

SERMONS

ON

THE LORD'S PRAYER

AND THE

Ten Commandments,

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. JOHN,
MANCHESTER,

BY THE REV. J. CLOWES, M. A.

RECTOR OF THE SAID CHURCH,

AND LATE FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

If ye shall ask any thing in MY NAME, I WILL DO IT.

If ye love ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.

John xiv. 14, 15.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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**F**ROM the *plain, unpolished* style in which the following discourses are written, it will be evident to the critical reader, that they were never intended to meet the public eye in a *printed* form, and that the Author, in composing them, was more intent on endeavouring to edify his readers, by suggesting pure and just ideas of the **ETERNAL TRUTH**, than on amusing them with the ornaments of flowery and studied language. If it be asked, by what motive then the Author has been induced to communicate to the public what was not originally designed for their inspection? He wishes to reply, that manuscript copies of the discourses having been circulated in different parts of the kingdom, he has lately received pressing solicitations from various quarters, and from a number of respectable persons, to consent to their publication, and he has accordingly submitted his own judgment to the opinion of those, on whose decision he could better depend than on his own. He is encouraged also to hope, that notwithstanding every imperfection of style and composition, and notwithstanding, too, the very limited and defective

views which he has taken of the grand subjects discussed, yet the subjects themselves are of such importance as to secure attention and regard from every well-disposed reader. For who doth not know, or may not know, that the **LORD'S PRAYER** is a brief summary of the **DIVINE WILL** and **WISDOM** of the **MOST HIGH**, intended to be implanted in human minds, that so the interiors of the affection and thought of every child of man, being opened and formed accordingly, may be rendered admmissive of all pure and heavenly influences from the **GOD** and **FATHER** of all life and blessing, and may thus enjoy perpetual communication and conjunction with the **SUPRMEE GOOD** and **SUPREME TRUTH**? And who also doth not know, or may not know, that the **TEN COMMANDMENTS** are a brief summary of the same **DIVINE WILL** and **WISDOM**, intended for the regulation of man's life, both *internal* and *external*, and thus calculated to promote the descent and admission of **DIVINE ORDER** and **PEACE** from **GOD** into his will, his understanding, and his works, by pointing out the principal evils which oppose in him such descent and admission, and which therefore ought to be rejected, and at the same time directing him to the true knowledge, love, and worship of that **ETERNAL BEING**, who is the only source of all his proper righteousness, joy, and security? Nothing then can be conceived more in-



teresting and important to man than these two subjects, and therefore, sensible as the Author is of the very imperfect manner in which he has treated them, yet he is led to indulge a hope, that the intrinsic excellence of the points discussed will more than compensate for the defects of the discussion. Of this, at least, he is well convinced, and he derives a secret satisfaction from the conviction, that if the reader peruses the following pages with a humble, teachable, and penitent heart, desirous of understanding and doing the whole will of his **HEAVENLY FATHER**, some bright rays of the **SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** will dart forth to enlighten and console him, even through the *clouds*, whether arising from the obscurity of the Author's ideas or of his expressions.

The Author deems himself bound in justice to acknowledge, that his sentiments, both on the **LORD'S PRAYER** and on the **TEN COMMANDMENTS**, as delivered in the following volume, have been derived, in a great measure, from the heavenly doctrines of the **New Jerusalem**, which are now revealed to mankind through the instrumentality of that enlightened servant of the **LORD**, the *Honourable Emanuel Swedenborg*. At the period when his discourses were first written, (the year 1777,) the Author was indeed but a *Noviciate* in these doctrines, and this circumstance will ac-

count for several imperfections, which a more intimate and extended acquaintance with the truth might have obviated. Nevertheless he has every reason to trust and believe, that no sentiment contrary to the truth has found its way into his pages, and therefore he flatters himself with a hope, that under the blessing of the **DIVINE PROVIDENCE**, what he has written may still, with all its defects, be rendered beneficial, especially to such of his readers as are beginning to peruse the above-mentioned heavenly doctrines. He further thinks it his duty to state, that the experience of upwards of thirty years, since the time when these discourses were first composed, has only tended to increase his admiration of, and veneration for, the volumes from which they are derived, and accordingly he takes this opportunity of repeating his humble testimony in favour of the incomparable excellence of the truths contained in those volumes, whether they be regarded in their tendency to exalt the **CHRISTIAN REDEEMER**, or to unfold the mysteries of *redemption*, or to expound the *wondrous things* contained in the revealed **WORD OF GOD**, or to detect the intricate windings of the *serpent of seduction*, or to develop the various and deep counsels of a *protecting and regenerating* **PROVIDENCE**, or lastly, to enforce on men's minds the important Christian duties of *repentance*, of *faith*, of *obedience*, and of *charity*, as essentially necessary to conduct to the regions of bliss.

That the following pages may be blessed with this same heavenly tendency, and may thus be made instrumental in leading the reader to an increased knowledge and more devout love of the GOD of his salvation, is the ardent, unceasing prayer, of

THE AUTHOR.

*Manchester, Oct. 27th, 1815.*

N. B. If the reader be disposed to consult a more particular and luminous exposition of the internal spiritual sense of the Ten Commandments, he will find all his wishes abundantly gratified by the perusal of the *Arcana Cœlestia* of Baron Swedenborg, n. 8860 to 8913; also of the *True Christian Religion*, n. 282 to 332; also of *The Doctrine of Life for the New Jerusalem*, n. 53 to 114; also of the *Apocalypse Explained*, n. 938 to 1029, all by the same Author.

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# SERMONS, &c.

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## SERMON I.

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St. Matt. vi. 9.

*After this manner therefore pray ye : “ Our  
FATHER which art in Heaven.”*

**I**N TENDING in this and some future discourses to unfold and explain the several particular petitions contained in that most holy form of prayer, called the **LORD'S** Prayer, I shall bespeak a previous attention to some general observations on the nature and use of Prayer.

It is then the great end and design of Prayer to change, to reform, and to purify our hearts and lives. Our **LORD** therefore taught us in what manner we should pray, that he might teach us what is the best, the purest, and most reformed state of heart and life.

In repeating therefore our **LORD'S** prayer, if we would render it of any real benefit to us, we should consider not only the words, but the spirit of it, or

what state of heart and life it recommendeth to us, and hath a tendency to produce in us. For if we only repeat the words, and do not at the same time attend to the spirit, the meaning, the purpose, intended to be expressed and conveyed by the words, how plain is it to see, that if we repeated the prayer twenty times in a day, it would leave us just as unimproved, because as unpurified, as it found us.

For **GOD**, it deserves to be noted, is not pleased with our prayers for **His** own sake, but for our sakes. Our prayers cannot affect **GOD**, so as to make any change in **His** disposition towards us, but they are intended to affect us, and to make a change in the disposition of our hearts before **GOD**; and when they have this effect, then they are pleasing to **GOD**; because then they make us such as **GOD** would have us to be; reducing us to such a humble and holy state of heart and life, as is most pleasing in **His** sight, because **He** knoweth it to be most pure, and beneficial, and blessed to ourselves.

In discoursing to you, then, on our **LORD'S** Prayer, I shall endeavour to point out to you the spirit which it involves, or that state of heart and life which it recommendeth to us, and is calculated to form in us, because then only we shall enter into the uses and the benefits of it, when we discover

its spirit, and endeavour to correct the state of our hearts and lives by its divine purity, wisdom, and sanctity.

Now the spirit of our LORD'S Prayer, or that state of heart and life which it recommendeth, and is calculated to open and form in us, is the most heavenly, the most sublime, the most angelic, the most wise and perfect that can possibly be conceived; because in its inward spirit it is *divine*. For in its inward spirit it is full of the love, the wisdom, and the power of the ALMIGHTY Himself, and therefore it has a tendency to impart to the devout supplicant such a spirit or temper of heart and life as must of necessity be in all respects most perfect, most holy, and most blessed.

Let us attend then to this sacred form of Prayer as to the purest wisdom of GOD, designed to convey a measure of the same wisdom unto ourselves, whereby our hearts may become changed into the likeness of GOD, and we ourselves, being made partakers of his nature, may be made partakers of His glory, of His happiness, of His immortality.

The first address which demands our attention in this divine Prayer, is in the words of my text, "*Our FATHER which art in Heaven.*" Let us consider now the spirit of these words particularly and attentively, that so we may find all that spiritual

instruction which is contained in them, and intended to be conveyed by them.

The words resolve themselves into *three* distinct considerations ;

1st. What is involved, in the appellation of **FATHER**, as applied to the **GREAT** and **HOLY GOD**.

2ndly. Why we are taught to address **Him** as *our* Father ; and

3rdly. What we are to understand by the concluding terms, *Which art in Heaven*.

In my present discourse I shall confine myself to the *first* of these considerations, viz. *What is involved* in the appellation of **FATHER**, as applied to the **GREAT** and **HOLY GOD**.

The holy title and character of **FATHER**, as applied to **GOD**, instruct us in these great truths—1st. That we have originally derived from **Him** the beginning of life, with all its several blessings and comforts—2ndly, That we owe to **Him** the daily continuation, growth, and perfection of that life—3rdly, That we are therefore dependent upon **Him** at all times for all that we are or have, whether it be internal or external—4thly, That **GOD** hath the purest and tenderest love as a parent towards every one of us, and that therefore we may with the ut-



most confidence approach Him ; we may with the utmost confidence lay open our hearts before Him ; because He will receive us, He will listen to us, with all the tenderness of the tenderest parent ; and He will no more withhold from us those real blessings which we in sincerity ask of Him, and which He seeth we want, than a kind father upon earth will withhold good things from the child whom he affectionately loveth.

Our BLESSED LORD therefore taught us to address the DIVINE BEING under the affectionate and venerable name of FATHER, to remind us of the tender and holy relationship which subsists between us and Himself, that so we might learn to approach Him with dispositions suitable to the nearness and dearness of such a connection.

Let us learn then, Brethren, to call GOD our FATHER, not in words only, but in the more true and sensible language of feeling and affectionate hearts. Let us learn to adore Him as the Father and Fountain of life, with all its blessings and comforts, both in ourselves and in every other creature : let us learn to confess that we daily owe to him the continuation, the growth, and the perfection of our life : let us thus teach ourselves to acknowledge that we are dependant upon GOD for all that we are or have, whether it be natural or spiritual, whether it be temporal or eternal ; and

that every good thing both within us and without us is of the divine mercy, grace, and love of our **HEAVENLY FATHER**. Let us thus learn to worship; let us thus learn to adore; let us thus learn to approach our Divine Parent, not as slaves and servants, who are afraid of Him, but as children and as sons whom He infinitely loveth, and whom He hath called to a holy liberty with Himself, and by whom He wisheth to be loved, to be importuned, and to be trusted in, as a **FATHER** of endless blessing, protection, hope, and comfort, both now and for ever, unto all His creatures.

Alas! how little in general do we know **GOD**! how little therefore do we love Him, because we do not thus approach Him as our **FATHER**; because we do not thus adore Him as the **GOD** and Parent of our life, *in whom we live, and move, and have our being!* We all of us indeed with our lips call **GOD** our **FATHER**, but how few of us do really know and acknowledge Him to be so with our hearts! how few of us do really see and confess that all we are or have is from Him; and that what we call our life is but an emanation from His all-blessed love and wisdom communicated daily in mercy and kindness unto us! Oh then, if we would truly know, if we would truly love and worship **GOD**, let us contemplate and adore Him as the **FATHER** and Fountain of life, of bles-

sing, and comfort, both in ourselves and in all the boundless universe of creatures and creation, both visible and invisible, which he hath formed.

But further—If we would call **GOD** indeed *our FATHER*, we should study to purify and perfect our souls through His divine righteousness and truth. For this is the only true mark of our being the children of **GOD**, and that He is our **FATHER**, when we are endeavouring to become like unto Him in wisdom, in holiness, in purity of life and conversation. It is therefore written, “*That they only are the sons of GOD who are led by the spirit of GOD.*” (Rom. viii. 14.) If we do not therefore partake of our Father’s wise and righteous spirit, suffering ourselves to be led and governed by it in all our thoughts, words, and actions, it is a plain proof that we are not His sons. For sons or children do always partake of a life similar to that of their parent. We are all of us sons or children of earthly parents, because we partake of an earthly life which we have derived from them; even so, to become the true sons or children of **GOD** our heavenly parent, we must partake of a heavenly life, which will be derived to us from Him according as we endeavour to purify and perfect our hearts by heavenly righteousness, wisdom, and truth. If then we desire to call **GOD** *our FATHER*; if we desire to know and to find Him to be related to us

by such a near, such a holy and happy relationship, let us endeavour to live righteously; let us endeavour to purify our souls by the lessons of our FATHER'S heavenly and eternal wisdom; let us take care that we may ever be partakers of His holiness, and that we may always keep open the communication between His righteous spirit and our own hearts. Thus shall we become indeed the true sons and children of *our FATHER which is in Heaven*, deriving from Him a heavenly and eternal life, as we have derived from our earthly parents an earthly and a temporal life.

Lastly. Let me give you here one word of important and instructive caution. Whosoever you approach and address yourselves unto your FATHER *which is in Heaven*, remember that He now *dwelleth bodily* in the GLORIFIED HUMANITY of your LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, and that you can only be admitted to Him, or have any communication with Him, as you approach Him through this DIVINE HUMANITY of the BLESSED JESUS. This is what He declared when He said "*No man cometh to the Father but by ME:*" (John xiv. 6.) And again, "*Believe ME that I am in the Father and the Father in ME:*" (John xiv. 11.) And again, "*He that hath seen ME hath seen MY Father also:*" (John xiv. 9.) by which words He meant to instruct us in this great and important

truth, that if we would approach unto, or have any communication with the **GODHEAD** of the **ETERNAL, INVISIBLE FATHER**, we must now approach unto **Him**, we must now seek communication with **Him** through the **HUMANITY** which **He** assumed here below ; and in which **He** now dwelleth bodily and visibly in the glorified Person of our **LORD** and **SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST**.

Do we wish then to find and to worship **GOD** as our **FATHER**? let us first seek **Him** in the centre and depth of our own hearts, as the **FATHER** and Fountain of all the life, blessing, and comfort which we ourselves and all other creatures do daily receive. But let us here seek **Him** in righteousness, in purity, in wisdom, and in truth : let us remember, that **He** is our **FATHER**, and we are **His** sons, only so far as we partake of, and are led by **His** righteous, pure, wise, and heavenly spirit : let us remember lastly, that **He** now dwelleth with all **His** fulness in the **GLORIFIED HUMANITY** of our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, and that therefore we can have no communication with **Him** but through this **DIVINE HUMANITY** : let us therefore draw nigh and approach unto the **BLESSED JESUS** : let us acknowledge **Him** from henceforth as our **GOD** and **FATHER**, agreeably with the magnificent prophetic testimony concerning **Him**, where it is written, “ *Unto us a Child*

*“ is born, unto us a Son is given, and the govern-  
“ ment shall be upon His shoulder, and His name  
“ shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty  
“ GOD, the EVERLASTING FATHER, the Prince  
“ of Peace. (Isaiah ix. 6.) AMEN.*

## SERMON II.

---

St. Matt. vi. 9.

*After this manner therefore pray ye: "Our  
FATHER which art in Heaven."*

**I**N a former discourse on these words I endeavoured to point out the great end and design of prayer, by shewing how this holy duty is intended to change, to reform, and to purify our hearts and lives; and that our **LORD** therefore taught us *how* to pray, that he might teach us how to attain unto the best, the purest, and most reformed state of heart and life.

I insisted further on the weighty lesson of instruction taught us in addressing **GOD** as our **FATHER**, and how this lesson was intended to lead us to a continual acknowledgment that all we are or have is from **GOD**; that our life itself, with all its manifold blessings and comforts, is a daily emanation from the mercy and love of our **HEAVENLY FATHER**; that **GOD** is the one **Fountain** of all life, and that we and all His creatures are but the receivers of life, and therefore dependant upon Him for all that we have or enjoy, whether it be of nature

or of grace; whether it relate to our perishable bodies or to our immortal spirits. In this acknowledgment, that all we have or enjoy is from **GOD** our **HEAVENLY FATHER**, dependeth, as was further shown, the true spiritual and acceptable worship of **GOD**.

Having thus then considered the wisdom, the sanctity, and the purpose of the divine mercy, in teaching us to address **GOD** as a **FATHER**, I shall now proceed to point out the additional instruction designed for us, when we are admonished to address Him, not as a **FATHER** only, but with the significant title of *our FATHER*.

The reasonableness of this title is founded in the greatest depths of divine wisdom; and I could therefore earnestly wish to bespeak your most awakened attention to the consideration of it, as to a point of the most important consequence to your spiritual interests.

The reason then why we address **GOD**, not as a **FATHER** only, but with the additional title of *our Father*, is this, to teach us that we are all brethren, and children of the same common parent, and that we ought therefore as brethren to pray one for another, that so we may abound in true charity one towards another, and love one another as we love ourselves.



For to love ourselves alone, despising others in comparison with ourselves; to seek only our own interests, and to make light of the interests of our neighbour; to exalt ourselves above others, whilst we delight to see others below ourselves; to pray for the divine blessings upon our own heads, without wishing that our brethren may share them with us; to seek a high place in the kingdom of GOD ourselves, and to have no concern about the place which others obtain there; to be thus, I say, solicitous about our own interests and our own happiness above that of other people, is a sure symptom of the most depraved, the most sinful, and the most unregenerate state of heart. Nothing therefore doth separate us so far from GOD; nothing is so contrary to the spirit of the kingdom of Heaven; nothing, in short, ought so much to be feared and guarded against by us, as this evil spirit of a defiled self-love, because there is nothing that doth so much endanger our true peace both here and hereafter.

On the contrary; to love others as we love ourselves; to rejoice in their welfare as we do in our own; to pray unto GOD with the same earnestness for them as we pray for ourselves; to consider all mankind as our brethren, equally related with us to the same common parent; to be thus as anxious for the temporal and eternal happiness of all men,

as for those that are united with us in the nearest bond of a holy relationship; who partake of the same nature, who are heirs of the same kingdom, who have one and the same GOD for their FATHER and their FRIEND; to be thus, I say, affected towards all men, loving them with a holy love, is a sure symptom of the most righteous, the most heavenly, and the most regenerate state of heart, because this is the temper of angels; this is the spirit which prevaieth in Heaven; this is to be *merciful even as our Father which is in Heaven is merciful*; this, in short, is a state of heart which we should above all things cultivate and cherish in us, because it constitutes the truly evangelical temper and spirit, and is the great distinguishing feature of the Christian life and character, agreeable to those words of JESUS CHRIST, "*By this shall all men know that ye are MY disciples, if ye have love one towards another:*" and again, "*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another.*" (John xiii. 34, 35.)

Here then we may see the true reason why our BLESSED LORD, by calling GOD *our* FATHER, directed us to pray for all other persons as for ourselves: It is because this heavenly spirit of love and charity one towards another cometh from the LORD alone, and can only be attained by prayer to Him one for another: For if we never pray one for

another, we may then depend upon it we shall never love one another as we ought to do; we shall only love ourselves; we shall be glad to see ourselves above others, and others below ourselves; we shall thus come to despise other people in comparison with ourselves; and by never presenting them before **GOD** as equally related to him with ourselves, as equal objects of his grace and mercy, as equal inheritors of his kingdom, we shall soon forget the near and brotherly relationship which subsisteth between us, and far from attaining unto the gospel pearl of Christian love, we shall fall into the dangerous idolatry of self-love and self-esteem.

But now, if we did but accustom ourselves to pray one for another with the same earnestness that we do for ourselves; if we did but unite our neighbours with us in our prayers, considering them as children of the same parent, and inheritors of the same blessed promises; if we did but desire **GOD** would bless them with the same blessings that He blesseth ourselves; we should then soon attain unto a true spirit of Christian love and charity one towards another, because then we should begin to love one another in **GOD**; we should consider one another as the children of **GOD**, as immortal spirits born for Heaven, as brethren, not according to the flesh, but according to the eternal nature of the spirit of **GOD**, in whom *we live, and move, and have*

*our being.* Our love thus would become holy, would become heavenly, would become eternal, being no longer subject to the fickleness, instability, and caprice of mere natural affection; we should be as much afraid of despising one another as of despising angels; and we should rejoice as much in doing all sorts of kind and tender offices one towards another, as if we did them towards the holy saints and children of **GOD** in **Heaven**.

To conclude. If the children of some great and powerful king were to come amongst us, and make their abode with us for some stated time, who amongst us, Beloved, would not rejoice in showing them every possible token of kindness and respect? Who would not greatly love and reverence them, though not for their own sakes, yet because they were the children of a king?

Now if we do not feel ourselves thus affected with a holy love and reverence towards our neighbours, our brethren, and all mankind; if we do not equally rejoice in showing them every possible token of kindness and respect as if they were all the children of a king; it can be for no other reason but because we never presented them before **GOD** in our prayers as his children; and therefore never learnt to consider them in this their high and heavenly character. For such a holy practice would soon have taught us to regard one another as the

children of the greatest and most powerful of all kings ; as inheritors of the richest and the most enduring kingdom ; and in this regard we should feel it as impossible not to love, and to reverence one another, and to rejoice in doing all acts of kindness one towards another, as if we were the children of the greatest potentate upon earth.

Let us then, Brethren, (if we wish to attain unto a true love and charity one towards another) learn to pray one for another, as our **BLESSED LORD** hath taught us : Let us learn to consider one another in our true characters, as brethren and children of **GOD** ; as immortal spirits created to be the temples and habitations of the divine love and wisdom ; as the children of the **KING OF KINGS** ; as heirs of **Heaven** and immortality ; as equally dear unto **GOD**, and equally the objects of his eternal grace, favour, and protection.

Such dispositions, and such habits of judging one of another, will necessarily inspire us with a wonderful reverence, love, and holy respect one towards another : All pride, self-love, hatred, malice, envy, and contempt one towards another will then find no place in our bosoms : We shall thus pray away every evil and disorderly affection of corrupt nature in us, and in their place shall receive from the **LORD** all those pure and heavenly affections of humility, love, mercy, compassion, and charity,

which will be our greatest blessing and comfort in this world; and in the world to come, will be our qualification for the enjoyment of the societies of blessed angels in that kingdom, where it is written in indelible characters, as a law of eternal life and salvation, **THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF. AMEN.**

## SERMON III.

[Preached the Sunday after Ascension Day.]

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St. Matt. vi. 9.

*After this manner therefore pray ye : “ Our  
FATHER which art in Heaven.”*

**I**N two former discourses on these words I have endeavoured to point out the great end and efficacy of Prayer, in its tendency to change, to reform, and purify our hearts and lives. I further showed in general the important and heavenly wisdom contained in this Prayer of our LORD'S, and the particular instruction intended for us in calling **GOD our FATHER**.

I shall now proceed to show what we are taught, and how our **BLESSED LORD** designed our hearts should be affected, by addressing **GOD** under this further character, not as *our FATHER* only, but as *our FATHER “ which art in Heaven.”*

Now by this expression, *which art in Heaven*, our **BLESSED LORD** intended to remind us, and to establish in us the comfortable persuasion of this great truth, that there is another world besides that which we now inhabit, which He here calleth

*Heaven*, and in which GOD dwelleth with all His holy saints and angels.

This is indeed a truth which all of us confess with our lips, for who amongst us denieth that there is another world? that there is a Heaven? and that GOD, and saints and angels have their abode there?

But, Beloved, suffer me to intimate to you that there is a mighty difference between confessing these things with our lips and having our hearts and lives rightly affected with the truth, the certainty, and the reality of these things. Very bad men may acknowledge with their tongues that there is a GOD, and that there is a heavenly world in which He dwelleth, but then the hearts of bad men are not affected by, and do not feel, the conviction of such truths.

Here then we may see the grand reason why our LORD taught us, not only to address our prayers to the FATHER of our being, but to address Him also under this most significant character and description, *Which art in Heaven*.

It was to bring us to a continual heart-felt acknowledgment of the realities of the invisible world, of the presence, of the nearness, of the powers and influences of the kingdom of Heaven,



and of **GOD** who dwelleth there, and of all His holy saints and angels; that so being rightly affected with the great certainties of these things, they might have their proper influence on our lives and conversations.

For there is no truth more sober and more certain than this, that there is a **GOD**; that there is a kingdom of **Heaven**; that there are innumerable companies of saints and angels dwelling therein; and yet how unaffected do the generality of mankind live with the soberness and the certainty of these truths!

There is, again, no truth more sober and more certain, than that this invisible world, with all its glorious inhabitants; this **GOD**, these saints and angels, this innumerable company of heavenly personages, are very near unto us, so near that **I** will be bold to affirm nothing can be nearer: we are not nearer one to another than we are to **GOD** and His blessed host; we are not nearer unto the visible things of this world, than we are unto the invisible things of another; and yet how few amongst us live rightly affected with the greatness and certainty of this truth!

Again—there is no truth more sober and more certain, than that there is a secret and invisible, but yet sensible and powerful communication be-

tween the kingdom of Heaven and this world; between the blessed inhabitants of Heaven and the inhabitants of earth. All nature beareth a holy testimony to this great truth. For whence, let me ask, cometh that wonderful power whereby the earth bringeth forth grass, *the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit, after his kind, whose seed is in itself after his kind?* Whence cometh all that variety of uses, of beauties, of glories, which we behold here on the face of the earth, both in the animal and the vegetable creation? We have lately seen the face of nature barren, wrinkled, and unfruitful with the winter's cold. Whence cometh it then that its aspect now beginneth to change into beauty, into fruitfulness, into the promises of blessed abundance for our service and comfort? Whence, I say, come all these wondrous changes, powers, beauties, and gracious influences on the earth? To what cause will the pious and enlightened mind ascribe them, but to the heavenly intercourse and communication of the blessed powers of the invisible world? To the holy influences of that Heaven whereof this earth which we inhabit is but, as it were, the body and shell, affording a temporary and visible cloathing to the eternal and invisible realities that exist in a much more perfect and more glorious state in the unseen world of spirits.

But this is not all—there is a question of still infinitely higher importance which remaineth to be asked; of still infinitely higher importance to be rightly answered. For whence come, let me ask, all those gracious influences into the souls of men? Whence comes it that we are enabled to love **GOD** and to love one another? Whence comes it that we can raise our thoughts above time and this world, to think of **Heaven** and eternity? Whence comes it that we can thus, by a right use of our faculties, acquire an angelic nature; connect ourselves with **GOD**; become the habitations of the divine love and wisdom; attain thus unto eternal life and eternal blessedness; acquire a fitness, when we leave this world, to live for ever happy amongst blessed beings in another? Whence, I say, come all these gracious gifts, powers, and influences into our souls? What or whence are they, and to what source shall we refer them? Surely it were impiety, it were the height of profaneness and blasphemy to say, that all this is from ourselves, and that we of our own power can do all these things. Let us then be wise to refer them to their true cause. They are indeed from **Heaven**, and they speak to the thinking mind, as plainly as words can speak, this instructive truth, That the **LORD**, by virtue of the influences of His holy angels in **Heaven**, has a continual communication with the souls of men here on earth, whereby,

so far as they will suffer Him, He is continually desirous to draw them to Himself, to purify them through His love, and thus by the process of regeneration to fit them for His heavenly kingdom.

How real then, Brethren, is the existence of a GOD, of a Heaven, of glorious saints and angels! how near are all these things unto us! how true and perceptible is the communication between Heaven and earth, between angels and men! but yet how forgetful, alas! are mankind of all these things! how few amongst us live rightly affected with the conviction and the certainty of them! how few really believe, how few really profit by the persuasion of these great truths, which relate to the invisible world! and yet we are all hastening to that world as fast as time can carry us.

Here then we should learn to adore that blessed wisdom, which, by teaching us to pray unto our FATHER *which is in Heaven*, hath not only acquainted us with these truths, but hath also taken the most effectual method of impressing the persuasion of them upon our minds. For if in our prayers we did but make it habitual to us inwardly to recollect ourselves, and before we prayed, to place ourselves in the presence of GOD, in the communion of saints and angels, in the glorious mansions of the heavenly world, the invisible abode of the innumerable and the infinitely blessed:

If we did but accustom ourselves to think that that world so certain, so happy, and so gloriously peopled, is yet as near unto us as the world we inhabit; that we are even now, as to our spirits, in communion with it; that the angels of GOD are round about us ever shedding their blessed influences upon us; that the beauty and fruitfulness of our earth is owing to its communication with Heaven and the internal world: if, I say, we did but use ourselves to pray in this recollected state of heart, we should soon be surprised to find how the certainties of these great truths would be confirmed in us, and how the ardour and efficacy of our prayers would be proportionably strengthened and increased.

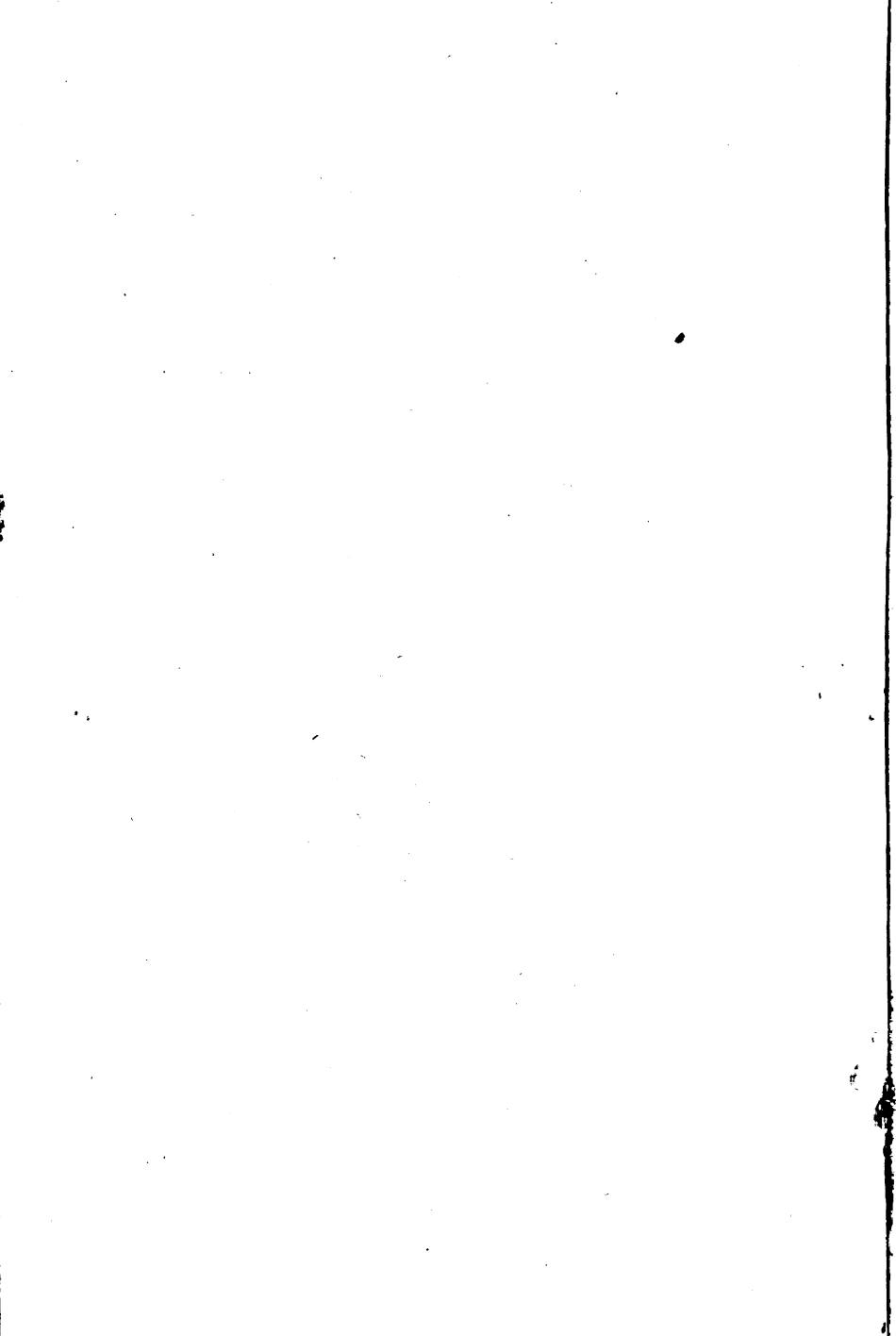
Let us learn then, Beloved, to pray; let us learn to live in this recollected state of heart. When we think of GOD, or our FATHER *which is in Heaven*, let us think of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, who as at this time ascended into Heaven, and let us believe, as He hath assured us, that He is both our GOD and our FATHER; our GOD, because His name was called EMANUEL, which, being interpreted, is GOD WITH US: and our FATHER, because to Him we owe our very life and being, as it is written, "*All things were made by Him:*" (John i. 2.) and to Him also we owe our *new birth*, which is *regener-*

ation, as it is written again, "*To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of GOD.*" (John i. 12.) Let us believe, therefore, that we can never find GOD, or have any communication with Him, but through that HUMANITY which He assumed here below, and in which He now reigneth eternally in the GLOBIFIED PERSON of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

And when we think of *Heaven* let us not think of some place high above us, and far remote from us, but let us think of the internal world from which this outward world which we inhabit deriveth its continual subsistence, and of which it is the outward visible manifestation. For "*the kingdom of Heaven, it is written, is within us ;*" and as spirit liveth within matter and is its life and support, even so the invisible world, wherein the LORD and His holy angels dwell, is within the visible world and is its life and support. If then we wish to know the certainties of Heaven and the invisible world, and to have any communication with them, let us look to that which is *within ;* let us look unto a GOD who hath His abode in us ; let us look unto a kingdom of Heaven *near unto us*, and with whose blessed and glorious inhabitants we may have an internal, spiritual, and everlasting communication of life and blessedness whensoever we will learn to think and to do the

things which are right. Let us pray thus with the heart and with the understanding also, and we may then rest in the most comfortable assurance that whatsoever we ask of the **LORD JESUS CHRIST** according to His will, *He will give it us.* (John xiv. 14.)

How we may ask according to His will shall be the subject of some future discourse. **AMEN.**





## SERMON IV.

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St. Matt. vi. 9.

*Hallowed be THY NAME.*

**I**N the three foregoing discourses I have endeavoured to explain the nature and design of Prayer, and to point out the particular excellencies of the LORD'S prayer, in its tendency to affect our hearts and lives, so far as is expressed in these introductory words, "*Our FATHER which art in Heaven.*"

I shall now proceed to consider the further instruction designed for us in the words of my text, "*Hallowed be THY NAME,*" which is the first petition that occurs in this divine prayer of our LORD'S.

