devotional feelings.... If I give unto the law its proper definition, and keep it within the compass of its office and use, it is an excellent thing; but if I translate it to another use and attribute that unto it which I should not, then do I not only pervert the law, but also the whole Scripture." Luther.

"The law is like a mirror, in which we behold, first, our impotence; secondly, our iniquity, which proceeds from it; and lastly, the

consequence of both, our obnoxiousness to the curse." Calvin.

"There was never so much matter and marrow, with so much admirably holy cunning, compended, couched and conveyed in so few words, by the most terse, concise, sententious and singularly significant spokesman in the world—as we find in the moral law. Durham. The dignity of the name of divine laws is reserved to those which concern the duties of religion, such as the two fundamental laws [love to God and love to man] the Decalogue, and all the precepts contained in the Holy Scriptures about faith and practice." Domat.

"Two things there are, which, the oftener and the more steadfastly we consider, fill the mind with an ever new, an ever rising admiration and reverence: the STARRY HEAVENS above, and the MORAL LAW within." Kant.

"Ignorance of the nature and design of the law is at the bottom of most religious mistakes." John Newton.

"None but rogues and felons look at a law to find out how they may evade it." Hare.

"Of the law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world. All things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, the greatest as not exempted from her power. Both angels, and men, and creatures of whatever condition, though each in different sort and measure, yet all with uniform consent, admitting her as the mother of their peace and joy." Hooker.

"I am confident of it, and affirm boldly there is not one man made free by Christ, that makes it his rule to be bold to commit sin because of the redemption that is in the blood of Christ; but that Christ who has redeemed from sin and wrath, has also redeemed from a vain life. All who have the pardon purchased by Christ for them, have also

the power of God in them, which keeps them, so that they do not sin licentiously." Crisp.

"Though the moral law is not a Christ to justify us, yet it is a rule to instruct us.... The law of God is a hedge to keep us within the bounds of sobriety and piety." Thomas Watson.

"Those only, who obey the word of the Lord's direction, shall enjoy the consolations of his love." Mason.

"If a man has not spiritual and just apprehensions of the holy law, he cannot have spiritual and transforming discoveries of the glorious gospel." Colquhoun.

"The purity of the law appears from its forbidding sin in all its modifications, in its most refined as well as in its grossest forms; the taint of the mind as well as the pollution of the body; the secret approbation of sin, as well as the external act; the transient look of desire, the almost unperceived irregular motion." Dick.

"The divine Lawgiver sees and knows the relations of things perfectly. He can draw no wrong deductions from them. He can make no mistake. Whatever laws have certainly emanated from him are certainly right." Sharswood.

Chapter 2. Law Defined.

A law is a rule of action. Johnson.

A law is a rule of action laid down or prescribed by a superior. Worcester.

Law as applicable to human conduct in general, may be defined a rule of moral action proceeding from a superior, having right to command, and directed to inferiors bound to obey. Edinburgh Review.

Law is beneficence acting by rule. Burke.

Law in its general and most comprehensive sense signifies a rule of action. Blackstone.

A law is that which directs, prescribes, or controls. Stowell.

The law is void of desire and fear, lust and anger. It is mens mind without passion, written reason, retaining some measure of the divine perfection. It does not enjoin that which pleases a weak, frail man, but without any regard to persons, commands that which is good, and punishes evil in all, whether rich or poor, high or low. It is deaf, inexorable, inflexible. Sidney.

To every good law be required these properties: that it be honest, righteous, possible in itself, and after the custom of the country, convenient for the place and time, necessary, profitable, and also manifest, that it be not confusing by any dark sentences, or made for any private wealth, but all made for the commonwealth. St. Germain.

The Moral Law is a divine, unchangeable rule given to man, and accommodated to his nature, as he was created by God, obliging him to serve to God's glory as his last end. Willard.

The Moral Law is that which prescribes to men their religious and social duties; in other words, their duties to God and to each other. Noah Webster.

The Moral Law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding everyone to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity, and obedience thereunto, in the frame and disposition of the whole man, soul and body, and in the performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which he owes to God and man: promising life upon the fulfilling, and threatening death upon the breach of it. Westminster Assembly.

A law, then, is a rule of binding force, given by a competent authority. It consists of two parts; first, a precept or direction given; and secondly, a sanction annexed, consisting of good secured to the obedient, or of punishment threatened against the transgressor, or of both of these. A law without a sanction may be disregarded at pleasure. It is no law. It is mere advice.

Blackstone, "Of all the parts of a law, the most effectual is the retributive. The main strength and force of the law consists in the penalty annexed to it."

Promises of good, irrespective of law, are mere gratuities. Threatenings of evil, having no reference to law, are but arbitrary expressions of displeasure. The Hebrew word commonly rendered Law, occurs more than two hundred times. It primarily signifies instruction, then precept. In a few cases it signifies a custom or manner so established as to form the rule of procedure. The Greek word rendered Law occurs in the New Testament nearly two hundred times. Primarily it signifies anything allotted or apportioned, then a usage or prescription, then a law.

In the Scriptures, the precise meaning of the word Law is varied according to the subject under consideration. In Psalms 1 and 19, it is put for the whole word of God as then written. In Romans 7:23, it twice has the sense of a force governing our actions in our present sinful state. In Romans 2:14, it signifies the law of nature. In John 10:34, and elsewhere, it signifies the Old Testament. In Gal. 3:11, it is put for the works required by the law. In John 1:17, and elsewhere, it is a name given to the whole of the Mosaic dispensation.

In popular use in Christian countries, it most commonly signifies the Moral Law containing the ten precepts or words as the Hebrew expresses it.

The law given from Mount Sinai consisted of three kinds of enactments:

1. Ceremonial prescriptions and carnal ordinances. These were very numerous. All the times, and modes, and circumstances of public worship, and all the varieties of cases that could arise under a ritual the most minute are here ordained. If salvation by rites the most exact, and extensive, and Heaven-appointed had been possible, verily it had been by the Mosaic law. It far outdoes all modern devices. Yet it was powerless. It never made the comers thereunto perfect. Heb. 10:1. Indeed it was an intolerable burden. Acts 15:10. It could not be endured. It has been wholly abolished. Acts 15:28. And yet it had a shadow of good things to come. Heb. 10:1. Its typical representations of the Messiah were both numerous and instructive. It was abolished by being fully accomplished.

2. Another part of the law given from Sinai related to judicial proceedings. It regulated commerce between man and man. It provided for the establishment of justice, and for the punishment of crime. Some of its provisions, as the cities of refuge, had a typical reference. Some of them constitute a good part of the foundation of the municipal and judicial rules of all Christian nations. They are not, however, of binding force on us except as they contain the principles of right and equity applicable to all men; or, unless they are incorporated into the laws of the state to which we belong. We are not living under the theocracy.

3. The third part of the code given from Sinai is the Moral Law. Very often in Scripture it is mentioned by way of excellence as The Law. This is the great code by which men's thoughts accuse or excuse them before God, and by which they will be finally judged.

Chapter 3. The Moral Law as Given in Scripture

1. "You shall have no other gods before me.

2. "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.

3. "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

4. "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

5. "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

6. "You shall not murder.

7. "You shall not commit adultery.

8. "You shall not steal.

9. "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

10 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." Exodus 20:3-17

Forty years later, Moses rehearsed these commandments to Israel, with slight variations, which in no degree affect our duty to God or

man. The moral law as given in Deuteronomy 5:6-21: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. "You shall have no other gods before me. "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments. "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. "Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you. "You shall not murder. "You shall not commit adultery. "You shall not steal. "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbor's house or land, his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Thus we have in two different books the whole Moral Law. Its precepts are of two kinds; some enjoining duties; some forbidding sins. The fourth and fifth command certain things. All the rest prohibit certain things.

Chapter 4. The Giving of the Law.

I. The law was first given from Sinai 2,513 years after the creation. It is now, (1864,) 3,355 years since this code was delivered to mankind in writing. To those living previous to the time of Moses, many of its precepts seem to have been pretty clearly taught by the light of nature, as indeed they are to all men. Paul says, "As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law." Romans 2:12. Speaking of the heathen he adds, that "the work of the law is written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness" to it. Romans 2:15. Doubtless also, much of the divine will was known to eastern nations, by revelations with which they were made acquainted from time to time, before and during the existence of the theocracy. Melchisedec, Job, and the wise men who brought their gifts to the infant Savior, are illustrations of what is here meant. It has always been true that, "in every nation, he who fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted by him." Acts 10:35.

II. In giving the law, God exercised an unquestionable right. Everyone's conscience says as much. Man is a creature. Surely his Creator has a right to direct him. In this very connection God claims universal sovereignty, saying, "All the earth is mine." Ex. 19:5. Calvin: "God asserts his authority and right of giving commands, and thereby lays his chosen people under the necessity of obeying him." Man is dependent. If God, on whom he depends may not direct him, surely none else can. Man is not fit to direct himself, for he is blind, foolish and perverse. That God is fit to be a lawgiver, it is blasphemy to deny. The act of God in giving this law is therefore no usurpation, no encroachment upon our rights. It is but controlling, regulating, and asserting his own sovereignty over that which belongs to him by every conceivable tie. Weak as men are, they claim the right of doing as they please with their own. Who can deny the same to God? He is infinitely wise. None of his enactments are foolish or mischievous. In their operation they produce only good. Even the best temporal princes have erred for lack of wisdom. To charge the same on God is

atrocious wickedness. God is good. He has no evil designs. Malevolence is as far removed from him, as folly. He is the most loving Being in the universe. Such a governor could not enact unrighteous laws.

III. In giving the law, God delivered it not as counsel or advice—but as law. The very form of enactment indicates this—"You shall." "You shall not." None but the perverse can misunderstand such language. Besides, God annexes sanctions to some of the precepts in immediate connection with them, and sanctions to the whole code in many general teachings of Scripture. These sanctions consist of rewards promised, and punishments threatened. All, therefore, which could prove any writing to be a law in the highest sense of the term, is found here. Competent authority enacts. The enactment has all the form of statute. The statute is supported by adequate sanctions.

Stowell: "Obedience and blessing, disobedience and a curse; holiness and heaven, impurity and hell; these are the unalterable connections which constitute the sanctions of the law of God."

IV. In giving a law, we would expect God to enact nothing dishonorable to himself. This is just what we find in the moral law. There is no objection to the assertion that this law is a transcript of the moral character of God. He is honored by such a remark. The law is worthy of its author. The glory which Jehovah gets from the holy angels arises from their conformity to it. A great end accomplished by the gospel is the recovery of believers from sin, to an agreement with the excellence of this law. In it there is nothing derogatory to the character of God. The only perfectly happy society in the universe is that of heaven, where every member is wholly conformed to the requirements of this code. The only perfectly wretched community in the universe is that of the world of darkness, where every member is entirely opposite and contrary to all the provisions of this law. On earth bodies of men are found to be either happy or miserable in proportion as they are more or less conformed to this code, so far as it regulates their fellowship with each other.

This law was given amidst the most extraordinary displays ever made upon earth, or ever to be made until the last day. The Jews have a tradition that there were seventy thousand angels present at the giving of the law. This may be a very incorrect enumeration. The number may have been far greater; for "the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels." The number present was probably "innumerable." Heb. 12:22. We have the best authority for stating that the law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Gal. 3:19. The whole visible church of God on earth was also assembled around Mount Sinai on that occasion. The greatest of all was that God himself was there—God, who is a consuming fire, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, whose dwelling-place is eternity, and before whom all nations are as a drop of the bucket. Yes, Jehovah was there in the brightest robes of glory and the most awesome and overpowering tokens of divine majesty. "The sight was so terrifying that Moses said—I am trembling with fear." Heb. 12:21.

If such was the effect upon Moses, who spoke to God face to face, it requires no stretch of the imagination to conceive how terror must have seized the people. Ex. 20:19; Deut. 5:5, 23-28. Nor was God angry with them for being thus alarmed. The sight must have been terrifying. The poetic description given by Moses is in these words: "The Lord came from Mount Sinai and dawned upon us from Mount Seir; he shone forth with flaming fire at his right hand."

VI. The moral law was given in a way altogether unique. God never made to man in like manner any other communication. In the midst of the grand and solemn appearances already alluded to, it was spoken by the Almighty in an audible voice from the top of Sinai, in the hearing of all the people. No other part of the law of Moses was thus uttered by Jehovah. Deut. 4:33; 5:4,22. Without any variation it was also twice written on tables of stone by the finger of God himself. Ex. 32:15,16; 34:1; Deut. 10:4,5. The Lord would have it engraved on a rock. These tables were long preserved in the ark of the testimony, covered with the divine glory. Ex. 25:16, 1; 37:1-9.

Moreover, great preparations were, by divine command, made by the people for the space of two days together. They cleansed themselves and their raiment from all pollutions that they might come and stand before the Lord. Ex. 19:10, 11. Every man seems to have been anxious to make himself ready for that great and solemn day of hearing the law; a day more great and solemn than ever any shall be, except that of judging men according to the law. Besides, a strict injunction was given them to beware of touching the mount, or offering to ascend it—a fence was placed around it, which was not to be violated on pain of death. Ex. 19:12. "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." Heb. 12:20. And even after God had descended upon the mountain, and the people had been brought out of the camp to meet with him, Moses was again called up to receive a new and more imperative prohibition of the transgression of the appointed limits. "Go back down," said God, "and warn the people not to cross the boundaries. They must not come up here to see the Lord, for those who do will die. Even the priests who regularly come near to the Lord must purify themselves, or I will destroy them." Ex. 19:21, 22. No marvel that our Savior said to the Jews, "Had you believed Moses, you would have believed me." John 5:46.

VII. At the giving of the moral law, it was not called by the name of the "Ten Commandments." Nor is it so denominated in any part of the Hebrew Scripture. It is more than once spoken of as the Ten Words. Ex. 34:28; Deut. 4:13; 10:4. Yet the English version renders the Hebrew in these cases Commandments; but the original requires it should be Words; for we have not the word commonly rendered Commandments. Sometimes the Moral Law is called the Covenant, or the words of the covenant. Ex. 34:28; Deut. 4:13; 1 Kings 8:21; 2 Chron. 6:11; Jer. 31:32-34. Very often in Scripture the Decalogue has the name of the Law, and sometimes of the Commandments. It is also often called the Testimony.

Chapter 5. The General Character of the Law.

I. The law of God is unbending, inexorable. This is the nature of all law. The law of gravitation in nature yields nothing to circumstances. The good man and the bad man alike feel its force in the prosecution of their benevolent or nefarious designs. A law that would yield to the caprices of men would be of no service either to direct them or to set forth the character of the lawgiver. The divine law may be broken, but it will not bend. We could have no confidence in the unchangeable character of God, if we found his law varying from time to time. He is a Rock, and his work is perfect. "I am the Lord, I change not." Mal. 3:6. Domat: "There are no natural and immutable laws but those which come from God."

II. The law of God is one and not many. There is no conflict between its several precepts. The same authority enacts, the same benevolence pervades, the same sanctions attend each commandment. It is for this reason that an apostle says, "Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2:10. The law is a chain of many links. Break which link you please, and the chain is broken. Hare: "All God's commandments hang together: they are knit and woven together like a fine net, wherein you cannot loosen a single stitch without danger of unraveling the whole.... There is no letting any one devil into our souls, without the risk of his going and fetching seven other devils wickeder than himself."

Although, by its peculiar form, the law seems to require only a few leading duties and to forbid a few atrocious sins, yet even this arrangement is found to be useful. Calvin: "Anger and hatred are not supposed to be such execrable crimes when they are mentioned under their own proper appellations; but when they are forbidden to us under the name of murder, we have a clearer perception how abominable they are in the view of God, by whose word they are classed under such a flagitious and horrible species of crime, and being influenced by his judgment, we accustom ourselves more seriously to consider the atrociousness of those offences which we previously accounted trivial."

III. The law requires compliance with its demands as obedience to God. It is not an accidental conformity to the letter of the law that will satisfy its claims. Men may avoid, for good reasons, the violations of its rules of temperance, honesty, and truth; but without any reference to the authority of the divine lawgiver. For their sobriety and uprightness they have their reward in health, thrift, and respectability. Men find infractions of the commandments oftentimes inconvenient and troublesome. To avoid vexation they outwardly conform, but this is not obedience to God. In all this they are consulting their own profit and advantage, and not at all the glory of Him who made them. Domat: "It is for God himself that God has made man. It is that man may know him—that he has given him an understanding; it is that man may love him—that he has given him a will; and it is by the ties of this knowledge, and of this love, that he would have men to unite themselves to him, that they may find in him their true life." This makes them like God.

IV. The law comprehends all conceivable moral acts. "Your commandment is exceeding broad." Psalm 119:96. It enjoins all duties, binding on any rational creature. There is no form of sin which it does not forbid. Scott: "The breadth of the commandment shows the scantiness of man's best righteousness, and recommends the righteousness of the Redeemer, as alone commensurate with its holy and extensive requirements." All admit that the law of God extends to overt acts. The great error of many is that here they stop. Nor can it be denied that the law claims to regulate our speech. What would a rule of moral conduct be worth if it allowed all men the unbridled use of their tongues? "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity." James 3:6.

The law goes further. It prohibits all wicked thoughts. It is spiritual. Romans 7:14. Calvin: "If a king prohibits by an edict, adultery, murder, or theft, no man, I confess, will be liable to the penalty of such a law, who has only conceived in his mind a desire to commit adultery, murder, or theft, but has not perpetrated either of them; because the superintendence of a mortal legislator extends only to

the external conduct, and his prohibitions are not violated unless the crimes be actually committed. But God, whose eye nothing escapes, and who esteems not so much the external appearance as the purity of the heart, in the prohibition of adultery, murder, and theft, comprises the prohibition of lust, wrath, hatred, coveting what belongs to another, fraud, and every similar vice. For, being a spiritual legislator, he addresses himself to the soul as much as to the body.... Human laws are satisfied, when a man abstains from external transgression. But on the contrary, the divine law being given to our minds, the proper regulation of them is the principal requisite to a righteous observance of it."

The moral law enjoins all those things which are honorable to God and profitable to man. It extends to the affections and pronounces unholy desires to be sin, and all pious longings to be pleasing to God. It regulates motives. It declares David's desire to build a house for God to be pleasing to his Maker. It declares worthless all the fiery and ostentatious zeal of Jehu for the reformation of the true religion. The heart is the very center of its dominion. The state of men's spirits, no less than the actions of their lives, falls under its precepts. Wicked thoughts are as truly an offence against its righteousness, as wickedness acted out. "The thought of foolishness is sin." A malicious feeling, like a malicious word or deed; an unholy thought—as truly as a wicked performance, infracts its principles. "Man judges by the outward appearance, but the Lord ponders the heart."

V. The law is right. It is an unerring standard of duty. It is holy, just, and good. The Spirit of God is its author. Whoever is perfectly conformed to it, knows no sin. Whoever lacks conformity to it in all respects is wicked. Whoever lacks conformity to it in any respect is so far a sinner. There is no moral goodness but is here enjoined. There is no moral evil but is here prohibited. Whether men's hearts and lives agree with other codes is a matter of comparatively small importance. If they agree with this, no more is required. If they disagree with this, conformity to any other can do them no good

beyond this life. Everything in the moral law is "exceedingly lovely and desirable."

VI. This law is of perpetual obligation. Some statutes expire by limitation. On their very face they are to be of binding force only for a term of years. But the law of God, as it has been the code of heaven ever since the creation of angels or men, so shall it be in the "dateless and irrevoluble ages of eternity." Sometimes a statute ceases to be binding, because it is repealed by a competent authority. But God has never repealed a single provision of the moral law. Christ himself declared that his mission was not to set aside any of its enactments, but to fulfill them. And long after Christ's ascension the apostles repeated in various forms the precepts of the decalogue as in full force. This law is unrepealed and unrepealable. Colquhoun: "The authority and obligation of the law of nature, which is the same as the law of the Ten Commandments, being founded in the nature of God, the Almighty Creator, and Sovereign, and Ruler of men, are necessary, immutable, and eternal."

It is making Christ the minister of sin, and his blood the justification of licentiousness, to hold that the gospel sets aside or relaxes the moral law. Having stated with great force the doctrine of salvation by grace, Paul says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! yes, we establish the law." Romans 3:31. We have never seen the Ten Commandments aright, unless we have perceived that "the obligations under which believers lie to yield obedience to them are greatly increased by the grace of the Redeemer and the mercies of redemption. If the saints are obliged as creatures, they are still more firmly bound as new creatures to keep those commandments.... The great Redeemer gives this high command to all his redeemed: "Be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

VII. This law, like its Author, is supreme. It admits of no rival code—no conflicting claims. Within certain limits, father, mother, teacher, guardian, civil governments may and must be obeyed. But when they trench upon the authority of the statutes of the Lord, we can but set

them aside. "We ought to obey God rather than man." Acts 5:29. Because God is greater than man, his commands override all others. God's supremacy establishes the supremacy of his laws. If He is over all, so are his laws. If He admits no rivals, neither do they. If any authority must yield, surely it ought not to be that of Heaven. If any claims may be deferred, those of the decalogue must not. Obedience to it may be threatened and followed by imprisonment, exile, confiscation, and crucifixion; but still it must be rendered. Though all other governments be disobeyed, here is a government that must not be slighted.

VIII. This law is in itself practical. Man did obey it perfectly until he fell from righteousness. His failure to obey it now is not chargeable to the law itself, but to his love of sin. A perfectly holy creature finds no difficulty in perfectly conforming to its requirements. It can be kept—it can be kept perfectly—it can be kept without weariness to its subjects. Though in the best of mere men on earth, piety is imperfect, yet the judgment of all the pious is, that the fault is their's and not God's. Duncan: "What a strong argument for the divine origin of the system of Moses is furnished by the excellence of the moral precepts embodied in it! In science, in art, in almost everything of a merely secular kind, the Israelites were far inferior to many nations of antiquity; yet in the writings possessed by them we find views of the character of God, and of the duty which he requires from men, immeasurably superior to those which prevailed among the most intelligent contemporary nations—nay, to those which are contained in the writings of the wisest philosophers of Greece or Rome. This fact cannot be explained on any other principle than that stated by the Psalmist, 'The Lord made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. He shows his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He has not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments they have not known them.'"

Chapter 6. Correct Rules of Interpreting the Law.

Every document is to be explained according to its nature and design. As the law of God is spiritual, and the intention of giving it was the promotion of the divine glory, it becomes a matter of great importance that we rightly understand it. An error here may be fatal. By rules of interpretation, let no one understand so much a reference to the mere words of the law as to the general scope of the whole; and yet the sense, of course, is not to be learned without a correct grammatical construction of the words in which it is delivered. Let these rules be heeded.

1. Although no two commandments are precisely the same, yet it frequently occurs that one and the same thing, in different aspects, is required or forbidden in several commandments. Thus the eighth commandment says, "You shall not steal," and the tenth says, "You shall not covet." Now though there may be covetousness without actual stealing, yet there cannot be actual stealing without covetousness. So both these commandments virtually forbid us to lust after that which belongs to another. In like manner, covetousness often leads to Sabbath breaking, and thus the fourth commandment often forbids the same sin as the tenth. And as the third commandment requires the reverent use of God's name, and as the right observance of the fourth commandment greatly promotes the fear of God, so these two commandments thus far enjoin the same thing. Colquhoun: "The first commandment is so closely connected with all the other precepts, that it is obeyed in all our obedience, and disobeyed in all our disobedience. Obedience or disobedience to it is virtually obedience or disobedience to the whole law."

2. Where a duty is commanded—the contrary sin is forbidden; and where a sin is forbidden—the contrary duty is commanded; and where a promise to the obedient is annexed—the contrary threatening to the disobedient is included; and where a threatening against the transgressor is annexed—the contrary promise to the obedient is implied. Colquhoun: "The duties required in the law cannot be performed, without abstaining from the sins forbidden in

it; and the sins forbidden cannot be avoided, unless the contrary duties be performed. We must not only cease to do what the commands forbid, but do what they require; otherwise we do not obey them sincerely. A negative holiness is far from being acceptable to God. Every affirmative precept includes a negative one, and every negative command contains an affirmative."

Thus the fifth commandment requires us to honor father and mother. Of course it forbids every act of disrespect to them. The eighth commandment, which forbids the sin of stealing, requires us to do all within our power to promote the temporal welfare of our fellow men. So also the promise of long life, affixed to the obeying of the fifth commandment, clearly implies the opposite curse upon those who disregard it. And the threatening annexed to the third commandment clearly implies that the opposite promise is made to the reverent and holy use of God's name. Had all sins and duties, all promises and threatenings been fully and formally expressed, the law would have become cumbrous; whereas, now it is easily remembered even by a child.

3. That which is forbidden in this law of God is never to be done—be the perils, or pains, or penalties ever so great. No circumstances can excuse, much less justify transgression. Sin is always wicked. Disregard of any prohibition is always criminal. Between two natural evils we are often compelled to choose, as between the amputation of a limb and death. But between two moral evils we are never compelled to choose. He who steals may indeed be strongly tempted to lie; but the strength of the temptation does not justify falsehood. With every temptation there is a way of escape. It is not wicked to be punished for stealing, but it is wicked to lie about anything. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts he any man." James 1:13. There is no excuse for sinning even in the least.

4. That which God commands is always our duty; and yet every particular duty is not to be done at all times. There is an order in our

duties. Everything is beautiful in its season. It is a duty to be tenderhearted, and to weep with those that weep; but it is not a duty to weep with those that are properly rejoicing. It is right to think upon God's name, and the habits of one's mind may be pleasing to God. Yet our minds may be intently occupied for hours in a mathematical demonstration, so that we cannot have them turned to anything else. We are to do our duties as we have opportunity. We should always be in a right state of mind and heart to do what is required, if the occasion offers.

5. "Under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded; together with all the causes, means, occasions and appearances thereof, and provocations thereunto." Thus the prohibition to use God's name in vain forbids an irreverent use of his word, or works, or sacraments, or worship; because his name is that whereby he is known. Thus the commandment to honor father and mother obliges us to honor magistrates, who are politically our fathers; and masters and mistresses, who are domestically our parents; and teachers, who for the purposes of education are as parents to us. And as we may not kill, so we may not prepare to kill, nor indulge envy, hatred, wrath, nor any malice; nor may we use quarrelsome, abusive, or contemptuous language, nor violent and threatening gestures as these things do often lead to murder. When God forbade the use of leavened bread during the passover, he mercifully forbade the keeping of leaven in the house.

6. What is forbidden or commanded to us, we are bound, according to our places, to do all that we properly can, to cause to be avoided or performed by others, according to the duty of their places. In the fourth commandment, this is expressly stated to be the rule. In other parts of Scripture, the principle is applied to the whole round of our duties. What a man may not lawfully do himself, he may not lawfully aid, counsel, countenance, or encourage others in doing. What a man is obliged to do himself, he ought to aid, teach, counsel and encourage others to do. We may not be partakers of other men's sins,

by leaving them in ignorance of their duty, when we could teach them.

7. The aim, scope, and tendency of this law is holiness. The sum of it is, "Be holy, for I am holy," says the Lord. This holiness is not the assumption of a peculiar appearance, nor submission to a round of ceremonies, nor a mere profession of religion under any form whatever. The demand of this law is for rectitude in conduct, rectitude in speech, rectitude in thinking, rectitude in feeling. Holiness of heart alone, is conformity to the law. This uprightness must be loved, and so must God the lawgiver, and man our fellow-subject. Therefore, a very important rule for interpreting any precept is to inquire what is its general scope and aim? what does God intend to prohibit? what does he design to encourage in the command? Domat: "For understanding aright the sense of a law, we ought to well consider all the words of it and its preamble, if there are any, that we may judge of the law by its motives, and by the whole tenor of what it prescribes; and not to limit its sense to what may appear different from its intention."

In interpreting human laws, there is a rule—He who sticks to the letter, sticks in the bark; that is, he does not penetrate to the heart of the tree. There is another rule of judging of the nature of a law—It is known by its fellows. The meaning is something like this: if any of the precepts of the law are moral, they are all moral; if any of them comes to us with solemn sanctions expressed, they all have solemn sanctions implied. The same rule is expressed by Domat: "Laws are interpreted one by another."

8. This law is never to be so interpreted as to make us cruel to our fellow-men. "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." Hos. 6:6; Matt. 9:13; 12:7. The law is good, and works no evil to any. It is benevolent. It abhors all cruelty. In Scripture, God often declares his preference for justice, faith and mercy, above any attention to the rites of religion, although prescribed by himself; 1 Sam. 15:22; Psalm 1. 8-15; Isa. 1:11-17.

9. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Romans 13:10. For this there is no substitute. Compare Gal. 5:14. Jesus Christ himself taught this same doctrine. When one of the Pharisees said unto him, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matthew 22:36-40. So that no preciseness or uniformity of outward action can in the least degree take the place of heart-felt love. "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart and of a good conscience, and sincere faith." 1 Tim. 1:5.

In case our love to the creature or to life conflicts with our love to God, we must still cleave to him. So teaches the Savior: "If any man comes to me, and hates not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:26. Of course the hatred here is comparative and not absolute. We are to love all things less than God.

10. "The commands of the first table are not to be kept for the sake of the second; but the commands of the second are to be kept for the sake of the first. The worship and service of God are not to be performed out of respect to men; but our duty towards men is to be observed out of respect to God. For he who worships God that he might thereby recommend himself to men, is but a hypocrite and formalist. And he who performs his duty towards men without respecting God in it, is but a mere civil moralist." Willard: "God and our neighbor do not stand upon even ground, so as to divide our love and obedience between them; but though it may seem to be a paradox, yet it is a great truth, that God must have all our love, and yet our neighbor must have some of it too. God must have our whole heart and soul—and yet our neighbor must have our hearty and sincere love."

Chapter 7. The Uses of the Law.

The moral law does not bear the same relation to men which it sustains to angels, and which it did sustain to man before his fall. Eternal life is no longer by our obedience to its precepts. To believers it is no more a covenant of works. By it, in the sight of God, shall no flesh be justified. Psalm 143:2; Romans 3:20; Gal. 2:16. To expect justification by our own works would be to supersede and render of no effect, the work of our Savior. We are not under the law—but under grace. To oppose this grave fundamental heresy of salvation by works is one of the chief objects of Paul in some of his epistles, and particularly in that to the Galatians. Seeing then that the law is not to be put in the room and stead of our Savior, what is its use? or as Paul expresses it, "What, then, was the purpose of the law?" Gal. 3:19. The answer is,

1. The moral law is of excellent use as a rule of life. Its value in this respect is great. Its precepts are comprehensive, definite and easily understood. They cover all possible cases. They inform us with the utmost exactness what is right and wrong in action and in word. They go further. They trace sin up to its original fountain in the soul. They pronounce envy and hatred to be murder; covetousness to be theft; and forgetfulness of God to be atheism. This law is universal in its prescriptions. In all things it is holy, wise, and benevolent. None can be truly pious without consenting that it is good. Whoever esteems any of its precepts grievous, shows that his heart is still unregenerated. All pious men do sincerely and habitually desire to be conformed to this blessed code. Often and earnestly do they cry, "Oh that my ways were directed to keep your statutes." Psalm 119:5,10. "Teach me your statutes." "Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law." Psalm 119:12,18. He who in the spirit of humility, carefulness and teachableness thus cries for divine guidance shall grow wiser than his enemies, shall have more understanding than all his teachers, and shall understand more than the ancients. Psalm 119:98-100; See also Micah 6:8.

The greatest grief of pious souls is not for poverty, or sickness, or slander; but because they either positively transgress or come short of keeping the holy commandments. Such is their desire to be as pure as the law requires, that there is nothing which makes them so willing to leave the body and exchange worlds as the hope that in a future state, they will be wholly conformed to its righteous demands. The superiority of this law as a rule of life is exceedingly manifest in the particulars already named as well as in others. It comes to the conscience with a sovereign authority. The heart of man when not utterly insensate, recognizes God's voice in all its precepts. Calvin: "The faithful find the law an excellent instrument to give them from day to day a better and more certain understanding, and to confirm them in the knowledge of it."

2. The moral law is of excellent use in producing conviction of sin, and thus making men sensible of their need of a Savior. "The law entered that sin might abound," Romans 5:20; that is, that it might be seen by us all, how many and ill-deserving our sins were. Conviction of sin is not confined to unregenerate men, nor to sinners in the earlier stages of religious impression when a law-work is wrought on the heart. Important as this is, the law is not then laid aside as a means of conviction. To the close of life, it continues to be of use to this end. It teaches us that we are not worthy to be called God's servants; it shows that our strength to do that which is right is nothing. Colquhoun: "The children of fallen Adam are so bent upon working for life, that they will on no account cease from it until the Holy Spirit so convinces them of their sin and misery, as to show them that Mount Sinai is wholly on fire around them, and that they cannot with safety remain a moment longer within the limits of it." "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God." Romans 3:19.

By our early conviction of sin, we obtain some faint impression of the necessity of salvation by grace. By our subsequent convictions, we are led more and more to renounce all confidence in ourselves for

righteousness; and to see more and more our need of the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no greater mistake respecting experimental religion, than that which regards the work of conviction entirely done when conversion takes place. It is true that sometimes there are certain horrors of conscience, certain pangs of remorse, certain guilty fears and solemn apprehensions of the wrath to come, which in an equal degree do but seldom afflict the soul after conversion. But these horrors and fears are not necessary elements of conviction. He is truly convicted, who has a due sense that he is a sinner against a just and holy God; and that he deserves hell and only hell at the hands of the Judge of all.

David was an experienced child of God, when he said of the commandments, "By them is your servant warned;" and "Who can understand his errors? cleanse me from secret faults." Psalm 19:11,12. One may have set his hope in God through Jesus Christ; indeed, the more effectually he has despaired of helping himself, and the more completely he has cast himself on God in humble hope, the more proper and deep are his convictions.

This use of the law is much insisted on in Scripture. Paul says, "By the law is the knowledge of sin." Romans 3:20. And when in the same epistle, he had proven the utter impossibility of salvation by the deeds of the law, he adds, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid." Romans 7:7. He then goes on to say how useful it had been to him. The spirit of his declaration is, that he never would have known what a poor, lost, undone, helpless creature he was, and that he never would have felt his need of a Savior, and never would have fled to him for refuge—but for the law. His words are, "What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said—Do not covet." Romans 7:7.

In ancient times, schools had teachers to superintend their instruction. Besides these, there were pedagogues employed to go

around and gather the children and conduct them to the school. It is probably to this latter office that Paul refers, when he says, "The law was our schoolmaster," [literally our pedagogue,] "to bring us to Christ." Gal. 3:24. And as the pedagogue of old brought the child to school not only one day, but every day, so the law brings us to Christ, not only when we first accept him but as often as we renew our hold on him. Thomas Watson: "The law is a star to lead one to Christ." The law shuts us up to the faith of Christ. It makes Christ precious to the soul. No man can esteem the redemption that is in Christ, more highly than his sense of his own lost and ruined estate as a sinner shall rise. Tell me what a man thinks of himself—and I will tell you what he thinks of the Redeemer. Tell me what he thinks of the Redeemer—and I will tell you what he thinks of himself.

Every believer is ready to say, "Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good." Romans 7:9-12. "For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit." Romans 8:3-4.

Why do the great mass of men feel so little interest in conversation, or books and sermons which explain the way of salvation? Obviously, the reason is, they have no just view and sense of their deplorable condition. God's Spirit is indeed the Author of all true conviction of sin; but in producing it, he leads the minds of men to understand the nature of the law under which they live; and to see that their lives, words and hearts are wholly destitute of conformity to its requirements. If men saw these things as the truth demands, and as

they will one day see them, the preaching of the gospel would be listened to in a manner far different, and with success far greater than we have ever witnessed in the world. Then salvation by grace through a Redeemer would be glad tidings of great joy unto all people. Listlessness would take her flight from worshiping assemblies. Eagerness would mold the features of every hearer; and the swelling solicitude of each bosom would catch every whisper of mercy from the word of God as it was pronounced by the living minister.

Let then all men study the law. Let them study it candidly, carefully, solemnly. There is a great Physician, but sinners will never go to him, unless they find out that they are sick. Let regenerate men also study the law. The more they know it, the closer will they cleave to Christ; and the more profound will be their humility; and the better will they understand their indebtedness to Christ, for fulfilling its precepts and enduring its curse in their stead, and for their salvation. If a man loves God he will also love his law; and what one loves he will desire and labor to know. "Christ's promise of ease and refreshment sounds sweet—after the thunderings and lightnings of Mount Sinai." Augustine: "The law gives commands, in order that, endeavoring to perform them, being wearied through our infirmity under the law, we may learn to pray for the assistance of grace... The utility of the law is to convince man of his own infirmity, and to compel him to pray for the gracious remedy provided in Christ... God commands what we cannot perform, that we may know for what blessings we ought to supplicate him... The law was given to convict you; that being convicted you might fear, that fearing you might pray for pardon, and not presume on your own strength."

3. The law is of great use to believers in restraining their corruptions, because it forbids sin and denounces the most fearful curses against those who love and practice iniquity. The very form of most of the precepts is suited to put believers on their guard. Goodwin: "Commandments in a negative form suppose the nature of man to run cross with the law." The soul says—why has God thus hedged me

in, but that I may always see my peril and beware? It is true that the great and habitually influential motives of Christians in aiming at a holy life, are not drawn from the terrors of the law. God's people are controlled by something more exalted. The love of Christ constrains them; that is, it bears them along. Nevertheless, it is true, first, that while our motives must be evangelical, yet, even in Christian obedience there is room for the entrance of the law. We are under law to Christ. We are married to him, but not to despise him. He is our husband, and, therefore, he is to be obeyed.

Secondly, in certain states of Christian experience, when the wickedness of the heart threatens to become outrageous, and when nothing kind or tender seems to have the desired influence over us, when Satan comes as a roaring lion, when the fiery darts fly thick and fast, and our spiritual enemies become terrible, it is of eminent service to the child of God to be able to point to something far more terrible, even the wrath of Jehovah and the lake of fire. So our Lord himself taught. Compare Matt. 18:7-9; Matt. 10:28; Luke 12:4-5. It is well for the poor persecuted, tempted soul to hear the voice of beneficial warning: "Don't fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

And who can tell the power of the law over the hearts of men in general? Its chief aim and purpose is not for this kind of power over the pious. Paul says, "We know that the law is not meant for a righteous person, but for the lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinful, for the unholy and irreverent, for those who kill their fathers and mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral and homosexuals, for kidnappers, liars, perjurers, and for whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching." 1 Tim. 1:9, 10. The restraining power of the law over the wicked is very great. Bad as they are, they would be unspeakably worse, but for its terrors. Luther: "The first use of the law is to bridle the wicked."

4. The law is eminently useful in teaching us how to regard afflictions and how to be quiet under them. Without just views of the law of God no man can have just views of his own ill-desert. Without a sense of his criminality, will he not rebel and cry out, as Cain—"My punishment is greater than I can bear!" But let him see that he deserves all that has come upon him, and a thousand-fold more, and he will bow his head in profound humility, and, by the grace of God, will assent to the saying of the pious Jews returned from their seventy years' captivity: "Now we are being punished because of our wickedness and our great guilt. But we have actually been punished far less than we deserve, for you, our God, have allowed some of us to survive as a remnant. But now we are again breaking your commands and intermarrying with people who do these detestable things. Surely your anger will destroy us until even this little remnant no longer survives. O Lord, God of Israel, you are just. We stand before you in our guilt as nothing but an escaped remnant, though in such a condition none of us can stand in your presence." Ezra 9:13-15.

Surely that must be a turbulent and unsanctified spirit, which is not quiet when it remembers that our pains are lighter than our sins; that our sorrows are fewer than our crimes. Will not every pious soul be inclined carefully to avoid sin, when it sees that God is merciful and visits us not according to our deserts? Surely in such a case the sincere soul must hear the voice of the Redeemer, saying, "Go your way and sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

5. The plan of salvation by grace in Christ Jesus is so arranged and ordered that obedience to the moral law sincerely rendered with evangelical motives meets a divine reward. Indeed, we know not that the spotless obedience of angels, who have never sinned, shall be any more abundantly rewarded than the obedience of the just, who have been great sinners but who have sincerely accepted the gospel and have honestly obeyed the law. O yes—in keeping the commandments there is great reward. It is true in this world. It will be true in the next. Nor will the deeply humbled soul be at all offended that the

reward of his obedience is counted not of debt, but of grace. He joyfully seeks the acceptance of his services in the same way that he seeks the acceptance of his person—through the mediation of Christ Jesus the Lord. The scriptural method of reasoning on this subject is this: "Since we are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be destroyed, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe. For our God is a consuming fire." Heb. 12:28, 29.

Blessed be God! The very lowest acts of obedience rightly rendered, even a pious wish, a holy desire, a devout thought, the giving of a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple—shall not lose its reward, though that reward shall be all of grace. Nor is there any contrariety between this and the glorious doctrine of salvation by the active and passive obedience of Christ. The righteousness of the believer in his best deeds is not a justifying righteousness; but it is a righteousness accepted by God and rewarded abundantly, yet graciously. It is a righteousness secured to him and in him by the very scheme of redeeming mercy. Even the Old Testament teaches as much; "When I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. And I will give you a new heart with new and right desires, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony heart of sin and give you a new, obedient heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so you will obey my laws and do whatever I command. And you will live in Israel, the land I gave your ancestors long ago. You will be my people, and I will be your God. I will cleanse you of your filthy behavior." Ezekiel 36:25-29. Compare Jer. 31:33. "We know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully."

Chapter 8. The Nature of the Obedience Required by the Law.

Pure Christianity differs from every form of corrupt doctrine by the place it assigns to obedience to God's law. On this point the human mind loves error to such a degree that nothing but grace can cure its follies. While some teach that obedience is everything, that it is meritorious, and that by it we are justified; others assert that it is nothing; that in the gospel plan of salvation there is no room for it; that none is required, and that, if rendered, it is useless. Both of these are flagrant and extreme errors. Both do fundamentally oppose the truth of God. A total rejection of the law will prove as fatal as a total rejection of the gospel; while a reliance upon the law as a method of justification is both a rejection of the gospel and an abuse of the law.

Colquhoun: "Legalists teach that believers are under the law, even as it is the covenant of works. Antinomians, on the contrary, assert that believers are not only not under it as a covenant, but not under it even as a rule of duty. These two assertions are not more contrary to one another, than they both are to the truth as it is in Jesus."

That obedience to the law is required upon its very face, and in many parts of Scripture, is evident to any candid reader. The form of enactment has been already alluded to. The following additional passages of Scripture are here given. "You must obey these laws and regulations when you arrive in the land you are about to enter and occupy. The Lord my God gave them to me and commanded me to pass them on to you. If you obey them carefully, you will display your wisdom and intelligence to the surrounding nations. When they hear about these laws, they will exclaim, 'What other nation is as wise and prudent as this!' But watch out! Be very careful never to forget what you have seen the Lord do for you. Do not let these things escape from your mind as long as you live! And be sure to pass them on to your children and grandchildren." Deut. 4:5, 6, 9. "Be careful to obey all my commands so that all will go well with you and your children, because you will be doing what pleases the Lord your God Carefully obey all the commands I give you. Do not add to them or subtract from them." Deut. 12:28,32, and parallel passages.

WHAT IS THE OBEDIENCE REQUIRED?

1. It is personal obedience. One man cannot obey for another. "The soul that sins, it shall die." "He who does righteousness is righteous." Though our personal obedience to the law does not justify us in the sight of God, yet it alone can justify our profession of love to him. The obedience which the Lord Jesus Christ rendered to the precepts of the law as our substitute was intended solely for the justification of our persons, and in no way as a substitute for our personal holiness. Scott: "The commandments are addressed in the singular number, to each person, because everyone is concerned in them on his own account: and each prohibition implies a positive duty."

2. According to Scripture. The obedience required is to some command given by God. Ames: "The matter of obedience is that very thing commanded by God." Uncommanded observances, whatever sanctity they may seem to attach to us in the eyes of man, are of no avail in the sight of God. They are all condemned in his holy word. Self-imposed worship, false humility, harsh treatment of the body, the worshiping of angels, and abstaining from foods which God has created to be received with thanksgiving—are crimes in the sight of Heaven, and are marks of an apostate church. Col. 2:18; 1 Tim. 4:1-4. Of old we read of no worse state of the church than—"These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men." Isa. 29:13.

"Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings." Col. 2:20-23.

3. The obedience required in Scripture consists not in mere outward acts of the body, irrespective of the state of the heart. According to Scripture no obedience is acceptable to God, unless it is rightly

intended. God may accept the will for the deed, but he will never accept the deed for the will. In fact, his holy word pours its heaviest curses on those who merely make clean the outside of the platter, while in their hearts they are ravening wolves, or sepulchers full of dead men's bones. "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness" Matthew 23:25-28. "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness." Luke 11:39.

This is perfectly right in God. No man would be willing to accept the most exact and respectful, though heartless politeness of a wife or child; instead of the warm, sincere affection which was his due. There is no dispensing with godly sincerity.

4. All obedience must flow from a principle of love. This is taught everywhere in Scripture. Jesus says, "If you love me, you will obey what I command. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him. If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching." John 14:15, 21, 23, 24. The mere legalist who trusts in salvation by his own righteousness, is never the man to make great sacrifices for Christ. He has no principle of love. He is performing a task, and his task is a drudgery. On the other hand, he who trusts in the merits of Christ alone, and has any just sense of his obligations to the Redeemer, gives much, gives all, and then wishes he could give more. The legalist has the spirit of a hireling; the evangelical man has the spirit of gratitude.

5. All obedience pleasing to God is connected with godly fear. We will never obey unto all pleasing, unless we bow to the solemn authority of Jehovah. We will never keep his commandments unless we fear him. Eccl. 12:13; Compare: Deut. 6:2, 10:12; Psalm 111:10; 1 Pet. 2:17; Rev. 19:5. In Deut. 28:58, it is expressly said that we are to "observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that we may fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord Your God."

6. All acceptable obedience must flow from a principle of living faith in the divine testimony, especially respecting Christ. "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." Heb. 11:6. "Whatever is not of faith is sin." Romans 14:23. What made Abraham's obedience of such value as to be noted in Scripture, was the fact that he believed God even contrary to appearances.

7. The obedience to the law required of believers under the gospel must be evangelical; that is, we are not to keep the commandments for the purpose of thus meriting God's favor, nor are we to render our obedience in our own strength; but by the assistance or the grace of God. All attempts to climb to heaven by the ladder of our own works must utterly fail; and all our endeavors to keep the law in the strength of our fallen nature must no less certainly overwhelm us with disgrace. Colquhoun: "Heathen morality is external obedience to the law of nature, and may be termed natural religion. Pharisaical righteousness is hypocritical obedience to the law as a covenant of works, and is usually called legal righteousness, or the works of the law. True holiness is spiritual and sincere obedience to the law as a rule of life, in the hand of the blessed Mediator, and is commonly styled evangelical holiness or true godliness."

8. All right obedience must be performed with a just sense of our imperfections. We must never present our obedience before God as being in itself deserving of any reward. Jesus Christ greatly insists upon this. One of his parables is on this very subject. "Suppose one of

you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'" Luke 17:7-10.

The proper spirit in which to commend our labors to God's favorable regard is beautifully exemplified in the life of that eminent young man, Nehemiah. He was the most distinguished patriot and servant of God in his day. With great intrepidity he rebuilt the holy city. His sufferings and trials were sharp. Having given a modest and truthful record of what he had endured and accomplished, he offers such prayers as these: "Remember me for this, O my God, and do not blot out what I have so faithfully done for the house of my God and its services. Remember me for this also, O my God, and show mercy to me according to your great love." Neh. 13:14, 22.

9. The obedience we render must be universal. God allows no eclecticism in this matter. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all your commandments." Psalm 119:6. "See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it." Deut. 12:32.

10. Our obedience must be perpetual. "I will never forget your precepts." Psalm 119:93. "Cursed is he who continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." Stowell: "The authority of the moral law is founded in the perfection of God, and extends over all the creatures whom he has rendered capable of obeying it while that capability exists."

Chapter 9. The Place Which Good Works Occupy in a System of Grace.

1. A great design of the gospel, so far as man is concerned, is his restoration to holiness. Indeed, Jesus Christ "gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for Himself a special people, eager to do good works." God "has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him." And we are expressly said to be God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." Titus 2:14; Eph. 1. 4; 2:10. So that election, redemption, and regeneration would all fail of their ends, if the subjects of them were not made holy.

2. It is only by good works manifest and open that Christians can afford to the world satisfactory evidence that their principles are better than the ungodly. The world will judge of men's real characters neither solely, nor chiefly, by their professions—but by their practice. This is right. Words are cheap. Actions speak louder than words. That is a just challenge of the apostle when he says: "Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." James 2:18. Christ himself says to his disciples, "You are the light of the world... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Matt. 5:14-16. But if their works are no better than those of carnal men, they are of course subject to the rebuke, "What are you doing, more than others;" and their lives can be no proof of the divine origin of their religion.

In the early ages of Christianity one of the most difficult stations to fill well was that of a Christian wife, who had a heathen husband; and yet that very position afforded an opportunity of holding forth the word of life to great advantage. See 1 Pet. 3:1-6. To such Paul says, "What know you, O wife, whether you shall save your husband?" 1 Cor. 7:16.

3. Good works are in themselves pleasing to God; and for Christ's sake their imperfections are forgiven—and divinely rewarded. According to Scripture, our happiness hereafter, will in an important sense be proportioned to our works here. Our good deeds will not be the cause, but merely the occasions of our receiving great and astonishing blessings. Even the penitent thief, who died on the cross, and whose public confession of Christ was one of the most illustrious acts of faith ever performed, shall not lose his reward. In accordance with these teachings speak the Scriptures. "Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work." Col. 1:10. "He who sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully." 2 Cor. 9:6. "Say to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings." Isa. 3:10. Colquhoun: "Though the law, as a rule of duty to believers, has no sanction of judicial rewards or punishments; yet it has a sanction of gracious rewards and fatherly chastisements."

4. God himself at the last day will determine men's characters by their works. "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Eccles. 12:14. Jesus himself said, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28, 29. So says the last book of Scripture: "The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." "They were judged every man according to their works." Rev. 20:12, 13. Compare also Dan. 12:2, 3, and Matt. 25:31-46.

5. As both our Creator and our fellow men will judge us by our works, so also ought we to judge ourselves. No man has any more true piety—than what controls his practice. He whose life is holy has a holy heart. He whose life is wicked has a wicked heart. All this is natural and fair. If the tree is not to be known by its fruits, by what shall it be known? If the fountain may not be known by the streams it sends

forth, then we can determine nothing. "Don't be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows he will also reap, because the one who sows to his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit." Galatians 6:7-8. We ourselves lay down the same rule in judging of our fellow-men. We marvel that a man, who, without subjecting himself to penal consequences, has done all he can to injure us, should suppose himself possessed of no malignity. Those religious principles and actions which cannot bear this test are of no value.

God's plan is to subject all his people to severe trials, not for the sake of giving them pain, but to illustrate his grace and their character. So says the Psalmist. "You have tested us, O God; you have purified us like silver melted in a crucible. You captured us in your net and laid the burden of slavery on our backs. You sent troops to ride across our broken bodies. We went through fire and flood. But you brought us to a place of great abundance. Now I come to your Temple with burnt offerings to fulfill the vows I made to you—yes, the sacred vows you heard me make when I was in deep trouble." Psalms 66:10-14 and onwards. So to Abraham God said, "Now I know that you fear God, seeing that you have not withheld your son, your only son from me." Gen. 22:12.

6. Good works are useful to our brethren. "These things I have told you are all true. I want you to insist on them so that everyone who trusts in God will be careful to do good deeds all the time. These things are good and beneficial for everyone. For our people should not have unproductive lives. They must learn to do good by helping others who have urgent needs." Titus 3:8, 14.

7. The Scriptures do clearly assert the necessity of good works to prove our acceptance with God. "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.... Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this—to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." James 1:22, 27. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to

hearken than the fat of rams." I Sam. 15:22. "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." 1 John 3:17, 18. "Herein is my Father glorified that you bear much fruit; so shall you be my disciples. You are my friends, if you do whatever I command you." John 15:8, 14.

Every Christian grace is to be judged of by the life we lead. Thus the fear of God is to be estimated not according to the secret dread which his majesty creates, but by our holiness of life. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." The sincerity of our benevolence can be safely tested in no other way. James 2:15, 16. It is only thus we can manifest our gratitude in a fitting way. Thus only can we be built up in a true assurance of eternal life. 2 Pet. 1:5-10. Thus only can we put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. 1 Pet. 2:15; Phil. 1:11. We are bound to maintain this view of the Moral Law and its obligations at all times and under all circumstances; especially, let not the pulpit give forth a doubtful utterance on this point.

There is a class of men who will accuse us of being Legalists, if we solemnly enforce duty. Stowell: "If by legal preaching is meant the faithful and fervid enforcements of these commands on every man's conscience as the standard by which he is to walk now, and to be judged hereafter; whence we demand, the dread of such a style of preaching? Surely not from an enlightened regard to the honor of God; we know nothing of that honor, but as we study and obey his law. Surely not from an enlightened attachment to the gospel: for we do not understand the gospel, but as it enlarges our conceptions of the divine law, and constrains us to fulfill it."

Chapter 10. Salvation Is Not by Our Obedience to the Law.

There are two capital errors respecting the law. One maintains that we are justified by it. The other asserts that we are under no obligation to obey it. The last of these will be considered hereafter. The first now claims our attention. The following things are made remarkably clear in God's word.

1. All men are sinners. In proof of this proposition we have the unanswered and unanswerable argument of the Apostle Paul in the first three chapters of his epistle to the Romans. In the first chapter he proves that all the Gentiles are sinners. In the second, he shows that the Jews are involved in the same condemnation. In the third, he shows that all men indiscriminately have offended God, maintaining that, "There is none righteous—no, not one." This great argument is but the summing up of irrefragable statements found in all the Scriptures, and confirmed by universal observation.

2. All men are under a curse. The reason is because he is a transgressor. This was declared at the giving of the law. Moses said, "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse-- the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known." Deuteronomy 11:26-28. "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked." Prov. 3:33. "The curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him." Dan. 9:11. "You are cursed with a curse." Mal. 3:9. "As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse." Gal. 3:10.

3. This is not the fault of the law. The Scriptures abundantly declare that the law is good. Romans 7:16; 1 Tim. 1:8. "For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law." Gal. 3:21. "The law was weak through the flesh;" Romans 8:3, not through any defect inherent in itself.

4. Yet justification by the law is impossible. It is often and expressly so declared. "By the deeds of the law there shall be no flesh justified in his sight." "The law works wrath." "Now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held." "You have died to the law by the body of Christ." "Israel which followed after the law of righteousness has not attained to the law of righteousness; because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law" "A man is not justified by the works of the law" "If righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." "That no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident." Romans 3:20, 4:15, 7:4, 6, 9:31, 32. Gal. 2:16, 21, 3:11.

5. The scriptures reveal an altogether different plan of justification. They say, We are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." "The promise is of faith, that it might be by grace." "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." "A man is justified by faith in Jesus Christ." "The life which we now live in the flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God." "The just shall live by faith." Romans 3:24, 4:16, 8:1; Gal. 2:16, 20; Gal. 3:11; Romans 1:17.

This scheme of pardoning the guilty and accepting them as righteous through the merits of the Lord Jesus, suits us exactly. Nor is this mere theory. It enters into the very life of religious experience. Jotham Sewell says, "When I was almost twenty-one years of age, I read a sermon which exposed the insufficiency and folly of self-righteousness. I felt the force of the reasoning, and was convinced that I had been self-righteous. I resolved that I would be so no more, but would try to trust in Christ. I then thought that I had freed myself from this sin, though I had no idea that I was convicted. Not long after, in giving a reason for the hope that he was a Christian, I heard a man express the conviction, that, while in secret and in his family before conversion, he was hypocritical and self-righteous. I thought with myself—shall I ever have to say as much as that man says? I am not convicted; but if I should be, whatever I may have to throw away, it will not be self-righteousness; for I fancied that I was

already free from that. So blind was I to my real condition I afterwards saw that I had made a righteousness of my resolution—that I would not be self-righteous! So true it is, that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."

In like manner spoke that godly minister, Owen Stockton: "I find, that though in my judgment and profession, I acknowledge Christ to be my righteousness and peace; yet upon examination I observe that my heart has done quite another thing, and that secretly I have gone about to establish my own righteousness, and have derived my comfort and peace from my own actings." Luther: "If I were able to keep the whole moral law, I would not trust to this for justification."

To the truly pious and humble child of God, however simple or youthful, there is nothing more unpleasant than the suggestion of the wicked one or of ignorant guides—that we can commend ourselves to God by our own works. A lovely young female, whose memoir has been printed, though not published, has lately departed this life in the triumph of faith. One of her dying testimonies was, "I would not like to think of my sufferings having anything to do with my going to heaven, as a cause. If I ever stand before God, it will be because Jesus Christ has redeemed me by his own blood—his ransom availed. God was satisfied—I am saved by him entirely."

The best practical writers of all ages have warned men against seeking justification by the law. Charnock: "Affecting to stand by a righteousness of our own is natural to us... Adam was to have lived upon his own righteousness, in the state of innocence; since we are fallen this relic of nature is in us to desire to rise by our own strength. We would find matter of acceptance and acquittance in ourselves.... What pains had the apostle to work the Romans and the Galatians from their own righteousness. A desire of a legal justification is inbred.... An imperfect righteousness cannot afford a perfect peace with God; the righteousness of a sinful nature is not the righteousness of a pure law."

John Owen: "Take heed of a degeneration into self-righteousness.... The way is narrow and strait, which lies between the indispensable necessity of holiness and its influence into our righteousness. The righteousness of Christ is utterly a strange thing to the best of unbelievers; and this puts them by all means upon the setting up of their own. Romans 10:3."

Willard: "The fall has utterly cut man off from ever obtaining life by the law, as a Covenant."

John Newton: "It is not a lawful use of the law to seek justification and acceptance with God by our obedience to it; because it is not appointed for this end, or capable of answering it in our circumstances. The very attempt is a daring impeachment of the goodness and wisdom of God; for if righteousness could come by the law, then Christ has died in vain; Gal. 2:21; 3:21; so that such a hope is not only groundless but sinful; and, when persisted in under the light of the gospel, is no less than a wilful rejection of the grace of God."

Colquhoun: "The great error of the Galatians was this: they did not believe that the righteousness of Jesus Christ alone was sufficient to entitle them to the justification of life; and therefore they depended for justification partly on their own obedience to the moral law, and to the ceremonial law."

6. Salvation partly by the law, and partly by the Gospel, is impossible. Grace and works are utterly opposed to each other as schemes of acceptance with God. In two epistles, Paul says as much. He says that if salvation is "by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." Romans 11:6. Again, "You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace." Gal. 5:4.

The ways in which a self-righteous spirit gains fearful power over man are such as these:

First. 'Do and live' is the law of nature. "For Moses wrote that the law's way of making a person right with God, requires obedience to all of its commands." Romans 10:5. Righteousness by works is the natural method of justification. Until the fall, Adam stood accepted of God on this ground. To this day the holy angels are justified by works alone. The heart of man is wedded to the law.

Secondly. Self-righteousness requires no humility, but leaves the heart under the full control of self-delight. Pride is natural to man; and the expectation of life by his own works feeds his self-esteem. The first and great demand of the gospel is humility. Matt. 18:4, 23:12; Luke 14:11, 18:14; 1 Pet. 5:6.

Thirdly. It is of the very nature of sin to blind the mind respecting all spiritual good. The sinner naturally perceives neither the holiness of the law, the sinfulness of his own heart, nor the glory of God in the gospel scheme. "The God of this world has blinded the minds of those who believe not." 2 Cor. 4:4.

Fourthly. Men are often led to indulge self-righteous hopes by comparing themselves with others. 2 Cor. 10:12. This, indeed, is not wise. The rule of final judgment will not be the life of our fellow man—but the perfectly holy law of God. Yet many say, If I am lost, what will become of these sinners around me? The correct answer is—Repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, or you shall all perish together! Yet how many are found full of self-righteousness, saying like the Pharisee, 'God, I thank you, I am not as other men, or even as this publican.'

Fifthly. Probably not a few mistake gifts for graces; and because they are fluent in prayer, they think they have the spirit of prayer; or because they have prophesied in the name of the Lord, and in his

name done many wonderful works, or commended his gospel with great earnestness to their fellow-men, they think themselves safe.

Sixthly. Others say, "We have Abraham as our father." They expect to go to heaven because of their pious ancestry, or relations. They cannot conceive how the descendants of so good people as their parents should ever come short of heaven. Let us, therefore, not imitate the wretched example of those, of whom Paul speaks, when he says, "They being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Romans 10:3. Let us rather follow the example and utter the prayer of David when bowed down with a just sense of his heinous guilt, he cried, "Enter not into judgment with your servant: for in your sight shall no man living be justified."

Chapter 11. Antinomianism.

Antinomianism is opposition to law. The word has, however, become tolerably precise in its meaning. Strictly speaking, Antinomianism is the doctrine, which asserts that under the gospel, dispensation the moral law is not binding. In a more extended sense it is any system of doctrine, which, if fairly carried out, would destroy belief in the necessity of good works, or of a holy life. The sect, called Antinomians, arose in the 16th century. Their founder was John Agricola. He reduced libertine principles to a system. His followers were at one time numerous. They were pests to society in many places. They can hardly be said to have a separate existence now. But opposition to the law as a rule of life is coexistent with the fall of man. Antinomianism has its seat in the deep depravity of the human heart. "The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so." Romans 8:7. Its spirit is of the essence of sin. The Old and New Testaments, and indeed all histories, are full of records showing the deadly hostility of men to the restraints of the divine precepts. Solomon, Jeremiah, Hosea and many others tell us

of men, who by anticipation, were followers of Agricola. Pr. 7:14-18; Jer. 7:9, 10; Hos. 12:7, 8.

The principles of Antinomians are variously stated. A thorough Antinomian holds that if Christ finished his work, there is nothing left for us to do—that the moral law is no rule of duty to Christians, that the transgression of its precepts by God's people is not sinful; that the law is of no use under the gospel, and that of course it is not of binding obligation. The reasoning of Antinomians is something like this: salvation is wholly by grace; man is impotent to good himself; God's grace is sovereign, so that it is not of him that wills nor of him that runs; therefore we are not under law, even to Christ; all our endeavors are useless, and we may give a loose rein to all our corruptions.

The world abounds with Antinomians. These are of three classes:

1. Speculative Antinomians. They are such as embrace some of the leading principles set forth above. They may hold but one or two of them; or they may receive the whole system.
2. There are Antinomians in desire. These feel the restraints of the law to be irksome. They would gladly cast off its cords and burst its bands asunder. And yet they have been too well instructed, and have too much conscience to be able to do so at once. But as the process of hardening the heart is going on rapidly, they may yet be able to say, "We will have none of God's ways."
3. Then we have the practical Antinomians. They care little about systems. They hardly avow a creed. But "the worst heresy is a wicked life." This they lead always. They practically and continually say, "Who is the Lord that we should obey him?"

In every form of Antinomianism, and especially in the systematic form it sometimes assumes, we can hardly fail to notice its utter contrariety to Scripture. Paul says, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid." Romans 6:1,2. He declares that it

was a slanderous report against him and his brethren that they taught, that we may do evil that good may come. He says that the "damnation" [condemnation] of those who hold such a principle is "just." Romans 3:8. "Any doctrine inconsistent with the first principles of morals must be false, no matter how plausible the metaphysical argument in its favor. Paul assumed, as an ultimate fact, that it is wrong to do evil that good may come."

How clearly the Scriptures testify against all Antinomian tendencies will appear by citing even a few passages. Paul says, "There are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." Titus 1:10, 11. John says, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not practice the truth." 1 John 1:6. "He who says, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 2:4. "Every man that has this hope in him, purifies himself, even as he is pure." 1 John 3:3. Peter also tells us of such: "They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you. With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed--an accursed brood!" 2 Peter 2:13-14. Jude also says of such: "These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm--shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted--twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever." Jude 12, 13. No wonder that in the strong language of Scripture, such men are "abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate." Titus 1:16.

When we open the gospel we find the most urgent calls to holiness founded on its gracious proposals: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Cor. 7:1. Indeed,

Paul expressly declares that "the grace of God that brings salvation," that is, the gospel, "teaches us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Titus 2:11, 12. Again, "God has not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness." John says: "Let no man deceive you: he who does righteousness is righteous... He who commits sin is of the devil." 1 John 3:7, 8.

The following propositions laid down by John Flavel are abundantly supported by Scripture:

1. The Scriptures "frequently discover God's anger, and tell us his castigatory rods of affliction are laid upon his people for their sins." 2 Sam. 12:9-14; Ex. 4:13, 14; Jer. 30:15; Lam. 3:39, 40; Psalm 38:3-5; Micah 7:9, etc., etc.

2. They "represent sin as the greatest evil; most opposite to the glory of God and good of the saints; and are therefore filled with cautions and threatenings to prevent their sinning." Jer. 5:30, 44:4, 18:13. 23:14; Hosea 6:10; Psalm 14:1, 53:1; Titus 1:16; 1 Pet. 4:3; Romans 6:23; Dan. 5:23; Romans 3:23; Heb. 4:1, and many other places.

3. "The Scriptures call the saints frequently and earnestly, not only to mourn for their sins before the Lord, but to pray for the pardon and remission of them in the blood of Christ." Matt. 6:12; 1 Pet. 5:6; James 4:10, etc., etc.

4. "They earnestly and everywhere press believers to strictness and constancy in the duties of religion, as the way wherein God would have them to walk." Romans 12, throughout, 1 Cor. 15:58, etc., etc. Many other Scriptures might be cited to the same effect. He, who has read thus far, and who shall read the next chapter also, can be at no loss for prooftexts. Of all errors in religion, perhaps none is more revolting to the truly pious than the grosser forms of Antinomianism. It is hardly more shocking to deny the divine existence altogether, than it is to teach that God is the patron of iniquity. Those pious

men, who seem to have had most fellowship with Antinomians, regard their principles and practices with extreme abhorrence. They were doubtless right in expressing in many forms the belief that nothing more imperils the soul than any religious principle, which releases us from the government of God.

Perhaps the most shocking thing in Antinomianism is that ordinarily it makes Christ the minister of sin. It impudently marches up to his cross, and says, "O you bleeding Lamb, who did live and die for me, I will neither live nor die for you; but I will serve divers lusts and please myself." The testimony of sound and pious writers in all branches of the church of Christ against Antinomian laxity of life and doctrine, has been clear and uniform. The best writers of the 17th century have lifted up their united voices in the most solemn manner against it. Hopkins says: "Antinomianism is to be abominated, which derogates from the value and validity of the law, and contends that it is to all purposes extinct to believers, even as to its preceptive and regulating power; and that no other obligation to duty lies upon those who are in Christ Jesus, but only from the law of gratitude: that God requires not obedience from them upon so low and sordid an account as the fear of his wrath and dread severity; but all is to flow only from the principle of love and the sweet temper of a grateful and ingenuous spirit.. This is a most pestilent doctrine, which plucks down the fence of the law, and opens a gap for all manner of licentiousness and libertinism to rush in upon the Christian world."

Robert Leighton: "The gospel does not set men free to profaneness: no, it is a doctrine of holiness. 'We are not called unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.' 1 Thess. 4:7. Jesus has indeed taken off the hardness, the iron yoke, and now, his commandments are not grievous. 1 John 5:3. His yoke is easy, and his burden light. Those who are most sensible, and have most assurance of their deliverance, are ever the most active and fruitful in obedience: they feel themselves light and nimble, having the heavy chains and fetters

taken off. 'Lord, I am your servant; you have loosed my bonds.'" Psalm 116:16.

John Flavel: "God preserves all his people from the gross and vile opinions of Antinomian libertines, who cry up grace, and decry obedience: who under specious pretenses of exalting a naked Christ upon the throne, do indeed strip him naked of a great part of his glory, and vilely dethrone him. My pen shall not write what my eyes have read. Tell it not in Gath."

Stephen Charnock: "Libertinism and licentiousness find no encouragement in the gospel. It was made known to all nations for the obedience of faith. The goodness of God is published, that our enmity to him may be parted with. Christ's righteousness is not offered to us to be put on, that we may roll the more vilely in our sins. The doctrine of grace commands us to give up ourselves to Christ to be accepted through him, and to be ruled by him. Obedience is due to God, as a sovereign in his law; and it is due out of gratitude, as he is a God of grace in the gospel.... The gospel frees us from the curse, but not from the duty and service. We are delivered from the hands of our enemies, that we might 'serve God in holiness and righteousness.' Luke 1:74, 75. This is the will of God in the gospel, even our sanctification. When a prince strikes off a malefactor's chains, though he delivers him from the punishment of his crime, he frees him not from the duty of a subject... Christ's righteousness gives us a title to heaven; but there must be holiness to give us a fitness for heaven."

Thomas Watson: "Those who cast God's law behind their backs—God will cast their prayers behind his back. Those who will not have the law to rule over them—shall have the law to judge them. If God spoke all these words—then we must hear all these words. As we would have God hear all our words when we pray—so we must hear all his words when he speaks. He who stops his ears when God cries—shall cry himself and not be heard."

Thomas Boston: "All men are obliged to keep these commandments, for God is Lord of all; but the saints especially; for besides being their Lord, he is their God and Redeemer too. So far is the state of the saints from being one of sinful liberty that there are none so strongly bound to obedience as they, and that by the strongest of all bonds, those of love and gratitude."

Nor have modern divines of high character been more slow or less sweeping in expressing their abhorrence of this corrupt system of faith and practice. May it not rather be called a system of unbelief and of lack of practice?

John Newton: "It is an unlawful use of the law, that is an abuse of it, an abuse both of law and gospel—to pretend that its accomplishment by Christ releases believers from any obligation to it as a rule. Such an assertion is not only wicked, but absurd and impossible in the highest degree: for the law is founded in the relation between the Creator and the creature, and must unavoidably remain in force so long as that relation subsists."

In his lectures in divinity, George Hill speaks of Antinomianism as "this horrible doctrine," and guards his readers against the impression "that the disrepute into which Antinomian preaching has begun to fall is owing to a departure from Calvinism;" and declares that there is "no room to suppose that Calvinism is inconsistent with rational, practical preaching." Dr. Dwight well says: "Why is the law no longer a rule of righteousness to Christians? Is it because they are no longer under its condemning sentence? For this very reason they are under increased obligations to obey its precepts. Is it because they are placed under a better rule—or a worse one? A better rule cannot exist: a worse rule, God would not prescribe."

Robert Hall: "The principles which compose the Antinomian heresy, are as much opposed to the grace, as to the authority of the great head of the church."

Chapter 12. The Gospel Does Not Supersede the Moral Law.

A great desire of the adversary of souls in every age has been to effect a divorce between doctrine and practice. Probably in no other way has more harm been done. Owen: "There is no way whereby the whole rule of duty can be rendered more vain and useless unto the souls of men, than by the separation of the duties of the law from the grace of the gospel." If men can be brought to believe that morality will save them without piety, the gospel is at once rendered of no effect. On the other hand, if men believe that any species of piety towards God renders unnecessary the great principles of morality towards men, they will of course turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. That the apostles saw a happy harmony existing between our duties to God and our duties to man, and that in their view doctrine and practice were not hostile—is evident from their writings.

The epistle to the Romans makes a near approach to a systematic body of evangelical doctrine. It consists of sixteen chapters. The first eleven assert the highest doctrines of grace. The last five contain a better code of morals than can be found in the writings of the whole heathen and infidel world. The epistle to the Ephesians is one of the sublimest ever written. It contains six chapters. One can hardly imagine how an apostle standing at the gate of heaven could utter sublimer doctrine than is found in the first three. Yet the last three give directions for the guidance of our conduct before men, which, if honestly carried out, would make a heaven upon earth. It would indeed be very remarkable if the Son of God should have done anything against the law of which he himself was the author. This matter is made entirely clear by Stephen, in his last address to the Jews. Speaking of the great prophet promised to them like unto Moses, he says of Christ, "God will send you a prophet like me from your own people. He was in the assembly in the desert, with the

angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; and he received living words to pass on to us." Acts 7:38. See also Heb. 12:24-26.

That the gospel does not supersede the law is explicitly taught in the word of God. Having stated the doctrine of a gratuitous justification for Jew and Gentile, Paul says, "Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law." Romans 3:31. That this is so will appear if we but remember that no one, not even an angel of heaven, ever magnified the law and made it honorable, as Christ has done in his life of obedience and suffering, and that all his genuine followers make it their great concern to walk in his footsteps. That Jesus Christ taught nothing contrary to a perfect obedience to the moral law, and made no war upon it, he expressly asserts: "It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law." Luke 16:17.

Much more at length in the sermon on the mount, the Lord says, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:17-20. Besides this explicit declaration of our Lord, it is manifest on the very face of the sermon on the mount that the great aim of much of it was to rescue the law from the glosses and false interpretations of the Scribes and Pharisees.

But the object at present is, to consider somewhat at length the four verses already quoted. Stier thinks that the choice of a mountain, as a

place for the delivery of Christ's great sermon, had reference to something more than merely a fitting pulpit. He says, "We naturally think of that mountain of the law which preached condemnation. The Old Testament placed foremost the curse; the New, being glad tidings, begins with a blessing." The question naturally arises, how did our Lord come to introduce this subject? Was there any popular error which required this refutation? The very first words, "Do not think..." would intimate either that they had thought, or were in great danger of thinking erroneously. If no error on this point was publicly taught, our Lord knew the heart of man too well to doubt that it would endeavor to pervert the doctrines of grace, as promulgated by himself, to the purposes of a wicked life. The two words, the Law and the Prophets, evidently denote the whole of the Scriptures. We have the same phrase in Matt. 7:12, 22:40; Luke 16:16; Acts 13:15; Romans 3:21. In all these cases the phrase evidently designates the entire word of God then written. In no sense did Jesus Christ come to introduce lawlessness. He himself submitted to the rite of circumcision and to baptism also, that he might fulfill all righteousness. He had not come to release mankind from the municipal laws under which they lived; much less had he come to wage a war of destruction upon the great principles of piety and morality as taught in the moral law.

The whole sense of the passage must very much turn upon the meaning of the words rendered destroy and fulfill. In giving the sense of this passage, commentators have been remarkably agreed. Luther: "I have not come to make of none effect, but to complete." To destroy the law and the prophets, says Diodati, is, "To derogate from their authority, to cause them to be thought false or unprofitable, to propound a doctrine contrary to them." To fulfill he paraphrases thus: "Observing the law in all points myself, and bringing to pass all that was foretold by the prophets, and putting in force the right view of the law; namely, to require a perfect obedience, and its promise, which is to give life to those who fulfill it, and is effected in me alone for all my church."

Matthew Poole thinks that by Christ's saying he came not to destroy the law, we are to understand that he came not to "put an end to the moral law," and by fulfilling it we are to understand "by yielding himself a personal obedience to it, by giving a fuller and stricter interpretation of it than the Jews formerly had, and by taking the curse of it, and giving a just satisfaction to divine justice for it."

Adam Clarke: "I have not come to make the law of no effect—to dissolve the connection which exists between its several parts, or the obligation men are under to have their lives regulated by its moral precepts; nor have I come to dissolve the connecting reference it has to the good things promised. But I have come to complete—to perfect its connection and reference, to accomplish everything shadowed forth in the Mosaic ritual, to fill up its great design, and to give grace to all my followers, to fill up or complete every moral duty."

Thomas Scott: "Christ assured the Jews that he had not come to teach anything inconsistent with the true meaning of their sacred writings, which would still continue in force as a part of divine revelation.... The moral law he came to fulfill—by perfectly obeying it as the surety of his people, in his life, sufferings, death and doctrines; to establish it in its fullest honor and authority; and to make the most effectual provision for men's loving and obeying it."

Tholuck: "The Savior says—My coming has not a negative, but a positive end: I have come not to do away, but to fulfill."

Stier: "Has Christ, then, in any sense, brought a new, a better, a more perfect law, than the law, to fulfill which he avows himself to be come? By no means, as the whole sermon on the mount, his whole word, and the virtue of that law itself in our consciences attest.... If you expect a Messiah, such as the prophets foretold, and yet suppose that he will come as a relaxer of the law, you do greatly err, not understanding the prophets in their central harmony with the law. If I did not fulfill the law, then would the prophets also fail of their fulfilment.... Let not the world think, even the Christian world down

to this day, that he came for any other end than to establish the whole will of God, as the law and the prophets in Israel especially enforced and foretold it. Let this be declared to the world continually in the Lord's own words, both for its encouragement and warning."

There is not the slightest ground for the opinion that to fulfill means no more than to teach; and that to destroy means no more than not to teach or to teach the contrary. The early fathers, the reformers and the best writers in the seventeenth century dwell much upon the perfection of the fulfilling of the law by Christ. Melancthon says, "In four ways has the law been fulfilled by Christ:

1. By the obedience he showed to it in his own behalf.
2. By suffering for us its penalty.
3. Inasmuch as he fulfills the law in us through the Holy Spirit.
4. Inasmuch as he has confirmed it, and given his testimony to the necessity of keeping it."

Maldonatus says, "Christ fulfilled the law:

1. In his own person;
2. By rightly interpreting it;
3. By giving us grace to keep it;
4. By realizing in his person the types of the law."

No doubt a Jew of those days by the law understood the whole of the dispensation as settled in the Old Testament; but as the Decalogue constituted the center and indeed the very heart of that system, so far as precept is concerned, the moral law is unquestionably here included. In the eighteenth verse, our Lord reiterates in the most explicit terms what he had asserted in the seventeenth. "I tell you the

truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished." Diodati says, that the form of expression here used is a proverbial kind of speech, as much as to say, Never while the world lasts. He thinks it is equivalent to that phrase in Job 14:12, "Until the heavens be no more;" or to that in Psalm 62:5, "As long as the sun and moon endure." No doubt this is the Savior's real meaning.

Tholuck: "This expression of Christ is an emphatic designation of the law in its most minute parts." Stier: "That this strong expression refers figuratively, in its special meaning, to the least important of its contents, is plainly to be understood." This verse is characterized by the solemn word, Amen, in English Verily; and by that peculiar form of speech employed by Christ, I say unto you—as if he had said, I, the Alpha and Omega, the infallible Teacher and final Judge of the living and dead.

"Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven." The 19th verse is of somewhat difficult interpretation as to its precise meaning in two points. The first relates to the phrase, one of these least commandments. These words themselves have been taken in three senses.

Some suppose they refer to the provisions of the Ceremonial Law. But this is not admissible, since Christ himself speaks of David as blameless, though he ate the show-bread. And everywhere in the Old Testament, no less than in the New, acts of justice, mercy, and dutifulness to parents receive a decided commendation over any attention to religious ceremonies, though prescribed by God. And in the 15th chapter of Acts, the council of the apostles and elders did not hesitate to declare that the Mosaic ritual was not binding upon the Gentiles.

Others think the reference is to the commands of our Savior as given in the New Testament. This can hardly be its meaning, because it was not the topic of his discourse.

The other opinion, which is most probably the correct one, is that by commandments here, we are to understand the precepts of the Decalogue. This is the usual sense of the word commandments in the New Testament. See Matt. 22:40; Mark 10:19; Luke 1:6, 18:20; 1 Cor. 12:19. When the peculiar precepts of our Savior are spoken of by himself, he calls them my commandments; when they are spoken of by others, they are called the commandments of the Lord, or his commandments. 1 Cor. 14:37; 1 John 2:4, 3:24. The New Testament admits that all the commandments are not of equal importance. Matt. 22:36, 38, 40; Mark 12:30. The Savior admits the same in this verse. The Scribes and Pharisees had greatly abused this principle. They had put ceremonies above moral duties. They had declared that "Whoever after eating, washes not his hands, is no better than he who has committed a murder." By their traditions, they had in many ways made void the commandments of God.