In this petition we pray that the NAME of *our FATHER which is in Heaven* may be rightly *hallowed* by ourselves and by all his creatures, which surely is a petition of the most interesting importance to every one amongst us, since it includeth in it the desire of every blessing which GOD can give or we receive. For if our heavenly FATHER'S *Name* was truly *hallowed* by us, there would no

longer be any sin, misery, or folly in the world, but righteousness, happiness, wisdom, and every heavenly grace and blessing would again abound amongst the children of men.

It surely then doth much concern us to consider how this petition may be fully accomplished by us, that so we may find in ourselves all the happy effects annexed to it and resulting from it.

1st. Then the *Name of our FATHER which is in Heaven* is particularly hallowed when we approach and address Him in and through the **DIVINE HUMANITY** of the **LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST**. For the proper, the peculiar and distinguishing *Name* of the Christian **GOD** is **JESUS CHRIST**, that is to say, the **INCARNATE GOD**, the **REDEEMING GOD**, the **SAVIOUR GOD**, who not only created the world and preserveth it, but who also came down upon earth to restore its fallen inhabitants to the life, and righteousness, and order which they had lost; to rescue them from the powers of sin and destruction, and make them again his pure and blessed children, meet to live with Him for ever in His heavenly kingdom.

This is what **JESUS CHRIST** declares, when He saith, “That *He and the FATHER are one;*” (John x. 30.) that “*He is in the FATHER and the FATHER in Him;*” (John xiv. 11.) that “*who-*

*“ soever hath seen Him hath seen the FATHER also ;”* (John xiv. 9.) that *“ no man cometh to the FATHER but by Him ;”* (John xiv. 6.) that *“ all men should honour Him, even as they honour the FATHER ;”* (John v. 23.) that *“ whatsoever we shall ask in His name He will do it, that the FATHER may be glorified in the SON ;”* (John xiv. 13.)

Numberless and endless are the passages in Holy Scripture, all confirming to us this great truth, that the FATHER now liveth and dwelleth with all the fulness of His Godhead in the GLORIFIED HUMANITY of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, agreeable to the declaration of St. Paul, who testifies, *“ In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily ;”* (Col. ii. 9.) that He assumed this HUMANITY in our nature here on earth for the sake of making Himself known, of making Himself visible, and thereby approachable unto His creatures, who had lost by sin all knowledge of Him, all acquaintance and communication with Him ; that it is highly pleasing therefore unto the FATHER that we should now approach and worship Him through this HUMANITY which He assumed, that is, that we should approach unto and worship Him in the glorified Person of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, because in that Person He now dwelleth with all His fulness, and

thus we may again know and find Him; thus we may again have acquaintance and communication with Him; thus, in short, we may attain unto that righteousness and regeneration, that peace and purity, that rest and redemption, which can never be found by us but in GOD alone, and which we could never have found in Him, unless by becoming manifest in our flesh He had given us the power of knowing and of approaching unto Him.

If then we wish to know and to find *our FATHER which is in Heaven*; if we wish to have any acquaintance or communication with Him; if we wish for a participation of those spiritual, those eternal graces and blessings which He communiceth unto those pious souls that seek and love Him; if we wish that His *name* should be truly *hallowed* by us; let us then draw nigh unto Him, let us seek, worship, and adore Him in the DIVINE HUMANITY which he assumed here on earth, and in which He now dwelleth and reigneth eternally under the glorified name and character of the LORD GOD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

But 2ndly. The name of *our FATHER which is in Heaven* is *hallowed* by us when we approach and adore Him under a full acknowledgment of that divine power, virtue, and operation, which proceedeth continually from Him, and which is called, in His Word, the HOLY SPIRIT, the COMFORTER, and SPIRIT OF TRUTH.

That there is a divine virtue, power, and operation proceeding from the **GODHEAD** in the glorified Person of our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, and that He hath hereby an internal communication with the souls of all mankind, by means whereof He reformeth, purifieth, enlighteneth, regenerateth, and finally saveth all such as believe in Him and keep His commandments; that all heavenly life, all heavenly love, all righteousness, all blessing, truth, and comfort, are derived into us from the **LORD** by virtue of this His **HOLY SPIRIT** or **WORD**; that therefore (as we profess on this day to believe\*) there is in the **GODHEAD** a glorious Trinity of **FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST**, all united in the one glorified Person of our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**; that these things, I say, are so, we have the most abundant and indisputable testimony of the **WORD OF GOD**.

Here then, again, Brethren, if we wish that the *name of our FATHER which is in Heaven* should be rightly *hallowed* by us, let us learn to adore Him under a real confession and acknowledgment of this His divine virtue, power, and operation: Let us teach ourselves to reflect worthily on the sacred communication which hereby subsisteth between us and our **LORD the BLESSED JESUS**: Let us think

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\* This Sermon was first preached on Trinity Sunday.

of the holiness, the happiness, and the importance of this communication, and of the innumerable graces, virtues, glories, and comforts, which our **GRACIOUS LORD** is hereby disposed to operate in us: Finally, let us learn to ascribe unto this sacred communication all that we have or can enjoy, our life itself, our righteousness, our wisdom, and whatsoever is good, wise, and blessed, whether it be within us or without us, agreeable to the declaration of **JESUS CHRIST**, where He saith, “*Without ME ye can do nothing.*” (John xv. 4.) Thus shall we approach nearer unto the perfect practice of this holy petition, that the *name of our FATHER which is in Heaven may be hallowed by us.*

But lastly.—The *name of our FATHER which is in Heaven* is most perfectly *hallowed* by us, when we truly love and obey Him, and show forth our love and obedience by the righteousness of our lives and the keeping of His commandments. For what honour will be derived to His *name*, or what profit to ourselves, from knowing and believing in our **LORD** and **SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST**, if we do not follow His example and keep His commandments?

Of what advantage, again, will it be to believe in the operations of His **HOLY SPIRIT** and **WORD**, if we do not cultivate and cherish these operations in ourselves to the reforming and purifying of our hearts and lives?

How, again, will the *name* of **GOD** be more *hal-  
lowed*, or our own salvation more secured, by pro-  
found speculations on the doctrine of the **HOLY  
TRINITY**, if our hearts are not more filled with  
humility, with charity, with the sacred fear and  
love of **GOD**?

If then we wish that the *name* of our **HEAVEN-  
LY FATHER** should be perfectly *hallowed* by us;  
if we wish to secure to ourselves all the heavenly  
graces and blessings which we pray for in this  
petition that our **LORD** hath taught us, then let us  
learn to love Him and to keep His command-  
ments; let us approach, let us worship and adore  
Him in the sacred Person of our **LORD JESUS  
CHRIST**; let us live under the continual acknow-  
ledgment of His holy presence, and of the opera-  
tion of His **HOLY SPIRIT** or **WORD** in ourselves;  
but above all, let us cherish this **SPIRIT** or **WORD**  
in our hearts through true love and obedience; let  
us suffer it to guide, to direct, to strengthen us,  
till it hath purged us from all our sins, established  
us in the practice of solid virtue, conjoined us with  
**GOD**, and thus purified and fitted us for the enjoy-  
ments of His heavenly kingdom.

Thus shall we become at once both the true  
worshippers and the blessed children of *our FA-  
THER which is in Heaven*: Thus, too, shall we at  
once rightly *hallow the name of GOD*, and effect-

ally secure our own eternal happiness and salvation. Thus, in short, shall we enter into all the gracious designs of our **HEAVENLY FATHER** towards us, who doth not desire honour from us for **His** own sake, but for our sakes; who hath commanded us to *hallow His holy name*, not with a view to **His** own glory, but with a view to our truest happiness; who wisheth to be worshipped, to be rightly adored by us, because **He** knoweth that such worship and adoration have an immediate and necessary tendency to promote our temporal and eternal blessedness. For it is a great truth, founded in the established and unchangeable laws of the divine order, and which therefore should never be forgotten by us, that the more we enter into a true humiliation before the **LORD OF HEAVEN**; the more our hearts are penetrated with a sense of the fear and love of **Him**; the more we grow in the graces of **His** spirit by an obedient practice of **His** commandments; so much the more shall we enter, as to our inner man, into the regions of true peace, and fit our souls for the perceptions and enjoyments of eternal blessedness hereafter at the resurrection of the just.

Let us never cease therefore to pray, let us never cease to practice this holy prayer—"HALLOWED BE THY NAME."



# SERMON V.

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St. Matt. vi. 10.

*Thy Kingdom come.*

**T**HE *Kingdom of GOD*, for the coming of which our **LORD** here teacheth us to pray, may be considered in two respects :

1st. As the *kingdom of GOD* in this world ; and  
2ndly. As the *kingdom of GOD* in that world which is to come.

In my present discourse I propose to consider it in the former of these respects, and to show, according to that respect, what it is we pray for, and how our **LORD** intended our hearts and lives should be affected by this holy petition, “ *Thy kingdom come.*”

Now the *kingdom of GOD* in this world may also be regarded in a two-fold point of view, 1st. as it respects *external* things, or things *without* us ; and 2ndly. as it respects *internal* things, or things *within* us.

By the *kingdom of GOD* in *external* things, or things *without* us, I would be understood to mean

the operations of His divine goodness, wisdom, power, and providence, in the preservation of the visible world, whereby it is fitted for the present habitation of man, and replenished daily with a wonderful variety of things adapted to the necessity, the service, and the comfort of its inhabitants.

According to this view of *the kingdom of GOD*, it is discoverable in the fruitfulness of the earth, in the regulation of the seasons, in the good order of government established in society, in the health of our bodies, and in various other considerations of a similar nature, which all demonstrate, that an **ALMIGHTY POWER** is ever at hand to bless, to rule, and to protect man, so far as he is willing to be blessed, ruled, and protected by it.

By the kingdom of **GOD** in *internal* things, or things *within* us, I would be understood to mean the operations of His divine goodness, wisdom, power, and providence, in our hearts, whereby He is continually disposed to instruct, to reform, to convert, to regenerate, to sanctify, to save us, and make us eternally happy, by making us internally holy, just, wise, and virtuous.

With respect to the *kingdom of GOD* in things *without* us, I shall here only observe concerning it, that we lose much of its usefulness, beauty, and glory, for want of seeing and confessing the opera-

tions of the power and goodness of GOD in this lower world. For the visible things of this world, as they proceed from, and owe their subsistence to the invisible things of another world, so were they intended to lead us to the knowledge of such invisible things, since they exhibit a glorious display of GOD'S spiritual kingdom, and are an outward manifestation of its glories, its uses, and its beauties, expressed in the kingdom of nature. If then we did but accustom ourselves to regard all outward objects in this holy point of view, as it would present them to us with an additional lustre of divine beauty and glory, so would it render the sight of them most interesting and edifying.

Much might here be said concerning the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of GOD, as displayed in His kingdom *without* us; but I am desirous at present to draw your attention to the more interesting consideration of His kingdom *within* us. To establish this kingdom in us was the great end of our creation, and to restore it when it had been lost, was the great end of our redemption through JESUS CHRIST. It is called a *kingdom*, because a kingdom implies *rule* and *government*, and the *kingdom of GOD* therefore is the divine rule and government of GOD. But the rule and government of GOD is the rule and government of His divine love and divine wisdom in the hearts of His

people, and therefore wheresoever this rule and government is, there is *the kingdom of GOD*.

The beginning of this kingdom is laid in repentance and faith in the **INCARNATE GOD**. From that time it continueth to increase in glory and perfection, as the soul continueth faithful in keeping the commandments of **GOD** and walking in the ways of His righteousness. It may here be well to observe, that as it is the highest privilege of our natures to be capable thus of connecting ourselves with **GOD**, and of having His *kingdom come* in us, so all our true peace, all our true happiness, both in time and in eternity, depend upon the coming, the establishment, and the increase of this kingdom in us.

For it is an undeniable truth, confirmed by the testimony of good men in all ages, that without **GOD** man can never attain unto true happiness. The reason is, because in **GOD** alone is the fountain of true peace, which man therefore can never find but as he receiveth it from **GOD**; nor can he receive it from **GOD** until he admits the rule and government of **GOD**, that is to say, the kingdom of the divine love and wisdom, into his heart and life.

If we would explore therefore ~~the~~ *the* one true cause of all misery, whether it be temporal or eternal,

we shall find it to be this, because men will not suffer GOD to come and reign in their hearts, and establish in them that kingdom of His love and wisdom which can alone expel all sin, and therewith all misery from the human soul. For where the kingdom of GOD is *not*, there the kingdom of *Satan* must be, and where this latter kingdom is, there is mis-rule, confusion, anarchy, disorder, and death. If, again, we would explore the one sure and safe way which leadeth out of all misery, whether temporal or eternal, we shall find it to be this, to submit ourselves to the rule and government of GOD, and to suffer Him to establish His kingdom of love and wisdom, of righteousness and peace, in our hearts and lives. For where GOD is with the blessed powers of His kingdom, there must of necessity be peace, protection, order, harmony, and life.

It is a great and fatal error which many people commit in matters of religion, that they are seeking GOD and His *kingdom* where they never can be found, viz. in external things, such as verbal prayers, ceremonious forms, and external observations, whilst they neglect to look for GOD where alone He can be truly found, viz. in their own hearts. For is it not the *heart* which GOD desireth for His habitation? Are not we commanded to love Him with our *hearts*? Hath not He pro-

mised to speak unto the *hearts* of His people? Doth not He again and again declare that He dwelleth and hath His abode in our *hearts*? Of what service then can verbal prayers or any other external acts be to us unless they are the means or instruments of bringing our hearts nearer unto GOD, that so GOD may gain admission there, and establish in us the kingdom of His love, righteousness, blessing, and truth?

“ *The kingdom of GOD, it is written, is righteousness, peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST:*” (Romans xiv. 17.) but where now shall we find *righteousness, peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST*, except in our hearts? For where else can we have or expect any communication with GOD? Where else therefore can the *kingdom of GOD come*, or where else can it be found by us, either here or hereafter?

We are looking, I doubt not, to be admitted into the *kingdom of GOD* hereafter; but we should do well to consider whether we are looking as earnestly for the *kingdom of GOD here*; whether we are looking now for the kingdom of GOD’S righteousness to come and be established in our hearts.

If then we desire to find that *kingdom of GOD* which we pray for when we say, “ *thy kingdom*

come," let us seek it first and principally in our hearts. Let us, by a sincere conversion, turn them unto GOD; and by a sincere repentance, fit them to receive the blessings of His kingdom and power in us.

The kingdom of GOD is a kingdom of *love and charity*: Let us learn therefore to love GOD above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves. It is a kingdom of *righteousness*: Let us learn therefore to love and to do the thing which is *right*. It is a kingdom of *wisdom*: Let us seek therefore after the true wisdom, which *cometh from above*. It is a kingdom of *power and dominion over evil*: Let us fight valiantly therefore against sin, praying unto the LORD. It is a kingdom of *good and profitable works*: Let us take heed then, that in our several stations and offices, we be always diligently and usefully employed. It is a kingdom which hath its foundations in the *deepest humility*: Let us learn therefore to be truly meek and lowly of heart. It is a kingdom where all praise, power, and glory, is ascribed unto JESUS CHRIST: Let us ascribe therefore unto His name the praise, the power, and the glory, in all that we think or do. It is a kingdom, we are taught, which "*suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force*:" (Matt. xi. 12.) Let us use therefore the violence of holy prayers unto the LORD, and we shall assuredly take it.

Finally—It is an eternal kingdom, in which the pious soul is advanced to an eternal rest, joy, and peace with **GOD** through the **HOLY GHOST**: Let us seek therefore after eternal things: and if we would know the happiness of the kingdom of **GOD**, let us look for a blessed communion with **Him** of rest, joy, and peace in the **HOLY GHOST**: Let us look above the transitory and perishable things of this world, and seek after the enduring riches, the never-fading treasures of that world where all things are fixed, immutable, and eternal as the throne of **GOD**.

Happy are they who shall understand and practice these things! happy are they who have not been blinded by the delusions of sin to the knowledge of their great certainty and importance! yea, blessed shall they be, who, looking for the *kingdom of GOD* here to be established in them in *righteousness, joy, and peace*, are daily preparing for the further and fuller revelation of its glory and blessedness in the *kingdom of GOD* hereafter! **AMEN.**



# SERMON VI.

---

St. Matt. vi. 10.

*Thy Kingdom come.*

**I**N a former discourse on these words, I endeavoured to point out the true meaning and nature of **GOD'S kingdom** in this world, as it is displayed both *within* us and *without* us; *within* us, by the operations of the divine grace, whereby **GOD** is ever desirous to establish and to perfect His kingdom of righteousness, of wisdom, and of eternal peace in our souls; and *without* us, by the operations of His divine goodness, power, and providence, whereby He continually preserveth the present visible world, and replenisheth it with a wonderful variety of things adapted to the necessity, the service, and the comfort of its inhabitants.

In my present discourse I shall proceed to consider, as was proposed, the nature of **GOD'S kingdom** in another world, and endeavour to show how the **GREAT REDEEMER** intended our hearts should be affected when He taught us to pray, according to this sense of the words, "*Thy kingdom come.*"

**GOD**, who cannot lie, hath informed us that He hath His kingdom in another world, which is at

present invisible to us. He hath besides been pleased to acquaint us with many interesting particulars respecting that kingdom, as for instance, that it is inhabited by an innumerable company of angels, who live in it a life of inconceivable and eternal blessedness; that the spirits of all good men, since the creation of the world, who have faithfully loved and served GOD, are now happy in that kingdom; that in that kingdom there is an end of all sorrow, because all is there order, harmony, peace, and rest in GOD; that that kingdom moreover is not an empty and visionary kingdom, but that it aboundeth with things real and substantial, such however as *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man to conceive*; that therefore in this kingdom, as in GOD'S *kingdom* here on earth, there is a variety and an abundance of all things needful for the high gratifications and comfort of those pure and blessed beings who inhabit it. GOD, I say, who cannot lie, hath, in His revealed Word, given us the most indisputable testimony of all these great and important truths.

But further—Blessed, glorious, and eternal as this invisible *kingdom of GOD* is in another world, yet we are further informed, that it is a kingdom in which we of this world have an interest and a concern, whose importance no words can express.

For GOD hath called every one of us alike to be heirs of this kingdom with all its blessedness. To prepare us for this high happiness is the great end for which He hath sent us into the world. The variety of His mercies and providence in our creation, preservation, redemption, and the methods furnished for our regeneration, have all their usefulness, and derive all their goodness from this blessed purpose, that we may be heirs of everlasting glory; that we may inherit that *kingdom which was prepared for us from the foundation of the world*. Our existence here is a very riddle of vanity, till we learn to connect ourselves with GOD and immortality. What an interest, then, what a concern have we all, if we did but rightly consider it, in the glories and the blessedness of GOD'S invisible kingdom!

But further—There is another consideration, relating to GOD'S kingdom in another world, of equal importance with the former, and that is its *nearness* unto us. For “the *kingdom of GOD*, saith JESUS “CHRIST, is *nigh unto you*.” (Luke x. 9.) It is *nigh*, first of all in this respect, that by righteousness and truth in our inner man we may at present enter into a blessed communion of providence, peace, and protection, with its glorious inhabitants; and it is *nigh* at hand in another respect, that we are all approaching unto it as fast as the wings of

time can carry us. A body of flesh and blood doth indeed at present, by connecting us with the visible objects of this world, separate us from open and free communication with the invisible things of another : But when this body shall be dissolved we must then enter into the world of our final destination, and must then either be infinitely happy in having believed and prepared for the glories of GOD'S *invisible kingdom*, or infinitely miserable in having disbelieved and disregarded them.

But lastly—Near as this *kingdom of GOD* is unto us, and dear as our interest is in it, yet there is one circumstance more relating to it which deserveth our particular consideration, and that is this : Our belief in the great certainties and importance of this kingdom, there is every reason to suppose, will depend altogether on the state of our hearts in this life with respect to GOD ; and as good men, by the purity of their hearts and lives, may come to the fullest and most comfortable persuasion of the glories of GOD'S *future kingdom*, so it is possible, if we pass through this life in a careless disregard of GOD and our own souls, that we may forget, we may doubt of, we may disbelieve its great realities, and forego all our interests as connected with it. Thus, notwithstanding its evidence and its certainty ; notwithstanding the repeated promises and proofs which the LORD hath given us concerning

the glories of that world in which He dwelleth ; notwithstanding all the convictions of our own minds, and the powerful apprehensions which, in the hours of sober consideration, must excite our hopes or alarm our fears about it : It is possible, I say, notwithstanding all this weight of evidence, that we may remain insensible to it, and unaffected by it. For such is the powerful and seducing influence of the world, the devil, and the flesh, that whilst we continue subject to their dominion, they can darken in our minds the light of all heavenly truth, let it be in itself ever so bright and glorious, insomuch that even the certainties of the kingdom of Heaven will, in such a state, seem uncertain to us ; its infinite blessedness will be unblest to us ; our interests in it will be uninteresting ; and we shall neither see nor feel any thing of the nearness and approach of those invisible things of eternity, which, if our senses were well awakened, would, of all other things, be most clearly perceived and most sensibly felt by us.

Adored then be that wisdom which directed us to pray in these awakening and consolatory words, “ *Thy kingdom come !* ” Adored be that wisdom which intended thus to deliver us from the above dreadful state of spiritual death and darkness, that so we may no longer live unto the sin and vanity of this world and the flesh, but may purify our

hearts through the divine love and wisdom, under a serious apprehension of the coming of **GOD's kingdom** ; under a continual sense of the infinite glories, the vast importance, and the real nearness and influence of that invisible world and those invisible inhabitants into whose company we are so soon to be introduced. For this blessed change in the state of our hearts can only be effected by sincere prayer unto the **LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST** for the *coming of His kingdom*, since if we live in the neglect of such prayer, we may then depend upon it that the kingdom of the Devil, of the flesh, and of this world, will alone prevail in us, and by separating us from the love of **GOD** and His heavenly world, will separate us at the same time from the blessed communications of the *kingdom of GOD* here, and from all belief, all hope, and expectation of its blessedness hereafter.

But what a contrary blessed effect might we not look and hope for, if we were but wise and pious enough to live in the sincere and constant practice of this short but most emphatical petition, *Thy kingdom come!* For then **GOD** would infallibly hear our prayer, and grant our petition, and make us sensible of the *coming of His kingdom*, because then *His kingdom* would *come* into our hearts and lives with all the power of heavenly love, righteousness, and peace ; and into our understandings, with

a full conviction of the certainties of the invisible world and the glory which shall be revealed; and it would come hereafter in the full and sure enjoyment of all those good things which GOD hath laid up in store for them that love Him.

Blessed then is that devout Christian who, by meditation and prayer, hath opened in himself a communication with the ETERNAL GOD and the comfortable expectations of His kingdom! Blessed is that Christian who doth not suffer himself to be cheated out of such certain and sober expectations by the deceitfulness of a sinful and unbelieving world! Blessed is that Christian who keepeth this lamp of heavenly truth ever burning bright within him, and by its clear light pursueth the happy path which leads to the regions of eternal day! Blessed is that Christian who walketh on stedfastly by this heavenly light, treading under foot the powers of temptation and darkness, until he arrives at the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem, and is admitted into the company of purified spirits! Blessed, in short, is that Christian who, by this holy light, can see through the vanity and deceitfulness of all lesser, all lower things; and penetrating thereby into the higher regions of the eternal world, accounteth nothing so truly great as GOD; nothing so truly desirable as to be conjoined in life and love with Him; nothing so truly blessed as through this conjunction-

to prepare for the coming of **H**is kingdom here in righteousness, love, peace, and truth, and for the perfect revelation of all its bliss hereafter in the habitations of the just! **AMEN.**



## SERMON VII.

---

St. Matt. vi. 10.

*Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.*

**T**O *do the will of GOD* is the highest privilege, blessedness, and perfection of our natures. It is the employment of angels and glorified spirits in Heaven. It is the delight of holy and regenerate men upon earth. The man who hath learnt to delight in doing **GOD'S WILL**, is already entered, as to the better half of him, into the city of Jerusalem : He liveth in communion with the saints that dwell in the holy place : He eateth of their bread, and drinketh of the cup of their blessing : He walketh by the light of the same sun of righteousness, and is refreshed with the same genial influences of its warmth and comfort. There is, in short, no blessing, no peace, no protection, either in Heaven or in earth, either temporal or eternal, but what in some degree or other is the happy portion of that pious Christian who hath learnt to rejoice in doing *the will of GOD*.

May I bespeak then your serious attention whilst I endeavour to explain to you the blessed design

and the important wisdom contained in this holy petition which our LORD hath taught us, "*Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.*"

In all ages of the world, and in all GOD's dispensations towards fallen mankind, it hath been His one continual desire and design to change this earth into the image of the glory and the blessedness of Heaven, and to change men into the image of the glory and the blessedness of the holy angels.

GOD willeth, and can never cease to will, to bring all men into the bosom of His peace. He hath no delight in the miseries or the imperfections of His creatures; but it is His unchangeable desire, that every disorder of nature should be removed; that all worlds and all beings in all worlds should rejoice in the communications of His infinite goodness; that not only the kingdom of this world, but of every world, and of every scul, should become *the kingdom of the LORD and of His CHRIST.*

Here however it is to be observed, that this great purpose of GOD's blessing towards us can only be accomplished by this one single method, viz. by introducing amongst us the same spirit which prevaileth in Heaven. For this world can never partake of the glory and blessedness of Heaven until it partaketh of the spirit of Heaven; and men

can never partake of the glory and blessedness of the holy angels until they live by the spirit of angels.

Now though with the eyes of flesh we cannot look at present into the invisible world ; though we cannot discover all the orders of the heavenly societies, or have a distinct view in what manner the holy angels are employed, and what particular laws, customs, and ways of life prevail amongst them, yet we are not left totally in the dark on this interesting subject. For it hath pleased **GOD**, in His adorable mercy, to reveal unto us many particulars relating to His kingdom in Heaven. We know, for instance, that the spirit which prevail-eth among its blessed inhabitants, is a spirit of love towards the **LORD** and towards one another, because no other spirit can possibly enter into the kingdom of Heaven. We may be assured, therefore, that the holy angels are full of humility, of meekness, of patience, of wisdom, of justice, of mercy, and of charity, because these holy tempers are the natural fruits of love towards **GOD** and towards one another. We may be assured, again, that the holy angels do not lead an idle and indolent life ; and though we do not know the precise nature of their particular employments, yet we may be certain that they are all employed to the glory of **GOD** and the good of one another, since without

employment, of some kind or other, we cannot conceive there can be any blessedness; and since love, and charity, and wisdom, even amongst the angels themselves, would be vain and unprofitable gifts, unless exercised in such useful works as may tend most to promote the glory of GOD and the good of society.

Here then we may establish this one great truth in the utmost degree of sober certainty, that so far as we form the spirit of our lives according to a spirit of love towards GOD and towards one another; so far as this spirit produceth in us the fruits of humility, of meekness, of patience, of wisdom, of mercy, and of charity; so far as it overcometh in us all sloth and indolence, and renders us diligent in our several employments to the glory of GOD and the good of one another; so far, I say, as this spirit thus prevaileth in us, in the same degree we shall attain unto the spirit and life of the holy angels: The communication betwixt their kingdom and that of our hearts will be opened. *GOD'S WILL will be done on earth as it is in Heaven*, and this world will thus be changed into the image of the glory and blessedness of Heaven, and ourselves into the image of the glory and blessedness of its holy inhabitants.

Behold here then the gracious design, and the important wisdom contained in this holy prayer

which our **BLESSED LORD** hath taught us, “ *Thy will be done,*” &c.

He meant by this prayer to fashion the spirit and the temper of our lives after the spirit and the temper of the holy angels in Heaven. He intended thus to make us partakers of the same blessedness; to advance us to a holy communion with the heavenly societies; to unite Heaven and earth, men and angels, together in one will, in one love, in one spirit, and in one happiness; whose fountain is **GOD**, whose end is His glory, whose duration is eternity.

It surely then becometh us, Brethren, to examine our hearts most diligently how far this heavenly prayer hath produced its effects upon us, whether it is become the daily rule and spirit of our lives, or is only the daily prayer and language of our lips.

For if it be only the prayer and language of our lips, it is then too plain that it can be of no manner of service to us whatsoever, because it can convey to us no more spiritual grace and benefit than if we were to repeat any other form of words before **GOD** of the most indifferent nature. For the mere motion of our lips only can never move the **SPIRIT OF GOD**: The repetition of words only, let them be ever so holy in themselves, can never

change the state of our hearts. If therefore this most holy prayer be but a prayer of words in our mouths, it must of necessity leave us as un sanctified, as empty of the spirit of angels, as great strangers to the communion and blessedness of Heaven, as ignorant of the counsels of GOD, and as much under the government of the Devil and our own evil wills, as if we never prayed at all.

To find then the good effects of this prayer, we must, as our BLESSED LORD intended, make it the daily rule of the spirit of our lives. We must learn by it to do and to suffer every thing as the *will of GOD*, and to respect Him and the influences of His HOLY SPIRIT in all our daily thoughts and actions. We must for this purpose enter upon a vigorous repentance from all our sins, and become true converts to JESUS CHRIST as to the GREAT and ONLY GOD. We must labour also, through His divine grace, to live useful lives; to renounce all sloth and indolence as things most destructive to our spiritual interests; and to respect the great laws of justice and judgment in all our employments, thoughts, words, and works.

Then shall we soon reap from our LORD'S prayer, in a manner inconceivable, and in a degree surpassing all our expectations, the fruits of holiness and of blessedness which were designed us by its Divine Teacher. We shall find it like that ladder

mentioned in the Holy Scriptures, of which Jacob dreamed, “ *whose foot was on the earth, and its top reached unto Heaven, and the angels of GOD ascended and descended upon it.*” (Gen. 28. 12.) For by its help we shall also ascend, and though our bodies are on earth amongst men, labouring here in the works of our several callings, yet our souls, exalted by the spirit of this prayer, will be in Heaven amongst the societies of blessed spirits. For whilst it is the fixed purpose of our hearts in all things, and at all times, to *do the will of GOD*, in humility, in meekness, in patience, in wisdom, in mercy, in justice, and in charity, what a multitude of holy angels, influenced by the same heavenly tempers, may we not expect to *ascend and descend* with their blessing upon us and our works! Doubtless all our employments, all times, all places, would then be consecrated, and we should be ready to cry out, wherever we were, and howsoever we were employed, as the patriarch Jacob did when he awaked out of sleep, “ *Surely the LORD is in this place and I knew it not : how dreadful is this place ! this is none other but the house of GOD ; this is the gate of Heaven.*” (Gen. xxviii. 16. 17.)

*Who then is that faithful and wise servant whom his LORD when He cometh shall find so doing ? Who is that servant who sincerely prayeth to know and to do the whole will of GOD ? Who is*

that servant who sincerely believeth that this is the best and happiest work he can do in this life? Who is that servant who seeth through the vanity of other things, and whom neither the love of this world, nor the lusts of the flesh, nor the temptations of the Devil, can separate from this fixed purpose of his soul to *set the LORD always before him*, and to do always what is pleasing in His sight? Of a truth I say unto you, *Blessed is that servant*; for he is already in the societies of angels; he is the favourite of Heaven; and hath already begun to breathe the spirit of Heaven; he is advancing from grace to grace, and from one degree of glory to another; and when that great day arrives which shall bring confusion upon worldly men who forget the counsels of GOD, and the concerns of their own souls, and the interests of eternity, it shall be to this *faithful and wise servant* a day of rest and consolation; a day of the fulfilment of all his hopes; a day of introduction into everlasting bliss in the *kingdom of GOD. AMEN.*



# SERMON VIII.

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St. Matt. vi. 10.

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

**I**N our addresses to **ALMIGHTY GOD** we cannot be too careful to consider, so as to understand rightly, what those things are which we ask of Him. For if a person was to come and pretend to beg something of us, without knowing what it was that he came to beg, how extremely ridiculous and unreasonable should we think the conduct of such a person! Should not we also naturally bid him first to go and consider with himself what he wanted, and what he had to ask of us, and then come again when he was satisfied in these enquiries?

Now equally ridiculous and unreasonable will be our conduct before **ALMIGHTY GOD** if we approach Him with a petition in our mouths, without first considering, so as to understand the meaning of our petition; and **GOD** will in like manner very justly send us away, and bid us go and ponder with ourselves what we want with Him, and what we have to ask of Him, and then come again when we are satisfied in these enquiries.

I have been led into these reflections, and have thought it needful to premise the caution which they suggest, as an expedient introduction to the peculiar and distinguished petition in my text. For in this petition we ask for the greatest and the most precious gifts of GOD; and yet if we are not more than ordinarily attentive to the meaning of this petition, we shall never know what those great and precious gifts are which we ask for; and thus we shall act the same ridiculous and unreasonable part with a person who cometh to ask something but he knoweth not what.

Do we wish then to be reasonable petitioners at the throne of grace, and to *pray with the understanding*, and to have our prayers granted, it becometh us well then to consider seriously and attentively the things for which we pray, and with this view to obtain first a clear discernment in our own minds of the blessings that we want. When we pray, for instance, in the petition under consideration, "*Give us this day our daily bread,*" we ought to reflect deeply within ourselves what this *daily bread* is and means, together with our want of it, otherwise our asking GOD for it will be like asking for we know not what.

To assist you, Beloved, in attaining this necessary knowledge, is the intention of my present discourse, in which I propose to consider the proper

meaning and signification of the word *bread*, as here used by our BLESSED LORD, and in other parts of the Sacred Scriptures.

Now *bread*, in the Sacred Scriptures, and as it is here expressed by JESUS CHRIST in the prayer which He has taught us, is applied in two distinct senses, 1st, to denote what nourishes and supports the body and bodily life of man; 2ndly, to denote what nourishes and supports the spirit or spiritual life of man. I shall consider it in both these senses, and 1st, as it denotes what nourishes and supports the body and bodily life of man.

The word *bread*, every one knows, is used in common speech to signify all kinds of bodily sustenance, whereby the bodily life of man is preserved in such health, strength, and vigour, as to become a fit instrument for the operations of the soul.

In this sense, therefore, when we pray to GOD to *give us this day our daily bread*, we pray for all such sustenance as is necessary for the preservation, health, and vigour of our bodily life, that so our bodies may become fit instruments for the operations of our souls, and thus may tend to promote the glory of GOD and the good of our neighbour in useful and profitable services.