Our Savior does not deny that one commandment may be more important than another. But he guards against the infraction of the very least, in the solemn manner now to be considered. He says, "Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven." Here is the second point of difficulty mentioned above. This is very alarming language, and should be well weighed by every man. If the evil here threatened is suited to strike terror, the blessing promised to those who do and teach these commandments is very glorious; they shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Commentators are not agreed whether by the kingdom of heaven we are to understand the visible church on earth as constituted by Christ, or the invisible kingdom of glory in heaven. But we need not perplex ourselves on this matter, inasmuch as he who is really unfit to be a member of the church on earth, is not fit to enter heaven. So we may give to the phrase the most solemn meaning.

The views of commentators on the import of the phrase, the least in the kingdom of heaven, are such as these: Diodati: They "shall lose much of God's approbation and of the good esteem of true believers." Henry: "Those who extenuate and encourage sin, and discountenance and put contempt upon strictness in religion and serious devotion, are the dregs of the church." Doddridge: "He shall be accounted one of the least and unworthiest members in the kingdom of heaven, or in the church of the Messiah; and shall soon be entirely cut off from it as unfit for so holy a society." Whitby: "He shall be unworthy to be reckoned one of the members of my kingdom." Clarke: "He shall have no place in the kingdom of Christ here, nor in the kingdom of glory above." Scott: "Either no true disciple at all, or one of the most inconsistent and base of the whole company." Poole: "Shall be accounted of the least value and esteem in the church of God, and shall never come into the kingdom of glory." Tholuck: "We are obliged to conclude that it is not exclusion, but inferiority of station, which is here spoken of." Stowell: "Christ assures his disciples that he who in the slightest degree departs from the most rigid demands of that rule, and either directly or indirectly teaches others so to do, shall scarcely be esteemed as belonging to the Christian church, or, if belonging to it, as the least worthy and consistent of its members; while, on the other hand, he who is obedient in all things, and by his instruction, persuasion, or example, influences others to the same obedience, shall be honored as an enlightened, decided, and useful subject of "the kingdom of heaven." Hare: "He shall be considered a most unworthy member of Christ's kingdom even here, and therefore, I need not add, can have no chance of being admitted into Christ's glorious and everlasting kingdom hereafter."

Whatever, therefore, may be the precise meaning of the phrase, least in the kingdom of heaven, we cannot doubt that it contains an solemn warning against the error of lightly esteeming any one of the Ten Commandments. In the 20th verse, the Lord says, "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall never enter into

the kingdom of heaven." "The righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees," says Diodati, "was all set upon vain ceremonies, arbitrary disciplines, false shows, and dead works without God's Spirit." The Scribes and Pharisees were very highly esteemed by the people for their piety; but Jesus Christ says his disciples must exceed them, both in their principles and practice.

"Their interpretation of the moral law," says Poole, "was so short and surface, that it is manifest that their righteousness was not only a righteousness not of faith, but of works, and those works that were very imperfect, and short of what the true sense of the law required." Scott: "The zeal and strictness of the Scribes and Pharisees, both in doctrine and practice, was chiefly shown about their own traditions, by which they 'made void the law of God;' and about minute observances by which they covered over their neglect of judgment, mercy, faith, and the love of God and man."

It was always true that the letter of the law killed. It is the Spirit who makes alive. The most exact observance of a ritual, and the most decent, though heartless conformity to the precepts of the moral law, never did meet the demands of God's word. Those, therefore, whose piety goes not beyond externals, however faultless in the eyes of men, will never secure the smiles of God. Of such the Savior says, "they shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven;" that is, they shall not be accepted members of his visible church, nor reign with him in glory. Yes, truly, our obedience must vastly excel that of any formalist that ever lived.

Stowell: "Your righteousness must exceed theirs in the principle from which it springs—not like theirs, from pride and self-sufficiency, but from love. Your righteousness must exceed theirs in the motives by which it is influenced—not the applause of mortals, but by the approbation of God, and the promotion of his glory. Your righteousness must exceed theirs in the standard by which it is regulated—not the traditions and questionable explanations of the Scribes and Pharisees themselves, but by the full and spiritual

meaning of the law. Your righteousness must exceed theirs in the extent to which it is carried—not merely to the visible observance, but also to the secret thoughts and feelings. Your righteousness must exceed theirs in the effect it produces on others—not securing their admiration of your ostentatious virtue, and forcing them to submit to your usurped authority, but leading them to admire the grace of God, to adore him in the purity and goodness of his law, and to emulate the example you have set them."

The conclusion is, nothing is said or done in the gospel to depreciate the law; but much to honor and magnify it. The apostasy gave no license to rebellion. Sinning can never make sinning lawful or excusable. Nor does the grace of God in the gospel open a door to unholy living.

Chapter 13. Detached Remarks.

1. Ignorance of the Law. The evils of ignorance of the law are very great. They are such as these: Where the law is not well known, there is but little knowledge of sin. Of course convictions, if any, are slight. The fallow-ground of the human heart is not well broken up. Where the law is not well known, repentance is slight. We are called upon to mourn for our sins; but if we do not know how numerous and vile they are, our sorrow will not bear any just proportion to their enormity. Besides, where there is general ignorance of the law, false confidence will abound. Multitudes will presume upon God's mercy where none is promised; and multitudes will lie in carnal security. When such ignorance becomes general, society assumes its very worst forms. Lawlessness runs riot. The carnal nature of man fearfully prevails. Impurity becomes general, and all godly men cry out—what are we coming to? The gospel itself begins to be loathed, like the manna to the Israelites; for "without an experimental knowledge and an sincere faith in the law and the gospel, a man can neither venerate the authority of the one, nor esteem the grace of the other."

2. How the law is made void. The error of many ancients, and of not a few moderns, consists, not in a formal denial of the obligation of the moral law, but in inventing various devices for evading its force. The Scribes and Pharisees superadded a great mass of the traditions of the elders, which they regarded as equal and even paramount to the law of God. Against this capital error our Savior directed much of his discourse. He charged them directly with transgressing the commandments of God by their traditions. The fifth commandment said—Honor your father and mother. The tradition of the elders said—If a parent was suffering with hunger, and if the son wished not to relieve the distresses of his parent, all that was necessary was to say—It is a gift; it is Corban; it is devoted to religious uses. Thus Christ declares—They made the commandments of God of no effect by their traditions. The worship of such is an offence to God. Jesus but expresses the tenor of the Old Testament when he says of such; "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men." Matt. 15:2-9.

Others render null and void the law by not sufficiently discriminating between it and the gospel. Colquhoun: "To blend or confound the law and the gospel has been a fatal source of error in the Christian church; and has much hindered many believers in their exercise of faith and practice of holiness."

The church of Rome follows both these devices fully. An old commentator says: "The Scriptures teach that there is no difference to be put between foods, in regard of holiness, but that every creature of God is good. This the Papists make void, by teaching that it is matter of religion to abstain from meats at certain seasons. The Scripture teaches that we should pray to God alone. This they make void by their manifold prayers to departed saints. The Scripture teaches Christ alone to be our Mediator, both of redemption and intercession. This they make void by making saints intercessors. The Scripture teaches Christ to be the only head of the church. This they abrogate by the doctrine of the Pope's supremacy. The Scripture teaches that every soul should be subject to the higher power. This

they abrogate by exempting the Pope and popish clergy from subjection to the civil power of princes and magistrates. Lastly, to instance in the same kind as our Savior here against the Pharisees, whereas the word of God commands children to honor their parents, the papists teach that if the child have vowed a monastical life, he is exempted from duty to parents."

3. A right temper. If in anything, surely in the study of the law, a right temper is exceedingly important. The law is not to be looked upon as the word of man, but is to be received as it is in truth—the word of God, spoken in most solemn circumstances. We are as much bound to look back to the solemn scenes of Sinai, as if we ourselves had been present at the giving of the law. Whoever would study the law aright, must have a teachable temper. He must be willing to learn whatever God would teach him. His language should be, "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears."

We would know the law of God better if we would more zealously practice what we have already learned. Perhaps nothing more impedes our spiritual progress—than refusing to do, as well as we know. James 4:17. We ought also to delight, and think much on the commandments. One mark of a godly man, as laid down in the First Psalm is, that "his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law does he meditate day and night." Although the word law here includes more than the ten Commands, even all Scripture, yet the law is an excellent part of the sacred writings; so that it is not excluded. If we would study the law profitably, we must be open to conviction. We must not be scared away from beholding sad sights in our own hearts, habits and lives revealed to us by the law. We must be willing to borrow light from all proper sources. Not a book of Scripture is there but that it throws some light on the Commandments. Above all, we must ask for the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Without his teaching we shall labor in vain. Let us, therefore, cry mightily to God, asking him to quicken us in his way, and not to hide his commandments from us, to teach us the way of his statutes, and not to take his Holy Spirit from us.

4. How should the law be divided?

No particular importance attaches to the numbering of the commandments, provided every word that God has spoken be faithfully delivered to the people. It is not reckoning the commandments aright, but keeping them—which is pleasing to God. And yet Roman Catholics have availed themselves of their mode of numbering the commandments entirely to omit from their short Catechisms all allusion to image worship. This is maiming and mutilating the word of God.

5. The PREFACE to the Moral Law. "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery." Exodus 20:2

The first title here claimed by God is "Lord"—in the Hebrew, Jehovah. It teaches the self-existence, independence, eternity and immutability of God.

The second title here claimed by the lawgiver is "God"—in the Hebrew Elohim, which is in the plural form. There is no satisfactory explanation of the use of these plurals concerning God, except that they were intended to recognize a plurality of persons in the godhead. Being in the singular, Jehovah expresses the divine unity. Being in the plural, Elohim points to the trinity. The Lord says, I am your God; by which he claims to have that people in covenant relation with himself.

The remainder of the preface is a direct appeal to the gratitude of those to whom the law was first given, on the score of God's amazing mercies to them personally and nationally, temporally and spiritually. It reminded them of all that God had done for their fathers as well as for themselves. It specially pointed to the deliverance from Egyptian bondage—as a type of the greater redemption promised to our first parents in the garden of Eden. To us this preface teaches that "because God is the Lord, and our God

and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments."

While claiming that these words are a preface to the whole law, we may yet admit that they have a particular relation to the first commandment. This preface then clearly points to the authority of the Most High, as the Creator and Governor of the world, as possessed of infinite and independent excellence, as having bound all his creatures to himself by bonds which they may not innocently disregard, and holding all who profess his name truly and firmly bound to his service by a covenant which he will not break, and which they must highly esteem. God's sovereignty is entire and absolute; and is so declared in Scripture. Romans 9:20-23.

The First Commandment

"You shall have no other gods before me."- Exodus 20:3

The phrase before me in this commandment occurs nowhere else in the Decalogue. Some writers render it by the phrases, Beside me, or But me. Both of these are mistakes. The phrase, Before me, if rendered literally would be, Before my face. It specially refers to God's omnipresence and omniscience. It reminds us at the very beginning of the commandments that He, with whom we have to do, searches the heart. "If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange God: shall not God search this out? For he knows the secrets of the heart." Psalm 44:20, 21. He knows our down-sitting and up-rising, he understands our thoughts afar off. He compasses our path and our lying down, and is acquainted with all our ways. He has beset us behind and before, and laid his hand upon us. We cannot flee from his presence. In heaven, in hell, in the uttermost parts of the sea—everywhere he is present. The darkness hides not from him; the night shines as the day; the

darkness and the light are both alike to him. He knows our thoughts and intentions. Every sin, therefore, and in particular every sin against this commandment, is committed in the immediate presence of God. For there is no "creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Heb. 4:13. "God's understanding is infinite." Psalm 147:5. Concealment from him is impossible. An attempt to hide ourselves or anything from him is itself folly and wickedness. Man judges of the heart by the deed; but God judges of the deed by the heart; and he judges the heart by itself. To him nothing is unclear. He never makes a mistake. His omniscience is infallible. This therefore is a great aggravation of all iniquity, that it is perpetrated under the immediate eye of God, and is an affront offered him to his face.

So he says, "Do you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and follow other gods that you have not known? Then do you come and stand before Me in this house called by My name and insist: We are safe? As a result, you are free to continue doing all these detestable acts!" Jeremiah 7:9-10. It is considered an act of extraordinary impudence when men will lie, or steal, or commit lewdness in the very presence of those who are most wronged and insulted thereby. This principle is of easy application to God.

I. What the first commandment **REQUIRES**.

1. It requires us to have a God. It is not so unnatural for man to be without hands, or feet, or hearing, or vision—as to be without the religious sentiment. If man is a creature, then it is clear to reason, that he owes all to the Creator. If man is weak and (dependent to an extent, which even the heathen themselves have admitted, then it is impossible to give him adequate strength, or meet his pressing needs, except by a divinity. An attempt or desire to obliterate the religious sentiment from the mind of ourselves or of others is an appalling atrocity. If it could be successful in any case, it would but

sink its victim below the devils, for they believe and tremble. James 2:19.

2. This precept requires us to have Jehovah for our God. He is the Creator of the ends of the earth. He is possessed of every and infinite perfections. He is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. He is over all, God blessed forever. Cleaving to him, saints and angels rise from glory to glory. All rational creatures are elevated in their natures and conceptions by every species of divinely appointed service rendered to him. His authority is acknowledged by the whole inanimate creation. Not a particle of dust nor a solid planet; not a drop of water nor a mighty ocean, but is wholly subject to his will, as expressed in the laws of nature. All deeps, and fire, and hail, and snow, and vapor, and stormy wind fulfill his word. Yes, the beasts and all cattle, and creeping things, and flying fowl are wholly subject to his authority. For man therefore to deny Jehovah's sovereignty over him is to make himself like the devils. From the days of Moses until this time, having Jehovah for our God has been declared fundamental in true religion, and is mighty in producing obedience to the other commandments. Ex. 15:2; Psalm 118:28.

But what is it to have Jehovah for our God? Surely this means much more than some decent public declaration that we take him as such. For in works, many deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. Titus 1:16.

1. Whoever takes Jehovah for his God, must KNOW him. So important is the knowledge of God that often in the Scriptures it is put for the whole of religion. Prov. 2:5; Isa. 11:9; Psalm 36:10, 46:10. If it may be truly said to us as to the Samaritans, "You worship you know not what," it is not only a terrible rebuke of our ignorance, but it proves that our religion is vain. John 4:22. "To know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, is eternal life." John 17:3. Not to know that God is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him, is subversive of all piety. Our knowledge must extend not only to his existence, but to his character. He is "the Lord, the Lord

God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Ex. 34:6, 7.

The knowledge of God is either speculative or practical. The former we may have and be none the better, but only the more guilty. The practical knowledge of God is saving. It controls the heart and life; it brings our moral nature into a blessed conformity to the truth of God; it shows its power by humbling the soul. Job 40:4, 5. It desires to bring others acquainted with the Most High, 1 Chron. 28:9, and it is valued above all the treasures of earth. Prov. 2:3-5.

2. We must CONFESS God in all our ways. Psalm 48:14; Prov. 3:6. We must be ready to declare, "Surely you are still our Father! Even if Abraham and Jacob would disown us, Lord, you would still be our Father. You are our Redeemer from ages past." Isa. 63:16. Unless we are brought to the "acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," we cannot hope for salvation. Col. 2:2,3; Deut. 26:17, 18:3.

3. We must LOVE God. This duty is largely insisted on in all the Scriptures. Jesus Christ said nothing more terrible to his foes, if it be rightly considered, than this; "I know you that you have not the love of God in you." John 5:42. Nor can any more important prayer be offered than this, "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God." 2 Thess. 3:5. Nor do the Scriptures enjoin on man any more weighty duty than this, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." Jude 21. This love, when genuine, is controlling. Many Scriptures require that we love God with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the mind, and with all the might. Deut. 6:5, 10:12, 11:1, 13, 22, 19:9, 30:6; Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:30.

4. The Scriptures no less clearly require us to FEAR God. Lev. 25:17; 1 Pet. 2:17. Great promises are made to such as fear him. Eccles. 8:12.

The rebuke the penitent thief gave to his companion was in the words, "Do not you fear God?" One mark of a godly man is, that he honors those who fear the Lord. Psalm 15:4. While the servility of ignorance and unbelief may cower at the very thought of God, only those who fear him after a godly sort, are ever ready to say, "His mercy endures forever." Psalm 118:4. "Fear the Lord, you His saints, for those who fear Him lack nothing." Psalm 34:9.

All claims to true piety, unsupported by holy living, are false. "For the grace of God has appeared, with salvation for all people, instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age." Titus 2:11-12. Calvin: "We manifest a fitting reverence for him, only when we prefer his will to our own. It follows then that there is no other legitimate worship of him, but the observance of righteousness, sanctity, and purity."

5. We must OBEY God. In the absence of hearty obedience, all other evidences of piety are deceptive. "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?" 1 Sam. 15:22. Men perish because they will not be obedient. Deut. 8:20. This test is fair. All pretenses to godly fear or holy love, not accompanied by a spirit of prompt and cheerful obedience to the known will of God, will sooner or later cover us with shame. "Augustine sometimes calls obedience to God the parent and guardian, and sometimes the origin of all virtues."

6. We must WORSHIP God. The essentials of worship pleasing to God are:

First, That the service rendered be something commanded by himself.

Secondly, That we adore his glorious perfections, and make prostrate obeisance of all our faculties before him, submitting our understanding to his teaching, our consciences to his guidance and

all our powers to be molded by his Spirit. Just conceptions of the greatness and majesty of God must lead all right minds to adoration.

Thirdly, That we depend upon him, confide in him, and rely upon his power, wisdom, goodness, holiness, truth, and righteousness.

Fourthly, That we be heartily thankful and render him our praise for all his mercies. To the truly pious mind this is a delightful part of all worship.

Fifthly, That we confess our sins before him and hide not our faults in his presence.

Sixthly, That we supplicate his blessing upon ourselves and all for whom we are bound to pray, not doubting his faithfulness, nor his readiness to give us all needed aid.

All these things enter into the essence of our having Jehovah for our God. They imply that we believe in him, Heb. 11:6; that we choose him, Josh. 24:15; that we hope in him, Psalm 137; that we honor him, Mal. 1:6; that we joyfully serve him, Psalm 2:11; that we submit to him, James 4:7; that we humble ourselves under his mighty hand, 1 Pet. 5:6; that we devote ourselves to him, Deut. 26:17; that we are zealous in his cause and for his glory, Romans 12:11; Rev. 3:19; that we make it our business to please him, 1 Thess. 4:1; that we wait for him and wait upon him, Psalm 25:3, 130:5; that we be sorry for our sins, Jer. 31:18, 19; that we mourn the sins of our fellow-men, Neh. 13:8; Psalm 113:21; that we desire God above all things, Psalm 93:25; that we delight in him, Psalm 37:4; that we think upon his name, Mal. 3:16; that we meditate upon him, Psalm 63:6; that we walk with him, Gen. 5:22; and that he be supreme in all our affections, 1 Chron. 28:9; Psalm 95:6, 7; Matt. 4:10. This commandment requires of us these things in perfection. It also enjoins the use of all means that may promote these things in our hearts and lives, or in the hearts and lives of others.

3. The first commandment requires that we should take the Lord Jehovah to be our God EXCLUSIVELY. Calvin: "The end of this precept is, that God chooses to have the sole pre-eminence, and to enjoy, undiminished, his authority among his people."

All other gods are vanities. They are no gods. They can neither hear, nor help, nor see, nor save. Jehovah is God alone. There is no God beside him; there is no God with him; there is no God above him; there is no God under him. Isa. 44:6, 8, 45:5. In this matter there are two errors; one entirely disowns Jehovah and exclusively worships some false God or gods. In that case the real object of worship is Satan himself. He is the author of it, and his kingdom is built up by it. Paul says: "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that you should have fellowship with devils." 1 Cor. 10:20.

The other error consists in mingling the worship of the true God and of false gods. So we read "They worshiped the Lord—but they also served their own gods in accordance with the customs of the nations from which they had been brought." 2 Kings 17:33. Daniel's image of clay and iron had some consistence. But such worship as this has none whatever. "I will crush Judah and Jerusalem with my fist and destroy every last trace of their Baal worship. I will put an end to all the idolatrous priests, so that even the memory of them will disappear. For they go up to their roofs and bow to the sun, moon, and stars. They claim to follow the Lord—but then they worship Molech, too. So now I will destroy them!" Zephaniah 1:4-5

Even Joseph in Egypt seems to have fallen into this sin. He swore "by the life of Pharaoh." Gen. 42:15. The great sin of such corrupt mixtures in worship arises from two things. One is, that God everywhere forbids it. The other is, that all such worship goes on the supposition that God is no better, or little better, than other objects to which we thus pay homage. Let every man beware lest in the day of prosperity, "Then they will worship their nets and burn incense in front of them. 'These nets are the gods who have made us rich!' they

will claim." Habakkuk 1:16. Jehovah has as much right to be loved and worshiped as God alone, as to be desired and adored at all.

II. Let us next consider this commandment in the negative form, and see what the first commandment FORBIDS.

1. ANTI-THEISM. The greatest error into which man can fall is the positive and affirmative conclusion that there is no God. The number, who go this fearful length, is, perhaps, very small; but that some should be given up to believe such a lie will surprise no one, who witnesses the diligence of men in corrupting themselves, and in seeking darkness rather than light. No man is so blind as he who does not wish to see. No darkness is more impenetrable, than that in which the carnal mind envelopes itself. The rashness of asserting that there is no God has no parallel.

Foster: "The wonder turns upon the great process by which a man would grow to the immense intelligence that can know there is no God. What knowledge is requisite for this attainment! This intelligence involves the very attributes of Divinity, while a God is denied. For unless this man is omnipresent, unless he is at this moment in every place in the universe, he cannot know but that there may be in some place manifestations of a Deity, by which even he would be overpowered. If he does not absolutely know every agent in the universe, the one that he does not know may be God. If he is not himself the chief agent in the universe, and does not know what is so, that which is so may be God. If he is not in absolute possession of all the propositions that constitute universal truth, that one which he lacks, may be that there is a God. If he cannot with certainty assign the cause of all that he perceives to exist, that cause may be a God. If he does not know everything that has been done in the immeasurable ages that are past, some things may have been done by a God. Thus unless he knows all things, that is, precludes another Deity, by being one himself, he cannot know that the Being, whose existence he rejects, does not exist."

So that it can never be proven to be even probable, much less certain, that there is no God. Every assertion that he does not exist but evinces unequaled rashness and pretension. Finite intelligence can never be sure that there is no infinite intelligence. A being limited to a small part of one small world cannot safely say but that in many other worlds there may be incontestable proofs of divinity. Surely no man can elevate his character, or improve the knowledge or the virtue of his race, by making bold assertions respecting a point, on which his information does not bear some just proportion to the extent of the proposition which he lays down. The mass of mankind will find it exceedingly difficult to conceive by what amazing stretch of depravity, one of their race should reach so monstrous a conclusion.

2. PANTHEISM. The extremes often lie nearer than the means. Atheism and Pantheism are not separated by any great gulf. Men easily pass from one to the other. He, who declares that there is no God, and he, who declares that everything is God—have each a theory well-suited to the most brutal knowledge and to the lowest depravity.

As such a belief can spring from nothing but great wickedness of heart, it need surprise no one to find mankind generally avoiding avowed Pantheists. Yet for thousands of years there have been in the world men who believe that the sun, moon and stars, the earth, the sea and the dry land, the mountains and valleys, the lakes and rivers, they themselves, their dogs, their swine, their cats, their turnips and their onions were not proofs of a divinity—but were divinity itself!

The founder of the sect of Pantheists was Orpheus. At a later time, various classes of these errorists were found in ancient Greece and Rome. The most conspicuous of modern Pantheists was Spinoza. The last development of this monstrous system is found in certain transcendentalists of Europe and America. These wrap up their teachings in modes of expression which may well be denominated learned gibberish. But when you are able to get hold of one of their

thoughts, it is found to be entirely destitute of the frankness and candor of Toland and his followers, who, during the last century, organized themselves into a body, and set forth a creed, asserting that "the ethereal fire environs all things, and is therefore supreme. The ether is a reviving fire: it rules all things, it disposes all things. In it is soul, mind, prudence. This fire is Horace's particle of divine breath, and Virgil's inwardly nourishing spirit. All things are comprised in an intelligent nature." This is obviously nonsense; but there is no serious attempt made to cover it up with high-sounding words. As to the ether here spoken of, there is simply no evidence of any such thing. The first trace of its existence is nowhere found.

Modern Pantheists are much held in contempt by all the men and literature of the world except their own. They are proud and haughty scorners, and often in a high degree malignant. They show considerable zeal, and sometimes fabricate the grossest slanders against godliness. A few of them aim at literary and scientific fame, and make eigh pretensions to politeness: but the mass of their disciples are found in the depths of social debasement, yet full of great swelling words of vanity. Their grand error is of course the denial of the personality of God.

3. ATHEISM. Atheists are of three classes:

1. Such as do not regard the existence of God sufficiently proven to make it an article of hearty, practical belief;
2. Such as cannot deny that there is considerable, perhaps satisfactory evidence, that there is a God, but in their hearts really wish there was none; and
3. Such as live and act just as they would, if they believed there was no God.

The first are called speculative atheists; the second, atheists in desire; the third, practical atheists. These all agree in this, that to all good ends and purposes they are "without God in the world."

Atheists in desire will probably continue in their error until regenerated by the Spirit of God. Practical atheists abound. Many of them would be shocked if charged with atheism; yet they could not live more entirely without prayer, and without the fear and love of God, if it was an article of their creed that there was no God. His laws do not bind them. His mercies do not attract them. His judgments do not correct them. They know nothing, but what they know naturally as brute beasts.

It is a mournful fact in human history that men have been found ready to publish their lack of belief in the divine existence, and have died for the maintenance of their speculations. So true is it that love of falsehood may be stronger than the fear of death. Lord Bacon says, that up to his time, "atheism did never disturb states." This was true. But since his time, especially within the last century, its outbreaks have been usually accompanied by political disturbances. The conversion of speculative atheists is of rare occurrence. Yet the power of God can bend the will of the most rebellious.

The utter unprofitableness of atheism is worthy of special note. It takes away all, and makes no returns. If it could be incontestably proven to be true, it would make no man less wretched, less foolish, less wicked, less criminal than he is now; but on the contrary it would make him every way less fit to live, and less fit to die. It begets no lively, solid hopes. Its moral lessons (if it taught any) would be enforced by no sanctions. It is the darkest gulf, into which the human mind ever looked.

Nevins: "If atheism is true, annihilation would be the object of most earnest longing to all thinking men." Lothrop: "If it were true that there is no God, what evidence can the atheist have that he shall not live and be miserable after death? How came he to exist at all? Whatever was the cause of his existence here, may be the cause of his existence hereafter. Or, if there is no cause, he may exist in another state as well as in this. And if his corrupt heart and abominable works make him so unhappy here, that he would rather be

annihilated than run the hazard of a future existence, what hinders but he may be unhappy forever? The man then is a fool, who wishes that there was no God, hoping thus to be secure from future misery; for, admitting that there is no God, still the man may exist hereafter as well as here; and if he does exist, his corruptions and vices may render him miserable eternally as well as for the present."

Atheism is both very stupid and very wicked. The case is this. The ox knows his owner, and the donkey his master's feeding-trough. The sheep is a silly thing, and yet it knows the voice of its shepherd, and will not heed the voice of a stranger. But men are more foolish. God feeds them daily. He opens his hand and liberally supplies their needs. He watches them with more than a shepherd's care. Yet are these men more brutish than the beasts. They don't know their Maker, Owner and Sustainer. They doubt, or even deny his existence.

Not only does the Lord provide for each of us, but for every living thing. Everett: "The human race is usually estimated at about one thousand million individuals. Let, then, the thoughtful farmer, who desires to form just ideas, reflect, when he gathers his little flock about him to partake the morning's meal, that one thousand million fellow-men have awakened from sleep that morning, craving their daily bread with the same appetite, which reigns at his family table; and that if, by a superior power, they could be gathered together at the same hour for the same meal, they would fill both sides of five tables, each reaching all around the globe where it is broadest, seated side by side, and allowing eighteen inches to each individual; and that these tables are to be renewed twice or thrice every day."

Then let him consider that the supply of food is but a small part of the care of Providence over him and his, and how can he go away and deny his Master, and refuse to know his Owner and his Shepherd? What would be thought of a man, or company of men, who would accept an invitation to even one feast provided by a neighbor, and then go and deny not only his kindness, but even his existence? Truly inspiration is right when it says that such folly and wickedness are

never found among wise men. "The fool has said in his heart, There is no God." Psalm 14:1. None but a fool could be brought to say so vile a thing even in his heart.

Without going at length into the proof of the divine existence, it may be proper to suggest something of the line of argument that might be pursued on this subject.

1. A fair argument for the divine existence is drawn from the consent of mankind. This argument is based on the just axiom that the belief of all nations and of all ages must be founded in truth. The whole world has never yet received an error as truth. Nor is there one instance, in which the learned and the unlearned, the polished and the crude, the rich and the poor, the civilized, the barbarous, and the savage, have united to support a falsehood. It is not possible to find in the history of the world a notice of any people, whose language, rites, laws or customs did not evince their belief of the existence of God. Cicero says, "There is no nation so savage or wild as not to know that there is a God." No fairer argument for a Divinity can be found than that stated by many a heathen, yes, even by many a savage.

The atheist, therefore, sets up the conclusions of his own mind against the judgments of his race. For it is as rare to find a man, who denies the existence of a God, as to find a man blind, or deaf, or dumb. It does not weaken the force of this argument to admit that the idea of a God is given from one generation to another. Before instruction, one does not know how to spell the monosyllables of his own language; nor does he know the axioms of science, but when he is taught these things, he is a madman to deny them.

It strengthens the argument from the consent of mankind that the belief of a God is not to unsanctified men pleasing, but troublesome. It "crosses their worldly interests, contradicts their sensual desires, deranges their joys, and torments their natural consciences." And yet no nation has ever been able to persuade itself that there was no

God. If the belief of a Divinity is not based in irrefragable truth, why cannot the delusion be shaken off? Mankind have clearly shown two things; first, that they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and secondly, that when they knew him, they did not glorify him as God. How comes it to pass then, that with the whole current of corrupt sentiment, and wicked desires, and unholy living against true religion, men should still believe in a God? There is no fair answer to this question, except that the truth is too obvious to admit of sober denial.

2. In every man's mind is something, which reproves him for evil actions, however secret or applauded; and commends him for right conduct, however misunderstood or condemned. In clear cases of wrong-doing, there is a sense of guilt, which is always painful, sometimes intolerable. Many a man has sought death rather than endure the sting of the scorpion in his own bosom. Caligula confessed to the Roman senate that he suffered the pains of death every day. It is common with offenders to be in torment. But where there is transgression, there must be law; and where there is law, there must be a lawgiver; and who is Lord of the conscience if there be no God? If the world has no moral governor, how can this self-condemnation be accounted for? There is no fairer reasoning than this: "There is a conscience in man; therefore, there is a God in heaven."

So mighty is the power of conscience, that among men nothing is more dreaded than its scourgings. Nor can it be so obliterated by false doctrines or a course of crime, as not to annoy the guilty everywhere. Herod was a bloody man. In principle he was a Sadducee, and believed neither in angel, nor spirit, nor heaven, nor hell, nor in a resurrection of the dead. At the solicitation of a bad woman he killed one, whom he knew to be the best man of his day. By and by, Jesus began to work amazing miracles among the people. These caused much talk. Some said one thing and some another. But Herod, in the teeth of all his principles, said he knew all about it: "It is John, whom I beheaded: he has risen from the dead." Mark 6:16.

Atheists have consciences, and though they are ignorant, erroneous, and sometimes seared as with a hot iron, yet from this quarter annoyance arises to those, who deny, no less than to those who own a God. No man, however debased in principle or behavior, can tell what moment a drop of the divine wrath may fall into his soul, and the fires of perdition flame out from his own bosom. Every effect must have an adequate cause. What is the cause of conscience if there be no God; who is the author of man's moral nature? It is evident too that the author of the moral nature of one race of men is the author of the moral nature of every race of men, for they are all alike. Whoever is the lawgiver to the conscience of an American, is the lawgiver to the conscience of the European, the Asiatic, and the African.

It is a favorite idea of atheists that fear formed a God. But if there is no God, why should all men fear him? It would be much nearer the truth to say that fear formed atheists. The godly fear not that there is a God, but would be dismayed if they even doubted his existence. It is the wicked who flee when no man pursues. A dreadful sound is in his ears. Terrors take hold of him as waters. God casts upon him and does not spare. Conscience stands a great bulwark against wickedness, and no less against atheism.

3. All CREATION says—There is a God, a God of power, wisdom and goodness. The blazing universe above us—is it without a cause? About a thousand years before the Christian era, lived a Hebrew king and poet. In early life he had been a shepherd-boy, and had watched the motions of the heavenly bodies. Later in life he had been a fugitive from home, being pursued to the wilderness by his cruel and jealous monarch. There too he had seen how the azure vault above was all bespangled with gems brighter than ever had been set in earthly crowns. By and by he seized his pen and wrote: "The heavens tell of the glory of God. The skies display his marvelous craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. They speak without a sound or a word; their voice is silent in the skies; yet their message has gone out to all

the earth, and their words to all the world. The sun lives in the heavens where God placed it. It bursts forth like a radiant bridegroom after his wedding. It rejoices like a great athlete eager to run the race. The sun rises at one end of the heavens and follows its course to the other end. Nothing can hide from its heat." Psalm 19:1-6

Are not such views just, pure, elevating? Do they not commend themselves to every man? Seven hundred years later lived the great man of Stagira, whose philosophy ruled the reasonings of men almost without interruption for nineteen hundred years. He wrote on logic, on ethics, on poetry, on politics, on physics, and on metaphysics. Among all his voluminous writings there is none more deserving of commendation than that commended by Cicero as "noble." Aristotle says: "If there were beings who had always lived underground, in convenient, nay, magnificent dwellings, adorned with statues and pictures, and everything which belongs to prosperous life, but who had never come above ground—who had heard, however, by fame and report, of the power of God—if at a certain time, the portals of the earth being thrown open, they had been able to emerge from those hidden abodes to the regions inhabited by us; when suddenly they had seen the earth, the seas, and the sky; had perceived the vastness of the clouds and the force of the winds; had contemplated the sun, his magnitude and his beauty, and still more his effectual power, that it is he who makes the day by the diffusion of his light through the sky; and, when night had darkened the earth, should then behold the whole heavens studded and adorned with stars, and the various lights of the waxing and waning moon, the risings and the settings of all these heavenly bodies, and their courses fixed and immutable in all—when, I say, they should see these things—ruly they would believe in a God, and that these things are his works."

The bard of Bethlehem, who had been educated in the law of Moses, and who was the father of the wisest of mere men, and the philosopher of Stagira, who had been the tutor of Alexander the

Great, though differing in a thousand other things, did not fail to see alike in this, that all we see, when we lift up our eyes, by day or by night, declares that this world had a divine author.

SEEDS. Have they no maker? All kinds of grass and grain, most kinds of roots and trees, of shrubs and plants, are propagated by seeds. Some of these are large, but most of them are small. Their shape and appearance are exceedingly diverse; but each of them contains a germ, in which is the vital principle. Men can make things which look like these seeds; but all the chemical skill and physical power of men cannot produce one seed with the vital principle in it. It is as much beyond created power to form a seed with the vital principle in it, as to form a solar system. Yet from the creation to this day men have beheld the wonders of divine skill and energy in the production of myriads of seeds in every acre on earth not doomed to sterility. In this matter nothing is more surprising than the amazing fruitfulness of plants. A few years ago a farmer saw one stalk of wheat springing up in the cleft of a rock. He thought there was something remarkable about it. When it was ripe he gathered it, and at the right season sowed it again. It has produced millions of bushels already.

Most seeds too have a tenacity of life that is amazing. Wheat has grown and produced its kind three thousand years after it had been stored away. Seeds have been found more than a hundred feet under ground, which seemed to have been formed many ages before, and yet when exposed to the action of moisture, air, and the light and heat of the sun, have grown vigorously.

INSECTS. Have they no Maker? If they have, he is God. Plato believed there was a God, because all the world could not make a fly. Yet he who has made the fly, has made it capable of propagating its kind. The eggs of a common house-fly in one season is over twenty million. Some spiders produce nearly two thousand eggs. There are six or seven generations of gnats in a season, and each one lays two hundred and fifty eggs. A single bee is said to produce in one season

a hundred thousand of its own kind. The eggs of insects, in some cases, retain the vital principle for a long time. Dr. Bright informed the world of the case of an egg that produced an insect eighty years after it must have been laid. And how wondrously these creatures are formed.

Spiders have four paps for spinning their webs. Each pap has a thousand holes. The fine web itself is a cord made of four thousand strands. Our spinning wheels are a crude thing compared with the amazing machinery of the spider. Nor can man make anything of such amazing elasticity and durability as are found in the spider's web. The late Dr. Mitchell showed me, as connected with the most delicate portion of the machinery of the observatory at Cincinnati, Ohio, one piece of spider's web which had been stretched three hundred and ninety-five thousand times, and yet when the tension was off, it contracted to its usual length.

The numbers of insects found even in a small space is almost incredible. A pound of cochineal contains 70,000 insects. A German naturalist has discovered in the space of ten miles square 600 species of insects injurious to the growth of grain. Captain Buford saw near Smyrna in 1841 a cloud of locusts forty-six miles long and three hundred yards deep. The least insect examined with a proper microscope shows as great wonders in its structure, as are detected in creatures that can be well examined with the naked eye. Have not these little creatures a Creator? May not a wise man walk through this portion of the kingdom of nature, and be justified in exclaiming at every step, "How countless are Your works, Lord! In wisdom You have made them all; the earth is full of Your creatures!"

THE FISH AND SEA CREATURES. Have they no Maker? We are amazed at the fertility of the finny tribes. The roe of a mackerel has been found to contain half a million of eggs; that of a flounder, about a million and a half; that of a codfish as many as nine million. The whole watery world is teeming with life. Is there no presiding Deity here?

The intelligent reader can pursue like trains of thought respecting the BIRDS OF THE SKIES. The feathers of those which are designed to be much on the wing are remarkably light, and their bones are hollow. Is not this a display of creative wisdom?

The BEASTS of the field, the beasts of the mountain, and the beasts of the desert would all in their turn furnish amazing illustrations of the creative skill of Him who made all things.

The existence of MAN, with his varied powers, the existence of society, with its untold resources and complications, the organization of plants and minerals, in short everything in nature, when rightly considered, show that there must be a great First Cause. It can be shown that the little chip of granite required a Creator, as truly as a living organism. He, therefore, who denies the being of a God, flies in the face of all science, of all creation, of all the facts in the case.

Nor can such monstrous folly be accounted for, without the belief of great depravity. "The carnal mind is enmity against God"—reveals the first great cause of atheism. But sometimes the human mind in casting off prejudices does not distinguish between them and truths, and so rejects both the vile and the precious together. Sometimes long, unbroken health and prosperity lead to the same result. Men feel no changes, and they say all things are stable of themselves, and that there is no God. Health chiefly keeps an atheist in the dark.

Sloth is another fruitful source of atheism. "The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason." It is no trifling task to arouse men from their natural torpor respecting divine things.

A bold and dashing spirit of speculation misleads others. They are ruined by their self-conceit. Others affect great singularity, and wish to be distinguished from all around them. This wind has blown many into hell. Atheism will ruin any community. It dissolves all the bonds of society. All, who rear their fabrics on unrighteousness, are but

preparing for a fearful overthrow. The higher they rise, the more dreadful will be their fall. The wickedness of atheism is truly dreadful. It subverts all religion; it makes it impossible for a man even to pray without stultifying himself. Aristotle said: "He, that does not confess a Deity, is not fit to live." Yet the sin of atheism is found in the dreadful wickedness of heart, which can cherish such vile notions, and deny the being of a God.

Shall the universe blush to own its Author? Shall a worm be ashamed to confess him who made it, and keeps it, and feeds it; and renders its existence a blessing? Lord Bacon says, "God never wrought a miracle to convince an atheist." The reason is the best in the world. He, who believes that the whole order of nature was established without an Infinite Cause, would easily believe that the laws of nature were suspended in the same manner. So that he, who will shut his eyes against the light before him, must continue in his blindness until he perishes in his own corruption.

4. IDOLATRY. Another sin forbidden in the first commandment is idolatry, which is committed when we direct religious worship to any but the true God alone; or when we ascribe to people or things properties peculiar to God; or when we unduly set the affections of our hearts upon any creature. Idolatry may exist in men's opinions, as when they believe that some divinity is found in the creatures of God, or in creatures of their own imaginations, as when men invest the gods of the heathen, or saints, or angels, or places, or things, with properties and powers, which belong to God alone. Such are in doctrine, idolaters.

Sometimes idolatry is merely practical, as when men set up themselves, their own elevation, their covetousness, their pleasures, their aggrandizement, or their ease—above all the obligations of pious duty.

The Bible throws no covering over any species of idolatry. He, who worships the sun, the moon or stars, does as truly sin against God as

he who worships a snake. He, who worships saints or angels, does as truly insult the Most High, as he who worships debauchees and devils. For the essence of the sin of idolatry is found in putting the creature in place of the Creator. If he shall be punished who worships a snake—shall he escape God's displeasure who worships yellow dust, called gold, or sinful pleasures, or the breath of worms, uttered in applause? It is very true that some forms of idolatry are more gross and shocking to the sensibilities of men than others. But in the gorgeous ceremony or in the secret observance of idolatrous rites, God may be as justly offended as in the most shameless and bloody practices.

There are two entirely different classes of objects, toward which we may practice idolatry—open or secret. We may desire the wages of unrighteousness, and be greedy of filthy lucre. That is all sinful from beginning to end. That, which God has absolutely forbidden, in all cases and at all times, is then lusted after. Or, we may be guilty of idolatry by an inordinate affection to lawful gains, and wealth obtained by means which men esteem honorable. An idol may, therefore, be something which we love, although we are forbidden to love it at all; or, it may be something which it is lawful to love in moderation, but which we love excessively. In either case, we set up some object before our affections in a way which draws our hearts from God. Whenever we esteem, or honor, or love, or fear, or serve, or obey, or confide in any person, or thing, or opinion, more than in God, or in any way that interferes with our duty to God, then we are guilty of idolatry. To whatever, or to whoever we yield obedience, we are servants unto that which we obey. Romans 6:16. When we put so high a value upon our ease, or houses, or lands, or husband, or wife, or children, or parents, or stations, or offices, or public favor—as that we pine away in rebellion against God at their loss—we do, by our conduct, cry out as Micah, "You've taken away all my gods—and I have nothing left!" Judges 18:24.

All things which perish in the using are dangerous to our souls, when, in apprehending our loss of them, we hold our remaining

mercies, the promises of the gospel, and the adorable Trinity, as of little value to us. The same is true when we are ready to make use of unlawful or doubtful means for regaining what we have lost.

Much idolatry is committed by unduly setting our affections on the things of this world. The Bible is explicit in stating that the covetous man is an idolater, Eph. 5:5; and that covetousness is idolatry, Col. 3:5. It further teaches that this love of the world cannot co-exist with true piety. "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world." 1 John 2:15,16.

This love of the world sometimes breaks out in atrocious wickedness, as when it leads to theft, or forgery, or murder. So intent was Ahab on getting Naboth's vineyard, that he would not rest until the dogs licked up his blood. Demas apostatized from Christianity, that he might secure the gains of idolatry in a heathen temple. Again, this love of the world greatly weakens our courage, and diminishes our zeal, and makes us languid in the service of God. This love of the world is the prevailing sin of multitudes in Christian countries.

This love of the world, uncured and unrepented of, will work the ruin of any soul. It is as true that the covetous shall not be saved, as that fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, sodomites, thieves, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners shall be excluded from the kingdom of God. 1 Cor. 6:9. Wealth may cause the wicked to be envied by fools, courted by sycophants, and applauded by the multitude; but all his gains will not help him in the day of wrath. They cannot cure a pain of body, nor relieve a pang of mind. In death, so far from comforting him, his wealth often adds terrors to the event. And in judgment and eternity all his earthly possessions will be but as fuel to kindle the fires of Tophet. For the riches of the wicked shall eat their flesh as it were fire. They have heaped treasure together against the last day. James 5:3.

Sometimes idolatry assumes the form of trust in something besides God. "Some trust in chariots and some in horses," Psalm 20:7; some make "gold their hope, or say to the fine gold, "You are my confidence," Job 31:24; some "have pleasure in the legs of a man," Psalm 147:10; some expect to be "saved by the multitude of an army," Psalm 33:16; some in sickness "seek not to the Lord, but to the physicians," 2 Chron. 16:12; some expect ease and quiet and a happy life through the "much goods which they have laid up for many years," Luke 12:19; some, despairing of help from God, betake themselves to those that have familiar spirits," 1 Sam. 28:7-14. All these practice a form of idolatry. They put a creature in the place of God. They rely upon means and instruments instead of the almighty agent. Let none trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God. "Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?" Isa. 2:22.

It is no less idolatry to be greatly afraid of man, or of the power of any creature. Our business is to sanctify the Lord Almighty himself, and let him be our fear, and let him be our dread. Isa. 8:13. It is as true now, as in former days, that "the fear of man brings a snare." Prov. 29:25. We cannot expect to please God and do our duty until we can say, "I will not be afraid what man can do unto me." "The Lord is my strength; of whom shall I be afraid?" Psalm 27:1. "I will not be afraid of ten thousand people, that have set themselves against me round about." Psalm 3:6. So that if we suffer for righteousness' sake, we may count ourselves happy. Let us never be afraid of the terror of man, neither be troubled. 1 Pet. 3:14. What sad work the fear of man made among some who believed on Christ, and yet did not own him, may be learned from John 12:42, 43. Even Peter, who truly loved him, and who seems to have been habitually intrepid, was more than once led into great errors by his fear of man. Mark 14:66-72; Gal. 2:11-13.

Sometimes men give themselves up to a service, which is practical idolatry. When we seek to please men, we are not the servants of Christ. Gal. 1:10. When we expect to be able to serve both God and

mammon, we miserably deceive ourselves. Cares and engagements, which so engross our time as to leave none for God's service, which make such demands upon our exertions as to leave us unfitted for devotions public and private, which fill us with excessive solicitude and carry us away far from the paths of simple and earnest piety—do make us idolaters.

The OBJECTS of practical idolatry are many, and wholly undeserving of our warm affection. When a man goes forth, crying, "Who will show us any good?" Psalm 4:6, he is a candidate for shame, and is on the high road to idolatry. When one is devoted to his appetite, he is already an idolater. "Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things." Phil. 3:19. When a man believes that the chief end of his existence is to provide the means of gratifying the appetites of himself and his family, and is content with a portion in this life—he is already an undone man. Psalm 17:14. Repentance alone can rescue him from an eternal overthrow. When we set an undue value upon our own bodily endowments, as strength, beauty, or agility; or upon our mental faculties, as memory, imagination, reason, wit, or judgment; or on our acquirements, as skill, learning, or eloquence—then we make idols of these things.

When Herod received the gross flatteries of the people, and gloried in his eloquence—he was eaten of worms and died. When the daughters of Zion were haughty, and walked with stretched-forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they went, they were but preparing themselves for the day of evil, when the Lord would take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments, and untold calamities should be poured upon them. Isa. 3:16-26.

How many too have an idolatrous regard to their good name and credit among men. They seem as if they would rather be out of the world than out of public favor. They are lovers of themselves and lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. They are high-minded. 2 Tim. 3:2-4; Romans 11:20. The least thing that goes cross to their

ambitious desires, causes them to display the very temper of Haman, the Agagite, the Jews' enemy. They are ready to inflict vengeance on any who cringe not before their brief authority.

Hare: "In short, there are idols for the worldly-minded, and idols for the generous. There are idols for the intemperate, and idols for the prudent. There are idols for the affectionate, and there is an idol for the selfish. Young and old have their idols. Married and unmarried have their idols. Rich and poor have their idols."

Self-will is the idol of many. To the will of God they are wholly unsubmitive. Should God take from them half of the temporal blessings he has heaped upon them; yes, if he should take but one of a thousand of their mercies from them—you would never find them adopting the language of Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21. They never say like the suffering Redeemer—Not my will, but yours be done, O God. Their will is directly counter to the will of God. They are of course idolaters.

Self-righteousness is also idolatry. It dares to put the morality, the prayers, the repentance, the orthodoxy, the zeal, the profession of religion, the ordinances of the gospel, the rites of religion—in the place of the infinite merits of the Son of God. If the self-righteous are saved, the Son of God lived and died in vain.

How many give to works, all over defiled—the honor, which is due to the spotless righteousness of Christ alone.

Against nothing is true religion more determinately set than against idolatry. When the evangelical prophet foretells the increase of Messiah's government, he says, "The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." The very next words are, "And the idols he shall utterly abolish." Isa. 2:17, 18. Again God calls, "Repent, and turn from your idols." Ezek. 14:6. When Hosea describes Israel as healed of his

backslidings, he makes him say, "What have I to do any more with idols?" Hosea 14:8.

But how little are the admonitions of Scripture heeded! Even Paul may cry, "For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? 2 Cor. 6:14-16. Yet how few are thereby moved to holy living!

When inspired writers wish to compare an act with some heinous sin, they sometimes liken it to idolatry. "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." 1 Sam. 15:23. And often do they call idolatry by the names of treachery and whoredom. Jer. 3:6-11. Compare parallel places. If any would see further the enormity of this sin, and the dreadfulness of its punishment, let him examine Eph. 5:5; Rev. 9:20, 21; 21:8, and parallel passages.

The end of some of the idolaters of this world has been exceedingly dreadful. One great British lord, when he came to die, said, "Had I but served my God, as I have my sovereign, he would not have left me thus." Another, no less distinguished, said, "I have always had my mind so occupied with the various affairs of the nation that I have had no time to examine Christianity or any other system of religion."

In the idolatry which adopts the heathen mythology, and erects temples to false gods, there is something so sottish and so debasing that it is a marvel men should ever fall into it. But as those who are likely to read this book are probably not worshipers of Jupiter, or Mars, or Buddha; and as the denunciations of spiritual idolatry already cited are no less applicable to the grosser forms, the subject is here dismissed, with the simple declaration of Jesus, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve." Matt. 4:10. Compare Deut. 6:13, 14; 10:20, Josh. 24:14; 1 Sam. 7:3.

IS THE CHURCH OF ROME IDOLATROUS?

This is a very solemn and practical question. In all countries nominally Christian, Romanism is urging her claims. Every man must examine and decide for himself. In discussing the question, let us accept the definition of idolatry given by Wiseman: "It is the giving to man, or to anything created, that homage, that adoration and that worship—which God has reserved unto himself." The church of Rome openly, habitually, and systematically gives to creatures honors, veneration, and worship due to God alone; and thus she is guilty of idolatry. This is a grave charge. No godly man can make it without sorrow of heart.

I. The church of Rome, in ascribing to the Pope titles and powers peculiar to God, is guilty of idolatry. Some of these he has claimed, and all of them he has accepted from his followers. In a great Lateran Council, one member called him "Prince of the world;" another, "King of kings, and Monarch of the earth;" another said of him, that "he had all power above all powers of heaven and earth." Bishop Newton says, "The Pope is styled and pleased to be styled Our Lord God the Pope, another God upon earth, King of kings and Lord of lords. The same is the dominion of God and the Pope. The power of the Pope is greater than all created power, and extends itself to things celestial, terrestrial and infernal. The Pope does whatever he wishes, even things unlawfully, and is more than God."

Cardinal Bellarmin says, "If the Pope could or should so far err as to command the practice of vice, and to forbid virtuous actions, the church were bound to believe vices to be good and virtue to be bad." Here, at the very threshold of this discussion, we are shocked by these amazing claims, and by the idolatry which concedes them. Is not here that Wicked One, who "will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God." 2 Thess. 2:4. Verily, it looks so much like the fulfillment of the prediction of Paul that while the world stands, we shall not find a more exact likeness.

2. In his turn, the Pope himself gives to a creature honors peculiar to God. In his first Encyclical letter, Pope Gregory XVI., who died but a few years ago, addressing all Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops and Bishops, speaking of the Virgin Mary, calls upon the clergy to implore "that she, who has been, through every great calamity, our Patroness and Protectress, may watch over us, writing to you, and lead our mind by her heavenly influence to those counsels which may prove most salutary to Christ's flock." In this matter of guidance, could Gregory have asked more from God himself? From the Bible we learn that He, whose eyes never slumber nor sleep, is a present help in trouble; but here the Pope says that Mary is "our Protectress through every great calamity." He adds, "But that all may have a successful and happy outcome, let us raise our eyes to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, who alone destroys heresies, who is our greatest hope, yes, the entire ground of our hope." This is plain. Whoever maintains truth by destroying heresies, and is our greatest hope, yes, the entire ground of our hope, is to us a God. What pious man ever put higher honor upon Jehovah himself, than by making Him his greatest hope, yes, the entire ground of his hope?

3. In full accordance with the Pope's declaration, are the books of devotion common in that communion. In them Mary is called upon more frequently than the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the "Catholic Manual," published with the approbation of Archbishop Whitfield, occur the following: "I confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary, ever Virgin, to blessed Michael, the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints that I have sinned," etc. How this differs from the practice of holy men of old! Daniel (9:4, 5,) said: "O Lord, the great and awesome God,...we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from your precepts and from your judgments." Addressing Jehovah, David said (Psalm 32:5,) "I acknowledged my sin unto you, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and you forgave the iniquity of my sin." Again he says to God, "Against you,

you only, have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight." Psalm 51:4. The publican prayed, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

Romanists say their religion is older than ours, but Daniel and David and the justified Publican lived before either Pope or Papist. Having finished the confession of sin, a Christian would have thought the proper application would have been first and alone to God. That was the course pursued by the worthies above named, and by Ezra. But in the Catholic Manual it is different. There we read thus: "Therefore, I beseech the blessed Mary, ever Virgin, the blessed Michael the Archangel, the blessed John the Baptist, the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints to pray to the Lord our God for me." Then follow two short petitions to God, and then this invocation: "O Holy Virgin, Mother of God! my Advocate and Patroness! pray for your poor servant, and show yourself a mother to me." Our Savior taught us to pray to our Father which is in heaven, but when did the Lord direct us to pray to our mother in heaven? Such idolatry is not taught by inspired men.

In the Bible (1 John 2:1,) are these words: "If any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous;" but in the Manual, everyone is taught to call Mary "My Advocate," and to seek her intercession. How then is the Romish doctrine older than ours? We agree with John in having but one "Advocate with the Father," and him "the Father hears always." He is able, he is willing, he is Jesus Christ the righteous.

The next thing in the Manual is in these words: "And you, O blessed Spirit!" One would have thought the address was now surely to God. But it is not so. "And you, O blessed Spirit, whom God in his mercy has appointed to watch over me, intercede for me this day, that I may not stray from the path of virtue." If any ask, What does this mean? he may look back a little and see that it is an invocation of your angel guardian. The next words are these: "You also, O happy Spirit, whose name I bear, pray for me," etc. Listen to the Bible. (1 Tim. 2:5.) "There is one God, and one Mediator of God and men, the man

Christ Jesus." This text is as plainly opposed to many mediators as it is to many gods. Yet the Manual teaches that we are to pray to our angel guardian and to the saint whose name we bear, to mediate in our behalf. Christ has no higher glory than that which belongs to him as Mediator. To rob him of that or any part of it is as wicked as to rob God of the honor of creating the world.

In the Bible (Heb. 4:15, 16,) we have these words: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." Thanks be unto God, who has taught us this best, this only way. But does it look like coming "with confidence" to stand off, and cry to Mary, to Michael, to John the Baptist, to Peter and Paul and others, and ask them to intercede for us? Paul told us to "look to Jesus," and to flee for refuge to the hope set before us in the gospel. The Bible (Heb. 7:25,) says of Jesus, "He is able also to save forever those who come unto God by himself; always living to make intercession for us." If we are to come to God by Jesus himself, we are not to come by his mother, or by any other creature. Blessed be God, that when Jesus was yet with us, he said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by ME." "I am the door." "Truly, truly, I say unto you, He who enters not by the door into the sheep-fold but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

And yet in the Manual we read, "O Holy Mother of God! deliver us from all dangers." On the 45th page is an address to Mary, in which she is styled "the bright Queen of heaven." The title Queen of heaven is found in Jer. 44:17, 25, 26. But it is in an alarming connection. God there declares his displeasure against the people for "making vows to the Queen of heaven." On the next page, she is addressed thus: "O Holy Mother! My Sovereign Queen, receive me under your blessed patronage, and special protection, and into the bosom of your mercy, this day and every day, and at the hour of my death. I

commend to you my soul and body, I commit to your care all my hopes and comforts, all my afflictions and miseries, my life and my death, that by your intercession and through your merits, all my actions may be directed and disposed according to your will and the will of your blessed Son."

As man, Christ never offered higher worship to God than when in death he said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Luke 23:46. Christ in glory never received higher worship from a holy martyr than when dying Stephen said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Yet in this Manual, all this honor and this worship are offered to Mary. The same book abounds with like evidences of idolatry. The same is true of all the formularies of worship designed for private use among Catholics.

A very favorite book among Catholics for some time past is entitled, "The Glories of Mary, Mother of God." Its author is St. Alphonsus Liguori. The edition at hand has the approval of Bishop Kenrick. The translator dedicates the work to Mary, "the Queen of Angels and of Men," with "all veneration and respect," and says it is "designed to increase the number and fervor of her worshipers." Here is the table of contents.

Chapter 1. How great should be our confidence in Mary, Queen of Mercy. How great our confidence should be in Mary as our mother. The great love borne us by Mary our mother. Mary is the refuge of repentant sinners.

Chapter 2. Mary is our life, since she obtains us the pardon of our sins. Mary is our life, because she obtains our perseverance. Mary renders death sweet to her servants.

Chapter 3. Mary is the hope of all the children of Adam. Mary is the hope of the sinner.

Chapter 4. Mary's readiness to assist those who invoke her. The power of Mary to defend those who invoke her in temptations.

Chapter 5. Necessity of Mary's intercession in order to obtain salvation.

Chapter 6. Mary is a powerful Advocate. Mary is a compassionate Advocate. Mary is mediatrix of peace between God and sinners.

Chapter 7. Mary is ever watchful to support our miseries.

Chapter 8. Mary preserves her servants from hell. Mary succours her servants in purgatory. Mary conducts her servants to heaven.

Chapter 9. The greatness of Mary's mercifulness and goodness.

Chapter 10. The sweetness of the holy name of Mary in life and in death.

The filling up of these chapters in sections is of the same shocking kind with what you would expect from this table of contents.

So also in "The Psalter of the Virgin" we find the last two Psalms of David thus thrown into parody, and applied to Mary instead of Jehovah: "Sing unto our Lady a new song: let her praise be in the congregation of the just," etc. Again, "Praise our Lady in her holiness; praise her in her virtues and miracles; praise her, you choirs of patriarchs and prophets; praise her, you army of martyrs; praise her, you crowds of doctors and confessors; praise her, you company of virgins and chaste ones; praise her, you orders of monks and anchorites; let everything that has breath praise our lady."

In that form of adoration, which, it is audaciously pretended, was revealed by an angel to St. Bernard, offering worship to many members of her body, we find among others these words: "I adore and bless your most blessed feet," etc.

The effect of this Mariolatry in fostering corruption is manifest in all Papal countries. Even pirates and robbers are often great worshipers of the saints. In "Graham's Three Months' Residence in the

Mountains East of Rome," pages 155, 161, he says: "Every robber had a silver heart, containing a picture of the Madonna and Child, suspended by a red ribbon to his neck, and fastened with another of the same color to his side... They talked pretty freely with their prisoners about themselves and their habits of life, which they maintained arose from necessity, rather than choice. They showed them the heart and picture of the Madonna, which each had suspended from his neck, saying, 'We know that we are likely to die a violent death, but in our hour of need we have these,' touching their muskets, to struggle for our lives with, and this,' kissing the image of the Virgin, 'to make our death easy.'

The following was admitted by a very prominent person at Rome in his conversations with Seymour, as reported in his "Mornings among the Jesuits," people. 104, 105. "The feeling of devotion to the Virgin has a mysterious something in it that will ever linger about the heart of the man who has ever felt it. It is one of those feelings that, once admitted, can never afterward be totally obliterated. There it still clings around the heart; and though there may be coldness to all other religious impressions; though there may be infidelity or even scorn upon all our faith; though there may be the plunging into the wild vortex of every sin, yet still there will not unfrequently be found even among the very worst of our people, a lingering feeling of devotion to the Blessed Virgin... Even in the most wild, wicked, and desperate men—even among the bandits in their worst state, there is always retained this devotion to Mary."

The church of Rome authorizes the worship of the crucifix. Thomas Aquinas, the great Romish doctor, teaches that the crucifix is to be worshiped with Latria. The Roman Pontifical expressly says, "Latria is due to the crucifix." The Catholic Missal enjoins on clergy and laity, "on bended knee to adore the crucifix." In the meantime the whole choir sing, "Your crucifix, O Lord, we adore." The Breviary says, "Your crucifix, O Lord, we adore." Again, "O venerable crucifix, that has brought salvation to the wretched, by what praise shall I

extol you?" In the service for Good Friday, in the Roman Missal, a hymn is given to be sung to the crucifix.

The church of Rome also requires the worship of the bread and wine in the Mass. The Council of Trent, the last general council of the Romish Church, expressly says, "There is, therefore, no room to doubt that all the faithful in Christ are bound to venerate this most holy sacrament, and to render thereto the worship of Latria, which is due to the true God, according to the custom always observed in the Catholic Church. Neither is it to be less adored because it was instituted by Christ our Lord, as has been stated." There can be no mistake here. The very highest worship which is due to the true God is to be rendered to the sacrament of the Eucharist. Faithfully is this carried out in the elevation and procession of the host. Thus, a wheaten cake and the juice of the grape are worshiped with the very worship offered to God, and a fearful anathema is denounced against those who teach otherwise.

The heathen worshiped Saturn, of whom their poets said that he ate his children as soon as they were born; but it was reserved for modern Rome to teach that the priest makes God with flour and water, and that then he and the people adore him and eat him!

These proofs of idolatry in the Church of Rome might easily be multiplied fifty-fold. Where is the difference between Pagan and Papal Rome? Pagan Rome worshiped demons, commonly dead men. Papal Rome worships dead men and women. Papal Rome claims that she invokes holy creatures, whereas Pagan Rome called upon wicked ones. But holy creatures are still creatures; and to call upon them is to put them in the place of God, and that is idolatry. Paul sends forth the challenge, "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" This clearly implies that religious service addressed to one that is not the object of religious faith is an absurdity. The invocation of saints, therefore, is either a mockery, or it at once exalts them to the rank of objects of religious belief.

Nor is it possible to prove that all whose names are in the Calendar are saints, or ever existed. Let any man prove that there ever lived such a person as St. Veronica, and by the same kind of evidence we can prove the existence of all the fabulous characters in Pagan mythology. But suppose all the saints named in the Calendar were now in heaven; not one of them possesses omnipresence. Not one of them can be in Rome, Vienna, London, Montreal, Mexico, St. Louis, New York, and all over the world at the same time; neither can they be in heaven and on earth at the same moment. Any act, therefore, which attributes to them omnipresence, is idolatry. Neither can any one of them possibly know all the needs, fears, sorrows, and temptations of all the pious in the church militant. Mary would need to have millions of ears and of understandings. She would require infinite intelligence; that is, she must be God in order to know the wants and wishes of all who now address her. To say or do anything that ascribes such knowledge to her is idolatry. This invocation of saints and angels goes upon the presumption that they pity and love us more tenderly and strongly than the Lord Jesus Christ.

A learned priest, holding high position at Rome, distinctly declared, "that God hears our prayers more quickly when they are offered through the blessed Virgin than when offered through any one else;" and "that even Christ himself was not so willing to hear our prayers, and did not hear them so quickly when offered simply to himself, as when they were offered through the blessed Virgin." Could greater indignity be offered to Christ than is expressed in such sentiments? He Himself said: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John 15:13. Did not Jesus die for us, even while we were yet enemies? How then dare any express by word or deed more confidence in the tenderness and love of any creature than of the Lord Jesus Christ? When on earth, he said, "Come unto ME, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" or as it is in the Douay Bible, "Come unto ME, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you."

Our Savior never directed the eyes of penitent sinners to his mother as a source of hope. When on earth, he was told, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you. He replied to him—Who is my mother, and who are my brothers? Pointing to his disciples, he said—Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." Matthew 12:47-50. Christ could not in more emphatic terms have declared that in his kingdom, a new and spiritual nature, leading to a holy life, infinitely exceeded in value all blood kinship, even with himself.

As to the doctrine that Mary is Queen of heaven and has the highest throne of any of Adam's race, it is a mere imagination, and contrary to the Scriptures. Christ expressly said, that to sit on his right hand and on his left hand in his kingdom should be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father, Matt. 20:23; Mark 10:40; never intimating that it should be to Mary, or Peter, or any one else known to us. We can, therefore, never prove that Mary is preferred before all the redeemed. But if she were, it would not alter the case, for the most eminent of all the redeemed is but a creature, helpless and dependent, and idolatry consists in giving to anything created—the homage and worship belonging to God alone.

When John mistook an angel for the Almighty, and fell at his feet to worship him, the angel said: "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!" Rev. 19:10.

How fully the ancient church testified by her example and teachings against such idolatry can be seen by consulting Church History, and especially the Antiquities of the Christian Church by Joseph Bingham.

5. UNGODLINESS.

Perhaps the most comprehensive definition of ungodliness is "Neglect of God." It involves a "disregard of God and his commands, and neglect of his worship; or it is any positive act of disobedience or irreverence." In all cases it supposes some degree of ignorance of the true nature of God and divine things. It implies a lack of reverence for God, and of right affections towards him. It supposes men to desire independence of God, to be unsubmissive to his will, to be ungrateful and disobedient. The ungodly may have many notions of the matters revealed in Scripture: but they are not clear nor sound. They are tainted with some degree of superstition or of impiety. They certainly will not endure the severity of God's judgment.

Ungodliness is always deficient in uprightness of conscience. It is not marked by what the Bible calls simplicity and godly sincerity. It is never self-sacrificing or self-renouncing. Whatever it may do for the sake of decency or public opinion, it never mortifies sin. Nor does ungodliness ever enter into the forms of religion with zest and animation. If it serves at all, it is with luke-warmness. It must be very evident that ignorance of God is directly a species of ungodliness, and is in the face of the first commandment. It is never the mother of true devotion, though it may be of superstition. It is everywhere condemned in Scripture. The Lord says: "For My people are fools; they do not know Me. They are foolish children, without understanding. They are skilled in doing what is evil, but they do not know how to do what is good." Jeremiah 4:22. Again: "The Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land: There is no truth, no faithful love, and no knowledge of God in the land! My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Hosea 4:1, 6.

All ignorance of God is aggravated by being to a considerable extent willful. Forgetfulness of God falls into the same class of sins. From the frequency with which it is charged in Scripture, it would appear to be very prevalent, and one of the most obstinate forms of rebellion. Nothing, no alarming judgments, no stupendous displays of mercy, can cure this folly, without the sovereign grace of God. Psalm 78:11; 106:13, 21. From one expression in Scripture, it would

seem to be the great sin of the whole heathen world; for there we read of "all the nations that forget God." Psalm 9:17.

To the same class of sins we must refer all false opinions, misapprehensions and unworthy thoughts of God. We are no more at liberty to liken God to some creature however exalted, than to a creature ever so debased. "We shouldn't think that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image fashioned by human art and imagination." Acts 17:29. Whenever we think that God is such an one as ourselves, we miserably degrade him. When we withhold from God any act of service or honor required by himself, we break the first commandment. That is a heavy charge, "You have not called upon me, O Jacob, you have not wearied yourselves for me, O Israel. You have not brought me sheep for burnt offerings, nor honored me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with grain offerings nor wearied you with demands for incense. You have not bought any fragrant calamus for me, or lavished on me the fat of your sacrifices. But you have burdened me with your sins and wearied me with your offenses." Isa. 43:22-24.

We greatly sin when we curiously and irreverently pry into God's secrets, Deut. 29:29, when we put ourselves above God, or make ourselves equal to God in our own estimation or plans, 2 Tim. 3:2-4; when we hate God, which must always be without a cause, John 15:25; when we yield to unbelief, Heb. 3:12; when we give up our hearts to heresy, Titus 3:10; when we believe God is pleased with our cruelty or with any of our sins, Acts 26:9, when we refuse to set our hopes in God, Psalm 78:22; when we refuse to believe the promises, and give up our minds to despair, as did Cain and Judas; when we refuse to be amended by God's sore judgments, Jer. 5:3; when we are not brought to repentance by his kind acts of providence, Romans 2:4, 5; when we cry Peace and safety, in the midst of our sins, Psalm 19:13; when we deny God's moral government over the world, Zeph. 1:12; when we tempt God, Matt. 4:7; when our zeal in religion is ignorant and indiscreet, Gal. 4:17; Romans 10:2; John 16:2; Luke

9:54, 55; when we are either dead or lukewarm in the service of God, Rev. 3:1, 16.

In all these cases we violate the first commandment. Nor do we less sin when we go after wizards and witches, and practice palmistry, spiritualism, and black magic, or use charms and spells. Gal. 5:20; Lev. 20:6; 1 Sam. 28:7, 11. The sin of such practices is not destroyed by any particular theory that we may hold on this subject.

We also violate the first commandment when we yield to any of the suggestions of the devil, Acts 5:3. Of course, apostasy from God is against this commandment. "If any man draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him." Heb. 10:38. "God will make his sword drunk in the blood of apostates." For a while they may seem to prosper, but it is the prosperity of the bullock preparing for the slaughter.

The Bible gives us solemn examples of the end of apostates, in the case of king Saul and of Judas Iscariot. The former of these was, in early life, modest, unambitious, mingling with God's people and even with his eminent ministers, himself a prophet among the prophets. But after he was raised to power, jealousy, malice, ambition, contempt of God and disobedience to the clearest commands began to mark his conduct. Bad became worse, until at length he openly apostatized by refusing to hearken to God, and by consulting the witch of Endor. His doom was as sudden as it was dreadful.

The case of Judas need not be here rehearsed. It is familiar to all. Nor is uninspired history without its solemn lessons on this subject. Early in life Julian embraced the Christian religion. For a time he seemed zealous for its truths. But before long a change came over him, and in course of time he became one of the bitterest enemies of Christianity. Against Christ he was exceedingly enraged. At one time he raised his dagger in the presence of his army and publicly defied the Son of God. The longer he lived, the more envenomed he became. But such wickedness could not be allowed to go unchecked forever. The day of retribution approached. He received a mortal wound in

battle and lay weltering in his own blood. After a while he gathered up a handful of the clotted gore and threw it into the air, exclaiming, 'You have conquered, O you Galilean!'

This commandment also forbids the giving of the praise of any good that has befallen us, or is possessed by us, to ourselves, to fortune or to idols. Deut. 8:17; Dan. 4:30; 5:23; 1 Sam. 6:9.

All impatience under God's dispensations, all discontent and murmuring, all foolish and wicked speeches respecting God, are also sins against this commandment. Psalm 73:2-17; Jude 16; Phil. 2:14; 1 Cor. 10:10. Some never show cheerfulness in bowing to God's will. Others openly fret against it. Many sin by taking no thankful notice of mercies received and remaining.

Leighton: "There is more joy in enduring a cross for God, than in the smiles of the world; in a private, despised affliction, without the name of suffering for his cause, or anything in it like martyrdom, but only as coming from his hand, kissing it and bearing it patiently, yes, gladly, for his sake, out of love to him, because it is his will so to try you. What can come amiss to a soul thus composed? I wish that even they who have renounced the vain world, and have the face of their hearts turned Godwards, would learn more this happy life, and enjoy it more; not to hang so much upon sensible comforts, as to delight in obedience, and to wait for those at his pleasure, whether he gives much or little, any, or none. Learn to be still finding the sweetness of his commands, which no outward or inward change can disrelish, rejoicing in the actings of that divine love within you. Continue your conflicts with sin, and though you may at times be foiled, yet cry to him for help, and getting up, redouble your hatred of it and attempts against it. Still stir this flame of God. That will overcome—'many waters cannot quench it.' It is a renewed pleasure to be offering up yourself every day to God. Oh! the sweetest life in the world is to be crossing yourself to please him; trampling on your own will to follow his."

Three other sins against this commandment should not pass without notice. One of them consists in resisting and grieving the Holy Spirit. How dreadful this sin is, may be learned from the fact that inspired men speak of it as if it were the sum of all wickedness. Thus said Stephen to his impenitent audience: "You stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you do always resist the Holy Spirit." Acts 7:51.

Another form of breaking this commandment is the rejection of Jesus Christ. Without him we can do nothing. John 15:5. He is the sole and sufficient author of salvation to lost men. To reject him is to reject all the counsels of God for our restoration to the divine favor. The Scriptures employ the most alarming language respecting this sin. Christ himself says, "If you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins." John 8:24. "Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?" Heb. 10:28, 29.

The last form of breaking this commandment is by insincerity of heart in religious worship. When Christ was on earth, he used more alarming and solemn language to hypocrites than to all others. Their case is indeed sad, and their guilt heinous. Hopkins: "The hypocrite calls on God to be an accomplice and partaker with him in his crimes; and so makes God to be the patron of sin—who will be the Judge and condemner of sin."

The Second Commandment

"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments." Exodus 20:4-6

God never gave a command more solemn in its terms, or in the sanction connected with it. Nor are we left in doubt respecting the vast importance of this precept. On this point other parts of God's word are full and urgent. Let us first consider the sanction annexed to it. It is very weighty. The words in which it is delivered seem to have been chosen for the purpose of striking terror into the hearts of the rebellious, and of giving the highest encouragement to the obedient.

1. We have an assertion of God's rightful authority and sovereignty: for I the Lord your God, etc. The phrase rendered the Lord your God is precisely the same as found in the preface to the commandments, already considered. It points to the foundation of all religious obligation. It is commonly thought to be a fair mode of estimating the importance of a principle by the frequency with which it is stated in Scripture. Applying this rule to the present case, there is no more important truth than this, I am the Lord your God. "He is your Lord, and worship you him." "Come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God." Psalm 45:11; 95:6, 7.

From the fact that the Scriptures frequently compare idolatry to whoredom, some suppose that the phrase your God, has special reference, not only to a covenant relation in general, but to a covenant relation well represented by that of marriage; and so Isaiah says: "Your Maker is your husband; the Lord Almighty is his name; and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called." Is. 54:5. See also Rev. 15:3, 4. There can be

no true religion, except as the doctrine of God's sovereign and rightful authority over us is received.

2. As the human mind is exceedingly prone to practical atheism, and to idolatry also, God takes pains to inform us respecting his nature. He says, I am a JEALOUS God. The word here rendered God is not Elohim, but El. This latter word rendered God, when used as an adjective, signifies strong or mighty; and when used as an abstract term, it signifies might or power. As a name of God, standing alone, it is chiefly found in the poetic parts of Scripture. It occurs about two hundred and forty times in the Hebrew Bible, and in a majority of cases refers to the true God. Whether we render it here God or strong, the sense is the same, for the Lord is mighty, nor can any number of people or nations resist his omnipotence. He is able to punish any insult that is offered him by any of his creatures. He is strong and jealous, too.

The same thing is repeatedly declared in Scripture. "You shall worship no other God; for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Ex. 34:14. Compare Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15. The word rendered jealous could not be better translated. Elsewhere the corresponding noun is used to express the strongest passion of man towards man: Num. 5:14, 15, 18, 25, 29, 30. It is several times rendered zeal; 2 Kings 19:31; Psalm 69:9; Isa. 9:7; 37:32; 59:17. A like word is used, Numbers 25:13, where it is said, that Phinehas was zealous for his God. So here the meaning is, that God has a zeal for his own honor and glory. The special reference here is doubtless to the intense emotions of men respecting their domestic peace.

Hopkins: "Jealousy is an affection or passion of the mind, by which we are stirred up and provoked against whatever hinders the enjoyment of that which we love and desire. The cause and origin of it is love; the effect of it is revenge." In its very nature it is apprehensive of worship. A sovereign is jealous of his authority. Freemen are jealous of their rights. The term always expresses exceedingly strong disapprobation and indignation against the

withholding of that which is our due, particularly in the marriage relation. Jealousy is never satisfied except with perfect fidelity. No compliments, no services however beautiful in themselves, and no rewards, can quiet its imperious demands. "Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy, for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land." Zeph. 1:18. No virtuous husband will rest satisfied with less than the love and fidelity of his wife. Nor will a holy God be content with less than the heart, the homage, and the holy living of his people. So he has said: "I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto you: they have well said all that they have spoken. Oh, that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and their children forever." Deut. 5:28, 29.

Nor will jealousy ever rest satisfied until its doubts are removed. It is exceedingly eager in its pursuit of what it supposes to be evidence calculated to put an end to all uncertainty. God indeed is never in doubt about the state of our minds; for he searches the heart. "God is light; and in him is no darkness at all." 1 John 1:5. His searching will therefore tear away every disguise, and bring out the whole truth. Men are never more determined to risk everything than in securing and guarding the sanctity of their own marriage. Nor does their indignation ever rise higher than against any crime, which destroys their domestic peace. "Jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which has a most vehement flame." Jealousy is indeed "the rage of a man; therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance." Cant. 8:6; Prov. 6:34. So the Almighty threatens: "The Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven." Deut. 29:20.

3. God declares that, as Governor of the world, he is not indifferent to the sins of men; but that he visits iniquity. The word visits is used

in Scripture both in a good and in a bad sense. It is found in a good sense in Gen. 21:1, 1. 24; Ex. 13:19; Psalm 80:14; Luke 1:68, 78, 7:16; Acts 15:14. It is found in a bad sense in the following passages. Psalm 59:5; Jer. 5:9, 29; Jer. 9:9; Isa. 23:17. 1 Sam. 7:16.

To visit iniquity, to visit transgression and to visit sins are phrases which always threaten punishment. The meaning, therefore, is, that God will terribly and condignly punish infractions of this commandment.

4. The Lord declares that his jealousy is such that he visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those who hate him. This declaration is repeated in so many words in Ex. 34:7; Num. 14:18; Deut. 5:9. Nor is there any doubt respecting the genuineness of the text, or the fairness of the translation. The following passages of Scripture are supposed to be to a considerable extent parallel or explanatory. "I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he, came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not." 1 Sam. 15:2, 3. This command was given to Saul, nearly four hundred years after the Israelites had entered Canaan. So that not a single man who had opposed Israel in the march to Canaan was then living; but only the descendants of such. Again: "Because Ahab humbled himself before God, the Lord brought not the evil upon his house in his days, but in his son's days." 1 Kings 21:29. In a time of great public calamity, when the heathen had come into God's inheritance and had defiled the holy temple, Asaph prayed, "O remember not against us former iniquities." Psalm 79:8. When Belshazzar was suddenly cut down, a part of the song sung by the children of Israel was in these solemn words: "The seed of evildoers shall never be renowned. Prepare slaughter for his children, for the iniquity of their father; that they do not rise, nor possess the land." Isa. 14:20, 21. Again: "You show loving-kindness unto thousands, and recompense the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them." Jer. 32:18. Again: "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon

the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom you slew between the temple and the altar." Matt. 23:35.

Thus it appears that whatever God intended to teach us by such language, he designed deeply to impress it on our minds, because he repeats it very often. The following additional remarks on the threatening contained in the second commandment are here offered.

1. Candor requires the admission that it is an exceedingly solemn threatening, and well suited to make men stop and think, and fear before the Lord. All threatenings to visit iniquity are alarming, because they are declarations of the inflexible justice of God. But when God declares that our moral conduct shall have a bearing on our posterity for generations, surely none but the desperately hardened can be insensible.

2. Candor no less requires the admission that this threatening is not of easy explication. The difficulty arises principally on three accounts. 1. It seems to be counter to the sense of justice and equity felt by men generally. But we should not forget that man is not a competent judge of the best rules for conducting a moral government; and that, therefore, any objection arising from his views of things ought to be stated with great modesty. He ought to be willing patiently to wait and carefully consider the whole case. Many things seem harsh or unfair, until the principles, on which they are founded, are well understood.

2. Another source of difficulty arises from the fact that in organizing the Jewish commonwealth under the theocracy, and in providing for the administration of penal justice, God expressly ordained that "the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin." Deut. 24:16. This statute was observed in Israel in their generations; 2 Chron. 25:3, 4. So that in the threatening connected with the second commandment, there is

involved no principle which ought to make our laws harsh to the descendants of wrongdoers. God himself thus teaches.

3. A still greater difficulty arises from the declarations of God made elsewhere. In Jeremiah 31:29, 30, God says, "In those days people will no longer say, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' Instead, everyone will die for his own sin; whoever eats sour grapes--his own teeth will be set on edge." "Those days" here mentioned are shown by the context to refer especially to gospel times, when the Mosaic dispensation should be fully ended. See verses 31-34. We have a like declaration, but much more extended, in the prophecy of Ezekiel, (18:2-28.)

Whatever may be the import of the threatening in the second commandment, or of these declarations by the prophets, we are certain that they would entirely harmonize if we correctly understood them. The right course, therefore, for us to pursue, is to receive them all, as they are indeed, the word of God, and reverently study to find out what they teach. It is not right to array one of these passages or classes of texts of Scripture against the other. No man is at liberty to receive one or more of them more fully or cordially than the others.

3. The evil threatened in the second commandment is said to extend to the third and fourth generation. This is the fundamental passage on the subject; and yet in Jeremiah 32:18, there is no such limitation, but the prophet declares that God "recompenses the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of the children after them." And in some other passages already cited, it appears that the curse extended beyond the fourth generation. So also in the punishment of the ten tribes, the evil consequences were felt far beyond four generations. The third and fourth generation are particularly mentioned, "partly, because a parent may live so long, and see the dreadful effects of his sin in his children's children; partly, because so far the memory of a father may extend, and be matter of imitation to his children; and partly, to show the difference between his exercise of justice and mercy, as appeals by comparing the next verse."

4. Some have supposed that we find an explanation of the whole principle here involved in the ruin of our race by the sin of Adam. But this cannot be admitted. Adam was a public person, the federal head and representative of his posterity. Had he stood his probation without sinning, they all would have been forever confirmed in holiness and in the favor of God. But he sinned and cut off from all possibility of standing accepted on the ground of the covenant of works everyone who descended from him by ordinary generation. No man is now so the representative of his posterity as that they will be lost for his sin alone; or that they will be saved on the ground of his piety.

5. Some have thought that the threatening here contained has exclusive reference to idolaters. No doubt idolatry is exceedingly offensive to God. So much is God incensed at it that he directed the inhabitants of idolatrous cities in Palestine to be exterminated. Deut. 13:12-17. And it is true that the most terrible denunciations of Heaven's wrath, made in Scripture, or executed in providence, are against idolatry and kindred sins. Maimonides confines the curse in the second commandment to idolaters, because, he says, they are haters of God; and it cannot be denied that wherever God specifies the particular class of sinners, against whose posterity he threatens evil for the sins of their ancestry, idolaters, persecutors, bloody men, or other atrocious offenders are the subjects of consideration. There seems to be something exceedingly dreadful in the operation of idolatry on communities. It strikes so deep into the very essence of moral character, that to root it out from among a people, where it has once obtained acceptance, seems to be all but impossible. Jer. 2:11. Even after it is driven from street and temple, it lurks in families and chambers; and images are often carried concealed under the vestments. Thus it is apt to be perpetuated from generation to generation."

While we may admit as much as the foregoing, it is not true that the curse is confined to idolaters. All the unregenerate hate God. Romans 8:7. Atheists, infidels, all willful violators of any of the

commandments, and all rejecters of the gospel of Jesus Christ are the enemies of God by wicked works. The special reason of speaking of idolaters as those that hate God is not merely to express that simple truth, but to cut off all pretext and pretense of love to him on the part of those who essentially corrupt his worship.

6. It cannot be denied that temporal calamities have been sent and are still sent on children in consequence of the wickedness of their ancestry. We see this principle carried out in all countries, whatever may be the form of government. The children of the thief, of the drunkard, and of the flagrant wrongdoer—do always commence life under great disadvantages. The grace of God, leading to uprightness, may enable them to overcome all these. But in some cases vice transmits diseases or entails poverty, from the effects of which, no virtuous living on the part of the children relieves them. Moreover, the Scriptures record instances of temporal suffering in children, even where the damning guilt of the parents' sin has been forgiven: "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die. Howbeit, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto you shall surely die." 2 Sam. 12:13, 14. The evil here threatened is exclusively temporal. So David understood it; for after his child was dead, he expressed strong confidence not only that his child was immortal and happy in heaven, but that he should soon join him. See verse 23.

Poole thinks that all the evil threatened in the second commandment relates to temporal punishments. But this cannot be proven any more than that all the mercy promised in the next verse relates to temporal prosperity.

7. While for the glory of his justice, the honor of his kingdom, and the good of his chosen—the Lord may afflict even the godly children of idolaters and of other great offenders with temporal calamities, for the sins of their ancestors—yet none of the pains of eternal death

shall fall on the humble, penitent believer, either for his own sins, the sins of his immediate progenitors, or for the first sin of his representative Adam; just as the Most High grants eternal mercies to none of the children of those who love him, if they forsake the God of their fathers, and walk on in sin. So he clearly declares, "When the son has done that which is lawful and right, and has kept all my statutes and has done them, he shall surely live;" and, "When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity and dies in them; for his iniquity that he has done shall he die." Ezek. 18:19, 26.

Thus, individual responsibility is fully retained; and a door of mercy is opened wide to all who, forsaking the evil practices of their ancestors, renouncing the works of the devil, and fleeing for refuge to the hope set before them in the gospel, accept the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Thus Hezekiah, though the son of wicked Ahaz, who had greatly defiled the house of God, was a truly pious man. walked with God, had great temporal prosperity, and died in faith.

8. Where children walk in the footsteps of their wicked ancestors and thus justify all their wickedness, as the descendants of idolaters and of other heinous violators of God's law are very apt to do, there is no difficulty in perceiving at once the perfect justice of the evil here threatened. Psalm 49:13. That indeed is visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children in the most terrible form. Spiritual judgments are the most terrific of all judgments. To be given over on any account, particularly in imitation of the wickedness of our forefathers, to work iniquity with greediness, is the heaviest of Heaven's curses.

9. It would probably quiet some of our rebellious thoughts respecting the evil here threatened, if we would duly remember the following things.

1. Sin is a horrible evil. It deserves God's wrath and curse both in this life and that which is to come. God has never punished it excessively.

He never will punish it more than it deserves.

2. We are all "by nature the children of wrath." None of us are in ourselves innocent. As we come into the world, we are under the just curse of the covenant of works.

3. It is of God's mere grace, that kindness is shown to any of our race. No man deserves mercy at the hand of God, either for himself or his posterity.

10. Let us for a moment suppose that there was no such principle as social liability incorporated into the government of the world; that the husband could not be made to pay the fines imposed upon his wife; that wives and children were subjected to no inconveniences on account of the criminal conduct of husbands and fathers; would we thus be led reasonably to expect an improved state of morality? Lord Bacon says, "He who marries gives pledges to society." That is, he gives additional pledges of his good behavior as a citizen. So also the father has motives for good behavior, which can never be felt by the childless. The love of our offspring is not only natural, but exceedingly strong. Even infidels, who have lived and died reckless of their own spiritual interests, have been known to exhort their dying children to believe in Christ; so mightily did parental love, at least for the time, over-ride their skepticism and enmity.

But suppose when a man was tempted to do wrong, he could truly say, "My evil conduct shall injuriously affect no one but myself," would not one of the strongest inducements to resist temptation, in many cases, be quite taken away? Even a heathen said, "It is nothing strange and absurd for the posterity of lewd and wicked men to suffer what belongs to them."

11. Hopkins: "God does not always observe this method of revenging the offences of fathers upon their children in temporal punishments. Neither does this threatening in the commandment oblige him to do it, but only shows what their sins deserve, and what he might justly

do, if he pleased to use his power and prerogative... If children themselves be pious and holy, this may be for their comfort, that whatever afflictions they lie under, shall be for their benefit and advantage; and they are not punishments to them, but only fatherly corrections and chastisements: for the very things which they suffer may be intended by God as a punishment to their ancestors, but a fatherly correction to themselves; and what to the one is threatened as a curse, to the other may prove a blessing and an advantage, as it gives them occasion of exercising more grace and so of receiving the greater glory."

12. It may be well here to present the views of some of the best commentators on this threatening.

Diodati: "As concerning eternal judgment upon the soul, everyone dies for his own iniquity. Jer. 31:30. But for the father's sins, the children are often punished in body, in goods, and other things, which they hold, and derive from their fathers. Num. 14:33; 2 Sam. 12:11, 21:5, 14. And besides, God oftentimes curses the generation of the wicked, withdrawing his grace and Spirit from it, whereby imitating their parents' wickedness, they are punished in the same manner." 1 Sam. 15:2; Matt. 23:32, 35.

Thomas Boston: "Not that God properly punishes one for another's sin; but that from the parents' sin, he often takes occasion to punish children for their own sins, and such their parents' sins oftentimes are by imitation, or some way approving of them."

Ridgley has three remarks on the threatening contained in the second commandment:

1. "That though God does not punish children with eternal destruction for the sins of their immediate parents, yet these oftentimes bring temporal judgments on families.

2. These judgments fall heavier on those children that make their parents' sins their own, by approving them and committing the

same.....

3. Whatever temporal judgments may be inflicted on children for their parents' sins, shall be sanctified and redound to their spiritual advantage, as well as end in their everlasting happiness, if they do not follow their bad example."

Scott: "If Israel, or any Israelites, revolted to idolatry, they would be deemed haters of God; (as the wife would be supposed to hate her husband, when she preferred every worthless stranger to him,) and the national covenant, with its peculiar blessings, being forfeited, the sins of the parents would involve their offspring in the punishment, even to the third and fourth generation."

Stowell gives much the same explanation. He says, "God's dealing with the seed of Abraham must be examined on the principles of that national covenant into which he entered with that people."

13. There is nothing in this threatening, which goes counter to the exceeding great and precious principle laid down by the apostle. (1 Cor. 7:14.) "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." So that the wickedness of one parent can never make null and void the covenant of God with the other believing parent. In this case, as in many others, though sin abounds, grace does much more abound. God, who would not have destroyed Sodom had there been ten righteous people in it; God, who spares the world for the sake of his elect that are in it—will never put beyond the reach of his grace, or the pale of his covenant, the child, either of whose parents is found faithful with God, except for the personal sins of such child.

14. It is an exceedingly great relief to a tender heart to find this declaration of God's justice immediately followed by a promise unspeakably more large and glorious, namely: "showing mercy unto thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments." So

that even here at the foot of Sinai, "mercy rejoices over judgment," triumphing over it. James 2:13. Compare Ezek. 33:11. The chief difficulty respecting this promise is in bringing our hearts to understand and embrace the exceeding riches of the grace here offered. The thousands here spoken of are not thousands of people merely, but thousands of generations. The context teaches as much, and this is the interpretation approved by a great body of the soundest expositors, among them John Calvin. The promise will stand forever good: "I will be a God unto you, and to your seed after you." Gen. 17:7. And Solomon says, "The children of a just man are blessed after him." Prov. 20:7. "This," says Calvin, "is not only the effect of a religious education, which is of no small importance, but it is also in consequence of the blessing promised in the covenant, that the grace of God shall perpetually remain in the families of the pious." So that if any of the effects of divine wrath are felt to the third and fourth generation of gross offenders, mercy is shown to thousands of generations of the truly pious. If God is glorious in holiness, and terrible in justice; he is matchless in loving-kindness, and unparalleled in tender mercy. And that we may labor under no misapprehension as to the infallible proof of love to God, it is stated in the same connection that it is evinced by keeping his commandments. Jesus himself repeated the same truth: "He who has my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me." John 14:21.

Under the influence of the due consideration of these great truths,

1. I am Jehovah;
2. I am your God, and
3. I am a jealous God; and
4. of the alarming threatening of visiting iniquity,
5. of the very glorious promise of showing mercy.

1. What the second commandment REQUIRES.

The first commandment clearly points out the one, glorious, exclusive object of religious worship. The second commandment chiefly relates to the manner in which such worship is to be offered to him. The word, worship, either means civil respect, or religious reverence. It is in the latter sense that it is here employed. The worship of God consists, says Buck, "in paying a due respect, veneration, and homage to the Deity under a sense of religious obligation to him." Fisher says, "Religious worship is that homage and respect we owe to a gracious God, as a God of infinite perfections, by which we profess subjection to, and confidence in him—as our God in Christ, for the supply of all our needs; and ascribe the praise and glory that is due to him, as our chief good, and only happiness."

Hopkins: "The true and spiritual worship of God in general is an action of a pious soul, wrought and excited in us by the Holy Spirit; whereby, with godly love and fear, we serve God acceptably according to his will revealed in his word; by faith embracing his promises, and in obedience performing his commands; to his glory, the edification of others, and our own eternal salvation."

One of these definitions may be more full than another; but they are all right as far as they go. While the second commandment, no less than all the other precepts of the decalogue, should be regarded as designed to regulate our tempers, it no doubt has special reference to the external worship of God. The things forbidden in it relate to outward acts. It is true the most gross form of violating God's worship is mentioned, just as the most flagrant form of sinning against our neighbor's life, and peace, and property are mentioned in the sixth, seventh and eighth commandments.

1. Let us then consider God's worship. Whenever worship is acceptable to God, it must have the following properties:

1. It must be SINCERE and genuine. Hypocrisy is odious to all right-minded men; to God it is detestable. Without this heartiness in God's service, it is impossible to "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." I Chron. 16:29. An attempt to serve him without sincerity calls in question the Divine Omniscience, and is a gross insult to his infinite purity and majesty. Of course true worship will be cheerful, free from moroseness, and from sanctimonious grimace. It never teaches men to disfigure their faces. It abhors whining cant. In all approaches to God, let the oil of gladness run through our souls.

2. It must be marked by solemnity and REVERENCE, excluding levity, vanity, and profaneness of mind in the worshiper. Nothing can be more offensive to God than rushing thoughtlessly into his presence. "Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few." Eccles. 5:1, 2. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence by all those who are about him." Psalm 89:7.

3. All worship offered to God must be HUMBLE. It is with the lowly that he takes up his abode; while the proud he sends empty away. The great difference between the Pharisee and Publican in the temple was, that the former was bloated with self-conceit, while the latter was bowed down in deep self-abasement. "God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble."

4. God's worship must be INTELLIGENT. If it may be truly said to us as to the Samaritans, "You worship you know not what," our service is utterly worthless. Charnock: "Worship is the fruit of knowledge.... There is no worship acceptable to God without the knowledge of Christ.... Without this knowledge of God, we could never worship him in a right manner.... Whatever the principle of the worship is, it must have knowledge for the foundation. Without a knowledge of God we cannot regard him; without a strong knowledge, we cannot

love him ardently.... When we understand not his justice, we shall presume upon him; when we are ignorant of his glorious majesty, we shall be crude with him; unless we understand his holiness, we shall leap out of sin to duty; and the risings of our lusts will be as nimble as the desires of our souls. If we are ignorant of his excellency, we shall lack humility before him; if we have not a deep sense of his omniscience, we shall be careless in his presence."

Ignorance of the true God will clearly lead to atheism or to the worship of false gods; while a true saving knowledge of him will surely preserve us from so great sins. Gal. 4:8. Dan. 3:18.

5. Our worship of God must be SPIRITUAL. Its seat must be in the soul. So taught Christ himself: "The hour comes, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeks such to worship him. God is a spirit; and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." John 4:23, 24.

6. Our worship must be according to DIVINE DIRECTIONS. Every sovereign, as every court, has a right to regulate the manner in which petitioners shall approach. Nothing more effectually destroys all acceptableness in worship, than that our fear towards God be taught by the precept of men. Isa. 29:13. Compare Matt. 15:9.

Acceptable worship is therefore pure and simple, and free from superstition, pomp, and idle ceremony. All will-worship and all displays of magnificence invented by man are an offence to God. True worship, like real "beauty, when unadorned is adorned the most." We may not, therefore devise any false worship, Num. 15:37-40; nor recommend it to others, Deut. 13:6, 7, 8; nor enjoin it upon others, Hosea 5:11; nor use it ourselves, 1 Kings 11:33; nor in any way countenance it. Rev. 2:14.

7. All acceptable worship must be offered in true FAITH. "Without faith it is impossible to please him; for he who comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently

seek him." Heb. 11:6. Mason: "There lacks nothing but a believing prayer—to turn every promise into a performance." Unless we have this faith, the most appropriate public worship will soon become a burden, and we shall cry out, "What a weariness is it!" Mal. 1:13. Then we may indeed draw near to God with our mouth and honor him with our lips, but our hearts will be far from him. Matt. 15:8.

8. All acceptable worship must be offered to God BY AND THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, the only Mediator. "Hitherto have you asked nothing in my name; ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full." John 16:24. "If you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." John 14:14. The Savior takes our imperfect services, puts them into his golden censer, sprinkles them with his own most precious blood and presents them before God for a sweet-smelling savor.

Worship is either internal or external. Internal worship consists in right thoughts and intentions, right views and desires, humility of soul united with warm and tender affections towards God. This is the fountain of all religious service, pleasing to the Most High. It is of great price in the sight of him who knows our thoughts afar off. When some one spoke to Leighton of his very valuable library, he said, "One devout thought is worth it all." But there is no contrariety between internal and external worship. The former naturally leads to the latter. In external worship, we use words and actions expressive of inward emotions. That worship exercising both soul and body is proper, can be made manifest in many ways.

1. We have the examples of good men recorded in Scripture and of the Savior himself.
2. External worship is specially ordained in many parts of Scripture. Time would fail us to cite all the texts pertinent.
3. Just so sure as we feel aright towards God, our pious affections will seek suitable modes of outward expression. Matt. 12:35; Luke

6:45; Romans 10:10.

4. Our bodies are no less redeemed than our souls. If the soul shall be glorified, so shall the body; if the soul shall be lost, so shall the body. The law is explicit: "Glorify God in your body and in our spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. 6:20. Compare Matt. 16:24.

5. Suitable outward worship greatly aids the spirit of devotion and cultivates pious affections. Many Scriptures say as much.

In some things in external worship, God has left us free to do that which seems to us most becoming and convenient. But he has prescribed the entire matter, and motive, and spirit with which he will be worshiped.

Worship is again distinguished into that which is taught us both by the light of nature; and that which is taught us by revelation alone. There is nothing in nature to suggest that the offering of bloody sacrifices would be acceptable to God. That was learned by revelation alone. The same is true of the sacraments instituted by Christ. On the other hand, prayer and thanksgiving seem to be taught by the light of nature. At least all nations have practiced them.

But enough of distinctions. The Westminster Assembly thus sums up the requirements of this precept: "The duties required in the second commandment are, the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God has instituted in his word; particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ; the reading, preaching, and hearing of the word; the administration and receiving of the sacraments; church government and discipline; the ministry and maintenance thereof; religious fasting; swearing by the name of God; and vowing unto him; as also the disapproving, detesting, opposing all false worship; and, according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry." This general view of what is required in this commandment must for the present suffice.

As the commandment itself is in the negative form, it will be most convenient to consider the various topics in detail, when we shall speak of—

1. What the second commandment FORBIDS.

1. How the Church of Rome breaks this commandment by idolatry. The church of Rome has long found this a very troublesome commandment. Her devices for evading its force are many.

Every kind of representation of the object of worship by casting melted metals, by carving, and by painting, is here forbidden. The graven images were worshiped as the representation or habitation of some deity. They presented to the eye of the worshiper something claiming religious veneration. So that any representation of the true God or of a false God would have been an idol. It was an image used in religious worship.

The last general council of that corrupt church, the Council of Trent, says, "Let them [i.e. all bishops, and others who have the care and charge of teaching] teach that the images of Christ, of the Virgin, Mother of God, and of other saints, are to be had and retained, especially in churches, and due honor and veneration paid to them." None will deny that in all countries, where worship is conducted by ministers of the church of Rome images do abound, and that the devotees do bow down before them, and kiss them, as Trent directs. All this is directly in the teeth of the second commandment. That the church of Rome authorizes a like use of pictures is evident from her uniform usage, and from the decrees of the same council of Trent: "Let the Bishops teach further, that by the records of the mysteries of our redemption, expressed in pictures or other similitudes, men are instructed and confirmed in those articles of faith which are especially to be remembered and cherished; and that great advantages are derived from all sacred images, not only because the people are thus reminded of the benefits and gifts which are bestowed upon them by Christ, but also because the divine miracles

performed by the saints, and their salutary examples, are thus placed before the eyes of the faithful, that they may give thanks to God for them, order their lives and manners in imitation of the saints, and be excited to adore and love God, and cultivate piety. Whoever shall teach or think in opposition to these decrees, let him be accursed."

That in practice the Romish church does carry out this decree, none will deny. That she goes still further, and represents the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in pictures, is also matter of notoriety. In one of the public buildings of the Jesuit College at Georgetown, D. C. was, and perhaps still is, a picture representing the Trinity. A draft of the picture and certificates of its existence have been before the public for more than twenty years. They are now in the author's possession, and have been seen by many. That all this is according to the teaching of the doctrines of the Romish church, none will deny. That all this is directly contrary to the express teaching of God's word may be learned by a reference to its earliest books.

Thus says Moses: "The Lord spoke unto you out of the midst of the fire: you heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only you heard a voice. Take you therefore good heed unto yourselves; for you saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spoke unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: lest you corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth. Take heed unto yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of anything, which the Lord your God has forbidden you. For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." Deut. 4:12, 15-18, 23, 24.

It is doubtless on this ground that Isaiah utters the fearful challenge: "To whom then will you liken God? or what likeness will you compare unto him?" Isa. 40:18. Verily men are fearfully blind when

they can "change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Romans 1:23.

The same Council of Trent says: "They are to be wholly condemned, as the church has long before condemned them, and now repeats the sentence—who affirm that veneration and honor are not due to the relics of the saints, or that it is a useless thing that the faithful should honor these and other sacred monuments, and that the memorials of the saints are in vain frequented, to obtain their help and assistance."

Some plea, if possible, must be set up for this species of idolatry. In his "Defense of Catholic Principles," Gallitzin says: "The Israelites venerated the brazen serpent, a type or figure of Christ." Num. 21:9.

This indeed is as good authority as can be brought for this purpose. How God regarded this veneration shown to the serpent appears from the record of Scripture itself. Good king Hezekiah, who "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord," and who was a great reformer in the church of God, "destroyed the high places, and broke the statues in pieces, and cut down the groves, and broke the brazen serpent, which Moses had made: for until that time the children of Israel burnt incense to it: and he called its name Nohestan." Gallitzin says, that in all this worship of images, pictures, and relics, there "is nothing but what every Christian must approve as conformable to the word of God and to reason. St. John the Baptist venerated the very latchets of our Savior's shoes." Mark 1:7.

Truly these are slender foundations on which to rear the immense fabric of Popish idolatry. John expresses no veneration for Christ's shoes, but simply declares that he himself was not worthy to perform the humblest office of kindness to the Savior. As if to cut off all occasion for this species of idolatry, our blessed Savior left no keepsakes among his disciples. It was his executioners who divided his raiment and cast lots upon his vesture.

2. Idolatry is Absurd and Criminal. Idolatry, in all its forms, is a sin so gross, and expressive of so much folly and stupidity, that it is bewildering that men should ever commit it. To inspired writers it is a theme of just and severe ridicule, not the less pungent because a simple statement of its grossness is all that is required to show its absurdity. The Psalmist says, "Our God is in heaven and does whatever He pleases. Their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell. They have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk. They cannot make a sound with their throats. Those who make them are just like them, as are all who trust in them." Psalm 115:3-8

In like manner Isaiah ridicules at length the whole process of making and worshiping idols: "Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one. All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless. Those who would speak up for them are blind; they are ignorant, to their own shame. Who shapes a god and casts an idol, which can profit him nothing? He and his kind will be put to shame; craftsmen are nothing but men. Let them all come together and take their stand; they will be brought down to terror and infamy. The blacksmith takes a tool and works with it in the coals; he shapes an idol with hammers, he forges it with the might of his arm. He gets hungry and loses his strength; he drinks no water and grows faint. The carpenter measures with a line and makes an outline with a marker; he roughs it out with chisels and marks it with compasses. He shapes it in the form of man, of man in all his glory, that it may dwell in a shrine. He cut down cedars, or perhaps took a cypress or oak. He let it grow among the trees of the forest, or planted a pine, and the rain made it grow. It is man's fuel for burning; some of it he takes and warms himself, he kindles a fire and bakes bread. But he also fashions a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it. Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. He also warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm; I see the fire." From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He

prays to it and says, "Save me; you are my god." They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand. No one stops to think, no one has the knowledge or understanding to say, "Half of it I used for fuel; I even baked bread over its coals, I roasted meat and I ate. Shall I make a detestable thing from what is left? Shall I bow down to a block of wood?" He feeds on ashes, a deluded heart misleads him; he cannot save himself, or say, "Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?" Isaiah 44:8-20.

In like manner Elijah mocked the priests of Baal: "At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed." 1 Kings 18:27, 28.

In all this ridicule there is no caricature, no exaggeration. It is all fair, because it is simple truth. Yet, absurd as idolatry is, there is no science, literature, philosophy, civilization, which can show its silliness so plainly, as to banish it from among men. As Athens rose in eloquence and philosophy, so did she rise in her devotion to false gods, until in the days of Paul, besides hosts of idols famous in Greece, she had her altar erected to the Unknown God, and was, as the Scriptures testify, wholly given to idolatry—she was "full of idols." Acts 17:16

The very word in Hebrew, which we render idol, means a vanity, nothing, naught. In Jeremiah (14:14,) the same word is rendered "a thing of nothing." The man of Uz says to his friends, "You are all physicians of no value," literally, idol or vain physicians. Job 13:4. The "idol shepherd" of Zechariah (11:17,) is a worthless shepherd, whose care of the flock amounts to nothing. It may be to this signification of the word, as well as to the futility of all idol worship, that Paul alludes when he says: "What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything?"

Again: "We know that an idol is nothing in the world." 1 Cor. 8:4, 10:19. Men never do a more vain and empty thing than when they make or serve an idol. It is as foolish and as unproductive of good, as when one beats the air.

Idols themselves and the worship of them are in Scripture often styled an abomination. Ex. 8:26; Deut. 7:26; 1 Kings 11:7, 14:24; 2 Chron. 15:8; Isa. 44:19; Ezek. 18:12. Some also explain Daniel 11:31, as referring to the images carried by the Romans, and to the pictures on the Roman standard, which were an abomination to the Jews, who after the captivity fell no more into the worship of either images or pictures, but all such things were an abomination to them.

That idolatry is the abhorrence of God and of godly men, is evident from the New Testament. 1 Peter 4:3 speaks of "abominable idolatries." So carefully did God guard his ancient people against idolatry, that he would not permit them to bring home with them as trophies, the idols of the nations whom they conquered in war. He required all such images to be at once burnt with fire. Nay more, he would not permit them to strip the idol of its rich ornaments, before they destroyed it, "lest they should be snared therein." The reason he assigns is, that "it is an abomination to the Lord your God." Deut. 7:25.

How often and earnestly God condemns all idolatry may be seen in many Scriptures. The following are mere samples of what he often says: "Do not make idols or set up carved images, sacred pillars, or shaped stones to be worshiped in your land. I, the Lord, am your God." Lev. 26:1. Compare Deut. 4:15, 12:2, 3, 32:16-20; Josh. 24:20, 23. By David God clearly declares a fact, which ought never to be forgotten, as it can never be safely denied, namely: that idolatry is productive of untold miseries, even in this life: "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another God." Psalm 16:4. See also Jer. 9:14, 15, 44:2-9; Ezek. 20:18-26; Acts 17:29; 1 Cor. 10:14, 12:2; 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 John 5:21; Rev. 9:20.

If any doubt the horrible wretchedness of ancient heathenism, let him read the writings of the early fathers of the church, who had been converted from Gentilism. They often write like men, who had escaped from horrors, of which those who had been born in Christian lands, can hardly form a conception. And if any suppose that modern heathenism is a whit better, let him hear the testimony of many, who have been eye-witnesses of its cruelties. The whole process of consecrating a heathen idol has in no important particular probably varied for thousands of years. The present mode of dedicating an idol is described by the prophet Daniel, five hundred and eighty years before Christ. Dan. 3:5-7. The following passages of Scripture condemning idolatry can be added to those already cited. They are all from the New Testament. 1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:20; Eph. 5:5; 1 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 21:8, 22:15.

3. The words of prohibition explained.

Let us revert for a little time to the words of the second commandment. One would think their import unmistakable. They positively forbid the making of images or likenesses for any religious use. The prohibition is clear against making images and against bowing down to images, and against serving them. The prohibition to make idols, is repeated in Lev. 26:1, and Deut. 5:8.

That the second commandment does not forbid the cultivation of the fine arts, is generally agreed. But making any images or likenesses for religious service is forbidden.

The terms of prohibition are very comprehensive. The image or likeness is not to be of anything in HEAVEN above. According to the Jews there were three heavens.

1. The aerial or atmospheric. No image or likeness of any flying bird or fowl may therefore be made for religious service, even though it be a dove.

2. The Jews spoke of the starry heavens. As we are forbidden to worship the sun, moon, and stars, so are we forbidden to make images of them for worship.

3. The Jews spoke of the third heaven, or heaven of heavens, the abode of God, the residence of saints and angels. No image or likeness of any inhabitant of this celestial city is to be made.

Then the commandment forbids the making of any image or likeness of anything that is in the EARTH beneath. These are men, animals, trees, plants, crosses, bodies of men, living or dead, etc.

Then we are forbidden to make an image or likeness of anything that is in the WATER under the earth, such as of fishes of almost countless varieties and creatures of the deep. Of none of these may we make any representation for religious service. We are not only forbidden to make them—but to bow down to them. We may not bow the head, or the knee, or the whole body to them, nor uncover the head to them, nor kiss the hand to them, nor kiss them. Josh. 23:16; Judges 2:17; 1 Kings 19:18; Job 31:26, 27; Hos. 13:2. Nor may we show them the least token of respect, nor make to them any manner of obeisance. Nor may we serve them, either as God's people serve him, or as the heathen serve their false gods by praising them, praying to them, building houses, or altars for their worship, carrying them in processions, or in any manner whatever commending them.

The reasons why this precept is so often repeated and so much insisted on, are that God has a great zeal for the purity of his worship; that man is very gross and corrupt in his conceptions of God; that he has a peculiar dislike to spiritual worship: that all history shows his special liability to fall into idolatry; that the least corruption of worship, however well intended, is sure in the end to mislead many; and that men who fall into errors in worship, especially into any form of idolatry, are full of all bitterness and horrible malice in promoting at all costs their abominable practices.

Matt. 15:9; Isa. 42:8; Romans 1:23, 28; Ex. 32:1-8; Jer. 2:11; 1 Kings 18:28; Psalm 106:36-38.

The world furnishes not a single instance of an idolatrous people, who were not a bitterly persecuting people.

4. Examples of corrupted worship. The Scriptures record four cases of introducing human inventions into the worship of Jehovah. Every one of them proved a snare to men's souls, and was an offence to the Most High.

1. The first was the making of the golden calf at the foot of Mount Sinai. The whole account is given in the thirty-second chapter of Exodus. That this was a professed attempt to honor the God of heaven seems evident from the record itself, as well as from the circumstances of the case. Indeed, Aaron said, "Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord;" the original word is Jehovah. Israel could hardly have sunk so low as now to admit that the idols of Egypt, or rather, that a calf not made until they reached Horeb had delivered them. But they attempted to worship Jehovah under this sacred sign of the Egyptians. And yet, no sooner had they made the calf—than down went all their conceptions of a spiritual God, and they cried, "These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt." They wanted some visible object to "go before them;" and in this they committed great sin. God himself says, "They have corrupted themselves." 5:7. And Moses says, "Oh this people have sinned a great sin," and Paul says, that they were idolaters. 1 Cor. 10:7. Compare Ex. 32:6. And Stephen, in his last address says, "They made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands." Acts 7:41.

Kurtz: "The stringency and exclusiveness of the Mosaic monotheism, and the earnestness with which it held fast to the notion of the absolute spirituality of God, required that the worship of Jehovah by images and symbols should be held up as equally reprehensible with actual idolatry, that both should be punished as rebellion against

Jehovah; in fact, that both should be represented under exactly the same point of view. It is easy enough to distinguish them in theory; but in practice the limits drawn by theory are quickly disregarded and overstepped. Hence they had rejected the God who had gone before them in the pillar of cloud and fire, and demanded to be led in a different way; they wanted a God to go before them in a more tangible form, and not enveloped in the pillar of cloud. They probably had no intention of rejecting and denying their God, Jehovah, for they said: 'This is the God who brought us up out of the land of Egypt,' (Ex. 32:8,) but they merely retained the name of Jehovah, and substituted a different idea. The Jehovah worshiped by the people in the form of the golden calf was as much an idol as Apis, Moloch, and Dagon; and the people acted in violation of the command in Ex. 20:3-4."

2. The next case in point of time of an attempt to worship Jehovah by symbolical representations was that of Micah and his mother, recorded in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of Judges. His mother blessed Micah in the name of Jehovah, (17:3.) She said, "I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord (Hebrew, Jehovah) from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image." When Micah had done so, a Levite came to Mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and Micah said to him, "Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest." When he had secured the services of this man, he said, "Now know I that the Lord (Jehovah) will do me good, seeing I have a Levite as my priest." (17:13.) When the Danites came and found this priest, he said to them, "Before the Lord (Jehovah) is your way wherein you go." (18:6.) And yet, by confession of all, this entire worship was gross idolatry.

3. The next case is that of Jeroboam, who made and set up the calves to be worshiped by the people. There is hardly a doubt that he intended these images as representations of the true God. His object is generally thought not to have been to withdraw Israel from the worship of Jehovah, but to prevent the kingdom from returning to the house of David. So he distinctly avows. He wanted a worship

which would as well satisfy the ten tribes as the splendid service in Jerusalem. One of the calves he put in Bethel, and the other in Dan. He wanted some sensible signs that would fill their imaginations with the belief that Jehovah was present there as well as at Jerusalem. That he did not design the introduction of the worship of new gods, seems to be evident from a declaration in 1 Kings 16:31, where God says of Ahab that "it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat,.. and went and served Baal and worshiped him." And yet God says to Jeroboam, "You have done evil above all that were before you: for you have gone and made you other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and have cast me behind your back."

For this sin, Jehovah threatened the extinction of all the males of Jeroboam's family; and in due time he did "burn up the house of Jeroboam as one burns dung, until it is all gone." 1 Kings 14:10. The destruction of this race became a by-word in Israel. I Kings 16:3. And long after the death of Jeroboam, this sin of his is mentioned to his disgrace; for thus he "made Israel to sin."

Kurtz, having spoken of the idolatry respecting Aaron's calf, says: "In the same way may Jeroboam have set up the bulls at Dan and Bethel as images of Jehovah, but in practice the people were not able to make so nice a distinction as he. Now, such dangerous distinctions as these, the law would at once cut up by the root, if it placed the false worship of Jehovah in precisely the same category as the worship of idols—and this it has done. For it is a false idea to suppose that Ex. 20:4, refers to symbolical images of God alone, and not to idolatrous images also."

However Jeroboam reigned, the people came right out and said, "Behold your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt." 1 Kings 12:28; or, "Behold your God, O Israel," etc.

4. The fourth kind of human invention leading to idolatry, was the use of groves and high places in the worship of Jehovah. God claimed

the right of fixing the place, as well as the manner of his worship. Deut. 18:12:5. He solemnly declared against these imitations of heathen worship, while the people were yet at the foot of Sinai. Yet so firmly rooted was the devotion of Eastern nations to this mode of worship, that it required a long time and the judgments of Heaven, and the zeal of great reforming kings wholly to abolish it. See 2 Chron. 33:17; 2 Kings 23:13, 14, and many other places. Solomon himself fell into this sin. 1 Kings 3:3. The Assyrians were by sore judgments brought so far to confess Jehovah that they worshiped him in the same manner. 2 Kings 17:24-33. See, also, 2 Chron. 14:4.

When great reformers were raised up, they found it necessary to cut down the groves and utterly to demolish the apparatus of worship in high places. So dangerous is it to tamper with the worship of God instituted by himself. Men always err when they revise the wisdom of Omniscience, particularly so in matters of worship.

5. Vain pleas for breaking the second commandment.

The plea of modern idolaters that they do not worship the image, but God by the image; that the material effigy is nothing but a sign used to help devotion; and that it cannot be unlawful to make an image of God somewhat resembling the figure of a man, because God made man in his own image, were given by the heathen long ago, in vindication of their idolatry. If God has said that the use of the cross in baptism is a part of the ordinance, then we are bound to use it. If he has said no such thing, we are not only at liberty to reject it, but we are bound to do so, as often as men or churches attempt to make it obligatory upon our consciences. The same is true of immersion and of triune-immersion, and of sprinkling, and pouring. So in respect of kneeling at the Lord's supper. If any choose in a spirit of devotion to Christ then to kneel, they are at liberty to do so. But if men refuse us the elements unless we will perform this gesture before them, we may not yield to their invention.

The same is true respecting days of Fasting or of Thanksgiving, resting solely upon human authority. Each man must be his own judge whether the providence of God calls him or not to such a service. The same is true of festival-days in the church of God. All the religious liberty that is now upon earth is the fruit of resistance to attempts on the part of churches and civil authorities to bind men's consciences where God has left them free. Human ingenuity is great, but it is expressly forbidden to bring its inventions into God's worship: "You are not to do as we are doing here today; everyone is doing whatever seems right in his own eyes." Deut. 12:8. Compare Deut. 12:29-32.

We do then grossly violate this commandment when we make any representation of the Most High God, or of any of his perfections either by image or painting; when we make an image of any creature or thing for religious use; when we worship the true God in the use of images, or by adopting any of the practices of idolaters; when we believe the Most High is peculiarly present in any one place, house, statue, painting or relic; when any reverence due to God alone is given to any creature, as when the inhabitants of Lystra brought oxen and garlands to sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas. Acts 14:11-15. It was idolatry in Cornelius to worship Peter, and would have been highly criminal had he persisted in it, when warned not to do it. Acts 10:25, 26. It would have been idolatry in John had he worshiped the angel, when told that he was a creature. Rev. 22:8, 9.

It cannot be innocent, therefore, for European Christians to make images of Hindu and Chinese gods, and transport them as articles of merchandise, to be dedicated and worshiped in Eastern countries; nor for any one to represent the Omniscience of God by a huge eye, sometimes denominated the All-seeing Eye. We are no more at liberty to worship the true God in a false way—than we are to worship false gods.

6. Violation of this precept in doctrine. We do this when we entertain carnal views and gross apprehensions of God, Acts 17:29; when we

give heed to the doctrine of devils, 1 Tim. 4:1; when we are carried about with strange doctrines, Heb. 13:9; when we are unwilling to hear sound doctrine, 2 Tim. 4:3; or do not relish that which is according to godliness, 1 Tim. 6:3; when we are not nourished in the words of good doctrine, 1 Tim. 4:6; when we do not obey the form of doctrine delivered to us in the Scriptures, Romans 6:17; when we are carried about with every wind of doctrine, Eph. 4:14; when we do not honestly inquire after the truth, Acts 17:5; when we are not willing to practice what we do know, John 7:17; when we are not on our guard against self-righteous teachings and against loose and Antinomian opinions. Matt. 16:6, Rev. 2:14, 15.

There is not a truth of Scripture which is not "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Tim. 3:16. We are no more at liberty to entertain loose opinions, however popular or plausible, than we are to indulge in loose practices, because they are common or agreeable. We have no more right to modify or alter the principles of church government, as learned from the revealed will of God, than we have to change the objects of religious worship. The Bible tells what elements shall be used both in baptism and the Lord's supper. It has declared one day in seven to be holy time; and all attempts to introduce into the church more holy days, or more elements in the sacraments, are as truly offensive to God as idol worship itself. The same is true of all attempts to make canonical, books which are apocryphal. All this is taught by God's word. Deut. 4:3, Rev. 22:18, 19. It is sad indeed, because it is sinful, when we introduce will-worship into God's service. Col. 2:18-23. If penances, pilgrimages, postures in worship, days and times are laid before us as matters to be conscientiously observed, it is mere superstition to yield to such demands.

7. The second commandment is often broken in PRAYER. There is no form of religion upon earth which does not include prayer. It is noticed in the Scriptures more than five hundred times. No duty is more clearly enjoined. Were it possible to find a man giving all the other evidences of piety and yet leading a prayerless life—that one

fact would sufficiently show the vanity of his professions. We are never in circumstances of joy or sorrow, sickness or health, where, if opportunity offered, the truly devout would not love to pray. No official station, no excellence of gifts, no experience in grace, can put us beyond the need of prayer, until we enter the heavenly Jerusalem. Jesus Christ has left us two parables to encourage importunity in prayer.

Nothing more effectually destroys the life of prayer than secret sin. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Psalm 66:18. Prayer is either secret or public. Secret prayer should, as far as possible, be secluded from the eyes of men. A church, street-corner, or a market is no fit place to offer our personal devotions. In the sermon on the mount, our Lord puts this matter beyond all doubt: "And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Truly I say unto you, They have their reward. But you, when you pray, enter into your closet, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is in secret; and your Father, who sees in secret, shall reward you openly." Matt. 6:5, 6.

Public prayer may be in the hearing of two or three friends, in a family, in a large company, or in the great congregation. Let us notice some particulars.

1. There are some things which never affect the efficacy of prayer. One of these is the posture. Standing, kneeling, and prostration are all sanctioned in Scripture. Let no man judge his brother in this matter. Church history informs us that in early times, the whole congregation stood with hands uplifted towards heaven. Another non-essential is the use or disuse of written or printed forms. There is not much room for doubt that extemporaneous prayer, if the heart is rightly affected, is the most edifying. But in either method, wickedness, pride, and unbelief may reign—or love, faith, and confidence in God may prevail. Nor does the prevalence of prayer

depend on the language employed. In public prayer, the words used should commonly be plain and simple. A scriptural phraseology is usually the best. But God looks beyond the words to the heart. His ears are never charmed with any sounds, however melodious, if the heart is lacking. Neither is he ever offended at our language, because it is broken, or crude, if it engages the pious affections. Nor does fluency, or the lack of it cause God either to hear or to reject our petitions. He cares nothing for eloquence. He knows the meaning of a sigh—the language of a groan—the pleading of a tear. Nor does the length of a prayer determine its character. The thief on the cross used a prayer of less than ten words and obtained all he asked. David prayed all night for the life of his child, and in the morning it died. The publican's prayer consisted of one short sentence, and was heard; the Pharisee's was long, and wordy, and worthless. Scriptural example seems to favor brevity. We are not heard for our much speaking.

2. But there are some things which greatly hinder our prayers. When we do not really desire what we ask for, God is offended at our cries. Augustine says, that in the days of his unregeneracy, he "prayed for chastity and morality—but not yet." All such prayer is a mockery of God. And how many, too, are heedless respecting the answer to their petitions. Men leave their prayer, as the ostrich does her egg—in the sand, to care for itself. It is well, when in our pious fervor, we cry out, "O Lord, how long?" When we ask God to gratify our wicked desires, or accomplish our evil purposes, we may know that he will be offended with us. If our reason for desiring personal usefulness is that we may be conspicuous, it is a mercy in God to deny us our request. Men may pray for zeal, or gifts in God's cause—that they may be set on high. Our prayers are always wrong, when we do not, in our measure, exercise towards men the sentiments which we ask God to show, without measure, towards us. If any ask for mercy, let him be careful to show it. If any prays for comforts, let him do what he can to make all happy around him. If he desires God not to mark iniquity in him, let him beware lest severity of judgment form a part of his own character. "With what measure you mete, it shall be

measured to you again." Matt. 7:2. If we pray with a right spirit, we will gladly use the right means, and be willing that God should employ the right measures to secure us an answer. If one asks for an abundant harvest, let him be careful to cultivate his crops, and let him not find fault with God for sending soaking rains. If one prays that he may be made a "workman, who needs not to be ashamed," let him not refuse the course of study, discipline, and prayer, requisite to make him such.

Some fail to secure an answer in peace, because they are impatient. "Blessed are all those who wait for him." Isa. 30:18. "They shall not be ashamed that wait for me." Isa. 49:23. "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry." Psalm 90:1. Impatience is the offspring of turbulence, rebellion, and unbelief. Impatience is apt to lead to the forsaking of prayer. Nor can we expect cold, heartless prayers to prevail. "Elijah's prayer brought fire down from heaven, because, being fervent, it carried fire up to heaven."

3. We all ought to pray more. As every faculty of body and mind, so every grace of the soul is improved by exercise. Prayer exercises all our graces. If we do not love to pray, we have no genuine piety. None of God's children are born dumb. They can all, at least, cry. Our pious comfort materially depends upon our having much of the spirit of prayer. Our usefulness is also thereby greatly affected.

Moreover the Scriptures settle the question that prayer has powerful efficacy. The Bible, and all church history abound in records of its prevalence. Christ himself prayed much. "During His earthly life, He offered prayers and appeals, with loud cries and tears, to the One who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence." Heb. 5:7.

4. We do, therefore, greatly sin against God's ordinance of prayer when we lightly esteem it, in secret, in the family, or in the public assembly, Matt. 6:6; Jer. 10:25; Acts 2:42; Mal. 3:14; when we do not

seek the Spirit's aid in prayer, Romans 8:26; when we make light of those who are much exercised in this duty, 1 Sam. 1:14; when we are not constantly in possession of the spirit of prayer, 1 Thes. 5:17; when our hearts are reluctant to this duty, Job 15:4; when we do not shake off our sluggishness, and stir up ourselves to this duty, Isa. 64:7; when we are impatient of God's delays in answering our prayers, Psalm 40:1; when we do not prepare our hearts to this exercise, 1 Sam. 7:3; when our prayers are full of words—and not of desires, Eccles. 10:14; when our thoughts are like the fool's eyes, wandering everywhere, Prov. 17:24; when we do not earnestly desire to know what we ought to pray for, Romans 8:26; when we are satisfied with the gift—without the grace of prayer, Matt. 15:8; when we offer up our prayers without any lively faith, Heb. 11:6; when we do not unite watching with prayer, Matt. 26:41; Mark 13:33; when we are not burdened with a due sense of the sins which we confess before God; when we limit God's power to grant us things lawful, Psalm 78:41; 2 Kings 7:2; when our prayers are chiefly for ourselves, and do not embrace all sorts and conditions of men, even those who are malignant towards us, 1 Tim. 2:1-4; when we desire our petitions rather for our own advantage—than for the glory of God, I Cor. 6:20; James 4:3; when we are satisfied with the act of devotion without the presence and blessing of God; when we use vain repetitions; though all repetitions are not vain, for Augustine spent a whole night in offering up this one short prayer: Grant that I may know you, O Lord, and that I may know myself. We also sin when our prayers are self-righteous; when, another leading our devotions, we do not heartily say, Amen, to all proper petitions, 1 Cor. 14:16; when we are not duly thankful for gracious answers; when we are not duly humble for the defects in our prayers, and when we do not flee continually to the blood of Christ for cleansing from the sins of our holy things.

8. We break this commandment in the manner of PRAISING God. Praise is offered to God for what he is, and for what he does. In the latter case it is commonly called thanksgiving. Both Scripture and providence frequently summon us to this duty. If it is a mark of bad manners not to thank men for acts of kindness; surely it is a mark of

a bad heart not to thank the Lord for his boundless goodness. Like prayer, praise is mentioned several hundred times in the Scriptures. It seems to be taught by natural religion. Even the heathen praise their gods. Judg. 16:23, 24; Dan. 5:4. Let us notice several particulars.

1. Our great error respecting this duty is, that we do not engage in it with sufficient frequency or fervency. If we were more thankful for the mercies we receive, we would doubtless receive more mercies to be thankful for. As God's nature is unchangeable and his compassions infinite—it is impossible for us to praise him too much. It is much to be lamented that the children of sorrow should ever feel themselves exempt from the obligations of this duty. The most afflicted of mere men in the depth of his sorrows, cried out, "Blessed be the name of the Lord!" Job 1:21. It should greatly commend this duty to us, that it is very delightful and refreshing to a contrite heart; and that if through grace, we shall ever reach the kingdom of God—praise will be our employment forever. No soul, that has been washed in atoning blood, shall, in passing Jordan, lose its harp. No! on the other side of "the river that has no bridge," the hand that had on earth touched its strings but feebly and awkwardly, shall strike them with a vigor and accuracy that shall entrance itself, and shall be well-pleasing to God.

Paul says love is greater than faith or hope, not because it is more necessary here, but because it shall last forever. By parity of reasoning, praise is greater than prayer or fasting. Psalm 104:33, 146:2. The chief revenue God gathers from our lost world, is from the praises of his loving, penitent people. Can it be doubted that many of the dismal fears and terrible misgivings of God's children would vanish, if they did properly abound in this duty? "Whoever offers praise glorifies me: and to him that orders his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God." "Is any merry? Let him sing psalms."

2. Some seem to have the impression that under the old dispensation, abundant praise was more required than under the new. But that is surely a mistake. "Be anxious for nothing: but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." Phil. 4:6. "Be filled with the Spirit: speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. 5:18-20. If Old Testament saints had much cause for abounding in praise and thanksgiving, as none but the wicked will deny—surely New Testament saints have much greater cause for doing the same. "For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness overflows with even more glory. If that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remains is glorious." 2 Cor. 3:9, 11. And if we are thus surrounded by the "glory that excels," we ought to say so in praises, and thanksgivings, and thundering hallelujahs,

3. We sin against the ordinance of praise and thanksgiving when we reject it altogether, either from public or private worship, Psalm 1:23; when we do not abound in it, Psalm 53:9; when we engage in it in a frivolous spirit, Psalm 4:4; when neither our understandings nor our hearts are truly engaged in the work, 1 Cor. 14:15; when we waver in this duty; when we look upon it as a task, Mal. 1:13; when we go from this duty and are no more thoughtful or watchful than we were before, Haggai 1:5-7; when we are willing the work of praise should be performed in an unedifying manner, 2 Chron. 29:11; when we enter into this service with malignant hearts, Luke 6:37; when without sufficient cause, we excuse ourselves from uniting our voices with God's people in this service, Psalm 16:9, 30:12, 53:8; when in our praises we have not a due reference to the mediation of Jesus Christ, Heb. 13:15; when we hinder or discourage others from engaging in this duty; and when this part of divine worship is performed in any way contrary to the requirements of God in all acts of worship previously stated.

9. We break the second commandment when we do not rightly use God's WORD. Revealed truth is to be read, preached, heard, and meditated upon. This was true even under a darker dispensation. That none is exempt from the study of God's word, is manifest from the Scriptures. John 5:39; Acts 15:21; 2 Tim, 4:2. The Lord gave it for a perpetual statute respecting the man who should be king over his people: "When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his brothers and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel." Deuteronomy 17:18-20. No cares of state, no engagedness in any office, can exempt its king from the obligation of making himself acquainted with the word of life; and this with devout reverence and all the attributes of religious worship.

In the council at Jerusalem, James declared, "Moses of old time has in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day." Acts 15:21. And Jesus Christ has instituted a permanent gospel ministry, the great object of whose appointment is to proclaim salvation, and cause the people to understand the word of the Lord. Romans 10:15; Eph. 4:11, 12; Neh. 8:7, 8, 13. So important is this ministry that God has ordained that it shall be supported at the charge of the people, 1 Cor. 9:14; 1 Tim. 5:18; and that all who are inducted into the sacred office shall be first proven to be fit and capable men. 1 Tim. 3:6. All to whom the truth is preached are required to receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls, and to be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving themselves. James 1:21, 22. We are bound carefully to guard the word of God against all corruption in doctrine or practice.

We do not give good heed to the second commandment when we read or hear God's word in a prayerless temper, 2 Thess. 3:1; when

we do not labor to attend upon the word without distraction, 1 Cor. 7:35; when we are not thankful for the privilege of hearing God's word, Psalm 103:2; Heb. 13:15; when we do not, as new-born babes, desire the pure word of God, 1 Peter 2:2; when we read or hear with our minds full of prejudice, 1 Kings 22:8; when we are actuated by no regard to God, but are merely following a custom, being satisfied with a decent appearance, Ezek. 33:31; when we do not earnestly lay hold of divine truth, Heb. 2:1; when we do not believe the truth read or heard, Heb. 4:2; when we soon forget the truth, or fail to practice it, James 1:22-25; when we do not tremble at God's word, Isa. 56:2; when from mere sluggishness of mind, we sleep when we should be all attention; Romans 11:8; when we are offended at the truth, Acts vii. 54; when we have itching ears, 2 Tim. 4:3; when we are satisfied with the gifts of the preacher, though there be no growth of grace in our own hearts; when we go to the house of God rather to see and be seen, to notice and be noticed—than to hear what God the Lord will say; when we are more pleased with enticing words of man's wisdom—than with the words and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. 2:1-5; when we do not set our hearts as a fair mark for the arrows of truth; when we dislike clear, discriminating, searching sermons; when we are more anxious after the curious than the profitable; when we do not embrace the promises of God; when we believe that we have little more to do with God's word than to hear it and criticize the preacher; when we irreverently treat any sacred truth; when we have little or no love to the truth as it is in Jesus; when slight excuses hinder us from hearing God's word; and when we put a low estimate upon the gospel ministry.

10. We may break the second commandment in regard to the ORDINANCES. Christ has instituted two sacraments in his house. Some corrupt communions have added four or five more without the slightest authority from Heaven. The sacraments of the Christian church are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Respecting these, we offend against God when we despise or neglect them; when we do not regard them both as signs and seals of the righteousness which is by faith; when we do not observe them under the binding force of

Christ's authority; when we observe them merely in conformity to custom, general usage, or the persuasion of others; when we expect salvation by the sacraments themselves; when we exalt them to the place assigned to the Savior himself; when we observe them in a superstitious frame of mind; when we are more eager after the sign in the sacraments, than after the things signified thereby; when we put a higher estimate on sacramental observances than on faith, justice, mercy or the love of God; when we add to the Scriptural mode of their administration; when we do not duly prepare our hearts by prayer and self-examination, 1 Cor. 11:28; when we rush thoughtlessly to the celebration of either of them, or needlessly delay their observance; when we go from their celebration and become careless or carnal in our affections; when we do not endeavor to have an abiding sense of the solemnity of sacramental acts; when we do not duly lament our imperfections and the low esteem in which the sacraments are held; when we do not earnestly desire our own edification and the glory of God in these ordinances; when we indulge in censorious and uncharitable tempers toward fellow-professors, refusing Christian communion with those whose profession and practice require the judgment of charity in their favor; when we wish the sacraments, which are holy things, to be given unto the dogs; or, when our observance of the sacred rites is marked by any of the deficiencies more particularly noticed in acts of worship discussed in previous pages.

11. Another duty respecting which we have full instructions and many warnings in God's Word is that of FASTING. This maybe either of people, as in the case of the great prophet of the captivity, Dan. 9:3; or of families, as with Queen Esther and her maidens, Esther. 4:16; or of churches, Acts 13:2, 3; or of citie(s), as of Nineveh, Jonah 3:5; or of nations, Judg. 20:26. Christ instituted no stated fast, or fasts to be observed by individuals, families, churches or communities. But he declared for the reasonableness of fasting under the gospel. He said, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast." Matt. 9:15. We have also

apostolic example for fasting; and in every age, "Christians of the finer mold have had their private fasts." It is worthy of notice that fasting is a branch of worship in every system of religion now upon earth. From this some have inferred, perhaps not illogically, that it is a duty of natural religion. The Jews had but one annual fast, prescribed by the Lord. Lev. 23:27-32. From this they could not plead exemption. The Pharisee, mentioned in the 18th chapter of Luke, regarded himself as pre-eminently pious, because he added one hundred and three days of fasting over and above all that was required by that dispensation. Note these particulars.

1. In fasting, abstinence from food is to be either total or partial so long as the fast lasts. Daniel says, "I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all." Dan. 10:3. This was his mode of observing a fast which lasted three whole weeks. Where the fast is of short duration, the abstinence from food is total. Some say that all the fasting required under the gospel is, that we abstain from sin. But this we should do every day and all our lives. A Christian may indeed observe a day of penitence and humiliation without fasting. But if he would observe a fast, let him abstain from all food or from pleasant food. It is but mocking God to eat, as some do, very heartily just before a fast, and very greedily just afterwards. Epicures themselves sometimes do as much as that, in order to increase their relish for food. The fast of Moses, of Elijah, and of our Savior, each lasting forty days (Ex. 34:28, 1 Kings 19:8, Matt. 4:2) are no patterns to us. They ate no food, but were miraculously sustained.

2. Others sin in the matter of fasting, because although they themselves abstain from labor, they relieve not those who are in their service. God charges it upon the Jews, that on their fast-days, they "exacted all their labors." They did not "undo the heavy burdens," they did not "let the oppressed go free," they did not "break every yoke." Isaiah 58:3, 6. Some are as severe and uncharitable on a fast-day as any other. At such a time, the wealthier should deal their bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out to their

houses; when they see the naked they should cover them. Isa. 58:7. If we can do no more, we can at least give the value of the food we would that day have eaten to such as really need it.

3. A real fast calls for humiliation and repentance before God. Sorrow for sin should be deep and personal, Zech. 12:9-14. The miserable substitute offered for this consists in bowing the head as a bulrush, Isa. 58:5; in disfiguring the face, Matt. 6:16; and putting on sanctimonious grimaces. Such arts are hateful to all right-minded men. How God abhors them, the Scriptures fully declare.

4. To all right fasting, prayer should be added. So teach the Scriptures in many places.

5. Some spoil their fasting by making it a cloak of maliciousness, 1 Pet. 2:16. To such God says, "Behold you fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness." Isa. 58:4. If our fasting make us ill-natured, fretful, irritable or stubborn—surely it has done us no good. True fasting does not convert men into wild beasts. It does not make them resemble a bear robbed of her whelps. It does not foster anger, jealousy, discontent or suspicion; but it makes men kind, gentle, and charitable in their thoughts, words, and deeds.

6. We always abuse a fast when we pervert it to self-righteousness as did the Pharisees; when we fast for human admiration, Matt. 6:16; when we have no solemn reference to God's authority and honor, Zech. 7:5, 6; when we fast for a pretense, Mark 12:40; when on a fast day, we find our own pleasure, Isa. 58:3; when we become weary of it, Amos 8:5; when we do not earnestly address ourselves to this solemn duty; and when in general we observe it in violation of any Scripture principle respecting God's worship. Although the subjects of oaths, vows, and lots, are naturally suggested in this connection, they may perhaps as well be considered when we come to the third commandment.

12. Let us briefly consider church government and discipline. These are expressly instituted by Christ himself, Matt. 16:19; Matt. 18:15-20. Nor are we at liberty to invest particular people with power over their brethren in the ministry of the gospel. Matt. 20:25-28. God has appointed all the officers who shall bear rule in his house, both ordinary and extraordinary. 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11. The use of discipline and the general principles by which it is to be administered are alike determined by the word of God. Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:4, 5; 1 Tim. 5:20. While it is sinful, therefore, to oppose church discipline in any of its proper ends, we are not at liberty, on the other hand, to make men lords of our faith. God's genuine servants disclaim all dominion in his house in this matter. 1 Cor. 3:5; 2 Cor. 1:24; 1 Pet. 5:3. Nor are we at liberty to yield, even for an hour, to those who would usurp such lordship over us. Gal. 2:5.

13. How the church of Rome breaks this commandment by SUPERSTITION. Johnson defines superstition to be "Unnecessary fear or scruples in religion; observance of unnecessary or uncommanded rites or practices; religion without morality." Brown defines it to be "Excessive exactness or rigor in religious opinions or practice: extreme and unnecessary scruples in the observance of religious rites not commanded, or of points of minor importance; excess or extravagance in religion; the doing of things not required by God, or abstaining from things not forbidden; or the belief of what is absurd, or belief without evidence." Perhaps a still more exact definition is "The observance of unnecessary and uncommanded rites in religion; reverence for objects not fit for worship; scruples about matters lawful or indifferent; and extravagant devotions." Superstition is almost always connected with a strange credulity on some points, and a singular incredulity on others. It is often solemn respecting what is unimportant or even ludicrous, and is yet

irreverent and frivolous on at least some solemn subjects and occasions. It is exceedingly dangerous.

Robert Hall: "Enthusiasm is an evil much less to be dreaded than superstition. Superstition is the disease of nations; enthusiasm that of individuals; the former grows inveterate by time, the latter is cured by it." John Owen: "As superstition is an undue fear of the divine nature, will, and operations, built on false notions and apprehensions of them, it may befall the minds of men in all religions, true and false. It is an internal vice of the mind." All superstition is based upon ignorance more or less gross. Minds not capable of close and just discrimination are peculiarly liable to it. A carnal state of the heart works up the imagination, and the fleshly mind seizes with great vigor upon its own conceptions. When one has not been made wise by God's word, and the affections become highly excited, plausible pretenses are sufficient to mislead. Once enlisted in the cause of superstition, self-love causes persistence in it. Having some persuasion that holiness is essential, and the natural heart rising in opposition to the requirements of God's law, the excited mind perversely seeks out some method whereby to delude itself into the persuasion that it is holy. The growth of superstition is by a very gradual process. Its whole history is written in three words—little by little.

The only sure defense against superstition is the true knowledge and genuine love of God, accompanied by a firm determination to do what he commands in his word, to worship as he directs, and to follow human devisings in nothing. "This is the fountain and principle of all error, that men think that those modes of worship which please them, must please God; and what displeases them, must also displease him." Surely these principles are clear; God alone has a right to state how he will be worshiped; his word is the only means by which we can know his will; his word clearly forbids all attempts to alter his worship, Ex. 23:13; Deut. 4:2; Gal. 4:10, 11; and the great business of God's church is to defend his truth and service, from all corruption, Phil. 1:7, 17; Jude 3; Rev. 3:10. Let the church do her duty.

Having previously noticed the breaking of the second commandment by the church of Rome through her idolatry, let us now see how she breaks it by her superstition. There is superstition in all idolatry; but there is not necessarily idolatry in all superstition.

1. The Romish church is guilty of superstition in conducting her worship in Latin, an unknown tongue. In Italy, in Spain, in France, in England, in China, among the Indians of North America, indeed wherever her priests are found, they offer public devotions in Latin, which is now nowhere a living language. Even in Rome, it is no better understood by the common people than it is in America. It is mere mummery to pretend to worship God by the use of words which convey no idea whatever to the mind of the assembly. If I render to God a service which I do not understand, how can it be a reasonable service? If it is not intelligent, how does it differ from the unmeaning chattering of swallows, or a cawing of crows? The Bible has settled this question. Paul insists upon it that the edification of the church requires that the language used in her worship should be understood.

"Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me." 1 Corinthians 14:7-11. In this passage, it is shown that a religious service, conducted either in speaking, singing, or praying, in a language not understood by the congregation, is to be avoided, and that God's servants must earnestly desire gifts whereby they may edify the people.

2. The use of relics in the church of Rome clearly proves the power and extent of superstition in that communion. Until of late, relics made but little noise in the United States. But no doubt we shall hear very soon and commonly of wonders performed by means of some old rag, or tooth, or bone, said once to have belonged to some now esteemed a saint. In Rome itself, "they show the heads of St. Peter and St. Paul, encased in silver busts, set with jewels; a lock of the Virgin Mary's hair, a vial of her tears, a piece of her green petticoat, a robe of Jesus Christ sprinkled with his blood, some drops of his blood in a bottle, some of the water which flowed out of the wound in his side, some of the sponge, a large piece of the cross, all the nails used in the crucifixion, a piece of the stone of the sepulcher on which the angel sat, the identical pillar on which the cock perched when he crowed after Peter denied Christ, the rods of Moses and Aaron, and two pieces of the real ark of the covenant." Volumes might be filled with similar statements.

In the Mass House at Dobborane, in Mechlenburg, they show the following relics: 1. Flax for spinning, which belonged to the Virgin Mary.

2. Hay, which the wise men had for their camels and left behind them at Bethlehem.

3. A piece of the garment of Lazarus.

4. A piece of linen worn by the Virgin Mary.

5. A piece of the head of Tobit's fish.

6. A part of Judas' bowels which fell out.

7. The scissors with which Delilah cut off Samson's hair.

8. A piece of the apron which the butcher wore when he killed the fatted calf for the feast of the prodigal son.

9. One of the five stones which David put in his sling when he went out to meet Goliath.

10. The branch of the tree on which Absalom hung by the hair.

11. A part of Peter's fishing net.

12. The heads of the apostles Thomas, Peter, and Paul.

3. In like manner one might refer to the superstitious use of charms, by which the Romish church leads those in her communion to expect to avoid or expel certain natural evils, asserting her authority over noxious insects by means of holy water and certain other superstitious acts and doings.

4. The Romish church makes also high, though false pretenses to the power of working miracles. The Catholic Herald, of Feb. 1, 1844, intimated an expectation that some miracles might before long be wrought at the graves of two deceased Roman bishops in this country. How perfectly idle all these claims are—it is not necessary here to discuss. Not one of them is accompanied by such evidences as to satisfy a reasonable spirit of inquiry.

5. Nor are the self-inflicted tortures by members of the Romish church less superstitious. But enough of these disgusting themes.

The Third Commandment

"Do not misuse the name of the Lord your God, because the Lord will punish anyone who misuses His name." Exodus 20:7

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, who takes his name in vain."
Exodus 20:7

The verb 'take', found in this commandment, occurs very often in the Bible. Here, and in many other places, it has the sense of 'use or employ'. The 'name of God' is a phrase of frequent occurrence in the Bible. Few words are employed in more varied senses than the word 'name'; and yet there is seldom difficulty in ascertaining its precise signification.

The name of God stands—

1, for his proper name, as Jehovah, God, the Most High, the Almighty, I am what I am, etc., Deut. 4:35; 6:4; Num. 24. 16; Rev. 1:8;

2, for his titles, as Creator, Shepherd, Savior, Redeemer, etc., Eccles. 12:1; Psalm 23:1; Isaiah 43:11; Psalm 29:14;

3, for his attributes or perfections, Ex. 33:19; 34:6, 7; 1 Tim. 6:1;

4, for his word, Psalm 138:2; Acts 9:15;

5, for his grace and mercy shown to sinners through Christ, John 17:6, 26;

6, for his help and assistance, 1 Sam. 17:45; Psalm 44:6;

7, for his honor, Psalm 136:1, and in many places;

8, for the display of his perfections in the works of creation, Psalm 8:1, 9;

9, for the illustration of his attributes in providence, Psalm 20:1, 7;

10, for his worship and service, 1 Kings 5:5; Ex. 20:24; 11, for God himself, Psalm 34:3; 61:5; Proverbs 18:10.

The name of the Lord therefore is either Jehovah himself, or anything whereby he is known. Hopkins: "It is not an unusual figure to put the name, for the thing or person that is expressed by it." Anything relating to the true God, his being, his nature, his will, his works, his worship, anything relating to the service rendered him, or to the doctrine concerning him—pertains to his name.

The phrase the Lord your God has been explained in the preface. The word rendered in 'vain' is a noun. It occurs nearly fifty times in the Hebrew Bible. The Lexicons define it, evil, iniquity, wickedness, falsehood, emptiness, vanity, nothingness. Twice in this commandment it is rendered in vain; twice also in Deut. 5:11, and once in Psalm 127:1, and 139:20. Its most comprehensive meaning is vanity. It is often so rendered, Job 7:3, 15:31, 31:5, 35:13; Psalm 12:2, 41:6; Isaiah 5:18, 30:28. It is frequently rendered vain, and several times false or lying; Ex. 23:1; Deut. 5:20; Psalm 31:6; Jonah 2:8.

Some render the prohibition of this commandment thus: 'You shall not utter the name of Jehovah unto a falsehood.' The original fully bears this translation. As in other commandments, God may here design to condemn the most atrocious form of a given species of sin. But if we follow the common rendering, which is good, we at once give to the commandment a wider scope. If we may not use God's name in a light and frivolous manner, surely we may not use it in vindication of our wicked falsehoods. A great design of true religion is to bring men to habitual and controlling reverence for the divine majesty. "And you shall not profane my holy name, that I may be sanctified among the people of Israel. I am the Lord who sanctifies

you." Levit. 22:32. "If you are not careful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, the Lord your God, then the Lord will bring on you and your offspring extraordinary afflictions, afflictions severe and lasting, and sicknesses grievous and lasting." Deut. 28:58, 59. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence by all those who are about him." Psalm 79:7. "Holy and reverend is his name." Psalm 111:9.

When our Lord gave us an outline of ordinary prayer, the first petition was, "Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy." Indeed all religious service, which does not revere and hallow the name of God, or which is without godly fear—is miserable trifling. The inhabitants of heaven are much purer and more elevated than we. Yet when they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, they say, "Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are your ways, O King of saints. Who shall not fear you, O Lord, and glorify your name? for you alone are holy." Rev. 15:3, 4.

To take God's name in vain, therefore, is to use it in any frivolous, false, inconsiderate, irreverent, or otherwise wicked manner. "This may be done in two ways; either by calling God to witness a lie—for lies and falsehoods of all kinds are in many places of Scripture called vanity; or else it may be done by using that holy Name on small and irreverent occasions; for light and empty things are also called vanity." The scope of this commandment is to secure the holy and reverent use of all that whereby God makes himself known to his people; and so to guard his sacred name against all that is calculated to make it contemptible. These things enter into the very essence of obedience to the requirements of this precept.

1. That we propose the glory of God, the good of our fellow-men, or the defense of ourselves, in all cases when we take the name of God upon our lips. Josh. 7:19; Heb. 6:16; Ex. 22:11.

2. Of course, the manner of so taking his name is to be grave, solemn, intelligent, thoughtful, sincere, and with godly fear.

3. We should not use the name of God, where there is no necessity; even in prayer it should not be employed to fill up our vacancies of thought. Nor should we use it in swearing, or in casting lots, where the matter can be otherwise properly adjusted.

4. We are not at liberty to use God's name in any way to promote superstition, false doctrine, perjury, blasphemy, profanity, cursing, or any such thing. We must therefore see to it, that what we propose to promote by the use of God's name is something which he approves.

Just reflection must satisfy any godly man that the non-observance of this commandment would utterly subvert all true religion. The very moment men cease to treat God as holy—that moment their worship becomes polluted. When God's creatures come into his presence with thoughtlessness, forgetting that he is in heaven, and they upon earth, they will surely lightly esteem the Rock of their salvation. The world furnishes no case of a despiser of the third commandment, who is not guilty of gross breaches of one or more of the other precepts of the moral law. There is not a country having written statutes but has ordained heavy penalties against one or more of the sins clearly condemned in this commandment.

In answer to the question, what is required in the third commandment, the Westminster Assembly answers, "The third commandment requires, that the name of God, his titles, attributes, ordinances, the word, sacraments, prayer, oaths, vows, lots, his works, and whatever else there is whereby he makes himself known, be holily and reverently used in thought, meditation, word, and writing; by a holy profession, and answerable conversation, to the glory of God, and the good of ourselves and others."

That this commandment extends to the state of men's thoughts and hearts, is clear, from the fact that God commends those who rightly think upon his name and meditate on his works. Mal. 3:16; Psalm 8:1-9. That it includes our speech, is clear from Psalm 105:2, 5; Mal. 3:16; Col. 3:17. That we are as much bound to honor God by our pen as by our tongue, is evident from the nature of the case, and from Psalm 102:21. This precept binds us to a holy profession of the true religion. We are required to be always ready to give an answer to every man that asks us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear. 1 Pet. 3:15. All men are bound to adopt the good resolution of the church in the days of Micah: "We will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever." Micah 4:5. Nor should this profession be light or inconsistent. Our whole deportment must be as it becomes the gospel of Christ. Phil. 1:27; Romans 10:10; 1 Pet. 2:12; Luke 1:6; Rev. 14:1.

It is not necessary here to repeat remarks previously made on the right use of God's word, the sacraments, prayer, praise, fasting, and the government and discipline of the church, as those subjects came up in considering the first and second commandments. But as those matters belong also to the requirements of this precept, let them be regarded with new and increased solemnity; and let all the principles here elucidated, be applied to them.

The general spirit of this command requires us to keep at the greatest possible distance from mingling in our doctrines, affections, or thoughts—the name of the true God—with any vanity or corruption whatever. The Lord forbade the Israelites to make any mention of the name of other gods or to let it be heard out of their mouth. Ex. 23:13. The meaning of the prohibition evidently was, that they should keep their minds as pure as possible from the contamination of heathenism, and its vain thoughts of God. For the same reason, no doubt, God required the Israelites utterly to destroy all the places where the heathen had served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree; and to overthrow their altars and break their pillars and burn their groves with fire,

and hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy their names, Deut. 12:2, 3. In the days of Joshua, Israel was again forbidden to make mention of the name of these false gods, Josh. 23:7. And when God promises a revived and healthful state of religion to his church, he says, "I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name." Hos. 2:17. And still more explicitly, God says by the mouth of Paul, "It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret." Eph. 5:12.

The reverent use of God's name requires all the attributes of acceptable worship, as stated at length in the foregoing pages; that is, we must have faith and love, and fear and godly sincerity, and singleness of heart, etc., etc. It is clearly implied in this commandment, that we do not keep it by observing a profound silence respecting the Almighty. Though we are not to take the name of God in vain, we are still to take it. More than once in Scripture, are pious men described as those who make mention of the Lord. Isaiah 26:13, 48:1, 62:6. There may be sinful silence respecting God as well as a profane use of his name. Besides acts of worship already discussed, it is proper here to call special attention to some things immediately suggested by this commandment.

I. OATHS are an appeal to God as a witness to the truth of what we say. It is always accompanied with an expressed or implied imprecation of his curse, or renunciation of his favor, if we perform not our oath. It is therefore a very solemn act of worship. The form of the oath is different in different ages and countries. All forms are an appeal to God. Some are more decent or appropriate than others; but our laws properly leave everyone to select that which in his own judgment is most fitting. The binding obligation of an oath is in no way diminished by the form of its administration. Abraham's servant swore to his master by putting his own hand under his master's thigh. Gen. 24:2. Another form mentioned in Scripture is that of lifting up the hand towards heaven. Rev. 10:5. But the word of God binds us to no particular form. Whatever be the mode of

administration, let us not forget that the essence of an oath consists in a solemn appeal to God as the Searcher of hearts, and the Judge of the living and the dead. It either expresses or implies a declaration that we are willing that God should subject us to his dreadful curse, if we swear falsely. The proper use of an oath is the termination of strife concerning matters which cannot otherwise be adjusted. Heb. 6:16. Oaths are authorized by the example of God, who swears by himself as he can swear by none greater. Gen 22:16. Isaiah 45:23. Jer. 49:13. Amos 6:8.

Oaths are sinful when they are not necessary. It deserves the consideration of all, who have the control of the administration of public justice, whether the great number and frequency of oaths do not seriously impair their sanctity in the public mind, and thus wound justice, morals and religion. The lax observance of oaths is a very painful subject. Still, the slight regard paid to them argues nothing against their lawfulness. Every well instructed Christian ought to be willing to worship God in this as well as in other appointed ways. Our Savior himself allowed an oath to be administered to him by the High Priest. Matt. 26:63, 64. Paul uses forms of expression which have the nature of an oath: "I call God for a record upon my soul," 2 Cor. 1:23; "God is my record," Phil. 1:8; "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not," Romans 9:1. We have at least one example of a holy angel swearing: "The angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth," etc. Rev. 10:5, 6. It is promised in the Old Testament that in the latter days this mode of worshiping God shall prevail. "To me every tongue shall swear," says God. Isaiah 45:23. "He who swears shall swear by the God of truth." Isaiah 65:16. "You shall swear—The Lord lives in truth." Jer. 4:2.

Those Scriptures therefore which forbid SWEARING evidently refer to passionate, unnecessary, common or profane swearing. Swearing is either lawful or unlawful. Unlawful swearing will be considered hereafter. Lawful swearing is always a solemn act. It is an

acknowledgment of the omniscience, truth, and justice of the Most High. Commonly it is required by the laws of the land. Yet there may be cases where one may receive from another the confirmation of a promise by an oath. This subject is much spoken of in the Scriptures. The general law respecting swearing is that it be done by an appeal to the true God, and in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness. Jer. 4:2. To appeal to any but the true God is an insult to the Heavenly Majesty. If the act is performed with any devoutness of feeling—it is idolatry. If the act is performed with levity of mind—it is profaneness. God's word carefully enjoins, that appeals should be to Jehovah. Isa, 15:16; Jer. 12:16; Zeph. 1:5,

Then we must swear in truth. The ordinary form of a public oath requires "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." We may not ask God to witness to a lie, or to a thing that we do not know to be true. The lips and the conscience must agree. Let all reservations and equivocations be put far from us. Psalm 15:2, 4.

We must also swear with understanding; that is, we must realize the nature of an oath; we must have God's fear before us when we swear; and we must know that which we testify about. According to Scripture, every godly man fears an oath. Eccles. 9:2.

We must also swear in righteousness. The cause in which we testify must be so far just. We may not give evidence to establish iniquity. In swearing we are not at liberty to show partiality to friends, or enmity to foes; but are to speak what truth requires. No doubt it greatly tends to the honor of God and to the execution of public justice, when the officers of the law administer oaths with due solemnity. We ought to be careful that the matter of every oath is fully true. Abraham's servant showed a proper conscientiousness on this subject. Gen. 24:5. Of course the matter of every oath must be something lawful. A man can never lawfully or firmly bind himself to do an act of iniquity.

II. VOWS. Vows belong to every dispensation of true religion. Gen. 28:20; Isaiah 19:21; Acts 18:18. The word vow is used in three senses in our language. Sometimes, it is equivalent to worship or devotion, or a public profession of religion. Isaiah 44:5; Jer. 1:4, 5. Again, it signifies a promise to serve God in a way to which his word obliges us, even before we make the promise. But in the strict sense, a vow is a solemn promise made to God, that we will do something which we were not bound to do until we made the voluntary engagement. Like promises or oaths, vows are either lawful or unlawful according to circumstances. A vow to do a wicked thing—is of course wicked. We ought to repent of it and of our sin in making it. God is more honored in its breach than in its observance. It is a great mercy when God hinders men from fulfilling such vows. This, however, does not diminish the wickedness of making them.

A man made a vow that he would never comb his hair until he could wreak his vengeance on an adversary. He never had the opportunity of gratifying his malice, and he never combed his head. But such promises are not properly vows. They are rather curses. Acts 23:12.

Vows are commonly distinguished into conditional and unconditional. Unconditional vows are solemn resolutions that we will do or abstain from doing certain things; as that we will practice certain acts of self-denial, or forego certain lawful indulgences, in order thereby to give to our character more firmness, or the more effectually to keep ourselves from bad habits.

Conditional vows are such as according to their original form are not binding unless God shall perform or cause to be performed some condition annexed. One says to God, "Then Jacob made this vow: "If God will be with me and protect me on this journey and give me food and clothing, and if he will bring me back safely to my father, then I will make the Lord my God. This memorial pillar will become a place for worshiping God, and I will give God a tenth of everything he gives me." Genesis 28:20-22. God performed the condition, which the patriarch annexed, and Jacob kept his vow—a pleasing instance of

paternal love on the part of God; and consistent, steadfast piety on the part of his servant.

From their very nature, conditional vows are voluntary. They are not required of us by any positive precept of God's word, but, like many other things—are left to the conscience, discretion, thankfulness, zeal, and general piety of each individual. They have a reference to the receipt of future good, in view of which one chooses to bring himself under the sanctions of a solemn promise to prove his gratitude, if the favor shall be granted. When we vow before a good is received, we express our judgment of its value, and the obligations under which the receipt of it will bring us. This helps us to resist the base ingratitude to which we are so prone after mercies have been received.

All vows should be kept most conscientiously. "When you make a vow to the Lord your God, be prompt in doing whatever you promised him. For the Lord your God demands that you promptly fulfill all your vows. If you don't, you will be guilty of sin." Deut. 23:21. "Do not let your mouth bring guilt on you, and do not say in the presence of the messenger that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry with your words and destroy the work of your hands?" Ecclesiastes 5:6 "It is a snare to say rashly, "It is holy," and to reflect only after making vows." Proverbs 20:25. Vows may be rash, and the fulfillment of them may cost us a great deal; but if they are not wicked we ought to keep them, however, hard they may bear upon our pride, or sloth, or covetousness.