When our **BLESSED LORD** then taught us to pray for *our daily bread*, in this sense of the words, He meant to lead us to a continual acknowledgment, that all the daily sustenance which we receive for our bodies is the immediate gift of **GOD**. He intended thus to teach us, that we ought therefore to receive our daily food with the greatest thankfulness, and to use it to the glory of Him who gave it; that *whether we eat or drink we may do all to the glory of God*.

There is no subject perhaps less considered by many Christians than this of which I am now speaking, and yet there is no subject perhaps of more real importance to the promoting a holy life, or the neglect of which is attended with more fatal and pernicious consequences.

For how common, alas! is it with many people to sit down to their daily meals, and to take sustenance for their bodies, without any thought about the **GIVER** of those good things which they receive! without any acknowledgment that they are **GOD'S** immediate bounty! without any thankfulness therefore to their **GREAT** and **HEAVENLY BENEFACTOR**, who daily supplieth them with all things necessary for life, for preservation, and comfort!

Yet what now can be conceived more profane, or what more destructive of all true godliness, than

such a forgetfulness of **GOD** at such a time when we are receiving such abundant favours at His hands?

For is it not one of the plainest laws of the Gospel, that “*whatever we do we should do it to the glory of God?*” (1 Corin. x. 31.) And are not we commanded by an apostle of **CHRIST**, “*in every thing to give thanks?*” (1 Thess. v. 18.) And is it not one of the first rules, and as I may so say, the foundation-stone of a holy life, *to have God in all our thoughts?*

But how now can we be said to have **GOD** in *all our thoughts*, if we have Him not in our thoughts at that time when we are receiving from Him the greatest of all temporal blessings?

How, again, can we be said *in every thing to give thanks*, when we show no thankfulness in that very thing which demands it most?

And how, lastly, can we be said to *do all to the glory of God*, when we omit to glorify Him upon that one occasion wherein His glory is particularly conspicuous, viz. in the nourishing, the strengthening, and refreshing our bodies by those wonderful supplies of food which He daily sendeth us?

We read, in the book of **Kings**, a remarkable circumstance concerning the prophet **Elijah**, “that

*“ the Word of the LORD came unto him, saying,  
“ Get thee hence and turn thee eastward, and hide  
“ thyself by the brook Cherith that is before Jor-  
“ dan ; and it shall be that thou shalt drink of the  
“ brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed  
“ thee there. So he went and did according unto  
“ the Word of the LORD ; for he went and dwelt  
“ by the brook Cherith that is before Jordan ; and  
“ the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the  
“ morning, and bread and flesh in the evening ; and  
“ he drank of the brook.”* (1 Kings, xvii. 1 to 7.)

How highly favoured now was this holy prophet, to be thus miraculously fed and supported by the power of GOD ! How thankful must he have been to that goodness which thus marvellously supplied him with the daily means of preserving his life ! With what a holy and religious pleasure too must he have partook of the divine bounty, which was conveyed to him in a manner so wonderful and so mysterious !

And yet, if we come to consider the matter according to truth, what is there more miraculous or extraordinary in being fed every day by *ravens*, commissioned from Heaven for that purpose, than in receiving our food in the common method by which it is supplied to us ? For who can say that our daily food is not as really the immediate gift of GOD as if it was brought unto us by *ravens* im-

mediately from Heaven? Who can say that it is not as marvellously prepared? Who, therefore, doth not see that we have as much reason to think ourselves highly favoured by Heaven, every time we eat and drink, as the holy prophet had in the wilderness? And that if we are not as thankful at our meals as he was; if we are not affected with the same holy and religious pleasure on the occasion; it can be owing only to our want of thought and a right reflection on the goodness, the mercies, and miracles of GOD?

I have been the more particular upon this subject relating to our *daily bread*, because of its great importance to a religious life, and on account of the numberless mischievous consequences attending, in such case, a want of due consideration.

For if GOD be forgotten in our eating and drinking, it is a necessary consequence, that temperance, sobriety, and moderation, will be forgotten also. And if neither temperance, sobriety, moderation, nor GOD are present with us at our meals, let us think what and who will be present in their place. If we banish the *angels of GOD* from our tables, let us reflect what sort of angels will succeed in their room. We have heard of him who *for a morsel of meat sold his birth-right*. (Gen. xxv. 33. Heb. xii. 16.) Let us take good heed then lest we do so likewise.

Our *birth-right* is to be the children of **GOD**, and to be the children of **GOD** implies the high privilege of having continual fellowship with Him in a spirit of love, of righteousness, of thankfulness, of sobriety, of temperance, of moderation in all things. Let us take then good heed lest we, by forgetfulness of **GOD**, and the indulgence of our own evil lusts, *for a morsel of meat sell this birth-right*. For this purpose, let us remember who it is that giveth us our daily bread, and let us never taste it without tasting at the same time the sweets of thankfulness towards our **HEAVENLY BENEFACTOR**. The *angels of GOD* will then be present with us at our tables, and we shall, in every sense of the words, *eat of angels' food*. Every meal we take will thus bring us nearer unto **GOD**. Sobriety, temperance, and moderation, will bring health to our bodies, whilst thankfulness, and the remembrance of **GOD**, will bring health to our souls. These will be the blessed fruits we shall derive from living under a right apprehension of this holy prayer, *Give us this day our daily bread*.



## SERMON IX.



St. Matt. vi. 10.

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

**I**N a former discourse on these words I considered the expression *daily bread* only as it signifies the *natural* food and sustenance of our bodies ; and endeavoured to show, in this sense, how our **BLESSED LORD** intended that our hearts and lives should be affected by the spirit of this holy prayer, “ *Give us this day our daily bread.*”

I shall now proceed to consider this expression “ *daily bread,*” as it further relates to the *spiritual* food and sustenance of our souls ; and show further, how our **BLESSED LORD** intended that our hearts and lives should be affected by this sense of the petition.

Before however we proceed to this consideration, I must bespeak your attention and your assent to this one great truth, viz. that our souls or spirits have a food peculiar to themselves as well as our bodies, which is equally necessary to their growth, their well-being, and preservation.

This is a truth which, it is to be feared, but few people consider and understand aright, because it is to be suspected there are but few people at this day who reflect, as they ought, on the nature of their immortal souls, or of the sustenance which they require, or of the manner by which that sustenance is conveyed to them.

We can all of us see clearly enough the necessity of *bodily food* for the health, the growth, the well-being, and preservation of our bodies. We can see, for instance, that if our bodies are without appetite for food, and take no nourishment, they will presently pine away and die; or that if their food be of an improper and unwholesome nature, they will become sickly and distempered; but that if they have a good appetite, and take a proper quantity of good and wholesome food, they are preserved thus in a state of health, of vigour, and activity.

Now it is for want of serious consideration and reflection on the nature of our immortal spirits, that very few amongst us discern all this to be equally true respecting spiritual sustenance; consequently that if our spirits be without appetite for, and take no spiritual food, they will also presently pine away and die; or if their food be of an improper and unwholesome nature, they will soon become sickly and distempered; but that if with

a good appetite they take a proper quantity of good and wholesome food, they will be preserved, in such case, in a state of health, of vigour, and activity.

Very few amongst us, I say, for want of a serious attention to the nature and interests of our immortal spirits, know all this to be true; and yet if we examine the unerring testimony of the **WORD OF GOD**, we shall there find these great truths unfolded to us in the utmost plainness and perspicuity, and confirmed by the most indisputable proofs.

For we there read, that “*man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of GOD:*” (Deut. viii. 3. Matt. iv. 4.) by which declaration is plainly intimated to us, that we have another life, which requireth sustenance, besides that of our perishing bodies, and that this life is supported by another and a more spiritual food, even by *every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of GOD*.

We read again, that “*blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled:*” (Matt. v. 6.) by which benediction is plainly declared unto us, that our spirits also, as well as our bodies, have their *hunger* and *thirst*; that *righteousness*, too, is their proper food; and

that by this food is conveyed unto them the blessedness of being *filled*, that is to say, fully satisfied and refreshed.

We read again, "*Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life;*" (John vi. 27.) How plainly then does it appear from these words, that there is spiritual as well as corporeal food! Meat which *endureth for ever*, as well as that which *perisheth*! The one adapted to the nature and necessities of our immortal souls, as the other is adapted to the nature and necessities of our temporal bodies!

Numberless are the passages in Holy Scripture all declaring and confirming to us the same great truths, as where our BLESSED LORD calleth Himself "*the bread of life,*" (John vi. 35.) and where He declares, "*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood ye have no life in you; but whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day:*" (John vi. 53. 54.) From which, and many other passages to the same purport, we are fully instructed in these weighty truths, that food is equally necessary for our souls as for our bodies; that the food of our souls is, however, of a spiritual nature, as that of our bodies is of a corporeal nature: That spiritual food is

righteousness and wisdom, goodness and truth, from the **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, and cometh from Him by and through His **HOLY WORD**, as corporeal food cometh from Him by and through the elements of nature : And further, that if we do not partake of this spiritual food we have no spiritual or eternal life in us, just as if we do not partake of natural food, we shall soon have no natural or temporal life in us.: And lastly, that this spiritual food, if it be properly received by us, hath a tendency to increase the vigour, the beauty, and the enjoyments of our spiritual man, in the same manner as natural food, when it is properly received, hath a tendency to increase the vigour, beauty, and enjoyments of our natural man.

Here then we may see clearly what I at first proposed to show, viz. how our **BLESSED LORD** intended that our hearts and lives should be affected by the spiritual sense of this petition, “ *Give us this day our daily bread.*”

He meant to inform us by these words, that there is an immortal spirit in each of us, which requireth immortal and spiritual food for its support and preservation. He meant to inform us likewise, that He alone is the giver of this food, and that He giveth it to all those who come unto and believe in Him as the great manifested **GOD** and **SAVIOUR**, and who ask it of Him with the sincerity

of true supplicants that have a real want and desire of it. He meant therefore to excite in us such a daily *hunger and thirst* after this spiritual and immortal food, as might daily direct us unto Him in prayer for it, and might put our souls in a right state and disposition to receive it from Him, and to grow, by its virtue and nourishment, unto the perfect health, beauty, and blessedness of a celestial life.

And need I now, Brethren, use many arguments to convince you of the excellence and the necessity of this holy prayer of our BLESSED LORD'S, and of the vast importance of that spiritual sustenance which it was intended to make known and to convey unto us?

For shall we take so much pains in providing for the beauty, the health, and preservation of our *bodies*, which are so soon to perish and become the prey of worms, and shall we take no pains to provide for the beauty, the health, and preservation of our spirits, which are to live for ever, and be the admiration of angels? Shall we think it cruel and barbarous in any one to refuse us bodily food when we are ready to die with hunger a temporal death? And is it not a far greater instance of cruelty and barbarity which we inflict on ourselves in denying our immortal spirits spiritual food, when they are ready to die an eternal death? *Is the meat which perisheth* pleasant and beneficial to our

bodies, and is not *the meat which endureth to everlasting life* much more pleasant and profitable to our souls? Do we think it a dangerous symptom when we have no relish for our bodily food, and shall we not think it a much more dangerous symptom when we have no relish for our spiritual food? Are natural bread and wine endued with such wonderful virtues to nourish, to strengthen, and refresh our *bodies*, and is there no virtue in spiritual bread and wine, in the love and wisdom, the goodness and truth of JESUS CHRIST, to nourish, to strengthen, and refresh our souls? Are the vigour and beauty of our natural life increased by the one, and shall not the vigour and beauty of our spiritual life be increased by the other? Surely, Beloved, if the truths of the Gospel have made their proper impression upon us; if we have any faith in the immortality of our souls; if we know any thing concerning the nature of eternal and spiritual life; we can be at no loss to give a satisfactory answer to these questions.

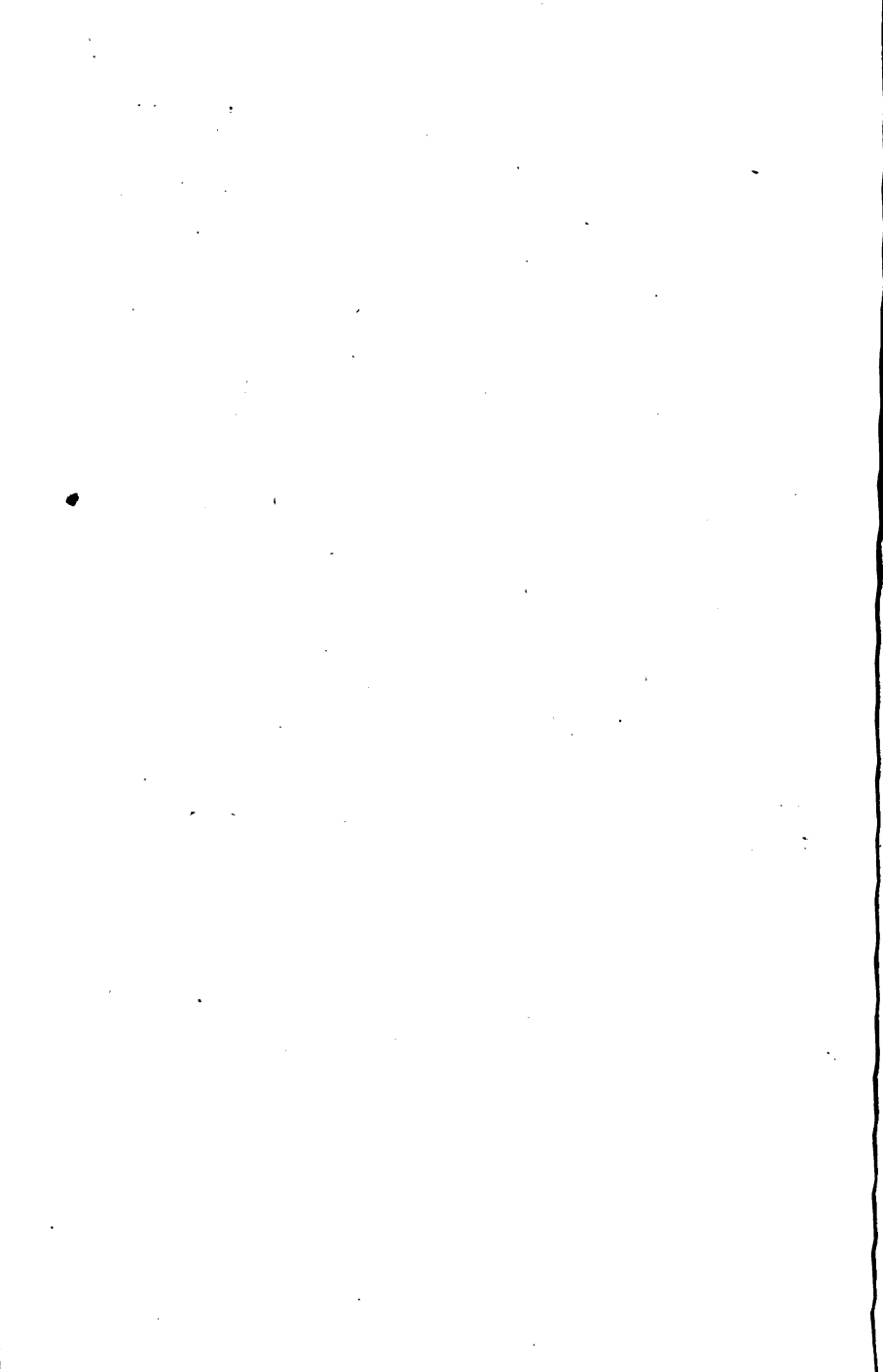
Let us then do ourselves the justice to live and act according to these convictions of our understandings. Let us take heed lest the world should ever darken in us the light of these great truths. Let us live like people convinced that we are to live for ever; but like people convinced, too, that an everlasting life must have everlasting food for its support and preservation.

We all of us believe, or profess to believe, that when our natural bodies are laid in the dust, we shall rise again with spiritual bodies to live in a new and an eternal world. But have we all of us made provision for this eternal state? Have we found out the proper food of this eternal life? Do we know this food to be righteousness and wisdom, goodness and truth, from our **LORD** and **SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST**? Have we tasted of the sweetness of this **BODY** and **BLOOD** of our **BLESSED LORD'S**? Is it become, as the wise man expresseth it, *Health to our navels and marrow to our bones*? Do we feed daily on this *bread* by holy prayer and serious meditation? Do we receive it, as often as we have opportunity, in the holy sacrament of our **LORD'S Supper**? Do we show ourselves, by such conduct, as solicitous about the health, the beauty, and perfection of those bodies, which we are to carry with us into eternity, as of those which we are to leave behind us in this world?

Surely, Beloved, we cannot ask ourselves these questions too frequently; we cannot answer them too sincerely. For what will it profit us at the last day to have believed that we shall live for ever, if we do not now make provision for that everlasting life by giving our souls the proper food and nourishment of that life? "*I have meat to eat* (saith our **BLESSED LORD** to His disciples) *which ye know*



“not of,”—for “*MY meat is to do the will of Him that sent ME.*” (John iv. 32. 34.) Let us then also labour to *do the will of Him that sent us*: Let us, by holy prayers, by serious meditations, by the good works of a holy life, seek to have continual communion with our LORD in love, in goodness, in meekness, in every grace of Christian wisdom and virtue. We shall then know what that *meat* was, of which our LORD speaks in the above words, because we shall taste of it ourselves, and shall find it to be the *hidden manna*; the *bread of everlasting life*; the *food of angels*; the sacred *body and blood of JESUS CHRIST*; the nourishment of Heaven and of everlasting life within us. We shall therefore love this food better than any thing in the world besides, and it will be the constant prayer and ruling desire of our hearts, *Give us this day our daily bread.* AMEN.



## SERMON X.

---

St. Matt. vi. 12.

*And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.*

**I**T is remarkable, that what are here called *debts* by the evangelist St. Matthew, are called *sins* by the evangelist St. Luke, and therefore in the form of the LORD'S prayer, as it stands in our liturgy, we say, *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.* Nevertheless it will plainly appear to the attentive observer, that the two expressions, *debts* and *trespasses*, are more nearly connected in their meaning than at first sound they may be supposed to be. For the term *debts* was manifestly intended to express the various and immense obligations which we all of us owe to the DIVINE BEING, for all the mercies and blessings of creation, preservation, and redemption, which we have received, and continue to receive daily at His hands. The term *trespasses*, on the other hand, was intended to express our manifold negligences and unfaithfulnesses in the discharge of those *debts*, in other words, our want of gratitude to the DIVINE BEING for all His gracious favours

bestowed upon us, this being the *great trespass of all trespasses*, that we do not acknowledge, as we ought, from the ground of a devout thankfulness, all the mercies and blessings which we have received, and receive daily, from the GOD of Heaven.

According to the above sense of the term *debts*, as here used by our BLESSED LORD, two most important considerations present themselves to our notice—

1st. How He intended that our hearts and lives should be affected by this petition, *Forgive us our debts*; and

2ndly. What additional instruction He designed for us, by annexing this condition of our debts being forgiven, *As we forgive our debtors*.

In my present discourse I shall confine myself to the *first* of these considerations, viz. how JESUS CHRIST intended our hearts and lives should be affected by this petition, *Forgive us our debts*.

And first, it is manifest, that when our LORD taught us to pray, *Forgive us our debts*, He intended to remind us that we have *debts* to be forgiven, and that those *debts* are owing to that FATHER OF MERCIES to whom we present our supplications.

He intended therefore to call us to the serious consideration of those *debts*, that we may thus discover our infinite obligations to the **GOD** who made us, and may also be led, in profound humiliation, and grateful thankfulness to acknowledge and return them, asking ourselves continually the edifying question, and applying it each of us to the state of our own hearts, *How much owest thou unto my LORD?*

Let us pause here a moment to reflect on this holy and edifying tendency of the divine petition before us.

That we owe every thing to **GOD**, and that our *debts* therefore to the divine mercy are without number, must be obvious to every one who, with any degree of serious thought, contemplates the wonderful frame and constitution of His own being. For to pass over the astonishing construction and powers of our bodies, all of which are manifestly from **GOD** and not from ourselves; to say nothing of the marvellous sustenance and preservation of bodily life, which is a continual standing proof of divine providence and agency; what an accumulation of debt to the **GOD** of Heaven is perpetually contracting by every one of us, in regard to the more extraordinary powers and faculties of our immortal souls! For whence, let me ask, is it, that we are capable of thinking, of choosing, of deter-

mining, of loving, and of enjoying? Whence comes it, I say, that we can *think* wisely; that we can *choose* an eternal good in preference to a temporal one; that we can *determine* to live for Heaven, and for this purpose to renounce what is contrary to Heaven; that we can love GOD, and what is of GOD, above all other things; that we can thus *enjoy* everlasting peace and bliss unspeakable? Surely common sense must see, that these immense, these distinguished faculties and powers are not of our own creating, or of our own contriving. Surely it must be seen therefore that they are the perpetual gifts of GOD, and are every day adding to the *debt* which we owe to His fatherly mercy and kind providence.

And yet alas! how little in general is this *debt* attended to, even by those who call themselves Christians! We all of us receive daily and astonishing *gifts* from above, but how few amongst us are truly sensible of their value, and of the Divine Source from which they flow! Our life itself is a perpetual gift; all our powers of mind and of body are perpetual proofs of a divine bounty; and yet who is there that calculates the full amount either of those powers, or of the bounty which bestows them?

Adored then be that goodness and wisdom, which would deliver us from all this criminal inattention,

by teaching us to pray, *Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors!* Adored be that goodness and wisdom, which would thus remind us of the multiplied favours which we daily receive from a divine hand, and in reminding us, would rescue us from that terrible thoughtlessness and ingratitude, which are not only themselves enormous offences in the sight of GOD, but are also the fruitful sources of every other enormity! Adored, in short, be that goodness and wisdom, which, by making us *debtors* to the divine mercy, would dispose us also to be *grateful*, and in disposing us to be *grateful*, would replenish us with all that fulness of peace and consolation, which the spirit of gratitude never fails to infuse, because the spirit of gratitude is the spirit of Heaven, and is ever singing the heavenly song, where it is written, "*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*" (Rev. v. 12.)

But further; when JESUS CHRIST taught us to pray, *Forgive us our debts*, it is manifest that He intended to remind us, not only that we have *debts* to be *forgiven*, but also that such *forgiveness* is a thing of the first importance to our happiness and eternal welfare.

For if this had not been the case, it can never be supposed that JESUS CHRIST would have made

such *forgiveness* an object of our prayers; since it is impossible to conceive, that He would teach us to pray for any thing which is not most essentially connected with our peace and well-being both here and hereafter.

What the *nature* of this *forgiveness* is, and *how* it is to be attained, shall, through the divine mercy, be the subject of our future enquiry, when we come to consider what JESUS CHRIST intended by annexing this condition of it, “*As we forgive our debtors.*”

At present I shall confine myself to the consideration of the infinite importance of attending to the *debts* which we all of us owe to the ALMIGHTY, and of attending also to the *forgiveness* or remission of those *debts*, which He has taught us to pray for.

Yet this importance must surely be manifest to every reflecting mind; for if GOD has given and perpetually gives us all the blessings which we enjoy, both temporal and spiritual, both of body and of mind; and if we are thus indebted to His bounty for all we have and for all we hope; then certainly it is reasonable to expect that He requires some consideration and return on our part of all this His unmerited goodness and favour to us. And the reason is plain and obvious, since if there be *no* consideration and return, on our part, of the bles-



sings which we daily receive from GOD, then those blessings cease to be blessings, and are converted into curses, because instead of promoting our conjunction with GOD, they do but increase our separation from Him. For take any blessing, whether of body or of mind, and suppose it to be unacknowledged to be from GOD; who cannot see that, in such case, the thoughtless man, who refuses to confess the divine bounty, takes the blessing to himself, and separates it from its Divine Source; not aware, alas! that in so doing he separates himself from that Source? For how can man be *conjoined* with GOD by any other means, so effectually as by the devout acknowledgment that all his property and all his faculties are from GOD? How then can he be *separated* from GOD by any other means so effectually, as by the want of such acknowledgment? How plain then is it to see, that a blessing from GOD only then becomes a full blessing to man, when it is devoutly and thankfully confessed to be from GOD, and that if it is not so confessed, it is converted into a curse; since there can be no full and true blessing to man without conjunction with GOD, and since separation from GOD involves in it the most tremendous of all curses, indeed the all of curse!

To conclude. Our real situation, in regard to GOD and his favours, appear to be this. Every

individual human being is a compound of divine blessings, accumulated, through every age and period of his existence, and in every principle, too, of his life, from the divine unmerited bounty of the MOST MERCIFUL GOD. Every human being, therefore, is a compound of accumulated divine *debts*, since every blessing communicated from GOD to man must of necessity be supposed to lay man under a distinct obligation to the DIVINE GIVER. But these *debts* may be either *paid* or *unpaid*, either *gratefully acknowledged*, or *ungratefully unacknowledged*: If they are paid, by being gratefully acknowledged, they then are productive of the happy effect of drawing closer the ties of conjunction between man and his GOD; whereas if they are *unpaid*, in consequence of not being gratefully acknowledged, they then produce a directly contrary effect, because they then widen the breach of separation between man and his GOD.

Do we then wish to escape all the terrible mischiefs resulting from the non-payment of our debts to the ALMIGHTY, and to attain all that blessedness which never fails to be derived from their payment? Let us proceed, in the first place, to take an account of those debts, because we can never hope to pay them until we discover their amount, and in what they consist. And here let us be upon our guard, lest we content ourselves

with taking only a *general* account, without entering into *particulars*. For a *general* confession of our debts, separate from a *particular* one, is like a *general* confession of our sins, separate from a *particular* confession, which in reality is no confession at all, because it leaves us as unaffected and unedified, as if no confession at all had been made by us.

In the payment then of our debts to the ALMIGHTY, let us begin with tracing up every distinct faculty, whether of body or of mind, to its DIVINE SOURCE, until we really and gratefully acknowledge it to come from that Source. But since we can never be brought to such grateful acknowledgment, unless we are in a disposition to renounce our *self-love*, and make an entire surrender of ourselves to our DIVINE BENEFACTOR, let us further supplicate continually His grace, out of penitent and contrite hearts, that He will deliver us from all that natural pride and foolish vanity of heart, which are continually tempting us to suppose that we have something of *our own* independent of Him, and thus that GOD is not entitled to *all* that we possess.

Then shall we soon begin to experience all the blessedness resulting from a real heartfelt gratitude to the GOD of Heaven. For then, tracing up all the blessings we enjoy to their *Divine Origin*, we

shall find their value immensely increasing in proportion to their conjunction with that Origin. And their increase will be this; they will be filled with GOD Himself, their DIVINE FATHER, and we also shall be filled with the same fulness; and thus, rendering back unto GOD all that we have received from Him, and being enabled, from grateful hearts, to adopt the divine language, and say, FATHER, *all mine are thine*; we shall be enabled further to say, to our unspeakable joy, *All thine are mine.* AMEN.

## SERMON XI.

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Matt. vi. 12.

*And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.*

**I**N a former discourse on these words we have considered the lesson of divine instruction intended for our use in the former part of the petition, *Forgive us our debts*. I shall now proceed to consider further, as was purposed, the *additional* instruction designed for us by annexing this condition of the forgiveness of our debts, “*As we forgive our debtors.*”

The words naturally lead to a two-fold enquiry ;

1st. What is here to be understood by the term *our debtors* ; and

2ndly. What is further to be understood by *forgiving our debtors*.

In regard to the first of these considerations, viz. what is to be understood by the term *our debtors*, it must be plain to every reflecting mind, that the term *debtors* has here a more extensive signification than what is generally annexed to the expression.

For, according to the common use and application of the term, it is confined to a very limited meaning, being intended only to denote those who *owe us money*, or who are *indebted to us on the score of this world's wealth and property*. But it ought surely to be considered, that this sense of the term is by no means so general as that which the term itself involves, and which, therefore, there is every reason to suppose, **JESUS CHRIST** had in view when He first adopted it in the **Divine Prayer** which He was pleased to teach us. For who cannot see that there are a thousand other *debts* besides those of money, and that we may be *indebted* to others, and others to us, in a thousand other ways than those which relate to mere worldly property? Thus children may be indebted to their parents, and parents to their children; servants to their masters, and masters, in their turn, to their servants; people to their rulers, and rulers, again, to the people, in a variety of ways, and for a variety of reasons, distinct from those which respect only temporal wealth. In short, it appears to be the constituted order of the **Divine Providence** here below, that every one man should be *indebted* to every other man, for some benefit or other, which their mutual connection in society gives them an opportunity of conferring one upon the other reciprocally. For how imperfect would be the happiness and well-being of any one man in

society, if his wants were not relieved, and his comforts increased, by the society, the friendship, the piety, the wisdom, the ingenuity, the strength, and the labours of others! How much, therefore, is every one man in society *indebted* to others for a thousand blessings which he could not possibly procure of himself! And how is this *debt reciprocal*, in such a way and order, that whilst one man is *indebted* to another, that other in his turn is equally indebted to him!

But this is not all; for the *debts*, of which we are speaking, are not confined to the mere temporal benefits which we derive one from another in a state of *civil* society, but they extend also to *eternal* benefits, or to those blessings which we are made the reciprocal instruments, under GOD, of conferring one upon another in a state of *spiritual* society. For such, again, is the constituted order of things here below, that we owe, under GOD, our very salvation to each other, as if GOD meant, by this appointment, to bind us closer to each other in the bond of mutual regard, charity, and obligation. Thus what an immense debt do children and servants owe to those parents, masters and mistresses, who have instructed them early in the ways of salvation, and taught them, by good example, to walk in those ways! What an immense debt, too, do parents, masters, and mistresses owe,

in their turn, to those children and servants who profit by their instructions, and who thus administer to them the noble joy and consolation of having co-operated with GOD in the great work of saving immortal souls from destruction, by conducting them in the way to Heaven and eternal peace! What an immense debt, again, of mutual obligation, in this respect, do people owe to faithful pastors, and faithful pastors to the people who listen to the words of salvation and eternal life delivered from their lips! I say *mutual* obligation, since if the people be willing to confess that they owe their salvation, under GOD, to the instruction of their pastors, the pastors, in their turn, will be equally willing to allow that they owe their glory and crown of rejoicing to the improvement of that instruction in the hearts of their people.

Further cases of the above reciprocal *debts* might be adduced in regard to *people* and their *rulers*, the *rich* and the *poor*, the *learned* and the *unlearned*; but passing over these cases, there is one peculiar instance, to which I shall beg leave to call your particular attention, because it serves to set the subject in the clearest and most edifying point of view. The instance I mean is the debt, or obligation, which we owe to those who do us injuries, who treat us with unkindness, who speak all manner of evil falsely against us, and the like. I call



this a debt, or obligation, because it is possible that whilst such persons are endeavouring to hurt us, and are most active in persecuting and reviling us, they may be doing us the most essential services, and even, under GOD, be made instrumental in promoting our salvation. For who cannot see, that whatsoever calls our patience and charity into exercise, must of necessity be a blessing to us, since it forces us nearer unto GOD, and that consequently our greatest enemies, even the powers of darkness themselves, by calling us into such exercise, may be the means, under a gracious Providence, of promoting our highest good? JESUS CHRIST accordingly points at this instance of obligation when He says, “ *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for MY sake : Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven.*” (Matt. v. 11.)

Having thus then considered the first object of our enquiry, viz. what is to be understood in the words of my text by the term *debtors*, I shall now proceed to the consideration of the second object, viz. what is further to be understood by *forgiving our debtors*.

It may be necessary however to observe, in the outset, that what is here rendered *forgive* in our English translation of the Bible, is expressed, in

the original, by a term which signifies to *remit*, or *put away*. And therefore the whole passage in the text ought properly to have been thus rendered, *Remit to us our debts, as we remit to our debtors*, or in other words, *Put away our debts, as we put away the debts of those who are indebted to us*.

From this sense of the term *forgive*, and from the meaning of the term *debtors*, as above explained, it will now plainly appear to every reflecting and serious mind, what is to be understood by *forgiving our debtors*, and why **JESUS CHRIST** makes this a condition of our debts to **GOD** being forgiven.

For to *forgive our debtors* is manifestly to remit the obligation or debt, which others may be supposed to owe to us; and this we do whensoever we confess, from a grateful and enlightened charity, that we are as much indebted to them as they are to us. For the real state of the case is this. By nature we are all of us unwilling to confess our obligations to other people, and so long as we remain in the corrupt principles of nature, we wish rather to have it supposed that other people are indebted to us than that we are indebted to them. Thus by nature we are proud and vain, exalting ourselves, in our own fancied superiority, above all other people, and conceiving all other people born to serve us, and not us to serve them. But **JESUS**

**CHRIST** would teach us another lesson, because **JESUS CHRIST** came to correct the false principles and persuasions of the mere natural man, and thus to elevate our understandings and wills into the light and warmth of the eternal truth, that we might form our judgments, and direct our actions accordingly. **JESUS CHRIST** therefore, I say, would instruct us, and He has been pleased to instruct us, in the Divine Prayer which He has taught us, that in whatsoever degree we may conceive others to be indebted to us, in the same degree we are indebted to them; that the balance of obligation therefore is in all cases equal, **GOD** Himself having appointed that we shall be mutually dependant upon each other, under Himself, for all the blessings which we enjoy, and that consequently there is not a single human being to whom we do not owe obligation, in a greater or less degree. **JESUS CHRIST** therefore would teach us further a lesson of the tenderest love and regard to each other, as arising from a sense of such obligation; and by making this sense the condition of the forgiveness or remission of the immense debts we all of us owe to Himself, the **FATHER OF OUR BEING**, He would instruct us, lastly, that in proportion to the gratitude with which we acknowledge our mutual obligations, under Him, one to another, in the same proportion our debts to Him are forgiven or remitted, because He requires

no other return for the immense favours which **He** has bestowed upon us, than that we should be thus grateful one towards another. He therefore says on this, as on another occasion, “ *Inasmuch as ye* “ *have done it unto one of the least of these MY bre-* “ *thren, ye have done it unto ME.*” (Matt. xxv. 40.)

To conclude. Would we then discharge the immense debt which we all of us owe to our **BENEFICENT CREATOR**? Would we partake thus of the blessings which that **CREATOR** has taught us to pray for in those **His** divine words, *Forgive us our debts*? Let us then learn, in all humility and thankfulness, to acknowledge our vast, our mutual obligations one to another. Let children make this acknowledgment in regard to their parents, and parents in regard to their children; servants in regard to their masters and mistresses, and masters and mistresses in regard to their servants; congregations in regard to their ministers, and ministers in regard to their congregations; the people in regard to their rulers, and the rulers, in their turn, in regard to the people. Let us extend this obligation to our greatest enemies, even to the infernals themselves, to those who do us injuries, and who put our patience to the greatest trials. Let us endeavour thus to make the grand and edifying discovery, that there is no creature of **GOD** to whom, under **GOD**, we are not indebted, even

for our very salvation. Let us thus, I say, learn to be thankful in every thing, and to every being around us ; and let this thankfulness be the thankfulness, not of the lips only, but of grateful hearts and enlightened understandings.

Then will **GOD** accept this our thankfulness as a full return of the numberless obligations which we owe to Himself. He will infuse also into it the fulness of His own divine blessing, because He will render it fruitful in charity, in peace, in patience, in good-will, in the exercise of every Christian grace and virtue. For whensoever we once learn truly and sincerely to confess our mutual obligations one to another, from that moment Paradise will be again restored and Heaven and earth united ; because from that moment enemies will be converted into friends, every creature of **GOD** will be seen by us in a new light, as ministering to our salvation ; nothing will be able to hurt us, but every thing will become, under **GOD**, an instrument of blessing to us ; the poison and the curse, in short, will then be taken away from every circumstance and event, howsoever apparently distressing, and this world will then become, what it was originally intended to be, a world of love and gratitude, a world of mutual confidence, accommodation, and obligation, in which there will no longer be any enmity, distrust, suspicion, and in-

98      **AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, &c.**

justice, but each will love and reverence another, and **GOD** will be **ALL IN ALL**. Such are the heavenly blessings for which we pray, when we say, *Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.*  
**AMEN.**

## SERMON XII.

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St. Luke xi. 4.

*And forgive us our sins as we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.*

**H**AVING considered, in a former discourse, how our hearts and lives were intended to be affected by the supplication, *Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors*, I shall now bespeak your attention to the manner in which this petition is expressed in the Gospel according to Luke, in which we find it written, *Forgive us our sins as we forgive every one that is indebted to us.*

Previous, however, to the explanation of this divine petition, allow me to remark, that there is in the petition so much for us to *hope*, and so much for us to *fear*; if we use it in a *right* spirit, it may convey to us so great a blessing, and if we use it in a *wrong* one, so great a condemnation, that there is nothing we are more concerned in than to attend to the true meaning and the true practice of it.

It is impossible, however, that we should attain unto the practice of this petition till we under-

stand its meaning, and it is impossible we should understand its meaning till we know

1st. What our LORD intended to teach us when He taught us to pray, "*Forgive us our sins ;*" and

2ndly. What He further intended to teach us when He added this condition, "*As we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.*"

1st. Then, let us consider what our LORD intended to teach us in this petition, "*Forgive us our sins.*"

Now we learn from this part of the petition, "*Forgive us our sins,*" that whenever we approach unto the LORD in prayer we should do it under the most humiliating sense of our manifold sins, trespasses, and imperfections, before Him.

For this is the only disposition in which we can ever expect to receive any favour from the GOD of Heaven, because it is this alone which can make us pray with that earnestness and desire which constitute the true essence of prayer, and without which our best prayers must be mere mockery before GOD. It was this disposition therefore which made the grand difference between the *pharisee* and the *publican* in the parable. (Luke xviii. 10.) For the pharisee, we find, prayed under no sense of his own sins, but with all the arrogance of self-



righteousness exclaimed, "GOD, *I thank Thee that I am not as other men are,*" &c.; whereas the publican prayed under a full conviction of his transgressions, for we read that *he smote on his breast, saying, GOD be merciful to me a sinner.* This latter therefore, it is said, *went down to his house more justified than the former.* (Luke xviii. 9 to 15.)

We are all of us too apt, when we approach unto the GOD of Heaven in prayer, to dress ourselves out in the best garb of our own righteousness: We wish to appear most holy in our LORD'S presence: We bring together all our fancied and shining virtues, and present them before Him:—Thus we vainly imagine to attract His particular notice and favour to ourselves, and to be in higher estimation with Him than others who have not so many virtues to boast of. And what is all this but acting the part of the foolish pharisee, in the parable, who *trusted in himself that he was righteous, and despised others?*

Our BLESSED LORD therefore hath taught us a very different disposition for our prayers, because He hath taught us to come before Him with this humiliating language of a penitent and contrite heart, "*Forgive us our sins.*" He would intimate thus to us, that the best and most profitable disposition for prayer is a humble and lowly spirit, conscious of its great sinfulness, unworthiness, and misery before GOD; that if we would pray aright,

therefore, we should search out our sins, our imperfections, our weaknesses, our miseries, and our wants; we should present these before our **HEAVENLY FATHER**; we should ask pardon for them, together with grace, mercy, and deliverance from them. This was manifestly the blessed temper of the humble publican who *went down justified to his house.*

Let us learn, then, to make this the temper of our prayers: Let us search out our sins, and contemplate the great distance we are at from **GOD'S** righteousness: Let us no longer deck ourselves out in the false and vain ornaments of our own virtues, but come before our **GOD** in the nakedness and humility of poor, penitent, and miserable sinners. We shall soon experience the excellence of such a state of heart, and the prevalence of prayers which arise from it. For we shall find that we never prayed in good earnest before; and that the reason was this, because we never before truly knew ourselves, our own sins, our own miseries, and our want of **GOD**. For till we know what we are of ourselves without **GOD**, it is impossible we should pray to Him with that true earnestness which is necessary to find Him. But let us only once learn to know ourselves truly, and our want of **GOD** to be our righteousness, our happiness, our guide, our deliverer, and whatever else is good and blessed for us, and we shall then soon pray as we ought; we

shall then soon find the blessed effect of our prayers.—But further,

Our LORD hath taught us another necessary disposition for prayer, viz. that *we forgive our debtors*, for thus He instructs us, “*Forgive us our sins as we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.*”

To *forgive every one that is indebted to us*, or as it is otherwise expressed in the liturgy of our church, *to forgive them that trespass against us*, implieth a most heavenly and merciful disposition of soul, by virtue of which we are enabled not only to forego all malice and hatred towards those that offend us, but also to love them, to pray for them, and to be ready to do them every act of kindness which lieth in our power.

This is the true nature of Christian forgiveness one towards another, which duty we are but too apt, many of us, to misunderstand, and through misunderstanding to be very deficient in the practice of it. Thus we often fancy that we forgive people only because we say that we forgive them, when, perhaps, if we were to examine our own hearts, and our dispositions towards them, we should find that our forgiveness is not of that pure and sincere nature which CHRIST requireth of us. The only sure rule, therefore, in this case, whereby we can know whether we impose upon ourselves or

not, is this, to examine ourselves with respect to all persons that offend us, or that do us injuries, or that have made themselves in any way disagreeable to us, and try whether we can sincerely pray for them, whether we can sincerely love them, and whether we are ready to show forth the fruits of our prayers and our love by doing them every act of kindness that lieth in our power.

This is the only test of the sincerity of our forgiveness one towards another, and from this test of our forgiveness one towards another, it will plainly appear why our LORD hath made this the condition on which alone we can ask or claim forgiveness from Himself.

For it is a sure and unchangeable truth, that "*with whatsoever measure we mete it will be measured unto us again ;*" (Matt, vii. 2.) that is to say, in whatsoever degree we show forth love, kindness, and mercy, towards our fellow-creatures, in the same degree we shall receive love, kindness, and mercy from the MOST HIGH ; but in whatsoever degree we shut up our bowels of love, kindness, and mercy towards our fellow-creatures, in the same degree the bowels of the divine love, kindness, and mercy will be shut up against us.

It is therefore said, in another place, "*Give and it shall be given unto you ;* (Luke vi. 38.) which

is the same thing as if it had been said, in proportion as you give forth mercy, compassion, and charity towards your fellow-creatures, covering thus their offences, concealing their imperfections, excusing their trespasses, praying for them, loving them, endeavouring to do them all true kindness, and removing from your hearts all bitterness, malice, evil-speaking, and ill-will against them, in the same proportion mercy, compassion, and charity will be given unto you from the **LORD**, by virtue of which **He** will remove your sins, cover your imperfections, excuse your trespasses, love you, bless you, and fill you with all the fulness of **His** divine grace, favour, and kindness.

Thus it is said again, “ *Judge not and ye shall not be judged; condemn not and ye shall not be condemned;*” (Luke vi. 37.) because the spirit of judgment and condemnation, exercised by us towards our fellow-creatures, is sure to bring judgment and condemnation upon ourselves from the **LORD**, inasmuch as it is sure to shut up the communication betwixt the merciful love of the **LORD** and our own hearts, wherein the most dreadful judgment and condemnation of the soul doth consist. On the contrary, not to judge and not to condemn others, doth wonderfully fit our own hearts to receive grace, mercy, and love from the **LORD**,

whereby alone we can escape the judgment and condemnation of the wicked.

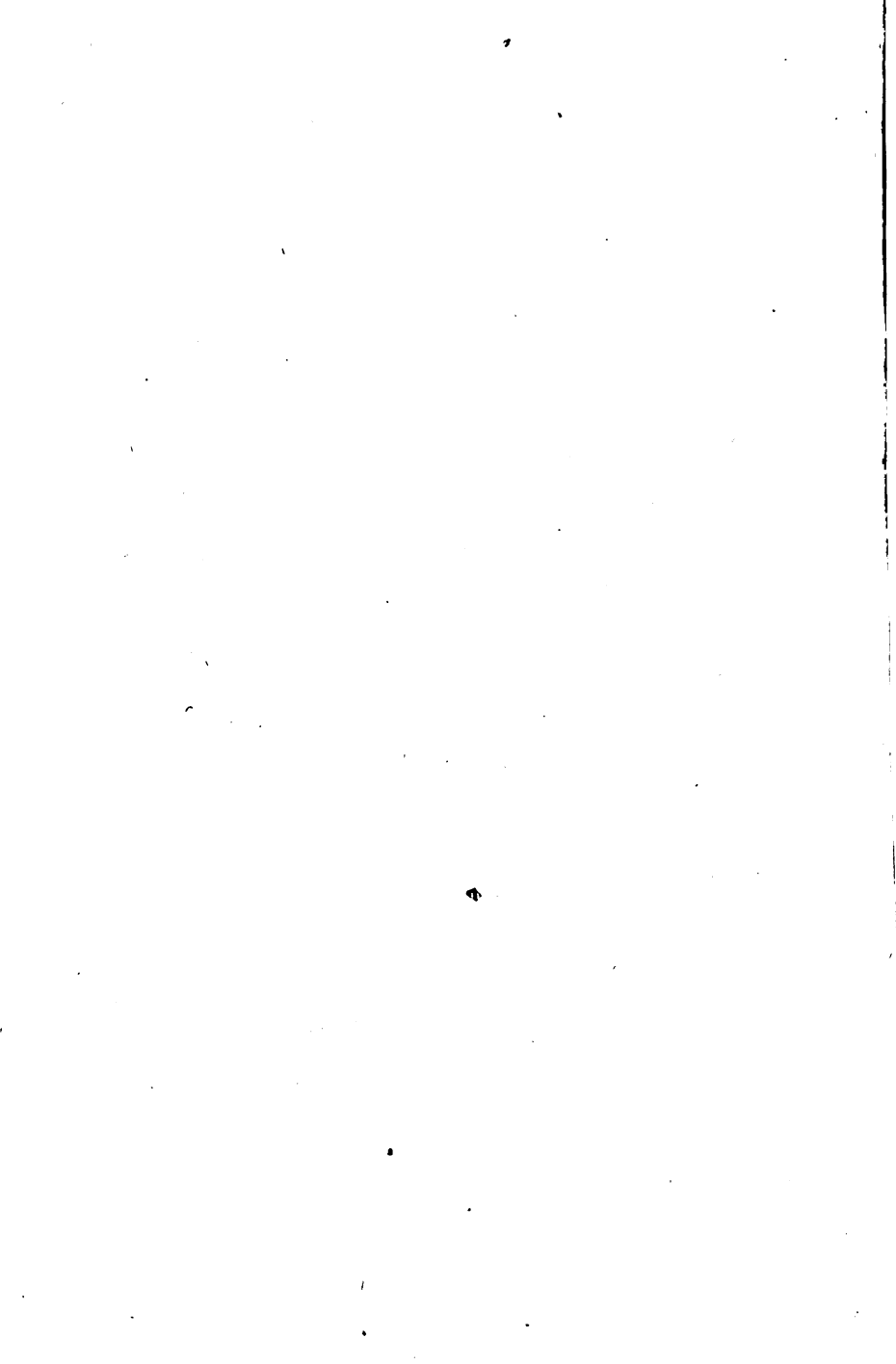
Behold here then the wonderful, the adorable wisdom of our **GOD**, in teaching us to pray, "*For- give us our sins as we also forgive every one that is indebted to us!*" It was to caution us against approaching the throne of grace at any time in any other spirit than that of an universal love, a merciful forgiveness, a tender compassion, a willingness to do all kindness towards all our fellow-creatures, however they may have trespassed against us, whatever may be their imperfections, or however offensive they may otherwise be to us. It was to remind us that the divine mercy would be shown in remitting and removing our sins, and blessing us with its heavenly blessings, just in the same proportion that we in our mercy, derived from the divine mercy, and acknowledged to be from **GOD**, and not from ourselves, remit and remove the trespasses of our brethren, and are ready to bless them with our blessings.

May we all then, Brethren, learn to profit by the divine wisdom of this holy prayer which our **LORD** hath taught us! For this purpose, when we approach the throne of His grace with this prayer in our mouths, let us be careful to do it under the most humiliating sense of our own manifold sins, trespasses, and imperfections before **GOD** in our

hearts. If this sense be real and sincere, it will teach us a true compassion for the sins, the trespasses, and imperfections of our fellow-creatures; and under the influence of this compassion for others, and this feeling of the weight of our own transgressions, we may approach boldly unto the habitation of our FATHER *which is in Heaven*, where we shall assuredly find the comforts of pardon for past offences, and the comforts of grace, mercy, and truth, from our great LORD and SAVIOUR, to preserve us from their dominion for the time to come.

For let us ever remember this great truth, so often taught us by the WORD OF GOD, and so firmly established by all the laws of the divine order, that nothing doth so fit us to receive the full communications of the divine favour, love, mercy, and blessing, as a true humiliation of soul under a sense of our own sins and imperfections, and a true compassion of soul for the sins and imperfections of our brethren: and therefore it is written, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven:*" and again, "*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*" (Matt. v. 3. 7.)

AMEN.





## SERMON XIII.

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St. Matt. vi. 13.

*Lead us not into temptation.*

**T**HERE is a weight and a wisdom in this petition, which if it were rightly considered and understood by us, would call forth all the earnestness of our attention and regard. For the petition relateth to one of the most interesting and important states of the Christian life, viz. the state of the soul with respect to the influence of temptations. It affordeth also a lesson of the most weighty instruction with regard to our conduct in this state; teaching us how we are to behave in it, where our true strength lieth, and how we may use that strength to the greatest advantage.

The words of the petition naturally lead us to the consideration of these two things,

1st. The meaning of the word *temptation*; and

2ndly. What it is that we ask of **GOD** when we pray, "*Lead us not into temptation.*"

1st. Then, the words before us naturally lead us to enquire into the meaning of the term *temptation*;

and this enquiry, if it be sincere and earnest, will soon lead us to discover, that by *temptation*, as the term is generally applied in the Sacred Scriptures, is meant all that opposition which we find in ourselves to think and to do such things as are right, that is to say, to love GOD above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves.

For it is too evident that by nature we are all of us in a state of heart opposite to the love of GOD and the love of our neighbour. When, therefore, in this state of heart we think of loving GOD above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves, and of willing and doing such things as are according to GOD'S commandments, there naturally ariseth a violent opposition to such thoughts in our minds, and that is what the Scripture calleth *temptation*.

*Every man, therefore, saith St. James, is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed; (James i. 14.)* that is to say, every man is tempted when his own evil lusts would draw him away and entice him to forget GOD, and to forego the happiness of His kingdom, and to live rather under the dominion of his own selfish and worldly lusts, than under the dominion of righteousness, the love of GOD, and the love of his neighbour.

Temptations, therefore, it is plain, arise in the soul from two causes, viz. from the operation of

**GOD** and good angels, and from the operation of the **Devil** and evil angels. For in our present life, as the **Scriptures** of truth assure us, we are subject to both these contrary operations; inasmuch as all good affections and thoughts, we are taught to believe, are from **GOD** and good angels, whilst all evil affections and thoughts are from the **Devil** or bad spirits. Thus it is the continual design, and therefore the continual operation of **GOD** and His good angels, to turn every man unto righteousness; to replenish him with the light and the love of **Heaven**, and to prepare him, by repentance and renovation of spirit, for the reception of eternal blessedness in the kingdom of **GOD**. But it is the continual design, and therefore the continual operation of the **Devil** and evil angels, to turn every man away from **GOD**; to divert him from righteousness and the love of **Heaven**, by enslaving him to sin and the love of this world; and to prepare him for the reception of eternal misery in the kingdom of darkness.

It would be greatly for our happiness and instruction in righteousness, if we did but rightly consider these awful and tremendous circumstances in which we are all of us placed in the short journey of our present lives. For we should then see clearly, that all temptation ariseth from these contrary operations in our own minds, since if **GOD**

did not operate to turn us towards Himself, we should then be led away by the Devil without opposition, and therefore without temptation; and if the Devil did not operate to turn us towards himself, there would then be nothing to turn us away from GOD and His righteousness, and therefore in this case also we should experience no temptation.

Every state of temptation then exhibits a manifest proof of the operation both of heavenly and infernal powers, and if our eyes were open to discern it, would bring with it an absolute demonstration, not only of the existence of those powers, but also of their presence, their nearness, and their influence upon us. A state of temptation, therefore, as was observed, is one of the most interesting and important in the Christian life, because it is to determine our everlasting state in regard to GOD and His eternal kingdom, inasmuch as it is to decide whether we will comply with the operation of GOD, or of His adversary, thus whether we will take part with GOD and Heaven in the great work of our salvation, or with the enemy of GOD and Heaven in the work of our destruction.

But there is yet another consideration relating to temptations, of no less importance to be rightly understood, and that is the different kinds of temptation to which we are severally exposed in the different stages of the Christian life.

These, however, can only be fully made known unto us by our own inward experience, as we turn unto **GOD**, and comply with His operations, and labour, by His grace, to purify ourselves from all evil and unrighteousness of life.

For if we never turn unto **GOD**, and never make any opposition to the Devil and our own evil lusts, we shall then never experience any power of temptation, inasmuch as we shall then be willing captives in the hands of our great adversary, and following him, without reluctance, whithersoever he leadeth us, we shall indeed be tempted by him, but we shall not know that we are so, and therefore we shall not know the various arts and stratagems whereby he tempteth and deceiveth us, but shall be ready to disbelieve and ridicule all accounts of such his influences and operations.

But if we were once turned in sincerity towards **GOD** and His goodness; if it were our desire to escape *from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto GOD*; if we were begun to labour in the purification of our own hearts through the influences and the operation of the love of **GOD** in us, that we might attain unto newness of life and unto a fellowship with the blessed in **GOD**'s kingdom; we should then begin to experience the power of numberless temptations with which we were before altogether unacquainted. For then the evil spirits

of darkness, in whose chains we were before quiet and secure captives, would begin to take the alarm: like Pharaoh of old, they would be *unwilling to let the children of Israel go*: they would pursue us therefore with all their malice, and try, by every artifice, to turn us from that good land whither we would go up to possess it. They would infuse into us all kinds of evil thoughts and evil inclinations, which perhaps we had never before observed or even suspected in ourselves; they would excite in us fearful apprehensions, distracting doubts, thick clouds of darkness and dismay, with a variety of other diabolical expedients, whereby they might turn us from **GOD** and His kingdom, and keep us still prisoners *in the land of Egypt and the house of bondage*: And thus we should know, by experience, a variety of temptations which had before been unknown and unsuspected by us.

Having thus then considered the meaning and nature of temptation, I shall now proceed to show, briefly, in the second place, what it is we ask of **GOD**, when we say, "*Lead us not into temptation.*"

These words seem, at first sight, to imply, that the **LORD** leadeth men into temptation: but this cannot be the case, inasmuch as we find it written in another place, that "*God tempteth no man, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed.*" (James i. 13, 14.)

In the petition, then, under consideration, we are not to look unto the LORD as the author of our temptations, but as our only sure guide, defender, and preserver from them, and under them. For the Christian life neither is, nor was it ever intended it should be, a life of continual peace and rejoicing. There will be times when, if we are followers of our LORD in the regeneration, we must follow Him through the wilderness of trials and temptations. Our BLESSED LORD hath gone before us in this way as our great captain and example, and it was the great end of His coming amongst us, to direct and to deliver us in this warfare with the powers of darkness.

Accordingly we find it written, that "*Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the Devil,*" (1 John iii. 8.) that is, to destroy the power and ascendancy which he had gained in the souls of men; to set the oppressed free; to deliver the captives; *to give us power again to become the sons of God.* This was the great design of our LORD'S coming into the world.

And as this was the great end of our LORD'S coming into the world, so it is now the great work in which He chiefly delighteth. There is nothing therefore in which He is more pleased or more glorified than in this deliverance of the souls of His saints; in watching over them in their temptations;

in protecting them from the snares of the tempter; *in making a way for them to escape, that they may be able to bear it*; in short, in leading the soul, as it were, by the hand, through all its spiritual trials and conflicts, till He bringeth it safe unto those heavenly mansions where it shall dwell for ever out of the reach of temptation.

When we pray, therefore, to the LORD, that He would *not lead us into temptation*, we mean thereby to express the deepest humiliation of soul from a sense of our own inability to help ourselves in the time of temptation, together with an absolute confidence in the divine power of our LORD. We mean also to ask for such a measure of His wisdom as may make us watchful against the occasions of temptation; such a measure of His strength as may make us powerful in fighting against them; and such a measure of His patience as may make us faithful in enduring whatsoever He may permit to come upon us for our greater purification in righteousness. For we are all of us, if we did but know it, placed here below in the most awful and tremendous circumstances, because we are all of us subject, during our abode in this world, to the influence and operation of two most contrary powers, the one leading to salvation, the other to destruction; the one from above, the other from beneath; and our eternal state will depend altogether on our

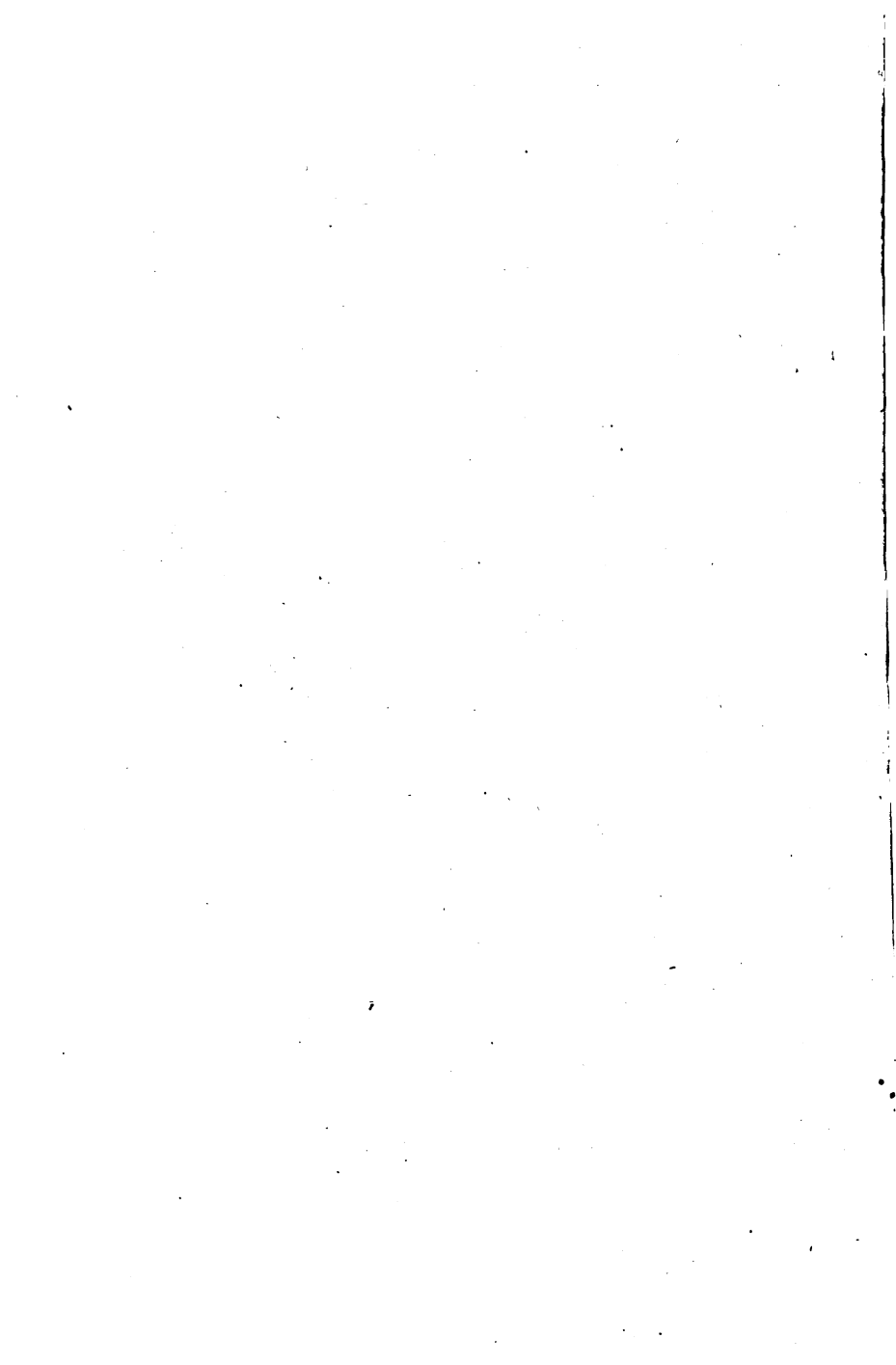


own conduct in respect to these two contending powers.

To conclude. The nature of temptation, it is to be feared, is a subject at present little known and considered by Christians, and yet there is none perhaps of more importance to be rightly understood by us. For we are all of us, if we did but know it, placed here below in the most awful and tremendous circumstances, because we are all of us subject, during our abode in this world, to the influence and operation of two most contrary powers, the one leading to salvation, the other to destruction; the one from above, the other from beneath; and our eternal state will depend altogether on our own conduct in respect to these two contending powers. For let us never forget, that our own conduct is to determine which of those two powers is to obtain the ascendancy in us, and this for ever. We must needs therefore stand or fall in this great and momentous trial, nor can we possibly be exempted from this necessity of our being. Let us however remember, that it is one thing to be tempted, and another thing to yield unto temptation. Good men are tempted-alike with evil men; but the difference between them is this, that a good man in his temptation looketh unto the LORD, and through his grace and power fighteth against it; but an evil man in his tempt-

ation looketh not unto the LORD, and therefore is led away captive by the tempter. The temptations, therefore, of evil men, are their shame and their destruction; but the temptations of good men *work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* The temptations of evil men, again, are like a fire which destroyeth them; but the temptations of good men are like a fire which refineth them. Evil men, therefore, in their temptations, are like those mighty men of *Nebuchadnezzar's* army who were slain by the furnace into which they cast *Shadrach, Mesech, and Abednego*; but good men, in their temptations, are like those three holy men who walked in the midst of fire, and had no hurt, and were attended there by one *whose form was like the Son of GOD.* (See Dan. chap. iii.) Again, we may compare the temptations of evil men to the waters of the red sea which overwhelmed the Egyptians; but the temptations of good men are like the same waters, which, being divided in the midst, declared unto the Israelites the greater glories and mercies of GOD. In short, the temptations of evil men, who do not look unto the LORD under them, like a tempest of thick darkness, hide from their eyes all the light and comforts of Heaven, that they can never behold them more; but the temptations of good men, who bear them faithfully, looking unto the LORD, are but like temporary clouds, which

obscure the sun for a season, but which, when removed, make the day brighter for its having been obscured. And thus is fulfilled the apostolic declaration, where it is written, “ *Blessed is the man who endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the LORD hath promised to them that love Him.*” AMEN.



## SERMON XIV.

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St. Matt. vi. 13.

*But deliver us from evil.*

**T**H**ES**E words contain a petition of such an interesting nature, as must surely engage the most serious attention, and awaken the most earnest desires of every thinking person. For who is there amongst us that doth not wish to be *delivered from evil*? What man living was ever known to be in love with pain, with disorder, and misery? If there was some person here on earth who had the secret and the power of removing such evils for ever from us, how eager should we all be to become acquainted with such a person, that we might experience the effect of the application of his secret and his power!

In this then we are all fully agreed, to hate and to fly from *evil*, but then, it is much to be feared, we are not all so fully agreed as to the knowledge of what evil is, and in what it consists. Such is the sad blindness of corrupt nature, that we often *call good evil, and evil good*; and as it is further expressed by the prophet, we *put darkness for light*,

*and light for darkness ; we put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. (Isaiah v. 20.)*

It must certainly then be a point of the utmost moment to us all, to enquire into the true nature of evil, what it is, and whence it cometh ; that so we may learn to know it, and by knowing fly from it, and by flying from it obtain the infinite blessing of all that deliverance which we pray for when we say “ *Deliver us from evil.*”

In my following discourse, therefore, I shall endeavour to assist you in this enquiry, by showing,

1st. The nature of evil, or *what* it is.

2ndly. The origin of evil, or *whence* it is? and

3rdly. The nature and meaning of that *deliverance from evil*, which we are taught to pray for in the words of my text.

1st. Then, let us enquire into the nature of evil, or what evil is.

A very short acquaintance with this world may serve to convince us all, that we are surrounded with a variety of evils, which we can neither prevent nor remove. For there are evils which relate to our bodies, such as sickness, infirmity, pain, and death. There are evils, too, which relate to our fortunes, such as losses, disappointments, po-

verty, and want. There are besides evils of nature, as they are commonly called, such as plagues, pestilence, earthquakes, famine, lightening, and tempest. There are evils likewise of a civil nature, such as wars, seditions, conspiracies, and all sorts of civil disturbances. Lastly, there are evils of a spiritual kind, relating to our inner man, or our immortal spirits. Such are all the varieties of sin and folly in us ; such are our bad passions, our corrupt affections, our ungovernable tempers, our unruly appetites, our inordinate thoughts, words, and works ; in short, all those vices and those vanities of our fallen nature, whereby we are separated from the influences of the love, the wisdom, and the peace of **GOD**, and plunged into a dreadful association and conjunction with the powers of destruction, with the evil and wicked ones in the kingdom of darkness.

Here, however, let me impress upon your attention this very interesting observation, viz. that all the fore-mentioned evils have originally had their rise in, and are now immediately derived from spiritual evils, or some kind of sin and folly in the human spirit. For **GOD**, we may be assured, cannot be the author of any evil, since we read, in the book of **Genesis**, that when He had made the world and all things therein, He pronounced every thing to be *very good* ; (Chap. i. 31.) which is a manifest

declaration, that at the beginning there was no such thing as evil ; that **GOD** neither created nor intended any ; and that therefore it could only come from the sin and the folly of mankind, and is at this day, in all its varieties, a standing proof how far wretched man is fallen from the good influences of his **HEAVENLY CREATOR**.

All evils, therefore, let it be well remembered, whether they relate to our bodies or to our fortunes ; whether they exist in the elements of nature, or in those of civil policy ; derive their origin ultimately and immediately from spiritual evils, or the various sins and follies which, since the creation of the world, have abounded in the spirits of men. We have only therefore to enquire into the nature and origin of spiritual evils, and we shall then know the true nature and origin of all sorts of evil whatsoever, which was the second point proposed for consideration.

Now all spiritual evil, it is manifest, consisteth in the soul's departure from **GOD**, in consequence of loving to live to itself and the world, uninfluenced by the love and the wisdom which are from above. This evil first began in the world when our first parents abused the freedom in which **GOD** had created them, by turning the love and desire of their hearts from their **HEAVENLY CREATOR**, to live according to their own sensual lusts and ima-



ginations. From that moment Paradise was lost. For from that moment the evil of sin entered into the world, and hath continued in it in a greater or less degree ever since, manifesting itself in their posterity under a variety of appearances, according to the different objects which have engaged men's love more than GOD.

This is the true origin of spiritual evil, and thus of all evil whatsoever which ever hath existed, or which still doth exist in the world. It was not caused by GOD, but it was caused by the fall or declension of man's heart from GOD. For GOD created this world and its inhabitants *very good*, and of consequence very happy; and he intended that they should always have continued so: And so they certainly would have continued had they remained in that state in which they were created, that is to say, had they persisted in living near unto GOD, and blessed by the participations of His heavenly love, presence, and protection. But foolish man thought, alas! he could be happy without GOD; and in consequence of this delusive imagination, he turned his heart by degrees from his good CREATOR, and in so doing he forsook the fountain of all true blessedness, peace, and repose, and began then to experience evils which were never intended for him, but which were still the unavoidable consequences of forsaking GOD, the centre of the only true good.

Behold here then the nature of the first and the greatest of all human evils and the parent of all! It is to live without GOD in our hearts, unawed by the fear, unenlightened by the wisdom, and unblessed by the love, the presence, and protection of His all-blessing majesty, grace, and truth. For the soul, in this unhappy state, doth of necessity immerse itself in all the varieties of evil, both temporal and eternal, because it forsaketh that Being who is the sole cause of all true blessedness, being the highest and only true good. In this sad case, however happy a man may otherwise appear, living in the vanities of this world, and in the pride and sensualities of his own fallen nature, yet since his heart is not risen and returned to GOD; since he hath not brought himself again to live under the influences of the divine love, presence, and protection, he is still under the dominion of the greatest of all evils in his own heart, because he is still at a distance from GOD, the only true blessing that his heart can ever find.

Having thus then considered the true nature and origin of evil, it will now plainly appear, in the third place, what is the true meaning and nature of that *deliverance* which we pray for in the words of my text.

For if evil of every kind be derived originally from spiritual evil, and if spiritual evil consisteth,

as hath been seen, in the soul's living without GOD, under the government of its own lusts, unrestrained either by a divine love or a divine fear, then how plain is it to see that a *deliverance from evil* can only be effected by the return of the soul from the power of sin unto GOD, to be governed and to be influenced by His sacred fear and love in all its thoughts, words, and actions!