III. The LOT is an appeal to God, to determine a matter which the parties themselves are unable to adjust. It is a confession of the universal providence and particular government of God. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." Proverbs 16:33. A recognition of this important truth is essential to the lawfulness of the lot in any case. This acknowledgment should be made in a pious and becoming manner; and the lot must be employed only in some grave and important matter, concerning

which God's will cannot otherwise be known, or a satisfactory decision cannot otherwise be had. The general design of the lot is very much the same as that of the oath, namely: the adjustment of difficulties, and the settlement of disputes. Thus Solomon says: "The lot causes contentions to cease, and parts between the mighty." Proverbs 18:18. Lots are never to be used for divination.

We have examples of the use of the lot both in the Old and New Testaments. The whole land of Canaan was thus divided as an inheritance among the descendants of Jacob. Num. 26:55, and 33:54. The apostles thus chose a successor to Judas, who fell from his office by transgression. Acts 1:26. The lot seems to be taught by the light of nature. Jonah 1:7.

The abuses to which the lot is liable are very great. Vast schemes of gambling and lotteries under various pretexts have been introduced into society, and have greatly corrupted the morals of the people. Hardly a more appalling history could be written than that of people who have become devoted to endeavors at gaining wealth by gambling and lotteries. When they have been initially successful, in many cases, reason has tottered and fallen from her throne; or sudden wealth has begotten extravagance and dissipation. But in a larger number of cases, the lack of success has driven to crime and then to despair those who have risked much or all in this hazardous scheme. Gambling by means of lotteries dates as far back as an early period of Roman history. The Republic of Genoa, among the moderns, first resorted to the lottery. It was employed as a state measure for supplying the treasury. Thence it was brought into other countries, especially France and England. The first public lottery known in English history dates as far back as 1567. The institution was soon felt to be injurious and mischievous. Parliament undertook to control it. Through the influence of the mother country, lotteries were introduced into the colonies of North America.

After the establishment of the independence of the United States, the system grew by degrees, until it threatened the most alarming

consequences. All classes of citizens finally became roused by the extensive ruin wrought by the system. It perpetuated poverty among the humbler classes; it produced much insolvency, many frauds, embezzlements, larcenies and robberies. Its effects on those who won large prizes were hardly less injurious than on those who lost everything. It led both classes to intoxication and suicide.

In one of the large cities of the North, some years since, the feelings of the community were most painfully and indignantly excited by the case of Mr. A. He had been for ten years the "chief clerk in one of the first importing houses in the city; and to the hour of his death he enjoyed the unbounded confidence of his employers. "His character for integrity and purity was unsullied. Modest and amiable in his manners, temperate and domestic in his habits, he was endeared to all who knew him as one without a vice." When the distressing tidings were first spread abroad, that he had been found dead, not the most distant suspicion was entertained that he could have ended his quiet existence by suicide. The rumor which momentarily prevailed, that he had been robbed and murdered, was received, it is true, with horror, but with implicit confidence; nor was it until the fatal evidence of his rashness was found in his own hurried handwriting, that they who had known, and loved, and trusted him so long, were made to feel that he had cruelly deceived them; and that in the distraction of remorse he had attempted to atone for one crime by committing another—the darkest crime of all.... In the short space between seven and eight months, he embezzled the sum of \$18,000, every cent of which was lost on lottery tickets. This unfortunate man became so tortured in mind that he resolved on self-destruction. In his desk, after his death, a paper was found, probably written very shortly before the fearful deed which ushered him into the presence of his Judge. It is a simple picture of human woe. In its untutored language, we see to what a depth of wretchedness, one false step reduced a man upon whose whole life before, not a blot had rested—

"I have for the last seven months gone fast down the broad road to destruction. There was a time, and that too but a few months ago,

that I was happy, because I was free from debt and care. The time I note my downfall, or deviation from the path of rectitude, was about the middle of June last, when I took a share in a company of lottery tickets, whereby I was successful in obtaining a share of one half the capital prize; since which I have gone for myself, and that too, not on a very small scale, as you can judge from the amount now due J. R. & Co., every dollar of which has been spent in that way. I have lived, or dragged out a miserable existence, for several past months. Sleepless nights and a guilty conscience have led me on to the fatal act. The worse luck I had, the more I gambled. Since I have reflected on my rashness, I cannot look back, and see how it is possible I could have conducted in this way. When the situation I occupied, and the confidence reposed in me, and the long time I have been engaged, and the reward for my poor services—and that all should be lost in one moment—the loss is too much for me to bear. Oh! that seven or eight months past of my existence could be blotted out—but no, I must go—and before this paper is read my spirit is gone to my Maker, to give an account of my misdeeds here, and receive the dreadful sentence for self-destruction and abuse of confidence. Relatives and friends I have, from whom I do not wish to part under such circumstances, but necessity. Oh, wretch that I am! Lotteries have been my ruin. I cannot add more."

Let all who have influence in controlling public affairs, either on a large or small scale, see to it that so corrupting an institution gains no footing in the community. Those amusements called games of chance, if they are indeed such, are liable to the same objection. Eliphalet Nott, President of Union College, has testified to the world that even a young gambler has been so hardened as to play at cards on the coffin of his dead brother. And the Gospels tell us that the Roman soldiers went to gambling at the foot of the cross of the Redeemer.

IV. DOXOLOGIES. It is not without cause that some have expressed surprise that doxologies were so little used in social and public worship, in the pulpit and in the choir. True, we often have them

sung at the close of public worship, but they ought to be spoken as well as sung. In printed works, and in familiar letters, they ought to occur more frequently. So the Bible would teach. In the Old Testament doxologies abound. A literary friend lately collected a list of doxologies from the Old Testament. Those who saw it were constrained to admit that too little attention was paid to this branch of worship. It seems to be forgotten by some, that we have a rich variety of doxologies in the New Testament also. So that they belong no less to Christian worship, than to Jewish worship. The outburst of holy joy in the mother of our Lord was of the nature of a doxology. That of Zacharias was so in form; Luke 1:46-55, and 68-79. So also Simeon's song over the infant Jesus was a doxology; Luke 2:28-32. In like manner, "praising and blessing God" was a good part of the work of the disciples between Christ's resurrection and the day of Pentecost. So in the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem, the people uttered the loud shout, "Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel, who comes in the name of the Lord."

But it is in the Epistles and in Revelation that we have the fullest and most formal doxologies. Thus, in Romans 16:25-27, we find the following, than which we could hardly conceive anything more fit to bring in at the close of a missionary sermon, or a discourse on the excellence of the gospel: "Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen!" As no one now living can fitly say "my gospel" a change may there be made, and we may say "the blessed gospel," or "the glorious gospel."

Another very precious doxology is found in Ephesians 1:3-6, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! He has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm, just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in his presence. In love he predestined us for adoption to

himself through Jesus Christ, according to the pleasure of his will, so that we would praise his glorious grace that he gave us in the Beloved One." Observe—

1. This doxology was written by Paul, a prisoner. No chains, or bars, or stripes, could repress his adoring praises.
2. We may have all "spiritual blessings," when we have few or no temporal blessings.
3. When the scriptural doctrine of election and predestination offends people, it is either because they misunderstand it, or because their hearts are not right. It filled Paul with praise, and it is honorable to God. It is conducive to holiness.

The same Epistle to the Ephesians (3:20, 21) contains another precious doxology: "Now to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think—according to the power that works in you—to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

On this notice—

1. That God's ability fairly implies his willingness.
2. That no difficulties to us—are hindrances to God.
3. That no words, no thoughts of ours, ever rise to the dignity of the blessedness reserved for saints.
4. That the whole plan of salvation shall eternally and more and more redound to God's honor.

The doxology in 1 Tim. 1:17, is very sublime: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." I marvel not that the chanting of this in some of our churches produces so marked an effect on the audience.

In each of his Epistles the apostle Peter has a short doxology: "To him [the God of all grace] be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." 1 Pet. 5:11. "To him [our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ] be glory both now and forever. Amen." 2 Pet. 3:18. The doxology in Jude 24, 25, is very full and very consolatory: "Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen." Could brighter or more glorious prospects be presented? Could glory to God be more fitly sung than in view of such prospects?

But the Apocalypse excels all the books of the New Testament in the ardor, variety and copiousness of its doxologies. See Rev. 1:5, 6, 4:11, 5:12,1, and 7:12. "Unto him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for you have created all things, and for your pleasure they are and were created." "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him who sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." "Amen! Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen."

These doxologies clearly show—

1. That the worship of heaven is, in substance, the same as the worship of earth.
2. That the honors paid to the Father in heaven and on earth are properly paid to the Son. So that if men have no heart to love and praise the Son, they do not love the Father; and if they have no heart

for spiritual worship here, neither would they have if taken to heaven.

Other forms of doxology are found in the New Testament. Let them be sought out, and studied. If we shall be saved, doxology will be our work eternally. Will not the ministers of Christ more abound in doxology, at least in the conclusion of public worship?

5. BENEDICTIONS. Another act of worship is blessing the people. A benediction is the ministerial and authoritative pronouncement of a blessing upon the people in the name of the Lord, and is therefore not merely or chiefly the expression of the private wishes of the minister. The ordinary blessing of the Jewish dispensation, used by the priests to each worshiper, who had brought his offering, and to the congregation of Israel was: "May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you his favor and give you his peace." This form is very full and very precious. The original of the word Lord is Jehovah—a name applied to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. From its being repeated thrice, as the word Holy is in Isaiah 6:3, some have thought there was an allusion to the doctrine of the Trinity. Perhaps there may be. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the one, self-existent, independent, eternal and unchangeable Jehovah revealed in Scripture. This form is used as a salutatory in opening the worship of some of our churches.

The forms of benediction in the New Testament are numerous, various and very precious. Of the twenty-one epistles, only five do not close with a benediction. These are the epistle of James, of 2 Peter, the 1st and 2d epistles of John and the epistle of Jude. James nowhere has any form of blessing. In the opening of his second epistle, Peter has this form: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." So, near the beginning of his second epistle, John says: "Grace be with you, mercy and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love." So also Jude, at the beginning,

says: "Mercy unto you, and peace and love be multiplied." So that there are but two epistles in the Bible entirely without some form of benediction. These are James and 1st John.

The shortest benediction in the Bible is that of 3 John: "Peace be with you." In Colossians we have: "Grace be with you. Amen." In Titus we have: "Grace be with you all. Amen." In Peter we have: "Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen." In 1 Timothy we have: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." In Philemon we read: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen." In 2 Timothy it is: "The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen." In Romans, Philippians, and 2 Thessalonians, it is: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." In 1 Corinthians it is: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." In 1 Thessalonians it is the same, with the addition of the amen. In Galatians the apostle says, "Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ bewithyour spirit. Amen." In Ephesians he says: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen."

In Hebrews we have two forms of blessing in the last chapter. The last is the same as that in Titus. The other is exceedingly rich, and might be appropriately used with much greater frequency than it is: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." In 2 Corinthians we have what has often been called by way of pre-eminence, the apostolic benediction, though it is no more entitled to that designation than others. Yet it is rich and full: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen." But the fullest form of benediction is that given by John in Rev. 1:4, 5. "Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne, and from

Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness, and the First begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth."

Besides these seventeen forms of blessing, we have in the beginning of ten of Paul's epistles this form of blessing: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ;" and in each of his three pastoral epistles this form: "Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord." Thus we have nineteen forms of benediction given us in the New Testament. Ought they not all to be used? Why should ministers confine themselves to one, that in 2 Corinthians, 13:14? It is precious indeed, but no more so than several others. Some of the others have also peculiar appropriateness to special occasions.

The last thing said in the Bible is a benediction. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." The Hebrew form of blessing was: "Mercy to you;" the Greek, "Grace to you;" and the Roman, "Peace to you." Paul uses them all, and tells us whence they come, even "from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ." Interpreters are in doubt whether the phrase, "through the blood of the everlasting covenant," in Heb. 13:20, qualifies one of the preceding clauses or that next succeeding, or whether it has special reference to the word great, meaning that the Shepherd of the sheep is great through the blood of the everlasting covenant. Why may it not refer to all these? By "the seven spirits" in Rev. 1:4, is meant the Holy Spirit, seven being the number of perfection, and the Holy Spirit being the absolute perfection of spiritual existence.

Generally the benedictions are plain. Let them all be studied and used at appropriate times. A part of God's worship in every dispensation has been blessing the people in his name.

6. Care in using of the name of God in the use of speech, and in making impressions on our fellow men. He who has so little reverence for the Most High as carelessly to utter whatever comes into his mind, whether it be true or false, will not be long in

becoming a gross violator of this commandment. The subject is now merely hinted at. So also whatever use is made of God's name should be sincere. We should never employ God's name to deceive our fellow-men, to make an impression that we are pious and so trustworthy, and thus lead men to confide in us. This commandment clearly forbids the following sins.

1. **BLASPHEMY.** In Scripture language, to blaspheme is to reproach or revile either God or man. 1 Kings 21:10. But for a long time, blasphemy in the English language designates an offence against God. George Canpbell says, "Blasphemy invariably implies an expression of contempt or detestation, and a desire of producing the same passions in others." Linwood says, "Blasphemy is an injury offered to God, by denying that which is due and belonging to him, or attributing to him what is not agreeable to his nature." Blackstone defines it as a crime "against the Almighty, by denying his being or providence; or by disdainful reproaches of our Savior Christ. Where also may be referred all profane scoffing at the holy Scripture, or exposing it to contempt and ridicule." In the Apocalypse, John describes the great beast as "having a mouth, speaking great things and blasphemies." "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." Rev. 13:6. According to modern usage, understanding, scorn and malignity against God are essential to the commission of this crime. In some of the states of North America, legal blasphemy is punishable at common law. In the Jewish commonwealth blasphemy was punishable with death. Lev. 24:16. Of the offence as against municipal law, nothing is here said. But of it as a breach of the third commandment, a few things are offered. Boston says, "Blasphemy is a wronging of the majesty of God by speeches tending to his reproach." Durham says, "There are three sorts of blasphemy.

1. When anything unbecoming God is in word attributed to him; as that he is unjust, unholy, unmerciful, etc., such as that complaint, (Ezek. 18:25,) 'The way of the Lord is not equal.'

2. When what is due to him is denied him; as when he is said not to be Eternal, Omniscient, Almighty, Sovereign, etc., as when Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?' Ex. 5:2, or as when railing Rabshakeh in his master's name said, 'Who is the Lord that is able to deliver you out of my hand?' Isaiah 36:20.

3. When what is due to God is attributed to a creature, or arrogated by a creature: thus the Jews, supposing Christ to be a creature charged him with blasphemy, (Luke 7:49; John 10:33,) because he forgave sins and called himself God."

In strict propriety of modern parlance, blasphemy always includes insolence. But in the Bible use of the term, it is much more comprehensive. So that we blaspheme, not only when we speak against God directly, but when we revile his word, his way, his children, his ordinances, or his works. 1 Tim. 6:1; Titus 2:5; 2 Pet. 2:2; 1 Cor. 4:13; Mark 3:29, 30. The judgment of the Christian world is that blasphemy is the greatest possible violation of the third commandment. Durham: "The great breach of this command is blasphemy, though perjury be more direct." Boston: "Blasphemy is the most atrocious of all sins." It is clearly our duty to express our abhorrence of it. The Jews rent their garments at the hearing of blasphemy. Our mode of testifying against it must depend upon our circumstances; but it should always be decided. At such a time even silence is sinful, much more than is smiling or laughing at it. It is truly appalling to reflect how even good men sometimes, by an untender walking, excite the blasphemies of their fellow-men. 2 Sam. 12:14, Romans 2:24. Nor is it possible for some truly converted men to forget how in the days of their own unregeneracy they led others to commit this crime. Even inferiors in station may lead their superiors into this sin, 1 Tim. 6:1.

A great source of blasphemy is ignorance, 1 Tim. 1:13. No doubt it is committed also from lack of watchfulness over our hearts and lips. The great source of blasphemy is the corrupt heart of man, as the Savior himself explicitly taught, Matt. 15:19. The Scriptures speak of

blasphemy against the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Lev. 24:16, Matt. 12:31, 32, Mark 3:28, 29, Luke 12:10.

Of all blasphemies, only that which is against the Holy Spirit is unpardonable. It has never forgiveness, neither in this world nor in that which is to come, Mark 3:29. It is the sin unto death, 1 John 5:16. Of course it is a sin that is never committed by one of God's chosen people. There is an impression very common among the best theologians that it is not often committed. But that it has been committed, we have the most alarming evidence in the New Testament. Some have said that this sin could not be committed in our day. But why not? It is a sin against light. And are not men much instructed in our time? Is not the truth preached with great clearness and power at least by some? and does not the Holy Spirit bear witness in many hearts by strong convictions and clear impressions of religious truth? and do not men assail the great fundamental truths of religion now as in the days of our Savior? Does not their opposition assume the form of deadly malice against the gospel itself? Have they not both seen and hated both Christ and his Father? John 15:24. Yes, do they not show despite not only to the Savior, but to the Spirit of grace? Heb. 10:29.

It is commonly agreed that if Peter had denied his Lord with the malice with which Saul of Tarsus persecuted the church, he would have committed this sin. Or if Saul of Tarsus, with the threatenings and slaughter which he breathed out, had enjoyed the light and advantages of Peter in his fellowship with Christ, he would have committed this sin. It is pretty clear that in all cases where there is a sincere desire to turn from sin and cleave to God, the unpardonable sin has not been committed. But let men beware how they embrace damnable heresies; how they deliberately set themselves against God; how by words, or writing, or painting, or acting, they represent anything sacred in an odious or ridiculous light; or how they stand silently by and connive at the blasphemies of others, Jer. 36:24, 25; or how they excuse, defend, or plead for, any form of ungodliness; or how in any way they walk untenderly.

Especially let them be very guarded against all scornful words and acts towards the Most High against all mocking and derision of sacred things; against all jibes and jests at the things of God; against all thoughtless use of God's name, or irreverent speaking, as using the names of God in mere exclamation, or as by-words. All these things lead directly to blasphemy against the people of the Godhead, and particularly against the Holy Spirit.

2.PERJURY. Cicero says that an oath is a religious affirmation. Of course perjury is an ungodly use of a solemn institution, the object of which is the ascertaining of the truth. Perhaps the most correct definition of legal perjury is that it consists in making a false oath, when lawfully administered, in some judicial proceeding, by a person who swears willfully, absolutely and falsely, in a matter material to the issue. Blackstone: "The law takes no notice of any perjury, but such as is committed in some court of justice, having power to administer an oath; or before some magistrate or proper officer invested with a similar authority, in some proceedings relative to a civil suit, or a criminal prosecution." But we are interpreting the law of God and not the municipal regulations of men.

In the sight of Heaven, all false swearing is perjury. Boston: "Perjury is falsehood confirmed with an oath." In God's esteem a man commits perjury, when upon oath he affirms as truth that which he knows to be false, or that which he does not know to be true, 1 Kings 21:10; or, when one engages upon oath to do something which is impossible, or which he is afterwards careless to perform. The word perjure is of Latin origin. The word forswear is of Anglo-Saxon origin. In ordinary language they have the same signification; though some have pretended to refined distinctions between them. Hopkins: Perjury is the chief and most notorious abusing of God's name. And indeed what greater sin can there be, than to bring God to be a witness to our lie? to make him, who is truth itself, attest that which is falsehood or deceit?"

All nations have punished perjury with severity. By ancient English law the punishment was death; afterwards deportation or cutting out the tongue; then forfeiture of all property. Although the punishment of this crime has been somewhat varied, yet in England and America, the criminal party is forever disqualified from bearing testimony, and so is subjected to perpetual infamy. The judicial regulation of the Jewish commonwealth on this subject was excellent, Deut. 19:16-19. For a long time it was, and perhaps still is the law of France. It provided that perjury in the case of prosecution for capital offences was itself a capital crime. And surely he who takes a false oath to screen a murderer from death, or to punish an innocent man with death, deserves to die. This crime is as ancient as perhaps any other. Paul mentions perjured people, 1 Tim. 1:10; but long before his time God ordained by his prophet Moses severe laws against swearing falsely, Lev. 19:12, Deut. 19:18, 19. Indeed the Scriptures array themselves with great rigor against perjury. "Love no false oath," Zech. 8:17. "I will be a swift witness against false swearers" Mal. 3:5. See also Zech. 5:4, Hos. 10:4.

OATHS OF OFFICE. Perjury may be committed not only by testifiers in judicial proceedings, but by merchants in the custom-house, and by the servants of the public, who bind themselves by an oath faithfully to perform the duties of their office. Every unjust judge is a perjured monster. Every magistrate, who violates the laws, which he is sworn to execute, is guilty of perjury. Every legislator, who has sworn to maintain the Constitution under which he is acting, and then is led away by selfish or party considerations, is perjured. And the executive officer, who for fear or favor, for bribe or reward, fails to do all he has sworn to do, is also a perjured wretch. The commonness of these sins does in no degree whatever abate their enormity.

A CASE OF CONSCIENCE. May we press a man to swear when we have good reason to think he will swear falsely? This is a very serious question. In one sense indeed, every man shall bear his own burden. But on the other hand, we are warned not to be partakers of other

men's sins. The correct answer seems to be, that if the matter is of no great weight, Christian tenderness on our part should not press him to the oath, if we seriously fear that in testifying he will commit perjury. This reason derives strength, if the matter in contest involves our own private interests only. In such a case, we may lawfully yield our rights. But if the matter at stake is of great importance to the public, or to private parties, then we may require the oath; for it is the appointed instrument of public justice. We cannot certainly know but that God will so fill the mind of the witness with a sense of his fear, as that the truth may come out. In no case has a judge a right to release a competent witness, duly brought forward, by either party.

3. PROFANENESS. The general definition of profaneness is irreverence for sacred names, or things, or institutions, or people. A more specific definition is, that profaneness is the act of violating anything sacred. The grossest form of profaning the name of God is by common swearing, in which oaths and curses are usually united; for very few men swear profanely without cursing also. Blackstone speaks of this as one sin, and calls it, "the offence of profane and common swearing and cursing." This sin consists, (besides the cursing,) in making an appeal to God in a light, passionate, or wicked manner, for no important purpose, and when not required to do so by any competent authority. Perhaps there is no branch of morals concerning which it is more difficult to preserve a healthy state of the public conscience. The difficulty is found,

1. In the natural lawlessness of the heart. It does not like to be under restraint to God.
2. The habits of men are extensively corrupted in this matter.
3. Some moralists have written loosely on the subject.
4. Men in high places often set a very bad example.

These causes have always been at work. They were felt in the days of our Savior. Strict as the Pharisees were, in some things, they held that common swearing was no sin, even if it were by the name of God, provided what we swore was true; that no oath was binding where the name of God was not expressly used; and that we might swear as much as we pleased without offence, if we swore by heaven, by Jerusalem, etc. Thus they subverted the entire system of morality of speech built on the third commandment. The rebuke of our Savior to them was dreadful. "How terrible it will be for you, blind guides! You say, 'Whoever swears an oath by the sanctuary is excused, but whoever swears an oath by the gold of the sanctuary must keep his oath.' You blind fools! What is more important, the gold or the sanctuary that made the gold holy? Again you say, 'Whoever swears an oath by the altar is excused, but whoever swears by the gift that is on it must keep his oath.' You blind men! Which is more important, the gift or the altar that makes the gift holy? Therefore, the one who swears an oath by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. The one who swears an oath by the sanctuary swears by it and by the one who lives there. And the one who swears an oath by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it."(Matthew 23:16-22)

The Old Testament no less distinctly condemns swearing by anything but God. "How shall I pardon you for this? your children have forsaken me, and sworn by those who are not gods." Jer. 5:7. To the same effect our Lord speaks in Matt. 5:33-37, where he notices the fact that the Pharisees condemned perjury, requiring the fulfillment of oaths to the Lord, but admitting common swearing. "Again, you have heard that it was said to those who lived long ago, 'You must not swear an oath falsely,' but 'You must fulfill your oaths to the Lord.' But I tell you not to swear at all, neither by heaven, because it is God's throne, nor by the earth, because it is his footstool, nor by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the Great King. Nor should you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. Instead, let your word be 'Yes' for 'Yes' and 'No' for 'No.' Anything more than that comes from the evil one."

The sin of swearing by anything but God is positively forbidden. "You shall fear the Lord your God, and serve him, and shall swear by his name." Deut. 6:13; Deut. 10:20. Swearing is an act of worship. When it is right to swear, such worship should be offered to none but him who searches the heart, and knows whether we swear truly; and who has almightiness, and justice, and sovereignty, and so can punish if we swear falsely. Swearing by any creature is therefore so far an act of idolatry, and yet, because it is a creature of God, we do in the esteem of Heaven take an oath, when we swear by it; and so, if we swear not truly, even by a creature, we do commit perjury in the sight of God. God's creatures were given us for other and lawful uses, and not to supplant our Maker.

The reasons against profane swearing are many, and entitled to the most solemn consideration.

1. Profane swearing never does any good. It makes no one wiser, better or happier. It inspires no respect for him who uses it. It casts no light on any subject. It gives force to no argument. It strengthens no assertions. It gives no edge to wit. It does not promote cheerfulness, justice, truth or any good thing. It is a wholly useless practice. More than this,

2. It always does harm. It must give pain to all right-minded people, who hear it. It is so much the language of passion that it either grieves or irritates. It often makes enemies, and weakens a good cause.

3. It is, therefore, a wanton sin, committed for the love of sinning, and not for any good to be secured in time or eternity. It is a gratuitous expression of contempt towards God and all that is sacred.

4. It is confessedly a vulgar practice. Even Chesterfield says that swearing is inconsistent with the character of a gentleman. In a world like this, virtue and happiness greatly depend on godly manners. Everyone is bound to be truly gentle and polite. He owes it

to his neighbors, not to offend against good breeding. Have you ever seen a man, who justified profane language as a branch of godly manners?

5. Profane swearing is forbidden by the laws of every well regulated government. The wisdom of lawgivers, sitting in council on the affairs of nations, has uniformly condemned profane oaths. We are bound by all the principles of citizenship, to maintain, both by speech and example, all good rules and laws made for the country in which we live.

6. Swearing leads to other evil practices. He who uses profane words, easily falls into the use of angry and bitter language. Cursing commonly goes with swearing. It is also generally conceded that swearing leads to obscene conversation. So utterly subversive of all good, was profane swearing considered by the heathen, that the ancient Scythians punished it with the loss of the estate, the Persians with slavery, the Greeks with cutting off the ears, the Romans with hurling from a high rock.

7. Profane swearing is a shocking sin. South: "All profanation and invasion of things sacred is an offence against the eternal laws of nature." It is never found alone. It dreadfully hardens the heart against God, and inclines men to reject both his mercies and his authority. It indisposes them to pray, to repent, to forsake any sin. While indulged it makes prayer a mockery. To swear one hour and pray the next is so inconsistent that very few men do both. Yet the poor, profane swearer is as feeble and dependent as his pious neighbor, and constantly needs the divine blessing to make existence desirable. How dreadful then must be that sin, which cuts off the soul from access to God! How seldom are the profane inclined to repentance!" Dwight: "Profaneness is the mere flood-gate of iniquity, and the stream once let out, flows, with a current daily becoming more and more rapid and powerful. It is the very nurse of sin; the foster-parent of ingratitude, rebellion and impiety. This witness is true." Thousands have testified as much. Boston, who had long

noticed the effects of evil habits on mankind, says, "Profane swearers do seldom reform. Many are very extravagant otherwise in youth, who afterwards take up themselves; but oftentimes swearing grows gray-headed with men." How much like a madman the swearer is in closing even the door of repentance and mercy against himself!

8. The corrupting influence of profane swearing on society is terrible. The prophet Jeremiah says, "Because of swearing, the land mourns." Jer. 23:7. How our land mourns by reason of this sin, almost all classes are made to feel. Among all profane swearers, you shall not find a teacher of Sabbath Schools, or one who reproves sin in his family, or who seeks the salvation of his fellow-men, or is otherwise a safe guide to those around him. You may search nations and empires throughout, and you shall not find a godly person among all the armies of profane swearers.

This crime diminishes reverence for God, relaxes the force of solemn oaths, and prepares men for perjury and general ungodliness. If the people of this nation continue thus to insult the Most High, we may look for even more dire calamities than are now, (1864) in the midst of civil war, poured upon us out of the vials of God's wrath.

"The mischiefs of evil examples," says one, "are always great; in the present case they are dreadful. The tongue is obviously the prime instrument of human corruption; of diffusing and perpetuating sin; of preventing the eternal life of our fellow men; of extending perdition over the earth; and of populating the world of misery.... Among all the evil examples, which I have heard mentioned, I do not remember that a mute man was ever named as one. No person, within my recollection, ever attributed his own sins to the example of such a man. Men corrupt each other pre-eminently by their speech. No individual, perhaps, ever began to swear profanely by himself: and few, very few, ever commenced the practice but from imitation. Let every profane person, therefore, solemnly remember how much guilt will be charged to him in the great day of accounts."

9. God has put this sin in a catalogue of the worst offences. "Hear the word of the Lord, O children of Israel, for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land; there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed. Therefore the land mourns, and all who dwell in it languish." Hos. 4:1-3.

10. Dreadful judgments often overtake people and communities, on account of this sin. This has often been declared by inspired and uninspired men. Jer. 7:9-16; Zech. 5:4. But should no curse fall on the profane in this life—there is an eternity of retribution before us all. We must reap that which we sow. We must give an account to Him, who says of all profane swearers, that he will not hold them guiltless. What everlasting sorrows await all who go to the next world with their souls defiled with wicked oaths!

And now, dear reader, are not these reasons good? Ought they not to decide the case? You are a poor feeble worm, living on God's daily bounty. You need his favor. At any moment you may be called out of time into eternity. How dare you provoke his wrath by treating his name with contempt? If even one profane oath has escaped your lips, humble yourself before God, heartily repent of your iniquity, and plead for forgiveness through the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. To the penitent who forsakes sin, there is mercy. Ask for it now. Give your heart to Christ. How dreadful it will be to spend an eternity with all the foul-mouthed, who shall day and night curse and blaspheme the God of heaven, and with all the vile from among men, sink down in endless, hopeless sorrow!

The following little scrap, written by a pious man, has been used so often to impress upon the minds of men a sense of the sin of profane swearing, and even to persuade them to turn to God and live, that it is here inserted without alteration. It is entitled, "THE SWEARER'S PRAYER, OR HIS OATH EXPLAINED." "What, a swearer pray! Yes, swearer, whether you think so or not, each of your oaths is a prayer—

an appeal to the holy and Almighty God, whose name you dare so impiously to take into your lips. And what is it, do you think, swearer, that you call for, when the solemn imprecations, damn and damnation, roll so frequently from your profane tongue? Tremble, swearer, while I tell you! Your prayer contains two parts: you pray, First, that you may be deprived of eternal happiness! Secondly, that you may be plunged into eternal misery! When, therefore, you call for damnation, do you not, in effect, say as follows?

'O God! you have power to punish me in hell forever, therefore, let not one of my sins be forgiven! Let every oath I have sworn—every lie that I have told—every Sabbath that I have broken—and all the sins that I have committed, either in thought, word or deed, rise up in judgment against me, and eternally condemn me! Let me never partake of your salvation! May my soul and body be deprived of all happiness, both in this world and that which is to come! Let me never see your face with comfort—never enjoy your favor and friendship; and let me never enter into the kingdom of heaven!'

This is the first part of your prayer. Let us hear the second. 'O God let me not only be shut out of heaven, but also shut up in hell! May all the members of my body be tortured with inconceivable agony, and all the powers of my soul tormented with inexpressible and eternal horror and despair! Let my dwelling be in the blackness of darkness, and my companions accursed men and accursed devils! Pour down your hottest anger; execute all your wrath and curse upon me; arm and send forth all your terrors against me; and let your fierce, your fiery, your fearful indignation rest upon me! Be my eternal enemy, and plague, and punish, and torment me, in hell, forever, and ever, and ever!'

Swearer, this is your prayer! Oh dreadful imprecation! Oh horrible, horrible, most horrible! Blaspheming man, do you like your petition? Look at it. Are you sincere in your prayer, or are you mocking your Maker? Do you wish for damnation? Are you desirous of eternal torment? If so, swear on—swear hard. The more oaths the more

misery; and perhaps, the sooner you may be in hell. Are you shocked at this language? Does it harrow up your soul? Does the very blood run cold in your veins? Are you convinced of the evil of profane swearing? How many times have you blasphemed the God of heaven? How many times have you asked God to damn you in the course of a year, a month, a day? Nay, how many times in a single hour have you called for damnation? Are you not yet in hell? Wonder, O heavens and be astonished, O earth, at the goodness and patience of that God whose great name swearing people so often and so awfully profane! Swearer, be thankful, O be exceedingly thankful, that God has not answered your prayer, your dreadful prayer—that his mercy and patience have withheld the request of your polluted lips.

Never let him hear another oath from your unhallowed tongue lest it should be your last expression upon earth, and your swearing prayer should be answered in hell. O, let your oaths be turned into supplications. Repent and turn to Jesus, who died for swearers as well as his murderers: and then, O then, though you may have sworn as many oaths as there are stars in the heavens, and sands upon the seashore, innumerable—then you shall find, to your eternal joy, that there is love enough in his heart and merit sufficient in his blood, to pardon your sins, and to save your soul forever. Swearer, can you ever again blaspheme such a God and Savior as this? Does not your conscience cry, God forbid? Even so, Amen."

It is a vain endeavor on the part of some to avoid the guilt of profane swearing by mincing their oaths, as is the practice of many whose consciences still trouble them so much as to hinder them from the more vile forms of this sin. Minced oaths are either oaths, or they are nonsense. If oaths, they are of course profane. If they are nonsense, they are not "good nonsense," and are clearly forbidden by Matt. 12:36. They are certainly offensive to godly manners and to God's people, 1 Cor. 15:33, Matt. 18:6, 7.

The following hints may be useful in restraining men from all profane swearing.

1. "I do not know that when a man is called to account for this his sin at the bar of God's judgment seat, that he will much mend the matter by pleading that he had been guilty of it so often, at last it became a second nature to him, and he got to swear ever and always without so much as intending it." (Hare)
2. Commit to memory the third commandment. Its language is clear and solemn. Very few men are able to remember its words and to swear profanely at the same time.
3. Cultivate the fear of God in the heart. Let a sense of the solemn majesty of the Most High fall upon you.
4. Beware of needless social fellowship with men who are habitually profane.
5. Control your passions amid needless and violent excitements.
6. Whenever you go out into the world, try to carry with you the spirit of prayer.
7. If at any time you fall into this sin, deeply humble yourself on that account and repent in deep sorrow.

SWEARING REPROVED. The following narrative is known to many to be substantially correct. It has found its way into the public prints: A physician left his residence to ride on horseback towards the lower part of the main street. He had not proceeded far when he met a well-mounted man, who was much excited with liquor. He hailed the doctor in a harsh and rather sharp manner. The latter stopped and looked him steadily in the face. Soon the excited man asked, "Have you seen a young man passing this way with a wagon?" The doctor replied in the negative. From the lips of the inquirer soon escaped a number of profane and foolish oaths respecting the strange

disappearance of the team and driver. The doctor sat still on his horse, greatly moved with compassion, and tenderly but steadily fixed his eyes on the face of his neighbor. Presently the excited man asked for some trifling favor. The doctor promptly gave it, saying, "I take great pleasure in doing anything to oblige you, although you have greatly hurt my feelings." The other replied, "How can that be? I did not intend to do so." The doctor replied, "You have spoken very disrespectfully of my best friend." The reply was, "What do you mean? I have said nothing against any one." The doctor answered, "The best Friend I have in the universe is God. Both to you and me He has done more kindness than all others besides. You have used his name here in my presence in a very profane way, and yet you ask, 'What have I said to hurt your feelings?' Can I hear my God and Savior spoken of contemptuously, and not be hurt?" "Sir," said the man, "I ask your pardon." The doctor replied, "My pardon is nothing. I am a worm of the dust. Like you, I must soon stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and give up my last and solemn account. Ask pardon of God."

By this time the countenance of the man revealed shame and remorse, and he said, "Sir, allow me to ask your name." The doctor said, "Oh, that is a matter of no importance. I shall soon meet you at the judgement bar of God. I hope for salvation through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do you?" Thus saying, he bade good-bye to the excited man, and rode away. Neither party in this strange interview knew the name of the other. About nine or ten months after this, the doctor was delivering an address on temperance, and when the meeting was over, a man well-dressed and having an appearance of respectability, came to him and said, "I suppose you do not know me." "I do not," was the reply. "Do you not remember," said he, "that last summer you met a man, and reprov'd him for swearing?" "I do," said the doctor. "I am that man," he replied. "I went home distressed, and wondering who you were. I described your appearance to my son. He told me you were a minister of the gospel, and gave me your name. Since that day I have drunk no

liquor; I have stopped swearing; and that is not all"—tears starting in his eyes—"the best of all is, I hope God has converted my soul."

The affecting character of this meeting can be better conceived than described. Subsequent inquiry showed that the reformation was entire, and that the former swearer was now a praying man, and the former drunkard was leading a consistent Christian life. From this narrative it appears,

1. There may be exceptions to the rule laid down by that wise and godly man, Ebenezer Porter: "I will not talk to a man intoxicated with strong drink." Such conversation is sometimes dangerous, seldom improving, but not always without advantage. Let us be civil to even drunken men. Who knows but that we may do them good?
2. "Love—and say what you please." A stern or harsh manner commonly makes men worse; but true tenderness commonly disarms enmity.
3. "In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening withhold not your hand; for you know not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." Let us be always at work, both in season and out of season.
4. Let us overcome the fear of man. It brings a snare. It makes us cowardly. It excites the contempt of the wicked. "Be of good courage." When the council saw the boldness of Peter and John they marveled, and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.
5. We must not treat all wicked men alike. Of some we must "have compassion, making a difference." They must have none but gentle, persuasive words and tones. Others we must "save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." To such we must often present the terrors of the Lord, and in his solemn name point them to the wrath to come.

6. How rich is divine grace how abundant is divine mercy! It saves even profane swearers and drunkards. It can do all things. Oh that men would accept the salvation so freely and so sincerely offered to them by the Lord!

4. ASSEVERATIONS.

An asseveration is to affirm or assert positively or earnestly. It may be either with or without an oath. The primary signification of the term pointed to an oath. But now we are said to asseverate when with repetition or solemnity we assert positively: a declaration without repetition is a simple assertion. An asseveration expresses vehemence, and is designed to give emphasis to one's declarations. Asseverations are right or wrong according to the occasion and manner of using them. When lawful, they do not materially differ from persistent declarations. Thus Rhoda constantly affirmed that Peter was at the gate. Acts 12:15. We may make our asseverations very strong, even as Elisha did to Elijah, when he said, "As surely as the Lord lives, and as your soul lives." 2 Kings 2:2, 4, 6. This is not really an oath; and yet it is an appeal to God and an assertion hardly less solemn than an oath.

But asseverations are sinful when they are made without thoughtfulness or without any proper call for them. Ray: "Another abuse of the tongue, I might add; vehement asseveration upon slight and trivial occasions." We ought especially to guard against making any asseveration rashly or needlessly, as it tends to weaken our regard for sacred things.

5. ATTESTATIONS.

Attestations are nothing more than giving evidence without oath. But ordinarily they have in them a tone of positiveness and absolute certainty, not belonging to ordinary testimony, and they may partake and often do partake of an appeal to God. If the occasion is sufficiently solemn and important, and the attestation reverent, it is

not sinful. It is frequently accompanied with such phrases as 'truly,' 'indeed,' 'I solemnly declare,' etc. But when made in rashness, or on frivolous occasions, or with irreverence of manner or of heart towards God or sacred things, it is contrary to the spirit of this commandment.

6. OBTESTATIONS.

Obtestations are exceedingly earnest entreaties or supplications, made to our fellow-men, respecting something which we desire. When lawful, they are solemnly made. Paul used such: "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, etc." Romans 12:1. Again, "I, Paul, beseech you by the meekness of Christ." 2 Cor. 10:1. These too are contrary to the spirit of the third commandment, when made without just cause; much more when employed to persuade men to that which is sinful.

7. IMPRECATIONS.

Imprecations are prayers, by which we seek evil to ourselves or others. They are conditional or unconditional. If unconditional, they are mere curses. The general spirit of the gospel and of its precepts is counter to them. "Bless, and curse not." "The wrath of man works not the righteousness of God." "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord." When directed towards others, if they partake of the spirit of railing, this adds to their sinfulness. Jude 9. There may be solemn occasions when we may conditionally imprecate evil upon ourselves, as did the royal Psalmist. Psalm 7:3-5. All imprecations, however, are sinful—when our appeal is to Satan; when they are made to establish a falsehood; to express malignant passions against others, and when there is no solemn occasion for them.

8. SUPERSTITIOUS OBSERVANCES.

These are so numerous, and vary so much with the country, and even the neighborhood where they prevail, that a detail of them would fill a volume. Sailors are superstitious about having a gospel minister on

board their vessels; and about sailing on Friday. Some farmers are superstitious about almost everything they do. Some will hardly sow flax, except on Good Friday. Some people are alarmed if they spill salt on the table; if they sneeze when putting on their shoes; or if they have a burning sensation in the left ear. All these and like things are senseless, are calculated to make life miserable, and to reduce us to slavery to perpetual apprehensions.

9. GENERAL IRREVERENCE.

Our Savior and his apostles very carefully guard us against all needless introduction of the name of God into common conversation. "let your word be 'Yes' for 'Yes' and 'No' for 'No.' Anything more than that comes from the evil one." Matt. 5:37. "Above all, brothers, do not swear oaths by heaven, by earth, or by any other object. Instead, let your "Yes" mean yes and your "No" mean no, lest you fall under condemnation." James 5:12. It may greatly encourage us to pay a strict regard to these injunctions, to know that those who keep at the greatest distance from all irreverence and needless appeals to God, other things being equal, probably suffer least in their reputation for veracity.

And in general, we should avoid everything that seems to us inconsistent with profound and solemn reverence for the Divine Majesty. The Westminster Assembly say: "The sins forbidden in the third commandment are, the not using of God's name as is required; and the abuse of it in an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane, superstitious, or wicked mentioning, or otherwise using his titles, attributes, ordinances, or works, by blasphemy, perjury; all sinful cursings, oaths, vows, and lots; violating of our oaths and vows, if lawful; and fulfilling them, if of things unlawful; murmuring and quarreling at, curious prying into, and misapplying of God's decrees and providences; misinterpreting, misapplying, or any way perverting the word, or any part of it, to profane jests, curious or unprofitable questions, vain janglings, or the maintaining of false doctrines; abusing it, the creatures, or anything contained under the

name of God—to sinful lusts and practices; the maligning, scorning, reviling, or any ways opposing of God's truth, grace, and ways, making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends; being ashamed of it, or a shame to it, by uncomfortable, unwise, unfruitful, and offensive walking, or backsliding from it."

The THREATENING annexed to this commandment.

This is expressed in terms well-suited to fill the mind with reverence and awe. "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, who takes his name in vain!" (Exodus 20:7). The threatening is delivered in a figure of speech, common to all languages, wherein much more is implied than is expressed. When the apostle Peter, exhorting the early Christians to holiness, says, "The time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do," he means to say, that we have spent far too much time in that wicked course of life.

This threatening clearly implies,

1. That we shall have a solemn and awful reckoning with God—a reckoning in which his creatures shall have all their conduct investigated with the scrutiny of omniscience, shall all be found innocent or guilty, and shall all be condemned or acquitted.
2. In that solemn account, we shall answer to God for all irreverence of thought, or feeling, or speech, or action.
3. God will by no means clear the guilty, and in particular, by no means clear those who shall then be found guilty of breaking this commandment.
4. No mercy shall be shown to men whose souls shall then be found defiled with the guilt of this sin. Yes, the Lord will not hold him guiltless, who takes his name in vain! Such a one may perhaps hold himself guiltless; he may esteem himself a fine fellow; he may think that he graces his profanity with the air of a gentleman; he may

imagine that he is quite above all responsibility even to God. Moreover his fellows may hold him guiltless; may make light of his sin; may call him brave and elegant. But Jehovah, the lawgiver of heaven and earth, will not acquit him! To God he is responsible, and in God's sight he is criminal.

If the profane man, at the last day, stands alone, still God will reckon with him. If hand has joined in hand, and he is surrounded by a crew of the ungodly, their numbers shall not protect him. Proverbs 11:21. If he is poor, and steals, and takes the name of his God in vain, Proverbs 30:9, still his poverty shall not screen him. If he is rich and gifted and honorable in men's esteem, and violates this command, his pomp shall be brought down to the grave, yes, he shall be brought down to hell, to the bottom of the pit. Isaiah 14:11, 14.

In all cases the violation of this commandment has many aggravations. It is committed immediately against God. It is in the teeth of the expressed letter of the law. It is vile. It is suited to lead others astray. It admits of no reparation. It is against the law of nature. It is against, all the pious instruction we have ever received. It is against the laws of common politeness. If open, it is against every man's convictions of right. It is exceedingly impudent. It is heaven-daring. It is an expression of deep malignity against God. Psalm 139:20. While indeed the profane person, who shall repent, shall obtain forgiveness; profaneness is a sin which greatly disinclines men to turn to God. To the penitent, the offence is not unpardonable. But how hard it is to bring a man to cry for mercy—when for a long time he has been insulting the Father of all mercies and the God of all grace!

The Fourth Commandment

Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work ; BUT the seventh day is the sabbath of the lord thy god : IN it thou SHALT not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, NOR THY MAID-SERVANT, NOR THY CATTLE, NOR THY STRANGER THAT IS WITHIN THY GATES: FOR IN SIX DAYS THE LORD MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE SEA AND ALL THAT IN THEM IS, AND RESTED THE SEVENTH DAY: WHEREFORE THE LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH-DAY, AND HALLOWED IT.

NO man can seriously read and consider this precept without seeing that it is of vast importance. It is a law claiming to regulate a seventh portion of human life. If a man lives twenty-one years, this law claims the entire control of three of them; if he lives fifty years, it disposes of more than seven of them. It is therefore important. But it also devotes this portion of time to religious purposes; and these are the highest ends of life. All other time is secular. This is holy. That may be occupied with things which perish in the using. This must be given to things which take hold on eternity. Many questions may be raised concerning this law; but one question is at the foundation of all the rest: " Is this law still in force?" If it is not binding now, it never will be; and if it is binding now, it will bind while the world stands. The inquiry is of great practical interest. Public manners are vastly affected by the esteem in which the Sabbath is held. It is, therefore, right to look well to the foundations.

DOES THE LAW OF THE SABBATH BIND US?

It is evident that laws may cease to be of force; that is, they may cease to be laws. When this occurs, it must be in one of the following ways.

The condition of a people may be so changed as to render obedience to the law impracticable. In human governments such cases often arise, and the law, unless administered by tyrants, becomes a dead

letter. No good government will inflict the penalty on the transgressor to whom obedience is impossible, even though the law remains on the statute-book. But the law of the Sabbath can as well be kept now as at any former period of the world. Indeed, when given from Mount Sinai, it was given to a people on a long journey, to whom were wanting many conveniences which we enjoy for its careful observance. If this law was in its nature ever practicable, it is so now.

Some laws expire by limitation. Such are many of the laws of every country. Such were many of the laws given by Moses. They were in force until Christ, who was their end, came; and then they bound no longer. Thus the whole ceremonial law ceased to bind after the death of Christ, to which it was limited.

But no limit was fixed to the observance of the fourth commandment, either when first given or afterwards.

A competent authority may repeal a law, and thus its obliging power may cease. Every free government affords numerous instances of the repeal of laws once useful, but no longer so. In a regular government, the repeal must be passed by the power which enacts the law. The great Lawgiver of the world is God. He ordained the law of the Sabbath, and he has never repealed it. Is any evidence of such repeal found in Scripture ? If so, where is the book, the chapter, the verse containing it ? All admit that the law was in force until Christ. Christ did not repeal it, for he says so, Matt. v. 17 ; nor did the apostles anywhere declare that it was repealed.

If this law, therefore, had ceased to bind, it must be in some way utterly unknown to us. It is still practicable ; it has not expired by limitation ; it has not been repealed.

THIS LAW IS PART OF A CODE WHICH IS IN FORCE.

It may also be said that this law is in the middle of a code, all the rest of which is acknowledged to be binding ; and why not this ? Were the

other precepts of this code spoken by God from Sinai amidst blackness and darkness, and tempest and terrors ? So was this. Were the others written by the finger of God, on tables of stone ? So was this. Were the others deposited in the ark of the testimony, in the holy of holies, under the wings of the cherubim ? So was this. No ceremonial or repealable law, given to the Jews, had these marks of honour put upon it. Did Christ say, " I came not to destroy, but to fulfil the

law?" He said it as much of this as of any other precept. Did Christ's most devoted followers keep the other commandments ? So did they keep this. Luke xxiii. 56.

THIS LAW ENACTED WITH GREAT CARE.

On the face of this law are found some things which prove that God, who gave it, regarded it as of great importance.

In the wording of it, a more full explanation of its true intent is given than in any other commandment. It is enacted both positively and negatively: positively, " Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy ;" negatively, " In it thou shalt do no manner of work." No other precept of the decalogue is given in both these forms, although every fair rule of interpreting them requires, that when they enjoin a duty, we should regard them as forbidding the contrary sin: and when they forbid a sin, we should regard them as enjoining the contrary duty. Yet in this command, but in no other, both forms are used.

This shows that God has a great zeal for the observance of the Sabbath, and that he is determined we shall not misunderstand his will concerning it. It also intimates the peculiar proneness in our nature to forget the sacredness of this day; and so God puts us on our guard in the most solemn manner; and has taken " an especial care to fence us in on all sides to the observance of this precept."

This command is also introduced as no other is. The very first word of it is a solemn memento—" Remember." This word is not found

elsewhere in the decalogue.

Moreover, this command not only addresses men in the singular, "Thou shalt," &c, but it goes further, and tells who is thereby intended, namely, not only the head of the family, but also the son, the daughter, the man-servant and the maid-servant, the cattle and the stranger. No such particularity is found in any other precept of either table of the law.

THREE REASONS CONTAINED IN THE COMMANDMENT FOR OBSERVING IT.

L God reasons with us on the equity of his demands. He says, he gives us six days out of seven, as if he had said, "I am no hard master; I do not act unreasonably. I give you ample time to do your necessary work. I give you six days; therefore, if you have any conscience, give me the seventh." For, says he, "It is mine—it is the Sabbath of the Lord your God." Surely, you will not deny to your God a right so equitable, a demand so fair.

2. It is also stated by God in the command itself, that he set us the example on the completion of the creation. And shall we not follow such an example? Calvin: "It is no small stimulus to any action, for a man to know that he is imitating his Creator." If we ought to be holy because God is holy, if we ought to forgive our enemies because God forgives his enemies, we ought also to keep the Sabbath-day because God kept it. Teaching by example is the highest kind of instruction. "Be ye followers of God, as dear children." Eph. v. 1.

3. The Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it. There is an important sense in which God has blessed each day of the week, but he has blessed this peculiarly, so that Ignatius calls it "The prince and sovereign OF DAYS." Strike out of the history of pious men the instructions, the warnings, the devotions, the refreshments, which they have received on this day, and what a blank would there be! Hare: "The same difference which there is between common down

and a cultivated garden, the same is there also between worldly days, worldly books, worldly names, worldly people, and God's day, God's book, God's name, and God's people. The former are common, and may be treated as such: the latter are not common ; because God has taken them to himself, and brought them within the limits of his sanctuary, and thrown the safeguard of his holiness around them." It was on our Christian Sabbath, that the conversation between Christ and the disciples on the way to Emmaus took place. And from that day to this have the hearts of pious men been made to burn within them as in the sanctuary they have attended to the wonderful discoveries of his grace and truth. It is also said that God hallowed it; that is, he set it apart from a common use to his own solemn worship. Some think that the phrases blessed and hallowed are explanatory of each other. Perhaps to an extent they are. But there is no tautology here.

THE SABBATH GIVEN IN EDEN.

Nor did the Sabbath originate with Moses, or with any sinner. It was an ordinance in Eden. So that the first whole day that man ever spent on earth, was in the observance of this holy day. " The Sabbath is but one day younger than man: was ordained for him in the state of his uprightness and innocence,

that his faculties being then holy and excellent, he might employ them, especially on that day, in the singular and most spiritual worship of God his Creator." When, for his sins, man was driven out of Paradise, God permitted him to carry with him two institutions, established for his good before his fall. Which of these institutions is the greatest mercy to our world, or which is the dearest to the heart of a good man, I will not undertake to say. One of them is marriage, the other the Sabbath-day. If he is the enemy of virtue who would abolish the former, he cannot be the friend of God or man who would set aside the latter. By restoring marriage, as far as possible, to its original purity in Eden, that is, by confining it to the pairs and rendering it indissoluble, the Christian religion has incalculably

advanced civilization, peace, and all the domestic virtues. By restoring the Sabbath, as near as possible, to its purity in Eden, that is, by the holy observance of all of it, man makes his nearest approach to primitive innocence and to future glory. There is no example of any community, large or small, ancient or modern, continuing virtuous or happy for a considerable time, if they slighted either marriage or the Sabbath day.

That the Sabbath was instituted in Eden, is expressly stated in Gen. ii. 2, 3. The same is repeated in the decalogue. Some have indeed said that there was no Sabbath observed by the patriarchs from Adam until the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. But this is surely a mistake. In Ex. xvi., the Sabbath is spoken of as an ancient institution well understood. In the 5th verse, all Israel is to prepare for its observance by gathering twice as much manna on the day preceding the Sabbath, as on any other day in the week. Again, in the 23d verse, it is said, "This is. that which the Loed hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord." And in verses 28, 29, is a sharp rebuke for not strictly observing the day. "The Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day, the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." Then, in the 30th verse, it is added, "So the people rested on the seventh day." And when God does actually give the law from Sinai, he does not declare that he is giving a new institution, but says, "Remember the Sabbath-day," as though it were an institution that they had known in all their generations. Some say that the patriarchs had no Sabbath, because it is nowhere stated that they kept such a day. But this cannot prove that there was no Sabbath from Adam to Moses, any more than the fact that no mention of the Sabbath is made during the time of the judges, of Samuel, or of Saul, proves that Israel wholly neglected the fourth commandment, from Joshua to David. "Arguments based on the silence of history are generally inconclusive." Moreover the patriarchs counted by weeks, and this

shows that the ordinance of Eden was in force. Gen. viii. 10, 12; Gen. xxix. 27, 28.

The foregoing remarkable peculiarities of this precept justly entitle it to as high and sacred regard as can be claimed for any command given from Mount Sinai. If we admit that this is not of binding force, we cannot show the obligation of any of the rest, unless we can show that they are in some way written in the constitution of man, and that this is not. But it would be easy to show, by innumerable testimonies, that life is not only rendered miserable, but also much shortened by not observing the day of rest. The world over, those men do the most work, and do it with the most comfort, who rest from labour one day in seven. Nor is there one exception to this remark. It applies as much to mental as to bodily labour.

THE LAW OFTEN ENACTED.

The law of the Sabbath is frequently noticed in other parts of the Bible besides the moral law; it is frequently and solemnly declared to be binding, and its spiritual nature is often explained. Indeed, the law of the Sabbath is several times solemnly reenacted. It is mentioned with the highest reverence in the second chapter of Genesis, as a day "blessed and sanctified" by God. It is especially mentioned as binding during the journey through the wilderness, in required the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, four chapters before that containing the moral law. It is repeated in the thirty-first chapter of the same book. It is also made by God the pattern for the solemn feasts of his ancient church. Leviticus xxiii. In short, it is often noticed by Moses, by David, by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. The 92d Psalm is by its author denominated "A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath-day." One of these passages could not have pointed more plainly to a spiritual service on the Sabbath, if it had been given by Christ or Paul. It is in Isaiah lviii.

13, 14: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath," that is, from trampling on it, "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 thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

In the New Testament, also, frequent mention is made of a day of rest and solemn worship. It is not necessary now to examine more than one of these passages. It is in the fourth chapter of Hebrews, where the rest of the Sabbath in Eden is made the figure of the rest of the Jews in Canaan, then of the rest of God's people under the gospel dispensation, and lastly, of the everlasting rest of all good men in heaven. Surely, so clear and evangelical a writer as Paul, in an epistle, one great object of which was to show that the ceremonial law had passed away, would not have made the Sabbath on earth a type of the bliss of heaven even to Christians, if he had thought they were at liberty to regard it otherwise than as a holy, religious day. From the Scriptures the following things are clearly made out.

In both the Old and New Testaments God claims the day as his. Exod. xx. 10; Isa. lviii. 13; Kev. i. 10.

Pious men have always acknowledged this claim. Neh. ix. 14; Luke xxiii. 56. Was there ever a community on earth who feared God and did not reverence his Sabbaths? When that company of

heathen and mutineers who settled Pitcairn's Island, repented and gave evidence of piety, although there was but one Bible and one man from a Christian country among them, yet the Sabbath was strictly observed.

There walked of late in this world a man of conceptions as sublime as they were philosophical, of views as benevolent as they were accurate. Recently, "he was not, for God took him." Before he left us, Chalmers said,

"We never, in the whole course of our recollections, met with a Christian who bore upon his character every other evidence of the Spirit's operation, who did not remember the Sabbath-day and keep it holy. We appeal to the memory of all the worthies who are lying in their graves, that, eminent as they were in every other grace and accomplishment of the new creature, the religiousness of their Sabbath-day shone with equal lustre amid the fine assemblage of virtues which adorned them. * * * *

"Rest assured, that the Christian, having the law of God written in his heart, and denying the Sabbath a place in his affections, is an anomaly that is nowhere to be found. Every Sabbath image, with every Sabbath circumstance, is dear to him. He loves the quietness of that hallowed morn. He loves the church-bell sound that summons him to the house of prayer. He loves to join the chorus of devotion, and to sit and listen to that voice of persuasion, which is lifted in the hearing of an assembled multitude. He loves the retirement of this day from the din of worldly business and the inroads of worldly men. He loves the leisure it brings along with it; and sweet to his soul is the exercise of that hallowed hour, when there is no eye to witness him but the eye of Heaven, and when, in solemn audience with the Father who seeth him in secret, he can, on the wings of celestial contemplation, leave all the cares and all the secularises of the world behind him."

So it has ever been. He, who loves God's word and worship, he, who delights in prayer and praise, loves the day devoted to the study of Scripture, and the service of Jehovah. Among the thousands of religious biographies now before the world, is there one which shows that any heart loved the other precepts of the decalogue and disregarded this.

It is generally agreed that Christ came to enlarge, not to curtail the privileges of his people, and especially of the poor and afflicted, many of whom are not the masters of their own time.

But if he abolished the Sabbath, he cut off the pious poor from one of their dearest privileges, one no less necessary to relieve their heavy hearts than to refresh their toil-worn bodies.

The Scriptures contain many precious promises to those who reverently keep this day, and take pleasure in its appropriate duties. Isa. lvi. 1-7, and viii 14; Jer. xvii. 21-26. To such God will give, in his house and within his walls, a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters. He will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. He will make them joyful in his house of prayer, and will accept all their sacrifices; and blessings like those which came upon Jacob shall fall upon them.

The Scriptures denounce many terrible curses against those who profane this holy day. Jer, xvii.

27; Ezek. xx. 21. These curses are none the less dreadful because expressed in general terms. * God has often visited, and does still visit sore calamities on many violators of his holy day. From the days of the man who perished for his sin in the camp of Israel, Num. xv. 36, to this day, God has made awful examples of Sabbath-breakers. The man has been blind who has not seen them. Almost all felons in prison and under the gallows are known to have provoked God by a series of open violations of the law of the Sabbath. Of six ladies who spent their Sabbaths at cards, five died either objects of pity or without a moment's warning. Not one in fifty of known criminals in the land even outwardly keeps the Sabbath. Men forsake God, and he forsakes them. They despise him, and he takes away the restraints of his providence, and they are lightly esteemed, yea, become vile in the eyes of even wicked men.

In both the Old and New Testaments God declares that the Sabbath is a benevolent institution. He says, he " has given us the Sabbath." Exod. xvi. 29. It is not a vexatious or injurious restriction upon us, but a gift, a mercy. " I gave them my Sabbaths, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them," Ezek. xx. 12; that they might

have proper time to acquire the most important of all knowledge, the knowledge of God and salvation. Christ himself taught the same, when he said, "The Sabbath was made for man." Mark ii. 27. It was made to do him good, and not evil. Nor was it made for the Jew alone. It was made for man, for the whole race.

Both the Old and New Testaments record the observance of this day by godly men as an act approved by God, and appointed in Scripture. Even after the death of our Lord, the holy women, who wished to anoint his sacred body, would not do it until the Sabbath was over, but "rested the Sabbath-day according to the commandment." Luke xxiii. 56.

PROPHECY REQUIRES A CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

The Old Testament requires that under the gospel, in times of its universal prevalence, "from one sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before the Lord." Isa. lxvi. 23, and Ezek. xlvi. 1. This is an argument of great importance. The holy observance of the Sabbath is made by the prophets one of the tests by which the evangelical character of any people, after the coming of Christ, shall be judged. The prophets declare that the offering of prayer and praise, and solemn oaths, in the name of the true God, shall be marks of a true gospel church. Psalm lxxii. 15 ; Isa. lvi. 7 ; lxv. 16. Suppose a church should be found, whose members in solemn oaths swore by some other than the true God, and never prayed to the Lord, nor daily praised his name, could any man fail to see that it was without the marks of a true church? And if no Sabbath was observed in the church of God, it would prove that Messiah's reign had not yet commenced. Christianity would not be what prophecy required that it should be. The test is a fair one. Just in proportion as churches decline in the practice and power of godliness, become unsound in doctrine, licentious in life, and lax in discipline, wedded to human inventions, and heedless of the law of God in other respects, in the same proportion do they lightly esteem the Sabbath of the Lord. No Sabbath, no Church, is the rule laid down in Scripture. It is a correct

rule. Without that holy day, all true religion would soon vanish from the earth.

A SABBATH AFTER CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

When our Lord was upon earth, he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, stating that the enemies of the holy city should cast a trench about it, and that the Roman eagle, the abomination that maketh desolate, should be seen from its walls. He directed his disciples how they should, with the utmost haste, flee from the city, and said, " But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath-day." Matt. xxiv. 20. Now, Jerusalem was not destroyed for more than thirty years after Christ's ascension, and this prophecy was delivered for the direction of Christ's disciples, when the siege, leading to its destruction, should take place. They were to pray that their flight "be not in the winter," on account of the difficulty of fleeing at that season, "neither on the sabbath-day." Whatever may have been the reason why the Sabbath-day was undesirable for flight, whether because it was not deemed lawful to travel far on that day—a Sabbath-day's journey being less than three miles—or because their tender consciences might cause them to hesitate, and not embrace the favoured hour of escape, yet the fact is clear, that Christ foretold that at the destruction of Jerusalem, long after his ascension to glory, long after tens of thousands had been converted to the faith of Jesus, his people should have a day of rest, called by himself, "the Sabbath-day." Human perverseness may annul the force of any reasoning, but candour and piety will be satisfied with fair argument. All admit that all laws and ordinances given by Moses, and not binding to the end of the world, ceased to be of force from the ascension of Christ. But the flight of the Christians from the holy city was more than thirty years after that event, and yet Christ speaks of a " Sabbath-day" that should at that date, in the mother church at Jerusalem, bind the consciences, not of Jews wedded to the law of Moses, but of Christians, converted, baptized, and formed into churches taught by apostles themselves.

THE EARLY CHRISTIANS HAD A SABBATH.

If we look into the early history of the Christians, we see that they did observe a day of sacred rest; the first day of each week. On that day of the first week after the crucifixion, Jesus rose and was worshipped: on that day of the second week after his death, he assembled his disciples, and said, "Peace be unto you," and confirmed their faith. The first day of the eighth week after his death, was the day of Pentecost, a glorious Christian Sabbath. In several passages of Scripture, we find a record of the meeting of the disciples and churches of Christ on that day, to worship God, to preach the gospel, to administer baptism and the Lord's supper, and to collect alms, so that when Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians, he directs that collections for charitable purposes be made weekly upon that set day. The work he directs them to perform is a work of piety, of proper love to their poor brethren, who were suffering through the violence of persecution—a work proper to a holy day; for it always was "lawful to do well on the Sabbath-days." Matt. xii. 12. "Pure religion and undefiled before God, even the Father, is, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." Paul says that he had given the same command to other churches—the churches of Galatia, 1 Cor. xvi. 1—so that the observance was general. Paul gave these directions by the Holy Ghost. Galatia was quite remote from Corinth, several countries and a sea lying between them; so that the religious observance of the first day of the week was very general, and by no means confined to any one nation or class of Christians.

When we come to the last book of Scripture, we find John, Rev. i. 10, saying, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." We read in the New Testament once of the "Lord's supper," and once of the "Lord's day." Does any one doubt that these expressions designate a feast and a day well known to the early Christians, and distinguished from all other days and feasts by their religious character?

Such are some of the arguments, by which it is shown that the Sabbath should be observed by us. Are they not fair, solid, and

conclusive? Are we not bound by the law of the Sabbath ?

The most common method of attempting to destroy or lessen the force of these arguments, is by asserting, that if we are bound to observe any day, it is the seventh, and not the first, as the seventh was the day observed from the creation till the death of Christ. It is sufficient to reply,

1. That the term Sabbath signifies rest; and that rest by divine appointment may, without at all changing its nature, be transferred from one day to another. Some other Jewish festivals were called sabbaths, but never is one of them called " the Sabbath" " the rest."

2. There is nothing in the fourth commandment, fixing this weekly rest to the seventh day of the week. The law in the decalogue does not point out any day of the week, but only a day succeeding six days of labour. It is said, " God blessed the Sabbath-day and hallowed it."

3. The resurrection of Christ was a very glorious event, to which the highest importance is properly attached, and which is well worthy of a weekly and joyful commemoration. His resurrection was life from the dead to all his people, and to all their hopes. If the completion of creation was worthy of a weekly celebration, much more is the same true of the completion of redemption. For Christians to celebrate the seventh day, would be to keep a feast on the gloomiest day of the week—the day on which their Lord lay in the sepulchre of Joseph.

4. Apostolic example is as safe and correct a guide as apostolic precept, and no serious and candid reader of the New Testament can doubt that the apostles and early Christians did observe the first day of the week as the rest appointed by God. This fact, therefore, clearly determines our duty. Many duties are taught us by the example of inspired men. An appeal to such example is fair, and the example itself is binding.

In Acts xx. 7 we read, " Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread,

Paul preached unto them." So from the early part of the first century to the present time, the whole Christian world has observed the first day of the week as the sacred rest approved by Christ.

5. It is believed by many sound writers, that prophecy foretold that the day of Christ's resurrection should be kept as the Sabbath under the gospel. This prophecy is in the 118th Psalm: " The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner." They refused him when they demanded his death. He became the headstone by his resurrection; for by that " he was declared to be the Son of God with power," Rom. i. 4. The very next words in the Psalm are, " This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will be glad and rejoice in it."

Some have suggested that the weekly day of rest under the gospel, which is an eminently spiritual dispensation, is not to be a rest from labour or business, but only from sin. To such it is sufficient to reply, that every day of life ought to be a day of abstinence from all sin: and when it shall be shown that we are at liberty to indulge in sin six days out of seven, and then avoid it for one day only, it will be time enough to make a more serious and extended answer.

But some persons of more seriousness ask, " Does not the apostle Paul, Rom. xiv. 5, 6, declare the observance of days a matter of indifference?" He does; but the context clearly shows that he speaks not of the weekly Sabbath, nor of any institution of the decalogue, but of matters besides the moral law. The same remark is substantially applicable to what he says in Gal. iv. 10, and in Col. ii. 16.

Every law is to be known by its position and connection in a code. This is an invariable rule in interpreting every body of laws, and ought to be applied to the laws of God and the teaching of the apostles. When the whole connection of one of their arguments shows that they are simply endeavouring to wean their converts from Jewish ceremonies, it is most unfair to extend their general remarks

to institutions as old as the creation, and observed before the fall of man, and by all the pious after the fall, up to the giving of the ceremonial law, and then not reenacted as a part of the ceremonial law, but put in the middle of the moral law. " The handwriting of ordinances which was against us," is indeed "blotted out;" but that can never prove that the Sabbath, which is for us, is blotted out also.

WHAT SHALL WE DO WITHOUT THE SABBATH?

If no time be set apart by a competent authority for public worship, there will be no public worship. When Paul rebuked some of the early Christians, for " forsaking the assembling of themselves together," Heb. x. 25, it would have been ample justification for them to have replied, " No such thing is required, and no time is set for it." But we hear of no such plea. It never was made. There was as much agreement among the early Christians in observing the Lord's day as in observing the Lord's supper. It would be mere will-worship to observe the Lord's day, if it had not been appointed to be so observed by God himself. Is it credible that God should have left the whole church so ignorant of his will, that all believers for eighteen hundred years should have been mistaken as to their duty in so important a matter as this? The apostle James says, "He that keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one point, is guilty of all." That he here means the moral law is evident, for he cites two of the precepts of it in the next verse: "Do not commit adultery," "Do not kill." James ii. 10, 11. Now, if you do not kill, or swear profanely, yet if you violate the fourth commandment, you are "become a transgressor of the law." Let those who indulge in Antinomian laxity concerning the law of the Sabbath, solemnly consider the course of reasoning adopted by James, and be warned in time.

WHEN DOES THE SABBATH BEGIN?

There is some diversity in the Christian world respecting the time, at which the Sabbath begins. Some date it from sunset on Saturday till sunset on Sabbath. When asked for their authority, they refer to a

phrase which occurs several times in the first chapter of Genesis : "And the evening and the morning were the first day." This has not been considered sufficient proof by the great mass of the Christian world. Nor ought it to be, as all the world knows that no day of creation began in the evening; but all of them began in the morning. That saying of Moses therefore only declares that the day was made up of two parts, the after part, and the fore part. Indeed the evidence in the New Testament seems to be clearly against this view. " Our Sabbath begins where the Jewish Sabbath ended; but the Jewish Sabbath did not end towards the evening, but towards the morning. Matt, xxviii. 1. 4 In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first

day of the week,' &c. In the New Testament, the evening following, and not going before this first day of the week, is called the evening of the first day. John xx. 19. 4 The same day, at evening, being the first day of the week,' &c. Our Sabbath is held in memory of Christ's resurrection, and it is certain that Christ rose early in the morning of the first day of the week."

IS THIS PRECEPT MORAL?

The correct answer is in the affirmative.

1. All admit that the other precepts of this law are moral; and this is in the very midst of the law. It would be very remarkable indeed if three preceding and six succeeding precepts were moral and this ceremonial. None but practical atheists will deny that God is to be worshipped; that if he is to be worshipped, some time must be appropriated for that service; and that where this worship is to be public, it is convenient that the time be fixed and known.

2. Nor is any reason given in the commandment for its own observance except such as is moral. The equity of the case, God's example and the blessing and hallowing of the day, are all moral considerations of the highest character.

3. The law of the Sabbath was binding in Paradise, and has been binding ever since. As long as man is on earth, he needs the Sabbath, and the evidence of this necessity is found in both his moral and physical constitution. Blackstone: "The keeping one day in seven holy, as a time of relaxation and refreshment, as well as for public worship, is of admirable service

to a state, considered merely as a civil institution. It humanizes, by the help of conversation and society, the manners of the lower classes; which would otherwise degenerate into a sordid ferocity, and savage selfishness of spirit: it enables the industrious workman to pursue his occupation in the ensuing week with health and cheerfulness: it imprints on the minds of the people that sense of their duty to God, so necessary to make them good citizens; but which yet would be worn out and defaced by an unremitted continuance of labour, without any stated times of recalling them to the worship of their Maker." The example of the ancient nations would prove the same thing. Even the heathen who knew nothing of the Sinaitic covenant regarded every seventh day as holy. Hesiod, Homer, and Callimachus, speak of the seventh day as "holy." Theophilus of Antioch speaks of the seventh day as "The day which all mankind celebrate." Porphyry says, "The Phenicians consecrated one day in seven as holy." Linus says, "A seventh day is observed among saints, or holy people." Eusebius says, "Almost all the philosophers and poets acknowledge the seventh day as holy." Clemens Alexandrinus says, "The Greeks as well as the Hebrews observe the seventh day as holy." Josephus says, "No city of Greeks, or barbarians can be found, which does not acknowledge a seventh day's rest from labour." Philo says, "The seventh day is a festival to every nation." These and other [testimonies may be seen in Dwight's Theology, and in many other writings. They go to show that the law of the Sabbath, like the law of marriage, was known at the origin of the human family, and was not derived from the Jews; and that there was an adaptation in it to the felt wants of our nature. Ussher: "The heathens had their knowledge of God and the Sabbath by tradition from the first fathers, which lived before the dispersion."

It would be easy to fill pages with the testimonies of eminent physiologists as to the value of the Sabbath as a day of rest to the physical constitution of man, and of beasts of burden and of labour. Duncan says, "Neither men nor animals are capable of sustaining for any length of time the continual waste of uninterrupted toil. The rest of the Sabbath, while it does not diminish the productive amount of their labour, adds incalculably to their comfort and happiness." Another physiologist says, "Of a single Sabbath spent in labour, without any great inconvenience or suffering, we can readily enough conceive; but we can have little idea of the degree in which uninterrupted, unrelaxing toil, going on from week to week, and from year to year, would be injurious and destructive to the health, and comfort, and life of multitudes of our fellow-creatures." In the French Revolution it was not proposed to abolish all days of rest. Every tenth day was reserved for that purpose. And yet such was the waste of human life and the decay of human vigor during the time that this arrangement was carried out, that even irreligious men themselves acknowledged its dwarfing and injurious effects.

4. If it is necessary to maintain the worship appointed by God, it is necessary that we observe the fourth commandment. And if this law is not moral, why should we explain it and urge the practice of it

upon all God's people, as has been done from the beginning of the world?

5. It is a remarkable fact that when this law is clearly stated and ably defended, the human conscience gives as strong a response to its morality as to any other precept of the decalogue. Man feels and knows that God has a right to a reasonable portion of time for his own worship. So clear is this assent of the conscience that it is among the last things that wicked men find themselves able to do, to get rid of awful compunctions for trenching on sacred time.

6. Both in temporal and spiritual matters, especially in the latter, God has connected blessings with the observance, and curses with

the breach of this commandment; and that in a very remarkable manner. All over the world men have confessed as much. Many a criminal, about to suffer capital punishment, has confessed that as long as he obeyed his conscience respecting the Lord's day, he was sensibly held in check as to other commandments. But that when he cast off the cords of the Almighty concerning sacred time, he was then prepared for almost any deed of darkness. It was a remarkable saying of Judge Hale, that of all persons convicted of capital crimes, while he was upon the bench, he found few who did not confess that they began their career of wickedness by neglect of the Sabbath.

The good also have borne a like testimony to the blessing of God on their right observance of this precept, and to the displeasure of the Almighty manifested against their infractions of its righteous requirements. One of the most remarkable men, that 27

his own or any other age has ever produced, was Sir Matthew Hale, chief-justice of England. He says, "I will acquaint you with a truth, that above forty years' experience, and strict observation of myself, hath assuredly taught me. I have been, near fifty years, a man as much conversant in business, and that of moment and importance, as most men; and I assure you I was never under any inclination to fanaticism, enthusiasm, or superstition.

"In all this time I have most industriously observed in myself, and in my concerns, these three things:

" 1. Whenever I have undertaken any secular business on the Lord's day, which was not absolutely necessary, that business never prospered and succeeded well with me.

"2. Nay, if I had set myself that day but to forecast or design any temporal business, to be done or performed afterwards, though such forecasts were just and honest in themselves, and had as fair a prospect as could be expected, yet I have always been disappointed in the effecting of it, or in the success of it. So that it almost grew

proverbial with me, when any importuned me to any secular business on that day, to answer them, that if they expected to succeed amiss, then they might desire my undertaking it upon that day. And this was so certain an observation with me, that I feared to think of any secular business on that day; because the resolution then taken would be disappointed, or unsuccessful.

" 3. That always the more closely I applied myself to the duties of the Lord's day, the more happy and successful were my business and employments of the week following. So that I could, from the loose or strict observance of that day, take a just prospect and true calculation of my temporal success in the ensuing week. Though my hands and mind have been so full of secular business, both before and since I was a judge, yet I never wanted time in my six days to ripen and fit myself for the business and employments I had to do; though I borrowed not one minute from the Lord's day to prepare for it, by study or otherwise. But on the other hand, if I had at any time borrowed from this day any time for my secular employments, I found that it did further me less than if I had left it alone; and therefore, when some years' experience, upon a most attentive and vigilant observation, had given me this instruction, I grew peremptorily resolved, never in this kind to make a breach on the Lord's day, which I have strictly observed for above thirty years.

" This relation is most certainly and experimentally true, and hath been declared by me to hundreds of persons, as I now declare it unto you."

All this is just the fulfilment of what is often declared in Holy Scripture, that it shall be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked; that in the keeping God's commands there is great reward; and that none hath hardened himself against God and prospered. Compare Isa. lvi. 2-7, and lviii. 14.

Nor is it necessary to explain these phenomena by a supposition of any miraculous interposition. He, who exhausts the vigor of his

nature by overwork, must expect ere long, sensibly to feel the penalty.

If by a moral law, therefore, is meant a law providing for the necessities of our nature under all circumstances, and enforcing its observance by penal consequences certainly felt by persons and communities which disregard it, it is clear that the fourth commandment is moral.

In further considering this commandment, it will be most convenient first to inquire,

WHAT IT FORBIDS.

1. It forbids all labour not required by necessity or mercy. The divine example, recorded in Gen. ii. 2, 3, teaches as much. "And God rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made." So also, in the very words of the fourth commandment we are required to do "all our work" in six days, and are forbidden to do "any work" on the Sabbath. In Exodus xxiii. 12, God says, "Six days shalt thou do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest." And in Ex. xxxi. 15, "Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy unto the Lord." So in Lev. xxiii. 3, "Six days shall work be done; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation: ye shall do no work therein; it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings." And in Jer. xvii. 21, 22, "Bear no burden on the Sabbath-day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath-day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the Sabbath-day." They disobeyed this command, and God was greatly displeased. Yet he mercifully renewed the same proposal, and promised them great and marvellous blessings if they would obey, and threatened the direst calamities if they would persist in profaning the Sabbath. Jer. xvii. 23-27. These several commands are in plain words, are clearly expressed, are given by divine authority, in the most solemn language, and are subject to no exceptions but those of necessity and

mercy, as God has himself laid down the law in Matt. xii. 1-13; Mark iii. 1-6 ; Luke vi. 6-11; Luke xiii. 10-17 ; Luke xiv. 1-6 ; and John v. 10-17. Although carnal men will abuse the doctrine of necessity and mercy to defend their violations of the Sabbath-day, yet "the law is good if a man use it lawfully."

Works of necessity are of two kinds—permanent, and occasional. Permanent works of necessity chiefly consist in preparing for the house of God, going to it, and returning from it. Occasional works of necessity arise from unusual events ; as the burning of a house, the inundation of a flood, or the destruction of a tempest. In either case the necessity should be real, and not feigned; and should be such as previous care could not have avoided.

Works of mercy are also permanent, or occasional. Permanent works of mercy, are such as the use of necessary and sufficient food and drink for ourselves, and the giving of them to our families, and to guests, and to brute animals. Occasional works of mercy, are such as the providence of God unexpectedly brings before us ; as dressing a wound, nursing the sick, and visiting the poor and afflicted, for the purpose of administering relief and comfort.

We ought to be very careful that we do not neglect works of necessity and of mercy, which might be done by us during the secular days of the week, in order that we may make a mere convenience of the Lord's day for doing things which ought to have been done before, although it would be wrong longer to omit them. How very sternly our Saviour rebuked those who would hinder others from doing good on the Sabbath-day may be seen from his address to such a caviller, beginning, "Thou hypocrite." See the whole address in Luke xiii. 15-17. See also Matt, xii. 10-12. Also Mark iii. 4.