This is the true meaning and nature of that *deliverance* which we pray for in the words of my text; and a *deliverance* it is indeed of the highest account and importance to us all, because on its accomplishment our happiness both here and hereafter doth entirely depend. To effect this deliverance in the souls of fallen and sinful men, hath been the great labour and endeavour of GOD in all ages of the world. Both the old and new Testaments are records of the methods of the divine wisdom adopted for its accomplishment. Visitations, judgments, mercies, miracles, the ministries of angels, the preaching of patriarchs, prophets, and evangelists, have all had their end in this one grand design to promote this *deliverance*. And when no other method was found sufficient to effect the heavenly purpose, *in the fulness of time*, GOD Himself, by a marvellous condescension of love and accommodation to our infirmities, came down amongst us, lived, taught, worked miracles, died,

rose again, and returned into His former glory ; and all with this one single, but most glorious, most important view, to *deliver us from evil* ; to bring us back unto Himself ; to open again a communication of heavenly love and peace in our hearts ; to restore us again to that paradise of righteousness and bliss, in and for which we were created.

Whensoever therefore from henceforth we pray unto the LORD to *deliver us from evil*, let us remember that the first and greatest of all evils is that of our own foolish and selfish hearts, living without the grace and the love of GOD in them ; and that of consequence the only true *deliverance from evil* that can be expected by us, must come from our return unto GOD in the spirit of a true repentance. For deliverance from evil can never, by any possibility, be effected, so long as we love, delight in, and cherish evil ; since what we love, delight in, and cherish, must of necessity remain with us for ever as our own. But from the moment that, by true repentance, we render evil hateful and abominable to us, from that moment it becomes separable from us, because from that moment we enter into covenant and conjunction with the OMNIPOTENT SAVIOUR, and through His divine grace and love receive *deliverance*, first, from the various corruptions of our own hearts ; and secondly, from the various miseries which

unsubdued sin would otherwise eternally entail upon us.

And let us not doubt, but if we were once earnestly set upon this great work of reforming our hearts, and bringing them into subjection to the love, the truth, and the righteousness of **JESUS CHRIST**, that then we should find a certain and an effectual *deliverance*, sooner or later, from all kinds and degrees of evil whatsoever. For then, being assailed, by the grace and power of an **ALMIGHTY LORD**, the evil of sin would soon be subdued in our hearts; since if we did but once let in the **BLESSED JESUS** to have dominion in us, we should presently find Him establishing His throne in strength, His dominion in victory, and His kingdom in everlasting peace and deliverance from evil. And being once resolutely engaged in this warfare against spiritual evil, we should then find every other evil would fall together with it, or work together for our good, as it is written, “*All things work together for good to them that love* “**GOD.**” (Rom. viii. 28.) Thus the providence of our **HEAVENLY FATHER** would assuredly either afford us protection from temporal evils, or would so order them, in His wisdom towards us, that they might serve as the means of our greater purification in His righteousness.

To conclude. May the evils, the troubles, and disorders which, in one shape or other, we must all experience, both within and without us, in our present fallen state, serve to convince us how far we are separated from the perfection of that righteousness and bliss for which **GOD** did create us! And may their next effect be, to turn us unto that blessed **SAVIOUR** and **DELIVERER**, our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, from whom we can alone hope for deliverance, and who certainly will be a deliverer from every evil to them who trust in Him and keep His commandments!

Alas! how miserable is the prospect of human life if it be not enlivened by the love and enlightened by the truth of **GOD**! How poor! how desolate is that soul, in its highest worldly blessedness, which is empty of the grace of **GOD**! which hath no communication with the mercy of the **EVERLASTING**! which hath not found its **DELIVERER**, its **FRIEND** and **PROTECTOR**, in the **ALMIGHTY**!

But how blessed is the prospect of human life when **GOD** and **Heaven** are its end!—how rich! how happy is that man, who by repentance hath entered again into a fellowship of grace and love with the **FATHER OF BEING**!

*He shall not be afraid of any evil tidings, for the disorders which infest this lower world shall not come nigh him, or, if they do approach, they shall not hurt him, since he dwelleth above under the covering of the wings of the ALMIGHTY, and hath his habitation in that city whose maker and builder is GOD.*

*He shall go on therefore from strength to strength; he shall see a thousand fall beside him, and ten thousand at his right hand, who had not GOD for their help; whilst he, being supported by the presence, by the grace, by the mercy and love of an invisible Protector, and looking for the kingdom of His righteousness, shall stand fast for ever and be established in the multitude of peace.*

He shall experience the wonders of the goodness of GOD; for, walking in the ways of GOD's commandments, and under the daily influences of His HOLY SPIRIT, he shall perceive a daily deliverance from every enemy and evil, both within him and without him. He shall thus find himself conducted safely by the right hand of an Almighty Power, through all the changes of this mortal life; and when he cometh to tread in the paths of darkness and *the shadow of death*, he shall still find a DELIVERER who will never leave him or forsake him, till He hath brought him through all his trials

into the regions of the everlasting rest and peace of **GOD.**

May we all then, Beloved, learn to pray aright, according to the true spirit of this holy prayer, "*Deliver us from evil,*" and we shall then assuredly soon find ourselves in actual possession of all this blessedness. **AMEN.**



## SERMON XV.

---

St. Matt. vi. 13.

*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. AMEN.*

**I**T is the great end of religion, and therefore the great end of all the duties which it prescribes, to bring us to a continual heartfelt acknowledgment of the everlasting *kingdom, power, and glory* of GOD. For in our natural state we live, all of us, without any such acknowledgment: We have no perception of *the kingdom, the power, and the glory* of GOD, either within us or without us: We have no senses adapted to the discernment or the enjoyment of such grand and magnificent objects: In our natural state, therefore, we are at the utmost distance from the kingdom of Heaven, because we are at the utmost distance from this heartfelt acknowledgment, that *the kingdom, the power, and the glory* are GOD's. But whereas JESUS CHRIST came to call us all out of our natural state to a state of regeneration, consisting in the sensible enjoyment of the kingdom of Heaven and its infinite blessedness, therefore He came to call us all unto the perception and acknowledgment of *the king-*

*dom, the power, and the glory of GOD*, both within us and without us. For as we approach unto this perception and acknowledgment, we approach, by the same steps and degrees, unto the blessedness of the kingdom of Heaven, which consisteth in such perception and acknowledgment. This therefore was the reason why our LORD, having taught us to pray, taught us to conclude our prayers with this confession, “ *Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever.*” AMEN.

There are four things in this confession which demand our particular attention ;

1st. How our hearts and lives are intended to be affected, when we say, *Thine is the kingdom.*

2ndly. How, when we say, *Thine is the power.*

3rdly. How, when we say, *Thine is the glory.*

4thly. How, when we say, *For ever.*

And first, when we say to GOD, *Thine is the kingdom*, it is plain that this confession was designed to lead us to the continual acknowledgment that GOD hath the supreme rule, dominion, and direction at all times, and in all places and circumstances, both in Heaven and in earth ; and that all things therefore being the immediate creatures of GOD, are governed by Him, and thus constantly preserved in their respective states of being, of sensibility, of blessedness, and perfection.

Now there is nothing to which the heart of man, in its natural state, is so great a stranger, as this acknowledgment of *the kingdom of GOD*. For the natural man refers every thing to human government and guidance, that is to say, to his own natural prudence and discretion, independent of GOD. Is he therefore a *politician*, and concerned here below in the rule of kingdoms? He fancies that his own political skill alone ensures prosperity and success. Is he a *priest* and *minister* in holy things? He depends upon his own opinions, or the doctrines of men, more than on the eternal truth of the **WORD OF GOD**. Is he a *merchant* or *trader*? He seeks to enrich himself by cunning speculations and crafty designs, rather than by that plain dealing and uprightness which cometh of GOD. Thus the natural man cannot receive or comprehend, much less can he in his heart acknowledge, the continual rule, dominion, and direction of GOD in the things of this world, and in all the varieties of circumstances and events relating to it. Still less can he acknowledge the government and protection of the **ALMIGHTY** over His creatures; and still least of all can he confess or comprehend *the kingdom of GOD* in the hearts of His people, and how, through the divine influences of his goodness and truth, they are severally preserved and perfected in their respective states of being and of blessedness. The natural man therefore liveth *as without God in the*

*world*, because he hath no perception of *the kingdom of GOD* either within him or without him.

To correct this ignorance of misapprehension in the natural man, and to open our eyes to a perception and sensibility of the nearness and greatness of **GOD**, our **BLESSED LORD** first taught us to say, "*Thine is the kingdom,*" as if **He** had said, "**Thine, O LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, is the rule, the do-**  
**minion, and direction in all things both in Hea-**  
**ven and in earth. Thou hast made all things, and**  
**through Thy marvellous and continual govern-**  
**ment, Thou protectest and blessest what Thou hast**  
**made. Thou art a fountain of being, of life, and**  
**enjoyment, to all Thy creatures. They derived**  
**these blessings originally from Thee, and they**  
**are dependent upon Thee for the daily con-**  
**tinuation of them. But above all, Thy kingdom**  
**is in the hearts of men, especially of those that**  
**love Thee and keep Thy commandments. They**  
**are Thine, to serve and obey Thee, and Thou art**  
**their's, to reign in them, to guide, to sanctify,**  
**and to bless them for ever and ever."**

Oh that all our hearts were thoroughly penetrated with a lively sense of this truth, that the *kingdom* is **GOD's!** that not in words only, but that in the full conviction and confession of our understandings, we did really acknowledge the sovereignty and dominion of the **ALMIGHTY** both with-

in us and without us! But, alas! this can never be till we draw nigh in heart unto GOD, and set ourselves in good earnest to purify our lives through the keeping of His commandments in sincerity and truth. It is therefore written, "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see GOD;*" (Matt. v. 8.) to instruct us, that to see GOD and His kingdom, to observe the wonders of His rule and government in ourselves, and in all things which He hath made, as it is the greatest of all human blessedness, so it is a blessedness reserved only for *the pure in heart.*

But 2ndly. We are taught, by our BLESSED LORD, to humble ourselves before Him under this further acknowledgment, "*Thine is the power.*"

For a kingdom without power can have no existence, still less can it have duration. If then the *kingdom* be the LORD's, so must also the *power* be to do and to order every thing in it according to His sovereign will and pleasure.

Here, however, it is to be observed, that *the power of GOD* Himself is circumscribed by certain limits, or boundaries, which it cannot pass, which limits, or boundaries, are the laws of order, established by His own divine love and wisdom. These laws therefore GOD cannot transgress, or over-rule, because that would be to break into the order of

His own appointments. Thus **GOD** cannot effect *impossibilities*. He cannot, for instance, change **Heaven** into hell or hell into **Heaven**;—He cannot make an obstinate sinner a saint, or a saint an obstinate sinner; because all such acts are contrary to the laws of order which He hath established, according to the immutable counsels of His infinite love and wisdom.

Whensoever then we think of the *power* of **GOD**, let us reflect, that it is a power which operateth according to the laws of order and of harmony, which have their foundation in the most transcendent love and wisdom, whereby all things are arranged and effected in **GOD**'s kingdom to His glory and the everlasting happiness of His creatures.

The natural man, as he is very blind with respect to the nature, the universality, the nearness, and the glory of **GOD**'s *kingdom*, so is he also very blind with respect to the nature and the operations of **GOD**'s power. He either never reflecteth at all upon *the power of GOD*, thus ascribing to Him no dominion in His kingdom, whether of nature or of grace, or else he supposeth **GOD** to be endued with a *power* which doth not belong to Him, such as is the power of effecting impossibilities, and of acting in opposition to the laws of unchangeable order, wisdom, and righteousness. Thus we hear some people argue, if **GOD** hath *all power*, why is

there such a place as hell? why are there such people as sinners? why doth not the **ALMIGHTY**, by virtue of His Omnipotence, change Devils into angels, evil men into good, and hell into Heaven? with other blasphemous questions of the like nature. Thus, again, we see others, in the great matter of their salvation, trusting all to *the power of GOD* to save them in another world, without paying themselves any regard to their lives in this; depending thus on a *groundless power* which GOD hath not, to effect things contrary to the laws of His own order, and the harmony of His own wise and righteous establishments.

But, Beloved, let us be cautious to think aright upon this important subject, neither ascribing too little, nor yet too much to *the power of GOD*, lest, in the *first* case, we should not give unto GOD what of right belongeth unto Him; and in the second, should give Him more than He is willing to receive, or is good for us to give.

Would we learn to give unto GOD the *power* which belongeth unto Him, and not to ascribe too *little* unto His power? Let us then, by a true humiliation of heart, teach ourselves to reflect, that all power is of GOD both in Heaven and in earth. It is His power, for instance, by which angels, sovereignties, and principalities in Heaven, live, minister, and rejoice for ever before Him. It is *His*

*power* whereby Devils and the evil spirits of darkness are kept in subjection that they cannot molest the peaceable habitations of the spirits of light. It is *the power of GOD*, by which the outward visible world, which we inhabit, is preserved in its present state of wonderful order, beauty, and good government. It is *the power of GOD*, by which kings reign and princes decree justice, and all orders of states and societies are preserved in external peace and security. Lastly, as the power of GOD is thus All in All, and effecteth all, in the *great worlds* of angels and of men, so doth it likewise in the *little world* of each individual man; for it is *the power of GOD* (let us reflect worthily upon the interesting and edifying consideration) by virtue of which we all *live, move, and have our being*. It is *the power of GOD*, again, which *worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure*. It is *the power of GOD* from whence all holiness, wisdom, and happiness, are derived into the souls of men, and which would make all men holy, wise, and happy, if they would but submit themselves unto its blessed guidance and dominion. In short, it is *the power of GOD* which, both in Heaven and in earth, in angels and in men, in nature and in grace, in societies, and in every individual person, effecteth all blessing, all redemption, all salvation, all deliverance from evil, and all enjoyment of good, in all ages, world without end.



If we would learn then not to ascribe *too little* unto *the power of GOD*, let us thus teach ourselves to reflect worthily and truly, that all power, of whatever kind it be, is derived ultimately from **GOD**; and on the other hand, if we would learn not to ascribe *too much* unto *the power of GOD*, let us remember, that this power is always circumscribed by the laws of His own infinite love and wisdom; which laws it is as impossible for **GOD** to infringe, as it is for **Him** to act in opposition to **Himself**. As for example, **GOD** cannot, by any immediate act of His *power*, change a sinner into a saint, or save an evil person and bring him to **Heaven** at once, without some previous preparation on the part of such sinner and evil person; for this would be to act in opposition to the divine order of things established by His own love and wisdom, which require that a man should turn himself with his whole heart unto **GOD**, in order to be fitted for the kingdom of **Heaven**; and that he should conform his whole life to the spirit of **GOD**'s commandments; and that he should labour thus to become perfect in the love of **GOD** and of his neighbour. For without such a co-operation, or reciprocal conjunction with **GOD** on man's part, he would be a mere machine, a stock or a stone, in matters of eternal life and salvation, and thus would be incapable of tasting the blessedness of life and salvation. To be *fellow-workers* therefore

with GOD, by repentance and obedience on our parts, is the one only possible way to become saints, and to enter into the kingdom of Heaven : And if we would set ourselves in this way, then GOD would give us His *power* to walk in it, and would preserve and deliver us from every danger, and from every enemy that might rise up in opposition to us. Thus we should learn to acknowledge that all our power is of GOD, and that as He gave us the power first to begin in this good way, so He can alone give us power to proceed in it. And thus, too, we should not deceive ourselves with misapprehensions of GOD's *power*, but should use it to His glory in the working out our own salvation, till we came to join in that song of the ever blessed, "*Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the LAMB, for ever and ever.*" (Rev. v. 13.) AMEN.

## SERMON XVI.

---

St. Matt. vi. 13.

*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. AMEN.*

**I**N a former discourse on these words, I considered the nature of *the kingdom* and *the power* of GOD, and endeavoured to shew how our LORD intended that our hearts and lives should be affected by ascribing to GOD *the kingdom and the power*.

I shall now proceed to shew further, 1st. how it was intended that we should be affected when we say, *Thine is the glory*; and

2ndly. How, when we add, *for ever. Amen.*

First, then, let us consider how it was intended we should be affected when we say, *Thine is the glory*.

We have already shewn that the *kingdom* belongeth unto GOD; in other words, that He hath all rule, dominion, and direction in all things, both in Heaven and in earth. We have shewn also that the *power* is GOD's; that is, that He hath all

power to effect every thing in His kingdom, according to the laws of order, which His own infinite love and wisdom have prescribed; and that the power of every created being is derived from Him and dependent upon Him.

Now if *the kingdom* and *the power* be GOD's, so must also, of necessity, the GLORY be His; since all glory is derived from rule, dominion, and power; and as these belong unto GOD alone, so must likewise *the glory*.

We talk, indeed, of human glory, as we talk of human power and of human kingdoms, and there is no harm in talking of such things, and giving them such names, if we do it but under a full confession that ALL is from GOD, and that as human power is only that power which man deriveth from the LORD, and as human kingdoms are only kingdoms of the LORD's appointment here on earth, in which He ruleth and hath the supreme dominion, so human glory is only so much glory as a man receiveth from the LORD, and referreth to the divine giver in humility and thankfulness.

Hence then we may discover both the goodness and wisdom of GOD in teaching us to ascribe unto Himself *the glory*. For by making this a part of our daily prayer, He would not only conduct us to the signal blessedness of giving Him *the honour*

*due unto His name*, but would at the same time deliver us from the dreadful curse and impious sacrilege of robbing Him of that honour, by ascribing to ourselves, or to any other created being, the glory which belongs of right only to Him.

For there is no crime marked in Holy Scripture with stronger marks of GOD'S disapprobation, than the taking of glory to ourselves, instead of rendering it unto GOD to whom alone it is due. This, amongst many others, was the great sin of Herod, whose example is recorded in the sacred writings, and doubtless for our admonition. The case is at once most memorable and most awful. The impious monarch, it appears, had made an oration to the people, and "*the people gave a shout, saying, it is the voice of a God and not of a man.*" This flattery, on the part of the people, was but too gratifying to the pride and vanity of Herod's heart, and accordingly we read, in the next verse, that the "*Angel of the LORD smote him, because he gave not GOD the glory; and he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost.*" (Acts xii. 20, 21, 22, 23.)

Let this terrible example then teach us, that as there is nothing more displeasing to ALMIGHTY GOD, so there is nothing more dangerous and destructive to our own eternal interests, than to rob GOD of the glory which is His, by ascribing it unto ourselves.

The natural pride and vanity of our hearts, fallen from **GOD**, will always be desirous indeed of setting up idols of self-honour and of self-glory for us to worship instead of **GOD**. This is a sin which of all others sticketh the closest to unregenerate nature. It is with the utmost difficulty (especially at the sight of what we call our own excellencies, our own virtues, and our own good works,) that we can turn from self-complacence and self-adoration, to bow down in humility before the throne of Heaven, and lay our crowns of glory at the feet of **GOD**.

It was this difficulty which proved too insurmountable in the case of the unhappy king, whose history we have just considered; and it will also be too insurmountable with us all, unless we learn to practise and to live by the spirit and the wisdom of this holy confession which our **LORD** hath taught us, “*Thine is the glory.*”

For it is this confession, well-digested and well-practised in our hearts and lives, which can alone enable us to overcome our natural pride and vanity, and thus conduct us to a state of blessed humiliation before our **HEAVENLY FATHER**. It is this confession, therefore, well-digested and well-practised, which can alone restore our minds to true purity and peace, because neither purity nor peace can ever possibly be found by us, only in

proportion as we renounce vain glory, by learning to ascribe all glory to the **MOST HIGH GOD**.

For let us ever remember, that as the great sin and misery of devils and unregenerate men consist in this, to live in pride and vanity of heart, ascribing glory unto themselves alone and not unto **GOD**, so the great holiness and blessedness of angels in Heaven, and of regenerate men on earth, consist in this, to ascribe all glory unto **GOD** and none unto themselves.

Let us then learn to digest and practise well this heavenly lesson of ascribing *all glory unto GOD*: Let us especially bring before **GOD** all that we call our own wisdom, our own goodness, and our own excellencies, whether they be of nature or of grace, whether they be temporal or spiritual, and lay them at the foot of His throne, trembling even at the sight of our own virtues, if we cannot from the depth of humble and contrite hearts say, "*Not unto us, O LORD, but unto Thy name be the praise.*"

This practice would soon from great sinners convert us into great saints, from unholy men into holy angels, from children of darkness into spirits of light. It would remove in our souls (if I may be allowed the expression) the great barrier betwixt us and the kingdom of Heaven. It would place us on the other side of that great gulph of

which it is said "*betwixt me and you there is a great gulph fixed ;*" (Luke xvi. 26.) and it would finally lead us into the communion and societies of the eternally happy in GOD's kingdom, and enable us to join with them in the sweetness of this their heavenly song, "*Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our GOD for ever and ever, Amen.*" (Rev. vii. 12.)

But 2ndly. Our BLESSED LORD hath taught us to acknowledge not only *the kingdom, the power, and glory* of GOD in all things, creatures, and circumstances, but likewise in all *times*, whether past, present, or to come ; therefore He hath instructed us to say, *for ever, Amen.*

What is here rendered *for ever*, is expressed in the original by a term which signifies *into ages*, and by *ages* are to be understood all periods of the existence, growth, and well-being of all things to all eternity.

Let us dwell awhile, Beloved, upon this awful consideration, till it hath had all that influence upon our hearts which our LORD intended it should, when He taught us to make it the conclusion of our prayers and of our praises.

The *kingdom, the power, and the glory* of GOD, as they have existed from everlasting, before the



ages of the world began, so they will continue to exist to all eternity, beyond the limits of temporal duration, when the ages of this world shall be no more.

The kingdoms, the powers, and the glories of men are all temporal, and having their beginnings in time, they are the portion of uncertainty, and pass away as a tale that is told. But *the kingdom, the power, and the glory of GOD* are all eternal, without beginning, and therefore without end; and therefore they shall endure undiminished, increasing in strength, and perfecting in excellence, when all that is great and powerful and glorious amongst men shall perish and be forgotten.

And are these things then true, Beloved? Is there indeed an eternity? and is it an eternity of *the kingdom, the power, and the glory of GOD*? Are the things of this world so soon to be swallowed up in that eternity? And are we all advancing towards it, under the inevitable necessity of soon entering upon its realities? Will a few years, or possibly a few months, banish us from the regions of time, with all temporal concerns, and place us in the regions of an everlasting duration, where there will be no concerns but what are everlasting also? Are these things, I say, really true, Beloved? Then who can utter these awful words, "*for ever,*" and not let them dwell in his heart till

they have begotten therein all the seriousness of sober truth and reflection?

I am persuaded that we none of us with our lips deny the eternity of *the kingdom, the power, and the glory of GOD*. But then let me ask, are our lives such as prove that we believe in these things with our hearts? Are we in a state of preparation for entering upon eternity? Are we taking the most effectual methods of securing a place of happiness in that everlasting world of which we are so soon to become the inhabitants? Do we rightly consider that *the kingdom, the power, and the glory* of that everlasting world are **GOD's**, and that therefore we can have no interest in them but so far as we are the friends of **GOD**? Is it therefore become the first study and business of our temporary life here to please **GOD**? Do we by daily prayer raise our hearts above temporal things, and open them to the reception of what is eternal, in the grace of **GOD**? Do we by daily praise confess the vanity of temporal things, and the great realities of the everlasting *kingdom, power, and glory of GOD*? And doth the holiness, the uprightness, the purity of our lives and conversations say a faithful and practical *Amen* unto our prayers and our praises? Finally, are we living like persons that were born to live for ever in the everlasting enjoyment of *the kingdom, the power,*

and *the glory of GOD*?—or are we living like persons who have forgotten the high prerogative of our birth, who are so deceived by temporal things as to lose sight of eternal, and thus have our eyes still shut against the brightest beams of the love and glory of *GOD*, for the eternal sight and enjoyment of which we were created?

Surely, Brethren, at what time we repeat with our lips these awful words, *for ever*, it were but reasonable, and to be expected, that they should suggest these important inquiries in our hearts, lest the time should come when it will appear that we have only payed unto *GOD* the worship of our mouths, whilst our hearts have been far from Him; and have talked about eternal things with our lips, whilst temporal things have engrossed all our thoughts and affections.

May the *GOD* of all mercy enable us to discover the miserable deceitfulness of such a conduct ere it be too late! For this purpose may all our hearts be now gathered unto the throne of His everlasting *kingdom, power, and glory*, in the true spirit of prayer and supplication, beseeching Him that He would open our eyes and our hearts in time to the knowledge and the love of the great riches of His eternity! that He would awaken in us a true sense of the insufficiency of temporal things to bless our immortal souls, and satisfy the vast desires of an

eternal happiness implanted in us! Finally, that **He** would make known to us **His** own sufficiency, and the almightiness of **His** own power to do that which no other things can do without **Him**, viz. to communicate to us a solid and durable peace, which can never be found but in the bosom of **GOD**, and can only be found there by the continual acknowledgment, that **His is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever.** **AMEN.**

# SERMON XVII.

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## On Prayer.

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St. Luke iii. 21.

*It came to pass, that JESUS also being baptized,  
and praying, the Heaven was opened.*

**H**AVING, in the above discourses on the LORD's *Prayer*, endeavoured to point out the nature and necessity of the important duty of prayer and supplication in general, I shall now bespeak your attention to the blessed effect of that duty, as made known to us in the words of my text.

In these words we learn some remarkable circumstances respecting the life of our BLESSED LORD here on earth, first, that He was *baptized*; secondly, that He *prayed*; and thirdly, the extraordinary effect of His baptism and prayer, *the Heaven was opened*.

Now as all the circumstances of our BLESSED LORD's life were intended for our instruction and imitation, even so were these which are here re-

corded in the words of my text; and the weighty lesson of instruction and imitation which they hold forth to us is this, that all prayer, which proceedeth from a pure heart, hath the power of *opening Heaven*.

For by being *baptized* we know is signified spiritual purification, this being the great end and design of all external baptism; to pray then after being baptized, is to pray from a heart purified and made clean from the defilements of sin; and the blessed effect of such prayer is what is recorded in the words of my text, *the Heaven was opened*.

May I bespeak your present serious attention to this effect of prayer as proceeding from a clean and pure heart!

True prayer, we all know, is a direction of the heart or the desire towards **GOD**; consequently it is a direction of the heart or of the desire towards **Heaven**, where **GOD** more essentially dwelleth.

True prayer, we further know, reacheth **GOD**; it pierceth through all worlds till it cometh into His divine presence; nothing can possibly prevent or retard its progress; it passes all the boundaries of time and space; it forces its way into the eternal world; it never stops till it comes to the throne of the **ALMIGHTY**; consequently true prayer reaches *Heaven*, for it must of necessity do so be-

fore it reaches GOD ; it enters into all the societies of Heaven ; it passes through them all, as it advances toward the *holy place*, the sacred habitation of the INFINITE OF BEING.

But this is not all ; for true prayer, we further know, is not only directed towards GOD and Heaven, reaching also GOD and Heaven, but it likewise moves or affects GOD and Heaven.

For GOD, we learn from the Sacred Scriptures, *heareth the prayer of the righteous*, and performeth all their petitions. *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man*, saith the apostle, *availeth much* : All true prayer, therefore, moveth or inclineth GOD ; He hath a perception and most exquisite feeling of it ; yea, we are further informed, He is infinitely delighted with it ; it is an odour of a sweet-smelling savour in His presence ; it is not slightly regarded by Him, as a thing of small consequence and value, but it is most grateful to Him ; it makes an impression upon Him which can never be effaced.

The case is the same also in respect to *Heaven*. For every true prayer moveth, affecteth, and inclineth all the societies of the blessed ; the holy angels about the throne of GOD are made most sensible of the holy desires which flow from pure and penitent hearts of men ; they are likewise highly delighted

with such holy desires, according to what is written, “ *There is joy in the presence of the angels of GOD over one sinner that repenteth.*” (Luke xv. 10.) All true prayer, therefore, moveth *Heaven* as it moveth *GOD*, and for the same reason, because the inhabitants of *Heaven*, like the *GOD* of *Heaven*, have an infinite satisfaction in seeing and feeling the affections and desires of good men ascending from the vanities of the things of time to the realities of the things of eternity.

But further. All true prayer is not only directed to, and reaches and moves *GOD* and *Heaven*, but it also opens and keeps open a communication between the person who prays and *GOD* and *Heaven*.

This indeed is the great privilege, blessing, and end of all prayer; for if it did no more than reach and move *GOD* and *Heaven*, without opening a communication of blessing from *GOD* and *Heaven*, its purpose, with respect to man, would be very defective; it would leave him as poor and unblessed as it found him, and he would have little or no encouragement to prayer, which by being an *unprofitable*, would of necessity soon become a *burdensome* duty.

But adoration and thanksgiving be to the *GREAT FATHER OF MERCIES* for His unspeakable goodness in having given to the prayer of the



upright a greater use and efficacy! The supplications of the faithful not only *reach* and *move* the **GREAT** and **HOLY GOD**, but they also open, and keep open a communication between **GOD** and the soul of him who prays. Every blessing from **GOD** enters by means of this open communication. There is a continual circulation, if we may use the expression, of good things maintained thus between the **CREATOR** and the *creature*: The **LORD** of infinite mercy, whose name is **JESUS CHRIST**, bestows upon the devout soul all the saving graces of **His HOLY SPIRIT**, and the devout soul in its turn renders them back to **GOD**, the giver, in thankfulness, and dispenses them amongst men in fruitfulness. In short, by means of this communication thus opened and kept open, all light and love, all joy and peace, all righteousness and truth, in a word, all eternal life, with all its blessings, are forever descending upon and enriching the pious and the penitent, according as it is written, "*Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*" (Matt. vii. 8.)

And as this is the effect of prayer with respect to **GOD**, so it is also with respect to *Heaven*. All true prayer therefore openeth and keepeth open a communication between the soul and the blessed inhabitants of the heavenly kingdom. By this com-

munication all the good things of *Heaven* enter and become operative; the holy angels have hereby access to man with all their holy influences; under the divine providence of the **LORD** they become thus *ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation*, blessing, protecting, comforting, and delivering them in a manner unspeakable; thus man, by true prayer, enters as it were into their societies; he associates himself with them in close bonds of love and amity; and they become His spiritual, though invisible companions, ever watching over him both for temporal and eternal prosperity, as it is written again, “*The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.*” (Psalm xxxiv. 7.)

Thus then it is, Beloved, that prayer, *out of a pure heart*, has the wonderfully blessed power of *opening Heaven to man*. Need I add further, that it has also the power of *opening Heaven in man*? This is a necessary consequence of its opening Heaven to man; for whensoever the human heart, by means of true prayer, is open to the communications of **GOD** and *Heaven*; whensoever thus the heavenly influences have power to reach unto and operate upon man; then presently *Heaven* itself is opened in him; then the spirit of man by degrees becomes formed according to the image and spirit of *Heaven*; thus even in this life, the truly

righteous are in *Heaven*, and have *Heaven* in them, according to those words of **JESUS CHRIST**, "*The kingdom of GOD is within you.*" (Luke xvii. 21.)

And what a blessed effect of true prayer is here opened to our delighted view! Oh let us stop awhile to consider it attentively; let us ponder deeply on this mystery of godliness, that so it may make its proper impression upon us; that so we may learn, and understand, and exercise aright, that astonishingly blessed gift and faculty which our **MOST MERCIFUL GOD** hath implanted in us.

For we are all of us, Beloved, alike in possession of this gift, or faculty, if we could but find it; we have all of us this *golden key* within us to unlock the hidden treasures of **GOD** and His invisible kingdom; for what human being is there that cannot pray? what human being therefore is there who cannot *open Heaven*? who cannot enter into its blessed societies? who cannot advance even to the throne of **JESUS CHRIST**, and move and incline His heart? who cannot thus open and keep open a communication between **GOD** and *Heaven* and his own soul, till his own soul is formed after the image and likeness of **GOD**, and becomes itself a *Heaven*?

Who, I say, if he were so disposed, cannot do all this? I do not say that we can do it *merely of our-*

*selves*, without divine aid, since *merely of ourselves* we can do nothing. But I would insist, that through divine aid we can accomplish this blessed purpose, and that GOD in His abundant mercy hath bestowed upon every child of Adam this inestimable power and faculty, this precious gift of prayer. It is by this gift we are distinguished from the brutes, for not one of them has the power of praying. It is by this gift we have immortality. It is by this gift we are enabled to overcome all the enemies of our nature, to obtain purification from sin, renovation of spirit, communion with GOD, and eternal life. Whensoever therefore the spirit of prayer is once rightly opened and operative in us, we rise from that instant superior to every misery and disorder of this lower fallen world; we regain Paradise; we begin to live as by creation we were intended to live, in Heaven and on earth at the same time; in a word, we become one with GOD and GOD with us.

Oh then let us lose no time in searching out well in ourselves this blessed, this invaluable gift, and in using and improving it aright! I say improving it aright, because the gift of prayer, like all other gifts and graces from Heaven, is capable of an indefinite improvement. There is not a man living upon the earth who can pretend to say that he has yet attained to a full perfection in the use of this di-

vine gift. There is not a man living upon the earth who might not, by diligent application, render this gift in himself more efficacious and blessed than it is at present. Let us not however be discouraged. Let us rather begin with making the experiment of this gift. It may be, that at first we shall not be able to pray so well as we could wish ; our prayers will not reach so far, nor prove so effectual, as we could desire. Let us still however not be discouraged. Let us only persevere diligently, praying as well as we are able, and then we shall assuredly find that the **ALMIGHTY** will add to and improve our talent. Nevertheless let us keep constantly in mind the lesson suggested in my text, that the efficacy of our prayers, in *opening Heaven*, will depend at all times and in all cases upon the purity of our hearts and lives ; for it is written, that *JESUS being baptized, and praying, the Heaven was opened*, and by being baptized is signified being purified. Would we then give full effect to our prayers ? Let us be careful first to put away from us all evil ; to examine ourselves diligently, both in heart and life, as to every thing which is opposite to the life and spirit of our **REDEEMER JESUS CHRIST** ; let us be careful to live well ; to see that our lives and actions be devout and holy as well as our prayers, otherwise our devotion will be false, vain, and ineffectual ; and so far from *opening Heaven* to us, it will but *shut Heaven* more against us.

But if to prayer we would join purity ; if to devotion we would add a sound and solid love towards **GOD** and our neighbour, operating in repentance and the fulfilling of all good and useful works, our piety would thus become exalted ; our prayers would become prevalent ; they would ascend easily unto the **GREAT GOD**, not being weighed down with the defilements and lesser cares and concerns of this world and the flesh ; and thus, to our unspeakable comfort, we should find them attended, in a measure, with that blessed effect which attended our **REDEEMER**'s prayers, and we also being *baptized*, and *praying*, should have *Heaven opened to us*, and enjoy continual communication with the **GOD** of Heaven and all its heavenly inhabitants.