2. Nor should the Lord's day be made a day of indulgence in sumptuous feasting. This sin seems to be pointed at in Ex. xvi. 23; in Ex. xxxv. 2, 3; and in Num. xv. 32-36. It is true, God has never commanded that the Sabbath be a fast-day; nor would it be proper so

to observe it. But let us not run to the other extreme. This is important, because sumptuous feasting produces drowsiness in religious exercises ; because, as far as possible, servants should be relieved from labour, and have an opportunity of going to the house of God; and because, in such feasts, we are too apt to seek the presence of others, who could better keep the Sabbath at home.

3. God, who has promised that " while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease," has expressly said, in Ex. xxxiv. 21, " Six days shalt thou work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest." Very diverse from this law is the practice of many. But if man and beast ever need refreshment from rest, is it not during seed-time and the excessive heat and labours of harvest ? It is also a solemn question, and may be pertinently pressed, Who hath hardened himself against God, in violating this law, and prospered ? But even if apparent success has attended any man in profaning the Sabbath in seedtime or harvest, let him remember, that " the prosperity of fools shall destroy them."

4. It was a resolution of pious men, in the days of Nehemiah, that " if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the Sabbath-day to sell, they would not buy it of them on the Sabbath, or on the holy day." Neh. x. 31. The thirteenth chapter of Nehemiah, from the fifteenth to the twenty-second verse, records the efforts of that resolute and pious man to enforce this solemn purpose. He did not regard it as a merely civil regulation, but says to the nobles of Judah, "What evil thing is this that ye do ? Ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath." From these passages it is very evident, that the law of God forbids the opening of markets and shops, and the driving of bargains, on the Lord's day.

o. The Scriptures, with equal explicitness, forbid travel upon the Sabbath-day. The exception is to what is known in the Scriptures as a Sabbath day's journey. Acts i. 12. From very early times, it seems to have been regarded as proper to visit God's prophets at any time that

men's distress required, even though it were upon the Sabbath-day. 2 Kings iv. 23. After the erection of synagogues in Palestine, the distance from a man's house to the nearest synagogue was his ordinary Sabbath-day's journey. With this exception, travelling was forbidden on the Sabbath. "Thy stranger that is within thy gates" is put down by name in the fourth commandment, and is as much required to keep the Sabbath holy as any other person. So in Ex. xxiii. 12, "the stranger" is required to "rest," and the reason is given, that he "may be refreshed." Many and ingenious, but wicked are the pleas urged by men for disregarding the fourth commandment when on a journey ; but they are "refuges of lies," which will be swept away the moment man appears in the presence of God. This is a great sin in our nation. Its influence is vastly mischievous. The traveller is seen by many, and sins openly. He requires the services of those who conduct the public conveyances; or if travelling privately, he at least demands the services of keepers of public or private houses. The whole moral law, including the fourth commandment, was given from Sinai to a whole nation on a journey.

6. The fourth commandment, like all the precepts of the decalogue, is spiritual, "and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It forbids us not only to do and to speak what we please on that day, but it binds our thoughts and hearts, and requires us to "delight" in its holy services. By the prophet Isaiah, lviii. 13, 14, God says, "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 thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord ; and I will cause thee to ride on the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

Dwight: "We may as easily and grossly profane the Sabbath, so far as ourselves only are concerned, by thoughts which are unsuited to its nature, as we can by any actions whatever. If our minds are intent on our business or our pleasures ; if our affections wander after them ; if

we are cold or lukewarm with respect to our religious duties; if we are negligent of a serious and cordial attention to them; if we regard with impatience the interruption occasioned to our secular concerns ; if we wish the institution had not been appointed, or that the time in which it is to be kept were lessened, then plainly we do not esteem i the Sabbath a delight,' nor abstain from finding our own pleasure. Every oblation from such a mind will be vain, and all its incense an abomination. The Sabbaths and the calling of assemblies among persons who act thus, will be such as God cannot away with; and their solemn meeting will be iniquity.

" The heart gives birth to all the movements of the tongue. We profane the Sabbath whenever we employ the time in worldly conversation. Such conversation is, in the text, denoted by the phrase ' speaking thine own words.' There is no way in which the Sabbath is more easily, more insensibly, more frequently, and more fatally violated, than this. Temptations to it are always at hand. The transgression always seems a small one; usually a doubtful one at the worst; and often no transgression at all.

" Multitudes of persons, beginning with religious subjects, slide imperceptibly towards those which are considered moral in such a degree as scarcely to differ from religious ones ; thence to secular themes bordering on these; and thence to mere matters of business or amusement. Such persons, before they are aware,

find themselves conversing about the affairs of the neighborhood, the strangers who were at church, the new dresses, fashions, business, diversions, news, and politics. To these they are led by mere worldly conversation concerning the prayers, the psalmody, or the sermon, as having been well or ill-devised, written, spoken, or performed; by a history, merely secular, of the sickness and deaths in the neighborhood or elsewhere, or of the dangerous or fatal accidents which have lately happened; the weather, the seasons, the crops, the prospects, the affairs of the family, and by innumerable other things of a similar nature.

" The next step is, ordinarily, an habitual employment of this holy day in open, cool, and self-satisfied conversations about business, schemes of worldly pursuits, bargains, gains, and losses. It is not to be understood that Christians go all these lengths. It is greatly to be feared, however, that they often go much farther than they can justify, and thus fail of their duty, and of the improvement, the usefulness, the hope, the joy, and the peace which they would otherwise attain.

" The profanation of the Sabbath by actions is seen and conceded by all decent men who acknowledge it as a day consecrated by God to himself. The common and favorite modes of profaning the Sabbath in this way, are spending our time in dress, in ministering to a luxurious appetite, in walking or riding for amusement, in writing letters of friendship, in secular visits, and in reading books which are not of a decidedly religious character.

" The end of this progress is the .devotion of this sacred day to downright business, such as letters of business, posting accounts, visiting post offices, making bargains, transmitting money to correspondents, going or sending to markets, making journeys, at first with, and afterwards without pretences of necessity, and ultimately labouring openly in the ordinary employments of life. This is what is called in Scripture doing our own ways."

Some have contended that the law of the Sabbath was considerably relaxed under the gospel. There is no such relaxation anywhere recorded. There is no evidence of its having been made. The reason why many have supposed that this commandment was less rigorous than formerly, may be found in their misunderstanding of Old Testament prohibitions respecting its violations. A right interpretation of the Old Testament would show that in no case did God prohibit the preparation of food necessary for the nourishment of men's bodies, nor that his ancient people were forbidden to do any work of necessity or mercy upon the Sabbath-day. They were not indeed allowed to gather the manna, to grind it in mills, to beat it in

mortars, or bake it in pans upon that day ; because all that work could be previously done. Our Lord himself lived under the ancient law of the Sabbath; and yet he did not hesitate to take a meal in the house of another man upon the Lord's day. Luke xiv. 1. At the same time he vindicated kindness to brute animals ; much more, therefore, is real kindness to human beings pleasing to God. Stowell: a very common error prevails respecting the strictness with which the Sabbath was observed under the Mosaic dispensation. We have no reason to suppose that its requirements were more rigid than they are now j

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though, being incorporated in the political laws, they were enforced by immediate and severe penalties."

WHAT IT REQUIRES.

There has perhaps been more difference of opinion respecting the requirements of this than of any other commandment. The human heart earnestly pleads for lawlessness. Men are much accustomed to yield to public opinion around them. The fear of being esteemed singular is a snare to thousands. He, who is not prepared to stand in a minority of one with a majority of millions against him, will not keep a good conscience respecting the Lord's day. It is clear that this commandment not only requires something, but that it requires it in a very urgent manner. This is expressed by the word Remember, the most solemn form of memento used in Scripture. By the same word Moses calls upon the Israelites never to forget their redemption from Egypt. Ex. xiii. 3. It is the strongest form of calling attention to a matter. Deut. xxiv. 9; Josh. i. 13. It is found in many parts of Scripture, as the word expressive of our wishes respecting the divine providence over us, as when men ask God to remember them, where the prayer evidently is that God may have them in his thoughts and so in his holy keeping. Then we have another word, Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. This word expresses great vigilance, as

of a guard over his prisoner ; as of a tiller of ground over his garden ; as of a shepherd over his flock. We must see to it that we do not let this commandment slip. In some of its forms the same word is often rendered beware and take heed. We are to remember the Sabbath-day be

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fore it arrives and prepare for it. "We are to remember and keep it when it shall arrive. We are to remember it when it is gone, and humble ourselves for the imperfect manner in which we have kept it. In looking into books of Moral Theology, written by authors in the church of Rome, nothing strikes one more painfully than that this one day set apart by God to be observed to the end of time, is put on a level with other days appointed by mere human authority. Thus, the old sin is committed of " setting their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts," and their days by the Lord's days. Ezek. xliii. 8.

This command is as careful to render the observance of the Lord's day practicable, as it is to enjoin its observance at all. It says, " Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work." Some have raised the point, whether this last clause is a command or a permission. It is not necessary to enter into that question. No human power can make it unlawful for men to pursue their industrial avocations during the six secular days. The New Testament plainly discourages the attempt to fill up the calendar with holidays. Gal. iv. 9-11; Col. ii. 16-23. Even days of fasting or thanksgiving are not holy days; but they are a part of secular time voluntarily devoted to God's service. And if we are to perform these things at all, we must take some time for them. Yet none but God can sanctify a day so as to make it holy. The attempt to do this was one of the sins of Jeroboam. 1 Kings xii. 33. If the clause, Six days shalt thou labour, is merely permissive, it is still enough for us. For who dare take away the liberty which God has here given us? Let us then consider particularly what it is for us to keep the Sabbath holy. It should be begun, and, as far as circumstances permit,

occupied with the duties of devotion. These are either private or public, personal or social.

I. THE PRIVATE DUTIES OF RELIGION.

These are chiefly: 1. Devout reading of the Scriptures. 2. Prayer. 3. Praise. 4. Meditation. 5. Self examination. Into each of these we should enter heartily. We should pour out our souls before him. We should give our minds free scope. We should rejoice in the opportunity to admire his glory and to think upon his name. If we have no heart for the secret duties appropriate to the Sabbath, it is probable we shall find it a burden on our minds, and its public duties a task. Coleman says that in early ages, "the several members of a Christian family were accustomed to rise very early in the morning, and address their thoughts to God by silent ejaculations, by calling to mind familiar passages of Scripture, and by secret prayer." Basil the Great says, "One must arise before the twilight of the morning, to greet with prayer the coming day. . . Let the sun at his rising find us with the word of God in hand. . . . Let the day begin with prayer. . . Let the child be accustomed early in the morning to offer prayer and praise to God." This is said indeed of every day. It is peculiarly appropriate to the Lord's day.

II. THE SOCIAL DUTIES APPROPRIATE TO THIS DAY.

Besides prayer, praise, and the study of God's word, in which two or more may join, these consist very much in an interchange of pious sentiments and in edifying discourse. See Luke xxiv. 13, 15. If we are bound to have our speech seasoned with salt, that we may minister grace to the hearers at all times, much more at times by God himself set apart for our edification.

III. FAMILY RELIGION.

The prophet Jeremiah puts prayerless families and the heathen in the same category. If God's wrath falls on the latter, it will certainly descend on the former. The language the prophet uses is truly

startling: "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name." Jer. x. 25. Such families are truly heathenish in their dispositions and practices.

Perhaps there never was a godly pastor, who did not feel that the cultivation of family religion was very important to the success of his ministry and to the progress of true piety; and who did not regret the neglect of it as a sad injury to the cause of God. But what is the cultivation of family religion ? It consists, 1. In a devout reading, hearing, and studying of the Scriptures. The word of God is able to make us wise unto salvation, and Timothy knew it from a child. We should acquaint ourselves and all our household with the sacred volume, because it is the word of God, because it is as fit to be read and spoken of in the family as anywhere else, and because we are specially commanded to teach all its truths to our children in the most familiar manner. 2 Tim. iii. 15; Deut. iv. 9; vi. 7; Ps. lxxviii. 4. 2. A

portion should be spent in praising God for his mercies. Where it can be done to edification, families should sing God's praises. If it is impossible to sing them, it is well even to read some sacred hymn.

3. To these should be added prayer, including adoration, thanksgiving, confession, and supplication.

4. Religious conversation guided and conducted by the head of the family, consisting of familiar explanations. This commandment also requires Scripture and catechetical instruction. In these endeavours to maintain domestic piety, all the family as far as possible should unite. Some may be too young. Others may be sick; but none should be absent except for good cause. Servants should be kindly invited to unite with the rest of the family, and comfortable seats should be provided for all. What a blessed sight is that, when the pious head of a family, " with solemn air," says, "Let us worship God," and then devoutly reads the Bible, and sings the praises of the Most High.

" Then kneeling down to heaven's eternal King, The saint, the father, and the husband prays; Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing, That thus they all shall meet in future days; There ever hark in uncreated rays, No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear, Together hymning their Creator's praise, In such society, yet still more dear, While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere."

Great care should be taken that this family religion should be attended to at the most fitting time; and not at hours so early as to make it necessary for the members of a household to neglect their private devotions in the morning, nor so late in the evening as to render it certain that children and others will be drowsy, and of course, unedified. That this whole matter may be truly useful, family worship, and attention to family religion should be 1. Stated and regular. No light or trivial cause should be allowed to postpone or hinder it. 2. It should be decorous, orderly, quiet, and serious. If it fails in this respect, it can scarcely edify any one. All trifling behavior should be carefully avoided. 3. It should be cheerful, and not austere and morose. God, who loves a cheerful giver, no less loves a cheerful worshipper. Every thing said and done should be suited to secure attention, and to awaken an interest in the service. 4. Therefore, tediousness should be avoided. A wise man regardeth both time and judgment. "Where exhaustion begins, edification ceases. It would often prevent weariness, if there was more variety in conducting Sabbath-day instruction and worship. Prayers, expositions, and remarks should be short and comprehensive. 5. But we should avoid both the appearance and reality of being hasty, and of attending to this matter as though we were desirous of finishing it as speedily as possible. 6. Family instruction and worship should take proper notice of family mercies and afflictions. Such are continually occurring. But we should be very careful not to wound the feelings of even the youngest or most ignorant. It is seldom well to lecture one member of a family for personal faults in the presence of others. 7. In this matter, widows, who are the heads of families, should remember that they are held responsible for the order and religious education of their households, even as if the family had never had another

head. 8. It is sometimes asked, what should pious wives and mothers do, when the husband and father are absent ? The correct answer is, Take his place and see to it that God is honoured in the house. 9. But what shall wives and mothers do, when husbands and fathers, even when at home and well, decline to give proper religious instruction, and to conduct family worship? In answer, it may be stated that it is not the duty of the wife to assume the husband's place, and therefore she may not in his presence, with an air of authority over him, convene the family and give instruction. But though she is not the head of her husband, yet with him and under him she is the head of the rest of the family, and she ought to assemble her children and servants in some suitable apartment, and there teach them, and unite with them in suitable acts of devotion. This course has often been followed by the happiest consequences. 10. As the great object of all religious instruction and worship is to please God, and secure his blessing; so let great care be taken, that whatever is done, be sincere, humble, and fervent. A heartless form is idle; yea, it is worse. Be zealous, not cold.

The following considerations show the propriety and obligation of family religion:

I. The very heathen, who profess and practise any form of religion, do, without exception, maintain some form of domestic religion. Though they call not on the name of Jehovah, yet they call upon their gods, and teach their children to do the same. This certainly argues a strong presumption that family religion is a dictate of nature. It is only in countries

nominally Christian that we find men failing to cultivate some form of devotion at home. The presumption, therefore, would be fearful against any system, which should be found fit only for temples or churches, because it would fail to meet the serious convictions and wants of men.

II. The condition of every family calls for such instruction and devotion. We are very ignorant. Every appliance is necessary to diffuse light into our darkened understandings. Every family has wants, which should lead it to unite in prayer. Every family has mercies, which demand a united song. Every family has trials, where each should shed with the rest the tear of sympathy. Afflicted souls can find no better way to staunch their bleeding wounds than thus to unite in solemn acts of worship. Sometimes a household is threatened with some dire calamity. Then, what is more proper than united petitions to Him, who is Lord of all, to avert the dreaded evil ?

III. The maintenance of domestic religion has a happy effect on the peace and order of families. If one is absent, or sick, or peculiarly afflicted, how it awakens and strengthens proper affection in the rest, to speak of that one, to utter words of kindness to him, and to pray for his return or deliverance ! How many little heart-burnings and jealousies are thus extinguished ! How sweet is the sight, when old and young quietly and lovingly meet, and put away all else, that they may speak, and hear, and think, and pray, and praise before the Father of their spirits ! There can hardly be an unamiable, disobliging family, whose habit is to make common confession of sin,

common acknowledgments of mercies, and common supplications for needed blessings, attended with the correct understanding of God's mind and will. They may lack much that the world calls courtliness. But of that politeness which consists in "real kindness, kindly expressed," such a family can hardly be destitute. There is real love there. Every act of joint devotion strengthens it. Temptation may assail it. It may even be temporarily interrupted; but it will seldom or never be destroyed. Such bonds as these are the ligaments of the whole social system. A good writer says, " That is the best system of economy, which as far as possible causes every family in an empire to be the most prosperous." Any thing, therefore, which serves to promote the peace, order, thrift, and happiness of families, must be a great blessing to all their members. The best "normal school" in the world is a well-regulated family. There, the first

lessons of government, law, literature, science, and religion are taught to purpose. A nation made up of such families can never be despicable. It is an alarming fact that during the nineteenth century, infidelity has directed its most formidable energy against the family institution and against family religion.

IV. The primitive church, and indeed every thriving evangelical church has set us an example in this matter, which it cannot be safe to despise. Church history informs us that after their private devotions, the members of the family in primitive times met for united prayer, the reading of the Scriptures, the recital of doctrinal and practical sentiments and mutual edification generally. This indeed, to some extent, was done every day. Each day was also closed by similar devotions. But the Lord's day abounded in them.

V. This maintenance of family religion is eminently useful. It has nearly every advantage attending every possible method of teaching. It gives a little at a time and repeats it often. It is varied in its modes. It cuts up ignorance by the roots. Prideaux says, " The excessive ignorance I have met with in some, who offered themselves for holy orders, is to be attributed in a great measure to the neglect of family devotion. For, while religion remained in families, and God was daily worshipped, children were early bred up by their parents and instructed in the knowledge of him. And the principles of Christianity thus instilled into them, continued to grow up with them into further knowledge, as themselves grew to be further capable of it. Thus young men carried some knowledge of religion with them to the universities."

VI. Family instruction and worship are of great importance in promoting pure and undefiled religion in the world. When Richard Baxter settled in Kidderminster, there were but few devout families. Consequently, iniquity abounded. But as the spirit of religion revived, so did family worship, until at last, in some whole streets, not one family was found, where God was not honoured by even daily worship. The Rev. Thomas Scott, the Commentator, was very

successful in leading his children and servants to Christ. He thus describes his general course with his family : " The grand secret of my success appears to have been this, that I always sought for my children as well as for myself, IN the FIRST place, the

kingdom of God and his righteousness." He says, " he had not attempted a great deal in the way of talking directly to his children, and drawing them forth to talk upon religious subjects; but much indirectly, by explaining the Scriptures, and by conversation in the family, especially by the improvement of passing events, of occurrences relating to their own conduct, and that of others, as the occasions of religious remark, teaching them to take a religious and Christian view of whatever took place."

VII. Besides the solemn passage already cited from Jeremiah, other Scriptures show that pious men did not neglect family religion. Of Abraham, God said, " I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." Gen. xviii. 19. Joshua said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Josh. xxiv. 15. David says, " I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. When wilt thou come unto me ? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart." Ps. ci. 2. Solomon says, " The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just." Prov. iii. 33. See also Acts x. 2, and all those passages of Scripture which speak of praying always, praying always with all prayer and supplication, praying every where, praying without ceasing, &c.

Let family religion be maintained in all its purity and power, cost what it may; but this has never been done where families have slighted the holy sabbath. Stowell: " It may be seriously questioned whether any one duty is so lamentably neglected among all classes of professing Christians, as the domestic observance of the Sabbath."

IV. THE PUBLIC WORSHIP OF GOD.

"How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts ! A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Such are some of the exclamations of the Psalmist respecting the public worship of God. How well they express the sentiments of God's true people has been testified in every age. It is, therefore, a great mercy that God has not only given us permission but made it obligatory upon us to frequent his sanctuary. No man has ever been the loser by complying with the scriptural ordinances of public worship. Lev. xxv. 22. It is an act of atrocious wrong to deny to God the service or the time which he claims as his due. " It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy." Prov. xx. 25. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, "Wherein have we robbed thee ? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." Mai. iii. 8, 9. Prophecy requires that in the most glorious times of the gospel solemn worship shall be maintained from one Sabbath to another. Isa. lxvi. 23. Our Saviour's example teaches the same thing. Luke iv. 16. The people of Macedonia, to whom the gospel brought countless blessings, were stated and devout worshippers. Acts xvi. 13-15. The apostles all lived in perilous times. It often cost a man his life to be known as a worshipper of the true God and of Jesus Christ our Lord. Yet Paul, writing to the Hebrews, says, " Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works : not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another : and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." Heb. x. 24, 25. Indeed, there never was a prosperous church that did not continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers. Acts ii. 42. They who separate themselves from the assembly of God's people are commonly sensual, having not the Spirit^ Jude 19.

It therefore seems clear from Scripture and from the nature of the case, that one of the duties we owe on the Sabbath-day, is " a diligent and conscientious attendance upon all the ordinances of God and the duties of his worship, appointed to be performed on this day."

Which duty of public worship could we safely neglect? Shall it be prayer? Public prayer is a great nourisher of secret devotion. To united prayer, special promises are made. "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," Matt, xviii. 19, 20. Shall we give up the public preaching and hearing of God's word? How can we? True, the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but to all that believe, it is the power of God, 1 Cor. i. 18. Yea, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe, 1 Cor. i. 21. Where was there ever a pious minister, filled with the spirit of his office, yet perhaps sorely tried and cruelly persecuted, who did not yet say with Paul and his co-adjustor, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place?" 2 Cor. ii. 14. True, if the Son of man were to come, he would probably find but little faith on the earth. But of whatever there is, it may be truly said, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," Rom. x. 17.

Shall we give up the public praises of Jehovah? In this degenerate world he is forgotten, despised, reviled, blasphemed. If he has any friends, shall they keep silence? Shall they not rather show forth his praise all the day long? If our Sabbath is a type of heaven, and much of the work of heaven is praise, shall we not get our organs in tune and in training for uniting in the hosannas and hallelujahs of the upper sanctuary? It is chiefly after a day thus fitly spent in the private, family and public worship of God, that good men are able to say with Philip Henry, "If this is not heaven upon earth, surely it is the road to a heaven above." Similar remarks may be made respecting the due celebration of the sacraments of God's house. It is one of the evidences of the low state of piety in the Christian world that so many professors and churches are satisfied with annual, semi-annual, or quarterly communions. Perhaps there never was a revived state of piety in which there was not a desire awakened for increased frequency in the celebration of The Supper.

TO WHOM IS THIS COMMAND ADDRESSED?

The answer is, To all who have authority; to the magistrate, who holds the gates of the city; to the parents, who hold the gate of the house ; to the principal of the literary institution, who holds the gate of the seminary; to the military chieftain, who holds the gates of the camp ; to each man who holds the gates of his own heart; in short, to all and in particular to those, whose word controls the actions of others. " 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."

GENERAL REMARKS.

I. Some make conscience of rising earlier than usual; while others sleep later on the Lord's day than is their custom. What is our duty in this matter ? It is certain that edification either in public or private devotion ceases when languor prevails. Drowsiness is very apt to overtake a labouring population, when they repair to the house of God, and are quietly seated. It is a shame to see our churches filled with sleepers. From Psa. xcii. 2, some have urged that we should rise earlier than usual on Sabbath morning. Surely the Lord's day was not made for the indulgence of indolence. The right course to be pursued seems to be this : let all persons retire rather earlier than usual to rest on Saturday night. Let them get sufficient sleep, and then awake at the ordinary hour and enter on the service of God. To those who indulge their drowsiness in the house of God, we might make a parody on the words of the Apostle : " What! have ye not beds to sleep in, or despise ye the church of God ? What shall I say to you ? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not."

II. In this no less than in all the other precepts, love is the fulfilling of the law. He, who has no heart or relish for the appropriate exercises of this day, can never remember the Sabbath-day so as to keep it holy. All the characteristics of worship described in considering the

second commandment, must enter into the services of the Lord's day.

III. Many able writers and more pious persons have remarked on the dreadful plagues, which God has often made to attend on the violation of holy time. Boston's last remark on the Fourth Commandment is this, "Many begin with the sin of profaning the Lord's day, and it brings them at length to an ill hour, both in this world and that which is to come." Calvin : " The Lord is hardly so strict in his requisitions of obedience to any other precept. (Num. xiii. 22 ; Ezek. xx. 12, xxii. 8, xxiii. 38.) When he means to intimate, in the prophets, that religion is totally subverted, he complains that his Sabbaths are polluted, violated, neglected and profaned, Jer. xvii. 21, 22, 2T; Isa. lvi. 2." Durham says, "No breach of any command hath more aggravations; for 1. It is against reason and equity. ... 2. It is high ingratitude. . 3. It is against love. . . 4. It is cruelty against ourselves." . He adds, "that no sin doth more evidence universal untenderness and that it occasion eth and breedeth other sins." Indeed many writers do not hesitate to say that breaches of this commandment are generally to be regarded as more aggravated than breaches of the subsequent commandments ; inasmuch as violations of them are primarily directed against man, and violations of this are directed against God himself. Stowell: "No terms are strong enough to express the impiety of that man, whatever be his creed or his connexions, who wilfully absents himself from the public solemnities of the Sabbath."

IV. What shall those do who have not decent apparel for visiting the house of God ? Shall they wholly stay away from public worship, or shall they be urged to attend in their rags ? The correct answer seems to be this. Let the rich help the poor. Let them in a delicate way provide for them suitable apparel. But if this cannot be done, let the poor man reason thus : " Shall I stay away from a place of worship because my clothes are old, and worn, and patched ? But do I go there to be looked at by others, to mind what others think and say ? My business is with God; and if I bring with me a broken and

contrite heart, no matter what my dress, God will not despise my sacrifice. Ps. li. 17."

V. Let us endeavour to cultivate more love for the sanctuary. It is a great reproach to the Christian religion that so many of its professors are for slight reasons detained from the house of God. Rather let us say with one, " Thither let me go, with willing feet, on the morning and evening of every Sabbath; thither a sense of guilt should urge me; thither the hope of mercy should draw me ; there God the Father waits to be gracious ; there God the Son exhibits his atoning blood, and God the Holy Ghost his sanctifying grace. With so much sin to confess, with so many mercies to acknowledge, with such darkness in my mind, and such hardness in my heart, how can I absent myself from the Lord's house on the Lord's day ! There a crucified Saviour holds forth wisdom to the ignorant, strength to the weak, comfort to the brokenhearted, pardon to the penitent, and salvation to the lost."

VI. Let us in a right spirit and in Christian fidelity reprove the profanation of the Lord's day. Even Sabbath-breakers often have consciences, capable of being roused, when faithfully warned.

VII. We should frequently remember that holy time will soon be gone for ever. Well may each one say, " Who can tell whether more Sabbaths are reserved for me in this world? Perhaps the next may be my last, and I may never again hear the glad tidings of salvation through Jesus Christ. And shall I then dare to stay away from public worship, with death and judgment at hand, with heaven or hell before me? Shall I let some trifling excuse, which I should be ashamed to make to any earthly friend, deprive me of the only remaining opportunity of meeting God in his own house ? Oh what would many a soul give, one hour after death, for the Sabbaths and sermons that are now so slighted?" Two things will probably have a keener edge in wounding the lost soul than all others. One will be the recollection of Christ rejected; the other will be, the remembrance of time, especially holy time misspent.

VIII. The Sabbath is, and in Scripture is made to be a type of the glorious rest of the people of God in heaven. If men do not relish the type, it is proof positive that they are not prepared for the antitype. Let us all diligently ask for grace to prepare us for the ' employments, the society and worship of that Sabbath which remains for the people of god.'

Thus we have considered the first commandment, which requires us to worship the true God and him alone ; the second commandment which prescribes how that worship shall be offered ; the third commandment, calling for reverence in the heart and in the manner of worship; and the fourth commandment, which designates the time to be appropriated to God's service. Thus we conclude the first table of the law.

The Second Table of the Law

The sum of the last six commandments is by our Lord given in these few words: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Matt. 22:39. He says of the second table of the law that "it is like unto the first." It is like unto it in these things: that it proceeds from the same divine authority; that in order to the fulfilling of it, we must have genuine love; that it is very comprehensive, involving many duties; that it requires our utmost care and vigilance to avoid transgression; that if we have a right spirit towards God, we shall not practice wickedness towards man; that the scope and aim of both are purity; that he who requires holiness in the church no less requires it "in the market, in the shop, at home, abroad; not only in prayer but at the plough." The law would have been an imperfect rule for the government of human beings, existing in society, if it had not as clearly taught us our duty to man, as our duty to God. Domat: "Man's first law is the spirit of

his religion.... This implies a second law which obliges men to unity among themselves, and to the love of one another."

It was particularly necessary that we should have the second table, in order to avoid that fatal mistake made by many, that if we are strict in our conduct towards God, we may be lax in our demeanor towards men. At the very beginning of a revelation of true religion, God would have us to understand that genuine piety will surely manifest itself towards those around us. And in all the Scriptures God "has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" Micah 6:8. If men "keep the way of the Lord," they will be sure to do justice and judgment. Gen. 18:19. No possible devotion to prescribed forms of religious worship is ever pleasing to the Almighty, or can save a people from ruin, unless they learn "to seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." Isaiah 1:17. Indeed, when God would save a backslidden church from utter extinction, he says, "These are the things that you shall do; Speak every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, says the Lord." Zech. 8:16. In like manner does God instruct us by the pen of Paul. Romans 13:8-10.

The second table contains six precepts, beginning with the fifth commandment, which points out the duties of our stations in society; the sixth commandment is a bulwark around human life; the seventh is God's protection to chastity and domestic peace; the eighth warns all evil doers against infractions of rights of property; the ninth is God's law respecting the good name of man; and the tenth is the keystone to this arch of morals, covering everything that involves the temporal good of our fellow men. We have an excellent help in the study of the second table. It is given us by our Lord himself. It is simple, easily remembered and easily applied to all the diversified cases that arise in fellowship between men: "Do for others what you

would like them to do for you. This is a summary of all that is taught in the law and the prophets." Matt. 7:12. Another evangelist gives it in still fewer words. "Do for others as you would like them to do for you." Luke 6:31.

There is no possible situation in which men can be placed in their dealings with each other, where, if the heart be honest, this rule will not furnish a sufficient guide to our conduct. True indeed, no man will rightly use even this plain maxim, unless he has learned the meaning of Paul, when he says, "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." Phil. 2:4.

The second table of the law is well sustained by many parts of Scripture, in showing that the will of God is that man's earthly existence should be social, and not secluded. The Author of our existence brings us into this world in a state of entire dependence on our fellow-creatures, and this dependence lasts longer in the case of man than of any other creature. Like dependence often recurs in old age. Nor can the perfection of man's nature in any sense be attained in absolute solitude. Hare: "Were we all so many hermits, made to live each by himself, having no ties or dealings with other men, the first table of the law would perhaps have been sufficient; as in that case, man would have owed no duties, except to God only. God, however, did not form men to live alone, but to live in society."

The Fifth Commandment

"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you." Exodus 20:12

In Deut. 5:16, this commandment is given thus: "Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so

that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you." The substance of this command is also given in the opposite form in the chapter next following that which contains the moral law. "He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death." Exodus 21:17. Again: "Everyone that curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death: he has cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him." Levit. 20:9. Jesus Christ unites these two forms of the commandment, when he explains it and rescues it from the glosses of the scribes and Pharisees. Matt. 15:4-6. The apostle thus refers to this commandment: "Honor your father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth." Eph. 6:2, 3. When he says this "is the first commandment," the meaning probably is, it is the first commandment of the second table, or that it is the first commandment that has a particular promise annexed to it; for there is a general promise of a very comprehensive nature annexed to the second commandment.

The general design of this precept is to regulate our conduct in the several vocations of life. The foundation of all the social relations is that of husband and wife. But this subject will naturally come up, when we consider the seventh commandment, and is for the present passed over. The next relation is that of parent and child. The word father is used in the Scriptures to express the relation between God and his creatures. He is the Father of spirits. We are his offspring. Heb. 12:9; Acts 17:28, 29. In him we live, and move, and have our being. God is our Father in a sense higher than is any other being. And as in the first table, God fitly provides for due honor to himself, it is by an easy transition that he provides for due honor to our parents.

Stowell: "In the care and interest, the tenderness and authority of the parent, we behold a faint image of the superintendence, compassion, and government of God." Some have misconstrued the teachings of our Savior, when he taught us to "call no man father." The whole

passage reads thus: "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." Matthew 23:8-12. From this it is evident that what our Savior forbade was assuming dominion over the faith of others, or allowing others to assume dominion over our faith.

The word father may be taken in several senses:

1. As the teacher or inventor of any art. Jabal was the father of such as dwell in tents; and Jubal the father of all such as handle the harp or organ. Gen. 4:20, 21.
2. Sometimes it is a mere term of civil respect, as when Naaman's servants said, "My father," etc. 2 Kings 5:13.
3. Again, it designates people who are our superiors in age, or experience. "The elders entreat as fathers, and the elder women as mothers." 1 Tim. 5:1, 2.
4. Again, it is the title of a wise and influential counselor. Joseph says, "God has made me, father to Pharaoh." Gen. 45:8.
5. It describes the relation between converts and those honored of God as the means of their salvation. Paul says, "Though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have you not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." 1 Cor. 4:15.
6. A respectful term for a religious teacher. Thus Elisha addressed Elijah, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof." 2 Kings 2:12.
7. A respectful title given in many nations to the chief magistrate. There was a line of kings in Philistia, called Abimelech, which word

signifies, The King, my Father. For many centuries the king of France was styled Sire, etc.; and

8. The fathers of our flesh, Heb. 12:9; the instruments of our earthly existence.

In the fifth commandment, the father being the head of the wife is named first. But that no slight was thereby intended to be put upon the female parent is evident from other Scriptures. "Each of you must show respect for your mother and father... for I, the LORD, am your God." Lev. 19:3. No child, however great or good, ever repaid a mother's love, a mother's care, and a mother's sorrow, manifested during all the trials of child-bearing, and child-rearing, and child-caring. Hare: "For a mother's heart is not like the heart of an animal, which, when its young have ceased to suck, drops them out of its memory. The human heart is of more lasting stuff... The mother, the good mother at least, will go on caring for her children, long, long after they have become men and women. Let them be men and women to others: to her they will always be children." Let us then consider,

1. The Duties of Parents to Children.

1. One duty of parents to children is suitably to provide for them when young and helpless. Nature teaches this duty. God's word enjoins it. Matt. 7:9, 10; 2 Cor. 12:14; 1 Tim. 5:8.

2. Another duty is to protect them. They are feeble. They are liable to wrong and injury. Reason suggests that the strong defend the weak.

3. Another duty generally confessed is to secure to them an education suitable to their talents and circumstances; that they may not enter upon the offices of life wholly unprepared for their stations, and thus find themselves most awkwardly situated. The secular education of children is in many ways important. This includes godly manners, 1 Pet. 3:8, industry, Proverbs 31:27, and humility of deportment, Proverbs 14:3.

4. But their pious and moral training is of so great value as that ruin, temporal and eternal, is likely to follow the neglect of it. In teaching, the matter and manner both claim attention. He, who takes heed what, but not how he teaches; or how but not what he teaches--does at the most but half his duty. Teach truth, and not its semblance, fiction. Teach truth, and not its opposite, error. Teach the truths God has taught you. Teach the whole word of God. The law is holy, just, and good. The promises are many, sweet, and faithful. The doctrines are true, sublime, and purifying. The threatenings are wise, righteous, and solemn. The examples are striking, various, and instructive. The encouragements are great, necessary, and seasonable. The invitations are kind, sincere, and persuasive. Omit nothing, abate nothing, add nothing. God's word is perfect.

He who made the Bible, made the mind of your child, and knew perfectly what would be best for it. Teach things in the proportion in which God has taught them. If God is just and holy, he is also good and merciful. If he forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin, he will also by no means clear the guilty. If his wrath is dreadful, his love is infinite. If he is a Savior, he is also a Judge. If he is a Sovereign, he is also a Father. If he pardons, it is not because sin is not infinitely hateful to him. Give clear ideas of the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace. Show how they differ. Never confound works and grace. Let Mount Sinai and Mount Calvary be set over against each other. Sinai without Calvary will fill the mind with terrors. Calvary without Sinai will breed contempt of mercy. The angels, who never sinned, are accepted for their works. "Do and live," is a law that suits them well. But eternal justice will smite to death the sinner who seeks acceptance by his own merits. He is a thief and a robber. "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Give to the person, teaching, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, offices, and glory of Christ the place assigned them in Scripture. He is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, light, life, prophet, priest, king, shepherd, surety, sacrifice, advocate. We are complete in him. He is all, and in all. He

is Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. Draw from the Bible the duties you inculcate, and the motives you urge. If you would repress self-will, stubbornness, immodesty, impatience, idleness, pride, deceit, selfishness, bigotry, cruelty, profaneness, or any vice; show that God forbids it. Always take sides with God against the sins and vices of even your own child. Explain the nature and urge the necessity of submission, patience, industry, humility, sobriety, moderation, truth, candor, honesty, justice, kindness, charity, faith, hope, repentance, fidelity, benevolence, respect for superiors, and reverence for God's name, word, worship, and ordinances. Take not the duty from the Bible, and the motives from Chesterfield, Rochefaucault, Seneca, or Plato. Present scriptural motives to an upright and virtuous life.

Think not to be wise above what is written: but try to be wise, and to make your children wise up to what is written. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable." Mix it not up with dreams and fancies, and loose opinions. "What is the chaff to the wheat?"

In teaching, great diligence is essential. So says God: "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates." Deuteronomy 6:6-9. "Be instant in season, out of season." The holy Sabbath, sickness or death in your family or neighborhood, a narrow escape from some great evil, a time of drought or of plenty, any event that excites notice, even the common incidents of life, furnish fit occasions for dropping the precious seeds of truth in the heart. Occasional remarks are no less impressive than stated instructions. They are often more pithy, and more easily remembered.

Take not too much for granted. Children are feeble and heedless. A little at a time, and often repeated, is the great secret of successful

teaching. "Line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept," is the scriptural method. Though you may have taught a lesson twenty times, it is not certain that it has been perfectly learned. Avail yourself of the love of narrative, so common in children. God has revealed much of his will in this way. The stories and parables of Scripture are not only admirable for their plainness and simplicity, but they enforce truth with unsurpassed power. Almost every principle of religion and morals is thus illustrated and enforced in the word of God. A good teacher must be gentle and patient. It is hardly worse not to speak divine truth at all, than not to speak it in love. Teach the same lesson a hundred times. Upbraid not a child for its dullness. Be like Jesus, who said: "Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart." Terror produces agitation, and thus precludes the power of learning.

Nor can anything be more undesirable than to have biblical instruction associated in the mind of a child with moroseness and harshness. The human heart is sufficiently opposed to the truth of God without our strengthening it by roughness or severity. Do not be easily discouraged. Persevere. He has seen but little of mankind, who has not witnessed the sad failures of the precocious, and the final success of the slow. "Long patience" is even more essential to the teacher than to the farmer. Let both parents heartily unite in this work. King Lemuel has given us the prophecy that his mother taught him. Proverbs 31. Enter with spirit and zeal on the work of instruction. Put off all languor and sloth. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might." A lifeless formalism is as truly mischievous at the fireside--as in the pulpit.

To your own efforts add those of well-selected pious teachers, both during the week and on the Sabbath. Every school, even every Sabbath-school, is not well taught. Exercise your best judgment in the choice of teachers. Know what books your children read. The world is deluged with books which abound in error. Guard the minds of your children against a fondness for novel-reading. It has ruined thousands. Hopkins: "The instruction of children must not be

technical and critical, but familiar and obvious; teaching them such fundamental truths and principles of Christian doctrine, as are of absolute necessity to be known, and in such a manner as may be most suitable to their capacity and discretion."

5. Another duty of parents to their children is that of governing them. The elements of good family government are strength, justice, wisdom, uniformity, and love. Act not the tyrant, yet be master or mistress of your own house. In your superior years, place, experience, and vigor, God has given you all that is necessary for making your government strong. Let it be a government, and not mere counsel. But let its provisions and administration be just. A child can feel injustice as soon and as keenly as a man. Impose no impossible tasks. Take into account all the weaknesses of childhood. In governing your children make a difference, not from partiality, but from a proper estimate of their various capacities, years, dispositions, and temptations. The varieties of character even in the same family are often surprising. Yet be uniform. Be not lax today and rigid tomorrow. Have settled principles, and let your children know them. Yet beware of making too many laws. They will not only ensnare your children, but destroy your government. Children may be governed too much. Do not expect perfection. In all you do, be guided by enlightened and pure affection. Never chide, nor correct in anger. If you cannot rule your own spirit, you may break the spirit of your child, but you cannot establish a wholesome government over him.

That we are bound to use authority is manifest from many parts of Scripture. Of Abraham, God says: "I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." Behold the dreadful end of the sons of Eli, and be warned. He was a godly man, hated sin even in his own children, and reprov'd it, saying: "It is no good thing I hear of you, my sons." But he used not authority, as their father and as the high-priest, to require reformation. Follow not so dangerous an example.

With reproof God has united the rod. When it is necessary, use it. It commonly is necessary in cases of willful and deliberate disobedience. "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." Hopkins: "The rod is to be used early, before age and spirit have hardened them against the fear or smart of correction. The wise man has told us, "He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him." Proverbs 13:24; see also Proverbs 23:13, 14. Never use the rod to gratify a feeling of anger, nor without being sure that it is deserved. I have somewhere read the following story, which well illustrates the matter.

Two coaches, belonging to opposite lines, left the same place at the same hour every day for London. Both drivers had orders to make the distance in the shortest time possible. One driver mounted the box, with whip in hand, was excited, spoke angrily to his horses, and alternately relaxed and jerked the reins, at the same time using his whip freely. In a few miles his horses gave signs of distress, and before he reached London some of his team were broken down. The other driver coolly took his seat, spoke gently to his horses, held a steady rein all the time, and seldom even cracked his whip. He was often hindmost for a few miles, but while the horses of the other team were in a foam, hardly a hair of his horses was moist. The last few miles, his team not being jaded, he took the lead, and seldom even distressed a horse. The reason of the difference was, not that one driver had a better team than the other; but one was a better driver than the other. One held a steady rein, and never used the whip unless it was necessary. The other constantly used the whip, fretted his team, and wasted both their spirit and strength. Who has not seen this precise difference in the government of families? The first driver would have done as well, perhaps better, without a whip. And many a family would not have been in a worse state, if a rod had never been in it.

Family government is always a failure when it does not secure prompt obedience and sincere affection from the child to the parent.

Parents should be agreed in the government of their children. If they do not support each other's authority, it must fall. A divided house cannot stand. Nor should they permit grand-parents, aunts, or any person whatever to weaken their authority. Hare: "I am aware, this strict and ready obedience, which does everything it is told, as soon as it is told, without asking why—this unquestioning obedience, I am aware, is rather out of date. But God's words are still true, and God's commandments are still good and reasonable, whatever the world, which is at enmity with God, may think or say.... There is the same difference between a father and son, a mother and daughter, as between a person who knows a road and one who does not."

"Hear, O children, the instruction of a father; for I give you good doctrine;" "Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings, for I have taught you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in right paths. When you run, you shall not stumble," Proverbs 4:1,10,11,12. How different would have been the history of Rehoboam, had he duly obeyed this counsel of his father Solomon.

There is a race of people said still to be found on the earth in thrift and honor, who are mentioned in history more than 2500 years ago, upon whom a blessing was then pronounced by the Almighty in these words: "This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'You have obeyed the command of your forefather Jonadab and have followed all his instructions and have done everything he ordered.' therefore, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'Jonadab son of Recab will never fail to have a man to serve me.'" Jer. 35:18, 19.

"Train up a child in the way he should go," Hare: "Train him up in obedience to his parents, while a child, in order that he may be less unwilling to obey his heavenly Father when he becomes a man. 'It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.' (Lam. 3:27.) But what yoke? First, The yoke of obedience; Secondly, The yoke of self-denial; Thirdly, The yoke of the cross, which is the sign and token of humility."

But beware of so conducting the government of children as to dishearten them. "You fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged," Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21. David set a noble example of encouragement to his son, 1 Chron. 28:20. Let the parent allure as well as command.

6. Parents should so walk before their children as that they may safely follow in their footsteps. Set a good example in all things. "Tinder is not more apt to take fire, nor wax the impression of the seal, than the young are to follow example." If your child may in his heart say: "Physician, heal yourself," your influence for good in that matter is at an end, at least until you reform. He who delivers good precepts, sows good seed. He who adds good example, ploughs in that seed. Children are the most imitative creatures in the world. The different species of ape excite the laughter of fools by their powers of mimicry, but children excite the admiration of wise men by their powers of imitation. Quintilian rightly says that babysitters should not have a bad accent. The reason is that children will soon acquire it. And Dr. Watts well says, "It is far less difficult to learn than to unlearn."

In his Ode to the Romans, Horace says: "Brave men are made by brave men." Nor, is there any other way of making men brave. Precept, eloquence, and poetry cannot do it. Cowards breed cowards. The same is true of all the virtues and vices.

The power of good examples above bare precepts is threefold; first, they most clearly show what the duty is; then, they prove that it is practical; and lastly, they awaken a more lively desire to perform it, by arousing the imitative principle of our nature.

I have known two men, by precept and authority, without example, to try to restrain their sons from intemperance and profanity. They both failed. I have known many a parent, whose precepts were few, and whose use of the rod was sparing, to raise a family to virtue and honor chiefly by a blameless example. It is as true of parents as of

preachers, that a bad example will destroy the good which might be expected from sound instruction. "Do as I say and not as I do," is a sentence which converts the best teaching into poison, and dreadfully hardens the heart. Precepts give the theory, but example instils principle. Words impart notions, but example carries conviction. One plain man, of blameless life and good sense, will more enforce the obligations of true piety than a hundred orators with godless lives. A heathen once gave as a reason for his guarded behavior in the presence of the young, "I reverence a child." If you deceive your child, break your promises to him, or practice any sin before him, you cannot fail to teach him to do the same. "In everything he followed the example of his father Joash." 2 Kings 14:3

7. But as he who sows is nothing, and he who waters is nothing, even though he be a tender and judicious parent, we should always look to God in humble prayer for his blessing. "Pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance." "Pray without ceasing." Pray in the house of God, in your family, in your closet, in your daily walks. Ask others to pray for you and your children. This should not be a mere formal, but an earnest request. You need special wisdom and grace to preserve you from error, and sin, and folly. The heart of your child is corrupt, and all your teaching and example will be lost without God's blessing. You cannot change the heart, renew the will, or wash away the sins of your child. God alone can impart to him a love of the truth, or give him repentance. You may use your best endeavors, but all will be in vain without God's Spirit. Sails are necessary, but a thousand yards of canvas will not carry forward a vessel, unless the wind blows. Be fervent in your supplications.

Monica, the mother of Augustine, said she "had greater travail and pain that her son might be born again, than that he might be born." God answered her prayers, and that too, at a time when he seemed to be utterly lost. John Newton tells of a mother of eleven pious children, who being asked how she came to be so much blessed, said, "I never took one of them into my arms to give it nourishment, that I

did not pray that I might never nurse a child for the devil." It is as true now as in any former age of the world, that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." Never despair of the salvation of a child. While there is life, there is hope. Wrestle with God like Jacob, and you shall prevail like Israel. Never, by unbelief, deliver over a child to sin, and to the wrath of God. Pray on. Hope on. For the encouragement of all who are charged with the religious education of the young, let these, promises of the covenant of peace be well considered: "I will be a God to you and to your seed after you." "The promise is to you and to your children." "Allow little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." More precious promises could not be made. Believe them. Plead them before God.

Richard Baxter has said, that if pious education, family worship, parental instruction, and a holy example were properly regarded by parents, even the preaching of the gospel would not be the most common means of conversion. The best encouragement to effort is found in the hope of success. In this case that hope is well-founded. God's word and providence both prove it. The great mass of the pious now on earth is made up of those who from childhood have been taught the ways of God.

Many foolish things have no doubt been said concerning the religious impressions of children. Yet there have been many well-authenticated cases of early piety. Our children cannot too soon begin to live to the glory of God. He who is old enough to sin against God, is old enough to love God. Whether your children shall be early or late converted, yet if they shall obtain salvation at all, they will be kings and priests unto God forever and ever. Does a sweeter hope ever visit the parental mind than that of standing before God in the last day, and saying: "Behold, I and the children, whom the Lord has given me!" "A whole family in heaven" will forever be matter of greater wonder and louder praise, than can be found in all the works disclosed by microscopes and telescopes in the boundless dominions

of God. But if you neglect the pious education of your children, dreadful will be the consequences. "A child left to himself brings his mother to shame."

Parental love is often blind and foolish,

"A parent's heart may prove a snare;
The child she loves so well,
Her hand may lead with gentlest care,
Down the smooth road to hell."

Trust not your heart. Trust God's word. Give not place to evil tempers and ways in yourself or your child. It is not many years since a young lady thus addressed her parents: "You have been the unhappy instruments of my being. You fostered me in pride, and led me in the paths of sin. You never once warned me of my danger, and now it is too late. In a few hours you will have to cover me with earth, but remember, while you are casting earth upon my body, my soul will be in hell--and yourselves the miserable cause!" If you would escape the scourges of a guilty conscience, the reproaches of a lost child, and the rebukes of an angry God, do your duty to your children. Only when the heart of the fathers is turned to their children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, may we hope that God will not come and smite the earth with a curse. As a town without walls, as a house without a roof, as a garden without a hedge, and as sheep without a shepherd, so is a family, whose thoughts and affairs are not molded by the fear and love of God.

2. The duties of CHILDREN to parents.

These are many, weighty and of great importance. They are summed up in the word HONOR. This word is well chosen. It contains the sum of the duty here required. The same word is found in Proverbs 3:9. "Honor the Lord with your substance, etc." It is often rendered glorify. Isaiah 24:15. "Glorify the Lord, etc." God himself uses the word in 1 Sam. 2:30. "Those who honor me, will I honor." Dwight:

"The word honor is chosen with supreme felicity; as being sufficiently comprehensive, and sufficiently definite, to express with as much exactness as can easily be compassed, all the several branches of duty which parents can equitably demand of their children." Poole: "The word honor does not only note the respect, love, and obedience we owe them, but also support and maintenance, as appears from Matt. 15:4-6, and from a like signification of that word, 1 Tim. 5:3, 17.

1. One duty of children to parents is sincere, strong, unwavering love. To be "without natural affection" makes either parent or child a monster of depravity. Romans 1:31. What a beautiful instance of filial love we have in Joseph, even when he was well-advanced in years. His venerable parent was coming to him; indeed had arrived in Goshen. "And Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while." Gen. 46:29. Love is no less the fulfilling of the fifth commandment than of any other.

2. Another duty of children to parents is to give them filial fear. Heb. 12:9. This is not inconsistent with love. Because the child is affectionate, he is devoted. Because he is filled with respect, he is free from unbecoming familiarity. There is no substitute for this kind of filial regard. Mal. 1:6; Proverbs 31:28. This kind of reverence Solomon manifested to his mother. 1 Kings 2:19. It was a good resolution of Jonathan Edwards of Northampton, "Never to allow the least measure of any fretting or uneasiness at my father or mother. Resolved, To suffer no effects of it, so much as in the least alteration of speech, or motion of my eye, and to be especially careful of it with respect to any of our family." This is quite in accordance with holy Scripture. "He that curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death;" "He that curses his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness;" "The eye that mocks at his father, and despises to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Exodus 21:17, Proverbs 20:20, 30:17.

With what great delight does a rightly ordered mind review the account of the reverence with which Joseph treated Jacob, when he went to see that venerable man. Joseph was then actually the wisest and most powerful man on earth; and yet when he approached his father, "he bowed himself with his face to the earth." Gen. 47:12. Where parents are wrong and show vile tempers, the speech of their children towards them should be mild and gentle, even in using the language of remonstrance. Thus said Jonathan to Saul; "Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; for he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine." 1 Sam. 19:4, 5. This reverence to parents should be sincere, uniform, profound. It should not indeed be servile, nor tormenting; but it should be full of sweet submission and of humble disposition. However worthless or wicked a parent may be, this duty still binds. One natural effect of reverence is submission. If parents are bound to give instruction, children are bound to receive it. "My son, hear the instruction of your father and forsake not the law of your mother."

3. Out of love and fear naturally grows obedience, which should be prompt, cheerful and universal, unless the parent requires the child to do something wicked. "My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not the law of your mother: bind them continually upon your heart, and tie them about your neck." Proverbs 6:20, 22. See also, Proverbs 13:1, and 23:22. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Eph. 6:1. "Children, obey your parents, in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord." Col. 3:20. No expectation of future eminence, no consciousness of present superiority in attainments can exempt us from this obligation. Two examples of Scripture delightfully settle this question. One is that of David, who after displaying amazing prowess, was yet entirely submissive to the authority of Jesse. I Sam. 16:11. The other is that of the Blessed Master himself, of whom we have this short but comprehensive record; that "he went down with his father and mother, and came to Nazareth, and was subject into them." Luke 2:51.

Let all children who are tempted to disobedience, or even to the slightest disrespect to either parent, remember the case of Canaan. Gen. 9:25. It is true that the kind of obedience due to parents differs according to the age of the child. At first, it is implicit, and rests entirely upon the authority of the parent. Young children must obey without reserve or examination. As children advance in years, it is reasonable that they should understand the grounds of many things required of them. In due time, by the law of their nature and of Scripture, ordinarily God sets them also in families, when it is agreeable to the divine will that a man should leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:7. Yet there can never come a time when the child may cease to honor the parent, in every way expressing love and esteem, and especially by yielding to all his reasonable commands. There have been cases and may be again, where parents require of their children to lie, to steal, to commit trespass and even to murder. In all such cases, children may not obey, because it is directly counter to the supreme will of God.

4. Another duty of children is to contribute as circumstances demand, and as their parents require, to their temporal support and comfort. The law on this subject is explicit. "If a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God." 1 Tim. 5:4. See also Ruth 4:15. Indeed that alarming statement in 1 Tim. 5:8, (If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever,) is brought out to enforce the duty of lineal and collateral descendants to provide for their helpless or dependent relatives. In nothing did those corrupt creatures, the Scribes and Pharisees, more grossly misinterpret God's will than in regard to the fifth commandment.

Our Savior said to them, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, 'Honor your father

and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,' he is not to 'honor his father' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites!" Matthew 15:3-7. The tradition of these false teachers seems to have been in almost all respects wrong. They appear to have held that a sacrifice offered in the temple was of such great value as to relieve children from the duty of showing piety at home; and that if we would say of anything, it was devoted to religious uses, that cut off all claim of parents to assistance. But all this was mere hypocrisy. Joseph set a good example in this respect. Gen. 47:12. Our Lord himself in the agony of crucifixion did not fail to show filial piety to his aged mother, now probably a widow. John 19:27.

It is also especially obligatory upon children well to consider and closely to follow the right counsel and worthy example of their parents. It is mentioned to the everlasting honor of Jehoshaphat that "The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because in his early years he walked in the ways his father David had followed. He did not consult the Baals but sought the God of his father and followed his commands rather than the practices of Israel." 2 Chronicles 17:3-4. Let us now consider,

3. The PROMISE Annexed.

Although the promise annexed to this commandment has reference more or less to the right performance of all relative duties, yet it has special application to dutiful children. It is in these words: "that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God gives you." In Deut. 5:16, it is, "that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you in the land which the Lord your God gives you." It is either to this latter form of the promise, or to the Septuagint translation of Exodus 20:12, or to both of them, that Paul alludes in citing this promise in Eph. 6:3. The literal rendering of the Hebrew is, that they may prolong your days, or cause your days to be

prolonged. If we follow this rendering, then the meaning is either that the commandments when rightly observed will prolong the days of dutiful children; or that their father and mother whom they honor will by their prayers, and protection, and example, be the means of lengthening their lives. So Diodati: "That they (the parents) may be instruments, and a means of it, by their blessing, and that this good may befall you from God for their sakes." Poole: "That your days may be long--that your parents may prolong your days, or the days of your life, instrumentally, by their prayers made to God for you, and by their blessing in my name conferred upon you." What then is the meaning of this promise?

Ridgley says, "there are three things which tend to make a long life happy.

1. Experience of growth in grace, in proportion to our advance in age, according to that promise, 'They shall bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.' Psalm 92:14.

2. When we retain our natural abilities, and that strength and vigor of mind, which we have formerly had. This some are deprived of, through the infirmities of age; whereby they may be said to outlive themselves. It was a peculiar blessing, which God granted to Moses; concerning whom it is said, that he was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; and yet his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. Deut. 34:7.

3. Old age is a blessing, when our usefulness to others, in our day and generation, is continued. Thus Joshua died an old man; but it was a peculiar blessing that he was useful to the end. Josh. 24:25, 29."

Matthew Henry: "Those who, in conscience towards God, keep this and the rest of God's commandments, may be sure that it shall be well with them, and that they shall live as long on earth as Infinite Wisdom sees good for them, and that what they may seem to be cut

short of on earth shall be abundantly made up in eternal life, the heavenly Canaan which God will give them."

Doddridge: "These words express the peculiar care of the divine providence for the continuance and comfort of the lives of those who should observe this precept, the benefit of which those children might generally expect, who were dutiful to their parents."

Scott: "The annexed promise of long life to obedient children, might have a peculiar reference to the covenant of Israel; yet careful observers of mankind have noted its remarkable fulfillment in other nations. Subordination in the family and community tends to personal and public felicity; and the dislike, which the human heart bears to submission, renders it proper to enforce it by motives of every kind."

Calvin: "The meaning is, Honor your father and your mother, that through the space of a long life, you may enjoy the possession of the land, which will be to you a testimony of my favor." "The hoary-head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness." Proverbs 16:31. Compare Lev. 19:32; 1 John 2:13.

It is evident from the interpretation of this promise given in providence that it is of a general, and not of a universal nature. The land of Canaan was a type of the heavenly blessing. "God has linked our duty and our interest together, so as there is no separating of them." The author wishes here to record his testimony. During a life neither short nor uneventful, he has mingled much with mankind. In that time he has seen many children forego their own gratification and apparent interest for the sake of parents, not always amiable, sometimes intemperate. Yet he has in no case seen such children losers in the end. A blessing has followed them.

The Sixth Commandment

"You shall not kill." Exodus 20:13

This commandment, as well as others, was greatly perverted by the traditions and glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees. So when our Savior came, the design of a part of his teaching was to rescue it from perversion: "But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, Matthew 5:22-23. The general scope of this teaching of our Lord is to show that not only actual murder is thus forbidden, but also all that leads to it. A few preliminary remarks seem to be called for.

1. The command reads, "You shall not kill;" and upon the face of it, we seem to be prohibited from taking the life of any creature. But other Scriptures inform us, that it is lawful for us to eat the flesh of animals, birds, and fish. Thus God says to Noah, "Every moving thing that lives shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things," Gen. 9:3. This grant is the more remarkable as it was not made until more than 2300 years after the creation. The New Testament fully sustains this grant to Noah. Our Lord himself partook of animal food, Luke 24:42. And Paul says, "I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself," Romans 14:14. And again, "Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, for, 'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.'" 1 Cor. 10:25-26. And again, "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it is received with thanksgiving," 1 Tim. 4:4. So that it is clear that we are not forbidden to take the life of animals for food.

Nor is it wrong to take the life of animals which are dangerous or ravenous. By miracle David slew a bear and a lion; and Paul shook off the serpent into the fire. The law of self-preservation fully justifies our destruction of injurious animals. But lest this liberty be misunderstood, it is proper to state that all cruelty to the brute creation is clearly forbidden. "God once made a dumb donkey to rebuke the madness of a prophet," Num. 22:28. "A righteous man regards the life of his beast." The emperor Domitian began his career of crime and cruelty by torturing flies with a needle. Benedict Arnold, when a lad, delighted in tormenting calves, colts, and lambs, thus preparing for his end of infamy.

2. There are three reasons why we are bound to be careful of human life. The first is, that mankind are our brethren and our flesh. Gen. 37:27; Isaiah 58:7; Acts 17:26, 28. The second is, that God made man in his own image. Gen. 9:6. Although by the fall, man has lost the moral image of God, yet he still has his natural image, consisting in his intellectual nature, which though marred is not destroyed. A third reason is, a clear and explicit command of God, hedging about human life with great care, as in this commandment, and often elsewhere; so that God requires that every beast that shall shed the blood of man shall itself be slain. Gen. 9:5; Exodus 21:28.

3. Important as is the preservation of our own lives and the lives of our fellow-men, yet we are not at liberty to use unlawful means for that purpose. We may not lie, or steal, or swear falsely, or deny God's truth—even to save life, our own or that of others. Gen. 12:12, 13; Romans 3:8; 1 Tim. 1:19, 20. Honor, truth, and conscience are worth more than life. It was the devil (and not God) who said: "Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has will he give for his life." Job 2:4.

4. There is nothing in this command forbidding us to take the life of men, who are seeking our lives, if we have no other way of escaping their malicious plots. This was clearly settled just after giving the moral law from Sinai. "If a thief is caught breaking in and is struck so that he dies, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed." Exodus 22:2.

Our Lord, himself, may allude to this law as of force in his day. Matt. 24:43. The reason of the law is, that there is always a strong presumption that a house-breaker will commit murder, if necessary to effect his nefarious designs. Nearly the whole Christian world has united in declaring the right of self-defense against murderous assaults.

5. Nor is there anything in this command prohibiting war, when necessary for the defense of a nation, or for the recovery of unquestioned rights. Gen. 14:13-16; Exodus 17:8-12; Judges 5:23; 1 Sam. 30:3-20, etc. John the Baptist called upon soldiers to "do no violence, and accuse no man falsely, but be content with your wages," Luke 3:14; but he never hinted to them that their calling was unlawful. Our Lord also greatly commended the faith of the centurion, but never called on him to renounce his profession. Luke 7:8, 9. While all this is so, the world ought not to forget what Dwight says: "Aggressive war is nothing but a complication of robbery and murder;" and what Robert Hall says: "War is nothing but a temporary repeal of all the principles of virtue."

We are also warned in Scripture that war is full of terrors and horrors. The prophet Isaiah thus describes war: "Howl, for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt; and they shall be afraid; pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travails; they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. Everyone that is found shall be thrust through. Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces, and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare

children. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood." Compare Jer. 4:19-31.

6. Although this commandment is against the murder of men's bodies, and against all that may lead thereto, it could be by fair and easy inference, shown that the murder of their souls is even more dreadful; and we may therefore expect God to inflict the direst judgments on those on whom the blood of souls is found. Ezek. 33:8. We are now prepared to consider several classes of sins against this commandment.

1. Wrong FEELINGS. "A tart temper never mellows with age, and a sharp tongue is the only edged-tool which grows sharper with constant use."—Irving.

1. One of the tempers very unfriendly to our own life and the lives of others is discontent. When indulged, there is no telling to what length it will go. It is very deceitful, and comes to us under the most plausible pretenses. "A change of situation is but a change of one class of trials, temptations, and duties for another." "Hell and destruction are never full, so the eyes of man are never satisfied." Proverbs 27:20. Discontent is well-near universal. Through divine grace it does not reign in the righteous, but it annoys them. How much pain it produces. "As a bird that wanders from her nest, so is a man that wanders from his place."

When discontent becomes strong and violent, it exhibits itself in ill-nature towards man and in hard thoughts and wicked speeches respecting God. It makes our fellow-creatures around us unhappy. 'It converts us into "murmurers and complainers." Jude 16. It is entirely counter to the Lord's prayer, "May Your will be done." It produces languishing, and often ends in the destruction of human life. It would be well if mankind had clear apprehensions of the sinfulness of discontent. When it assumes a violent form and becomes impatient, it makes us quarrel with providence, and foolishly declares life undesirable. The prophet sent to warn Nineveh was in

such a frame. "Now, O Lord, take, I beseech you, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.... I do well to be angry even unto death." Jonah 4:3, 9. How much more befitting was the language of Job in his deep afflictions: "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, until my change comes." Job 14:14.

Luther, seeing a bird light on a twig by his window, to roost for the night, wrote: "Ah, dear little bird! he has chosen his shelter, and is quietly rocking himself to sleep without a care for tomorrow's lodging, calmly holding by his little twig, and leaving God to think for him." Irrational creatures are as if they had more faith in God than men who profess to know him.

2. Ambition is no less against the spirit of this command. It may be very low in its aims, yet if it rules a man, it will ruin him. One may "aspire to be a fool," he may aim at being esteemed rough, or unpolished; or he may aim high, and desire to subject thousands to his belief, or influence, or government. He may be ready to wade through rivers of blood and build a throne on human skulls. The deadly nature of this passion is often concealed under plausible names. It is called spirit, energy, laudable emulation, etc. But in its gratification, men often destroy soul and body, and become unjust enemies of those who favor not their selfish aims. To such, how clear is the word of God: "Are you seeking great things for yourself? Don't do it!" Jer. 45:5. The higher the ambitious rise, the greater is their peril—and the more tremendous will be their fall.

3. Nor is envy less contrary to this commandment. It often destroys life. It is "a rottenness of the bones." Proverbs 14:30.

"What makes the man of envy what he is
Is worth in others, vileness in himself,
A lust of praise, with undeserving deeds,
And conscious poverty of soul."

How some hearts sicken at rising merit, and growing worth, and increasing credit in others! How embittered is rivalry! The unsanctified heart dies within it at the advance of a competitor. The hollow-hearted professor of religion sickens at the moral grandeur of a church not of his sect. How envy detracts from the worth of good men. How it destroys its subject. "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous, but who can stand before envy?" Proverbs 27:4. It directly leads to murder. 1 John 3:12. And yet how common it is. James 4:5. "The shadow does not more naturally attend the sun than envy does favor." Boston: "Envy is the devil's two edged sword drawn to slay two at once; the envious person himself, for he is like a serpent gnawing its own tail—and the party envied." Proverbs 14:30, Job 5:2, Proverbs 27:4.

4. Revenge is another malignant exercise of the heart. Some of the more devilish exhibitions of it will be considered hereafter. It manifests itself in the rencontres of public assemblies. But often it works secretly, where all seems fair and kind. It clandestinely attacks property, liberty, or reputation. Possibly it becomes open, and indulges in innuendo, invective or scurrility; or it delights in the envenomed retort, and with keen irony, biting sarcasm, or scornful ridicule, assaults its object. "Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, 'I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it', says the Lord. Instead, do what the Scriptures say: 'If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink, and they will be ashamed of what they have done to you.' Don't let evil get the best of you, but conquer evil by doing good." Romans 12:19-21

5. Sinful anger is also contrary to the sixth commandment. All anger is not wicked. Jesus Christ himself was angry. Mark 3:5. We are bound to express hearty and decided displeasure at wrongs committed against ourselves or others. But anger is sinful when it becomes outrageous, Proverbs 27:4; when we give way to passion, so that reason is virtually dethroned; or when it is without just cause, Matt. 5:22; or when it is of long continuance, Eph. 4:26; or when it is

accompanied with ill-will. It is not easy, yet it is possible to "be angry and sin not." Anger may rise in the bosom of a wise man, but it abides only in the bosom of fools. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice." Eph. 4:31.

It is peculiarly sinful to bring our angry feelings into religion. "The wrath of man works not the righteousness of God." Seeker: "He who would be angry and sin not—must not be angry with anything but sin." James 1:20. "He who is slow to wrath, is of great understanding; but he who is hasty of spirit exalts folly." Proverbs 14:29. See also Proverbs 16:32.

6. Hatred of our fellow-men, in any degree and in every shape, is sinful. It is essentially ill-will. Very properly does the apostle put it in the catalogue of works of the flesh. Gal. 5:19-21. "He who says he is in the light and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now." I John 2:9. "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." 1 John 3:15. "If any man says 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar." 1 John 4:20. These Scriptures settle the question. Hatred leads to actual murder, because it "stirs up strifes." Proverbs 10:12.

7. Rancour (bitterness or resentment) is hatred of long standing, known in Scripture by the epithets of hatred and perpetual hatred. Ezek. 25:15, 35:5. Rancour is of course inveterate and exceedingly stubborn. It shows itself in shyness and coolness of manner, in grudges and in heart-burnings. Where such a sentiment possesses the heart, holiness cannot dwell. Left to himself, the subject of such an affection will soon be prepared for any deed of violence.

8. One of the strongest exhibitions of depravity is the spirit of unmercifulness. The Lord said, "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy." Matt. 5:7. The same principle is asserted throughout the Scriptures. Yet behold the wretchedness of our race. "And man, whose heaven-erected face

The smiles of love adorn,
Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn."

How often does the creditor take the debtor by the throat, and sternly say, "Pay me what you owe!" The poor man cries, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you all." But the greedy monster wields all his power to distress even friends, that in some way he may extort the amount of his claims. Everywhere are found marks of this evil spirit. Oh how will the injured, and abused, and wronged of the race arise and clank their chains and show their scars, and pour abundant shame on the inhuman wretches, who made their lives a burden! What would a tyrant monarch, a tyrant governor, a tyrant husband, a tyrant father, a tyrant master, a tyrant creditor, a tyrant officer do in heaven—where all is gentleness and love? Ah, without repentance, he shall never see that holy, happy place. "He shall have judgment without mercy, who has showed no mercy." James 2:13.

9. An unforgiving temper is no less clearly sinful. The Lord says, "If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matt. 6:15. To pretend to forgive, only because we cannot otherwise be forgiven; and to forgive but not forget—is not what the Lord requires. He, who cherishes a sense of wrongs with an intention to requite them as soon as occasion offers, can never truly pray, "Forgive us our debts—as we forgive our debtors." When such a one reads that we must forgive a brother seventy times seven, he does not even attempt conformity to this law.

10. Contempt is a sentiment not to be cherished. Commonly its chief ingredients are haughtiness and scorn. It forgets that God has made from one blood all nations of men; that we are all sinners before God; and that the Almighty is no respecter of people. Haughty scorner is the designation of an ungodly man.

11. Sometimes malice shows itself at the downfall of others. But "he who is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished." Proverbs 17:5.

None but devils and those who are of their father the devil, will exult because evil has come on a fellow-worm.

12. Any unkind feeling to men is sinful, and strictly forbidden by the spirit of the sixth commandment. "Be kindly affectioned one to another."

13. Nor is ingratitude an uncommon sin. An ancient heathen said, "If ingratitude were punishable, there would not be courts enough in the world to try the causes." Another said, "Call me ungrateful, and after that you can say no more evil of me." How many are annually carried to the grave through the ingratitude of those from whom better things might have been expected!

14. Of all the dispositions of the mind, perhaps none leads to more frequent violations of the sixth commandment than PRIDE. Leighton: "Pride is the spring of malice and desire of revenge, and of rash anger and contention." Tully was proud of his humble origin, and boasted that he was "the first of his family." Others find fuel for this passion in the ancient respectability of their households. Diogenes was proud of the lowliness of his circumstances; while many are lifted up with their wealth. The disposition, which makes one man put on purple and fine linen, makes another assume the roughness of a voluntary humility. Men are proud of their parents, of their children, of their brothers and sisters, of their companions, of their correspondents, of their acquaintance, of their learning, of their ignorance, of their talents, of their looks, of their success, of their education, or of their lack of it, of their virtues, and even of their crimes. Yes, a man may be proud of his humility!

This pride fills men with self-conceit; it causes them to speak in brash tones; it makes them stubborn, heady, intractable; it fills them with the spirit of dictation; it kindles up fearful strife. "Only by pride comes contention." Proverbs 13:10. The proud condescends to mix with others only by the force of some reason like this: "A sunbeam contracts no pollution by shining on a dung-hill." Pride fills our

courts with litigants. It leads to broils, disputes, and murders. Like salamanders, the proud live in fire. Like Nabal, they are such sons of Belial that a man cannot speak to them, without incurring their displeasure. They expect all others to be humble; for pride in their fellow-men is very offensive to the proud. "Pride with pride—will not abide." At times indeed when overawed, the proud will cringe, and truckle, and show real harshness of spirit.

The Scriptures set themselves everywhere against pride. "The proud and all that do wickedly, shall be burned up." Mal. 4:1. "A proud heart is sin." Proverbs 21:4. "Everyone who is proud in heart is abomination to the Lord." Proverbs 16:5. "God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble." James 4:6.

2. Wrong WORDS. Another way of violating this commandment is by sinful language. "Grievous words stir up anger." Proverbs 15:1. "There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword." Proverbs 12:18. David complained, "My soul is among lions: and I lie even among those who are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword." And again: "Behold they belch out with their mouth; swords are in their lips." Again: "They whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words." Psalm 53:4; 59:7; 64:3.

In interpreting this precept, our Lord warned men against saying Raca, which means vain fellow. Michal, David's wife, violated this commandment when she scornfully said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!" 2 Sam. 6:20.

The Lord also forbade us to apply to men in any provoking way, the epithet fool, which signified not only that one is far from wisdom, but also that he is wicked and ungodly. He who takes away the life of a fellow creature by false testimony, is himself a murderer. Proverbs 6:16-19; 19:5. He who suborns others to do the same is a murderer. Acts 6:13. He who passes unjust sentence of death is a murderer,

Proverbs 17:15; 1 Kings 21:9-14. He who rewards the righteous according to the work of the wicked is a murderer. Isaiah 5:23. He who sees a fellow-creature in danger, and warns him not, lies under blood-guiltiness. Lev. 19:17; Isaiah 58:1. He who utters even the truth maliciously is in the same condemnation. 1 Sam. 22:9, 10; Psalm 53:1. He who speaks slightly of justice, and is regardless of truth, does what he can to spread the spirit of murder. Isaiah 59:4. He who perverts the sayings of his fellow-men, Matt. 26:60, 61; Psalm 56:5.

He who by falsehood afflicts his neighbor, Psalm 1:20; he who backbites with his tongue, Psalm 15:3; he who speaks evil of his neighbor, Titus 3:2; he who turns tale-bearer, Lev. 19:16; he who disturbs the peace of society by whispering, Romans 1:29; by mocking, Isaiah 28:22; by reviling, 1 Cor. 6:10; in short, he who, by any form of speech annoys his fellow-men, breaks up the peace of families, and fills upright men with anxiety and sorrow, violates the spirit of this commandment.

3. Wicked PLOTS. Men are not free from the guilt of breaking this precept, when they command or contrive the death of others; as when Saul bid Doeg kill the Lord's priests; or when David told Joab to put Uriah in the front of the battle; or when they counsel and advise the ruin of moral character, as did Jonadab, 2 Sam. 13:1-29; or when men stand by and consent to outrages against others, Acts 8:1; or by failing to give faithful warning, Ezek. 3:18; or by giving their voice to put men in offices which they are not capable of filling, and from their incompetency sad evils result, 1 Tim. 5:22.

4. QUARRELING. Perhaps no form of social evil is more degrading, or leads to more misery, than base quarrelling. It makes a hell upon earth. See Gal. 5:15.

5. Wrong ACTS. All expressions of the evil passions already spoken of are acts contrary to this commandment. Of this kind are all looks and gestures of a menacing, malignant, revengeful, violent, irritating, spiteful or tormenting character; all oppression, Isaiah 3:15, smiting,

maiming and wounding, Num. 35:16, 21, Proverbs 28:17, or doing anything which tends to the destruction of human life, Exodus 21:18-36.

Some things suggested by this commandment require a more particular consideration. Let us therefore inquire,

6. Is SUICIDE Criminal? It cannot be denied that the value set upon our own lives is in many cases very small. Mr. Hume, of the eighteenth century, wrote in favor of suicide; and since his time societies for the encouragement of self-destruction have been formed in many parts of Europe. Their baneful influence has also been extended to America. Mr. Hume's reasoning is truly shocking to pious minds. He says: "In the sight of God every event is alike important; and the life of a man is of no greater importance to the universe than that of an oyster." This sounds well in the ears of profane men. Yet every man knows that there is no truth in it. Though lessons may be learned from the lowest of God's works, yet Infinite Wisdom has never given to the world the history of an oyster for its instruction. But God has inspired many men to write the lives of others, and has preserved them to us in the canon of Scripture. The reckless question of Mr. Hume: "Where is the crime of turning a few ounces of blood out of their channel?" is as applicable to murder as to suicide; and what further license can the murderer possibly ask than to be allowed to plead at the tribunal of public justice that he has committed no crime by turning a few ounces of blood out of their course? With all his acuteness, Mr. Hume terribly confounds the plainest distinctions. He says: "When I fall upon my own sword, I receive my death equally from the hands of the Deity, as if it had proceeded from a lion, a precipice, or a fever." If this sentence has any meaning, it is that the willful, deliberate taking of our own lives is the same as dying by the providence of God, when he permits us to fall under the influence of pestilence, or of wild beasts. And if that is true, then we are no more criminal for killing a man than we are for seeing him die of a fever.

The whole argument in favor of suicide goes on the supposition of the truth of these principles, which are clearly false.

1, That man has a right to dispose of his own life; whereas none but the Author of our existence can lawfully do so;

2, that we are competent judges of the question whether we have lived long enough or not; whereas a large proportion of mankind have been very useful after they supposed they could do no more good;

3, that we owe no obligations to parents, or children, or others, who may be dependent upon our exertions; whereas we may entail upon them untold miseries by taking our own lives;

4, that God has not legislated on the subject; whereas the sixth commandment clearly forbids it;

5, that salvation is not an object worth seeking; whereas it is the only thing claiming our supreme attention;

6, that it is heroic to sink under distress or play the coward in suffering wrong; whereas a large part of the best moral lessons, taught by example, has been delivered to mankind in the depths of affliction.

It is not necessary to use any harsh language respecting the entire class of people, who may be left to take their own lives. In some cases, no doubt, reason is dethroned before the fatal act is committed. While we may charitably hope that this is so, it is an appalling fact that the Scriptures do not mention a single instance of any godly man committing this sin. Three cases are given in Holy Scripture. One is that of Saul, a man of violent passions, who sought to compass the death of his own son, Jonathan, and of his son-in-law and deliverer, David; an open transgressor of the divine will, who, before the close of life, committed crimes which he knew ought to be punished with death. Another is that of Ahithophel, a wily statesman,

a man of unusual political sagacity, but wholly unprincipled, and a traitor against King David. The third was that of Judas Iscariot, for years a thief, consummating his crimes by betraying his Redeemer. There can be no hope of the salvation of a man who, in the exercise of his reason, commits this crime.

So unmanly is suicide, that even Aristotle has condemned it: "For a man to die merely that he may avoid poverty or trials is not courage, but sheer cowardice. It declares that he lacks sufficient fortitude to encounter them." Of the self-destroyer a poet says:

"He thought, but thought amiss, that of himself
He was entire proprietor; and so,
When he was tired of time, with his own hand,
He opened the portals of eternity,
And sooner than the devils hoped, arrived In hell."

7. The Duel. The duel is a combat with deadly weapons between two people agreeably to previous arrangements. It differs from a boxing match, because in that no weapons are used. It differs from a rencounter, because that is a sudden combat without premeditation. These may be as immoral and as fatal in their consequences as the duel. But neither of them is so called.

1. The modern duel is maintained to avenge personal or family insults. It can in no way be justified. "You shall not kill," is the plain command of him that made us. No acumen can reconcile duelling with this prohibition. The law is clear. No exception is made in other parts of the divine code. The contrariety between this practice and the law of God, is manifest. The statute is unrepealed.

2. The duel includes in it also the guilt of suicide. As man has no right to take his own life, so he has no right wantonly to expose it to destruction. He who without any call of Providence knowingly puts himself in needless peril, contracts the guilt of suicide. Nor can we plead for duellists, which in some cases we may for suicides—that

they are insane. Duellists themselves admit that it would be murder to call to the field any unfortunate fellow-creature, whose reason had fallen from its throne. The duellist is mad in no other sense than that the sorcery of sin has bewitched him. His blood, if shed, is, in a fearful sense, on himself. Even if from the first, he intends to fire his own weapon into the air, yet if he exposes his body to the gunfire of an antagonist, he is in heart a self-murderer. If he dies in the duel, he has done what the law of nature and the word of God forbid, and incurred the heinous guilt of dying in an act which admits of neither reparation nor repentance.

"No murderer has eternal life abiding in him." This is as true of him who kills himself as of any other murderer. Before his conversion, J. A. Haldane fought a duel, and as he raised the pistol, he prayed, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit," *Life of Haldane*, p. 61. Such prayers are vain and are commonly admitted to be so. They are hypocritical.

3. Moreover duelling is in its very nature murderous. The weapons chosen are the weapons of death. The efforts of each party are almost without exception for the destruction of his antagonist's life. The fact of a malignant animosity is proven by all the circumstances attending duels. The deliberate aim of a deadly weapon at a fellow-creature determines the act to be murderous in design, and if life is taken, to be murder in fact. This is indeed strong but not rash language. Matthew Hale says, "This is a plain case, and without any question. If one kills another in fight, even upon the provocation of him that is killed, this is murder." Judge Foster says, "Deliberate duelling, if death ensues, is, in the eye of the law, murder."

Sir Edward Coke says, "Single combat between any of the king's subjects is strictly prohibited by the laws of the realm, and on this principle, that in states governed by law, no man, in consequence of any injury whatever, ought to indulge the principle of private revenge." Blackstone, supported by Coke, says: "Murder is when a person of sound memory and discretion, unlawfully kills any

reasonable creature, with malice aforethought, either express or implied." The applicability of this definition to the crime of killing in a duel, will be granted by all, except so much as relates to malice aforethought. Even a part of this will not be denied, namely that if there be malice at all, it is aforethought. Is there malice at all? The forbidden act of shooting with intent to kill is clearly malice implied. Is it not also malice expressed? The authority last cited says, "This malice aforethought is the grand criterion which now distinguishes murder fromn other killing; and this malice prepense is not so properly spite or malevolence to the deceased in particular, as any evil design in general; the dictate of a wicked, depraved, and malignant heart. Express malice is when one with a sedate, deliberate mind and formed design, does kill another, which formed design is evidenced by external circumstances discerning that inward intention; as lying in wait, antecedent menaces, former grudges, and concerted schemes to do some bodily harm. This takes in the case of deliberate duelling, where both parties meet avowedly with an intent to murder; thinking it their duty and claiming it as their right, to wanton with their own lives and those of their fellow-creatures; without any authority or warrant from any power either human or divine, but in direct contradiction to the laws both of God and man. These statements of principles are clear. They are made by lawyers and judges, not by divines and moralists. Their authors cannot be suspected of any wild, religious fervor, or of any foolish devotion to a fine-spun theory in ethics. Killing in a duel, then, is murder; intent to kill in a duel, is intent to commit murder. Milder terms ought not to be employed.

4. Both human and divine laws properly guard the life of man with much caution. Blackstone says: "If any man in a populous town throws carelessly from a house-top any tile or timber, and gives no notice to the crowd that is usually passing below, though he may see no one, yet if one thereby be killed, it is not merely man-slaughter, but it is murder, and the law assigns the reason that such conduct is an expression of malignity against all mankind; and even if he gives loud warning, and yet it be in a place where many people usually

pass, and one be killed, it is man-slaughter, and is punishable by the laws."

The same principle was incorporated into the law of Moses, Exodus 21:29. It is right. If these things are so, by what principle is he turned loose unpunished, who not only is careless about human life, but who trains himself to the skillful use of deadly weapons that he may destroy it, meets a fellow-creature by arrangement and takes away his life? Divine law is no less loud and clear in its demands for the punishment of blood-shedding. This point will be argued at length in a succeeding section.

PLEAS FOR DUELLING. In defense of duelling, it is sometimes pleaded that the practice is in accordance with a body of rules fit for the government of gentlemen, commonly called The Code of Honor. Whenever a code is mentioned, we naturally ask for the enacting power. Who made the code of honor? God did not. All its principles are repugnant to his revealed will. Nor has any competent authority sanctioned them. Nearly all legislatures have condemned them. Yet some are so bold as to dignify them with the name of The Commandments, thus adding profaneness to other sins. Two of these Digests of the laws of crime are before us. A statement of even half their provisions would show their absurdity, their cruelty, and their wantonness. They are sufficiently bloody to satisfy the most diabolical malice. Even in America, some of their leading principles are these: Some insults cannot be compromised or settled without fighting. Words do not satisfy words, nor blows, blows. Seconds go armed to the field, first to shoot the adversary of his principal, if he shall take any advantage; and secondly, to keep the other second in order. If principals will not fight, seconds are to pronounce them cowards, and abandon them on the field. You are not bound to fight a minor, unless you have made a companion of him. You are bound to fight a respectable stranger. Seconds have absolute control after a challenge is given and accepted. Time may always be claimed to make a will.

A code with such provisions is shockingly immoral. It violates all the charities of life. It tramples on the laws of God. It defies the statutes of the land. It repute forbearance as weakness, and forgiveness a baseness. It exalts diabolical passions to a seat among the highest virtues. It puts revenge and murder above meekness and patience. It is also full of absurdities. It places the aggressor and the aggrieved upon the same footing; or if the former be the best shot or the smallest mark, it gives him the advantage. If a man be injured and complain, by this code he may be compelled to lose his life and to write his wife a widow and his children fatherless. There is hardly an end to the absurdities which may be fairly drawn from its rules. This code is useless. It elicits no truth. It determines not who is innocent, and who is guilty. By common consent it proves no man brave; it seldom proves him a coward. It does not even prove one a good marksman or a good swordsman. In 1815, the English almost invariably killed the French officers with the sword. Yet the former were unskilled and the latter were experts in its use. Very often: in our own land, the less skillful in the use of weapons has killed his adversary.

This code is very bloody, not only in its laws, but also in its results. During the first eighteen years of the reign of Henry the Fourth, four thousand gentlemen perished by duels in France alone. In one hundred and seventy-two consecutive duels, sixty-three people were killed, and ninety-six wounded, forty-eight of them desperately. This latter statement is made on the faith of an official paper prepared in England. A few years ago, four people were killed in four successive duels in the same vicinity. This code smells horribly of blood. Why will men worship this modern Moloch?

Some plead for the code of honor that it maintains courage among men. True courage is indeed an enviable quality. But what is it? Is it recklessness of life? Does it delight in blood? No man has true courage except so far as he is a godly man. "The righteous are as bold as a lion, but the wicked flee when no man pursues." Burke: "The only real courage is generated by the fear of God. He who fears God,

fears nothing else." Addison: "Courage is that heroic spirit inspired by the conviction that our cause being just, God will protect us in its prosecution." Seneca: "Courage is properly the contempt of hazards according to reason; but to run into danger from mere passion is rather a daring and brutal fierceness than an honorable courage." Pages from similar sources and to the like effect might be cited.

The Duke of Sully, speaking of duels, says, "That which arms us against our friends or countrymen, in contempt of all laws, as well divine as human, is but a brutal fierceness, madness, and real timidity." True courage is calm, just, mild, firm, reasonable. To such a quality, good men do reverent obeisance. It is truth and justice sitting on a throne of virtue. It has no malignity. It never thirsts for vengeance. But is the duellist brave after his bloody work? Is he not timid, nervous, melancholy? Does he not often seem to anticipate the pains of hell? A dreadful sound is in his ears. A good writer says, "How fares it with him in the court of conscience? Is he able to keep off the grim arrests of that? Can he drown the cry of blood, and bribe his own thoughts to let him alone? Can he fray off the vulture from his heart, that night and day is gnawing his heart, and wounding it with ghastly and amazing reflections?"

Shall we award to such a system the meed of honor? The demand can never be granted. Humanity and God forbid it. Honor is a sacred thing. Honor is not lawless, is not cruel, delights in the approbation of the good, and abhors the infliction of misery. Honor is humane, generous, tenderhearted. Honor casts from her even her own rights, when insisting on them does a great wrong to others. Honor never willingly mingles the tears of widows and orphans with the blood of husbands and fathers. Honor looks at the things of others, bows to the majesty of law, listens to the conclusions of reason, and obeys the voice of God.

Can anything be done to arrest this evil? Yes! Public sentiment can rectify it. Good laws can be enacted. Good men can execute them. If all good men and all public functionaries would show like mildness

and firmness, like sympathy for the suffering, and like determination not to swerve from duty, there would soon be a change. Let mothers teach their sons that killing in a duel is murder. Let wives soothe their irritated husbands and assert their rights not to be left mourning widows. Let young ladies discountenance the gallants who come into their society reeking with blood. Let the press and the pulpit utter just and solemn notes of remonstrance.

Is any tempted to commit this sin? Here are good answers, any one of which is sufficient to justify him in declining. You shall not kill—the Almighty. It is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression—Solomon. I am not afraid of fighting, but I am afraid of sinning—Colonel Gardiner. I neither am, nor wish to be a murderer—a modern gentleman.

Tis hard, indeed, if nothing will defend
Mankind from quarrels but their fatal end;
That now and then a hero must de cease,
That the surviving world may live in peace.
Perhaps at last close scrutiny may show
The practice dastardly, and mean, and low;
That men engage in it, compell'd by force,
And fear, not courage, is its proper source;
The fear of tyrant custom, and the fear
Lest fops should censure us, and fools should sneer,
While yet we trample on our Maker's laws,
And hazard life for any or no cause.
Cowper.

8. Murder. All men admit murder to be a crime. Nor do they doubt that it is a fearful crime, even when attended with the fewest aggravations. None but the divine Lawgiver is competent to decide on the heinousness of any sin as against himself. No mortal is capable of knowing all the bearings of any sin in a moral government that has no end. But murder is an offence so obviously atrocious that man can judge somewhat of its mischievous effects in this life. It is

the strongest expression of malignity against our fellow-creatures. It is commonly the result of pride, or cruelty, or avarice, and always of impiety. It supposes a long process of hardening the heart and indulging wicked passions. But even the temporal consequences of murder are fully known to God only. Every man sustains relations to his family, his country, and the universe, which no finite mind can gauge. Then every life is worth untold millions to its possessor.

Both in Hebrew and Greek the same word is rendered life and soul. And, indeed, the connection between them is such that the loss of the former may be the loss of the latter. The murder of an unregenerate man, forever puts him beyond the reach of renewing grace and pardoning mercy. In speaking of duelling, murder has been sufficiently defined. Within the last half century, unusual opposition to the capital punishment of murder has been manifested in many quarters. Against it forms of expression full of railing and bitterness are frequently employed. One cries out against the orthodox Christian world: "The gallows and the gospel, Christ and the hangman." Those who deny eternal punishment seem particularly anxious to have the death penalty abolished. An ex-president of the United States, some years since, declared for the abolition of capital punishments. Some legislatures have fallen in with the popular error.

HAS GOD SETTLED THIS QUESTION? Our appeal is to his word. "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Gen. 9:6. This command was not given to the Jews, but to Noah, the second universal father of the human race. It is limited to no time or nation. It has never been repealed. A wholesome law ought to continue while the reason for it continues. That is given in these words: "For in the image of God made he man." So that killing man is a very different thing from killing any other creature. It is a despising of God, whose natural image every man bears. To murder a man is to blot out this image of God. This interpretation of this law is agreed upon by Rivet, Le Clerc, Selden, Grotius, Michaelis, Rosenmuller and numerous other eminent scholars. Nor is this the only instance in which God has expressed his will.

The command to Noah was given sixteen hundred and fifty-seven years after the creation. Nine hundred and fifty-six years later, God ordained judicial regulations for the Jewish commonwealth. Into that code he incorporated these explicit teachings. "He who smites a man so that he dies, shall surely be put to death." And to show that no refuge was to be allowed him, God adds, "You shall take him from my altar that he may die." Exodus 21:12, 14. A year afterwards, God said again to Moses, "He who kills any man shall surely be put to death." Lev. 24:17. Thirty-eight years later, God gave minutely the law of murder and manslaughter, provided for the trial of all charged with either crime, gave particular rules according to which sentence was to be given, repeatedly stated that murderers should be put to death.

This law is the basis of the laws of most Christian countries on this subject. It reads thus: "If a man strikes someone with an iron object so that he dies, he is a murderer; the murderer shall be put to death. Or if anyone has a stone in his hand that could kill, and he strikes someone so that he dies, he is a murderer; the murderer shall be put to death. Or if anyone has a wooden object in his hand that could kill, and he hits someone so that he dies, he is a murderer; the murderer shall be put to death. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death; when he meets him, he shall put him to death. If anyone with malice aforethought shoves another or throws something at him intentionally so that he dies or if in hostility he hits him with his fist so that he dies, that person shall be put to death; he is a murderer. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death when he meets him. "But if without hostility someone suddenly shoves another or throws something at him unintentionally or, without seeing him, drops a stone on him that could kill him, and he dies, then since he was not his enemy and he did not intend to harm him, the assembly must judge between him and the avenger of blood according to these regulations. The assembly must protect the one accused of murder from the avenger of blood and send him back to the city of refuge to which he fled. He must stay there until the death of the high priest, who was anointed with the holy oil. "But if the accused ever goes

outside the limits of the city of refuge to which he has fled and the avenger of blood finds him outside the city, the avenger of blood may kill the accused without being guilty of murder. The accused must stay in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest; only after the death of the high priest may he return to his own property. "These are to be legal requirements for you throughout the generations to come, wherever you live. "Anyone who kills a person is to be put to death as a murderer only on the testimony of witnesses. But no one is to be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. "Do not accept a ransom for the life of a murderer, who deserves to die. He must surely be put to death. "Do not accept a ransom for anyone who has fled to a city of refuge and so allow him to go back and live on his own land before the death of the high priest. "Do not pollute the land where you are. Bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it. Do not defile the land where you live and where I dwell, for I, the LORD, dwell among the Israelites." Numbers 35:16-34

A clearer revelation of God's mind and will could not be made. Nor is this any ceremonial regulation. It is the wisdom of God expressed to a famous people for the guidance of their conduct in criminal proceedings. These laws given by God were carefully executed by the best kings, that ruled over that people. By the command of Solomon, Joab was put to death, even while holding fast to the horns of the altar; for he had killed two innocent men, "more righteous and better than he." 1 Kings 2:28-34. This case is the more remarkable as Joab had rendered eminent military services to the country. Again, God expressly says, "A man tormented by the guilt of murder will be a fugitive till death; let no one support him." Proverbs 28:17. The same doctrine is taught by Christ: "All those who take the sword shall perish with the sword." Matt. 26:52. This saying was a proverb among the Jews. Its import was precisely the same with that of the words: "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." The meaning is, he who, under a government of laws, takes

the sword into his own hand, for private revenge, and slays a man, shall himself be put to death by the sword of public justice.

The same is taught by Paul. Of the civil magistrate, he says: "For government is God's servant to you for good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, because it does not carry the sword for no reason. For government is God's servant, an avenger that brings wrath on the one who does wrong." Romans 13:4. It is true that this passage does not confine capital punishment to the case of murder. But none will deny that if the death penalty should be inflicted on any, it should be on the willful murderer. The sword in this passage clearly points to death, as it was used for beheading. The apostle admitted the correctness of the same doctrine, in his argument before Festus. "If I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die," Acts 25:11; thus clearly implying that there were crimes properly punished with death; and that, if proven on the apostle, he would admit the justice of the death penalty against himself.

And in the very last book of Scripture, we have the same doctrine taught: "He who kills with the sword, must be killed with the sword." Rev. 13:10. It is true this passage is not a precept, but a prediction respecting the doom of bloody persecutors, who are wholesale murderers. Yet it is a prophecy which Jehovah has caused and will ever cause to be wonderfully fulfilled. Let bloody tyrants beware how they shed the blood of innocent men; for He who is higher than the highest regards. With an awful vengeance, even in this life, he commonly marks so heinous sin. Often in providence does "the Lord comes out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." Isaiah 26:21.

Thus speak the Scriptures. The general consent of mankind in all ages and under all dispensations since the flood, would lead to the same conclusion. Blackstone: "Murder is a crime which shocks human nature, and which is, I believe, punished almost universally throughout the world with death." The consent of mankind

approaches as near universality on this as on any other subject. Perhaps as few men have held that murder should not be punished with death, as have professed their belief that there was no God. The force of the argument is this: 'When men in every variety of circumstances, civilized and uncivilized, crude and refined, Jews, Mohammedans, Christians and Pagans, have generally agreed to any principle and acted upon it, its propriety is manifest.' There has never been a mistake among mankind of all descriptions, on any moral subject so wide-spreading as the opinion that murder should be punished with death. The experiment of sparing the lives of murderers has been fully tried. The world is now considerably less than six thousand years old. Yet for the first sixteen centuries and a half, capital punishment was not inflicted. In his adorable sovereignty, God made a great experiment, beginning in the family of Adam. The first man ever born was a murderer—the murderer of his own brother. He was constantly apprehensive of death. "It shall come to pass that everyone that finds me shall slay me." Gen. 4:14. But God sacredly guarded his life, and threatened dreadful vengeance on any who should touch him. Gen. 4:15. His punishment was expulsion from the visible church, expressed by the words, "He went out from the presence of the Lord," Gen. 4:16; together with his own reflections and the remorse of his conscience. Did his mental anguish and expulsion from the congregation of the righteous deter men from murder? No! Lamech soon followed his example, saying to his wives: "I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged seven fold, truly Lamech seventy and seven fold." Gen. 4:23, 24. Nor did the thing stop here. Men went from bad to worse, until "the earth was filled with violence." Gen. 6:11. The wickedness of man grew so rapidly that God swept from the face of the earth every breathing thing; those saved in the ark alone excepted. And no sooner had Noah come out of the ark, and become heir of the new world, than God enacted that henceforth murder should be capitally punished.

Nor do the lessons of history stop here. The Jewish commonwealth, in some form or other, existed for more than fifteen hundred years.

Whenever, in the kingdom of Judea, the magistrates were faithful in punishing murder with death, peace and prosperity succeeded. But whenever they became remiss in this matter, the nation groaned in misery. One of the States of America, (Michigan) about the middle of the nineteenth century, abolished capital punishment. The Grand Jury at Detroit, in 1852, under the solemnities of an oath said: "The increase of the crimes of murder and manslaughter, since the abolition of capital punishment, not only among us, but throughout our State, has become most manifest and alarming. The records of the courts of this County show that at each of the four terms, there has been at least one aggravated case of murder—and at one term two cases. Whereas, previously to the existing law, no conviction of murder had ever been had by any of the courts of the State. These facts we regard as a proof of an alarming disrespect for, and undervaluing of human life, legitimately referable to a change of the legislation upon this subject."

However men may fortify themselves with plausible arguments in favor of a sickly philanthropy, yet so exceedingly outrageous and shocking are some of the crimes which are committed, that it requires, not an ardent love of truth and commendable firmness, but an obstinacy of temper to stand up and say, they ought not to be punished with death. For a crime of deep dye, a man was sentenced to confinement, in a penitentiary, for a term of years. His treatment was mild. His tasks were moderate, and yet in cold blood he killed a kind and faithful officer. What would sickly philanthropists do in this case? Would they have him sentenced to the penitentiary? He was already there. Would they sentence him for life? How many faithful keepers might he kill before the law would assert its majesty in behalf of the lives of guards and wardens? Abolish the penalty of death, and trustworthy men could not be found to keep our prisons. Abolish capital punishments, and mankind will return to the old practice of avenging blood.

Some have argued respecting capital punishment upon entirely false principles. Some assert that punishment can be justified only upon

the ground of the right acquired by society, when men enter into that state, to prevent an evil-disposed person from repeating an offence. Others say that the only justification of punishment is found in the hope that the criminal may thereby be reformed. Others say that the right to punish is based upon the obligation of society to deter those, who have not yet offended, by exhibiting examples of the misery of criminals. Yet others contend that all punishment is merely for reparation, and should be of such a kind as to gain that end. Some have laid down all these as the foundations of punishment. Let us look at these statemets.

It is admitted that some of the fore-mentioned things are occasionally gained by punishment. But neither severally nor jointly are they the ground on which it proceeds. If the right to punish is based upon the obligation of society to prevent an evil-disposed person from repeating an offence, none will deny that capital punishment gains that end, and puts it quite out of the power of the culprit again to disturb society. So that the mere admission of this principle would be no argument for the total abolition of the death penalty. But this statement of the matter does not furnish a principle sufficiently broad to cover every case of punishment. Some sentences are but light and temporary. They bear no proportion to the strength of men's passions for doing wrong. Yet severer penalties would by all enlightened men be esteemed excessive. But the great objection to this principle is, that it makes a man suffer, not for what he has done, but for fear he will hereafter do something wrong. He asks his country, "Why do you restrain my liberty?" The reply is, "We are afraid you will injure men if you are allowed to go at large." This reply suits the case of a man restrained under a writ of lunacy, or subjected to quarantine, no less than that of the culprit. He sees no justice in the case. He asks if society is not afraid that some men, going at large, will commit as great offences as himself; and the community must be very small, in which men could not be found, of whose future good conduct there was as little guaranty as of his. Some of the worst men in every country are going at large. Mere prevention therefore is not the basis of punishment.

Nor is the reformation of the criminal the ground of punishment. Incidentally it may sometimes be effected; and if in crimes of a lower grade one mode of punishment is found more conducive to reformation than another, and the ends of government can all be secured—that mode should be preferred. But who gave society a right to imprison men in order to reform them? No such grant of power is anywhere found. Surely God never gave it. When he would rescue men from vice and sin, it is by his blessed gospel. Besides, if society punishes only that she may reform bad men, then as soon as they are reformed they ought to be discharged. Would this be proper? And if reformation be the ground of punishment, then all penal sentences ought to be indefinite as to time, and the punishment should last until the reformation is effected.

Universalists urge this point with great zeal. Their chief argument is, that all suffering, under the government of God, is for the good of the sufferer, and that therefore the same principles should obtain in human society. But the argument is false. All suffering under God's government is NOT for the good of the sufferer. What benefit have the fallen angels ever reaped from their chains of darkness? What blessing has ever come on the Sodomites for their suffering the vengeance of eternal fire? When Paul says that "all things work together for good," he limits the statement to "those who love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose." To such it is a glorious truth that their afflictions do them eternal good. But where is the like declared concerning those who hate God and are ordained to a fiery condemnation?

And even if reformation were the ground of punishment, no man, before the judgment-day, can certainly know that capital punishments for high crimes are not preceded by as many conversions to God and thorough reformations as any other modes of punishment whatever. We have inspired authority for believing that one man publicly executed for his crimes was truly penitent. Doubtless there have been others.

But do not our wisest men confess that our penitentiaries are seldom, if ever, places of penitence? Neither is the utility of example to others any ground for punishing a man. Punishment may deter some men from crimes; but it may be seriously questioned whether even this influence is not greatly overestimated. It has become proverbial, that punishments so inflicted as to afford a spectacle, have in many cases a hardening effect. Be this as it may, when did society acquire the right of punishing one man for the good of others? If it has such a right, why may it not exhibit the innocent in a posture of shame and under false accusation, for the benefit of the public?

Nor is reparation the ground of punishment. If in cases purely civil, where no felony is charged, this is the great end of punishment, yet in the case of murder, reparation is wholly and absolutely impossible. No tears, no repentance, no toils, no sacrifice of worldly goods can restore life to the murdered man, or the husband and father to his bereaved family.

The true ground of punishment is JUSTICE. The penalty of law is to be inflicted because it is right. If the murderer deserves death; if his guilt is so enormous that no other punishment is adequate; if God has pronounced death the proper penalty; if criminals themselves, whenever their consciences are awakened and enlightened, do acknowledge the justice of their sentence; then we have a sure foundation on which to vindicate our laws. Justice, eternal inflexible justice is the sole ground of the right of punishment. And it is ground enough. "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

9. Intemperance. Modern usage has almost confined the word intemperance, unless otherwise explained by the connection, to the excessive use of intoxicating drinks. In this sense let us consider it for a little while. No form of vice is more contrary to the true spirit of the sixth commandment, and none brings more misery on society. Its sweep is wide and fearful. Every profession and every community

have furnished victims to this destroyer. The annals of this miserable vice are written in blood. Its statistics rise high and tell us of hundreds of thousands of drunkards and of hundreds of thousands more reduced to pauperism or seduced to crime—by intemperance. They tell us of millions of gallons of intoxicating drink annually consumed. For every hour in the year it is calculated that at least one drunkard passes to the retributions of eternity.

Nor is intemperance in any case a slight evil. To its subjects it brings complicated forms of disease, and pains of the most excruciating character. "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine." Proverbs 23:29, 30. Loss of integrity frequently attends intemperance. Little by little the inebriate loses his once sacred regard to truth, to contracts, to promises and all engagements. At the same time, the fatal stab is given to the best and kindest sentiments of the heart. Petulance and irritability supplant love and tenderness. Self-respect commonly dies early in this career, and the inebriate begins to herd with the degraded. Reputation cannot long stand such assaults, and by degrees public esteem and confidence are withdrawn. In his sober moments, the drunkard's bosom will be wrung with anguish. Shame, remorse, and the darkness of guilt are followed by the perishing of hope. He deplures his dreadful captivity, but has neither courage, nor expectation of bursting its bonds. Loss of property commonly follows close on the heels of other evils.

While intemperance does not always lead its victims to the commission of crimes, yet more than three-fourths of all the felonies in the land are traceable to this source. The worst thing attending intemperance is its direct and invariable tendency to destroy both soul and body in hell. "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Cor. 6:9,

10. For the impenitent, unreformed drunkard, there is no salvation. God has determined that matter already, True, the context of the passage just cited shows that drunkards may be converted: "Such were some of you," says Paul to the Corinthians. But how seldom does the drunkard turn to God. When the direct tendency of a sin is to make the whole man sottish and even less than a man, how feeble is the hope we can entertain that he will turn and live.

The case of the drunkard is very discouraging. It is hard to convince him either of his sin or his danger. He is full of confidence in his own strength. He is persuaded that the meltings of nature, which he sometimes feels, are a sign that all is not lost. His conscience is seared; his understanding is terribly darkened. Numbers of such die, giving fearful evidence to the last that they were wholly impenitent.

Nor are the evils of this sin confined to him who drinks. Others come in for a large share. The father, who had begun to depend on his son; the mother, who thought that she had borne a man; the wife, who had dreams of earthly happiness; the sisters, who had once been proud as they saw his manly bearing—all now find that honor is forsaking him, and that their hopes must soon perish. His children are often filled with terror at his approach. He is no longer the kind and judicious friend of the poor, the widow and the orphan. He is a pest to his neighborhood. His will might read thus: "I give and bequeath to society a ruined character, a wretched example, and a memory that shall rot. I give and bequeath to my parents, shame, sorrow and (so far as I am concerned) a childless old age. I give and bequeath to my brothers and sisters, deep humiliation at the mention of my name. I give and bequeath to my wife, a broken heart, an early widowhood, a shattered constitution, poverty and an early grave. I give and bequeath to each of my children, poverty, ignorance, and the remembrance that they had an monstrous father."

Multiply all these evils by hundreds of thousands and you will have something like the true result. But there are other evils of a general

nature connected with intemperance. Time is wasted. Prisons are multiplied. Taxation is greatly increased. Property is destroyed; justice perverted; idleness fostered; riots encouraged; life jeopardized; and morality and religion made to bleed. Hell follows in its train. He who indulges in wine and strong drink shall find that "in the end it bites like a poisonous serpent; it stings like a viper!" Proverbs 23:32.

Where the population is crowded, the statistics of this sin are most appalling. When London had a population of 2,350,000 souls, it had a total of 471,000 people steeped in crime, demoralization and vice; of whom 180,000 were habitual hard drinkers. The vices of the rest were akin to this. All these evils are quite unnecessary. Strong drink laid aside, all the affairs of life would move on better than they do. The strongest man noted in history never tasted such stimulants. In certain cases alcoholic drinks are proper for medicinal purposes. "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that are of heavy hearts." "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your often infirmities," Proverbs 31:6; 1 Tim. 5:23. Medical skill, or our knowledge of our own constitutions must determine when we need such aid to our health. In all other cases, the consciences of men are left free to abstain if they choose.

The principle of voluntary abstinence is not new. By solemn vows, the Nazarites were bound to it. John the Baptist never drank wine. For thousands of years the Rechabites have been wholly abstinent. Every generation furnishes such cases. It is said, on good authority, that one of the petty kingdoms of Africa has never permitted the introduction of intoxicating drinks, and while surrounding kingdoms are torn with internal wars, and are sinking under the power of many evils, among which are the usual attendants of intemperance; this kingdom remains quiet, industrious and prosperous. Kidnapping and the slave-trade are unknown.

The Scriptures give very solemn warnings against seducing men into this vice. "How terrible it will be for you who make your neighbors

drunk! You force your cup on them so that you can gloat over their nakedness and shame. But soon it will be your turn! Come, drink and be exposed! Drink from the cup of the Lord's judgment, and all your glory will be turned to shame." Hab. 2:15, 16.

10. The low estimate of human life. Perhaps there never was a century in which mankind have been more disposed to think, and speak, and act, as if human life were a trifle, than the present. This remark is fearfully true of the country in which this volume is likely to be most read. In his Thanksgiving sermon, preached Nov. 24, 1853, H. A. Boardman, says: "It is scarcely a figure to say that the history of many a steamboat and railroad line, in the Union, has been written in blood. The statistics would probably show, that a greater number of travelers perish by these agencies in our country, than in all the rest of the civilized world combined. An accident which destroys a single human being, or three or four, is nothing thought of. Even those which involve the destruction of scores of lives produce but a temporary ripple in the current of public feeling, and are presently forgotten. Men are allowed to erect buildings which may tumble down of their own frailty, and bury a crowd of inhabitants beneath their ruins. Steamboats of such fragile construction are permitted to navigate our tempestuous lakes and dangerous sea-coast, that there is less to wonder at when we hear that they have gone down into the abyss, with a load of passengers, than when they survive a violent storm. Conductors and engineers may whirl their crowded trains into other trains, down precipices, and into drawbridges; and superintendents of management may so frame their arrangements as almost to insure the frequent recurrence of these disasters, without exposing themselves to penalties. Homicides are rapidly multiplying; and, with occasional exceptions, justice is slow in securing the murderers, and slower still in convicting and punishing them.

Society has so far reverted towards its primitive condition, that even in our older States, the practice has become common of carrying deadly weapons, and avenging affronts, real or imaginary, with

instant death. The generation of young men now coming forward in our cities, seem to think it manly to wear dirks and pistols, and to use them on the slightest provocation. Approximating to savages in their equipments, they resemble them no less in the value they put upon human life. And if matters proceed much further in this direction, the shooting of a man will soon come to be looked upon as very little more than the shooting of a beast. If these practices were properly rebuked—if the force of law or of public sentiment were adequately employed to repress them—it might be out of place to cite them in this connection. But they meet with a degree of tolerance which indicates anything but a just appreciation of their enormity on the part of the community. As the natural result of these things, the feeling of personal insecurity has become very general. The unavoidable hazards of traveling are so multiplied, that a journey is a source of incessant anxiety, from its commencement to its close, both to travelers themselves, and their friends and families. Even in traversing the streets of a metropolis, people feel that they are liable to plunge, inadvertently, into some unprotected pitfall, or to be crushed by having building materials or bales of merchandise precipitated upon them from above. Nor can thoughtful parents rid themselves of solicitude for the safety of their sons, lest they may some day be brought home to them 'in their blood,' victims to that fashionable code which makes every man the avenger of his own wrongs, and converts into a 'wrong' every hasty utterance or passionate gesture. That this insensibility to the true value of life, is a mark of our imperfect civilization, is a humiliating truth which it were quite useless to deny.

If there is any gauge by which the progress of a people from barbarism to refinement can be tested, it lies in the estimate they attach to human life, and the pains which are taken to preserve and prolong it. If a nation fails in this point, the defect is one which admits of no compensation. It is idle to talk of its arts and arms, its literature and religion, its wise laws, its schools, its contented and thriving populations—if it holds human life at a cheap rate, the less it boasts of its cultivation the better. Other nations, certainly, will

concede to it nothing beyond a second or third rate type of civilization, while it is disfigured by one of the radical characteristics of barbarism.

Much innocent blood is shed. Violent deeds abound. One terrible tragedy follows another with rapidity. Lately seventeen murderers were executed in one day. Fightings, assassinations, duels, suicides, and deliberate murders for revenge or for money, are reported with an alarming frequency. The cause of this deplorable state of things is to be found in human depravity. But why should this depravity now manifest itself, in so unusual a degree, in this particular form? The following answers may not include all that should be said, but they point to some leading influences which have a fearful potency for evil.

1. One fruitful source of crime has been the expectation of impunity. Many have argued, some have legislated, and more have practiced on the belief that no crime ought to be capitally punished. This has increased the hope of impunity, so that some have declared their belief that death would follow no crime.

2. The country has been and is still flooded with books which mightily stir up all the principles of wickedness. Novels or narratives of fact, have dressed up the burglar, the robber, the assassin, the duellist, the murderer—in mirthful colors, and held him forth to the youthful mind as a hero to be admired. These books are exceedingly common, are offered for sale in almost every train of cars, and are filling the pockets of thousands who never read any book suited to improve their morals.

3. Very corrupt religious doctrines extensively pervade portions of the lower classes; among them are Universalism, Deism, Spiritualism, and other infidel delusions. One who has for a long time visited prisoners in jails and penitentiaries, declares his belief that nine-tenths of our convicts disclaim the doctrine of eternal punishment. These maintain their doctrines with just such

arguments as are heard from Universalist pulpits and infidel clubhouses.

4. The intemperate use of intoxicating drinks is terribly on the increase, especially among the classes who commit these bloody crimes. The liquors drunk are often terribly drugged. Reason is frequently dethroned. At all times the blood is overheated, or the temper roused, and so the poor victim of strong drink is kept ready for anything.

5. Gambling in its worst forms is also fearfully prevalent. It fosters the worst passions, and hardens the heart beyond almost all other vices. It has its schools and "hells" almost everywhere. Its leaders are among the most desperate men in the world.

6. The practice of wearing side-arms, now so common, is a great provocative of blood-shedding. It makes men familiar with the instruments of death, and so diminishes their horror of blood-shedding. It awakens apprehension that another is armed, and so leads to a speedy resort to these weapons in case of any difficulty.

11. Intolerance and persecution.

Every man has a pope in him—Luther. Intolerance is the parent of persecution. It refuses to let others alone, if they differ from us in views or sentiments. It takes a very wide scope in this respect. Galileo was persecuted for his views on science. Whately well remarks that if his cotemporaries could have answered his arguments, they would not have persecuted his person. No little of this intolerance is still manifested even among some modern philosophers. To differ from them is to incur their scorn and their ill-will. Another matter on which men are intolerant is the subject of politics. How often does the vehemence of partisans rise to invective and deadly malice. Men are oppressed for utterances which are as honest and as harmless as any held by their adversaries. But religious doctrine and worship have for many ages furnished the ground of the bitterest intolerance.

It ought exceedingly to warn those, who are inclined to be bitter towards others for difference of religious belief or practice, that there is no unerring judge of truth and error upon earth, and that none have more egregiously erred than those who have made the highest pretensions to ability to discriminate between truth and error.

Beza says that such was the "folly, ignorance, ambition, wickedness of many bishops in the best times, that you would suppose the devil to have been president in their assemblies." John Owen says, "I would acknowledge myself obliged to any man that would direct me to a council, since that mentioned in Acts 15, which I may not be free from the word of God to assert, that it, in something or other, went astray."

The solemn challenge of Scripture is, "Who are you that judges another man's servant? To his own master he stands or falls." Romans 14:4. Who but God is competent to decide on the aims, hopes, fears, desires, convictions, failings, darkness, misapprehensions and invincible prejudices of men? Oh that men had the spirit of Salvian, when he said of some of his cotemporaries, "They are heretics, but know it not; heretics to us, but not to themselves: nay, they think themselves so right, that they judge us to be heretics; what they are to us, that are we to them: they err, but with a good mind, and for this cause God shows patience towards them."

One of the saddest things attending this spirit is that intolerance begets prejudice, and persecution, persecution. No doubt this evil has existed from the first. But it comes to the Western World through Pagan Rome, which admitted no worship and no doctrine but such as was established and approved by those who claimed authority in such matters. This was the ground of that great clamor made at Philippi respecting the preaching of Paul and Silas: "They teach customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans." Acts 16:21. Nor has there been anything new uttered for centuries in favor of intolerance.

The defense of it, made as early as the time of Augustus Caesar was, that "They, who introduced new deities draw many into innovations, from which arise conspiracies, seditions, secret meetings—which are in no way profitable for the commonwealth." The other great ground of defense of persecution was that the worship of new gods was a dishonor and a provocation to those already worshiped, and thus they sent calamities upon the people. It is a fact worthy of note, that persecution has never been raised against any man or people, whose opinions or practices have been fairly dealt with by adversaries. This is illustrated on almost every page of the history of spiritual despotism. Owen says, "The course accounted so sovereign for the extirpation of error—was first invented for the extirpation of truth."

Even persecutors have at times admitted the faultless character of their victims. Louis XII, with all his bitterness against the people of Mirindol, said: "Let them be heretics, if you please, but assuredly they are better than I and my Catholics." Thus far in the history of persecution generally, the punished have been far better than the punishers. Nor has persecution checked the progress of anything but truth. Many a time has it been confessed that so far from suppressing heresy by the sword and fagot, it has thereby been exceedingly spread and established. When a man's followers honor him in his life as a saint, they count him a martyr as soon as you shed his blood.

The fact is, that where heresy in religion exists, it is a spiritual disease, and so ought to have a spiritual remedy. The Christian church, for more than three centuries after the ascension of her Lord, neither knew nor thought of the carnal weapons of intolerance for the extirpation of wrong opinions or wrong practices in religion. Marcion reprov'd a great errorist in strong terms; Irenaeus says he would have no fellowship with heretics; Cyprian says, "Neither eat, nor talk, nor deal with them." Ignatius says: "Count them enemies, and separate from them who hate God; but for beating or persecuting them, that is proper to the heathen who know not God, nor our Savior; do not you so."

How terribly God has followed persecutors with his sorest judgments, can be seen in Jortin's remarks on Church History, in the fifteenth volume of Owen's Works, p. 229, and indeed in many other writings.

One good, not sought by persecutors, has been brought out of their cruel practices. It has given God's people an opportunity to illustrate the true character of a Christian.

After pagan Rome lost its power, papal Rome took up the trade of intolerance and persecution in the most fearful manner. In the Apocalypse, John speaks of that corrupt communion thus: "I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." Rev. 17:6. That the Church of Rome is in her fixed principles and uniform practice intolerant and cruel, is as easily proved as any other proposition.

The creed of Pope Pius IV, issued Dec. 1564, after the decrees of the Council of Trent, and sworn to by every clergyman in that communion, contains these sentences: "I acknowledge the holy catholic and apostolical Romish church, to be mother and mistress (Magistram) of all churches; and I promise and swear true obedience to the Roman Pontiff, successor of the blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ. Also, all other things handed down, defined and declared by the sacred canons and general councils, and chiefly by the most holy of Trent, I undoubtedly receive, profess, and, at the same time, all things contrary, and all heresies whatever condemned, rejected, and anathematized, I, in like manner, condemn, reject, and anathematize. And this true Catholic faith, out of which no one can have salvation, which at present I voluntarily profess and truly hold, I promise, vow, and swear," etc.

Here we have a clear and full declaration that all protestants and their children sink down to perdition. The oath taken by every Roman Catholic Bishop contains, among other things, this sentence: "Heretics, schismatics, and rebels—I will to my power persecute and

oppose." In the year 1582, there was published at Rheims, a copy of the New Testament, with various notes, etc. This work, in several editions, has been frequently approved, sanctioned and published, by various Romish bishops. Here are some of the notes: "The insufficient and pretended church service of England, being in schism and heresy, is not only unprofitable, but also damnable." "If the temple of the Jews was a den of thieves, because of profane and secular merchandise; how much more now, when the house appointed for the holy sacrifice and sacrament of the body of Christ is made a den for the ministers of Calvin's bread." "The prayers and services of heretics are not acceptable to; yes, are no better than the howling of wolves." "A Christian is bound to burn and deface all heretical books." "The translators of the English Protestant Bible ought to be abhorred to the depths of hell." "Justice and vigorous punishment of sinners is not forbidden, nor the church, nor the Christian princes blamed for putting heretics to death." "To say that a heretic, evidently known to die obstinately in heresy, is damned, is not forbidden. Where heretics have unluckily been received for fear of troubling the state, they cannot be suddenly extirpated—the weeds must grow while the church obtains power, then eradicate them from the soil." "The zeal of a Catholic ought to be so great towards all heretics and their doctrines that he should give them the curse—the execration—the anathema, though they were ever so dear to him—though they were his parents."

On the Thursday before Easter, in every masshouse in the world, where service is conducted, unless public sentiment restrains the priest, there is read the Papal Bull, entitled *In Coena Domini*. The second clause of this Bull contains the excommunication of all Hussites, Wiclifites, Lutherans, Zuinglians, Calvinists, Huguenots, Anabaptists, Trinitarians, and other apostates from the faith; and all other heretics, by whatever name they are called, or of whatever sect they be," etc., etc. The sixth paragraph utterly curses all the civil powers, who impose new taxes without the consent of the Roman court. A more shamelessly wicked, cruel, and malignant document was probably never sent forth to the world. The phrase anathema 'let

him be accursed,' occurs more than one hundred and twenty times in the canons and acts of the council of Trent. Paul said, "Bless, and curse not," Romans 12:14. But Rome thunders forth her curses on all hands. She sends forth as bitter anathemas against those who do not believe all the falsehoods and absurdities found in the Apocrypha. With her, every dogma is fundamental; every principle essential. Here are some of the decisions of the canon law: "The Roman faith destroys all heresy and tolerates none." "The Roman church admits no heresy, for the Catholic religion must be kept without spot." "It is permitted neither to think nor to teach otherwise than the court of Rome directs." "He who is separated from the church can neither have his sins pardoned, nor can he enter the kingdom of heaven." "Heretics may be excommunicated after death." The object of this canon was the confiscation of property by the church. Many a time the bones of the dead have been exhumed and burned in fulfillment of this horrible doctrine. When jackals dig up the dead, it is to fulfill the law of their animal nature. The property of heretics must be confiscated for the good of the church." "Advocates and notaries, who defend heretics, or assist them by writings or deeds, shall be adjudged infamous, and deprived of their office." "Statute laws of the civil power, by which inquisitors of heresy are impeded or prohibited are null and void." "Heretics shall not be interred in ecclesiastical ground."

How fearfully these wicked principles have been carried out, history records. At least two million Jews and fifty million Christians are supposed to have perished by the hand of this cruel power. The Duke of Alva, in a short time hanged and beheaded eighteen thousand Protestants, besides thousands put to death by his ruffian soldiery. At the command of Pope Paul III, twenty-four villages were burnt to ashes, and thousands of people, men, women and children murdered. It is supposed that not less than one million Waldenses have suffered death to gratify Romish bigotry and cruelty. St. Bartholomew's day, in 1572, will be ever memorable in France. It was the time fixed for the indiscriminate butchery of Protestants. It swept away seventy thousand people in the space of a few hours. The

Dublin University Magazine for June, 1842, contains an account of a copy of a medal ordered by the Pope to be struck in commemoration of this shocking wholesale murder.

But enough of these horrible annals. Let all men express their detestation of all persecution and intolerance. God abhors them. 1 Cor. 13:1-8. Jesus Christ prayed for even his murderers.

12. Hard-heartedness, etc., etc.

Besides the things already noticed, it is clear that this commandment in its spirit and scope forbids and condemns hard-heartedness to the suffering poor, Matt. 25:42, 43; Jas. 2:15, 16; all immoderate passions, Jas. 4:1; oppression of every kind, Isaiah 3:15; devotion to carnal pleasures, Eccl. 11:9; overtaking the bodily powers of ourselves or others, Eccl. 4:8; Exodus 2:23, 24; excess in food or drink, Luke 21:34; Proverbs 23:20, 21; in short all that tends to disturb the peace of people, families or communities, Romans 14:19; 2 Tim. 2:22; or needlessly to shorten human life, Proverbs 28:17.

The Seventh Commandment

"You shall not commit adultery." Exodus 20:14

It is both man's crime and misery that he often acquires a habit of thinking lightly of the most weighty and serious things. Such levity is not reconcilable with wisdom towards ourselves, or duty towards God. It generates recklessness and impetuosity of character. It banishes those solemn and beneficial thoughts which are essential to sound discretion. It is still worse when we learn so to think and speak of matters of great moment as that the introduction of them is a temptation to impurity of thought. The consequence is, that we often

find sadness where we looked for joy, and wretchedness where we supposed peace had her abode. These remarks apply with great force to almost all topics belonging to the seventh commandment. Such is the state of the public mind that it is exceedingly difficult to write or speak on any of them without giving offence to some, or occasion of evil thoughts to others. Still here stands this great commandment. A right understanding of it is essential to the welfare of society. If anyone shall be injured in his nicest feelings by the discussion proposed, it shall be his own fault.

It is convenient to the plan of discussion proposed to begin with considering the subject of MARRIAGE. True, many smile and some lose sobriety of mind, whenever they think, or hear, or speak on this subject. But surely the matter is solemn, and deserves our gravest thoughts. It is not indeed a melancholy theme, a doleful matter; and so we may bring to the study of it all our vivaciousness, as well as great earnestness.

1. The first thing which claims our attention is the NATURE of the institution. Marriage is a solemn and perpetual covenant between one man and one woman to live together in the most affectionate and endearing state of social existence known upon earth.

1. It is a covenant. Such is the language used respecting it in nearly all the Christian forms of its solemnization, as well as in Holy Scripture, Proverbs 2:17.

2. It is a solemn covenant. With the exception of the engagements by which a man binds his soul to the service of God, there is no other covenant of more solemnity.

3. This covenant is of perpetual obligation, as long as the parties live. Exceptions to this remark will be stated hereafter. Other covenants may be set aside, sometimes by mutual consent, sometimes by the payment of a specified penalty, and sometimes by casualties, rendering fulfillment impossible; but this cannot even be weakened,

much less destroyed in this manner. Without a high crime, in one party subverting the very design of marriage, death only can release the other party. Whoever lawfully and properly enters the state of marriage intends that it shall be for life.

4. This covenant is between one man and one woman. All good laws insist upon this. This was the form of the institution in Paradise. Jesus Christ has taught us that the law of Eden is still of binding force, Matt. 19:3-9. The laws of the land wisely enforce the same principle. Bigamy and polygamy deserve to be severely punished, as high immoralities, tending to the rapid destruction of society and of the commonwealth.

5. This covenant binds the parties to live in the most affectionate and endearing state of social existence known upon earth. All other relationships give place to this. It takes precedence of the tie of parent and child. So that from the first, the infallible rule of marriage required a man to forsake father and mother, and to cleave unto his wife. By parity of reason, the woman is to forsake her parents and cleave to her husband. Both human and divine laws regard husband and wife as in an important sense, as one. Blackstone says, they "are one person in law, so that the very being and existence of the woman is suspended during the union, or entirely merged, or incorporated in that of the husband." Dr. Johnson says: "Marriage is the strictest tie of perpetual friendship, and there can be no friendship without confidence, and no confidence without integrity; and he must expect to be wretched, who pays to beauty, riches, or politeness, that regard which only virtue and piety can claim." The divine lawgiver settles the question in a few words: "They shall be one flesh."

Some people far removed from all sickly sensibility never witness the solemnization of a marriage without strong emotion. Behold that noble, generous young man, full of energy, courage and magnanimity. He has sincerely plighted his troth. He would not hesitate a moment to step in between his loved one and the stroke of death, and thus save her from all harm. By his side stands "a lovely

female clothed in all the freshness of youth, and surpassing beauty.... In the trusting, the heroic devotion, which impels her to leave country, parents, for a comparative stranger, she has launched her frail bark upon a wide and stormy sea. She has handed over her happiness and doom for this world, to another's keeping. But she has done it fearlessly, for love whispers to her, that her chosen guardian and protector bears a manly and a noble heart. Oh woe to him that forgets his oath and his manliness.

We have all read the story of the husband who in a moment of hasty wrath said to her who had but a few months before united her fate to his—"If you are not satisfied with my conduct, go, return to your friends and your happiness." "Can you give me back that which I brought to you?" asked the despairing wife. "Yes," he replied, "all your wealth shall go with you; I covet it not." "Alas," she answered, "I thought not of my wealth—I spoke of my devoted love; can you give that back to me?" "No!" said the man, as he flung himself at her feet. "No! I cannot restore that, but I will do more—I will keep it unsullied and untainted; I will cherish it through my life, and in my death; and never again will I forget that I have sworn to protect and cherish her, who gave up to me all she held most dear."

2. The marriage state is honorable. For ages the wise and good of all countries have bestowed upon it high commendations. Hooker says: "The bond of wedlock has been always, more or less, esteemed of as a thing religious and sacred. The title, which the very heathen themselves do thereunto oftentimes give, is, holy." Dr. Johnson: "Marriage is the best state for man in general, and every man is a worse man, in proportion as he is unfit for the marriage state." Addison: "Two people, who have chosen each other out of all the species, with design to be each other's mutual comfort and entertainment, have in that action bound themselves to be kind, affable, discreet, forgiving; patient and joyful with respect to each other's frailties and imperfections to the end of their lives." John Newton says: "Marriage has been, and is, to me, the best and dearest of temporal blessings.... Long experience and much observation have

convinced me, that the marriage state, when properly formed and prudently conducted, affords the nearest approach to happiness, (of a merely temporal kind) that can be attained in this uncertain world, and which will best abide the test of sober reflection."

Our Creator has dignified this state by legislating upon it under every dispensation of his government over men. In Eden—before man was a sinner—in the Hebrew commonwealth as organized by Moses, and under the reign of Messiah, marriage has been regulated, guarded and honored by solemn enactments, the whole tenor of which was to raise it high in the esteem of men. When Christ was upon earth, he wrought his first miracle at a marriage in Cana of Galilee, which he graced with his presence. Lest there should remain a shadow of a doubt in the human mind, God has declared by an inspired apostle that "marriage is honorable in all." Heb. 13:4. On this clear, unequivocal teaching of inspiration, we may rest the defense of the honorableness of marriage in all classes and conditions of life, high and low, lay and clerical.

3. Yet this institution has long been assaulted by ignorant and wicked men. Various apostates from the truth of God have made war upon it. Christ's apostles predicted the appearance of men who would "depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, etc." 1 Tim. 4:1-3. Accordingly, there early arose men, who exerted all their power against this great bulwark of virtue. Irenaeus tells us that Saturninus and Marcion led the way in this unholy assault. These were followed by the sect of the Encratites, founded by Tatian. They openly taught that "marriage was the work of the devil." Augustine says, these errorists "would admit no married person into their society." The Apostolici held the same views, and arrogantly denied all hope of salvation to such as were married, or would not grant a community of goods. Augustine tells us that the Manichees also condemned marriage and prohibited it as far as they could. "The Severians and Archontici held the same views. Some of their teachings were cruel and brutal. They said that

"woman herself was the work of the devil." After these arose Hierax, whose followers took their name from him. He taught that marriage belonged only to the Old Testament institutions; since the coming of Christ it was no longer lawful; and that no married person could obtain the heavenly kingdom. Augustine says that they "admitted none but monks and nuns, and such as were unmarried into their communion" Still later arose Eustathius, bishop of Sebastia, who said that "no one who lived in a married state could have any hope in God." This man had many followers. Since his time we have had hosts of errorists, who have held that there was a holier state than that of virtuous wedlock. So confident and plausible have been these empirics, that in almost every age they have had some followers, male and female. It is one of the gross inconsistencies of Popery that while, contrary to Scripture, it elevates marriage to the grade of a sacrament, it also, in the teeth of God's word, enjoins universal celibacy upon the clergy, and builds its prisons all over the world, where it locks up free-born females, white and black, who, under the force of superstitious fears and hopes, have been induced to take the vow of single life.

But for all this there is not one word of divine authority. By the constitution of the Jewish commonwealth, the tribe of Levi was placed under the law of marriage just as were the other tribes. The son succeeded the father in his sacred functions. Nor was the doctrine of universal celibacy of the clergy known among the apostles. Both during and subsequently to our Lord's residence on the earth, Peter was the husband of one wife. The evangelists tell us that Peter's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, Matt. 8:14; Mark 1:30; Luke 4:38. Many years after Christ's ascension, Paul says, "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" 1 Cor. 9:5. Peter and others of the apostles were married men. The evidence is clear.

Paul also gives us the law respecting the marriage of pastors: "An elder then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, one that rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all

gravity." 1 Tim. 3:2, 4. The Greek church interprets this phrase so strictly that she requires all her pastors to be married men, and she allows them to be married but once during life. And if the wife dies, the pastor ceases to exercise any function in the church. The Romish church interprets it only by contradicting it. She allows none of her pastors to have even one wife. The Protestant doctrine is that this passage permits pastors to be married, but not to practice polygamy. This is doubtless the sense of this Scripture.

There have arisen various founders of infidel communities, which have attacked this institution. The history of Robert Dale Owen of Lanark, of Frances Wright, and of their compeers and imitators, is before the world, illustrating, as all such attempts must do, the truth that material dishonor to marriage, as ordained by God, will subvert any community, and make life wholly undesirable. An eminent patriot, philosopher, statesman and divine of this country, who signed the Declaration of Independence, has said: "Nothing can be more contrary to reason or public utility than the conversation of those who turn matrimony into ridicule. Such act in direct and deliberate opposition to the order of Providence, and to the constitution of the society of which they are members. The true reason why they are borne with so patiently is, that their wicked attempts are unavailing. But if we are to estimate the malignity of a man's conduct or sentiments, not from their effect, but from their native tendency and his inward disposition, it is not easy to imagine anything more criminal than an attempt to bring marriage into disesteem."

If men will indulge in satire, let them select some ridiculous or mischievous opinion or practice as a theme for merriment. But let them not amuse themselves by attempting to desecrate or destroy one of the best institutions Heaven has given to mortals.

4. Marriage is the source of many blessings. These may be divided into three classes. The first relate to the parties themselves; the second to the church of God; and the third to mankind in general.

1. Marriage is of great value to the parties themselves. It is an old saying that "marriage sobers even the soberest." Whatever cures men's antics and frivolities is so far useful. Marriage greatly diminishes the sorrows and augments the enjoyments of those who are fitly united. This is a world of much unhappiness. Human life is possessed only at the cost of many pains and sorrows. It is true that in deep affliction God alone can give efficient help and support. Blessed be his name! His ear is ever open to the cry of the humble. But in nearly all our woes, it is an unspeakable relief to have an earthly friend, to whom, in the sacredness of confidence, and with the perfect assurance of sympathy, we may unbosom our griefs. The Son of God himself, when in tribulation, did not disdain to call for sympathy. To his disciples he said, "What, could you not watch with me one hour?" Matt. 26:40. There is no human being so elevated in character, so independent in resources, as not to need the confidence and sympathy of some of the race. Most admit that in her feebleness, timidity and delicate sensibility, woman, like the ivy, needs a support, that she may not be tossed about by every adverse wind, nor trodden down by the crude and the strong around her.

A little reflection will convince us that the rougher gender also needs soothing and sympathy. Man spends most of his waking hours in severe studies, in exhausting toils, in grappling with great difficulties, and in enduring the asperities of many coarse and malignant people. To him, how consoling it is to know that there is one spot, his own fireside, and one sanctuary, the heart of his faithful wife, where all is calm and kind. Every virtuous husband, who has a virtuous wife, has often returned home, pressed down, almost beyond endurance, with cares and anxieties, dreading an almost sleepless night. Yet in an hour, the love of his wife and the prattle of his little ones have made him blithe, and reassured him before he was again called to buffet the storms of life. In accordance with this view, Jehovah said: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Gen. 2:18. While wives need the care and even the caresses of husbands, they are themselves invaluable helps to their partners.

The married pair in many ways help each other. They give mutual counsel in perplexity; they afford to each other the best and safest society; they are the surest guardians of each other's interests; and they rejoice in each other in a manner unknown in any other relation of life. We are here met by the fact often alleged that some marriages are not happy, and that here and there the parties are very miserable. It would be worse than idle to deny that some husbands and some wives are extremely unhappy on account of their matrimonial relations. But does not candor require the admission that many unmarried people are extremely unhappy? Besides, some matches are made merely for the purpose of securing a fortune or some family distinction. In this case the person married is taken as a means to an end. The object is to make an acquisition of name or money. Could the same end be gained free from any encumbrance, it would be much preferred. Others in the choice of a wife regard only personal beauty. That beauty is a desirable quality no man of sense or taste will deny. But that in value it is not comparable to intelligence, good temper, industry, truthfulness, or any of the virtues, is clear to all except the silly. It should also not be forgotten that as some very beautiful flowers have thorns, so it is with some beautiful women. The flattery heaped on lovely women often greatly injures their dispositions. Besides, beauty is a flower that fades—in many cases early, and so all that was loved vanishes away. No one need be surprised at such marriages ending in misery. Erasmus: "Love that has nothing but beauty to keep it in good health, is short-lived, and apt to have many troubles." In other cases there is a total dissimilarity of taste, habit, sentiment, and even principle.

The man is refined and his wife coarse. Some say that a lady may love a man quite inferior in breeding, because she may improve him. But a gentleman cannot love one whose tastes are much inferior to his own. And the wife is so much secluded that commonly she cannot after marriage materially improve her mind or manners. What chance of permanent solid happiness is there for husband and wife, where one loves the ball-room, and the other the sanctuary? or one is ever seeking society, and the other loves home? "How can two walk

together except they be agreed?" Some points of dissimilarity do not impair the happiness of a marriage; but where the substantial elements of character are diverse, there cannot be marital bliss. Under the Jewish law an donkey and a heifer might not be put to work at the same plough. Utter unsuitableness is a sure foundation for matrimonial misery.

Another bane of married life is found in intemperance, not always confined to the stronger gender. It is utterly impossible that any virtuous woman should be happy with a drunken husband. Her very love will torment her. It may be said that most unhappy marriages are brought about either by rashness, by refusing good counsel, by marrying to please some third party, by being actuated by wrong motives, or by being moved by senseless impulses and fancies, or by failing to look to God in humble supplication for heavenly guidance. Scripture well says: "A prudent wife is from the Lord." How many look every or anywhere else but to the Lord in such matters!

The subject of unhappy marriages has claimed the attention of many writers. Witherspoon says that the number of unhappy marriages is greatly overestimated; and that we do but deceive ourselves when we suppose others unhappy, because we would be so, if placed in their circumstances. This remark is entitled to great weight. Dean Swift assigns another reason for unhappy marriages, namely the lack of the stronger and more enduring excellences in some females. Johnson says: "When we see the avaricious and crafty taking companions to their tables, and their beds, without any inquiry but after farms and money; or the giddy and thoughtless uniting themselves for life to those whom they have only seen by the light of candles; when parents make agreements for children without inquiring after their consent; when some marry for heirs to disappoint their brothers; and others throw themselves into the arms of those whom they do not love, because they have found themselves rejected where they were more solicitous to please; when some marry because their servants cheat them; some because they squander their own money; some because their houses are pestered with company;

some because they will live like other people; and some because they are sick of themselves—we are not so much inclined to wonder that marriage is sometimes unhappy, as that it appears so little loaded with calamity; and cannot but conclude, that society has something in itself eminently agreeable to human nature, when we find its pleasures so great that even the ill choice of a companion can hardly overbalance them. Those, therefore, of the above description, that should rail against matrimony, should be informed, that they are neither to wonder, or repine, that a contract begun on such principles has ended in disappointment." This may suffice for the unhappiness of marriages.

2. Marriage is eminently conducive to the interests of the church of God. When properly regulated by Christian laws and when properly entered into and regarded, it shuts out many and nameless evils, evils everywhere condemned in Scripture, evils always subversive of thrift, good order, quietness and harmony in society. The name of these evils is Legion, for they are many. They are secret and they are open—they torment man and they provoke God. They are insidious and they are impudent. Some of them lead to the utter subversion of States, and all of them impair both bodily and mental energy—waste the health—deprave morals—pollute the mind and banish pure and undefiled religion from any community where they obtain a footing. So that an attempt to introduce the gospel among a people where such things prevail would be as discouraging as to preach the gospel with the worst forms of idolatry and the iron laws of Hindu caste to oppose its progress.

But the prevention of these dire evils is not nearly all the good done to the cause of religion by marriage. For it is only in communities where marriage is properly regarded, that we find ourselves able to make many of the most solemn and moving appeals in behalf of virtue and piety. Who has ever listened to the calls given by the ministers of the gospel to husbands and wives, to parents and children, to brothers and sisters to pray and labor for each other's salvation, or to come, and go with the pious members of their own

families to their promised inheritance, and has not felt that here was a chord that might be made to vibrate in such a way that all, who were not "past feeling," must know its power? Moreover, where there is no marriage, there is no family religion. Children in all such cases grow up without proper education. They are not carried to the house of God and by the mild authority, kind instruction, and good example of both the parents, taught to revere the name and ordinances of Jehovah. The longer I live, and the more I see the operation of moral causes, the more am I convinced that next to the pulpit, if not before it, God designs to perpetuate his church and renovate the world by family religion, in the broad sense of that term.

But where the institution and Christian law of marriage are despised and rejected, the domestic altar is never raised, except to sacrifice to devils. Indeed, according to Scripture, the great design of preserving marriage pure, between one man and one woman, was the propagation of true religion throughout the earth. So says the last of the Old Testament prophets. "Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth." Mal. 2:15.

3. The state, no less than the church, comes in for inestimable blessings flowing from this institution. If marriage is not properly guarded, population itself will dwindle away, even under the most favorable circumstances of soil, climate, and commerce. The fairest fields and the most thronged cities would in a very few generations become desolate and without inhabitants, if it were not for marriage. Carelessness of the health and lives of children, whose parents are not lawfully married is so well established and so generally confessed, that it is enough to allude to it. Nor is this all. The real prosperity and solid wealth and resistless power of a nation do not depend upon splendid edifices and glittering crowns for the few; but upon the industry, frugality, and thrift of the component parts of an empire. Families make empires. And where are the domestic and

social virtues successfully taught and practiced except in families, constituted by lawful marriage?

Visit our almshouses, our work-houses, our jails, our prisons of every description, yes, inquire into the history of the strolling beggars of the land, and what do you find? Here and there is a case of virtuous misfortune. Here and there are the offspring of virtuous parentage; but in an appalling number of cases, the people are themselves those who have in some gross manner violated the law of marriage, or are the offspring of parents who have forgotten or failed to obey it. All men are born with an irksomeness under restraint and government. Men by nature are averse to the controlling of their desires. Government is an artificial state, and yet with the present or any conceivable condition of society, it is necessary to man's well-being. The sooner he learns to obey just authority the better for him, the better for his country.

Where then are the first and most useful lessons of obedience learned? Not in the public assembly, not in the camp, not in the counting-room, not in the neighborhood school, but in the family—the well-ordered family, where the joint and just authority of an honest father and mother subdue the will, and teach important lessons of self-denial. Nor can the state, in the absence of marriage, ever make adequate provision for educating the minds and manners of the young in any way promising much good. Hirelings have neither the patience, nor the tact requisite to develop in an advantageous manner the mental energies of the young, as virtuous parents have. In short, look at this subject as we may, and we find the state deeply concerned to do all in its power to make marriage honorable, as God has made it, to guard it from all abuses, to keep the burdens of government light upon the lower classes, so that the industrious poor may not be prevented from entering the state of marriage at a proper time of life, and, above all, to punish with just severity every infraction of the wholesome laws made to defend the institution from perversion, contempt, or neglect.

5. Let us dwell a little on the duties growing out of this relation. Love is the fulfilling of the law. This remark is peculiarly just in regard to the law of marriage. This love must be the result, not of ecstasies produced by a fervid imagination, but of the warm pulsations of an honest heart. It must be founded in solid esteem. For this there is no substitute. The cares and sorrows of life are so numerous, the trials of temper so many, and the calls for forbearance so frequent, that unless there be ardent, and strong, and mutual affection, life will soon be a weariness. This love must not only be a sentiment, it must be a principle. Then it will be abiding. It must not only be a principle, it must be a sentiment. Then it will be warm and generous. It must be,

"A friendship that like love is warm,
A love like friendship steady."

It is, therefore, an act of great cruelty in parents and friends to urge others to the formation of marriages, when there is lacking this fervent love. Nothing can make amends for deficiencies here. This is the root from which, under the divine blessing, grows up that tree of domestic happiness under whose shade myriads of households rejoice, and whose fruit is better than apples of gold. Proverbs 15:17. Love counts not its sacrifices. It gives all and would give more if it had more to give. This duty is often insisted on in Scripture. "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." "Men ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself." "Husbands, love your wives—even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it." Eph. 5:25, 28; Col. 3:19. Compare Eccl. 9:9. Paul says that one of the duties incumbent on aged pious females is to "teach the young women to love their husbands." Tit. 2:4.

As the parties mutually owe to each other love, so do they fidelity in its highest sense. They are bound sacredly and tenderly to regard each others' rights, and peace, and happiness. 1 Cor. 7:5. Moreover, the husband owes to his wife protection to her person, reputation,

health, and comfort. He never fulfils the duties of a husband, who leaves his wife to contend with the adversities of life and steps not forth with the whole strength of his arm to shield her. On the other hand, the wife owes to her husband respect and obedience. On these the Bible insists. Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1. And whether they were openly promised or not at marriage, they are enjoined by God and it is a sin to withhold them. The respect and obedience required are not those of a servant, nor even those of a child, but of a companion, who is yet the weaker vessel. The woman is not the head of the man but the man of the woman. Adam was first formed, then Eve. Husbands and wives owe each other honor in their respective stations. No churl can be a good husband; and no shrew, a good wife. 1 Sam. 25:17; Proverbs 21:19, 25:24. When respect ceases, love and peace generally depart. Husbands and wives, who do their duties, are an honor to each other in fact. Proverbs 12:14, 31:23; 1 Cor. 11:7. But they are both commanded to aim at giving honor to each other. 1 Pet. 3:6, 7. They should also endeavor in all lawful ways to please each other. 1 Cor. 7:33, 34. Husbands and wives should tenderly sympathize with each other, and plead for each other, 1 Sam. 1:8, 35:18-28. The husband should cultivate tenderness.

And the wife should not be cold, but hearty in her endeavors to soothe and please. "It must be the best woman's lot in the world to bind up for the dearest on earth, the wounds which men have inflicted."

6. It is pleasing and not uninstrusive to see how men of very diverse characters have felt their happiness increased by marriage. Calvin says of his wife, she was a woman of rare example. After her earthly career had closed, in lamenting her loss, he said of her: "I am separated from the best of companions, who if anything harder could have happened to me, would willingly have been my companion, not only in exile and in poverty, but also in death. While she lived, she was a true help to me in the duties of my office. I have never experienced from her any hindrance, even the smallest."

The following letters passed between Mr. Winthrop, the first Governor of Massachusetts, and his wife, in 1628. The reader will demand no apology for their insertion here. The wife writes first: "My most sweet husband: How dearly welcome your kind letter was to me, I am not able to express. The sweetness of it did much to refresh me. What can be more pleasing to a wife than to hear of her best beloved, and how he is pleased with her poor endeavors? I blush to hear myself commended, knowing my own deficiencies. But it is your love that conceives the best, and makes all things seem better than they are. I wish that I might please you, and that those comforts we have in each other may be daily increased, as far as they may be pleasing to God. I will use the speech to you that Abigail did to David: 'I will be a servant to wash your feet, my Lord.' I will do any service wherein I may please my good husband. I confess I cannot do enough for you, but you are pleased to accept the will for the deed, and rest contented.

"I have many reasons to make me love you, whereof I will now name you two. First, because you love God; and secondly, because you love me. If these two were lacking, all the rest would be eclipsed. But I must leave this discourse and go about my household affairs. I am a bad housewife to remain so long away from them; but I must needs borrow a little time to talk with you a little, my sweetheart. I hope your business draws to an end. It will be but two or three weeks before I see you, though they be long ones. God will bring us together in his good time, for which time I shall pray. Farewell, my good husband, the Lord keep you. Your obedient wife, Margaret Winthrop."

The husband answers. "My good wife: Although I wrote you but last week, yet having so fit an opportunity, I must write to you again; for I do esteem one little short letter of yours (such as the last one was) to be worthy two or three from me. "I began this letter yesterday at two o'clock; thinking to have been at large, but was so taken up with company and business as I could but get hither this morning. It grieves me that I have not liberty to make expressions of my love to

you, who are more dear to me than all earthly things; but I will endeavor that my prayers may supply the place of my pen, which will be of use to us both, inasmuch as the favor and blessing of God are better than all things beside.

"I know that you look for troubles here, and when one affliction is over to meet with another; but remember our Savior tells us, 'Be of good comfort, I have overcome the world;' therefore, my sweet wife, raise up your heart, and be not dismayed with the crosses you meet in family affairs, or otherwise, but still fly to Him who will take up your burden for you. Go then on cheerfully in obedience to His will in the course He has set you—peace shall come. I commend you and all to the gracious protection of the Lord. Farewell, my good wife, I kiss and love you, with the kindest affection, and rest your faithful husband, John Winthrop.

Sir James McIntosh thus describes his deceased wife in a letter to a friend: "Allow me, in justice to her memory, to tell you what she was, and what I owed her. I was guided in my choice only by the blind affection of my youth. I found an intelligent companion, and a tender friend, a prudent mistress, the most faithful of wives, and a mother as tender as children ever had the misfortune to lose. I met a woman who by the tender management of my weaknesses gradually corrected the most pernicious of them. She became prudent from affection; and though of the most generous nature, she was taught frugality and economy by her love to me. During the most critical period of my life, she preserved order in my affairs, from the care of which she relieved me. She gently reclaimed me from dissipation; she prompted my weak and irresolute nature; she urged my indolence to all the exertions that have been useful or creditable to me, and she was perpetually at hand to admonish my heedlessness and improvidence. To her I owe whatever I am; and to her whatever I shall be. In her solicitude for my interest, she never for a moment forgot my feelings or my character. Even in her occasional resentment, for which I but too often gave her cause (would to God I could recall those moments,) she had no sullenness nor acrimony.

Her feelings were warm and impetuous, but she was placable, tender and constant. Such was she whom I have lost, and I have lost her when her excellent natural sense was improving, after eight years of struggle and distress had bound us fast to each other—when a knowledge of her worth had refined my youthful love into friendship, before age had deprived it of much of its original ardor—I lost her alas! (the, choice of my youth, and the partner of my misfortunes) at a moment when I had a prospect of her sharing my better days."

The following description was written by Burke and presented to Mrs. Burke on the morning of an anniversary of their marriage. It was evidently intended as a description of his wife. It was headed "The Character of Mrs. Burke" "I mean to give you my idea of a woman. If it at all answers an original, I shall be pleased; for if such a person really exists, she must be far superior to my description, and such as I must love too well to be able to paint as I ought. "She is lovely, but it is beauty not arising from features, from complexion, or from shape; she has all three in a high degree, but it is not from these she touches the heart; it is all that sweetness of temper, benevolence, innocence, and sensibility, which a face cannot express, that forms her beauty. She has a face that just raises your attention at first sight; it grows on you every moment, and you wonder it did no more than raise your attention at first. Her eyes have a mild light, but they awe you when she pleases; they command, like a godly man out of office, not by authority, but by virtue. Her features are not exactly regular; that sort of exactness is more to be praised than loved, for it is never animated. Her stature is not tall; she is made to be the admiration of everybody, but the happiness of one. She has all the firmness that does not exclude delicacy; she has all the softness that does not imply weakness. She is always clean without preciseness or affectation. Her gravity is a gentle thoughtfulness that softens the features without discomposing them. She is usually grave. Her smiles are inexpressible. Her voice is a low, soft music; not formed to rule in public assemblies, but to charm those who can distinguish a company from a crowd; it has this advantage, you must come close to hear it. To describe her body, describes her mind; one is the

transcript of the other. Her understanding is not shown in the variety of matters it exerts itself on, but in the goodness of the choice she makes. She does not display it so much in saying or doing striking things, as in avoiding such as she ought not to say or do. She discovers the right or wrong of things not by reasoning, but sagacity; most women, and many good ones, have a closeness and something selfish in their dispositions; she has a true generosity of temper; the most extravagant cannot be more unbounded in their liberality, the most cautious in their distribution. No person of so few years can know the world better; no person was ever less corrupted by that knowledge. Her politeness seems rather to flow from a disposition to oblige than from any rules on that subject. She does not run with a girlish eagerness into new friendships, which, as they have no foundation in reason, serve only to multiply and embitter disputes; it is long before she chooses, but then it is fixed forever, and the hours of romantic friendship are not warmer than hers after the lapse of years. As she never disgraces her good nature by severe reflections on anybody, so she never degrades her judgment by immoderate or ill praises, for everything violent is contrary to her gentleness of disposition, and the evenness of her virtue. She has a steady and firm mind, which takes no more from the female character than the solidity of marble does from its polish and luster. She has such virtue as makes us value the truly great of our own gender; she has all the winning graces that make us love even the faults we see in the weak and beautiful of hers."

Even the severe and scathing Reviewer, Lord Jeffrey, felt the softening, cheering power of a wife's love and presence. A few days after the death of his wife, he wrote to his brother thus: "Edinburgh, August 15, 1805. "My Dear John: I am at this moment of all men the most miserable and disconsolate. It is just a week today since my sweet Kitty died in my arms, and left me without joy, or hope, or comfort in this world. Her health had been long very delicate, and during this summer rather more disordered than usual; but we thought it not serious, and looked forward to her complete restoration. She was finally seized with the most excruciating

headaches, which ended in an effusion of water on the brain, and sank her into a lamentable stupor, which terminated in death. It is impossible for me to describe to you the feeling of lonely and hopeless misery with which I have since been oppressed. I doted upon her, I believed, more than man ever did on a woman before; and after four years of marriage, was more tenderly attached to her than on the day which made her mine. I took no interest in anything which had not some reference to her, and had no enjoyment away from her, except in thinking what I would have to tell or to show her on my return; and I have never returned to her after half a day's absence, without feeling my heart throb, and my eye brighten, with all the ardour and anxiety of a youthful passion. All the exertions I ever made in the world were for her sake entirely. You know how indolent I was by nature, and how regardless of reputation and fortune. But it was a delight to me to lay these things at the feet of my darling. She had so lively a relish for life too, and so unquenchable and unbroken a hope in the midst of protracted illness and languor, that the stroke which cut it off forever appears equally cruel and unnatural. Though familiar with sickness, she seemed to have nothing to do with death. She always recovered so rapidly, and was so cheerful and affectionate, and playful, that it scarcely entered into my imagination that there could be one sickness from which she would not recover. We had arranged several little projects of amusement for the autumn, and she talked of them, poor thing, with unabated confidence and delight, as long as she was able to talk coherently at all. I have the consolation to think that the short time she passed with me was as happy as love and hope could make it. In spite of her precarious health, she has often assured me that she was the happiest of women, and would not change her condition with any human creature. Indeed we lived in a delightful progress of everything that could contribute to our felicity. Everything was opening and brightening before us. Our circumstances, our society, were rapidly improving, our understandings were expanding, and even our love and confidence in each other increasing from day to day. Now, I have no interest in anything, and no object or motive for being in the world. I wish you had known my Kitty, for I cannot

describe her to you, and nobody else knows enough of her. The most peculiar and ennobling part of her character was a high principle of honor, integrity, and generosity, that would have been remarkable in a man, and which I never met with in a woman before. She had no conception of prevaricating, shuffling, or disguising. There was a clear transparency in her soul, without affectation or reserve, which won your implicit confidence, and commanded your respect. Then she was the simplest and most cheerful of human beings; the most unassuming, easy, and affectionate; dignified in her deportment, but affable and engaging in conversation. Her sweetness and cheerfulness in sickness won the hearts of all who came near her. She was adored by her servants, and has been wept for by her physicians, by the chairman who used to carry her, and the tradesmen with whom she dealt. O! my dear John, my heart is very cold and heavy, and my prospect of life every way gloomy and deplorable. I had long been accustomed to place all my notions of happiness in domestic life; and I had found it there, so pure, perfect, and entire, that I can never look for it any where else, or hope for it in any other form. Heaven protect you from the agony it has imposed upon me. Write me soon to say that you are happy, and that you and your Susan will love me. My heart is shut at this time to everything but sorrow, but I think it must soon open to affection. All your friends here are well. I shall write you again soon. Ever, my dear John, most affectionately yours," F. J.

The late lamented Abel P. Upshur, Secretary of State of the United States, thus wrote to the sister of his first wife, then recently deceased: "If there be truth in the promises of Jesus, I do confidently believe that she is an angel in heaven. What kindness were it to withdraw such a being from a scene in which all is peace, and confidence, and joy, to involve her again in the cares, the anxieties, the idle contests and frivolous activity of the world? I can truly say that I derive much comfort from this reflection; other considerations contribute to calm me, but this alone brings with it a sensible consolation. We are assured that in a future state the godly and pious will receive an infinitely more exalted happiness than any this world

can afford, and surely none that ever lived can with more confidence claim that reward than she for whom we are mourning. When I analyze my feelings in this affliction, I find that it is for myself that I mourn, and not for her, that I am bewailing the comforts of her society, the cheering light of her countenance, the warm pulse of joy which throbbed for her so actively. Is it not selfishness which makes me regret to surrender these joys as the price of her infinite happiness? On earth I would have given all I possessed to purchase her one hour's exemption from pain, yet I envy her the joys she has taken from me, although they form her passport to endless happiness. Surely I ought to reproach myself that I yield up, even with reluctant consent, the imperfect pleasures of the few years I have to live, when I know that their surrender is necessary to her everlasting good. Besides, Madam, it is true though trite, that she is but removed to a little distance from us, and we are already on the road to meet her again. I am not afraid of this reflection; it is mingled with melancholy, but it is a melancholy of a soothing character. It is certain we are approaching her by daily journeys, nor can we tell how soon the last day's journey shall be performed. In the meantime, we should persevere with constancy and with cheerful hopes, relying that when we meet her again it will be in a far different scene, that we shall find her happy beyond our natures to imagine how perfectly, that this happiness will be subject to no accident to render it less complete, and that we also may seize hold on it with the strong confidence that it will last forever. Have we not the greatest reason to rejoice and to be grateful that we are permitted to entertain these consoling hopes? How different would be our feelings if we dared not to look beyond the grave, or if in looking beyond it, we were forbidden to contemplate anything but its horrors. I am sure I could not believe without distraction that all that I loved is gone from me forever, that all my life to come must be a contest with despair. And how full of horror would be our feelings if in contemplating this eternity, we could even doubt that she whom we so tenderly loved is enjoying its best rewards. We have certainly much reason to rejoice in the light which has broken in upon the tomb, that in our anguish we are not abandoned to the imperfect consolations of this life that

fall surely to her, whose steps never erred. The grave is but the passage to endless felicity. If she had been less godly, these hopes would have presented themselves to us with less strength and fewer consolations, so that in fact, those very excellencies which make us regret her so much afford us the strongest motives for being reconciled to her loss. It is possible that at another time death would have found her less prepared to receive him. As it is, he has set his everlasting seal upon her character, the living will love and revere her memory, and those to whom she was most dear have the consoling consciousness that her summons came before the cares of the world had alienated her from God. It appears to my mind that we ought to derive much strength from these reflections. At all events we must not forget that resignation to the will of God is a duty which none shall be excused from neglecting. To command and to submit is the only reasoning between the Creator and his creatures. Nor, if we consider the matter aright, is resignation as difficult a duty as in our agony we may think it. It is extremely presumptuous in us, who cannot penetrate the issues of one moment that is to come, to question the correctness of His doings, whose eye is over the universe, whose glance is through eternity, and whose goodness is without bounds. If it were not good, would the God of goodness do it? If it were not right, would the God of justice bring it to pass? In the decrees of that Being there can be no caprice, in his ordinances there can be no mutability. He acts by settled laws, which are hid from human scrutiny, but we have the fullest assurance that they are right, and that human wisdom could not alter one of them for the better. We would have ordered this thing differently, and yet, if we could have lifted the veil which hides us from the future, it is perfectly certain that we should have shuddered at the consequences of our weak interference. There are some afflictions which come upon us like a torrent, which bears down and breaks in pieces all the barriers which reason, philosophy and even religion can set up against it. Yet the torrent passes away and imparts in its progress strength and healthy fertility to the soil. It is only in such a soil that the seeds of pious consolation can flourish. To a mind at ease and rejoicing in the world it would be useless to address arguments

drawn from beyond the grave. Those only who need such consolations are capable of feeling their force, and it is certain that the heart which has been truly wrung, will find all other consolations a feather in the storm.