**AMEN.**

# SERMON XVIII.

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Rev. xxii. 14.

*Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the TREE OF LIFE, and may enter in through the gates into the CITY.*

**I**NTENDING, in some future discourses, to enter into a *particular* consideration of the laws of the *Ten Commandments*, I could wish at present to call your attention to a few *general* observations respecting those laws, as a preparation for the better understanding and more diligent practice of the heavenly and eternal precepts.

There is the more need of such attention, inasmuch as few Christians, perhaps, at this day, are affected by the holy commandments in the manner and the degree which the infinite importance of the subject demands. We were taught these sacred laws when we were children, and possibly at that time our minds were impressed with a blind reverence for their sanctity and authority. But how few amongst us, in our more mature age, have so cherished that early-conceived reverence, as to allow it to grow with our years to its proper

maturity also! Alas! it is to be feared, that the generality of Christians entertain very gross ideas on this very interesting subject, and for want of apprehending aright the spirituality, the divinity, the supreme sanctity of the laws of the Decalogue, they hear and read, when they become men, in the same temper, and with no higher a degree of understanding, than when they were children.

To prevent, as far as possible, this criminal inattention to a point of all others the most important to our best interests, I propose to make my following discourse a sort of preface to some future discourses, by endeavouring to press upon your minds these two distinct considerations,

1st. The *particular* sanctity of that part of the **HOLY WORD OF GOD** called the **TEN COMMANDMENTS**.

2ndly. The *particular* blessedness attending a right observance of these heaven-born laws.

And may the spirit and power of that **ALMIGHTY ONE**, who first delivered to His creatures these pure and holy precepts of life, engrave deeply on every heart here present, and enforce with all the weight of serious conviction, these two considerations!

Permit me now, in the *first* place, to call your attention to the *particular* sanctity of this part of



**the HOLY WORD OF GOD called the TEN COMMANDMENTS.**

Who amongst us has not read, or heard, how this law of the **TEN COMMANDMENTS** was delivered immediately by **GOD** unto Moses, on *Mount Sinai*? (See **Exod.** xx. 1 to 18.) Who has not read, or heard, all the extraordinary circumstances of majesty and solemnity with which it was delivered? (See **Exod.** xix.) Who doth not know that it was written by the finger of **GOD** Himself on *two tables of stone*, which were ordered to be laid up in an *ark*, most curiously and wonderfully contrived by the wisdom of **GOD**? (See **Exod.** xxxiv. 1 to 5. **Chap.** xxv. 10 to 26.) And lastly, who hath not heard the marvellous things recorded of this *ark*, which was thus consecrated by the presence of the great **JEHOVAH** in His holy law? For who hath not heard how this ark went before the children of Israel in their journeyings through the wilderness? How, *when it set forward, they set forward, and when it rested, they rested*? How all their enemies perished and fell before it? How, by the presence and the power of the **LORD** in the law, which was in the ark, the waters of Jordan were divided? How the walls of Jericho fell down, when the ark was carried round about the city? How, when the Philistines took it, and brought it into the house of Dagon their **GOD**, this idol was broken in pieces,

and the Philistines were plagued with great plagues, till they sent the ark back again to the children of Israel? And finally, how it was brought up of David into His own city of Sion, and was afterwards deposited in the HOLY OF HOLIES in the temple built by Solomon?

Behold, in all these circumstances, a special declaration of the divine sanctity of the law of the ten commandments! This law, therefore, when deposited in the ark, was called JEHOVAH there, and we read, that when the ark at any time set forward, Moses said, “*Rise up JEHOVAH, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee: And when it rested, He said, Return, JEHOVAH, unto the ten thousand thousands of Israel.* (Numbers x. 35. 36.)

Thus much may serve to show the especial divine sanctity of the ten commandments: Let us now proceed to consider, secondly, the especial blessedness attending the observance and practice of them.

GOD, we read, said unto the children of Israel by Moses, concerning this law of the ten commandments, “*If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.*”

(Exod. xix. 5. 6.) And JESUS CHRIST saith, in the Gospel, concerning the same law, "*If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*" (Matt. xix. 17.) It is also written in the words of my text, *Blessed are they that do His commandments, &c.*

But whence, let me ask, cometh all this blessedness to those that observe and do these holy commandments? This question is of the utmost importance, and the proper answer to it will conduct us to a lesson of most edifying instruction.

This blessedness is expressed, in the words of my text, by *having a right to the Tree of Life, and entering in through the gates into the city.* Now the *Tree of Life*, we know, is JESUS CHRIST, and to *have a right* to this tree is to be conjoined with JESUS CHRIST by love and obedience. The *gates*, too, which lead to the *holy city*, are all those holy truths which conduct to the knowledge of this GREAT INCARNATE GOD, and to *enter in through those gates* is to admit into our understandings those most holy truths, and to submit our whole lives to their guidance and government.

Behold here then the *blessedness* derived from keeping and doing the ten commandments! For all the laws of the ten commandments are so many laws of heavenly love and wisdom. They are

therefore the laws of Heaven and of heavenly order, and of consequence, in whatever heart they are received and become operative, they introduce love and wisdom, order and Heaven, and therewith life and peace, and blessedness eternal.

For let it be well noted and observed by us, that in these His holy laws and commandments, the **LORD JEHOVAH**, our **JESUS**, is *present* most essentially, so that whosoever in right repentance, and true affection of heart, receiveth these holy laws and commandments, he receiveth at the same time the **LORD JEHOVAH**, or **JESUS CHRIST**, who is their proper life and spirit. He becometh thus a *living* ark, in which **JEHOVAH** is ever present with His most holy laws; and as in old time the ark was a defence unto the children of Israel, and a terror unto their enemies, and wrought divers miracles, by reason of the holy commandment deposited in it, even so, whosoever at this day becometh such an ark, he also hath power over all his spiritual adversaries, whilst the presence of the great **JEHOVAH** in his heart is a sure defence unto himself, working daily and divers miracles of preservation, redemption, and regeneration.

Is it asked, who are the *blessed ones* who observe and do this holy law of the ten commandments? I wish to reply, that this question is of the utmost importance. For we read, in the Gospel, of a young

man who came to JESUS, and declared unto Him, that he had observed all the commandments from his youth. Nevertheless JESUS said unto him, *Yet lackest thou one thing* ; by which declaration we learn, that it is possible we may persuade ourselves we are keeping these holy commandments, when yet we are not keeping them aright, when we are still *lacking one thing*. For thus the young man in the Gospel was persuaded, and thus he was deceived. The case was, he had kept these commandments *in the letter* only, but he had not kept them *in the spirit*, that is, He had not respected GOD and His kingdom in keeping them, through a denial of himself and his own concupiscencies, but had sought rather to establish his own righteousness and merit ; and therefore the LORD tells him, “ *Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven ; and come, take up thy cross and follow ME ;*” by which words he was instructed to keep the commandments *in the spirit* as well as *in the letter*.

You are, perhaps, surprised to hear of the distinction between keeping the commandments *in the letter*, and keeping them *in the spirit*. I will therefore endeavour to illustrate it. In the sixth commandment it is said, *Thou shalt do no murder*. Now it is possible we may keep this command-

ment in the letter, by not hurting the bodily life of our fellow-creatures, and yet we may not keep it in the spirit, because in the spirit it forbids, not only all injury done by outward violence to another, but also all injury done inwardly ; consequently it forbids all malice, all hatred, all contempt of others, in which evils consists the real sin of murder. The case is the same respecting the evil of adultery, of theft, of false witness, of idolatry, all which evils it is possible may be shunned according to the letter, and yet not shunned according to the spirit.

It becomes us then, if we would not deceive ourselves, but would attain unto the full and perfect blessedness of keeping the holy law of the ten commandments, to keep them not in the letter only, but in the spirit also, and for this purpose to consider and ponder well their spiritual sense and meaning.

To assist you in this important work, and thus to help both you and myself forward in the blessed ways of salvation, I propose, through the divine mercy, in some future discourses, to open and explain to you the spiritual sense and purport of these holy commandments. In the mean while, I could only wish that your hearts might be thoroughly impressed with a deep sense of their divine sanctity and great importance towards the promotion of your eternal blessedness and salvation.

For this purpose suffer me again to remind you, that they are the spirit and life of **JEHOVAH**, or **JESUS CHRIST**, brought nigh unto every penitent, devout, and obedient mind: for this **GREAT ALMIGHTY LORD** hath His abode and His manifestation in these His holy laws and commandments; and He will have His abode and manifestation in you, just in proportion as you receive these His laws and commandments into your hearts, and make them operative in your lives. For thus He Himself witnesseth, "*If a man love ME he will keep MY commandments;*" and then it follows, "*I will come unto him and make MY abode with him.*" (John xiv. 21, 23.)

Consider well then, and ponder deeply, on the divine sanctity of the holy law of the ten commandments. When you hear them, think you hear **GOD** speaking: When you read them, think you are conversing with **GOD**: When you are meditating upon them, think that **GOD** is present with you: When you purpose to practise them, think that in so doing you have conjunction with **GOD**; that you are forming after the image of Heaven in your inner man; that you breathe the spirit of Heaven; that you eat the bread of Heaven; that you are in society with the angels of Heaven, and are beginning to live the life of Heaven. But oh! take good heed that your purpose

on this occasion be right and sincere; that you may really practise as well as you believe in the sanctity of these holy commandments. Remember, that the promise is to them who *obey* and *do*; whereas *faith* without *work* is declared to be *dead*; and yet such a faith (lamentable to tell) hath slain its thousands, and still slayeth, whilst it shutteth them out in their careless security, and dead formality, from *eating of the Tree of Life*. Would ye then escape from this slayer? Enter then with all speed and with all sincerity upon the *work*; the great work of reforming and renewing your hearts and lives by the spirit of heavenly love and charity, as operating in the holy commandments; and then may ye hope to be of the number of those blessed ones, *who shall have right to the Tree of Life, and who enter in by the gates into the city.* AMEN.



# SERMON XIX.

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## On the Decalogue.

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Exod. xx. 1, 2.

*And GOD spake all these words, saying, I am JEHOVAH thy GOD, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

**I**N a former discourse on the sanctity of the commandments of GOD, and the blessedness attending a faithful obedience to them, I signified a purpose of entering, at some future time, upon a more particular consideration of the sense and import of each commandment.

Before, however, we proceed to such particular consideration, I shall beg leave to call your attention to these few words, with which GOD introduces Himself and His law to the children of Israel, “*I am JEHOVAH thy GOD, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*”

All the words of GOD are full of wisdom and instruction for the children of wisdom, and so it is

with these words. They contain a most important lesson of spiritual edification for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear them. It is possible, however, we may overlook this lesson, and thus may make the wisdom of GOD unprofitable to us. Let us beware however lest we be guilty of such oversight, since by such guilt we shall deprive ourselves of *that* which was intended for blessing, and life, and salvation to us; we shall close our eyes in darkness against the bright beams of the eternal light of GOD'S TRUTH, and how great then must be our darkness? Let us rather then, in humiliation before GOD, supplicate the grace of His holy spirit to enlighten our eyes to see the wondrous things contained in this and all other parts of His HOLY WORD.

Then may we have a good hope that GOD will give us understanding to comprehend His holy precepts and to profit by them; and then shall we delight to discover the secrets of wisdom as He revealeth them unto us for our spiritual instruction, and we shall see, and rejoice to see, that in the words of my text, as in all His other words, GOD'S wisdom is most manifest, and that they were intended for our instruction and comfort touching a matter of the greatest importance to our eternal interests, as I shall now proceed to lay before you.

It is universally agreed, that by the bringing up the children of Israel *out of Egypt, out of the house*

*of bondage*, was prefigured, as in a type, the deliverance of mankind from the worse than Egyptian slavery and bondage of sin, through the redemption wrought by **JESUS CHRIST**: For the land of Egypt is a figure, and was intended to be so, of the natural state of the human mind, before it becomes converted to **GOD**; and to be *brought up* out of that land is a figure equally striking of man's being elevated out of such a mere natural state into a spiritual state, in consequence of the admittance of heavenly love and heavenly wisdom into his mind, for his government and guidance. The *house of bondage*, again, is a figure of man's slavery, so long as he remains in a mere natural state of heart and life, because in such case, he is the miserable servant of his evil affections and concupiscencies; and to be brought out of this *house of bondage* is a figure of the freedom which man attains when he is set at liberty to pursue the great ends of his being in the love and favour of **GOD**.

When **GOD** therefore said unto the children of Israel, "I am **JEHOVAH thy GOD**, *who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage,*" He intended, by these words, to make Himself known unto them as their **REDEEMER** and **REGENERATOR**; as their **REDEEMER**, by delivering them from the slavery and bondage of sin; and as their **REGENERATOR**, by forming them

anew after a divine image, according to the likeness of His own essential mercy, truth, and righteousness. And what GOD thus intended in respect to the children of Israel of old, that He still intendeth by the same words in respect to all the true children of Abraham in all ages and places. He intends, I say, yea He is infinitely desirous to make Himself known unto them under this His two-fold divine character, as a REDEEMER and as a REGENERATOR.

And here, before we proceed, allow me to call your attention to the significant appellation of JEHOVAH GOD, by which the ALMIGHTY stiles Himself, and to point out the edifying meaning of that appellation. Allow me therefore to observe, that in the word of the Old Testament, the GREAT CREATOR sometimes is called JEHOVAH, sometimes GOD, and sometimes unitedly, as in my text, JEHOVAH GOD. A careless reader will perhaps not attend to these distinctions, and will thus overlook the wisdom which was designed for his instruction. But the devout and intelligent Christian will be aware, that in all the distinctions which the ALMIGHTY makes there must be a meaning, and that that meaning must be DIVINE. He will be enlightened therefore to see, that when the CREATOR stiles Himself JEHOVAH, He means to describe and make Himself known to His creatures

as the **SUPREME GOODNESS** or **LOVE**; and when He stiles Himself **GOD**, He means to describe and make Himself known as the **SUPREME TRUTH** or **WISDOM**; and when **JEHOVAH GOD**, as the union of both, thus as the **ALL** both of love and of wisdom united.

May I bespeak your most serious attention, **Beloved**, to the weighty and interesting consideration here suggested, by this **JEHOVAH GOD** announcing Himself to be our deliverer from spiritual *Egypt*, and from the *house of spiritual bondage*.

In our natural state, whilst we remain in *spiritual Egypt* and its *miserable bondage*, before we become true converts to **GOD** and the kingdom of His righteousness, by renouncing the sin and vanity of the fleshly, or unregenerate nature, we know **GOD** only as our natural Creator; and if we ever think about Him, in this our natural state, we think only of that being who hath formed and preserved us as to our natural life, and who hath created the outward natural world which we inhabit. But to know **GOD** under His holy name of **JEHOVAH GOD**, as the **SUPREME LOVE** and **SUPREME WISDOM**; and as our **REDEEMER**, by that love and wisdom, from a sinful nature; and as our **REGENERATOR**, or *second CREATOR*, of a new, and holy, and ever blessed nature in the deep centre of our own souls, by the process of a real new

birth, whereby we become His children, being begotten and born again of His own incorruptible Word, or Spirit; this is a knowledge to which the natural man is an entire stranger, because it never entereth at all into his imagination and apprehension; and thus he liveth in the grossest and most unhappy ignorance both of GOD and of himself.

For let it be well noted, that to be acquainted with GOD only as our *natural* Creator, whilst we are unacquainted with Him as our *spiritual* Creator, that is, as our REDEEMER and REGENERATOR; as the fountain of all our love and all our wisdom; this is an acquaintance with GOD which is infinitely short of what GOD willeth, because it is infinitely short of what is necessary for our own eternal peace and blessedness; it leaves our hearts and lives therefore as unsanctified, and our minds as entire strangers to the true peace, and comfort, and privileges of the Gospel, as if we had no acquaintance with GOD at all. And yet how many, alas! rest satisfied with this slight, this imperfect, this superficial acquaintance with GOD! how many therefore are entire strangers to GOD as their REDEEMER and REGENERATOR within! How many stand thus, as it were, in the outward court of the heavenly temple, and for want of entering into the secret recesses of the holy place, and there seeking an inward and intimate acquaintance with

**GOD**, fall short of all the solid blessings and comforts of true religion!

Blessed, then, for ever blessed, be these words of our **GOD**, by which He expresseth His ardent desire to make Himself known unto every fallen son of Adam in the way of a more intimate and spiritual acquaintance, as His **REDEEMER** and **REGENERATOR**, “ *I am JEHOVAH THY GOD, &c.*”

May we all ponder well, Beloved, in the most sacred chambers of our hearts, these weighty and edifying words! May we be led by them to seek, and to find, and to know our **GOD**, not in the way only of an external dead knowledge, as our natural Creator, but in the way of an inward, vital, experimental, blessed, and saving knowledge, as our **REDEEMER** and our **REGENERATOR**! as our *Redeemer* from all the deep-rooted evils of a corrupt and fleshly nature; its pride and wrath, and envy and malice, and covetousness and sensuality; as our **REDEEMER** from the powers of darkness, which have their dreadful and defiled abodes in each of these evil lusts; as our **REDEEMER** from the miseries, the follies, the delusions, the dismays, the terrors and condemnations which unrepented and unforsaken sin will sooner or later bring upon us! And may we next come to know Him as our **REGENERATOR**! our *Regenerator* to the blessedness of a new and holy

life through the pure love of Him and of one-another; our **REGENERATOR** to the spirit of righteousness, joy, and peace in the **HOLY GHOST**; our **REGENERATOR** to the comfortable expectations, happy prospects, well-grounded hopes, which ever attend a well-spent life; finally, as our **REGENERATOR** and **RESTORER** to that spirit of meekness, mercy, humility, patience, contentedness, well-doing, and every other virtue, which is the spirit of Heaven, which is the power and life of **JESUS CHRIST**, which is the salvation of believers, which is the beginning and the ending of all blessedness, and without which, whosoever liveth is but dead before **GOD**, but with which, they that be dead shall live for ever with **GOD**.

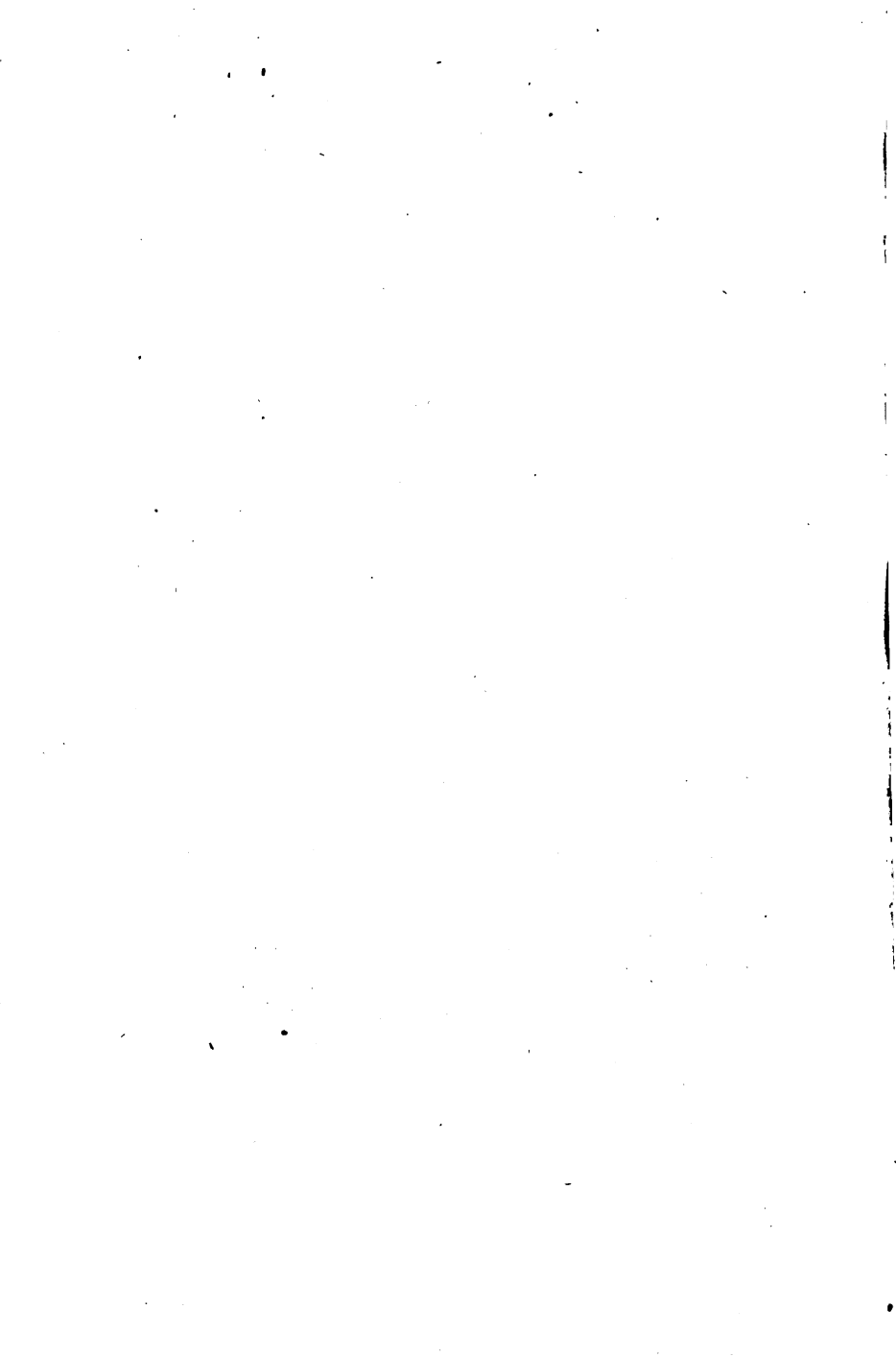
Then shall we indeed know our **GOD** as He ardently and infinitely willeth to be known by us; for then shall we know Him under His holy name **JESUS**, and He will write upon us, as He has promised, this His **NEW NAME**, which is His dearest, and most precious, and most sacred name; a name which none can name but they who, by redemption and regeneration, have it inscribed in their hearts, according as it is written, "*None can sing the song of the **LAMB** but the 144 thousand who were redeemed from the earth,*" (Rev. xiv. 3.) that is, who were made regenerate.

To conclude. May we all then, Beloved, labour to be included in this blessed number, the 144



thousand! For this purpose, may we labour to gain an acquaintance with our **GOD**, our **JESUS**, as our *Redeemer* and *Regenerator*, by the communication of His holy love and wisdom! May we no longer live at a distance and in separation from Him in our hearts, but there seek to know and to find Him as a daily deliverer from sin and death, and a daily restorer to the newness of a holy and eternal life! And with this happy, this interesting purpose of heart in view, may we proceed to ponder and digest well His holy law of the ten commandments! For this law was given in order to help us forward in the regeneration, by acquainting us with **GOD** our **REGENERATOR**, and teaching us how to walk so that we may forward His regenerating purposes. If then we have not an eye to **GOD** as our **REGENERATOR**, and to His law as the medium of regeneration, we shall disappoint and frustrate all the counsels of **GOD** in giving us His law: But if we would thus look spiritually unto **GOD** and His law, then we should experience its holy and heavenly power; for then we should find it to be a law coming from **GOD**, leading to **GOD**, forming after the image of **GOD**, effecting conjunction with **GOD**, and finally opening in the obedient soul all the treasures of the light and life, and peace and truth, and righteousness of **GOD**.

**AMEN.**



## SERMON XX.

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Exod. xx. 3.

*Thou shalt have no other gods before ME.*

**I**N two former discourses we have considered the peculiar sanctity of the decalogue or ten commandments, together with the peculiar blessedness resulting from a right observance of those Heaven-born laws. We have announced also an intention of proceeding to a particular explication of each commandment, as forming a lesson of most interesting and edifying instruction for every Christian. But in order to our right understanding and profiting by these most holy precepts, there is one thing necessary to be premised and well attended to, viz. that each commandment hath a two-fold sense or signification, a *natural* sense, adapted to the instruction and edification of the *natural* man, and a *spiritual* sense, adapted to the instruction and edification of the *spiritual* man: It deserves further to be noted, that the holy commandments can never be thoroughly comprehended, according to their full purport and meaning, unless they be understood in reference to this their double sense and signification.

Let us keep then these two senses in view, as we proceed to an explanation of each commandment, and we shall then see how they contain all the fulness of the mercy and truth of GOD, and are thus effective of conjunction with GOD, and Heaven, and eternal life, in every humble and penitent disciple, who faithfully and diligently observeth and doeth them.

This then being premised, may I now bespeak your serious attention to this first and great commandment of the all-good, all-wise, and all-powerful JEHOVAH, delivered to His sinful and infirm creatures for their eternal blessing, redemption, regeneration, and final salvation, "*Thou shalt have no other gods before ME.*"

The *natural* sense of this commandment is obvious, viz. that we should not fall down before and worship any creature or created thing as a god, but should worship only the great JEHOVAH, who made Heaven and earth, ourselves, and all things that are therein.

For there was, alas! a time when mankind, through sin, were so immersed in darkness and ignorance touching the knowledge of GOD, that they *outwardly* worshipped the creature instead of the CREATOR. They bowed down to and adored the host of Heaven, the sun, the moon, and the

stars, as their gods: Yea, they even worshipped weak men like unto themselves, and made themselves gods of those whom GOD had made for His service and glory.

But this time of darkness and ignorance is now no more, at least not in our land, because we are all enlightened, through the divine mercy and truth, to see the miserable weakness and folly of worshipping the creature, in this natural sense, more than the CREATOR.

It were earnestly to be wished, that we were all equally enlightened to see the weakness and folly of such creaturely worship in a *spiritual* sense; but, alas! there are too many symptoms visible in the lives and conversations of some who live even in a Christian land, and who profess themselves the worshippers of the true GOD, too plainly declaring, that although in a *natural* sense they have no other gods before JEHOVAH, yet in a *spiritual* and most real sense, they have many and divers other gods before that great GOD who made the Heavens and the earth.

Let us give this point the serious consideration which it deserves. Every reflecting person must of necessity perceive, that the worship of creatures and things, as gods, does not depend only on our prostrating our bodies before them; on bending

our knees at their altars ; or uttering verbal prayers for their aid and succour : For these are but natural, external signs and tokens of worship : But besides these there are spiritual or internal signs and tokens, far more real, far more constitutive of a false and creaturely worship, and infinitely more destructive of that true spiritual and living worship which is due to the **GREAT CREATOR**.

What these spiritual internal signs of a false and creaturely worship are, must also be plain to every attentive mind. For who cannot see, if he will but reflect, that to love, to trust to, to find delight in any thing, these are the real marks and tests of worship, nor is it possible to worship the **GOD of Heaven** any further than as we worship him thus with our best affections ? Consequently, to love, to trust to, to find delight in any thing more than **GOD**, His righteousness, and His kingdom, this is the fulness and reality of creaturely worship.

Would we know then whether we have any other *god* before **JEHOVAH** ? We must not consider only whether we bow down our bodies and bend our knees, and repeat verbal prayers before a creaturely image ; but we ought to consider further, whether in mind and spirit we do this, in other words, whether we love, or trust to, or find delight in any other thing or creature more than the **GREAT GOD** who made us, and who also redeemed us.

By this examination we shall soon discover, if we are sincere with ourselves, the real **GOD** of our hearts and the true object of our worship. For here we shall see, that if we delight in the pride and vanity of the flesh, according to the lusts of the old man, then pride and vanity are our gods: If, again, we love this world more than **JESUS CHRIST**, then this world is our god: If we seek worldly gain, in the spirit of worldly covetousness, more ardently than eternal riches, then gold is our *god*, because it is written of such covetousness, that *it is idolatry*: If, again, we indulge in sensual fleshly lusts, then sensuality is our god, and we rank amongst those idolaters of whom it is recorded, *Their god is their belly, they mind earthly things*: If, lastly, we are lovers of ourselves, seeking ourselves alone, taking complacence in what we call our own excellencies, our own virtues, or our own accomplishments, delighting in self-esteem, self-applause, and self-will, more than in the esteem, applause, and will of **GOD**, then self is our *god*, and we worship ourselves more than Him who made us. In short, here we shall see, that whatever is the chief and ruling object of our desire, of our pursuit, of our love and mind's delight, *that*, and that only, is the god which we worship, nor is it possible for us to worship any other.

And here, in examining our hearts respecting the object of our worship, the point to be consi-

dered is, not what we *partially* and *occasionally* love, what we *partially* and *occasionally* delight in, or what we *partially* and *occasionally* trust to, but what we *principally* and *constantly* love, what we *principally* and *constantly* delight in, and what we *principally* and *constantly* trust to. For it is very possible that we may *partially* and *occasionally* love GOD, and delight in Him, and trust to Him, as in the hour of some great prosperity or some great trouble, and yet, notwithstanding this *occasional* and *partial* regard, our *principal* and our *constant* respect may be directed to some other objects separate from GOD. The point, therefore, I say, to be considered, respecting what we worship, is, what is the *supreme*, the *perpetual* object of our best affections, because the *subordinate* and *casual* objects are of little or no concern.

And would we know the reason why our GOD, our JEHOVAH, hath demanded for Himself the supreme and perpetual place in our best affections, and for this end hath said, *Thou shalt have no other gods before ME*? It is this: Our GOD, our JEHOVAH, knoweth well, better than we know, that we can never be truly happy, and experience deliverance from our sins and sorrows, and attain to true rest and peace, but in Himself; that is to say, in loving Him, in trusting to Him, in delighting in Him, in giving our best affections and thoughts



to Him, and in serving Him, with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. He doth not therefore require our worship for His own sake, or to add any thing to His own majesty and greatness; but He requires it for our sakes, to add to our holiness, and to our consequent happiness, by making us partakers of His life, of His love, of His eternal wisdom and truth; thus by delivering us from all our sins and sorrows, from *the land of Egypt, and the house of bondage*, that so we may be truly and fully blessed by Him, and find in His mercy and love that solid rest and true bliss which other things cannot give.

Would we wish then to unite and close with this gracious design of our GOD, our JEHOVAH, to us? Oh then let us consider well what those other gods are which our hearts have chosen and set up in the place of this ALL-GOOD, ALL-WISE, ALL-MIGHTY JEHOVAH. For this purpose, let us explore all our secret affections, and thoughts, and delights, and designs, and ends of life. Let us force them to tell us, every one of them, to what object they are directed, whether it be of this world or of another, of time or of eternity, of Heaven or of hell, of light or of darkness. And if in this examination we find, as most likely we shall find, some *strange* god in us, then let us hasten to put this strange god away from us. Then let us

turn unto **GOD**, the **LIVING GOD**, our **REDEEMER** and **REGENERATOR**, in the spirit of a true repentance, and contrition, and humiliation, and beseech Him to *make us clean hearts, and renew a right spirit within us*, that so we may love, and serve, and worship Him as we ought to do.

These things if we would do, then would our **CREATOR** look graciously upon us, and take His delight in us ; and then would He come unto us, and *thoroughly purge His temple*, and remove all *strange gods* from our hearts, and make us the pure and blessed tabernacles of His presence. And then would He enable us to love Him freely, and to delight in His love and service, and He would soften and melt down our hearts with His mercy, and we should be merciful as He is merciful, and thus He would renew us in His image and likeness, and reveal in us all the riches of His love and kingdom, and deliver us from all our sins and sorrows, and convince us that He is our **REDEEMER** and **REGENERATOR**, and we should then, to our unspeakable joy, learn to sing eternally this song of thanksgiving, *Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel who only doeth wonderful things, and blessed be the name of His Majesty for ever, and let all the earth be filled with His Majesty.* **AMEN.**

# SERMON XXI.

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Exod. xx. 3.

*Thou shalt have no other gods before ME.*

**I**N a former discourse on these words I endeavoured to shew what is here to be understood by having *other gods before* JEHOVAH, and that, in a literal or natural sense, it means the external worship of the creature instead of the CREATOR; but in an inward and spiritual sense, it means to love any thing, to trust to any thing, to delight in any thing more than GOD, because such love, trust, and delight, constitute the true nature of worship, whatever be the object towards which they are directed.

May I now bespeak your serious attention to some further observations on this first great and weighty commandment.

It may seem strange, at first sight, that GOD, in this commandment, which was intended to lead to the knowledge and love of Himself, does not say directly, thou shalt love ME, thou shalt trust in ME, thou shalt delight in ME, thou shalt serve and

obey **ME**, but He says only, *Thou shalt have no other gods before ME.*

This, I say, may appear strange at first sight, but on further consideration we shall find, that in this circumstance, so apparently strange, is contained a mystery of divine wisdom, which deserveth all our attention and regard.

The mystery is this. There is no other possible way for fallen and sinful man to attain unto a right knowledge and love of his **GOD** and **CREATOR**, but by first putting away from his heart all *other gods*, that is, by renouncing all those evil desires, corrupt affections, and false imaginations of his sinful nature, which being according to this world and the flesh, are opposite to the purities and sanctities of the divine nature.

This great truth is confirmed to us by the words of **GOD** in the prophet, where it is written, "*Wash ye, make ye clean ; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ; cease to do evil ;*" and then it follows, "*Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow : though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool ;*" from whence it appears, that no purifying saving good from **GOD** can possibly have admission into the heart of man, only so far as by repentance he is first *washed* and *made clean* from the opposite evil.

Yet plain and important as this truth is, it seems, alas! to have been in general but little considered and attended to, and it is perhaps for want of such consideration and attention, that many persons make the most fatal mistakes in their worship and service of **GOD**.

As for example. Some people think to find and please **GOD** merely by repeating verbal prayers to Him, and being regular in their public and private devotions, though possibly at the same time they take no pains to search out and renounce the evil, vain, and false affections of their hearts, which are contrary to **GOD** and His righteousness, mercy, and truth. But what a most unhappy and fatal delusion is this! For who cannot see that such a way of seeking and serving **GOD** must be altogether vain and unprofitable to the polluted worshipper, whilst at the same time it is most highly offensive and criminal in the sight of that **GOD** whom He pretends to worship? For it is written, *That the prayer of the wicked is an abomination*: If therefore we pray and offer our devotions to **GOD** without at the same time searching out and renouncing vain and evil affections of self-love, of the love of the world and of the flesh, which are all contrary to the purities of the divine love; if we do not labour to please **GOD**, and to be like Him in all our daily tempers and ways of life, as well as in our prayers

and supplications, how plain is it to see, that our prayers and devotions, so far from making us more acceptable to GOD, will render us but the more abominable in His sight !