"As long as I looked no further than the grave, I saw nothing before me but despair. I have seen the necessity of drawing my consolation from a purer and more exalted source, and I am sincerely grateful to God that he gave me, even for a little while, an example by which I can profit in the day of my distress. While she lived it was habitual with me to refer all my actions to the standard of her judgment and goodness, and if even in secret an impure thought rose in my bosom, her image was present to rebuke me. Madam, she was a being not fitted for this world, and she has taken a flight to a better. Still, however, her example remains with us, and in my bereavement I shall not forget it. It shall be my endeavor so to conduct myself in my affliction as I think will be acceptable, if it be permitted her to bend her regards from heaven on my conduct on earth, to act as far as my less perfect nature will permit me as I think she would have acted under the circumstances."

Solomon has given us the following portraiture of a good wife: "Who can find a virtuous and capable wife? She is worth more than precious rubies. Her husband can trust her, and she will greatly enrich his life. She will not hinder him but help him all her life. She finds wool and flax and busily spins it. She is like a merchant's ship; she brings her food from afar. She gets up before dawn to prepare breakfast for her household and plan the day's work for her servant girls. She goes out to inspect a field and buys it; with her earnings she plants a vineyard. She is energetic and strong, a hard worker. She watches for bargains; her lights burn late into the night. Her hands are busy spinning thread, her fingers twisting fiber. She extends a helping hand to the poor and opens her arms to the needy. She has no fear of winter for her household because all of them have warm clothes. She quilts her own bedspreads. She dresses like royalty in gowns of finest cloth. Her husband is well known, for he sits in the

council meeting with the other civic leaders. She makes belted linen garments and sashes to sell to the merchants. She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs with no fear of the future. When she speaks, her words are wise, and kindness is the rule when she gives instructions. She carefully watches all that goes on in her household and does not have to bear the consequences of laziness. Her children stand and bless her. Her husband praises her: "There are many virtuous and capable women in the world, but you surpass them all!" Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the LORD will be greatly praised. Reward her for all she has done. Let her deeds publicly declare her praise." Proverbs 31:10-31

Others must judge what proportion of our modern fashionable ladies can be said to be up to Solomon's standard. Have you found many of them seeking wool and flax and working willingly with their hands? Do they rise while it is yet night? How many of them have planted a vineyard with the fruit of their hands? If their candles go not out by night, is it not because they slept most of the day before, or expect to sleep most of the day afterwards? And as to the spindle and the distaff, how few would know these articles if they were to see them. Many cannot show clothes spun and woven at home but they can show hands as soft and white as lilies; for like the lilies they toil not, neither do they spin. They never make nor sell fine linen, though they buy a good deal of the article with money, to procure which father or husband was expatriated for years, or was obliged to give a mortgage on real estate. They are often highly sentimental over poverty or distress in a novel, but seldom stretch out the hand to the poor and needy. They love to be praised in the gates, even if husband and father are left at home to shift as best they may.

Who would not commend Solomon's portraiture to all his countrywomen? Although the Bible does not draw at length the character of a good husband, yet in many places it tells as how he should behave towards the wife of his bosom. His character might be thus sketched. However he may appear to others, to his wife he is generous and

confiding. While he commands respect, he abhors tyranny, and never breathes the spirit of domination. He does not love to make anyone feel his power, but he rules his house with such gentleness that all, and especially his wife, deplore his occasional absence. His duties may call him abroad, but his own fireside is the chief seat of his delight. He is courteous and benevolent to all, but loves his family with unfailing tenderness. His manners may be unpolished, but his warm affection takes from them all that is unseemly except awkwardness. While he loves the company of his wife, he remembers that human life cannot subsist on doting fondness. He therefore resolutely toils and labors for the comforts required for our frail natures. He knows his own business, yet he is not such a son of Belial that his wife cannot speak to him about any of his affairs. While he encroaches not on her department, he is yet ready to give counsel and aid in any matter that occupies the mind of his partner in life. He bears his full share of domestic cares. He is neither demure, nor frivolous, morose, nor petulant. He may be neither wit, nor humourist, yet he does not dictate, nor dogmatize. He knows when to weep, and when to rejoice. His temper is far removed from suspiciousness. He is not blind to the faults of his wife, but his marital affection covers them all from sight. He suggests improvements and labors to effect them, but not by means of rage or passion. He exemplifies the difference between cold civility, and solid respect. His means may be limited, but he rejoices to have his wife share with him the pleasure of befriending the needy, and advancing the welfare of his race. In all good things he seconds her efforts. He goes with her to the house of God, and often implores Heaven's blessings on her. When she is pleased, he rejoices. In her days of nervous timidity, he neither laughs at her idle fears, nor makes a jest of her sorrows. If he is a king in her eyes, she is a queen in his. However rugged his nature, he is alarmed when first he sees the hectic flush, or other sign of danger; and when he finds she must die, he is more nearly unmanned than ever before. And when she dies, divine cordials are necessary to sustain him. Or, if he dies first, his greatest grief is at leaving her to meet the storms of life alone, and he says, as a great man [Dr. Archibald Alexander] lately fallen in Israel,

with great tenderness said to his wife, just before his death: "My dear, one of my last prayers will be that you may have as serene and painless a departure as mine. Are you a happy husband or wife, give thanks to Him who has made you so. Put not on yourself or any mortal, the crown which belongs to God alone.

"Whoever finds a wife, finds a good thing, and obtains favor of the Lord." Proverbs 18:22.

7. It is the obvious duty of all men to use their best endeavors to maintain good laws on the subject of marriage. In some places they are already enacted; let them be enforced. As a civil institution, marriage is subject to municipal regulations. As appointed by God, it is subject to divine laws. Among the influences exceedingly destructive to the right observance of the seventh commandment may be named

1. Theatrical Entertainments. It is generally conceded that these lead to expensive habits. The very constitution of the whole system demands large sums of money. The price of tickets of admission declares how this matter stands. All people know how fascinating these exhibitions are. He who has acquired a taste for them will forego the luxury of relieving even the widow and the fatherless; yes, he will neglect his business, often deprive himself of the means of paying his just debts, and in some cases, consent to subject himself and his family to a scanty mode of living, rather than fail of these entertainments. It is also a well-known fact, that young men, in our large cities, when once brought within the suction of this mighty vortex, will not flee from it, even though, in many cases, their only financial means for gratifying their fondness for a favorite amusement, must be money taken from the chests of their employers. At first they fully intend to return it; but the means of restitution not coming into their possession, and the desire for amusement continually gaining strength, they finally go further, and take money without either the purpose or prospect of refunding it. Thus many young men commence thieves. Of nine young men and

lads found guilty of felony, five stole to get the means of going to the theater. Of seven others, two purloined money to buy lottery tickets, and three to buy tickets to attend the circus.

Theatrical entertainments also tempt to dissipation and intemperance. These vices are known to be exceedingly expensive; but we wish to speak of them in other respects. In the first place, a very frequent preparation for attendance at theaters and such places, is indulgence, to some degree in stimulating drink. Then, these places of resort, almost without exception, are supplied with one or more bars, at which liquors of every tempting variety are sold; and what is more common, after the excitement of a protracted sitting at the theater, than a certain sensation of lassitude and exhaustion, tempting to the use of additional stimulus. This leads to the remark, that the company which a man finds at these places, is tempting; and he who goes into it is in danger of ruin. All observation unites with revelation in declaring, that he who walks with wise men shall be wise, but the companion of fools shall be destroyed.

By common consent, in all Christian communities, ministers of the gospel, and professors of serious godliness, venture not to these entertainments, on pain of witnessing all that they deem sacred exposed to the ribaldry of the profane. It will also cost all that the fairest female reputation is worth, for its possessor to be seen, even for one minute, in the gallery of a theater; and yet it does not remain unvisited by the sons, and brothers, and husbands, and fathers, of many an humble, and pious, and modest female. In this vortex of vice, the first step is to the theater, the next to the bar, the next to lewd company, the next to the brothel, the next to disease, the next to death, and the last to HELL.

Attendance at the theater is also a great waste of time. How much time is taken up first in thinking and talking about it! how much in attending it! and how much in thoughts and remarks upon what has been seen and heard! If "minutes make the years," how soon will he have consumed years of time, who wastes hundreds of minutes

nightly at the place of amusement! Allowing a man to spend but six hours in each week at the theater, for ten years, he will thus consume, of waking hours, one hundred and thirty days, equal, at least, to two hundred days of ordinary time, a period long enough to pay a visit to London and Paris, and spend sixty-five days in each; and this, too, at a cost of money sufficient to pay one's expenses in performing the tour of Europe.

Neither must it be forgotten that the theater is not under the control of play-writers, nor of play-actors, nor of the refined and chaste part of the audience. The exhibitions of the stage are such as to familiarize and even encourage wicked and sinful inclinations and dispositions, and entirely to leave unsung the praises of sobriety, temperance, Christian watchfulness, gospel humility, evangelical penitence, self-denial, heavenly-mindedness, and indeed every Christian virtue.

Let me here present the thoughts of a writer in the Port-Royal in France. The author is the Prince of Conti. He says: "It is so true that plays are almost always a representation of wicked passions, that the most part of Christian virtues are incapable of appearing on the stage. Silence, patience, moderation, wisdom, poverty, repentance, are no virtues the representation of which can divert the spectators; and, above all, we never hear humility spoken of, and the bearing of injuries. There must be something great and renowned, according to men, or at least something lively and animated which is not met with in Christian gravity and wisdom; and therefore those who have been desirous to introduce holy men and women upon the stage, have been forced to make them appear proud, and to make them utter discourses more proper for the ancient Roman heroes, than for saints and martyrs."

Now, when we place ourselves in such circumstances as continually to fill our minds with images of viciousness, must we not be tempted first to endure, then to admire, then to imitate? Does not all experience corroborate this view? The pious Psalmist said: "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of those who turn

aside." Psalm 101:3. Another scripture declares that "the thought of foolishness is sin." Proverbs 24:9. Shall frequenters of theatrical entertainments then be innocent? Another portion of scripture speaks of "vain imaginations" as marks of a wicked character. Romans 1:21. Are not theaters and such places the very nurseries of vain imaginations? "Lead us not into temptation." Another passage of scripture requires us to avoid all "coarse and foolish talking or crude joking which are not suitable," or becoming virtuous character. Eph. 5:4.

How any frequenter of theaters, circuses, etc., can avoid oft-repeated violations or powerful inducements to violations of this precept, requires more ingenuity to discover than any mortal has ever yet manifested. Indeed this precept forms no part of the moral code of devotees of theatrical diversions and amusements. These general views derive considerable strength from the general impression, that attendance on these amusements is tempting to some people. For the young and inexperienced to go without some special safeguard is generally confessed to be unsafe. Men show their candid and real judgments on this subject, when their apprentices, clerks and wards acquire a passion for this amusement.

That the foregoing views are not confined to any one person or age, it is very easy to show by a reference to the views expressed by historians, biographers, philosophers, poets, moralists and religionists, of almost every nation and grade. We shall quote them as witnesses, whose conspiring testimony, mightily strengthened and confirmed by their discordance on almost every other subject, is conclusive proof of their correctness on this. At Athens, where the stage was first known, both tragedy and comedy were soon abolished, by public authority because judged injurious to the state. The Greek philosophers speak the same language. Plato says: "Plays raise the passions, and pervert the use of them: and, of consequence are dangerous to morality." Aristotle says: "The seeing of comedies ought to be forbidden to young people, until age and discipline have made them proof against debauchery." It is thought in our day that

there are some old men who are not proof against debauchery. Ought not they to stay away from the theater? The Romans did to a limited extent allow of theaters, yet did they so much dread their prevalence that no public theater was allowed to remain standing more than a certain number of days. Even the great theater erected by Scaurus, which cost more than four and a half million dollars, was speedily taken down. Pompey the Great was the first who had influence sufficient to continue a theater. Tacitus, the great Roman historian, says: "The German women were guarded against danger and preserved their purity by having no play-houses among them." Ovid, in a grave work addressed to Augustus, advises the suppression of theatrical amusements as a grand source of corruption. Indeed, Guevara says, that a virtuous prince or emperor was known by his banishing from his presence players, jesters and jugglers; and that a wicked prince was known by his retaining such. Many of even the Roman emperors declared the scenes of the stage to be "unbecoming exercises and seductive arts which very much corrupted and disgraced the state, and were seminaries of all vices and intolerable mischiefs in the commonwealth."

Seneca, the moralist, says: "Nothing is so destructive (*damnosum*) of godly manners or morals as attendance on the stage." Titus Livy, the accomplished Roman historian, in his history thrice mentions the theater. In the first instance he says: "It commenced with the purpose of aiding in the worship of the devils." In the next instance he calls it a "folly, which had grown to an intolerable height of madness." In the third instance he says the stage had its origin in purposes of superstitious devotions. Augustine agrees with Livy in making the same statement of its origin. Juvenal says that in his time "a man could not find one chaste woman whom he might safely love as his wife in all the play-house, and that all who frequent stage-plays are infamous, and forfeit their good names."

That Christians ought not, in the judgment of good men of past days, to attend theaters, is very clear. One to whom America is vastly indebted said many years ago: "For many ages there was no debate

on it at all. There were players, but they did not pretend to be Christians themselves, and they had neither countenance nor support from any who did." In the Apostolic Constitutions, stage-players and actors are enumerated among those who are not to be admitted to baptism. All the ancient forms of baptism, written after the Apostolic Constitutions, required a renunciation of all such things. Individual writers have also from the early ages of Christianity borne a decided testimony on this subject.

Cyprian says: "The Scripture has everlastingly condemned all sorts of such spectacles and stage-plays." In another place he styles theaters "the stews of public chastity, the mastership of obscenity, which teach those sins in public. It is not lawful for faithful Christians, yes, it is altogether unlawful to be present at these plays." Elsewhere he says: "She that perchance comes a chaste woman to the play, goes away with stained chastity." Tertullian says that "the heathen did chiefly discern who were infidels and who Christians, by the latter abandoning all stage-plays." In another place he says: "We Christians renounce your spectacles and stage-plays; we have nothing at all to do with the fury of your circus, and the dishonesty of the theatre—we come not to your plays." In another place he says: "We who compute our nobility not by blood, but by our manners, do with good reason renounce your sinful pleasures, pomps and spectacles, whose original with respect to their sacredness, and whose pernicious allurements to sin, we both alike condemn. For in your Circensian games, who can but abhor the madness of the people clamoring on different sides? And as for your gladiatorian diversions, who can sit with ease in that school of murder? And for your theaters, there also the extravagance is not less, but the lewdness longer. For one while the mimic either recites adulteries or exhibits them; another while the lascivious actor plays the gallant and kindles the passion he feigns. He likewise vilifies your gods by personating their rapes, sighs and discords. And so by well-dissembled sorrow and hypocritical gestures, he sets you a crying to the life. Thus are you mad upon murder in good earnest, and yet, forsooth, cannot bear it in fable without a tear."

Clemens Alexandrinus calls "stage-plays, comedies, and amorous songs, teachers of adulteries and defilers of men's ears with fornications;" and says: "Not only the use, the sight, the hearing, but the very memory of stage plays should be abolished." In another place he directs Christian youths "not to permit their pedagogues to lead them to plays or theaters, because they are the occasion of lewdness, and wicked counsel is plotted at them."

How much like the modern theatre. "Wicked counsel is plotted there," such as is peculiarly dangerous to young men! Origen says "Christians must not lift up their eyes to stage-plays, the pleasurable delights of polluted eyes." Lactantius says: "These interludes with which men are delighted, and which they willingly attend, are wholly to be abolished from among us, because they are the greatest instigations to vice, and the most powerful instruments to corrupt men's minds." Gregory Nazianzen calls "stage-players the servants of lewdness, and stage-plays the dishonorable, unseemly instructions of lascivious men, who repute nothing filthy but modesty." He also calls "play-houses the lascivious shops of all filthiness and impurity." Ambrose calls "stage-plays spectacles of vanity," and exhorts "Christians to turn away from them." Augustine says that "stage-plays are the subverters of goodness and honesty, the destroyers of all modesty and chastity, the arts of mischievous villanies which even modest pagans did blush to behold." In another place he calls them "the cages of uncleanness, the public profession of wickedness." Epiphanius says, "that apostolic church does reprobate and forbid all theaters, stageplays, and all such like heathenish practices."

Chrysostom says: "I wish the theaters and play-houses were all thrown down, though as to us (Christians) they lay desolate and ruined long ago." "Nothing," says he, "brings the oracles and ordinances of God into such contempt as admiring and attending stage-plays. Neither sacraments nor other ordinances of God, will do a man any good, so long as he frequents stage-plays." Bernard says: "All true soldiers of Jesus Christ abominate and reject all stage-plays, as vanities and false frenzies."

These testimonies of individuals are fully corroborated by the ancient synods or councils, which did often prohibit, condemn and reprobate, all sorts of stage-plays; and appoint to excommunication from the visible church all who attended them. The Eliberine council in Spain, in A. D. 305, the council at Arles in France, in A. D. 314, the council held in the same place, in A. D. 326, the third council of Carthage, in A. D. 397, the council of Hippo, in A. D. 393, the great African council in A. D. 408, the great council at Constantinople, in A. D. 680, and the great council in the same place, in A. D. 692, did severally and solemnly condemn everything belonging to theatrical exhibitions of every description. Modern divines and synods have been as little divided on this matter, as on any other subject of Christian practice. Let a few men speak for themselves. Archbishop Ussher says: "Stage-plays offend against the seventh commandment in many ways together—in the abuse of apparel, tongue, eyes, countenance, gestures, and almost all parts of the body; therefore they that go to see such sights, and hear such words, show their neglect of Christian duty, and their carelessness in sinning, whereas they willingly commit themselves to the snare of the devil." Collier says: "Nothing has done more to debauch the age in which we live than the stage-poets and the play-house." Tillotson says: "The playhouse is the devil's chapel, a nursery of licentiousness and vice; a recreation which ought not to be allowed among a civilized, much less a Christian people." Andrew Fuller says: "The introduction of so large a portion of heathen mythology into the songs and other entertainments of the stage, sufficiently shows the bias of people's hearts. The house of God gives them no pleasure; but the resurrection of the obscenities, intrigues and bacchanalian revels of the old heathens, affords them exquisite delight." The Synod held at Rochelle, in A. D. 1571, unanimously voted that "Congregations shall be admonished by their ministers seriously to reprehend and suppress all dances, mummeries and interludes; and it shall not be lawful for any Christian to act or be present at any comedies, tragedies, plays, interludes, or any other such sports, either in public or in private chambers, considering that they have always been opposed, condemned and suppressed, in and by the church, as

bringing along with them the corruption of godly manners, especially when the Holy Scripture is profaned, which is not delivered to be acted or played, but only to be preached."

The Westminster Assembly numbers among the violations of the seventh commandment "all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections, all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereto, immodest apparel, unchaste company, lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage-plays, and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others." But not only have the ancient heathens and the divines and councils of the church in every age condemned these things. All classes of moderns have borne their testimony in the same way.

Dymond says: "The night of a play is the harvest time of iniquity, where the profligate and the sensual put in their sickles and reap." Sir John Hawkins, the biographer of Dr. Johnson, and an infidel, observes: "Although it is said of plays that they teach morality; and of the stage that it is the mirror of human life, these assertions are mere declamation, and have no foundation in truth or experience. On the contrary, a play-house and the regions about it are the very hot-beds of vice." Lord Kaimes, a skeptic, says: "It requires not time nor much thought to discover the poisonous influence of such plays, where the chief characters are decked out with every vice in fashion, however gross, and where their deformities are carefully disguised under the embellishments of wit, sprightliness and good humor." Dr. Johnson, speaking of Collier's view of the immorality and profaneness of the English stage, says: "The wise and the pious caught the alarm, and the nation wondered that it had allowed irreligion and licentiousness to be openly taught at the public charge." Dryden, a Catholic, acknowledged the propriety of Collier's remarks, and published his repentance for the licentiousness with which he himself had written. Rousseau, the infidel, has said some things I would not dare to say, namely, "It is impossible that an establishment (a theatre at Geneva) so contrary to our ancient manners can be generally applauded. How many generous citizens will see with indignation this monument of

luxury and immorality raise itself upon our ancient simplicity! Where is the imprudent mother that would dare to carry her daughter to this dangerous school? And what respectable woman would not think herself dishonored in going there?"

"What the stage might be," says Mrs. Hannah More, "under another, and an imaginary state of things, it is not very easy for us to know, and therefore not very important to inquire. Nor is it, indeed, the soundest logic to argue on the possible goodness of a thing, which in the present circumstances of society is doing positive evil, from the imagined good that thing might be conjectured to produce in a supposed state of unattainable improvement."

That there is nothing in theatrical entertainments inconsistent with the wildest excesses, was abundantly illustrated in the French Revolution, near the close of the 18th century. Speaking of the state of things in Paris, Edmund Burke says: "While courts of justice were thrust out by Jacobin tribunals, and silent churches were only the funeral monuments of departed religion, there were no fewer than twenty-eight theaters, great and small, most of them kept open at the public expense, and all of them crowded every night. Among the gaunt, haggard forms of famine and nakedness; amidst the yells of murder, the tears of affliction, and the cries of despair; the song and the dance, the mimic scene and the buffoon laughter went on as regularly as in the mirthful hour of festive peace. The society of Paris was like a den of outlaws upon a doubtful frontier, a lewd tavern for the revels and debauches of banditti, assassins and paramours—filled with licentious and blasphemous songs, proper to their brutal and hardened course of life."

And will not every American heed the following testimony? In Congress, October 12th, 1778: "Whereas, true religion and good morals are the only solid foundation of public liberty and happiness: Resolved, that it be, and is hereby earnestly recommended to the several States to take the most effectual means for the encouragement thereof, and for the suppressing of Theatrical

entertainments, horse-racing, gaming, and such other diversions, as are productive of idleness, dissipation, and a general depravity of principles and manners." Extract from the Minutes.

But let us look at the effect of stage-plays upon those who are most affected by them. Reference is had to the players themselves. Tertullian says: "The heathens themselves marked actors and stageplayers with infamy, and excluded them from all honors and dignity." Augustine says: "Men reject from the advantages of good society, and from all honors, the actors of the poetic fables and stageplayers." Rousseau says: "In all countries the profession of a player is dishonorable, and those who exercise it are everywhere despised." Witherspoon says: "Even those who are fondest of theatrical amusements, do yet notwithstanding esteem the employment of actors a base and sordid profession. Their character has been infamous in all ages, just a living copy of that vanity, obscenity and impiety, which is to be found in the pieces which they represent." Thus also a French writer of some note during the reign of wickedness in that land, near the close of the last century, says: "It must appear very surprising, that even down to the expiration of the French monarchy, there was a character of disgrace affixed to the profession of a player, especially when compared with the kindred profession of preacher or pleader." This same language was used in lamentation by one of our oldest journals forty years ago.

A modern writer asks a question which each man can answer or not at his pleasure: "Is there any family of rank or high standing that would not feel degraded by a marriage alliance with a stage-player?" Wilberforce says: "It is an undeniable fact, for the truth of which we may safely appeal to every age and nation, that the situation of the performers, particularly those of the female gender, is remarkably unfavorable to the maintenance and growth of the pious and moral principle, and of course highly dangerous to their eternal interests." Dymond says: "If I take my seat in the theatre, I have paid three or four shillings as an inducement to a number of people to subject

their principles to extreme danger—and the defense which I make is, that I am amused by it. Now we affirm that this defense is invalid."

Even the famous Mrs. Frances Ann Butler says in her journal: "Acting is the very lowest of the arts"... "I acted like a wretch of course; how could I do otherwise".. "What a mass of wretched mumming mimickry acting is"... "How I do loathe my most impotent and unpoetical craft." Surely a late poet was fully justified when he said: "The theatre was, from the very first, The favorite haunt of sin, though honest men, Some very honest, wise and worthy men, Maintained it might be turned to good account: And so perhaps it might, but never was. From first to last it was an evil place."

All these testimonies, gathered from pagans, infidels, Christians, laity, clergy, poets, statesmen, historians, philosophers, councils, and our national congress, have been presented for the purpose of showing what these entertainments have been in every age, as they have been regularly handed down to us, and for the purpose of developing in a satisfactory manner the peculiar vices which are thus nourished. No man can properly object to the testimonies cited, because, be his views what they may in morals, here is evidence that the theatre is an "evil place." There is no method by which the force of these testimonies could be destroyed, except by showing that the theatre is now in an improved condition that it is really reformed. Yet that it has NOT changed for the better, is manifest from the complaints made in the journals of the day—the very journals that are crowded with advertisements and notices respecting plays, and therefore cannot be suspected of being righteous overmuch.

2. Divorce. "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery. Matthew 5:31-32. The subject of divorce claims increasing attention. In this age and country, we are inclined to too great readiness to legal separation of husband and wife. Let us

beware that we do not follow the sad example of revolutionary France in this matter. Gregoire, speaking of the statute of divorce said: "This law will soon ruin the whole nation." And yet it is a great mistake to suppose that we uphold virtue by adopting rules on this subject more strict than those laid down in Scripture. Our Lord explicitly states that infidelity to the marriage vow is a sufficient cause of a divorce. Matt. 5:31, 32. This case is perfectly clear. Another case clearly settled by the apostle according to the general understanding of the Christian world is that of willful desertion; where one party or the other persistently refuses to perform the duties of the relation. 1 Cor. 7:15.

Some years ago, a youthful lady was married to a man considerably older than herself. He had property; she had none. She told her friends that she married him for his money; but to him she was obliging. Very soon after marriage, she attempted to pour melted lead into his ear while he was asleep. His petition for a legal separation was promptly granted. Perhaps few intelligent people will doubt the morality of that divorce. A willful and deliberate attempt at murder is surely a crime of as high a grade as either of the others mentioned. The mode of reasoning on this subject is this: If for a minor offence, utterly subverting the design of marriage, a divorce is lawful, surely it is so for a greater offence against the same person.

3. Incest. This unnatural sin may be committed even under the forms of law. It is not proposed here to discuss it at length; but to state that the understanding of the Christian world has long been that the law of incest laid down in the 18th chapter of Leviticus is still binding. The only other hint of any rule directing us on this subject is found in I Cor. 5:1, where without marriage, incest was committed. Of late years there has been manifested a disposition to set aside the law of incest, given in Lev. 18. But let men remember that if the rules there given be not binding, the whole world is left at large, without any law of God prohibiting even brother and sister from marrying.

4. This Precept is Comprehensive. This commandment, like all the rest, is spiritual, and extends to the thoughts of the heart. Our Savior put this point beyond all doubt in his sermon on the Mount. "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Matthew 5:28. We must therefore maintain purity in body and behavior, in mind, in feeling, in words and in conduct. 1 Thess. 4:4, 5, Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6. This precept forbids unchaste looks, unchaste company, and immodest apparel. "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl." Job 31:1; 1 Cor. 5:9; 1 Tim. 2:9; 2 Pet. 2:14. It requires us studiously to avoid whatever may lead to impurity of heart or of life. Proverbs 5:8. The venerable Thomas Scott, writing on this commandment, says, "Under the word lasciviousness, various transgressions are denoted, which cannot be mentioned without offence; and everything, which does not comport with the spirit of marriage, though sanctioned by that name, violates the spiritual meaning of the prohibition. All impure conversation, imaginations, or desires, are likewise condemned by this law. Writing, reading, publishing, vending, or circulating obscene books; exposing to view indecent pictures or statues, or whatever else may excite men's passions, must partake of the same guilt: and wit, elegance, and ingenuity only increase the mischief, wherever the specious poison is administered. All the arts of dress, motion, or demeanor, which form temptations to heedless youth; with all those blandishments, insinuations, amorous looks and words, which subserve seduction, fall under the same censure. In short, the commandment requires the utmost purity, both of body and soul, in secret as well as before men; with a holy indifference to animal indulgences, and the strictest government of all the appetites, senses, and passions; and it enjoins the desire and endeavor of preserving the same disposition and behavior in all others, as far as we have it in our power."

The following things are clear.

1. The language of Scripture concerning the breaches of this commandment is exceedingly well-suited to alarm any guilty soul. It

says, "This is an heinous crime; yes, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges. For it is a fire which consumes to destruction." Job 31:11, 12.

2. All uncleanness, even of mind, is contrary to God. "It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God." 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

3. All impurity is entirely contrary to the Christian profession. "God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." 1 Thess. 4:7. "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving." Ephesians 5:3-4

4. All violations of this commandment are signs of a depraved nature. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, etc." Gal. 5:19.

5. God calls upon us to put to death all vile affections. "Mortify your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, etc., etc." Col. 3:5. 6. The Scriptures tell us of the debasing and ruining effects of this sin on those who fall under its power. "But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroys himself. Blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will never be wiped away." Proverbs 6:32, 33. Compare Proverbs 7:22.

7. They further declare that it leads to general irreligion. "Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart." Hos. 4:11; Eph. 4:18, 19.

8. Good writers have dwelt much on the heinousness of those acts which transgress this commandment. They especially notice the fact

that two souls are murdered at once. Hopkins says: "Suppose that God should vouchsafe you repentance unto life; yet are you sure that his justice and severity will not harden the other in this sin, to which you have been the author and persuader?"

9. Everywhere the Scriptures declare the reigning power of this sin to be an infallible token of coming perdition. "This you know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Eph. 5:5. Compare Heb. 13:4; Rev. 21:8, 22:15. There is no room for doubting that he who dies impenitent for violations of the seventh commandment, goes to an undone eternity.

5. Beware of Sins Against this Precept. The following thoughts may suggest rules and motives that may be helpful in enabling us to avoid violations of this precept.

1. The time is short, and eternity is near. The Judge stands before the door. Let every man remember that he is mortal. Let those that have wives be as though they had none; and those that rejoice as those that rejoiced not; for the fashion of this world passes away.

2. In all things endeavor to be temperate and moderate. Ask yourself, will I approve of my present conduct, when called to give up my last account?

3. Remember that the Lord is omniscient. "You God, see me," is a good motto for all occasions.

4. Remember that no mortal ever had exaggerated views of the evil of sin. It burns to the lowest hell. The sweeter the unlawful indulgence to our carnal nature—the bitterer will be the cup of repentance or of indignation put into our hands.

5. Let each one remember his own weakness. None but God can preserve any man from falling into the worst of sins. Our strength is nothing. All human resolutions unsupported by divine grace, are like

fences of snow before a burning sun. When temptation comes, they soon melt away.

6. Our great business should be to obtain thorough renewal of nature. Without this, we have no guaranty that we may not be overcome at any moment. Let every man cry, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Augustine found regeneration the only remedy for his wickedness, and so have millions of others.

7. Let each one continually set before him the bright and blessed example of our Lord Jesus Christ, and let us dwell much on his amazing sufferings in our behalf. If our sins are ever effectually mortified—we must nail them to the cross of Christ.

The Eighth Commandment

"You shall not steal." Exodus 20:15

The honor of religion is deeply involved in the course men pursue concerning this commandment, which regulates our labor, our buying, our selling, our expenditures, and our entire civil conduct. We are bound to "provide things honest in the sight of all men." Romans 12:17. We are not at liberty to live in needless poverty and wretchedness, nor to let our dependents suffer. "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." 1 Tim. 5:8. Compare Eph. 4:28. This is wholesome doctrine. No pious teacher may keep silent concerning it. The church that disregards it is ruined. Yet we may "not make provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." Romans 13:14. Our attention to our temporal affairs must not minister to our pride, our sloth, our vanity, our sensuality, our love of the world. 1 John 2:16; Proverbs 21:25; Eph. 4:17, etc.

Although man's absolute needs, to be supplied by his personal industry, are not very numerous, nor of long duration; yet they are more than some suppose. And while we ought to be content, yes, and thankful for food and raiment of a simple kind; yet it is lawful, and when practical, it is obligatory on men to secure the comforts of life. Paul exhorts his converts to "This should be your ambition: to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we commanded you before. As a result, people who are not Christians will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others to meet your financial needs." 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12.

One of the great obstacles to be overcome in some heathen nations is found in the fact that masses of the people feel their needs to be so few, and so easily supplied, that they spend most of their time in

idleness, in gambling, in sauntering about, in listening to foolish songs and stories, in witnessing the feats of jugglers, and in attending on vain processions. The same is true of Roman Catholic countries in the south of Europe. There are so many saints' days, that the laboring classes have not time to earn enough to secure the comforts of life. They become discouraged in the attempt, and extreme poverty and squalid wretchedness are perpetuated from generation to generation.

Everywhere in Scripture, indolence is condemned, and industry commended. Of the virtuous housewife, Solomon says, 'She eats not the bread of idleness.' "If a man is lazy, the rafters sag; if his hands are idle, the house leaks." Eccles. 10:18. "Sodom's sins were pride, laziness, and gluttony," were among the causes of the ruin of Sodom and the other cities of the plain. Ezek. 16:49. These sins fostered others which provoked the wrath of Heaven beyond forbearance. It is a remarkable fact that Paul himself once addressed a congregation of idlers, who "spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing." Acts 17:21. But so far as we know, not one of them received any spiritual benefit. For "when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear you again of this matter." Acts 17:32. The only people mentioned by name among those who profited by his preaching were a member of the chief court of the city and a woman named Damaris.

Man was not allowed to be idle even in Paradise; and when he apostatized from God, the sentence to which it is wise ever to submit, was, "In the sweat of your face shall you eat your bread, until you return unto the ground." Gen. 3:19.

Let us consider the law of HONESTY. There is hardly a word of more varied classical meaning than the word Honesty; and the Latin word from which it is derived. The same remark is true of the Greek word rendered honesty. In all these the range of meaning is very extended. But when applied to civil affairs, there are two ideas connected with the word, which we may not pass over in silence. One is that of

JUSTICE. That which is unjust can never be honest. All injustice ought to be avoided, and is clearly condemned by Scripture. However refined, or countenanced by society or custom, it is still contrary to God's word and will. No human conscience ever approved of a clear and decided case of injustice.

The other idea inseparably connected with the word honesty, when applied to civil affairs, is that of HONOR, or good repute. Any dishonorable conduct in temporal affairs is not honest; For a Christian to receive a bribe to do what was his obvious duty, or to refuse to do his duty without reward, is dishonest. So, for one to consent to do an odious thing (for instance, to act as hangman, not because his office required it of him, but because he loved gain,) would be dishonorable and so dishonest. A godly man must keep his eye on the things that are lovely and of good report, if he would avoid a stain upon his escutcheon, and a wound on his conscience.

All the ordinary and necessary avocations of life, the culture of the soil, the practice of the learned professions, trade, and the useful and ornamental arts, are honest. That it is not enough barely to satisfy one's own conscience of the honesty of a course, or even to meet the demands of the mere letter of God's word respecting rigid justice, is manifest in many ways. The Scripture abounds in proof: "Provide things honest in the sight of all men," not merely honest in the sight of God, in the sight of yourself, in the sight of some men—your partial friends and neighbors, or those who practice the same things—but in the sight of all men. Let your honesty be above all doubt and suspicion in the eyes of men, who understand what your conduct is. The apostle laid down no more rigid rule for others than he was willing to be governed by himself. He says that he and his helpers provided for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of all men. 2 Cor. 8:21.

Selden says: "those who cry down moral honesty, cry down that which is a great part of religion—my duty toward God and my duty toward men. What care I to see a man run after a sermon, if he

deceives and cheats as soon as he comes home? On the other side, morality must not be without religion; for if so, it may change as I see convenient. Religion must govern it. He who has no religion to govern his morality, is not better than my mastiff dog; so long as you stroke him and please him, and do not pinch him, he will play with you, as finely as may be; he is a very good, moral master; but if you hurt him, he will fly in your face."

Let us then look at the great principle of HONESTY, as it ought to enter into our affairs, and see how it may be and often is violated.

1. All robbery, theft, receiving stolen goods, forgery, embezzling, swindling, obtaining goods under false pretenses, and cheating in every shape are contrary to the eighth commandment. Psalm 62:10; Eph. 4:28; Psalm 1:8; Proverbs 29:24; 1 Thess. 4:6; Proverbs 11:1, 20:10; Amos 8:5. These things are more near akin to each other than some suppose. Mark 10:19. As this part of the subject is generally well-understood, and warmly entertained by most who will read this book, it is not necessary to dwell upon it. A few observations, however, will not be amiss. One is, that the law of honesty makes no extenuation of these or like sins—because they are practiced against the rich. It is as dishonest unrighteously to possess the goods of one class as of another. True, in taking unjustly from the poor, we commonly add oppression to dishonesty, and thus perpetrate two crimes. But we are not to grade dishonesty by the worldly estate of him whom we defraud. What if a man is able to bear the loss? If all men should treat him fraudulently, he would soon have nothing. Our sin is against the law of God chiefly and primarily—and not against the man.

Another remark is, that the amounts of our dishonesty are not to regulate our ideas of its criminality. He who unjustly holds a farthing, is as truly dishonest as he who has amassed a fortune by fraud. To pant after the dust of the earth on the heads of the poor, is as strictly forbidden as to covet thrones and empires not our own, Amos 2:7. Ahab was as really wicked and unjust in covetously

desiring and violently obtaining Naboth's vineyard, as if he had marched an army against the king of Syria, and taken his possessions from him. Our offence cannot be measured by the amount unjustly secured. With one sentence our Savior forever settled this principle. "He who is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much," Luke 16:10. Compare Matt. 25:21; Luke 19:17.

Another remark is, that corporations and the government of the country in which we reside, sustain to us, in the matter of honesty, the same relations as individuals. He who will cheat a body of men, or his government, is as guilty as if he defrauded his neighbor. He who wrongs a corporation, not knowing or caring who may be thereby affected, shows a wicked principle in general, a malignity against his race. He who will not render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, who will not pay tax to whom tax is due, is not likely to render unto God the things that are God's. All embezzlement, smuggling, false invoices, and unauthorized perks of office, making the government odious, are thus condemned by this precept. Another remark is, that no man can merge his individual moral responsibility in a corporation. It is sometimes said that "corporations have no souls," and there is painful evidence that some corporators have no consciences, or bad consciences, and do things acting jointly with others, which they would not dare to do acting alone. Such should not forget that he who goes with a multitude to do evil, shall go with a multitude to suffer punishment, Proverbs 11:21.

2. All people are bound to regard the law of honesty in making bargains, or contracts. To be a swindler is to have an unenviable distinction. It is wholly inconsistent with Christian principle. The rule of some—That we may buy as cheap as we can and sell as costly as we can—is liable to so many exceptions, and must receive so many explanations before it ceases to conceal immorality, that it ought not to be received. We may not sell as costly as we can, nor buy as cheap as we can, when we deal with the ignorant, who are no judges of the

quality or value of the articles bought or sold. It would make anyone infamous, were it known that he cheated a little child out of his pennies by giving him not half what he should have done. In any such case, one acts as dishonest a part as if he had taken a ten-dollar note from one who cannot read and who supposes it is of a less denomination, and had given him only the change which he expected. Many who wish to buy or sell know almost nothing of the value of the commodity in trade, and are dependent on the superior knowledge of their merchants. To deceive them is dishonest. One cannot say—Their eyes were open; for on this subject they were without eyes and so were blind.

The same exception holds in regard to the credulous, who are children in understanding. They are easily persuaded to buy or to sell at the price others may fix. To take advantage of their feeble minds or optimistic temperaments, is fraud. Nor may we buy as cheap, nor sell as costly as we can, when we deal with those who are in distress. The pressing poverty of another does not make our goods any more valuable in fact. To avail ourselves of his necessity, therefore, is to rejoice in his calamity, because it may be profitable to us. Such conduct shall not go unpunished, Proverbs 17:5. To a drowning man, the end of a rope might be worth a whole estate. Shall one therefore sordidly bargain for a great reward before he extends assistance? Proverbs 24:11, 12. One may say, I put him not in the water; I brought him not into his present distress. But this alters not the case.

The same is as true of the man who is hard pressed in his worldly affairs. Nor may we buy as cheap nor sell as costly as we can, when by heightening the defects of what we would buy, or by magnifying the value of what we would sell, we lead others into error. Such artifices are as old as trade among men, and are condemned in the Bible. "The buyer haggles over the price, saying, "It's worthless," then brags about getting a bargain!" Proverbs 20:14. This practice is not only odious, but soon ceases to gain its end.

A. B. is a respectable Christian man. He is worth a handsome estate. He lives in a small city. Not a shop-keeper is ignorant that he never gives what is first asked by his merchant. The consequence is, that when he prices an article, everyone asks more than he is willing to take. But the very entrance of this godly man into a shop awakens significant hints and looks.

It sometimes occurs even in free governments that a state of things very much like a monopoly exists, putting much in the power of one man or of a few men. A fire, a drought, a storm, or a war, may leave one man, or a few men, in possession of an article of no great value in itself, yet much needed by their neighbors or others. Then to sell as costly as we can, is dishonest. "He who withholds corn, the people shall curse him; but blessing shall be upon the head of him that sells it," Proverbs 11:26. Nor is it honest to buy as cheap or sell as costly as we can, when threats or deceitful promises, or flattery, or any such are employed to influence the minds of those with whom we deal. Here it may be observed that in trading generally, men are apt to use too many words. They say more than is good. They do not fix their prices or make their offers at what is right or fair, and then abide by it. There is a great deal of lying in the world in the driving of bargains. Self-interest is in all ages the most powerful principle at work in the commercial world. From the influence of it even good men are not wholly free. If one feels doubtful, therefore, let his neighbor have the benefit of his doubts; for the uncertainty probably arises from a conflict between selfishness on the one hand and conscience on the other. Let every man keep fairly and unquestionably within the bounds of justice and honor.

Sometimes it occurs with the poor that in making bargains, they habitually or with indecent frequency and urgency plead their poverty, in favor of terms advantageous to themselves. Such seldom succeed for a long time, and even then with the loss of character. Such a practice is unmanly and so is dishonest. If any really needs charity, let him ask charity; but in trade, let justice and honor hold the scale.

3. As but few things have any real intrinsic value in trade, we still need a rule, by which to be governed. Perhaps this is as safe a maxim as any other. In all buying and selling, a fair equivalent according to the general and regular tenor of things ought always to be given or received. There is a fair market price for everything in common use. Men having no interest in the purchase or sale, and knowing the facts in the case would seldom disagree respecting it. Articles of a rare quality, intended merely for luxury or ornament, and obtained at very great risk of loss, may be unsettled in value, and more scope may be left for the exercise of a general discretion. But of most things bought and sold, it is possible for us to ascertain the fair market price, and that ought to be given or received, no more and no less. It is true that in merchandizing, on some things there will necessarily be loss. This ought to be met by increased profit on others. But then no price should be exorbitant. All extortion is forbidden, Ezek. 22:12; Matt. 23:25.

It is also true that he who sells only for an equivalent in hand, may sell cheaper than he who runs the risk and incurs the delay of a credit. But to charge two prices to him who has not the means of ready payment, but who may reasonably expect to have them in possession, is unjust, and so is dishonest. If he who buys on credit knew how much more he was charged than his neighbor who buys for cash, he would deal no more there. "Do unto others as you would that they do unto you."

4. When bargains contain promissory engagements, let every man adhere to his word, cost what it may. One description of a godly man is, that "he swears to his own hurt and changes not." Psalm 15:4. Domat: "In all sorts of engagements, whether voluntary or involuntary, it is forbidden to use any infidelity, double dealing, deceit, knavery, and all other ways of doing hurt or wrong." "The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death." Proverbs 21:6. Is there not a lamentable lack of veracity manifested in many contracts? What could more painfully

afflict a virtuous mind, than the ten thousand rash promises made respecting the fulfillment of contracts?

5. The Bible opposes the system of debt and credit, at least when carried to such lengths as we sometimes see. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another." Romans 13:8. If the debtor is honest, he is to a painful extent servant to the creditor. The spirit of many a man is crushed out by a sense of his indebtedness to others. His goods are distrained for rent; the peace of his mind or of his family is impaired; he finds himself avoiding particular walks lest he should meet the man to whom he owes money. Every loan puts him in anguish or irritates his mind. We have no reason to believe that Paul ever resorted to borrowing as a means of relieving his needs. In fact, we do know that when he was destitute of means, he went to tent-making. Acts 18:3, 20:34. An honest mechanic or laborer may sleep sweetly and walk abroad composedly. But what is social position worth, when appearances are preserved only in the face of most painful facts respecting one's worldly estate?

Debts may not be honestly contracted under the following circumstances.

1. When we have no reasonable prospect of paying them. In such cases it is swindling and robbery to take another man's property out of his hands. This is remarkably the case when the commodity received is of a perishable nature and is likely to be consumed before the day of payment arrives. A reasonable prospect of payment is something not very precarious, something better than the prospect of a prize in a lottery, or of profit from a daring speculation.

2. He who is so careless of the condition of his own affairs as not to know how they stand, and yet goes forward and contracts new responsibilities, violates the law of honesty. No man has a right to live in such ignorance of his worldly estate as not to be sure, when he receives a neighbor's goods, that he will in the ordinary and regular course of business be able to pay him; and that too,

3. At the time agreed upon. Many, who are in the main upright men, and on the whole sustain a fair reputation, are always so far behind their engagements as to require the most charitable construction of their conduct by friends and foes, to keep them from falling into disrepute. A delay in payment, especially to the poor, and often to the rich, is as real, if not as great an injury as absolute failure to pay. It was a part of the code of Moses that the sun should not go down upon the hire of the laborer. Compare Deut. 24:14, 15.

4. The Scriptures give no countenance to the practice of those who go on heedlessly and recklessly in their affairs, until insolvency ensues, and then compound with their creditors for five or ten shillings in the pound; and even if able afterwards, do not pay the full sum due. Voluntary relinquishment of creditors in order to give further opportunity to acquire the means of payment may be accepted. But if ever the whole can be paid, let the bona fide offer be made, with money in hand. Once a debt, always a debt—unless freely forgiven, is a sound maxim. Romans 13:8. If we had honest debtors and merciful creditors, we would need no bankrupt laws.

6. On the whole subject of our business affairs, these maxims, duly regarded, would save a world of trouble. 1. Never engage in a business you do not understand, however inviting the prospect of gain. Proverbs 14:8.

2. Let not young men, who are in the way of acquiring a thorough knowledge of business, be hasty in setting up for themselves. Let them be patient.

3. Avoid all highly hazardous speculations, even in a lawful business, except where they involve no more than you are able to lose without injury to your creditors or your family. You may not needlessly jeopard in wild adventures the rights of others.

4. Always prefer a regular business to any new and striking scheme of making money. The latter may beget many beautiful dreams. The

former is sustained by the usual course of divine providence. "The hand of the diligent makes rich." Proverbs 10:4. "See a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men." Proverbs 22:29.

5. Be not anxious to grow rich all of a sudden. "He who makes haste to be rich shall not be innocent." Proverbs 28:20.

6. Beware whom you admit as partners in business. Partners ought to have a congeniality in views, in temper, and in all the leading principles of business. Proverbs 22:24; Amos 3:3.

7. If you have any regard for your peace and comfort, avoid all suretyships, which exceed the amount you are able and willing to lose for your friend. "He who puts up security for another will surely suffer, but whoever refuses to strike hands in pledge is safe." Proverbs 11:15. It may be safely said that he is the only man that is safe. "Do not be a man who strikes hands in pledge or puts up security for debts; if you lack the means to pay, your very bed will be snatched from under you." Proverbs 22:26, 27. See also, Proverbs 6:1, 17:18, 20:16, 27:13.

8. Practice no deceptions. Let "no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter; because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified." 1 Thess. 4:6. Never resort to false weights and measures. They are an abomination to God. Lev. 19:36; Deut. 25:13; Proverbs 16:11, 20:10, 23; Hos. 12:7; Amos 8:5; Micah 6:11. Never adulterate goods. Always send the precise quality that was sold. Beware of all filthy lucre, that is, of all gain obtained in any manner dishonorable.

9. Never buy anything because it is cheap. What you do not need is costly at any price.

7. Are you already involved in debt? Inquire whether you cannot in some important respects cut back your usual expenses. Scorn to live in luxury, to roll in affluence or glitter in splendor, while you are

unable to pay your debts. Your wife, if a prudent and honorable woman, will cheerfully submit to great self-denial. You will also find it useful to ascertain precisely how much you owe, and to keep the matter continually before you in memorandum. Be not afraid to know the state of your own affairs. Never avoid a creditor. Go to him with the manliness and fearlessness of uprightness. Tell him precisely how the case stands. Do not deceive him by plausible statements and fair promises. Tell him your real prospects, and how you are laboring to meet your liabilities. Remember that your charities ought not to be bountiful, while you are in debt; because in giving away, you rather dispose of the goods of others than of your own. Yet, be not hard-hearted. Without money, you may do a little to help the deserving poor. Also settle it in your mind that you will never make over your estate to some who will hold it for your benefit or that of your family, in order to keep your creditors from getting it.

Never ask your wife to relinquish her rights of property, which was hers before your indebtedness. Never begin the ruinous practice of paying high interest. Exercise rigid economy. Work day and night at your lawful and honest calling. Observe with regularity seasons of devotion in secret, in the family, and in the house of God. Never allow your mind to be annoyed with worldly affairs on the Lord's day. Maintain a cheerful and inflexible resolution to bear up like a man and a Christian under your great afflictions. Resist melancholy. As you acquire even a little, hand it over to your creditors. Beware of needlessly expending small sums. Cry to God for deliverance. Think not that he will scorn your humble, fervent petitions.

To a young man in debt, Dr. Franklin gave the following advice: "Make a full estimate of all you owe, and of all that is owing to you. Reduce the same to note. As fast as you can collect, pay over to those you owe. If you cannot, renew your note every year, and get the best security you can. Go to business diligently and be industrious; waste no idle moments; be very economical in all things; discard all pride; be faithful in your duty to God, by regular and hearty prayer morning and night; attend church and meeting regularly every Sunday; and

do unto all men as you would that they should do unto you. If you are too needy in circumstances to give to the poor, do whatever else is in your power for them cheerfully, but if you can, help the poor and unfortunate. Pursue this course diligently and sincerely for seven years, and if you are not happy, comfortable and independent in your circumstances, come to me and I will pay your debts."

8. In matters of trust, observe the utmost exactness. Are you a treasurer of any institution? You cannot be too careful in your accounts, nor too cautious in the disposition of funds. Are you an agent, and so entrusted with money? Never spend it for your own convenience or comfort. Many a man has gone to his grave with a wounded reputation and an aching heart, because he had spent money which did not belong to him. He hoped indeed soon to replace it; but his expectation was like the mirage of the desert. Paul's example in this behalf is worthy of close imitation. He raised many collections and distributed them. But he tells us that "We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift." 2 Cor. 8:20. Are you a guardian of such as are not able in law to represent themselves? The courts of the land will very properly hold you to a strict account. Carelessness and mismanagement will almost certainly bring terrible exposure and anguish. But the sin of such conduct is worse than the shame. It is in the teeth of the eighth commandment. In all fiduciary matters, keep your behavior on the highest key of morality. The class of offences against this precept entitled breaches of trust is very numerous. Many have expressed wonder that they are not punished as felonies.

9. Not a little sin is committed in borrowing. Sometimes indeed it is necessity. "From him that would borrow of you, turn not you away." Matt. 5:42. But as little borrowing as possible ought to be resorted to. For,

1. "The borrower is servant to the lender."

2. Men are often tempted not to return, at least with promptness, what they have borrowed. Some yield to this temptation. Psalm 37:21.

3. That which we borrow may be lost, and we may be unable to replace it; and then our position is truly distressing. 2 Kings 6:5. The law of Scripture is, "If someone borrows an animal from a neighbor and it is injured or killed, and if the owner was not there at the time, the person who borrowed it must pay for it." Exodus 22:14, and this sometimes he is quite unable to do. Then hard thoughts and speeches are apt to ensue, and the peace of the neighborhood is broken. Some have attempted to justify borrowing without any intention of returning, (if they think they have been injured) by citing the case of the Israelites' borrowing jewels from the Egyptians. Exodus 12:35, 36. In that passage, the words borrowed and lent are found; and the original words may be so rendered. But it is now generally conceded that the translation is wrong. It would be better, and the Hebrew would bear it, to render the words asked and gave; for this is doubtless the sense. The text confirms this view, by saying that God gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, that is, for a little while, being crushed by plagues and having their hearts touched by God's Spirit, a sense of justice and of kindness prevailed. Josephus expresses it; "They honored them with gifts." So that this passage gives no countenance to the bad morals taught in some books of Romish Theology, that a servant may defraud his master to the amount of what he supposes is his due. Borrowing may be and often is so conducted as to be in effect the same as theft. When it is proper to lend, it should be done heartily and freely. Deut. 23:20; Luke 6:35. Many a time the best charity is not a gift, but a loan without interest.

10. We may never steal. There is an impression among some that dependent people, or the poor, may take that which belongs not to them, provided it is merely to satisfy the demands of hunger or to meet necessary wants. Even Solomon says, "Men do not despise a thief, if he steals to satisfy his soul when he is hungry." Proverbs

6:30. And Agur prayed that he might not be poor, lest he should steal. Proverbs 30:9. But all such taking what belongs to others is dishonest. Man's standard of ethics, especially when drawn from his appetite, is very low. The word of God makes no such allowance. In this very case it says, "If the thief be found, he shall restore seven-fold; he shall give all the substance of his house." Proverbs 6:31. Hopkins: "Though his necessity and hunger may take off somewhat from the shame, yet it shall not from the punishment of his offence, but he shall restore that which he has stolen seven-fold. Not that the restitution should be seven times as much as the theft, for the utmost that the law requires was but a five-fold restitution, Exodus 22:1; but as the word seven-fold is most frequently used in Scripture to signify that which is complete and perfect, so is it here, 'he shall restore seven-fold,' that is, he shall make a full and satisfactory restitution."

11. Restitution. The closing remark of the preceding paragraph suggests this important matter. Why should not men restore that which they have wrongfully withheld or taken away, or that which they may not longer lawfully hold? Common justice demands it. The law of Moses required it. David's sentence against him that took the poor man's lamb, was this: "The man that has done this thing shall surely die; and he shall restore the lamb four-fold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." 2 Sam. 12:5, 6.

Zaccheus understood that he lived under the same law. "If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold." Luke 19:8. Domat: "It is a natural law, that he who has been the author of my damage ought to repair it." "Unjust possession is a continued and prolonged theft, and certainly repentance can never be true, nor sincere, while we continue in the sin of which we seem to repent; and your repentance not being true, pardon will never be granted you." God's word is very explicit: "if he gives back what he took in pledge for a loan, returns what he has stolen, follows the decrees that give life, and does no evil, he will surely live; he will not die." Ezek. 33:15. And if the person to whom restitution was at first

due, is dead, payment can be made to his heirs. But if neither he nor they can be found, then it is to be made to the Lord. Num. 5:6-8.

Surely the law of good neighborhood requires us no less to restore that which has strayed from its owner or has been lost by him. Deut. 22:1-3. Nor would high-toned honor consent to receive a reward for returning that which had been lost, unless time or money had been expended for its recovery. The law of Moses very fitly required that a man who injured another in a fight, if he did not die, should pay him for the loss of his time, and cause him to be thoroughly healed. Exodus 21:19.

12. Begging. This is a sad evil in many parts of the world. In some portions of Europe and in the large cities of America, it is a great sore on the body politic. What legislation can do in the matter, statesmen must decide. But let the conscience of each one settle it that beggars who could get employment, and who are able to work for a livelihood, ought not to be countenanced. The law of Scripture and the law of nature are clear upon this point. "In the sweat of your face shall you eat your bread." Gen. 3:19. "Even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." 2 Thess. 3:10. Compare verses 11, 12. Every man ought to set his face steadfastly against a system of mendicity. Everywhere the Scriptures pronounce against the slothful. Proverbs 12:27, 15:19, 18:9, 19:24; Romans 12:11. So far, therefore, as beggary is the result of indolence persisted in, the duty of those who have means is to refuse assistance.

13. Frugality consists in avoiding needless expenditures which we are not able to afford. "Frugality may be termed the daughter of Prudence, the sister of Temperance, and the parent of Liberty." It is essential to the peace of our lives. The lack of it brings on a world of wretchedness; while its exercise greatly conduces to our happiness. Proverbs 21:20.

14. Poverty. There may be virtuous poverty, though often we find wicked poverty. Poverty is a disgrace when it is the result of indolence, slothfulness, carelessness, or extravagance. Proverbs 6:10, 11. But it is no discredit to any man when he was born poor; or when he has made himself poor for the benefit of others; or when after careful industry and all lawful exertion and prudence, God leaves him without ample means. In that case, we should be content with those things we have. Heb. 13:5. Abject poverty is a great misery and a source of much temptation. Proverbs 30:9. Yet God may have great ends to answer in the world by keeping some of his best people in great straits. The poor are in danger of hardening their hearts against one another. No less than the rich, they ought to believe that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." No man has ever practiced on this precept without finding it true. It is as true now as ever, that "he who has pity upon the poor lends unto the Lord; and that which he has given, will he pay him again." No man is in the end a loser for any willing sacrifice or self-denial practiced for the good of others. He enjoys life far better than the selfish man. He has a vast storehouse of good laid up for him. To him the promises are many and wonderful. "The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and you will not deliver him to the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: you will make all his bed in his sickness."

Nor should anyone regard himself as too poor to do something. The reason why the small gift of the poor woman was greater than that of all the rich was, that she gave "all her living," and they did not. She had to practice self-denial to give anything. They only cast in of their abundance. He who shall finally reward the giving of a cup of cold water, will not be unfaithful to forget any work of faith or labor of love.

In Stevenson's Exposition of the twenty-third Psalm, we have this little narrative: "The long-tried and consistent piety of the wife of a poor laborer had attracted the regard of her wealthier neighbors. She was one of those happy Christians whose holy cheerfulness of

manner adorns their profession of the gospel. She 'rejoiced and wrought righteousness,' and 'remembered the Lord in his ways.' She had gained the esteem of all who knew her, and now that a slow but sure decline rendered her incapable of contributing to her own support, some pious friends agreed together to provide her regularly with those little comforts which were so necessary to her sinking condition. The Lord thus met her necessity by their instrumentality. But she knew not that he had awakened this thought within the hearts of any of them. Her own heart was stayed upon the heart of her God. As she stood one afternoon in her humble doorway to breathe the balmy air, she observed, three objects of misery soliciting alms in the street. Her heart pitied the famished mother and her two tattered children, but all the money that she possessed was her last and only sixpence. Every article of provision in the house had been already consumed. Without delay or hesitation, however, she drew from her pocket the little coin which was needed for her own necessities, and freely bestowed it on the widow and the fatherless. She considered that all her own wants for the day had been supplied, and that 'she ought not to be distrustful for the morrow.' 'I have a heavenly Friend,' she said within herself, 'to provide for me, and perhaps this poor woman does not know the God that is above. I have no one to think of; she has these two children to struggle for. I know my own need, but they are more needy than I.'

That very evening the individual deputed by her unknown friends visited her dwelling to inform her of their kind determination; and great was her astonishment and gratitude to hear that a sum double the amount she had that day given to the poor wanderers, was to be her daily allowance during the remainder of her life. It pleased the Lord to spare her two years, as she declared, 'in plenty and comfort.'" So in every case God will be as good as his word, as gracious as he has promised to be. All the promises are yes and amen.

15. Money. The Bible says nothing against money. It admits that it is a defense, and answers all things, Eccles. 7:12, 10:19. After Job's restoration to prosperity, "every man gave him a piece of money,"

Job 42:11. What the Scriptures warn us against is the abuse of that which is good.

1. We must not set our hearts upon it; nor be distracted with the care of it. "The love of money is the root of all evil," 1 Tim. 6:10; Matt. 6:21.

2. We must not employ it for purposes of sinning, Acts 8:20.

3. We must not rely upon it, 1 Tim. 6:17.

4. We must not hoard it up with greediness, James 5:1-3. 5. We must not use it to make ourselves wanton in life, James 5:5.

6. We must not needlessly squander it, Isaiah 55:2.

7. We must not use it for purposes of oppression, Lev. 25:37; Deut. 23:19; Psalm 15:5.

8. We must not be led by a regard to it to disobey any of God's commands, 2 Chron. 25:9.

9. We must give to the poor, and thus lay up treasure in heaven, Luke 12:33, 34. And we ought to give for conscience sake, because we thus desire to honor God, Proverbs 3:9. Our alms ought to be cheerful and according to our ability, 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7. Our liberality ought also to be unostentatious. Our Lord settled this matter in his Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 6:2-4. All the reasons of this command we may not know; but we do know two reasons, either of which is sufficient.

1. We ought, as far as possible, to save the feelings of those who are profited by our kindness, Ruth 2:16.

2. All vanity and ostentation in religion is very disgusting to well-balanced and well-instructed minds. Our liberality should be abundant towards the truly needy. In particular they should never be forgotten in days of unusual gladness, Neh. 8:10. Our liberality

should be out of our own funds. Eccl. 11:1; 1 John 3:17. Durham tells us the story of Selymus, the Turkish emperor, a most bloody man, that when he was a dying, one of his Bashaws desiring him to build a hospital for relief of the poor with the wealth taken from the Persian merchants, he replied thus, "Would you, Pyrrhus, that I should bestow other men's goods, wrongfully taken from them, on works of charity and devotion, for mine own vain-glory and praise? assuredly I will never do it; nay, rather that they be bestowed on the right owners again; which was accordingly done."

16. When God gives us good things richly, it is that we may enjoy them. 1 Tim. 6:17. It is a great reproach to religion when God opens his hand liberally and supplies our wants, that we should stingily withhold them from ourselves and our dependents. "He has made everything beautiful in his time... I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life. And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labor; it is the gift of God." Eccles. 3:11-13. Compare Eccles. 4:8, 6:1, 2.

17. One species of sin against this commandment is common in all ages and countries. It relates to boundary lines between neighbors. The forms in which this sin is committed are exceedingly numerous, but they are all forbidden under the general prohibition to alter landmarks. Deut.. 19:14, 27:17; Job 24:2; Proverbs 22:28, 23:10.

18. A sin kindred to the last mentioned is greed for land beyond our necessities, and a desire to hold it for its own sake. There is no little of this spirit in some parts of the world; and yet there is no mode of violating this commandment more strictly forbidden. "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, until there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth." Isaiah 5:8. Compare Micah 2:2.

19. The Scriptures do not require a community of goods. "The Most High has divided to the nations their inheritance." Deut. 32:8. He

divided to the tribes of Israel and to each family in every tribe a separate portion. He takes also the desolate and sets him in families. It is true indeed that when the church was in her infant state in Jerusalem, and had great numbers of poor and suffering members, God poured out a spirit of liberality, according to the exigencies of the case, and "all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." Acts 2:44, 45. But this was wholly a voluntary and temporary arrangement. In addressing Ananias, Peter expressly said, that there was no law on the subject binding any man, "While it remained, was it not your own? and after it was sold, was it not in your own power?" Acts 5:4.

20. What shall we say of law-suits? It is very clear that litigiousness is contrary to the spirit of the gospel. Our Savior said, "As for the one who wants to sue you and take away your shirt, let him have your coat as well." Matt. 5:40. This passage has been uniformly understood as a call upon us to repress that natural desire for insisting upon our legal rights before courts. Paul also warns his Corinthians to abstain from all litigation before heathen magistrates. 1 Cor. 6:1-7. Let no man go to law for a mere tittle, involving no principle. "A bad settlement is better than a good lawsuit." Avoid a law-suit, if you can, without wrong to someone.

21. Perhaps one of the most common errors respecting property is the neglect of hearty prayer to God on that subject. "Then shall you remember the Lord your God: for it is he who gives you power to get wealth." Deut. 8:18. "Feed me with food convenient for me." Proverbs 30:8. "In all your ways acknowledge him." Proverbs 3:6. "Give us this day our daily bread." Matt. 6:11.

22. Sometimes theft and robbery are committed directly against God. He is the rightful proprietor of all things. Whatever therefore he claims as proper for his worship, our time, the time of our servants, our property and our affections, should be sincerely rendered to him. "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob

you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--because you are robbing me" Mal. 3:8, 9. Compare John 10:1. Sacrilege is a heinous sin. "It is a snare to the man who devours that which is holy." Proverbs 20:25. The sin that filled up the measure of the iniquity of the haughty monarch of Babylon was taking the vessels of God's house, and thus lifting himself up against the Lord of heaven. Dan. 5:23. X13:It should greatly deter us from any and every violation of this precept that God visits solemn judgments upon those who transgress it. "The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them." Proverbs 21:7. "As the partridge sits on eggs, and hatches them not, so he who gets riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool." Jer. 17:11. Compare Psalm 55:23; Proverbs 22:23; Hab. 2:6-13; Zeh. 5:3, 4; 1 Cor. 6:10; James 5:1-6.

24. On the other hand an exceedingly rich blessing is surely promised to those who obey this commandment. "A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked." Psalm 37:16. Compare Proverbs 16:8; Matt. 6:9-34; Matt. 25:31-44; 1 Tim. 6:17-19.

CONCLUSION. Never in any wise be an instrument of sowing the seeds of enmity between the rich and the poor. If you are poor, beware of envying the rich. If you knew their crosses and their miseries—you would probably think them heavier than your own. James 5:9; Ecc. 5:12. If you are rich; beware of despising the poor. In so doing you reproach your Maker. Proverbs 17:5.

The Ninth Commandment

"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."
Exodus 20:16

The tongue is, at the same time, the best part of man, and his worst part: with good government, none is more useful; and without good government, none is more mischievous. —Anacharsis.

A wound from a tongue is worse than a wound from the sword. —Pythagoras.

There is nothing so delightful as the hearing or speaking of truth. —Plato.

Truth is the foundation of all knowledge and the cement of all societies. —Casaubon.

Let us remember that not our actions only, but the fruits of our lips are to be brought into the solemn account, which we must give to the great Judge of all the earth; and that the day is coming when all our idle and unprofitable talk which has proceeded from the evil treasury of a depraved heart, will undergo a strict examination..... And if foolish and wicked speeches are to be accounted for in the day of judgment, let us set a watch on the door of our lips to prevent them, and labor daily to use our tongue so that it may indeed be, as it is in Scripture called, our glory. —Doddridge.

Tale-bearing is as bad an office as a man can put himself into, to be the publisher of every man's faults, divulging what was secret, aggravating crimes, and making the worst of everything that was amiss, with a design to blast and ruin men's reputation, and to sow discord among neighbors. The word used for a tale-bearer signifies a pedler, the interlopers of trade; for tale-bearers pick up ill-natured stories at one house, and utter them at another, and commonly barter slander by way of exchange. —Matthew Henry.

When we are not able wholly to separate from the wicked, we should double our watchfulness, and especially impose a strict restraint

upon our tongues, lest we should be betrayed into boasting, reviling, slandering, flattering, or trifling conversation; remembering that they will criticize every expression, and turn it, if they can, to our disadvantage, and to the discredit of religion. Sometimes it may be necessary to keep silence even from good words, when they are likely to excite profane contempt or rage; yet in general we run into an extreme when we are backward to engage in edifying discourse." — Thomas Scott.

Perhaps on no one point of morals has so much been written or spoken as on the use of the tongue. Ancients and moderns, heathens and Christians, have alike said many excellent things. The pen is subject to the same laws as the tongue. It is an artificial tongue, speaking to those at a distance in time or place. What a man may not speak, he should not write. Indeed, writing evil things often does more harm than speaking them. We may sin not only by the words used, but also by the tones with which they are spoken, and by looks and gestures. The language of pantomime is universal, vigorous, and easily perverted. "A worthless person, a wicked man, who goes around speaking dishonestly, who winks his eyes, signals with his feet, and gestures with his fingers." Proverbs 6:12, 13.

In many ways we may sin with our tongues. Laurentius enumerates as many sins of the tongue as there are letters in the alphabet. In his Christian Directory, Richard Baxter gives a list of thirty sins of speech, beginning with blasphemy. In expounding the third and ninth commandments, the Westminster Assembly makes the number still larger. There is, therefore, no lack of matter on such a theme.

Some speak too fast. Merely rapid articulation is not here intended. But statements made without reflection, though not designed to mislead, are a great evil. "There is more hope for a fool than for someone who speaks without thinking." Proverbs 29:20. The intellect of such is in a state unfriendly to accuracy of knowledge or

statement. He seldom improves in mind or manners. He jumps at conclusions, and wishes others to do the same.

Others speak too often. When awake and in company they are seldom silent. In the absence of things weighty, wise or true; trifles, folly, or falsehood serve their turn. It is a mark of intolerable self-conceit to be continually offering unsolicited opinions. Even the oracles of the heathen were sometimes silent, though paid for speaking.

Others say too much. Not content with stating what is called for, they proceed to tiresome and sinful lengths. They are neither "swift to hear," nor "slow to speak."

Others speak too soon. They do not inquire, listen and consider, but are ready to deliver their views at all times, and often in dashing style. "A wise man regards time and judgment," but they disregard both. "The one who gives an answer before he listens— this is foolishness and disgrace for him." Proverbs 18:13. As "there is a time to speak," so "there is a time to keep silence." Eccles. 3:7. One of these times is when you have nothing pertinent to say. Another is, when others are speaking. Did any family ever come to much good, where the young were not taught to be silent when the old were speaking, or where all the children were allowed to speak at once? Another such time is when we first visit a friend overwhelmed with affliction. Some sympathies are best expressed by silence. Thus, Job's friends "sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spoke a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great." Job 2:13.

When others are greatly heated by passion, it is usually best to be silent. A very godly man wrote down this rule, "I will never talk to an angry man." In general, men probably speak too much. The Scriptures warn us on this point. "A fool's voice is known by multitude of words." Eccles. 5:3. "A fool also is full of words." Eccles.

10:14. "When there are many words, sin is unavoidable, but the one who controls his lips is wise." Proverbs 10:19.

Talkativeness is not always innocent. Even good and wise men censure it. One of our proverbs is, "The fool's tongue is long enough to cut his own throat." Babblers were never held in high esteem among a virtuous people. "Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babbler is no better." Eccles. 10:11. This odious character is often more or less acquired by those who suppose themselves unsuspected of it. Of many a man it is said, "He is not worth minding, he is always talking." This is a sign that all is not right. One may plead that he is a licensed character, and that he was always allowed to say just what he pleased. But it may be asked, Who signed and gave the license? Can it be produced? It never came from God, and godly men would not dare to sanction what God condemns. If any man has such license, he forged it.

By excessive talking professors of religion make sad the hearts of their brethren, and all men are less esteemed for it. The judgment of mankind is with Solomon, that "a fool utters all his mind; but a wise man keeps himself under control." Proverbs 29:11; and that "even a fool, when he holds his peace, is counted wise; and he who shuts his lips is esteemed a man of understanding." Proverbs 17:2. Someone has well said: "He is not a fool that has unwise thoughts, but he who utters them." Quarles: "A word unspoken is, like the sword in the scabbard—yours. If vented, your sword is in another's hand. If you desire to be thought wise, be so wise as to hold your tongue."

It is much to be lamented that some can never be cured of the folly of much speaking. To them silence is torture. Like one of the ancients they might say, "If I hold my tongue, I shall give up the Spirit." Job 13:19. They know little of the peace and quiet of one who follows them not. "Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue, keeps his soul from troubles." Proverbs 21:23. The troubles brought on by an unbridled tongue in this life are but a prelude to far worse in the next.

Excessive talking is frequently attended by loud speaking. The former betrays self-conceit; the latter impudence. One feature of as bad a character as is sketched in Scripture is that "she is loud." Proverbs 7:11. "The woman named Folly is loud and brash. She is ignorant and doesn't even know it." Proverbs 9:13. It was a bright ornament of the character of the divine Redeemer that he was gentle and quiet, and did "not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." Isaiah 42:2. He was not a clamorous person, but meek and lowly.

Is not the following a realistic sketch? When others were speaking, he was restless, and if ruled to entire silence, he was miserable. Ordinarily he seemed to have some amiable traits, but when others had the good sense to listen to his wit or wisdom, he was in a specially good temper. The more you attended to him, the louder and more emphatic he was. On nearly all subjects he knew something; on many, he knew much; on some, he was an oracle in his own esteem. Our hero wished to pass for a benevolent man. He was great at a public meeting. He commonly said something, and was full of promises in aid of the cause. To fulfill them was far from him. His children caught his spirit, though in his presence they were sometimes forced to keep silence. But when they had a chance, they lost no time. Even on his death-bed the same propensity was sometimes manifest, and he left the world without seeming to know that he bore the character of a babler.

One of his townsmen was little like him. He was a man of few words. When he did speak he was heard with marked respect. If others were impatient, it was because he was slow to utter his mind. His maxim, was, "The fewer words, the less sin." He thought much and weighed his words well. Far removed from sourness, he was given to self-communion. His prayers were brief, but fervent and comprehensive. His words were well ordered. He was not hasty to utter anything, especially before God. His sincerity was apparent. His word was as good as his bond or his oath. He was rarely required to explain or retract any of his statements; but if he had been mistaken, he frankly

said so. His children, though sprightly and joyous, were neither pert nor impudent. They honored his gray hairs. In him "the effect of righteousness was quietness and assurance forever." Isaiah 32:17. His end was peace. Survivors generally mentioned his name with honor. His family never blushed to own him as their former guide and head.

Would it not be wise for every man to say with a servant of God of the seventeenth century, "I am resolved, by the grace of God, never to speak much—lest I often speak too much; and not to speak at all—rather than to no purpose."

Our words should also be pure and chaste. How many narratives, anecdotes, songs, riddles, and questions are indelicate, and therefore unchristian? How many hints, allusions, innuendos, insinuations, and surmises are of this description? Nearly everything in the form of double entendre falls under the same condemnation. Whatever pollutes the mind is wicked, and never should be repeated. This class of evils is vastly sustained by the theater, by works of wit and fiction, and by many popular ballads. Tradition also shows both fidelity and industry in transmitting impure sayings from age to age. Those who thus sin sometimes excuse their conduct by saying that "unto the pure all things are pure," but they seem to forget that "unto those who are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." Tit. 1:15. This latter class constitutes no small portion of mankind. The sow washes more frequently than the sheep, and yet is not clean. The nature of the flock is to avoid the mire. Shun those who are foul-mouthed. Never smile at their impurity. Never imitate them. "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." Eph. 4:29. "But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips." Col. 3:8. "Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals." 1 Corinthians 15:33. Many who greatly offend against these

laws of speech, would be both surprised and displeased if their sin was charged upon them.

Another grievous sin of the tongue is flattery, which consists in undue or unseasonable praise. Few things are more ensnaring. Riches, talents, family, office, person, attainments, deeds of distinction, and even vices furnish occasions for it. Husbands flatter their wives, and wives their husbands; parents their children, and children their parents; ministers their people, and people their ministers, and all under the pretense of manifesting esteem. The poor flatter the rich, and demagogues the people. Yet all commendation is not flattery; but that which exceeds the truth is always sinful, and untimely praise, even when true, disgusts wise men and puffs up the minds of the simple. It was a good purpose of Beveridge, "I am resolved, by the grace of God, to speak of other men's sins only before their faces, and of their virtues only behind their backs." The only exception to this rule is that of necessity. Properly observed, it would banish a large part of social misery.

Flattery is always an unkindness. "A man who flatters his neighbor, spreads a net for his feet." Proverbs 29:5. Those are good words of Elihu, "I will show partiality to no one, nor will I flatter any man; for if I were skilled in flattery, my Maker would soon take me away." Job 32:21-22. Paul says, "Never once did we try to win you with flattery." 1 Thess. 2:5. Courtly manners may require such words, but the truth, even bluntly spoken, is more pleasing to God. Almost all flatterers have some wicked design in view. "Wisdom will save you from the immoral woman, from the flattery of the adulterous woman." Proverbs 2:16.

Nor is the sin or danger of flattery diminished when it is directed to ourselves. Indeed this is sometimes the worst of all. Plutarch said, "Every man is his own greatest flatterer." The undue commendation of others would harm us but little, if we were honest with our own hearts. "Nor is it honorable to seek one's own honor." Proverbs 25:27. "Let another man praise you and not your own mouth; a

stranger, and not your own lips." Proverbs 27:2. The only thing that can justify speaking in our own praise is the necessary defense of ourselves or our offices. John 8:49. 2 Cor. 12:11-18. But let no man put upon himself a lower estimate than the truth requires. Exodus 4:10-14; Romans 12:3. This is a great evil under the sun. Kings have their courtiers, and few are sunk so low as not at times to have their sycophants. Yet if a man is really displeased with flattery, it will seldom be offered. To be pleased with it is to become a candidate for shame, perhaps for ruin.

Every human being is entitled to some respect. Even the guilty felon on his way to execution should not be mocked or rudely gazed at. Every well-meaning person is entitled to such treatment as will express approbation of his good character. But fawning servility is due to no mortal. "The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips." Psalm 12:3.

Among some "to be agreeable" is their goal. This sin is one of the most degrading to him who practices it, and tempting to him who is flattered. It greatly hinders the proper giving and receiving of reproof. One who was famous in his day said, "I will do my best to cross any man in his sins; if I have not thanks of him, yet I shall of my own conscience." Flatterers are quite sure to be backbiters. This is neither conjecture, nor the mere fruit of observation. The Bible so teaches. "He who goes about as a tale-bearer, reveals secrets; therefore meddle not with him who flatters with his lips." Proverbs 20:19.

A defeated flatterer becomes a malicious slanderer. His principles are bad. He who will lie in your favor will upon a turn lie against you. He who will unduly praise, will unduly censure. Flattery and slander are branches of the same trade, and are carried on by the same people. Those called in the Bible, "whisperers," belong to the same class. They go about their work by stealth. They often enjoin secrecy on their dupes. To them an evil report is music. They are often very cunning in avoiding responsibility before men, but God knows the

filthiness of their hearts. Their career is sometimes long, but generally ends in open shame. They have sometimes poisoned the minds of many with their falsehoods. They often speak well of a man to his friends, but evil of him to his enemies. "He who utters a slander, is a fool." Proverbs 10:18. A heathen once said, "the most dangerous of wild beasts is a slanderer; of tame ones, a flatterer."

Men sometimes pretend to know some great evil of another, but will not tell what it is. They know that the human imagination, appealed to mysteriously, can soon outrun any common scale of enormity, and so they set it to work. That such conduct is base, cruel, and indefensible, few will deny. Yet how many practice it! And if, instead of going abroad with such or other charges against their neighbors, men would go directly to them, how much evil would be prevented. "If you argue your case with a neighbor, do not betray another man's confidence, or he who hears it may shame you and you will never lose your bad reputation." Proverbs 25:9, 10. The law of love to man may be violated in speech without uttering a word that is not true. To say as much of any particular person is often slanderous in its effect, and may tear a good name to pieces.

Tale-bearing and news-carrying are species of slander, and are very mischievous. In this more than in most ways, one man may produce deep and extensive distress. Like the incendiary, who has fired a city and fled to an eminence to ravish his eyes with the progress of the ruin he has wrought, the talebearer loves to embroil families and communities, and then, if possible, escape unnoticed and unhurt. Often he is found out in time to receive the frowns of the virtuous, but commonly not until he has engendered strife. Paul says such people were found in his day, "At the same time, they also learn to be idle, going from house to house; they are not only idle, but are also gossips and busybodies, saying things they shouldn't say." 1 Tim. 5:13. Hopkins says that Paul here gives "a true description of giddy flies in our times, that are always roving from house to house, and skipping about, now to this man's ear, and by and by to that, and buzzing reports of what ill they have heard or observed of others."