So again. Others seek to attain unto the true knowledge and worship of GOD in the way of meditation and contemplation, by thinking much about GOD; by hearing, reading, and considering His Word; by pondering on the holy things of His kingdom; and so far they do well, inasmuch as these exercises, like prayer, are exceeding profitable, if performed out of a pure and sincere mind: But then it ought surely to be well considered, whether the mind be pure and sincere in the performance of these exercises; in other words, it ought to be considered, whether these exercises be attended with a sincere spirit of repentance, in searching out and renouncing all evil and vain affections, all false imaginations, all wrong habits and ways of life and conversation, thus in putting away these *other* and strange gods from before the faces of JEHOVAH. For if this is not the case, then the most refined contemplations about GOD and His kingdom; the deepest researches into heavenly mysteries; the most diligent reading and pondering the best books and the most sublime instructions; all these things may leave us infinitely short of the true knowledge and pure worship of GOD.

So again. Others seek to serve and please **GOD** by what they call a moral life, by doing good works, which are called works of charity, as by giving to the poor, relieving the indigent, and the like; in all which cases it is possible also they do well; but then surely they ought to remember, that these works, which they call good works, are not good in the sight of **GOD**, unless they search out and renounce all evils in themselves as sins against **GOD**. For till they do this, their best works will be defiled by an evil pride and vain self-love, which will render them impure in **GOD**'s sight, and will but banish them farther from His kingdom.

Here then, if our eyes be at all enlightened from above, we may see plainly into the nature of this mystery, why **GOD**, in teaching us to know, to love, and to worship Him aright, said unto us, "*Thou shalt have no other gods before ME.* For this mystery is grounded in a wisdom which we find operative in all other cases, and which teaches universally, that nothing good and profitable can be safely and successfully implanted, until what is evil and unprofitable be first plucked up and cleared away. Thus, for instance, a wise husbandman would never think of sowing good seed in his ground until he had first cleared it of all hurtful and choking weeds. A wise and prudent

shepherd, in like manner, would hardly be persuaded to inclose his sheep in the same fold with wolves, but would first drive out the wolves, and then he would know he might safely introduce the sheep. The case is exactly similar in regard to the heavenly, innocent, clean, and profitable graces and virtues, intended to be implanted in all human souls by the spirit of the GREAT REDEEMER. The opposite vices and follies therefore must first be rooted out by sincere repentance, otherwise the heavenly seed *falls among thorns and is choaked*; the sheep and lambs of the heavenly fold are introduced amongst wolves, and *the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep*.

And is not this the true reason why, notwithstanding the good things of the everlasting Gospel are so abundantly dispensed, yet comparatively they are received to so little profit in the hearts and lives of mankind? Is not the reason, I say, this? We receive the seed in uncultivated ground, covered with briars, thorns, and thistles, which choak the seed as fast as it begins to grow. We introduce the sheep amongst wolves, instead of first driving the wolves out of the fold, and then inclosing the sheep. In other words, and to speak without a metaphor, we are not, it is to be feared, so careful as we ought to be, to separate from our hearts all evil and vain affections, that so the spirit



and truth of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST may live and grow in us. We suffer the love of this world and of ourselves, the spirit of pride and covetousness, the spirit of envy and malice, the spirit of vain-glory and false joy to remain in full vigour, so that the heavenly graces of humility, meekness, charity, contentment, and true joy, like sheep among wolves, are in danger of being destroyed.

To this purpose it is written in the prophet, "*Your iniquities have separated between you and your GOD, and your sins have withheld good things from you;*" in which words it is plainly declared, that the true cause of the *separation* between GOD and man, and of the consequent *hiding* of GOD's *good things* from man, is iniquity and sin. It is plainly declared, therefore, that whosoever wishes to attain to a blessed conjunction with GOD, and to a consequent participation of His *good things*, must begin his work with the putting away of sin and iniquity.

JESUS CHRIST teacheth to the same purpose when He saith, *How can any one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house?* by which words we are further taught, that before JESUS CHRIST can enter and establish His kingdom fully in us, the *strong man* of sin, that is, of the sinful, selfish, vain, and worldly

affections and concupiscencies, must be bound and cast out by a deep and sincere repentance.

Would we then, Beloved, become true worshippers of the great and merciful **JEHOVAH**, whose name is **JESUS CHRIST**, and find in our own hearts the saving and ever-blessed manifestations of His kingdom, power, and presence, as a **REDEEMER** and **REGENERATOR**, forming in us His own Heaven of peace, and light, and love? Then let it be our first care and study to put away other gods; to search out and renounce in ourselves all vain, evil affections, of selfish, worldly, and carnal love; all false imaginations, all sinful and unprofitable habits and courses of life and conversation. If we are sincere in this work, looking unto **JESUS**, and labouring to make our hearts clean habitations of His holy love, and of charity towards our neighbour, then we may have a sure hope and confidence, that He will come unto us, and delight in us, and shew us mercy; and finally, every act of repentance and self-denial, we shall find, will bring us nearer to **GOD**, and open our hearts more to the life of **GOD** and Heaven, which is love and charity; and if we continue in this blessed way, we may then rest assured that **GOD** will form and establish in us the kingdom of His unutterable peace, rest, and blessedness.

# SERMON XXII.

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EXOD. XX. 3.

*Thou shalt have no other gods before ME.*

**T**HESE words, in the original tongue, are written thus, *Thou shalt have no other gods before MY FACES.*

I have already, in some former discourses, endeavoured to shew what is here meant by *having other gods*, together with the true ground and reason of the prohibition, *Thou shalt have no other gods.* May I now bespeak your attention to the concluding words of my text, according to their true original sense and meaning, *Thou shalt have no other gods BEFORE MY FACES.*

There is a wisdom and a mystery also in this expression, *before MY faces*, which none can see but the serious and the attentive, and which nevertheless is of the utmost importance to be well considered and understood.

We find frequent mention made in Holy Scripture, of the *face* or *countenance* of the GREAT JEHOVAH. Thus He is said to *lift up the light of His*

*countenance* upon the righteous, but to *hide His face* from the wicked; thus, too, we find it represented as the greatest curse, or misery, not to behold the face of GOD; but as the greatest blessing and happiness to behold it. Hence we are so frequently exhorted to *seek the face of the LORD*, “*Seek ye, saith He, MY face;*” and hence the sum and substance of all blessing was supposed to be contained in this holy prayer, “*The LORD make His FACE to shine upon thee.*”

In the words of my text, it is remarkable, that it is not said, *before MY face*, as if JEHOVAH had only *one* face, but *before MY faces*, as if He had *many*. The true ground and reason of this mode of expression is also worthy of our most serious attention, as containing a mystery of holy wisdom highly edifying and interesting to all who wish to know GOD and to be blessed by Him.

The mystery appears to be this. JEHOVAH in Himself is unchangeable, and His *face* is ever one and the same, being a face of mercy, of blessing, of peace and comfort to all who seek and love Him; nevertheless this unchangeable, this uniform, this blessed *face* of JEHOVAH GOD appears changeable and variable as viewed by His creatures, differing in its aspect according to the different apprehensions of those that behold it, and in this sense the Holy Scriptures speak of His *faces* as being many and various.

I could greatly wish to engage your present attention to this weighty truth, because of its tendency both to open our eyes to a clearer and more edifying knowledge of **GOD** and of ourselves, and also to unfold to us, in a more convincing power and fulness, the purport of that first and great commandment of which we are treating.

It is a truth equally certain and consolatory, that the **GREAT** and **HOLY GOD** is ever disposed to unveil Himself, in all the lustre and beauty of His countenance, to all the human race, for their blessing, their light, their guidance, and everlasting protection. But it is a truth equally certain and mortifying, that all mankind do not see this *face* of the **BLESSED GOD** as it really is, and according to its divine purposes, but with a variety and difference according to their own purposes. This circumstance is owing, not to any changeableness in **JEHOVAH** Himself, but to the different ideas and apprehensions of men of different minds, just as the sun, we find, which is always the same, has a different appearance according to the different states of the eye by which he is seen, or of the different states of the air and atmosphere through which his rays pass.

Hence it is that good men, and wicked men, for example, they that fear **GOD**, and they that fear Him not, behold the divine face under such

remarkably contrary aspects. For all men see GOD under some image or other, inasmuch as all men, whether good or evil, have some idea or apprehension of GOD in their minds, and this is what we are to understand by *seeing* GOD. But the good, we know, see the *face of* GOD as a face of unspeakable mercy, blessing, peace, truth, loveliness, comfort, and protection; whereas the wicked, on the contrary, see the same face as a face of vengeance, of terror, of severity, of condemnation, and cruel judgment, according as it is written, "*With the pure Thou wilt show Thyself pure, and with the froward Thou wilt show Thyself froward.*" (Psalm xviii. 26.)

How plain is it from this instance, that when the face of GOD appears to change, it is owing to a change in the ideas and apprehensions of those that behold it, whilst GOD in Himself has but one and the same unchangeable face to all His creatures!

And what a lesson of important instruction is presented to our view from this consideration! For if all our blessedness or misery, both in time and in eternity, will depend upon the appearance of the face of GOD towards us; and if the face of GOD thus changes towards us according to our different ideas and apprehensions of Him; and if our ideas and apprehensions of GOD are variable according to the state of our hearts and lives, that is, of our love and affections, whether they be right with

**GOD**, and purified according to His commandments, through repentance, obedience, the love of Him and of our neighbour; or be wrong with **GOD**, being impure and defiled through the evil love of ourselves, of the world, and of the flesh, whilst we continue to live impenitent and disobedient—if all this, I say, be so, then who does not here discern the most awful and cogent reasons to attend most carefully to the daily state of His heart, His love, and affections, on which the appearance of the face of **GOD**, and His own consequent eternal blessedness, must altogether depend?

And who does not further discover from this consideration, an additional weight, and clearness, and power, in these words of the holy commandment, *Thou shalt have no other gods before MY faces?* For to *have other gods*, we have already shewn, is to love any thing, to trust to any thing, to take delight in any thing, to set our desires and affections upon any thing, as an end of life, more than on the **GREAT ALMIGHTY JEHOVAH**, our **CREATOR**, **REDEEMER**, and **REGENERATOR**, and the things of His invisible kingdom.

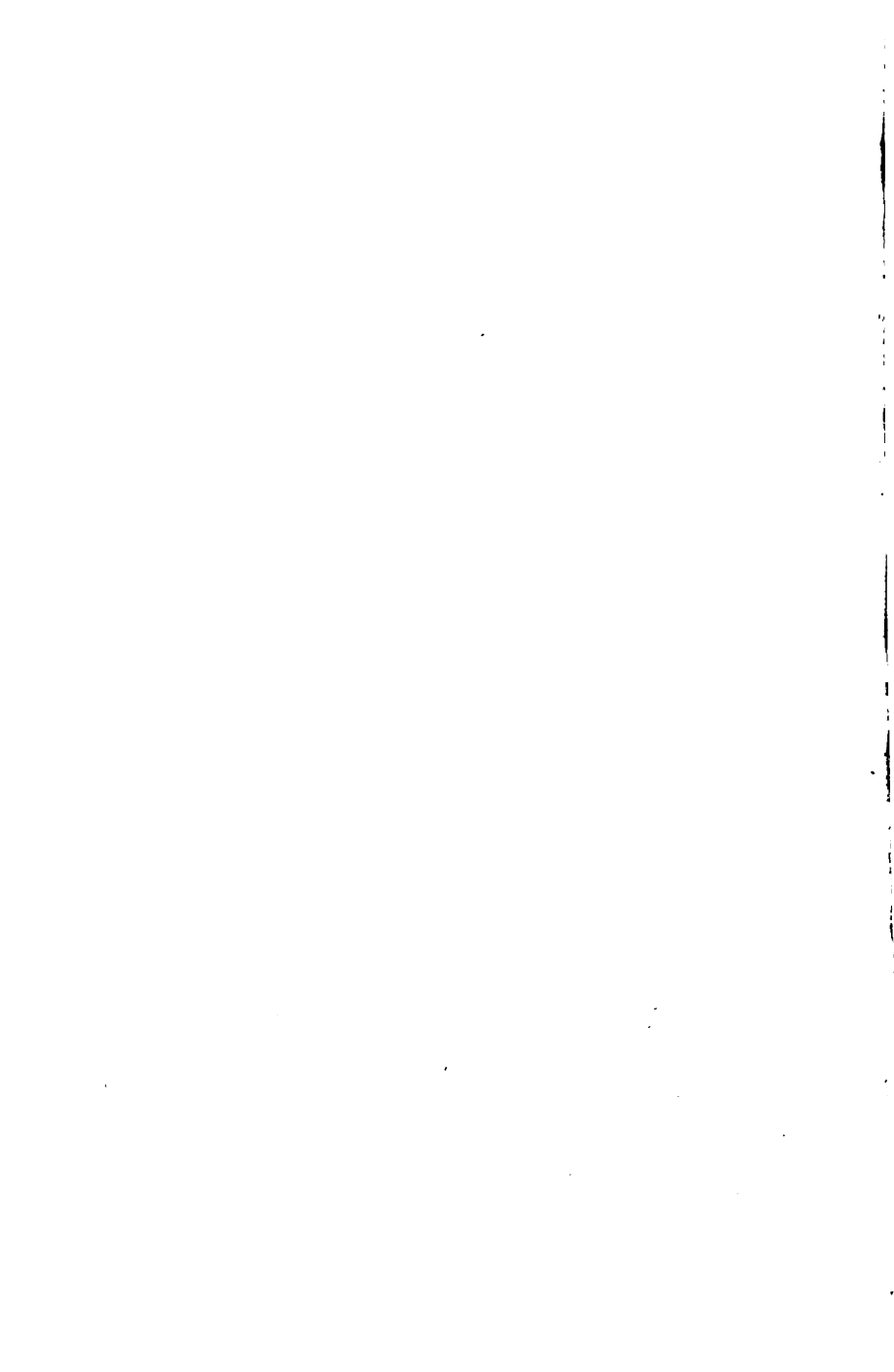
But why are we thus required to put away *other gods from before the faces of JEHOVAH?* The answer is plain, and the reason in which it is grounded is most edifying and important. It is because all *other gods* stand before *the faces of JEHOVAH*,

and hide the brightness and blessedness of His face from shining upon us: It is because every evil desire, every wrong affection, every false imagination, every perverse working and tendency of our hearts, is as a dark veil or cloud interposing itself between us and the glory of that countenance, from whence alone all light, and life, and peace, and comfort, can come unto us. It is because every known sin and sinful affection hath this dreadful consequence, to hide the face of the divine mercy from the soul, and make that appear *terrible* which otherwise would be most pleasant, most comfortable, and delightful to behold. For sin is a distorted thing, and therefore it distorts whatsoever it approaches and beholds. It sees this world as **ALL**, and **GOD** comparatively as nothing. It magnifies temporal things beyond their due size, and diminishes eternal things in the same proportion. In short, it is a corrupt and defiled medium, through which the blessed face of **GOD** cannot be seen as *it is*, but is seen as it *is not*.

Would we then behold the face of **GOD** unclouded, and as it really is? we must put away from us that distorted thing. We must remove these dark images of earthly and corrupt appearances, and then the brightness and comfort of the unutterable mercy of the **MOST HIGH** will begin to dawn upon and enlighten us. We must remember where it is written, “ *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they*



“ *shall see GOD:*” And if we wish to attain to this blessedness: If we wish no longer to behold the face of GOD as an angry, severe, avenging, and condemning GOD: If we wish to arise out of that dark region, which misrepresents the realities of things, and ascend unto those lightsome and chearful regions of day, where we may see things as they are, and behold *the face of JEHOVAH* as He is, shining with inexpressible mercy, and love, and truth, and peace upon us, like the sun in his strength: If we wish, I say, to be partakers of all this blessedness, we must then be wise and diligent in our endeavours to become *pure in heart*: We must put away from us all filthiness of flesh and spirit: We must destroy all the idols and *strange gods* which self-love, the love of the world, or the lusts of the flesh have set up in our affections: We must watch and pray that heavenly love, which is love towards the LORD and our neighbour, may ever have the ascendancy and upper place in our souls: Thus will all those veils be rent, and those thick clouds dispersed, which are interposed between us and the face of JESUS CHRIST; and then, to our everlasting comfort, the face of JESUS CHRIST will soon arise and be lifted up on our humble, penitent, and obedient minds, convincing us experimentally of the infinite blessedness contained in the holy prayer, where it is said, *Shew the light of THY countenance and I shall be whole.* AMEN.



## SERMON XXIII.

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Exod. xx. 4.

*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.*

**H**AVING already endeavoured to point out the instruction of heavenly mercy designed for us in the first commandment, *Thou shalt have no other gods before My faces*, I shall now proceed to lay before you a further lesson of the same unutterable mercy and truth, intended for our everlasting blessing and comfort, as it is contained in these words of my text, “*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,*” &c.

In these words, as in those of the former commandment, there is contained a double or two-fold sense, the one called natural, and adapted to the natural man, the other called spiritual, and adapted to the spiritual man.

According to the natural sense of these words, it is forbidden to make images of gold, or silver, or

brass, or wood, or stone, expressing the likeness of things in Heaven, or earth, or the sea, with a view to worship them as gods.

There is no need, however, Beloved, for me to dwell on this sense of the commandment, or to give you any caution respecting it, for we are all, I am persuaded, too much enlightened with the light of natural truth, not to see the folly and weakness of such idolatry and outward image worship.

Would to GOD we were all equally enlightened, and that all caution were equally useless, in respect to the spiritual sense of this commandment! but on this occasion, it is to be feared, that many err through inadvertence, in not considering the right purport and meaning of the prohibition here given; it is to be feared, therefore, that many make to themselves *graven images, and likenesses of things that are in Heaven, and that are in the earth, and that are in the water under the earth, bowing down to them and worshipping them*, whilst they are not aware of being guilty of any such abomination. A word of caution therefore to such may be needful and profitable, as well as a word of instruction touching the true spiritual sense of the commandment under consideration.

And 1st. It deserves well to be considered and understood, what *an image and a likeness* of any

thing is; for until this be clearly seen and apprehended, it will be impossible to see into the full import and extensive reach of the law which prohibits the making of such *images* and *likenesses*, with intent to worship them.

Now *an image* and *a likeness* of any thing, it is well to be noted, is somewhat which hath no real life or living principle in itself, and yet is so constructed and made, as to represent that which hath in it life, or a living principle.

Thus an image of wood or stone, made by man, after the likeness of any thing in Heaven, or in earth, or in the sea, is without all life or living principle in itself, and yet is so contrived as to resemble or represent somewhat which hath life or a living principle in it. It deserves further to be noted, that as man hath the power to make to himself such outward material *images* or *likenesses* of things which are yet without life, so hath he the power also to make to himself inward and spiritual images and likenesses of things in his own mind which may yet be without life. As for example. Man hath a power of thought and imagination, (and it is a power, alas! which too many at this day apply to their own great injury)—Man, I say, hath a power of thought and imagination, whereby he can *frame to himself* devices, conceptions, opinions concerning GOD, the divine opera-

tion, and the divine kingdom. Thus he can make to himself, by the activity and artifice of his own mind, *images* and *likenesses* of GOD, and *images* and *likenesses* also of the things of GOD. But if these *images* and *likenesses*, thus made by himself, be made merely *from* himself, that is to say, if they be the mere workmanship of his own intellect, unassisted and unenlightened by the Word or Spirit of GOD, they are in this case *dead* images and likenesses, having in them no life or living principle from above; they partake of all the man's corruptions and defilements; and therefore are those very images and likenesses which GOD forbids to be made, when He says, "*Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image,*" &c.

So again. Man hath the power, not only in his imagination and thought, but also in his words and in his actions, to make to himself *images* and *likenesses* of holy things, which yet may be without life. Thus he may talk or discourse much of holy things, he may make long prayers, he may assume appearances and postures of devotion, he may do many outward works of charity, and yet in all these *images* and *likenesses*, it is possible, there may be no life; because it is possible he may do these things in and by *his own* spirit, and not in humiliation under the influence of the spirit of love and wisdom from the LORD of Heaven; and where the spirit

of love and wisdom from the **LORD JESUS CHRIST** is not, and doth not operate, there can be no life; there all is death; there, whatever be the external form, image, or likeness, it is a mere inanimate creature, the work of men's hands, and not of **GOD'S**.

The grand question therefore that concerns us in all our words and works, which have a semblance of holiness, is this, Are they done from and by ourselves merely, or are they done from and in agreement with a power which is above ourselves? Are they the workmanship of our own hands only, or do we confess therein and show forth a divine operation? In short, are they dead *images* and *likenesses*, made to appear fair and beautiful before men and ourselves, or are they *living images* and *likenesses*, having in them life from the **MOST HIGH**, and thus really appearing fair and beautiful in His sight, and in the sight of His holy angels?

But 2ndly. As man hath the power to make to himself forbidden spiritual images and likenesses of things *that are in Heaven*, so he hath the power also to make unto himself forbidden spiritual images and likenesses of *things that are in earth*, and of *things that are in the waters under the earth*.

These forbidden images and likenesses of *things that are in the earth*, and in *the waters under the earth*, are all such semblances and appearances of

virtue, goodness, and charity, in the outward man, or in our outward behaviour one towards another, as are void of an inward principle of real love, and charity, and goodness from the LORD.

For every man, we find, whether he be really good, and sincere, and charitable at heart, or not, is yet desirous to pass for good, and sincere, and charitable amongst men, and in the sight of his fellow-creatures. For this purpose he assumes an external form or *image* of goodness, sincerity, and charity, in his outward conduct and behaviour, which is what in the world is called civility, courtesy, and good-breeding; and so far there is no harm, if so be he is only careful that his inward spirit be fashioned according to the likeness of his outward man, that is, that he be really such within, from the LORD, as he would appear to be without before men; otherwise he is a deluder, he is a hypocrite, he is a maker of *graven images and likenesses of things that are in the earth, and of things that are in the waters under the earth*; he is heaping to himself carcasses that have no life in them; he is building *painted sepulchres full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness*; and howsoever he may impose upon men by fair appearances of virtue, sincerity, charity, and other graces, yet in the sight of GOD and His angels he will be seen only as a deceitful hypocrite, the maker and profane wor-



shipper of *images* and *likenesses*, void of life, of spirit, of power, and of reality.

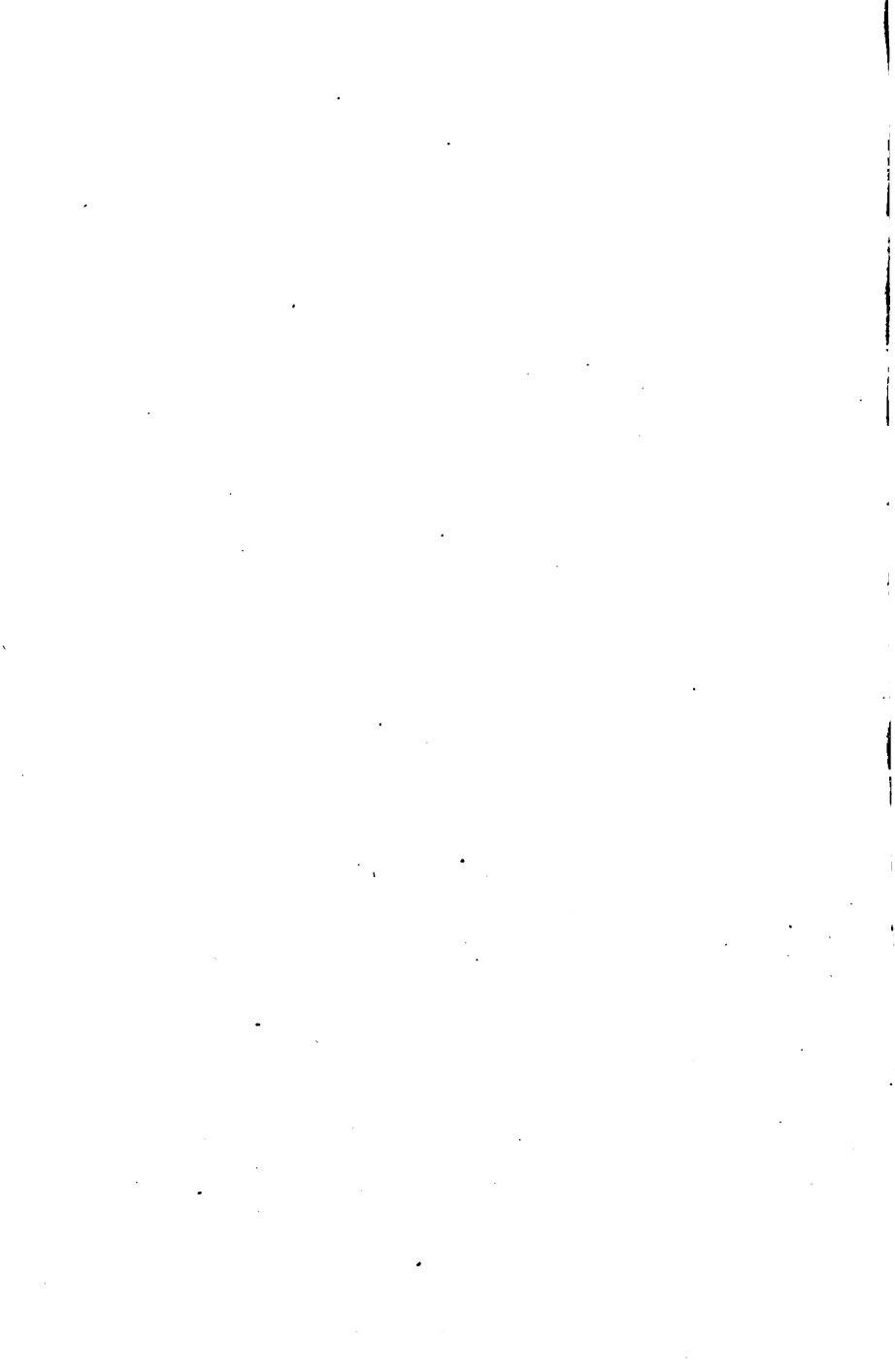
From the words of the commandment then, thus explained, let us all learn, Beloved, this important lesson of spiritual caution and conduct, designed for us, by the infinite mercy and wisdom of our GOD, viz. to take good heed how we make to ourselves such *dead images* and *likenesses* of any thing that is in *Heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth*; inasmuch as such *image-making* and *image-worship* is highly offensive in the sight of GOD, at the same time that it is utterly destructive of our spiritual interests, by separating our hearts and lives from the life, and blessing, and health, and strength, of the love and mercy of GOD.

It was a weighty command, which the LORD gave unto Moses, respecting the building of the tabernacle and its appurtenances, “*Look, saith He, that thou make them after their pattern that was shewed thee on the mount.*” Let this be our rule in building up in ourselves the heavenly tabernacle to be the abode and resting-place of our GOD. Let us take heed that we make all things *after the pattern that is shewed us on the mount*, viz. on the mount of the divine mercy, love, and charity, in our inner man. For this purpose let us consult daily this *pattern*, by a holy intercourse and communica-

tion with our GOD in prayer and meditation. Let us then labour to bring down this *pattern* into things below, that they also may be formed and fashioned thereby, and animated by the same heavenly and blessed spirit. Let our doctrines, and opinions, and knowledges in things appertaining to GOD, feel and be made sensible of the life-giving power of this spirit, otherwise they will be *dead images*. Let our prayers and devotions, our acts and forms of worship, partake of the same spirit, lest they also prove lifeless and unprofitable *likenesses*. And in our ordinary intercourses one amongst another, in *these things that are in the earth*, let us watch well to practise the same heavenly rule, that our civilities and appearances of sincerity in the outward man may not be without life and reality in the inward man; but that a like divine principle of love, mercy, and unfeigned good-will towards men, from the LIVING LORD, may animate all, may bless all, and form all things *without* according to its heavenly image and likeness *within*.

Then shall we no longer deceive ourselves, and be deceived, and mock our GOD, and separate our hearts from His mercy, by making and worshipping vain and lifeless *images*, the works of our own hands; but having our inner and outer man ever open to the holy influences of life and love, of mercy and truth, from JESUS CHRIST, we shall be

in all things, both inwardly and outwardly, formed by Him after this heavenly image ; we shall thus in all things have conjunction and communication with Him : There will be no division, no separation, no disunion between our hearts, our thoughts, our words, and works : All will be in unity, all in harmony, all in peace, because all will be comprehended in JESUS CHRIST and His holy Spirit, and all knit together in Him as *His image and likeness* ; and thus we shall be His workmanship, and *worship Him in spirit and truth*, to our unutterable blessing, comfort, and salvation. AMEN.



## SERMON XXIV.

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Exod. xx. 5.

*Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them,  
nor serve them.*

**H**AVING endeavoured to show, in a former discourse, what we are to understand by *making to ourselves graven images, or the likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth*, I shall now proceed to shew the further heavenly instruction designed for us in these words, “*Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.*”

It is remarkable, that two terms of prohibition are here applied by the **ALMIGHTY**, to prevent our polluting ourselves with the dead *images and likenesses* which are the creatures of our own imaginations. One term is *bowing down*; the other is *serving*; *thou shalt not BOW DOWN thyself to them, nor SERVE them*. It may appear, perhaps, at first sight, as if each expression had the same meaning, and is only a repetition of the same thing. But permit me to observe, that in the Word of the **MOST HIGH** no such vain repetitions are ever

used, but every expression has a distinct meaning peculiar to itself, and grounded in the distinct and particular principle of life to which it refers. Now the two peculiar and distinct principles of life in GOD are His DIVINE LOVE and DIVINE WISDOM; and in man, they are his *will* and his *understanding*, because the *will* of man was created to receive the DIVINE LOVE, and his understanding to receive the DIVINE WISDOM. Whenssoever then two expressions occur in the Word of GOD which appear to have a similar meaning, such as *joy* and *gladness*, *nations* and *people*, *justice* and *judgment*, and many others of a similar kind, one has reference more to the divine love, and the other to the divine wisdom, or what is the same thing, one has reference more to the *will* of man, the other to his *understanding*.

Here then we may discover the deep ground and reason why the two expressions, *bowing down*, and *serving*, are applied in my text. For to bow down has relation to our *wills* and *affections*, and to *serve* hath relation to our *understandings* or *thoughts*: To *bow down* therefore to graven images and likenesses, is to give them an upper place in our wills and affections, and to *serve them* is to give them an upper place in our understandings and thoughts.

Let me bespeak, Beloved, your serious consideration to this edifying reflection, that we are ever *bowing down* to that object, whatever it is, which has the uppermost place in our *affections*, and we are ever *servng* that, whatever it is, which is uppermost in our *thoughts*. Our bodies, it may be, are *bowing down* before the **GOD OF HEAVEN**; our lips, it may be, are *servng* Him in prayer and praise; but if in the mean while somewhat else hath the *supreme* place in our affections and thoughts, then it must of necessity be that *that* somewhat else is the real object before which we *bow down* and which we *serve*.

*Bowing down*, therefore, and *servng*, are acts which relate not to our bodies only, but to our spirits; if then we would know before what we are really bowing down, and what we are really serving, we should examine not only the postures, and gestures, and expressions of our outward or bodily man, but the state, that is, the real affection and thought of our inner or spiritual man.

For it may be, and it is to be feared it frequently happens, that in this instance the outward or bodily man, and the inward or spiritual man, are mightily at variance. The outward or bodily man, for example, may be bowed down before the throne of Heaven; he may be talking of heavenly things; he may be using heavenly expres-

sions ; he may be singing the praises of the heavenly King ; he may be supplicating His mercy and protection ; he may be doing these and many other such like acts of heavenly worship and adoration ; whilst in the mean time the inward or spiritual man is engaged in a worship totally different, bowing down and serving in reality and truth, that is, with its uppermost affections and thoughts, the creatures of its own imagination, the graven images and likenesses, fashioned by its own corrupt lusts and concupiscencies, which are totally destitute of life, and without GOD.

From this explanation, then, of the true sense of these expressions, to *bow down to*, and to *serve*, it may plainly appear why the GOD OF MERCY hath forbidden us, whom He wisheth to make His beloved children, to *bow down to, and to serve graven images and likenesses*; for by such *graven images and likenesses*, it has been already seen, are meant all such outward forms of things as are destitute of the life, and light, and power of the divine mercy, love, and charity, of the LORD JESUS CHRIST in us. These, it was shewn, may be *things in Heaven*, as when, in our worship of GOD, we make semblances of holy things without life ; or they may be *things on earth*, as when, in our dealings and intercourses with one-another, we make semblances, and put on appearances of good-will and



justice, and sincerity, and uprightness, and other virtues, which have no reality and life; or they may be *things in the water under the earth*, as when in things of a still subordinate and inferior nature, we lose sight of the Great ALMIGHTY FATHER of the universe, and separate any thing from its connection with Him, and thus leave it without life.

Who now amongst us, if his eyes be at all enlightened from above, cannot here see a plain reason why the GOD OF INFINITE MERCY forbids all His children to *bow down to*, and *serve* such dead images and likenesses?

For who cannot see, that if such images and likenesses get an uppermost place in the affections and thoughts, they must then, of necessity, separate between the soul and the essential life and mercy of GOD? They must, of consequence, leave the soul in a state of spiritual death and darkness as to all true life and light. It may indeed have a semblance of life; it may assume an appearance of love towards GOD and towards its neighbour; it may thus, like Satan, *transform itself into an angel of light*. But if all this be but semblance and outward shew; if it be but a *graven image and likeness* fashioned by its own hands, without GOD, and without His essential life; how plain is it to see that such an image and likeness is the soul's de-

struction, by cutting off its communication with the grace and saving mercy of GOD!

Far otherwise is it with those wise and pious Christians who are careful to observe their **HEAVENLY FATHER'S** commandments, and not *bow down to, or serve such graven images and likenesses*. For all such are watchful to remove from themselves every false and dead form, whether of *things in Heaven, or things on earth, or things in the water under the earth*, which is without the life of the love of GOD. Such therefore, through grace, keep open continually the communication between Heaven and themselves. Abiding in **JESUS CHRIST** as their chief, and supreme, and sovereign good, they love Him above all things, and they know that they love Him above all things, because their chief delight is in Him and the keeping His commandments, and the looking for the things of His kingdom. By virtue of this conjunction with **JESUS CHRIST** they are enabled also to love their neighbour as themselves, and this love of their neighbour is not mere outward civility only, or the deportment of the external man, the form of civil courtesy, grounded merely in the laws of human establishment. No; it is something more, something infinitely surpassing in solidity, in reality, and in power, all the appearances of human refinement; for it is a living, substantial, operative good-will,

grounded in the tender mercy of **JESUS CHRIST**, which loveth *not in word and in tongue only, but in deed and in truth*; which is not subject to the variations of humour, or prejudice, or caprice, but is steady and stedfast as the love of **GOD**, in pursuing and promoting, as far as possible, its neighbour's real good and well-being.