In the law of Moses is this statute, "You shall not go up and down as a tale-bearer among your people." Lev. 19:16. "A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret." Proverbs 11:13. Every man, family, and group have secrets, which it does not concern others to know. If by accident, or in confidence, they come to your knowledge, reveal them not. To be a spy upon your neighbor is a base occupation, and he to whom confidence is not sacred, is truly debased.

None but the imprudent are in the habit of telling their secrets. "If you would teach secrecy to others, begin with yourself. How can you expect another to keep a secret when you yourself cannot?" It was a wise determination of a godly man of the last generation, "In general, I will deal in secrets as little as possible." Much social misery is owing to tale-bearing. "Where no wood is, the fire goes out; so where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceases." Proverbs 26:20. The dreadful effects of this vile practice are clearly stated in Scripture. "The words of a talebearer are as wounds; and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly." Proverbs 18:8. Among the seven abominations which the Lord hates, four of them are, "a lying tongue, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaks lies, and he who sows discord among brethren." Proverbs 6:17-19. Compare Proverbs 11:9.

Lying in some form is a common attendant on tale-bearing. Useless strife always follows it. It argues a sordid mind, and a meddling disposition. "A passerby who meddles in a quarrel that's not his, is like one who grabs a dog by the ears." Proverbs 26:17. To others he gives trouble, while he has a large share himself. Very few men openly declare themselves candidates for contempt, but tale-bearers gain it without direct seeking. If such people met with no encouragement, they would cease their evil work. If none will dance, they will not pipe. Pity it is, that they are not made ashamed of their evil course. He who listens to them is partaker of their sins. A godly man "takes not up a reproach against his neighbor." Proverbs 15:3. Tale-hearing is twin sister to tale-bearing. "Where the carcass is,

there the vultures will be gathered together." And where evil report is rifest, there foul birds will gather, which prey upon ruined character.

How court-houses are crowded by this sort of people, when matters of a scandalous nature are to be investigated! Their dolorous notes of regret do not even conceal their hypocrisy. Like sepulchers, their memories are full of dead men's bones and all corruption. If none would hear evil reports, none would be made. "The north-wind drives away rain; so does an angry countenance a backbiting tongue." Proverbs 25:23. Compare Jer. 20:10; Neh. 6:6. "It is not the lie that passes through the mind, but the lie that sticks in and settles in the mind, which does the hurt."

Hall says, "There would not be so many open mouths to detract and slander—if there were not so many open ears to entertain them. If I cannot stop other men's mouths from speaking evil, I will either open my mouth to reprove it, or else I will stop my ears from hearing it; and let him see in my face that he has no room in my heart."

"A good name is better than precious ointment." Eccles. 7:1. Yes, "a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." Proverbs 22:1. Character is all the estate many have. To any man it is of great value. Hopkins: "Indeed a good name is so excellent a blessing that there is but one thing to be preferred before it, and that is a good conscience." Everywhere and always human happiness much depends upon it. Compared with it, other possessions are paltry: "Who steals my purse, steals trash. But he who filches from me my good name, makes me poor indeed." Who is the gainer by tattling or slander? He who utters either is greatly polluted. He who listens to either is an "eater of calumnies," as the Syriac calls Satan. He of whom either is uttered, does not thereby lose a good conscience, but he sometimes loses his temper, which is the source of much of his enjoyment; and sometimes he loses his good name, which is the best legacy he can leave his children.

Both tattling and slander are commonly malignant, and always evil. Nor is any one safe from these robbers. No lock and key, no armed sentinel, no life of usefulness, no solid worth can secure a good name from their attacks. "No might, nor greatness, can escape censure; back-wounding calumny strikes the purest virtue. What king is so strong—that he can tie up the gall in the slanderous tongue?" Well does the word of God describe such: "Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips." Romans 3:13. "There are those who speak like the piercings of a sword." Proverbs 12:18. One asked a Spartan if his sword was sharp. He replied, "Sharper than calumny."

The good of all ages have testified against these sins. One said, "The most abandoned and sordid minds have the least abhorrence of calumny. He who is but moderately wicked, dares not venture upon it. He who has the least particle of integrity in his nature disdains it." Another said, "The malice of evil tongues cast upon a godly man is only like a mouthful of smoke blown upon a diamond, which, though it clouds its beauty for the present, yet it is easily rubbed off, and the gem restored with little trouble to its owner."

Were this the proper place, it might be well to consider at length how we should behave under such wrongs. One said, "The sparks of calumny will be presently extinct of themselves unless you blow them." In some cases this is true, but in all cases imitate Christ, and commit yourself to Him who judges righteously.

Detraction is a species of slander. It consists in taking away something from the character of another. It denies not all his merits, but it puts in many abatements, exceptions, and insinuations. It is a common sin with rivals, sectaries, and partisans. Sallust explains to us the motives of such; "By casting down others, they hope to rise to honor." But to prove that one man is base will not prove another noble or virtuous. One of the basest ways of sinning with the tongue, is so to attack the character of one, who can make no fair defense. Some will give no names, others will avoid all particulars, but yet

both will so describe things as to give cruel thrusts. If called to an account, they basely enough put you to the proof of their having said anything against you, and show the cunning of a fox in eluding a pursuit which is becoming hot.

The great difficulty in all evil speaking is that so soon as a man utters it, his pride and self-love force him to make it good. Unless compelled, he seldom retracts. To injure a man is the surest way to hate him, and to wish to have ground of justification in such a case is quite natural. Passion, once enlisted, is blind and obstinate. Most of the hard and cruel things said, would, but for this cause, be taken back. Detraction is seldom followed by retraction.

A fondness for the unusual and marvelous is one of the sins of every age, and shows itself in speech. To make a mountain out of a mole-hill, and to abound in the amazing may make fools gape, but will cause wise men to fear. When such men speak soberly, they fail of gaining credit. Some of the most painful scenes witnessed in social fellowship arise from the love of amazing stories. Asseverations, and even oaths, do not secure belief in them. He who duly fears God, will take care neither to invent, retail, nor even listen to them.

It is to be regretted that superlatives are so commonly in use. How many speak of others as the the cleverest, the wisest, or the kindest people they ever knew! How often do we hear such expressions as these: "This is the hottest, or the coldest, or the darkest day I ever saw!" Perhaps these very people have said the same things oftentimes, and do not really mean what they say. They may not so much wish to deceive—so much as to be impressive. True, all hyperbole is not unlawful. John 21:25. But this habitual use of it is out of place, weakens respect for our sobriety of mind, if not for our love of truth, and utterly fails of any good object.

Exaggeration is said to run in some families. In giving solemn testimony there is often no little lying of this kind. Jonathan

Edwards wisely "resolved, in speech, never to speak anything but the pure and simple truth."

The spirit which leads men to the amazing, often guides them to boasting. As formerly, so now, "most men will proclaim his own goodness." Proverbs 20:6. So they boast of their exploits, property, influence, talents, charity, family, friends, and correspondents. Those "whose glory is in their shame," go further, and proudly tell of things which should crimson their cheeks. They seem to have one pleasure in committing a sin—and two in speaking of it! Men sometimes unwittingly let others know that they are knaves—"The buyer haggles over the price, saying, "It's worthless," then brags about getting a bargain!" Proverbs 20:14. Perhaps there are commonly too many words used in buying and selling. Many assert their large possession of qualities, of which they have little or none. And "whoever boasts himself of a false gift, is like clouds and wind without rain." Proverbs 25:14. Such a man is sometimes said to be windy, and he is a mere puff. "All such boasting is evil." James 4:16. "Boasters" do not bear a high character for truth in other respects, and Paul enrolls them among backbiters, haters of God, inventors of evil things, blasphemers, and such like wicked characters. Romans 1:30, and 2 Tim. 3:2.

It is very important that we should avoid the extremes of excessive confidence or doubtfulness in our statements. Some men conjecture, think, suppose, presume, guess—but are not sure but that things are or were thus and so. On the other hand some know, aver, declare most positively, are ready to make oath about trifles and things in their nature doubtful. The first class is certain of nothing; the latter, is certain of everything. The one by seeming doubtful of plain facts well known to them, would hang an innocent man; the other would bring about the same result by speaking so confidently of things doubtful as to destroy their own credibility in other things. The rule is—obtain correct views, if you can, and express them modestly, but clearly; but if there is room for doubt, do not be so positive. If you know a thing, say so; if you know it not, say so.

There is much sin committed respecting promises. Some promises are wicked, and should be neither made nor kept. If made, they are to be repented of. Some are rash, yet not wicked; such are to be kept. Rashness is always a folly and commonly a sin, and so should be mourned over. But "he who swears to his own hurt and changes not," is the man that shall never be moved. Psalm 15:4, 5. But even in lawful and prudent promises, what slackness of fulfillment! How few men keep all their engagements! How little punctuality and promptness do we see! If a man would be confided in by none, let him promise much—and perform little. There is no surer mark of general corruption than lack of fidelity. "When the Son of man comes, shall he find faith on the earth?"

For remarks on blasphemy, perjury and profane swearing, see my comments on the third commandment.

Following the usual course of theologians, Thomas Boston says, "Lies are of four sorts:

1. Jestling lies, that is, when a person speaks that which is contrary to the known truth, in a jesting or ludicrous way; and embellishes his discourse with his own fictions, designing thereby to impose on others. See Hos. 7:3.
2. Officious lies, that is, when one speaks that which is contrary to the truth, and the dictates of his conscience, to do good to himself or others thereby. Job 13:7; Romans 3:8.
3. Pernicious lies, that is, when a person raises and spreads a false report, with a design to do mischief to another.
4. Rash lies, that is, when a person utters that which is false through surprise, inadvertency, and customary looseness of speech." 2 Sam. 13:30.

Perhaps of all the sins that men commit, none is more difficult to be cured than lying. Hateful as it is, it adheres to men with great

tenacity. Montaigne: "After a tongue has once got the knack of lying—it becomes almost impossible it is almost to reclaim it." This is felt in churches formed in heathen countries at this day. The same difficulty was experienced by Paul and Titus, at least in reference to the churches in Crete. Paul says, "Even one of their own prophets has said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.' This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith." Titus 1:12, 13.

It is not necessary to be able to classify every kind of lying. The essence of the sin consists in an intention to deceive. If anything is spoken, it should be the truth. Of every species of this sin the old saying is true: "A liar should have a good memory." Montaigne expresses it thus: "He who has not a good memory should never take upon him the trade of lying."

Tillotson's illustration of this idea has been often quoted: "Truth and reality have all the advantages of appearance and many more. Why does any man pretend, or seem to be that which he is not, but because he thinks it good to have such a quality as he pretends to? for to counterfeit and pretend is to put on the appearance of some real excellency. Now, the best way in the world for a man to seem to be anything, is really to be what he would seem to be. Besides, it is many times as troublesome to make good the pretense of a good quality, as to have it. And if a man have it not, it is ten to one but he is discovered to lack it, and then all his pains and labor to seem to have it are lost. There is something unnatural in painting, which a skillful eye will easily discern from native beauty.

"It is hard to pretend and act a part, for a long time; for where truth is not at the bottom, nature will always be endeavoring to return, and will leak out and betray herself one time or other. Therefore, if any man think it convenient to seem good, let him be so indeed, and then his goodness will appear to everybody's satisfaction; so that, upon all accounts, sincerity is true wisdom. Particularly as to the affairs of this world, integrity has many advantages over all the fine and

artificial ways of dissimulation and deceit; it is much the plainer and easier, much the safer and more secure way of dealing in the world; it has less of trouble and difficulty, of entanglement and perplexity, of danger and hazard in it; it is the shortest and nearest way to our end, carrying us there in a straight line, and will hold out and last longest. The arts of deceit and cunning do continually grow weaker, and less effectual and serviceable to those who use them; whereas integrity gains strength by use; and the more and longer any man practices it, the greater service it does him, by confirming his reputation, and encouraging those with whom he has to do, to repose the greatest trust and confidence in him, which is an unspeakable advantage in the business and affairs of life. Truth is always consistent with itself, and needs nothing to help it out; it is always near at hand, and sits upon our lips, and is ready to drop out before we are aware; whereas a lie is troublesome, and sets a man's invention upon the rack, and one trick needs a great many more to make it good."

The reason why lying is so hard to be cured is that it is seated in sin itself. Men go astray from the womb, speaking lies. How few there are, even in boyhood, who possess the entire confidence of their play-mates in matters of veracity. Once in a while, such a case is observed and always attracts attention.

'Thomas' was never known to tell a lie. He would sometimes do wrong, but when asked about it, his chin would curl up, and his lip quiver—and out would come the truth. When he was eight or ten years old, bad boys, who wished to do any mischief, would not ask him to go with them; often they would not let him go with them; for they said, "he will be sure to tell all about it, if he is asked." In this way he kept out of much sin and sorrow too. Yet when the boys were playing ball and a dispute arose, it was pleasing to see how they would all agree to leave the decision to Thomas. Everybody knew that he would tell the truth. If any boy was not willing to take the word of Thomas, it was thought that he must wish to cheat. When Thomas was quite a young man, he was called into court to give his evidence under oath, and he told a modest plain story. One of the

lawyers told the jury that the young man behaved very well, but he was so young that they ought not to give much weight to what he said. But the judge told the jury that there was no better witness, old or young, than Thomas. So he was honored there before all the people. Thomas lived to be an old man, and was much respected. He was always a man of truth. When he died there were many sad faces. Perhaps very few have known more than one or two people, whose character for veracity was like that of Thomas.

This sin of lying is exceedingly daring. "A liar is brave towards God, and a coward towards man." "A lie has no legs," and so cannot stand. Blessed is the man "who speaks the truth in his heart," Psalm 15:2. Compare Proverbs 12:19. Downright lying, without an object, is perhaps not very common, though some such cases do appear. But equivocation, prevarication, twisting men's words, disparagement of others, undue praise of others, untrue commendation of ourselves, denying our own gifts, exaggerating the faults of others, and making "a man an offender for a word"—are kinds of falsehood, always having some guilt in them. In short, whatever is contrary to frankness, fairness, and sincerity—should be avoided.

It is to the great reproach of human nature that there should so often seem to be manifest pleasure in falsehood. "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone." Rev. 21:8. Compare Rev. 22:15.

Not a little injustice is done, not a little sin is committed by a class of men, who denominate themselves critics. Some time ago a minister quoted the words "we be all dead men." A vain and conceited young man, walking home, said that he was astonished at the minister's ignorance of grammar, and so occupied the attention of others, and flattered his own vanity—by his silly criticism. A large body of this class of men may properly be denominated professional fault-finders.

Stowell: "There is more surmising, insinuating, censuring of what is dishonorable, inconsistent, or iniquitous—than expressed approbation of what is pure and just." Such have no patience with the principle laid down by Bunyan in the Preface to "Grace Abounding." Speaking of that work he says: "He who likes it—let him receive it; and he who does not—let him produce something better." A certain class of critics have no heart and no talent to produce a better work; and yet they delight in showing how poor is the production of another, who is far their superior.

It cannot be denied that under the name of criticism, the very worst feelings and basest passions of the heart often give vent to themselves. More than one critic, in "attempting to commit murder—has committed suicide." A man is as accountable for his temper as a critic, as in any other respect. One of the worst misapplications of criticism is to preaching; it seems to destroy nearly all prospect of doing good to those who indulge it. One such critic may infect a whole church with his hateful spirit. Such critics can hardly be profited—they are self-constituted judges; they are hardly hearers of the word—much less are they commonly doers of it; they do not go to the house of God in a mood to be profited. If such would see divine light—they must first put out their own candle.

It is a great fault in some that they relish discourses entirely beyond their comprehension. With many to be plain, and base—is the same thing. The loss to one of such a critical temper, is great—he loses both enjoyment and edification; he feeds on wind. If he knows himself he must feel sad at his own leanness of soul. Nor can he be much profited until there is a change in him. Happy will he be, if that change be speedy and thorough.

Passing judgment before hearing evidence or argument, is a common sin. "All are not thieves—whom the dogs bark at." Many an innocent man is clamorously and falsely accused. To come out against the innocent or for the guilty, is a great sin. "He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, even they both are abomination to

the Lord." Proverbs 17:15. A tumult or an uproar for or against a man —is no proof of truth. Nor are we innocent in justifying ourselves, when we should condemn ourselves. Luke 16:15. Confessions of sin in prayer, if not true, are very shocking to pious ears, and must be offensive to God.

Making merry with the miseries of others is a great sin of the tongue and heart. "Those who rejoice at the misfortune of others will be punished." Proverbs 17:5. We should be sorry both at the sorrows and sins of even our worst foe. "Don't gloat when your enemy falls, and don't let your heart rejoice when he stumbles, or the Lord will see, be displeased, and turn His wrath away from him." Proverbs 24:17, 18. None but men of fiendish dispositions allow the violation of this law.

Railing, reviling, and scornful words are also condemned in Scripture. "Be compassionate and humble, not paying back evil for evil or insult for insult but, on the contrary, giving a blessing." 1 Pet. 3:9. If another reviles you, set him an example of patience and forgiveness. Paul puts "railers" among "fornicators, covetous, idolaters, drunkards, and extortioners." 1 Cor. 5:11. "When they hurled their insults at Him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly." 1 Pet. 2:23; Gal. 4:29. Of the early Christians Paul says, "being reviled—we bless." In reading Heb. 11:33-39, John Blair Smith once said, of all the things mentioned in this catalogue of trials, perhaps the hardest to be borne were these "cruel mockings." Hopkins: "As Nero for his barbarous sport wrapped up the Christians in animal skins and then set dogs to molest them; so these railers disguise the brethren in false shapes, and then fall upon them and beat them."

Our Savior condemned the use of the scornful titles Raca and You fool; surely then we are not at liberty to call men Liars; "for a liar loses all credit and reputation among men." Whoever has a right sense of honor would prefer death, rather than a life in good society,

where he was justly esteemed a liar. I Cor. 4:12. Our rulers in church and in state are to be spoken of respectfully. We read of some who "are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord." 2 Pet. 2:10, 11. Let those who indulge in scornful language consider well the import of Matt. 5:22. "A soft tongue breaks the bone." Proverbs 25:15. "A soft answer turns away wrath but grievous words stir up anger." Proverbs 15:1.

Quarreling is one of the lowest vices, and "recrimination is the last resort of guilt." The late Ebenezer Porter entered it among his solemn purposes, "When I am angry I will never speak, until I have taken at least as much time for reflection as Athenodorus prescribed to Caesar." This was, "Always repeat the twenty-four letters of the alphabet before you give way to the impulse of anger."

Scolding is a kind of threatening without the power, or at least without the intention, of punishing. It is finding fault in a surly manner. It is one of the most unamiable of domestic vices. It banishes peace, spoils the temper, and makes many a house the miniature of hell. Many "hard speeches" are uttered in this way. The effect on children is so discouraging that they often become desperate, thinking it is of no use to try to please.

Any unnecessary exposure and repetition of the faults of others, is a sin. Proverbs 17:9. It was a resolution of one of the greatest men of his day, "Never to say anything at all against anybody, but when it is perfectly agreeable to the highest degree of Christian honor, and love to mankind, agreeable to the lowest humility, and sense of my own faults and failings, and agreeable to the golden rule. And when I have said anything against anyone, to examine it strictly by the test of this resolution."

"Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving." Eph. 5:4. "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of

judgment." Matt. 12:36. "Idle words" are words without effect, and are "frothy, unsavory stuff, tending to no purpose, nor good at all."

When Latimer, in his examination, heard the pen of the notary who was writing behind a curtain, he was careful what he said, because he knew it might be brought against him at his trial. All our words will meet us at the tribunal of Christ. The question is often asked, What rules should guide us in the use of humor, wit, satire, irony, sarcasm, and ridicule? The following seem to cover all cases:

1. It is certain that all use of these things is not unlawful. The examples of Elijah, David, and Isaiah prove this. 1 Kings 18:27; Psalm 115:4-8; and Isaiah 44:9-17.
2. Yet they are dangerous talents. They are edgetools, and sometimes cut terribly. "Wit is folly unless a wise man has the keeping of it." It is, therefore, better to err in making a spare use of them, rather than a free use of them. To make a trade of any of them is contemptible.
3. They should never be employed to effect malignant or mischievous purposes, nor to put down truth, nor to defeat justice, nor to uphold wickedness. They should never be wielded against the serious misfortunes or afflictions of men, nor against the good name of any, nor on sacred subjects.
4. They should not be used unseasonably. To some minds they are always unpleasant. Unfitly employed, they ruin friendships. "He is not a wise man who will lose his friend for his wit; but he is less a wise man who will lose his friend for another man's wit." Discretion is better than a witty remark; and friendship is more valuable than fun.
5. In this, as in all things, "love is the fulfilling of the law." Whatever is not benevolent is not wise or right.
6. Their chief use should be to enliven the mind, to promote cheerfulness, to expose absurdities, to lash popular vices, to reprove

self-conceit, and to show the enemies of God's word that these things are not solid tests of truth and righteousness.

7. "The wisdom of man lies not in satirizing the vices and follies of others—but in correcting his own!" A deep sense of our true characters will commonly prevent us from too much severity against others, and from allowing our pleasantries to sink into buffoonery.

The Scriptures also condemn undue and untimely conversation on worldly affairs; all ill-natured, censorious remarks, though they be but surmises; all fiery, bitter wars of words. They also forbid all murmurings and complainings against God; all seductive tempting speeches; all defense and propagation of false doctrine; and all scoffing at sacred things.

But there may be sinful silence as well as sinful speaking. A dumb devil is an evil possession. Ambrose says, "As we must render an account of every idle word, so must we likewise of our idle silence." Another says, "Strange is the disorder that sin has brought into the world; as in the tongue, which is often going when it should be quiet, and often quiet when it should speak. Our tongues are our glory; but they are often found enrapt up in a dark cloud of silence, when they should be shining forth."

Our tongues should be used in acknowledging, adoring, praising, thanking, blessing, extolling, justifying, and supplicating God. We should honor him with our tongues in prayer, in sacred songs, in solemn vows, in humble confessions of sin, in solemn oaths judicially administered, and in professing true religion. On all these points the Bible is full and clear. We should also use our vocal powers in giving honor to whom it is due; in charitable expressions concerning others; in readily acknowledging their good qualities; in hearty and timely expressions of sorrow for the sins and infirmities of others; in giving proper warning to the erring; in pleading the cause of the poor and needy; in advocating truth; in speaking truth; in speaking the whole

truth when properly called to do it; and in confessing our sins and errors known to men, or committed against them.

SELF is a poor theme of conversation, yet indifference to one's character is no fruit of piety. If unjustly accused we may, like Job, David, Jeremiah, Paul and Christ, defend ourselves, John 8:49; 2 Cor. 12:11-18. But no wise man says much of himself unless compelled, and then with modesty and a sacred regard to truth. According to our station, it is also our duty to give reproof, admonition, rebuke, and advice, Proverbs 17:10; Psalm 141:5. True, every man is not to be reproved. "Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse. Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you." Proverbs 9:7, 8. Silence is often the best reproof, and the only wisdom. "I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth as long as the wicked are in my presence." Psalm 39:1.

The most essential quality in a reprover is meekness; next to this are love and humility. Even "sin may be sinfully reproved." Advice is often the best charity; yet "to advise much is a sign that we need advice." In giving advice, do not try to please—but to do real good. An adviser fills a very responsible post. "The greatest trust between man and man is the trust of giving counsel." Beware of the vanity of affecting to know things beyond your reach. Admonition and rebuke must not be untimely, unjust, severe, or bitter. "To him that is afflicted pity should be showed from his friend," Job 6:14. "Timely advice is as lovely as golden apples in a silver basket." Proverbs 25:11. And can anything be more important than that our speech be such as to please God? "By your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned," Matt. 12:37. "O deceptive tongue, what will God do to you? How will he increase your punishment? You will be pierced with sharp arrows and burned with glowing coals" Psalm 120:3, 4.

"Gentle words bring life and health; a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit." Proverbs 15:4. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." Proverbs 18:21. "Worry weighs a person down; an encouraging word cheers a person up." Proverbs 12:25. "A man finds joy in giving an apt reply-- and how good is a timely word!" Proverbs 15:23. "A wise correction to a receptive ear, is like a gold ring or an ornament of gold." Proverbs 25:12. One of the heathen said, "Tongues cut deeper than swords, because they reach even to the soul." A religion which leaves the tongue uncontrolled is mere pretence. "If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless." James 1:26.

After such representations, where is anything to be added to convince men that here is a most weighty matter? If men will not be moved by arguments drawn from human happiness and human misery on earth, from the solemn scenes of the last day, from the miseries of future punishment, and the rewards of a life of piety—their case is beyond the reach of human skill. Thus we get some just views of the number and heinousness of our sins, and of the necessity of divine grace both to pardon and to reform us. Left to ourselves we are undone and helpless. "We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been

made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be." James 3:2-10.

He, who thinks he needs not amazing mercy to blot out the sins of his tongue, is indeed blind! And he, who thinks he shall easily cease to sin by word, knows nothing of the strength of an evil nature, confirmed by evil habits. If we have nothing else to repent of, surely our lips may well abase us. If we have nothing else to confess and bewail, surely each of us has reason to say with Isaiah, "I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips!" If in nothing else we are called to make restitution, have we wronged no one in words? If we can reform nothing else, can we not amend our habits of speech?

Yet, as Leighton says, the conquest of these evils of the tongue "must be done in the heart; otherwise it will be but a charlatan cure, a false imagined conquest." The weights and wheels are in the heart, and the clock strikes according to their motion. A deceitful heart makes a deceitful tongue and lips. The heart is the factory, where deceits and slanders, and other evil speakings are forged; and the tongue is only the outer shop where they are vended, and the lips the door of it; so that such wares as are made within, such and no other can be set out.

From evil thoughts—come evil speakings; from a profane heart—come profane words; and from a malicious heart—come bitter or calumnious words; and from a deceitful heart—come deceitful words, well varnished, but lined with rottenness! And so in general, from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, as our Savior teaches. "What goes into a man's mouth does not make him unclean, but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him unclean."

That which the heart is full of—runs over at the tongue. If the heart is full of God—the tongue will delight to speak of him. If the heart is full of heavenly things within—they will sweetly breathe forth something of their fragrance by the mouth. If the heart is full of nothing but earth—all that man's discourse will have an earthly smell. If the heart is full of nothing but wind, vanity, and folly—the speech will be airy,

and vain, and purposeless. The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom; the law of his God is in his heart." Psalm 37:30, 31.

Nor is it possible for us to effect a thorough change without diligence, watchfulness, and prayer. An unguarded mouth will pour forth folly and wickedness. Therefore after all David's resolutions and efforts he comes to God in earnest prayer, and cries, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips!" Psalm 141:3. If you go on sinning with your lips, you either will repent or not. If you shall repent, you will have more anguish than all the vile pleasure of sin is worth. If you never shall truly repent, how sad your state forever!

Are we not all guilty enough already? Are not our iniquities fearfully multiplied? They are more than the hair of our head. We cannot answer for one of a thousand of our offences. Even now our only hope is in the infinite mercy of God. How sweet are the words of Scripture to those who rightly feel their sinfulness! "If any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin." Wonderful, wonderful are the compassions of the Lord. Oh that we may no longer abuse them, but by them be won to God, to love, to holiness in thought, word, and deed!

Would it not, therefore, be right for you to make these solemn resolutions?

1. I will steadily keep in view my latter end, and remember that soon I must stand before my Judge. I would not live a day or an hour in forgetfulness of the truth—that all my thoughts, words and deeds are to undergo the scrutiny of Him—who is so holy as to hate all sin, and so great as to know all things, and so just as never to clear the guilty.

2. I will endeavor often to ask myself—How would Jesus Christ speak were he in my circumstances? He has left me an example that I should follow his steps. His life is the law of God put in practice. If I walk in his steps, I shall not err.

3. I will rely more and more on the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to preserve me from sins of the tongue. I have too much relied on my own strength and my own virtue—and so I have failed. O Lord, undertake for me!

4. I will constantly strive to have a deep sense of the importance of making a right use of my tongue. I will endeavor to avoid levity of mind—and so escape levity of speech and behavior. By God's grace I will be serious.

5. I will often call myself to an account for my words during the day, and when I have" erred, I will not spare myself from these severe, yet beneficial answers, which my sins deserve. I will not justify, excuse or extenuate the sins of my lips.

6. I will labor to have my mind stored with godly information and reflections, that I may not be tempted to deal in gossip, and scandal, and idle news; and that my words may be instructive to those with whom I mingle.

7. I will endeavor to be more impressed with a sense of the amazing grace and mercy of God to me a sinner, in bidding me hope for his favor, notwithstanding all my offences. Thus I shall have alacrity and joy in resisting evil and seeking holiness.

8. I will labor to have a proper view, not only of the vileness, mischief, and troubles of a loose tongue—but also of its great sinfulness in the sight of God. As an unbridled tongue is a wickedness, I would avoid it, even if it brought me no temporal evil.

9. Above all things, I will seek to be thoroughly renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit. If he will make his abode with me, I shall be able to resist all sin, and overcome all evil habits. To change my nature is beyond my power—but not beyond the power of the Sanctifier. My power is but another name for my feebleness. God's energy is irresistible. "Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips." Psalm 141:3.

The Tenth Commandment

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." Exodus 20:17

This precept was the key that unlocked the mystery of iniquity in the mind of Paul. He says, "I had not known lust, except the law said, You shall not covet," that is, he would not have known that the thought of foolishness, the secret desire of evil was wicked, but for this precept. It served to show him the nature of all the commandments. Charnock: "Paul thought himself a righteous person until he came to measure himself by the exact and spiritual image of the law. His head and the law were acquainted, and then he thought himself a living person: but when his heart and the law came to be acquainted, there he found himself dead, and his high opinion of himself fell to the ground." It is clear, therefore, that this commandment directs attention immediately to the state of the heart. White-washing the sepulcher will do no good, while it is full of dead men's bones. The heart must be purified. There is no substitute for a thorough renewal of nature.

Calvin: "Since it is the will of God that our whole souls should be under the influence of love, every desire inconsistent with charity ought to be expelled from our minds." Stowell: "This closing commandment is of great importance in two distinct points of view—first, as exhibiting the spirit of all the previous commandments, and secondly, as laying the foundation for just and consistent views of all the doctrines of the gospel."

Some have undertaken to trace the progress of concupiscence in the soul, showing its various stages. Perhaps something may be done that way; but there is an inscrutable mystery in iniquity. No man can

understand his errors. Psalm 19:12. The growth of iniquity is like the diffusion of leaven. It is very rapid, and soon changes the whole lump. The more full the consent of the soul to any sin, the more defiled it is. This command clearly settles the point that the seat of the divine government in man is the human heart. When that is right, all is right. When that is wrong, all is wrong.

Let us look at this precept in regard to WEALTH. The Scriptures say that "the ransom of a man's life are his riches;" that the "crown of the wise is their riches;" and that "house and riches are the inheritance of fathers." Proverbs 13:8, 14:24, 19:14. So that God's word admits the lawfulness of possessing riches, and of setting a right value upon them. Although man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God; yet by worldly goods we ordinarily maintain our natural life, support our families, help the poor, and aid in strengthening the cause of Christ. If all men were perfectly holy, riches would, in every case and in every sense, be a blessing. But sin perverts everything. It takes that which was ordained to life, and causes it to be unto death. By reason of sin, riches are ordinarily tempting, seductive, dangerous and ruinous. Our Savior announced this in strong language. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Matt, 19:24.

A right view of the perils of wealth would, with the divine blessing, have a mighty efficacy in curing our covetousness and discontent, and in causing us to cease improperly to love what we have, or sinfully to desire that which belongs to others. Why should we enhance the obstacles to our reaching the kingdom of God?

1. He who increases riches, commonly increases cares. Should these cares become engrossing, salvation is not possible. If we would be saved, religion must command our attention, so as nothing else does. If our minds are eagerly turned to gold and silver, to farms and merchandise, to debts and demands, to gains and losses, religion can take but a slight hold of us, and yet its first call is, "Give me your

heart." If we sit in the house of God with our minds reeking with worldly cares, the best preaching will probably make very slight impression on our minds. Or, if we should be somewhat affected, the service will hardly be over, until worldly thoughts and anxieties rush in like an armed man, and carry us captive.

"The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful" Matt. 13:22. This is a short but sad account of the whole matter. The hope of expelling cares by increasing wealth is as vain as the hope of banishing ravenous birds by multiplying the carcasses on which they prey. He is not wise, "who imagines that the chief power of wealth is to supply wants. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, it creates more wants than it supplies." If even in public worship, we cannot "attend upon the Lord without distraction," how much more difficult it is to do so in private. And if the spirit of devotion is wholly lacking, our religion is vain.

What a testimony was borne to the terrible power of worldly care by the late Mr. Stephen Girard, of Philadelphia. "As to myself, I live like a galley slave, constantly occupied, and often passing the night without sleeping. I am wrapped in a labyrinth of affairs, and worn out with care. I do not value fortune. The love of labor is my highest emotion. When I rise in the morning, my only effort is to labor so hard during the day, that when the night comes I may be able to sleep soundly." Is there not great danger that one thus pressed with care will neglect his soul? Jesus Christ answers that question.

2. But one may so arrange and invest his property that necessary attentions to it will not demand much of his time. Yet it is not found that this state of things generally exempts men from care. Their thoughts are as busy as ever. If their investments are good, they wish they were better; or if they should be freed from care, then new dangers arise. The heart is led to idolize a state of secure and independent wealth; or idleness, luxury and practical atheism imperil salvation. When one says to himself, "You have many goods

stored up for many years. Take it easy; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself!" Luke 12:19, destruction is already at the door. No state of mind is more opposite to the spirit of the gospel than that of slothfulness, high living, banqueting, and carnal mirth. "Sodom's sins were pride, laziness, and gluttony." Ezekiel 16:49.

Wantonness and luxury, sloth and corruption usually go together. The great nourisher of these is wealth. Neale: "The million covet wealth, but how few dream of its perils! Few are aware of the extent to which it ministers to the baser passions of our nature: of the selfishness it engenders; the arrogance, which it feeds; the self-security which it inspires; the damage which it does to all the nobler feelings and holier aspirations of the heart."

3. Riches have also a mighty tendency to fill the heart with pride. Than this, nothing is more hostile to the soul's best interests. Dominant pride is the forerunner of destruction. So says the Psalmist: "Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue forever, and their dwelling-places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names," Psalm 49:11. When men set their nest on high and pride revels in the soul, ruin comes on apace. Above pride, nothing more effectively opposes the reception of the gospel. Often did the Savior say, "Whoever exalts himself shall be abased, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted." The gospel message is: "Let the rich man rejoice in that he is made low," James 1:10.

In the heart, the levelling of Christianity spares nothing. It abases whatever exalts itself against God. Jehovah will stain the pride of all glory. Those who boast in their riches, and trust in the abundance of their possessions, shall fall; the mouth of the Lord has spoken it, Psalm 49:6; 53:7; Proverbs 11:28. Nothing is more opposed to God than pride. Nothing more hinders salvation. How needful the apostolic exhortation: "Tell those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which will soon be gone. But their trust should be in the living God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment." 1 Tim. 6:17.

Cecil: "We hear much of a decent pride, a becoming pride, a noble pride, a laudable pride. Can that be decent of which we ought to be ashamed? Can that be becoming, of which God has set forth the deformity? Can that be noble which God resists and has determined to abase? Can that be laudable which God calls abominable?" "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

4. It is very difficult to possess wealth without loving it and desiring more of it. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," 1 John 2:15. Compare Luke 14:26. "Covetousness is idolatry." It disowns Jehovah. It sets up gold to be worshiped. It brings man, like the serpent, to lick the dust. It sadly perverts God's mercies, as well as all our own thoughts. It makes men believe in no God but mammon, no devil but the absence of gold, no damnation but being poor, and no hell but an empty purse."

How few rich men can say with Calvin in his poverty: "I confess, indeed, that I am not poor; for I desire nothing more than what I have." How few are ready to say with a moralist, "To be truly rich is not to have much—but to desire little." He who loves riches can never say either of these things. Each acquisition naturally adds fuel to the flame. Fire can never be extinguished by pouring oil upon it. The more a worldling possesses, the more he desires. Although for fear of losing what he has, he may cease to make ventures, yet his covetousness may take the sullen form of grasping like death, what he possesses. He seeks no more because he dreads failure. To be greedy of gain is still in his heart; but fear deters him from attempts to acquire more. He sits down wickedly to dote on what he has. If he thought he could succeed in increasing his wealth, he would still sell the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes; for he still pants after the dust of the earth, and turns aside the way of the meek, and drinks the wine of the condemned, Amos 2:6-8. Oh that men would believe their final Judge, when he says, "You cannot serve God and mammon," Matt. 6:24. Oh that they would believe his servant Paul, when he says: "People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap

and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." 1 Timothy 6:9-10

5. All that has been said is on the supposition that wealth has been acquired in a righteous and honorable way. But is it not often otherwise? How many estates are built up by fraud, by extortion, by usury, by unjust gain, by monopoly, by unconscionable prices, by wild and dangerous speculations, by imposing on the ignorant, by the triumph of one race of sharpers over another, by false weights and measures, by lying, by unfaithfulness in contracts, by oppression, by gaming, by wicked law-suits, by inveigling the unwary into suretyships, by stinginess and meanness towards ourselves and our dependents, and in general by undue eagerness for wealth. The curse of God is this day resting on many an estate because it was acquired in some sinful manner. "An inheritance may be got hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed," Proverbs 20:21. "He who hastens to be rich has an evil eye, and considers not that poverty shall come upon him," Proverbs 28:22. Better be poor by birth, by misfortune, by the villany of others—than be rich by any species of iniquity. The more wealth unjustly held, the more is the soul in peril.

6. To all men, the call to self-denial and mortification of the flesh is unwelcome; but to the rich it is peculiarly distasteful. To them self-denial is as necessary as to the poor. Yet commonly it is far more difficult. It is true of every class that if they live after the flesh, they shall die. The poor man is seldom tempted to gluttony; yet this sin is very prevalent among the rich, and if allowed to reign, it will be as fatal as theft or murder, Phil. 3:19. How many too, waste life in idle and fashionable entertainments, in paying calls on those whose absence is refreshing, in seeing sights, in feasting the ears with instruments of music, and in cultivating the arts of high culture. It is a great mercy that when for his sins Jehovah drove man from Paradise, he did not sentence him to a life of such senseless

occupations as some members of almost every rich family voluntarily subject themselves to—thus running a round of vanity, refusing the laws of self-mortification, and jeopardizing the interests of the immortal soul.

7. So generally do pious men regard the case of the rich as discouraging, that commonly but few and faint efforts are directly made for their salvation. The poor and the middle classes, unless very wicked, usually receive kindly a visit from a minister of the gospel, or from a Christian friend, even if he shall faithfully speak to them of their soul's affairs. But the rich often discourage all such calls to life and mercy. So that there is danger that they will lose their souls by the neglect of their plain and humble neighbors, who get the impression that the rich despise close, pungent, personal appeals to themselves. We are forbidden to cast pearls before swine. "He who reproves a scorner, gets to himself shame."

Perhaps very few men can bear the elevation acquired by wealth, without adopting the belief that their talents, wisdom and intellect are equal to their fortune. Yet, this is not true. Very feeble-minded men often grow rich. Yet such self-conceit excludes the spirit of docility. Such scorn to learn from a man who never made a dollar by sagacious foresight in temporal affairs. They expect to be courted. Like Naaman, they look for some great thing to be done for them. Such cases are not rare, though gain is no more a sign of wisdom than it is of godliness.

8. Sometimes wealth is accompanied by long continued exemption from sad reverses. Thus practical atheism is engendered. "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God." Psalm 55:19. "They cry tomorrow shall be as this day and more abundant," and so they plunge on in sin.

9. On the other hand, the fear of change for the worse often agitates some rich men, and when sad reverses overtake them, they become sullen and desperate, and behave badly. In some cases their reason is

dethroned, or their tempers soured, or they resort to the bottle, or seek refuge in suicide. How often do riches take wings and fly away as an eagle toward heaven. The torment and restlessness of dreaded change wear many a life away. Oftener do we see great reverses leading to misanthropy or melancholy. Speak to such of their souls and of eternity, and you will find them intensely occupied with the folly or wickedness, which robbed them of their earthly possessions, or crippled them for life. Very seldom do they cease to long after that which they once enjoyed, but which is now gone forever.

10. Another difficulty in the way of the salvation of the rich is the flattery which they receive from the foolish or the designing around them. "Men will praise you when you do well to yourself." Psalm 49:18. Who has not seen unprincipled men rise to wealth, and yet before long one and another would say, Really we never knew until of late how great their merits were? Hosts of mean sycophants and of vain fools gather around them and flatter them with their lips. Where rich men are entitled to a good name for integrity, still another class of flatterers appear, and the peril is increased. Where men have no gracious principles, such adulation is very seductive. By degrees the flattered rise to giddy heights of self-esteem. Many are even flattered out of their souls.

11. Almost all rich men are induced at times to give something to the poor, or to works of benevolence. Or, they make a feast, and invite to it those whose presence will honor them, or whose means will enable them to return the compliment. All this they may be able to do without self-denial, and for the sake of a good name with their neighbors, or for even baser motives. But there is danger lest those who do these things may infer that they are in favor with God. They forget that their motives are not holy, and that at the last day Jesus will say, What have you done unto ME?

12. The rich seem to be so happy in their possessions, that it is often impossible to make them feel their need of the solace of religion, the comfort of divine love, and the supports of the Holy Spirit. Were they

sure that death, disease or poverty would never disturb them, they would rather be let alone, than take any pains about salvation. Yet until one feels his need of religion to the completion of his happiness, he will not seek the favor of God, with any considerable zeal or earnestness.

13. Perhaps even more than the poor, the rich feel that true religion would put a strong and unwelcome restraint on their passions and appetites. All the sins that kennel in the bosom of wealth must die, no less than the hungry pack found in the haunts of poverty. God's law must be kept, the code of Christian morals must be obeyed, the Christian graces must be cultivated. All this looks unwelcomed to any natural man. To the rich sinner it is peculiarly so. To lead a Christian life is to give up one's idols. Oh how hard it is for the rich man to yield so much, to renounce self-will and self-righteousness; and to sit down like a little child at the feet of Jesus, and practically learn the lessons of salvation.

14. The very fact that men have great possessions here, creates a presumption that they have nothing better hereafter. Jesus said: "Woe unto you that are rich! for you have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for you shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for you shall mourn and weep." Luke 6:24, 25. In like terms did Abraham address the rich man in hell: "Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and you are tormented." Luke 16:25. David also speaks of "men of the world, who have their portion in this life." Psalm 17:14. So that a man may receive all his good things here. The last mercy ever extended to him is in the hour of his death. It is amazing that men who have great earthly prosperity are not alarmed lest they should wake up in eternity without one blessing in reserve for that endless state.

15. These fears may well be strong, if our prosperity is accompanied by a disposition to hoard wealth. "Look here, you rich people, weep and groan with anguish because of all the terrible troubles ahead of

you. Your wealth is rotting away, and your fine clothes are moth-eaten rags. Your gold and silver have become worthless. The very wealth you were counting on will eat away your flesh in hell. This treasure you have accumulated will stand as evidence against you on the day of judgment." James 5:1-3. This is indeed an solemn account of things. And every act of oppression, of pride, of hard-heartedness, of covetousness, of ostentation, of insolence, or of selfishness does but give signs that when the eyes shall close on time—the last blessing will have been drained from the cup held to our lips by a merciful God. With Solomon some believe there is a time to gather, but alas! they do not hold with him that there is a time to scatter. If men have so little fidelity to their engagements as was exhibited by Laban towards Jacob in changing his wages ten times, Gen. 31:41, they cannot expect the divine blessing. "I tell you the truth, it is very hard for a rich person to get into the Kingdom of Heaven. I say it again—it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!" Matt. 19:23,24.

While all that has been said is true, let us not forget that it is possible for a rich man to be saved. The Bible does not say, Not any rich are called; but, Not many rich are called. Abraham, Job, Solomon, Joseph of Arimathea were all rich men saved by grace. Such cases are amazing. They show how God can take the camel through the eye of a needle. And where the piety of the rich is unquestionable, their exhibition of the Christian character is often very attractive. The faith, and love, and meekness, and charity of a rich believer gladden and surprise us. When their "horn of plenty overflows, and its droppings fall upon their fellow-men; fall like the droppings of honey in the wilderness, to cheer the faint and weary pilgrim;" we are ready to wish the world was full of such men. When we see a rich man exercising the humility of a cottager, the self-denial of a peasant, the love and faith of a martyr, and the bountifulness of a prince—we know that he must have higher aims and purer motives than those who are not born from above. "He, that will not permit his wealth to do good to others while he is living, prevents it from doing any good to himself when he is dead."

If you were once rich and are become poor, be not cast down with overmuch sorrow. Sanctified reverses are better than unsanctified prosperity. Leighton: "Certainly it is true in matter of estate, as of our garments, not that which is largest, but that which fits us best, is best for us." Remember Job in the midst of his poverty. Rather remember Christ, who "though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." And if you never were rich in earthly things, neither was your Savior. "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." 1 Tim. 6:8. Carefully guard against all willfulness in your desires. Psalm 87:29-31; 1 Tim. 6:9. Let us cheerfully take up our cross and follow Christ. Matt. 16:24. Let us sweetly submit to the will of God in all things. 1 Sam. 3:18; Phil. 4:11, 12. Let us learn to bear the yoke whenever God shall lay it upon us. Lam. 3:27-29. Let us dismiss all tormenting solicitude, putting our trust in the unerring wisdom and gracious providence of God. Hab. 3:17, 18; Phil. 4:6. Let us by experience prove how God's grace can abound towards us in the greatest straits, and let us glory in our infirmities. 2 Cor. 12:9. Let us never question the right of God to do what he will with his own; much less set up our wisdom against his. Job 34:33; Matt. 20:15. Let us remember that our sins deserve far worse than we have ever received. Neh. 9:16, 17; Micah 7:9. Nor will our sufferings be long. They will last but for a little moment and be gone forever. 2 Cor. 4:17. Let us only believe and they will do us good. Romans 8:28.

Those parents are not wise, who live, and risk their own souls to heap up riches for their children. A good name is the best inheritance we can leave to posterity. When to that we add a good example, a good education, good counsel, and good principles—there is but little more that is valuable in an inheritance. At all events, it is God's blessing that makes our children rich and adds no sorrow. Let us commit them to him in hearty prayer, and be not over-anxious respecting their temporal needs. "The Lord will provide." "I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

And let not the poor envy the rich. When all is told, the latter have not many advantages. In eating and sleeping, they are frequently worse off than the poor. "The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eats little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not allow him to sleep." Eccles, 5:12.

The rich can live no longer, can die no more easily, can fill no larger space in the grave—than the poor. What profit then, has he of all his wealth? He works hard for years to amass a fortune. He spends the remainder of his life in watching that fortune. "What good is there to the owners of riches, except to feast his eyes on them?" Eccles. 5:11. Let all men seek the true riches. "Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Luke 12:33-34.

If God has denied you great things here, seek the more diligently for glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life. Poverty is no virtue. Your poverty will not save you; but it ought to remind you of your greater needs, and to make you the more earnest in seeking the unsearchable riches of Christ. But let us not forget that we are never out of danger until we reach our heavenly home. The way to heaven is like the way that Jonathan and his armour-bearer ascended. There is a sharp rock on one side, and there is a sharp rock on the other side. Leighton: "We pervert all: when we look below us, it raises our pride; and when above us, it casts us into discontent. Might we not as well, contrariwise, draw humility out of the one, and contentment out of the other?"

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Pet. 2:11. Good writers have stated that this commandment requires full contentment with our condition, and that it forbids ambition, envy, the inordinate love of what we possess, greediness after more, repining at providences and grieving at our neighbors' good. All

these things have been noticed in previous pages of this book. The great requisition of this command is fervent love, charity out of a pure heart towards our neighbor. This excellent grace is so fully explained in the New Testament, and especially by Paul in the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians, and we have so many good popular treatises upon it—that the reader's time and attention will not be asked any longer to this subject.

How May We Know Our Sins?

One of the most difficult attainments is such a knowledge of our own defects, errors and sins--as shall lead us to right apprehensions of Christ and his salvation. Self-delusion is natural to man. He is wedded to self-righteousness. He naturally denies the charge of guilt. Like the Jews of old, men cry out, "What have we spoken and done so much against you?" Even those who are somewhat enlightened from above, when they fall into error, are ready to say, "We are rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing," while they are poor, and miserable, and blind and naked. This self-justifying spirit keeps men from a knowledge of sin and from accepting Christ. It destroys tens of thousands. Those who indulge it reject mercy because they do not feel any need of mercy. Benjamin and all his brethren declared that none of them had the silver cup. They thought they were telling the truth. But they had not looked to see whether they had it or not. When they searched, they found it right in the mouth of Benjamin's sack. So if men would honestly search their lives and hearts by the light of the law, they would find out that they were undone. "By the law is the knowledge of sin."

Take these rules for knowing your own hearts.

1. Diligently compare them with the law of God. Study the letter of the law. Acquire a knowledge of its true spirit and scope. Let it be

your daily business to go through the dark chambers of the soul with these ten lighted candles and see what is wrong.

2. Consider what your friends say of you. It is a pity that some convert a friend into a foe if he suggests that they are in error. Such must be let alone. They will probably work out their own destruction with greediness. When one is disposed to seek the truth, however, he may get useful hints and suggestions from pious and judicious friends. Psalm 141:5. And as friends are prejudiced in our favor, we may give full credit to what they say, unless we have positive proof that they are mistaken. David was bound to receive Nathan's reproof. Peter would have acted foolishly, if he had flared up against Paul for reproving him.

3. Weigh well what those say who are unfriendly to you. "It is lawful to learn from an enemy." Bitter enemies sometimes fabricate statements and frequently exaggerate and misrepresent. Sometimes they nearly hit the nail on the head, and sometimes they tell the plain truth, which others are afraid to speak. A shrewd enemy commonly attacks the weak points of character. What do your enemies say of you? Do they charge you with pride, or malignity, or covetousness, or vanity, or ingratitude, or hardness of heart? Improve what they say.

4. Observe what that is, which always comes to your mind when inclined to pensiveness or melancholy. Some indeed are so beset with a sense of guilt that they dare not reflect. They fly from scene to scene and from place to place. They avoid solitude, and seek merriment that their own thoughts may not disturb their peace. But even in the midst of laughter, their heart is sad. If they would sit alone, and keep silence, and not call off their minds from sober reflection, they would soon get a profitable insight into their defects.

5. Notice your thoughts when you are sick or in peril of death. At such times the mind sometimes gets a ready insight into personal faults. Men generally are more disposed to be honest when they feel that their life is in danger. How did you regard your moral character

when you were sick? Did no special sin present itself to your view? Probably your alarm was well founded.

6. When you are in distress and inclined to think your affliction a judgment or a punishment for some sin, you may be pretty sure that there is guilt in that affair. When the web of distress had perfectly entangled the sons of Jacob, and one calamity but opened the door for another, they well said, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." And afterwards when in still greater distress, Judah as a mouth for the rest, said, "How shall we clear ourselves! God has found out the iniquity of your servants." Gen. 42:21, 45:16. So if you suspect that any distress has come on you for any particular sin, you may be quite sure that guilt attaches to you in that transaction.

7. When you suppose a preacher is personal, it is pretty good evidence that you are guilty. No right-minded man under the influence of Christian feelings will hold up personal character to the scorn of an audience. Therefore if anything seems especially to suit you, do not be offended; do not refuse to listen to the voice of warning. The fact that it suits you is reason enough for letting it come with all its force and edge.

8. When you are afraid that others suspect you of a sin, though they have said nothing, it is pretty good evidence that you are guilty. In their conversation some men are always fending and defending themselves. They feel that their conduct is liable to serious reprehension, and the chief aim of their lives is to keep others, from finding them out. Why is this, if they are innocent?

9. When you do not like to hear a particular sin preached against, you may suspect that you are guilty of it. If it were chargeable only to others, you would probably not care how much it was reprov'd. The wicked themselves seldom object to rebukes administered to their neighbors.

10. When in conversation, a sin is spoken of and you would gladly change the subject, you are probably guilty on that point. When Paul reasoned of temperance, righteousness and judgment to come, Felix told him that he would hear him at another time. When Christ charged the woman of Samaria with wickedness in her marital relations, she immediately called his attention to an old controversy between the Jews and Samaritans.

11. When a sin is mentioned in general terms of disapprobation, and you begin to excuse it, or try to make it appear small, then probably you are guilty in that matter.

12. So when in pleading exemption from any fault, you lose your temper and fall into passion, you are hardly innocent. Thus Hazael seems to have been quite vexed with the prophet. He said, "Is your servant a dog, that he should do this great wickedness?" Yet as soon as he had the opportunity, he did it all. He knew not the depths of iniquity in his own heart.

13. When one is so sure of his innocence that he will not examine his own heart, he may be sure there is sin there. He is afraid to look, lest he should see frightful sights in his own bosom. His persuasions of innocence are not well founded, and he suspects as much.

14. We are guilty of a sin, when the prevailing tendency of our mind is towards that conclusion. Suspicion of guilt ought to awaken and alarm us, 1 John 3:21.

15. We are chargeable with all the sins which the Bible imputes to the same class, to which we belong. If we are unconverted, then all that God's word alleges against such lies against us--as unbelief, impenitence, forgetfulness of God, enmity against the Most High, blindness of mind, ingratitude, destitution of holiness, etc. Any right view of our case will make us see that we are undone.

One who had studied the law with some care might use this soliloquy: "I am sick. O, I am very sick. I am sick at my very heart. I

know I am sick. God's word says so. My own feelings declare as much. I have pain, and fever, and delirium, and restlessness, just like a madman. I am wretched. There is no soundness in me. There is a rottenness in my bones. Without relief I must die. Cannot I be saved? Must I linger on a while and then perish? Blessed be God, I need not die. There is a Physician. His name is Jesus Christ. He is able. He is willing. He is full of grace and truth. He is just such a friend as I need. He is very skillful. He never mistakes symptoms. He knows the malignancy of diseases. Flattering appearances never deceive him. He knows the difference between depression of spirits and a penitent heart; between natural frankness and godly sincerity; between the humility of Ahab and that of Paul; between the repentance of Judas and that of Peter. His skill is divine, because He is divine. He knows my case perfectly, because he knows all things perfectly. My case is not hidden from him in any particular. He knows the remedies I need. He knows I cannot be sound without his blood and righteousness, his word and Spirit, his grace and power. If He will but undertake my case, I am sure it will be treated aright. I shall never perish, if I make Him my Physician. He has been chosen of God; appointed and ordained to this very work. Whatever He has done has been by the choice and commandment of his Father. He was approved of God in all he did and in all he suffered. He was no impostor, or vain pretender. The seal of God was on His commission. The great Physician is also very tender and loving. He was once hit by the archers himself. One object of his incarnation was that he might be a merciful and kind Savior, and sympathize with us in all things. He was tempted as we are. He is the most gentle and most approachable being that ever walked this earth. He was often reviled, but he never resented it. He suffered, but he never threatened. He was mocked, but he never showed bitterness. The great Physician cured the first case He ever undertook, and He has had great experience since. He has cured millions. The realms of glory are filled with the wonders of mercy which He has wrought. He never wounds where cordials are called for. He never heals slightly the hurt of his people. He probes deeply every wound. He loves his people too well to let them die rather than cut off the gangrene. He gives wine

and oil to the faint and wounded. He gives no peace to those who add drunkenness to thirst. To the truly penitent and godly Jesus is very tender and gracious. He never breaks the bruised reed, nor will he quench the smoking flax. He also goes where He is most needed and sought unto. Our poverty is nothing, for He does all without money and without price. Our wretchedness is nothing, for the first word of his ministry was, Blessed. Our unworthiness is nothing, for His merits are infinite. Our necessities may be great, but His riches are unsearchable. O wondrous Physician To you I submit my case, my whole case. I know nothing. I reserve nothing. I deserve nothing. I am nothing but a poor lost sinner. Unless You undertake, I shall be forever undone. Savior, be patient with me. Spare me. Heal my diseases. Then will I give you glory forever, and spread your fame through heaven and earth.

Christian Liberty

Few things are more commended or less understood, than Christian liberty. Most men praise it; not many maintain it. The vile Antinomian boasts of it, and casts off the cords of the moral law. The bigot praises it, and counts you a fool because you do not adopt his whims. The superstitious lauds it, and makes himself a slave of some imposture. The openly profane struts, and swaggers, and is the servant of corruption. What then is Christian liberty? The comfort and usefulness of many are destroyed by not understanding this matter.

1. The first element of Christian liberty is freedom from the ceremonial law of Moses. At this time the Christian world is undivided respecting this matter. This was not always so. The

apostles had much trouble, and even Peter was involved in dissimulation on the subject.

2. Believers are free from the moral law as a covenant of works. "You are not under the law, but under grace," Romans 6:14. "You are become dead to the law by the body of Christ," Romans 7:4.

3. God's people are free from the penalty of the moral law which we have all broken. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," Gal. 3:13. The Judge himself, by his own most precious blood, has opened the prison doors, and said to the prisoners, Go free.

4. Christ sets his people free from the torments of a guilty conscience. They are not crushed with a sense of terrible condemnation. He, who has a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, is indeed in a sad plight. He has a hell upon earth. But the blood of Jesus Christ speaks as perfect peace to the conscience as it does at the throne of God.

5. Christ sets his people free from the reigning power of sin. The unconverted are the slaves of lust, of pride, of malice and of all iniquity. They are led captive by the devil at his will. But to his people, Christ makes good the promise, "Sin shall not have dominion over you." He preaches deliverance to the captives and sets at liberty them that are bruised, Luke 4:18.

6. Christ frees his people from the evil of afflictions, though not from afflictions themselves.

7. Jesus Christ also delivers his people, who, through the fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage--a dreadful bondage indeed. Such are the chief elements of Christian liberty taken in the broadest sense. But

8. The liberty of Christians, while it makes them Christ's freemen, and binds them in chains of love to his service, delivers them from

the traditions and commandments of men in all matters of faith, worship and morals. This is the sense in which the term Christian liberty is now most commonly used. If God has made no law in these matters, we can do as we please. If he is silent, man's word is of no force. That God has set his people free from the commandments of men in matters of faith, is very evident. Jesus Christ alike forbade his servants to be called Master, or to call others Master. He expressly said that even the apostles should not be lords over his heritage. The apostles disclaimed all dominion over the faith of Christians. Churches have no power to alter, amend, enlarge, or diminish the creed given us in Scripture. Nor can any church give Scriptural authority for claiming the right of ordaining ceremonies, and imposing forms upon the consciences of people; so that nonconformity shall be esteemed schism. If some such things were commended as decent or expedient, they might be comparatively harmless; but when they are exacted, they are worse than tolerable fooleries; they are engines of wickedness and cruelty.

The same is true of morals. That, which is not made sin by God's word, can never become so by the legislation of men. That, which is not in Scripture prescribed as a part of duty, can never become such by the canons of church authorities. Sin is a violation of the law of God, or a lack of conformity to a divine precept. Nothing else is sin. Men have often forbidden what the decalogue required; and as often required what it forbade. The rules to be observed respecting all attempts to bind us in faith, worship or morals, by the commandments of men are such as these:

1. Never yield your liberty with which Christ has made you free. Whether the laws of men shall be permitted to set aside divine statutes ought never to be a question among men. To oblige another, Paul would yield up all but his honor and his conscience; but when there is an attempt to invade his rights under form of law, he exclaims, "I am a Roman citizen;" and when they put his life in jeopardy, he exclaims, "I appeal to Caesar." Rather than offend prejudices or hinder the gospel, he circumcised Timothy because of

the Jews, which were in those quarters. Acts 16:3. This he did uncommanded. But when an attempt was made to enforce circumcision, he "gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with" the churches. Gal. 2:5.

Wherever there is a clear attempt at domination, the rule of reason, of public spirit, and of Christian duty is one--Never yield an inch. Paul did not.

Life is not desirable, when civil and religious despotism have the sway. To yield a point enforced by no command of God is to admit that there is more than one lawgiver. And to yield to civil wrongs, when the laws protect us, is to admit that the will of one man is above a free constitution.

2. We must never hypocritically plead our consciences, when in fact we are governed only by prejudice or passion. It is a great weakness, and a wickedness to raise doubts where duty is clear, or to wish a purpose defeated by a false plea. Let men never plead conscience where conscience is not involved.

3. Let no man use his liberty for a cloak of maliciousness. 1 Pet. 2:16. Even if we are in fact right, and our brethren through weakness are in error, we may not be reckless of their spiritual interests. We must love them tenderly and seek their good.

4. Beware of lightly esteeming one, who through weakness does not use his liberty as he might. Paul gives the whole law on this subject in Romans 14:1-4. 5. When a thing is lawful, or when it is not forbidden, and the only question relates to the expediency of a given course--the whole decision must be made by every man for himself. This is clearly taught by Paul in Romans 14:10, 12. "Why do you judge your brother? or why do you set at nothing your brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.... So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God."

The spiritual despotism of modern times shows itself in nothing more than in judging others, where God has left them free. This whole subject came up repeatedly in the early history of Christianity, and Paul then clearly marked the distinction between the lawful and the expedient. "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not." I Cor. 6:12, 10:23. This distinction should be preserved. Considerable difficulty arose respecting things offered to idols. Animals were slain, and their blood and fat used in idolatrous worship; but the meat was sold in the market. Libations of wine were also offered in heathen temples, and the priests sent to the wine-merchant what they did not wish for their own use. Some contended that it was in itself lawful to buy and eat any meat sold in the markets, and to buy and drink any wine offered for sale. Of this class were Paul and other strong established Christians. But there were weak brethren who doubted the lawfulness of so doing. These were tempted to judge their stronger brethren, and their stronger brethren were tempted to despise them. Paul would not have the strong believe that to be wicked, which was innocent. He would not have the strong to become weak. But he would not have the weak defile their consciences by doing anything, the lawfulness of which they doubted. This would be wicked. "To him that esteems anything unclean, to him it is unclean." "Whatever is not of faith is sin." On the other hand, he would not encourage any to do that which would harden others in sin. "All things indeed are pure: but it is evil for that man who eats with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby your brother stumbles, or is offended, or is made weak." Romans 14:20, 21.

A similar difficulty arose respecting days. One man esteemed one day above another; another esteemed every day alike. Romans 14:5. Some wholly rejected the Jewish holy-days, while others as yet held on to them. It was not wicked to observe them, if it was done to the Lord. The question whether it was expedient to observe them was left

to each man to decide for himself. It is here noticeable that Paul directs us never to violate our consciences. If a man thinks an act wrong, nothing is more clear than that it is sinful for him to do it. To do what we are doubtful about, is always sinful. But it is not always right to do what we think is right. Whatever is not of faith, is sin, but it does not follow that whatever is of faith is holy. For Saul of Tarsus verily thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. While, therefore, a weak brother has no right to require us to adopt his notions, our love to him and to Christ should make us tender of his feelings, careful not to tempt him to violate his conscience, and anxious to edify him.

Thus an effectual stop is put to any attempt of minority or majority, weak or strong, to afflict their brethren, wound their feelings, or defile their consciences. Terms of communion in the church of God are never to be made more or less close than Christ has made them.

Rules for Conscience

In morals and religion, conscience holds a prominent place. Curious questions on this subject are unprofitable. The practical views of the matter are far the most important. The word conscience means joint or double knowledge. There is a knowledge of the law, which binds us, and a knowledge of the fact, that we have kept or broken the law. For present purposes it is sufficient to say that conscience is the judgment of a man concerning the moral character of his thoughts, words and deeds. Because its decisions are accompanied by peculiar sensations of approbation or remorse, it is often called the moral sense. It is the office of conscience to judge and decide on the morality of all our acts. Conscience is the soul of man sitting in judgment upon his moral conduct, condemning or justifying as the

case may be. The decisions of conscience are never theoretical but always practical. It accuses, it excuses; it afflicts, it consoles; it terrifies, it gives joy. Nothing produces such consternation, nothing imparts such boldness. As conscience determines the right or wrong of acts before they are committed, we speak of it as a light or a law. As it respects guilt or innocence in a given matter, we speak of it as a judge pronouncing, or a witness testifying.

Its process is simple. It says: "The soul that sins it shall die." That is the law. "I have sinned." That is the fact. "I am therefore exposed to death." Or, "You shall not covet anything that is your neighbor's." "I have coveted my neighbor's prosperity. Therefore I have broken the tenth commandment."

The rule by which the conscience is to be governed is the whole will of God, however made known. The heathen learn God's will by the law of nature. Every man knows that murder, theft and ingratitude are wicked. But in the Bible we have the whole will of God revealed for our guidance. There all is clear and plain. This binds the conscience. It obliges everyone to obey its teachings.

God alone is Lord of the conscience. He alone can bind it. Blindly to follow the teachings of any creature is an act of wickedness. It is giving to a worm, a prerogative of God. To assert a right to control the conscience of another, except by reason and Scripture, is an atrocious offence. It is the foundation of all diabolical persecutions.

In a sense conscience impels us to duty, that is, it is accompanied by a strong sense of moral obligation. Thus Paul says, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel;" the meaning is, that he had so strong, so controlling a sense of duty that he knew he would be guilty if he kept silence. Conscience is a safe guide so far as it is informed of the will of God, and is not perverted by sin, error or ignorance. Whatever falls short of supreme love to God, or equal love to our neighbor as to ourselves, whatever violates the letter or spirit of the commandments, burdens an enlightened conscience. Simple

questions of morality are easily solved. It is on complex matters that we are most liable to err. We should therefore study with a teachable spirit, the whole word of God, and impartially scrutinize our own acts, ends and motives.

The extreme evil of an erring conscience is, that it always involves us in guilt. If we follow it, we sin, as did Saul of Tarsus in persecuting the church. If we violate it, we are guilty of doing what we believe to be wrong. An erring conscience is almost invariably the result of a gross lack of the love of truth. If your conscience is not clear, stand still. "Happy is he who condemns not himself in that thing which he allows." The great duty of those having erring consciences is to seek for light. A doubting conscience is one that is not clear respecting duty. Here too we must stand still, until we are resolved. It may be one's duty to preach the gospel, but not while he prevailingly doubts his call to the sacred office. "He who doubts is guilty if he eats." But let not one with a doubting conscience be idle. Let him diligently seek to know the will of God in every matter of duty.

A doubting conscience not enlightened and not resolved, is very apt to end in an over-scrupulous conscience. The habit of doubting in questions of morality grows by indulgence. Scrupulousness is evinced by doubts in clear cases, by a morbid fearfulness of doing wrong, and so life is wasted in considering vexed and vexatious questions. A scrupulous conscience is like a diseased eye, which weeps if air, or water, or light reaches it. It is very favorable to the temptations of the devil. Hearty prayer, an honest search after truth, holding fast great principles, and an earnest performance of all known duties—are the chief remedies for a scrupulous conscience. It has been found very useful also to abound in acts of kindness to the poor and afflicted. Such a conscience is well called "weak," and it will probably be best strengthened by vigorous exercise in what it admits to be plain duty.

Conscience is said to be evil when it is guided by wrong principles, when it decides contrary to known truth, or when it is burdened with

a load of guilt. Thus the consciences of all unregenerate men are greatly defiled. They do not give ready and hearty assent to the duty of loving God supremely, and their neighbor as themselves. They see not the iniquity or the danger of rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the greatest sin of the impenitent in Christian lands. Such have, indeed, misgivings, qualms, or even terrors—but these lead to no thorough amendment.

Some consciences seem wholly blind. They call good evil and evil good. This darkness is followed by stupidity. If such hold the truth, it is in unrighteousness. Even the most pungent words of God do not properly move their affections. Their lives are unrestrained by the most sacred laws of Heaven. Their minds are inflated with delusive opinions of their own worth. If they have zeal in religion, it is not according to knowledge, or wisdom or meekness. Sometimes such a conscience whispers, all is not right; and sometimes it thunders. When a great calamity is feared or felt, when some truth is brought home with power, when death seems to be near, the anguish of such a conscience is often dreadful. The terrors of God then become consuming.

The most usual manifestations of an evil conscience among reputable people in Christian communities are obtuseness and dullness. Convince some men that a course is wholly agreeable to the will of God, and you have in effect done nothing towards their right behavior. They may go as far as Agrippa, and say, "You almost persuade me to be a Christian," or, like Saul, they may lift up the voice and weep and make some confession of sin—and then go and be as carnal, as sensual, as unbelieving, as abominable, yes—as devilish as ever. Their case is described by the prophet: "Moab has been at ease from his youth, and he has settled on his lees, and has not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither has he gone into captivity; therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed." Jer. 48:11.

Carnal security is the ruin of most men, who lose their souls under the preaching of the gospel. The great source of such stupor is practical infidelity and the habit of sinning, which takes away a sense of guilt. Of all habits, that of sinning is the hardest to conquer. It is the only habit that hardens the heart. A seared conscience is one that can be moved by nothing, not even by the most atrocious sins. It is commonly found in those, who have been much enlightened but have resisted the calls of mercy, and given themselves over to a wicked life. "What they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves." He, whose conscience is seared, gives these signs of his sad state: he rejoices in iniquity; he has pleasure in others, who openly practice wickedness; he obstinately perseveres in doing evil, whatever may be God's dealings with him; and he gives himself up to what he knows to be sins.

An evil conscience, a conscience defiled, polluted, or seared—is the great source of heresy. As every man has a standard, he must either bring his life up to his standard—or bring his standard down to his life. The latter is much the more easy, and is therefore commonly done. Of such Paul says, that having put away a good conscience, concerning faith they have made shipwreck. Their lives being wrong, their creed soon becomes erroneous.

Henry Smith, a good writer who lived about the middle of the seventeenth century says, "There is a warning conscience, and a gnawing conscience. The warning conscience comes before sin, and the gnawing conscience follows after sin. The warning conscience is often lulled asleep; but the gnawing conscience wakens her again. If there be any hell in this world, they, who feel the worm of conscience gnaw upon their hearts, may truly say that they have felt the torments of hell. Who can express that man's anguish but himself? Nay, what horrors are there which he cannot but express himself? Sorrows are met in his soul as at a feast; and fear, thought, and anguish divide his soul between them. All the furies of hell leap upon his heart as on a stage. Thought calls to fear; fear whistles to horror; horror beckons to despair, and says, 'Come and help me to torment

this sinner.' One says she comes from this sin; and another says that she comes from that sin; and so he goes through a thousand deaths, and yet he cannot die. Irons are laid upon his body like a prisoner. All his lights are put out at once. He has no soul fit to be comforted. Thus he lies, as it were, upon the rack, and says that he bears the world upon his shoulders, and that no man suffers that which he suffers. So let him lie, says God, without ease, until he confesses and repents, and calls for mercy."

All this is the more striking when compared with a good conscience. The properties of a good conscience are:

1. It is enlightened. It knows the will of God, the entrance of whose word gives light. A good conscience delights in knowing the whole mind of God. It hates darkness. It rejoices in the truth. It comes to the light that its deeds may be reprov'd. It approves what God approves. It condemns what God condemns. It judges true judgment. It holds fast correct principles. It hates every lie.

2. It is firm and decided. It does not waver like a wave of the sea. It has stability in knowledge and principle. To it truth is not a notion, but a law. It is grounded and settled in the revealed will of God. He, who has it, is fully persuaded in his own mind. He will probably yield many of his own rights to serve and please others; but he will not yield a single claim of God. In his own cause he may show all amiable compliance. In his Master's cause, he dare not surrender anything.

3. So far as any conscience is good, it is also tender. He who possesses it is ashamed to think before God what he would be ashamed to speak before men; and to meditate before God, what he would be afraid to do before the world. Sibbes: "All scandalous outbreakings into sin—are but thoughts at the first. Evil thoughts are as little thieves, which, creeping in at the window, open the door to greater sins. Thoughts are seeds of actions." Thus the true Christian judges. No man ever had a good conscience, who did not hate vain thoughts, idle words, and little sins; for to a godly man no sin is

absolutely little. A tender conscience is distinguished from a scrupulous conscience in this; that the former makes no difficulties where God makes none; whereas the latter perplexes itself with needless refinements and endless questions. An eye may be tender and delicate, may be stimulated by the least light, may perceive the nicest shades and faintest lines in a picture. This is a good eye. But to have an eye that is pained at the least light, or confused with much light so as not distinctly to see anything, is to have the visual organ in an unhealthy state. A good conscience is not a dull and stupid thing, but it is wakeful and lively. It has a ready perception, is of quick understanding, and the more plainly it sees the path of duty, the better it is pleased.

4. A good conscience is sincere and simple. It seeks not pretenses, excuses and subterfuges. It abhors cunning, craftiness and delusive refinements. It delights in "simplicity and godly sincerity." It is not governed by "fleshly wisdom." It is fair, candid and truthful. To it subtlety and artifice are revolting. Wherever such a conscience is found, it is proof of a great change of character, for by nature the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. There never was sin without deceit. The greater the sin, the more the deceit.

5. A good conscience is accompanied by the spirit of obedience. "We trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly." Heb. 13:18. Where there are not right dispositions, and honest intentions to do the will of God, there cannot be a good conscience. Wrong affections will soon disorder any conscience; and how can any conscience be good, if it has not power to direct the life and control the heart?

6. No conscience is good until it is sprinkled with the blood of Christ. It draws its sweetness from the cross of the Redeemer. A great defect of the law of sacrifices among the Jews was that it "could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience." But "the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purges our consciences from dead works to

serve the living God." "Those, who are thus purified from guilt, have no more conscience of sin." They therefore "draw near with a true heart, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water." The most enlightened and burdened conscience demands no other atonement, no more perfect sacrifice than that of Christ. Its sufficiency is as completely satisfactory to him, who fully believes, as it is to God, whose law was broken. Nor can any man, with an enlightened mind, find ease for a troubled conscience anywhere else than in precious atoning blood.

7. God's Spirit is also poured upon all who believe, and their consciences are good in a very high sense. Speaking of the Gentiles, Peter said: "God, which knows the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us." Acts 15.

8. To the Ephesians, Paul says: "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory." Eph. 1:13, 14.

He who is thus has a good conscience, and in it a source of unfailing gladness. "This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." This kind of a merry heart does good like a medicine. It is a continual feast. He who has it has so far terminated the fearful war within his own heart, that he has crucified his evil passions, has enthroned his conscience in his own bosom, and breathes benevolence towards men, and piety towards God. He rejoices in the mighty work of grace begun in him. He no longer shudders at a sight of himself. His designs are approved by the vicegerent of God in his soul. Harmony reigns in his bosom. He esteems God his Father. He no longer trembles at the thought of meeting his Maker. "The righteous are as bold as a lion."

There is no shield to repel sharp arrows like that of a good conscience. Such a good conscience will be a passport and a fortress in the severest trials. It will disarm death of its sting. It will give boldness in the day of judgment. All the wealth, honors and pleasures of earth are not to be compared to it. A man may be full of them, and yet full of misery. The more he has of them, the less of a man may he be. But with a good conscience a man is a man, yes, he is a great man under all the accumulated ills of life. Nothing can infect him with cowardness. But how different it is with the wicked. They "flee when no man pursues." "They come out against the righteous one way, and flee before them seven ways."

So dreadful are the torments of an evil conscience that in many periods of human history, men, who knew not the evil of sin, have held that it was adequately punished in this life. The fears of the wicked, especially at times when it is peculiarly desirable to be unshaken, are oftentimes overwhelming. "Conscience makes cowards of us all." A heathen left this petition inscribed on a pillar in the temple of his god: "Save me from my enemies." One coming after him wrote: "Save me from my friends." It seems to have occurred to no one to write: "Save me from myself." Yet unless a man heartily offers such a prayer, and is rescued from his passions, his prejudices, his sinful desires, and the lashings of his guilty conscience, he is eternally undone. "There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked." This is true in time. It is more fearfully true in eternity.

Directions for keeping a good conscience

1. Put a high value upon such a blessing. Never be satisfied without it. It is worth more than all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.
2. Labor diligently to secure it. It comes not to the careless and indolent. Paul says: "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men."

3. Especially maintain in your heart a strong and constant sense of the goodness, authority, majesty, and holiness of God. "Be in the fear of the Lord all the day long." "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death." "Those who fear God least—have reason to fear him most."

4. Meditate on God's law day and night. Study both tables with care and diligence. Let it dwell in you richly.

5. Set the Lord always before you. If you can honor and please him—that is enough.

6. As far as possible avoid confusion of mind respecting duty. Gurnall: "There are three kinds of straits, wherein Satan loves to entrap the believer; needless questions, obscure Scriptures and dark providences."

7. Beware of all tortuous ways of proceeding. When you find your course demanding craftiness, be alarmed. Be honest and frank with yourself, with your neighbor, and with God.

8. Beware of the least sins. They are the little foxes which spoil the tender grapes. Avoid every form of evil.

9. Guard with all possible care against secret sins. You have no worse enemies.

10. Watch against the sins of the times. If there is great heat in the public temper, be doubly careful to keep cool. If all around you are eager or violent, let your moderation appear.

11. Ever watch against easily besetting sins, those to which your constitution, education, habits, or calling incline you. You cannot be too guarded against old sins.

12. Never venture on any course of doubtful propriety. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

13. In all cases of doubt, decide against self-will, self-interest, and self-indulgence; against your passions, prejudices, and even preferences.

14. If overtaken in a fault, do not deny it, or excuse it before God or man—but sincerely confess and forsake it. So shall you find mercy.

15. Fervently pray to God to keep you. Beg him not to take his Holy Spirit from you, and not to leave you to yourself. That was a good prayer of David: "Hold me up—and I shall be safe."

16. If you strongly suspect that you are wrong, you probably are wrong; and if conscience is against you, you may know that God is also against you. "If our heart condemn us—God is greater than our heart, and knows all things."

17. Be not afraid of knowing the worst of your case. Your discovery of your own vanity, imperfection and nothingness, so far from being a bad sign, will be a token for good—if it leads you to trust wholly in Christ.

18. Choose your company with care and in God's fear. "He who walks with wise men shall be wise; but the companion of fools shall be destroyed." Loose companions, freely chosen, will give a loose conscience.

19. Die unto the world. Let its charms fade from your view. Freely consent to be a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth. Seek for heavenly-mindedness. Owen: "Unless we can arrive at a fixed judgment that all things here below are transitory and perishing, reaching only to the outward man, the body; and that the best of them have nothing substantial and abiding in them—it is impossible but we must spend our lives in fears, sorrows, and worry."

20. Be not faithless, but believing. Trust God in the darkest hour. He "will either keep his saints from temptations by his preventing mercy, or in temptations by his supporting mercy, or find a way for

their escape from temptation by his delivering mercy." "He who loves you into sorrow—will love you through sorrow."

21. "Resist the devil and he shall flee from you." Give place to him, no, not for an hour. He is mighty, but he is not almighty. He is cunning, but he has no wisdom.

22. Beware of attempting to be wise above what is written, yet humbly pray to be taught up to what is written.

23. In every new enterprise undertaken for God's glory, look out for sharp trials. "My son, if you come to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for temptation." As our Lord himself entered on his public ministry, he had long and fearful conflicts with the adversary.

24. When God is humbling you, try to humble yourself. "With the lowly is wisdom." "Be not high-minded, but fear." "He who is down needs fear no fall." Dyer: "He who lives without fear, shall die without hope." "Pride goes before a fall, and a haughty spirit before destruction."

25. If you have a great fight of afflictions, remember that "it is a worse sign to be without chastisement, than to be under chastisement; and that all you suffer is not hell, yet it is all the hell you shall suffer," provided your heart is right with God.

26. Often come to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and wash away all guilt contracted in life. The blood of Christ is both the purifier and the preserver of a good conscience. Dyer: "Christ with his cross—is better than the world with its crown. Study more how to adorn the cross than how to avoid it." Miller: "If God's people fall into sin, it is not while they are eyeing the perfection of Christ's righteousness, but when they lose sight of it."

27. Think often of death, judgment, heaven, hell, and eternity. Keep your latter end in view. "The time is short." "The Judge stands at the door!"