Oh that there was in us all such an excellent spirit as this! Oh that the love and the mercy of **GOD** were but thus experienced by us and operative in us! This, however, can never be, till we cease to *make and bow down to, and serve our graven images and likenesses* of things without life. Oh then, if we wish to know and to taste the dear mercy, and love, and life of **GOD**, with all the inexpressible joys and delights thereof, let us search out and put away from us all such images and likenesses; let us *bow down to, and serve, in unfeigned humiliation, the GOD OF HEAVEN, that is, the GOD of love, the GOD of charity, the GOD of eternal life*; and let us rest assured, that whensoever He seeth us thus humbling ourselves before Him, He will then arise and have mercy upon us, and He will communicate to us of His tender love, and will enable us thus to love Him, and to love one-another, and we shall thus experience, in our own bosoms, and to our everlasting comfort, the accomplishment of those words of the

Psalmist, "*Let GOD arise, and let His enemies be scattered,*" &c. and we shall know, of a surety, that this is salvation, the dawning of Heaven and everlasting joy. AMEN.

# SERMON XXV.

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Exod. xx. 5.

*For I the LORD THY GOD am a jealous GOD.*

**T**HE MERCIFUL LORD, having endeavoured to call His people to the knowledge and love of Himself, by forbidding them to worship other gods, and to make any *graven images or likenesses*, now proceeds to unfold to them the ground and reason of these His gracious commandments.

The first of these grounds or reasons is contained in the words of my text, "*For I the LORD THY GOD am a jealous GOD.*" In these words the LORD openeth the reasonableness and expediency of His commandments, from the consideration of His own nature, as being a *jealous GOD*, or as it might more properly be expressed, a *zealous GOD*.

Now as this consideration, if well attended to, would be found the most effectual of all others to bind us to a pure and entire obedience to the holy commands of our GOD, and thus to lead us to all the peace and comforts arising from the knowledge

and love of **GOD**, may I earnestly bespeak your most serious attention, whilst I endeavour to explain to you the nature and effects of the divine *jealousy*, or *zeal*, that so we may understand the full force and design of these blessed words, “ I “ *the LORD THY GOD am a jealous GOD.*”

**GOD** calleth Himself *jealous*, or *zealous*, by reason of His great and tender love to the souls of men, or the exceeding ardent desire which He hath to turn all men unto Himself, that He may deliver them from all evil, and bless them with all the blessings of His own essential mercy, goodness, and truth.

We have no words to express, nor even thought to conceive, this intense love and divine parental regard of our **HEAVENLY FATHER** towards us. It infinitely surpasseth all human idea or comprehension. The tender affection with which **GOD** regardeth every human soul; His disposition to bless it, to redeem it from misery, to gather it unto Himself, to communicate to it all the blessings of His own kingdom, and to make it thus eternally happy in and with Himself; this love of the merciful **GOD**, I say, is such, that had we but the smallest sense of it in our minds, we should want no other motive to the practice of every kind and degree of evangelical virtue. It would be enough for us to know that **GOD** was *jealous* over us, and

that in His *jealousy* He was infinitely delighted with our progress in the ways of holiness.

Here then, if our hearts be opened at all to feel, or our eyes to see this marvellous love of our GOD, we shall then be enabled to discern for what reason He calleth Himself a *jealous* GOD, and what must be the nature and necessary effect of such *jealousy*.

For *jealousy*, when applied to man, is a word denoting fear and apprehension, lest he should not be loved again, or should not meet with a return of love from the person he loves. It is a word also denoting enmity or animosity against those persons or things which are the means of preventing such a return of love.

Now though *jealousy*, in this sense, cannot be applied to the GREAT and GLORIOUS GOD, inasmuch as there cannot be in Him either fear or animosity, yet in this respect it may be applied, as denoting His earnest desire to be beloved again by us, or to meet with a return of love; and as denoting further, His opposition to those things which would prevent such a return of love on our parts.

Let us consider the nature and effect of the divine *jealousy* in these two respects; and first, as desiring a return of love on our parts.

The end and design of GOD's love, it must be plain, is to make us happy: He loveth us for our own sakes, that is, that He may bless us, and bring us to an eternity of rest and peace: This purpose, however, cannot be effected till we love GOD in return, or on our parts, because all our blessedness and happiness must depend altogether upon our conjunction with GOD in love, which conjunction cannot be accomplished unless the love be *reciprocal*, as in the case of human friendship, it is necessary, we know, that each friend shall *mutually* love the other, before they can be united in its blessed and endearing bond.

If then we love ourselves, the world, or the flesh, more than GOD, we are so far incapable of entering into that rest and peace which He designeth for us. GOD, therefore, out of His exceeding great and tender love towards us, must, of necessity, earnestly desire a return of love from us, without which return His love cannot profit us; and therefore the GREAT REDEEMER saith, *Abide in ME, and I in you*; intimating, that before we can expect the infinite honour and happiness to be derived from His *abiding in us*, we must, on our part, *abide in Him*, by an act of mutual or reciprocal affection of faith and love: This, then, is the first respect in which GOD is fitly called a *jealous* GOD.



But He is jealous also in regard to His opposition to those things which would prevent such a return of love on our parts.

These things are the love of ourselves, the love of the world, and the flesh, which loves, when they gain dominion, make the desires cool towards GOD; for they who love themselves, or the things of this world, and the flesh, more than GOD, cannot possibly love GOD as He wisheth to be beloved by them, because they cannot love Him so as to find their chiefest and truest delight in Him. GOD, therefore, is in opposition to such disorderly love; He setteth Himself ever against it to root it out and destroy it; this is a necessary consequence of His unutterable love to man, whom He wanteth to replenish with the love of Himself.

Let us stop awhile to ponder and adore this second character of the divine jealousy, because it is for want of considering it aright that the deep counsels of the divine love are so little, in general, noticed and attended to by us, and have so little effect upon our hearts and lives.

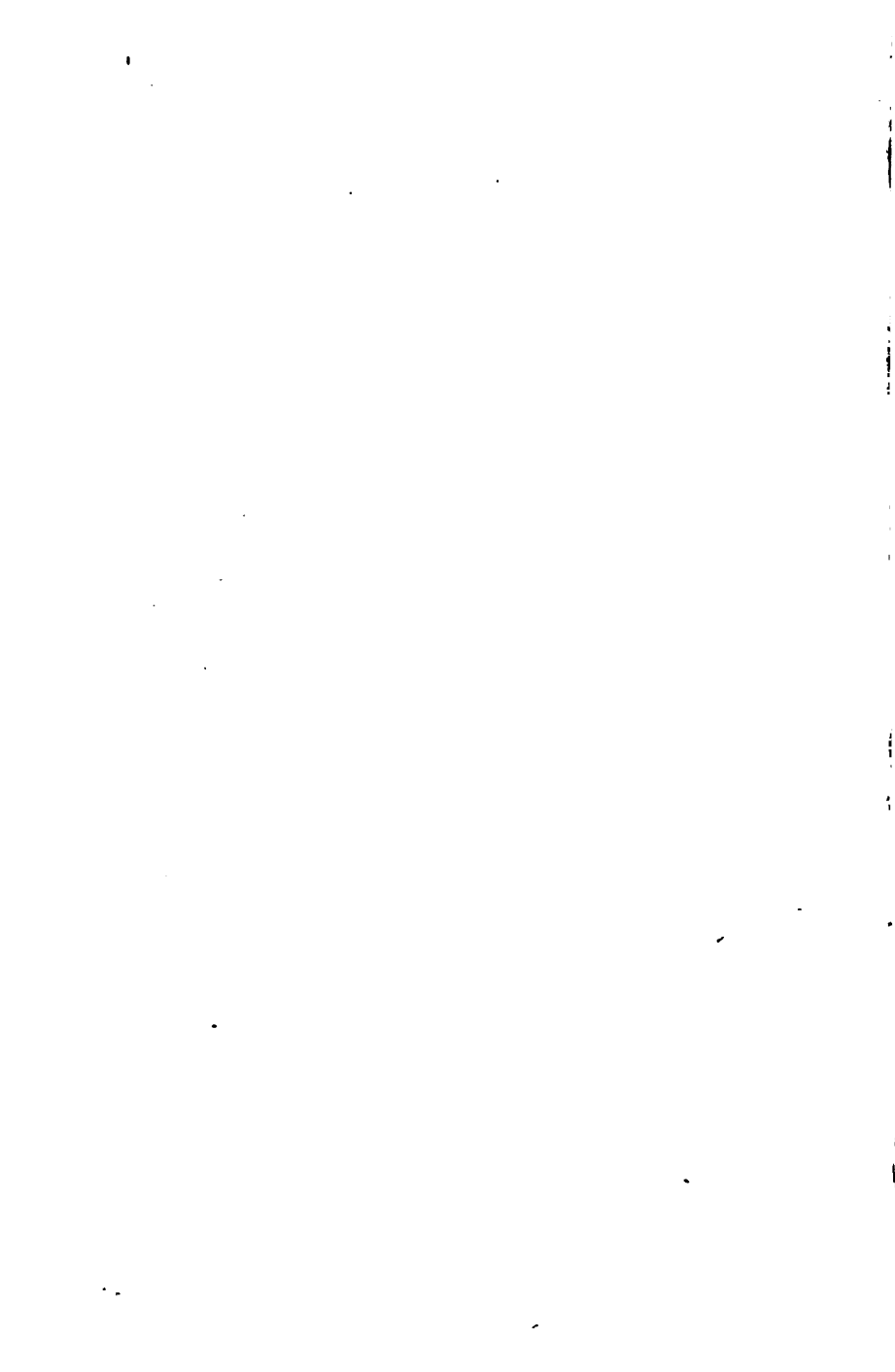
We fancy, alas! in our blindness and ignorance of the ways of GOD, that His favour is most towards us, and we are most in His love, when all temporal things go well with us, when prosperity smileth upon us, and we are sitting at ease in the

full enjoyment of ourselves and the things of this world, though at the same time it may be that our hearts are far from GOD, and we are loving ourselves, the world, and the flesh, more than GOD and the things of His kingdom.

In this state we are often made sensible of the blessed effects of the divine *jealousy*. GOD seeth our unhappy attachment to ourselves, the world, and the flesh, and out of His adorable love and mercy He setteth Himself to break and dissolve it. For this purpose He troubleth the waters of our temporal lives: He visiteth us with sundry afflictions, distresses, and disappointments, in order to unloose the bands of that base affection which held us captive, that so we may return into the bosom of His love. Who hath not experienced, at one time or other, these marks of the divine *jealousy*? For who hath not known trouble? Yet every trouble, under every variety of shape, is but a proof and an effect of that tender love of GOD which willeth to draw all souls unto Himself, and is for this purpose jealous over, and continually opposing those things that would draw us from Himself.

Oh! may we ever attend well to these blessed operations of the divine jealousy, under a sure conviction that they are the effects of the purest and most boundless love of GOD towards us! May we watch well over all those things that hinder our

return to GOD, and prevent our loving Him with a mutual love! These are the things of which GOD is *jealous*; these are the things therefore which GOD setteth Himself to oppose. Whensoever then we find ourselves disturbed in the possession of these things, let us not repine, let us not charge GOD foolishly, but rather let us learn to adore that jealous love, which will not be satisfied till we are blessed with the fulness of His own blessedness in the love of Himself. Thus shall we learn to see the hand of an infinite mercy in every dispensation of GOD towards us. We shall praise Him in our greatest troubles. We shall behold His *jealousy* ever at work to draw us unto Himself; and if we continue faithful and obedient to His drawing, we shall finally be drawn to Himself, and thereby to the possession of an eternal rest and peace, agreeable to His own blessed promise, where He saith, “*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto ME.*” (John xii. 32.) AMEN.



## SERMON XXVI.

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Exod. xx. 5.

*Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth [generation] of them that hate ME.*

**T**H**ES**E words, well considered, contain such an awful declaration of the nature and consequences of sin, that I am persuaded they only want our serious attention to make us all virtuous and holy. Did we but rightly ponder what is here said concerning *iniquity* and those that *hate* GOD, it would surely not be possible for any of us to defer a moment longer our deep repentance and sincere conversion to the FATHER of our being. We should, assuredly, all forsake our evil ways, and become lovers of the great and merciful GOD, and seek the treasures of His righteousness and the peace of His kingdom, if we would but once be at the pains to reflect on the mischiefs and miseries denounced in these words of truth on a contrary conduct. May I then bespeak your most serious attention whilst I endeavour to point out those mischiefs and miseries, that having our eyes ever

open to the fatal consequences of sin, we may be led to seek after GOD and His righteousness with a more steady and vigorous attachment! Before, however, we proceed further, it may be necessary to premise, that by *visiting*, or *visitation*, for *iniquity*, as applied to GOD in the words of my text, and in other parts of Holy Scripture, is meant the natural and necessary effect of sin, in that it bringeth its own punishment along with it, by separating the soul, sooner or later, from the grace and mercy of GOD. When the sinner thus incurreth the punishment of his sin, he is then said to be *visited* by GOD, because it appears to him as if the punishment came from GOD, when nevertheless it is not in the least from GOD, but is the unhappy consequence of his own *iniquity*, unrepented of, and unforsaken.

This then being premised, I shall now proceed to shew that there are two senses in which the words of the text may be understood, a natural sense and a spiritual sense, both of which are of the utmost importance to be well attended to and understood.

In a *natural* sense they regard the terrible effects of sin upon a man's children and posterity.

In a *spiritual* sense they regard the like effects on the sinner himself. Let us consider them in both

these senses, and first, as declaring the effects of sin upon a man's children or posterity.

It is a great Scripture truth, though, alas! little in general attended to, that every sinner, as to his spirit, is the exact form or image of his own unrighteousness, that is, of his own evil love and affections, and that he so appears in the sight of GOD and his angels, howsoever he may appear otherwise in the sight of men: as on the other hand, every good man is an exact form or image of his own goodness, that is, of his own righteous and godly love and affections.

This being the case, it must of necessity follow, that every sinner, or ungodly person, transmits to his children the form or image of his sin, that is, of his own evil affections, vicious inclinations, and bad habits, which he had acquired in himself by his own ungodly course of life and forgetfulness of GOD.

For every child is by nature the exact image of its parents, and cannot possibly be otherwise. Whatsoever evil affections therefore prevailed in the parents, and had acquired a form in them, these must of necessity be communicated to the child, and acquire a form in him likewise, which form must for ever remain unless it be changed by repentance and regeneration.

Here, however, let it be observed, that though children, as to their spirits, bear the form or image of their parents' sin, yet they do not bear its *guilt*, agreeable to those words of the prophet, "*The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father.*" (Ezek. xviii. 20.) For the *guilt* of sin cannot be transferred from one to another, although the inclination or disposition to sin may be transferred; inasmuch as the *guilt* of sin must depend upon every person's own life and conversation, and not upon the evil which he hath derived by birth from his parents. Nevertheless where children have received, by birth, from their parents, corrupt inclinations and evil affections, it must be plain to see they will have greater temptations to struggle with in the way of duty, which will render it more difficult for such children to *put off the old man*, and to be renewed in a righteous and holy spirit by regeneration.

And surely this consideration, were it well attended to, must have a powerful effect upon men's minds, and lead them seriously to reflect what manner of spirit they are of. To think that their evil inclinations will not be confined to themselves, but that they will descend to, and affect their children; to think that their children must feel the unhappy consequences of all their vices and bad habits, and that they are thus entailing additional



troubles and labours upon their posterity, by rendering it more difficult for their corrupt offspring to enter into the kingdom of Heaven; to think that all the forms of their iniquities thus remain, and are propagated to successive generations, causing accumulations of evil, and making repentance and régénération more difficult to be practised and attained—surely these considerations, seriously attended to, must exhibit sin in a light of dreadful deformity, and impress upon every mind an awful sense of the terrible nature and consequences of every iniquity, every evil habit, and ungodly affection, which are contrary to the truth and purity of GOD.

But the words of my text, in their *spiritual* sense, exhibit to us the terrible nature and consequences of sin in a further respect, not only as regarding a man's children, or posterity, but as regarding himself. This sense of the words however cannot be seen and understood until it be first known and well apprehended, that every sin, or sinful affection of the soul, is of a prolific or fruitful nature, by virtue whereof it produceth other sins, or sinful affections, as so many successive generations or posterities, all derived from a common father, and partaking of the father's evil nature and quality

As for example. If the sin or evil affection of self-love have dominion in the soul, and be in-

dulged, it presently becometh fruitful in divers other sins and sinful affections, such as pride, contempt of others, unreasonable aversions, animosities, hatreds, envyings, with a long catalogue of vices that no tongue can number; and these vices, again, are the parents of others, and so on to endless generations of vice, till the sinful soul becometh at last a monstrous form of innumerable evils, which had all their birth from one parent, viz. the evil affection of an inordinate self-love.

The like is true of the love of the world and of the flesh, when they prevail over the love of GOD and of our neighbour. In this case these inordinate loves, too, become the parents of divers other evil and corrupt affections: They are not barren and childless, but are fruitful and multiply exceedingly, producing a terrible diabolical offspring, generation after generation, of successive evil forms and affections, whereby the kingdom and power of iniquity is extended in the soul, and it becomes at length a monstrous image of ungodliness, according to its several proliferations and multiplications.

Beloved, let me beg your earnest attention to this circumstance relating to the fruitfulness, or proliferation of evil, because possibly you may never have attended to it before; and yet there is no consideration which can serve to impress upon the mind a more awful and alarming sense of the nature and consequences of sin than this.

Let it then be known and well considered, that if we live in wilful sin, that is, in forgetfulness of GOD and the things of His blessed kingdom, obeying only the evil love of ourselves, of this world, or the flesh; if we suffer sin thus to reign in us, without endeavouring to remove it from us by repentance, and by entering upon a course of regeneration, under and through the influences of the divine grace and holy mercy of the LORD; if this, I say, be our unhappy state, then our sin is ever becoming fruitful, and multiplying, and begetting in us new forms of evil affections without end, whereby the kingdom and power of Satan and the angels of darkness is extended and more established in us day by day. In this case we by degrees, and unawares, separate ourselves utterly from the benefits and blessings of the divine mercy, since it is the very nature and quality of all the forms of sin to reject the mercy and love of GOD, just as one opposite always rejects another. This is what is meant by GOD's *visitation*, and therefore let it be well considered and understood, that if we live in sin, or the indulgence of affections contrary to the love and purity of GOD; if we do not suffer the spirit of our lives to be renewed in the image of the blessed and holy spirit of GOD by regeneration; if we do not thus, by virtuous and heavenly habits of living, labour to acquire virtuous and heavenly forms of life and love in our spirits, in this case

we separate ourselves from the participations, blessednesses, and enjoyments of the divine mercy, love, grace, or kingdom of GOD ; the forms of evil daily increase and multiply in us ; these forms reject GOD more and more ; till at length, if we continue impenitent, the holy spirit of GOD can have no longer any access to us, by reason of our utter opposition to it, and then we are left, of necessity, to the punishment of our own evils ; or, in the language of inspired wisdom, *our house is left unto us desolate*, which desolation is called by the same wisdom, GOD's *visitation*, and consists in an eternal separation from the grace, and mercy, and kingdom of GOD.

That the *spiritual* sense of the commandment has thus relation to the multiplication and increase of the principles of evil, and of the persuasions of what is false, in the mind or spirit of the impenitent sinner, might appear plain to the intelligent Christian, from the peculiar manner in which the commandment is expressed in the original Hebrew. For it is remarkable, that no mention is there made of *generations*, and it is only said upon the *thirds* and *fourths*, that is to say, upon the *third* and *fourth sons*. The question then is, what is to be understood by the *third* and *fourth* sons? But as this question is too abstruse to be investigated before a mixed congregation, I must be content to

refer you, for its solution, to that enlightened expositor of the Sacred Scriptures, the Hon. EMANUEL SWEDENBORG, in his comment on the book of Exodus, where the humble and sincere searcher after truth will not fail to find a removal of all doubt and difficulty, together with a fuller illumination in the mysteries of the divine mercy and wisdom.

To conclude. If a nest of vipers or of scorpions were to multiply its poisonous brood in our bosoms, how should we tremble at the thought, and how should we use every effort to extirpate the venomous family!

But how is it that we do not comprehend that there is no viper so poisonous, no scorpion so venomous, as sin, that is to say, sinful affection! How is it therefore that we are, in general, so careless about the extirpation of this most dangerous, because most deadly of all reptiles! Alas! we suffer ourselves to be deluded by our *senses*, and like our first parents in Paradise, listening to the enchanting language of the *serpent*, we eat of the *forbidden fruit*, and incur the tremendous penalties denounced against this primary act of sin and disobedience.

But let our past follies be our present instructors, by teaching us how far we have wandered from the

paths of wisdom and peace. Let a vigorous repentance, and sincere conversion to GOD, open our eyes to discover at once both the cunning of the serpent by which he would deceive us, and the poison by which he would destroy us. Then shall we have nothing to fear from the multiplication of the serpentine brood in our bosoms, but on the contrary, we shall have every thing to hope, from the proliferation and increase of all those heavenly virtues of purity, peace, and innocence, which will accomplish in us the blessed prophecy, where it is written, "*The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den.*" (Isaiah xi. 8.)

AMEN.

# SERMON XXVII.

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Exod. xx. 6.

*And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love ME and keep MY commandments.*

**T**HERE are two points, of most important concern, which these words present to our consideration,

1st. *The mercy of GOD.*

2ndly. *Man's qualification to receive that mercy.*

May we all be led, by the spirit of the divine wisdom, to a right attention to, and serious apprehension of, these two important points! May every heart here present be made insensible, for a while, to lesser concerns, and gathering up all its affections unto GOD, may it be duly impressed with a sense of these interesting objects which more immediately affect its eternal peace!

And 1st. Let me bespeak your attention to the *mercy of GOD.*

I say your attention, because without attention, and an attention, too, grounded in a serious concern

about our eternal well-being, we shall never be able to discern or comprehend what the divine mercy is and means, because we shall neither have eyes to see, nor hearts to be affected by its heavenly nature and qualities. For though all things be full of this *mercy*; though it be nearer to us than every thing else besides; though its marks and characters are stamped deep on ourselves and on every thing around us; yet it is possible nevertheless it may escape our notice, so that we shall not discern the smallest traces of its divine virtues and excellencies. And all this blindness will come upon us, not because we had not faculties to see, nor yet because the divine mercy was out of the reach of our vision; but because our minds were so immersed in lesser concerns, and so seduced by the delusions of inferior goods, that we felt no interest in beholding even the bright beams of that love and glory by which alone we can be saved.

Yes, Beloved, to contemplate the *mercy* of GOD, and to be rightly affected by such contemplation, is a happiness which belongs only to the *children of GOD*, and can be tasted by none other.

For the children of this world have their delight merely in this world; their hearts, their treasures, their joys, are all here below, and therefore they cannot be elevated to see and comprehend the sweetness, perfection, and blessing of the divine



loving-kindness. But they whose hearts are turned from sin and the vanities of lower things, to seek the living GOD; they who are looking and labouring for eternal rest and peace in the FATHER of their being; these will be enabled, in a measure, to behold, and greatly to rejoice, in the gracious manifestations of the divine *mercy*. There are three distinct faces of this *mercy* and its operations, which will thus be presented more particularly to our view.

1st. The mercy of GOD, as displayed in the *creation* and *preservation* of the world and all its parts:

2ndly. The same mercy, as displayed in the *redemption* of the world: and

3rdly. As displayed in the great work of our *regeneration*.

And 1st. Whensoever our eyes are opened, by the spirit of serious attention, we shall immediately be enabled to discern, by the eye of faith, the mercy of GOD in all His marvellous operations of creation and preservation. For we shall see how the Heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and all things therein contained, came forth originally from this mercy, and are so many outward forms and patterns of its Omnipotence, standing as continual witnesses of its eternal power, and wisdom, and glory.

We shall be enlightened further to discern, how the same mercy is continually preserving the things that are made, or rather is continually creating them anew, since preservation is nothing but a perpetually new creation.

In the same view we shall regard ourselves, our bodies, our health, our properties, our joys, our comforts, as so many standing monuments of a mercy to which we owe every thing, and without which we should not only be destitute of existence, but also incapable of tasting a single gratification arising from the wonderful order of being established in this lower world. We shall discover, I say, that our very lives are nothing but a perpetual grant of the divine, unmerited mercy of the MOST HIGH, and are held perpetually by that most sacred tenure.

But it is not in the works of *creation* and *preservation* only that we shall thus perceive the bright beams of the mercy of GOD, for the spirit of serious attention will, secondly, make that mercy further manifest to us in the great work of our *redemption*.

And here, whensoever under divine influence we begin to reflect on the interesting subject, what stupendous contemplations will be presented to our view, and what an interest will be excited in those

contemplations! For we shall then clearly perceive how man was created originally to be the blessed habitation of the divine mercy: This was his Paradise of GOD, this was his garden of Eden: For whosoever receiveth the divine mercy in his inner man, and is formed in agreement with its virtues, he is truly in Paradise, he is really in that garden where all is blessed rest, and peace, and delight, and no sorrow or trouble is known.

But man, we learn, did not long continue in the tabernacle of happiness and innocence for which he was created. The reason was, he forsook his GOD and the blessedness of the participations of his mercy, to live unto himself in the pride, and vanity, and restlessness, and sin, of a worldly and fleshly life, which brought with it all the disorder and misery that have since converted the world into a miserable habitation of sin and sorrow.

Nevertheless the divine mercy did not forsake man, but was ever striving and labouring to bring him back again into its bosom. If then we are attentive observers, we shall rejoice in calling to remembrance these works of our heavenly, our compassionate FATHER. We shall see how Patriarchs and Prophets, in their several ages, were the ministers of Heaven, to call fallen man to repentance, that he might find again the life, and riches, and blessing of the mercy of his GOD. We shall per-

ceive how, when other methods proved ineffectual for this purpose, GOD Himself came down in the likeness of man, that He might restore man to the likeness of GOD. But what wonders of mercy are here opened to the view of the pious and believing! Thousands and ten thousands of holy souls were made converts to GOD by this wondrous act of His fatherly love. The powers of this world and the flesh were, for a while, overcome. The door of redeeming mercy was opened in JESUS CHRIST, and all who entered in were received in the arms of His fatherly compassion, and restored to the life, and joy, and peace of Paradise.

But the *mercy* of GOD did not end with accomplishing the great work of our *redemption*, for it is still manifested in the equally distinguished work of our *regeneration*, and if we continue our attention to this work, we shall be equally struck with its wonders and its virtues.

By the work of *regeneration* on GOD's part, I would be understood to mean, that divine and merciful power which He is continually exercising on the souls of all mankind, to turn them from sin and vanity unto Himself. By the work of regeneration, therefore, I would mean the separation and deliverance of man from the powers of evil and darkness, and at the same time, a blessed restoration to the righteousness, the order, the image, and the

peace of Heaven and its GOD. And who amongst us, let me ask, if he do but attend to what passes in his own mind, will not discover himself to be the perpetual subject of this divine, this merciful operation? For who has not, at times, found his mind drawn inwardly with delight towards GOD and the things of eternity? Who has not, at times, found a restlessness and weariness in the paths of sin, and in the highest gratifications of a mere worldly and fleshly life? Who has not experienced something within, reproving and troubling him when he does wrong, and encouraging and comforting him when he does right? And what shall we say is all this internal operation? By what name shall we call this inward Reprover, Monitor, and Comforter? Oh, let us be sure we give it its right name; let us be sure we confess it to be what it really is, the **ESSENTIAL MERCY OF GOD**. And when we have taught ourselves the blessed name; when we are well informed what is at work within us; oh then let us consider well the nature and the importance of its work; for it is no less than to restore us to Paradise; it is to deliver us from the vanity, and restlessness, and misery of a mere worldly and fleshly life; it is to rescue us from the dominion of the powers of darkness; it is to purge and purify us from the defilements of sin, which is the inordinate love of ourselves and of this world; it is thus to make us meet to be the habitations of the **DIVINE MERCY**;

it is thus to fashion us after the image of **GOD** ; it is thus to renew us in the life, and joy, and peace, of the kingdom of **Heaven** ; it is thus to enable us to love **GOD** above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves ; it is thus to restore us to **Paradise**, and rest, and light, and eternal blessedness in the bosom of **GOD**.

To conclude. I should now proceed to consider who they are that will be meet to receive this mercy, but the present time will only permit me to request you, as I do most earnestly, to join me in fervent prayer, that we may all be led, in humility and the true spirit of inward recollection, to ponder on the **DIVINE MERCY** ; to consider how near it is unto us ; to attend unto its warnings ; to hearken to its admonitions ; to rejoice in its consolations ; to contemplate the miseries from which it would rescue us, and the exceeding blessed rest, and peace, and purity, to which it would lead us. Then may we hope to become meet for its reception, and thus for the reception of **GOD**, and **Heaven**, and immortality, being enabled to sing, out of the depth of penitent and rejoicing hearts, "*Thy mercy, O **GOD**, endureth for ever, for Thou hast redeemed my life from destruction ; Thou hast crowned me with mercy and loving-kindness.*"

AMEN.

# SERMON XXVIII.

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Exod. xx. 6.

*And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that  
LOVE ME and KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.*

**I**N a former discourse on these words I endeavoured to shew what we are here to understand by the **DIVINE MERCY**, and how this mercy is the tenderness and compassion of the divine love, whereby the **GREAT ALMIGHTY** is continually inclined and urgent to bless and to save all His creatures from the defilements and miseries into which they had immersed themselves through sin. All blessing, therefore, and all salvation, are of the **DIVINE MERCY**. It is mercy alone which created man, and it is by mercy alone that man is redeemed and made regenerate. None therefore can possibly enter into the kingdom of Heaven but through the **DIVINE MERCY**, because it is the **DIVINE MERCY** alone which maketh Heaven. Without the **DIVINE MERCY** man is a mere lump of sin, of defilement, of death, and eternal misery; but being quickened, being purified, being enlivened, being blessed by the participations of the **MERCY OF GOD**, he becometh a vessel of honour

and of holiness, meet for the enjoyments of eternal life in the Paradise of GOD.

Such, then, being the nature of the **DIVINE MERCY**, it must surely be a matter of the utmost importance to us all to enquire how this mercy may be best received and secured by us. For it is well to be noted, and carefully attended to, that though the tender **MERCY OF GOD** is *over all His works*, and infinitely desirous to communicate itself as a spring of eternal life and blessing unto every soul of man, yet it doth not therefore follow, that every soul will receive the benefits of that mercy. There hath indeed prevailed, and there doth still prevail, it is to be feared, in many people's minds, an unhappy, delusive persuasion, that the **MERCY OF GOD** is capable of blessing and of saving them by some arbitrary power of its own, without previous preparation on their parts. Hence so great a carelessness and fatal supineness with many concerning the things of **GOD** and eternal life :- Hence so little of real repentance, and of the genuine fruits of Gospel faith and obedience, amongst the generality of those who call themselves Christians. We think to be saved, alas! by the mere **MERCY OF GOD**, without any respect to conformity of life on our parts for the reception of such mercy. The sure and certain consequence is, that we grow heedless and



remiss in our spiritual conduct; presuming on mercy, we see no need of repentance and obedience; till at length falling fast asleep in sin, we forget **GOD**, and become insensible to the calls of **His** mercy.

Against this unhappy and fatal delusion, suffer me, **Beloved**, most tenderly and earnestly to warn you, as against one of the most deceitful and pernicious stratagems of the wicked one to deceive and to destroy you. And as a mean of escaping such delusion, and attaining thereby to the light of the divine wisdom in your own minds, and thus to the comforts of the **DIVINE MERCY**, suffer me further to call your especial attention at this time to the words of eternal truth in my text, pointing out to you, and to all mankind, the appointed necessary qualifications for receiving the blessings of the mercy of the **GREAT JEHOVAH—SHEWING MERCY UNTO THOUSANDS OF THEM THAT LOVE ME AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.**

In these words, the conditions on man's part of receiving the **DIVINE MERCY** are clearly and fully stated, so that none can possibly mistake them but such as are willing to be mistaken. Nevertheless, for our more perfect apprehension and confirmation in the practice of them, it may be expedient to consider them more particularly.

The first and chief condition then imposed upon man by the **DIVINE LAW-GIVER**, for receiving the inestimable pearl of **His** precious mercy, is to *love Him*.

Now *love*, we know, hath relation to the desire, or the will-principle in ourselves, which is the very centre of our life, the spring and source of all our affections, and the parent of all our joys or miseries.

Every thing therefore depends upon the direction or determination of this love, this will-principle, or desire, because every man is what his supreme love is, consequently if his love be earthly and sensual, he himself is earthly and sensual also; as on the other hand, if his love be heavenly and spiritual, he himself also is of the same character and quality. If then the love or ruling desire be directed or determined wrong, that is, to wrong objects, such as the things of this world, the false and deceitful pleasures of the carnal or natural life only, or to the vanities of an evil self-love, which would take delight in its own glory, in its own riches, in its own power, or in its own wisdom, in this case it separates the heart from **GOD** and the communications of **His mercy**: It forms, as it were, a great gulph between **GOD** and the soul, so that no ray of life, of light, or of peace from **GOD**, can pass to get admission. The soul, thus separated,

is, in the language of Holy Scripture, *alienated from the life of GOD; a branch broken off from the true vine, and fit only to be burned; and the reason is, because having turned its desires or love a contrary way, it shuts itself out from GOD, so that though GOD be willing to enter in, yet He is not able.*

The very reverse of all this happens where the love is directed or determined aright, that is to say, towards GOD, His righteousness, and His kingdom; for in this case GOD, with His unutterable mercy, and all its blessings, enters in as into His own habitation: He delights to make His tabernacle in such a soul: He communicates to it His own essential life, and light, and peace; for the desire of the soul being ever towards GOD; is continually keeping open the door of Heaven, at which GOD may come in, according as it is written, "*If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come to him, and sup with him, and he with ME.*" (Rev. iii. 20.)

It is in consequence of this Almighty power implanted by GOD in the will, or love, or desire of man, that so much is said in Holy Scripture concerning the right direction of this inward, this vital principle. Hence the repeated exhortations to *love GOD with all the heart, with all the mind, with all the soul, and with all the strength*: hence, too, the repeated prohibitions against a contrary

love, such as the love of this world, its vanities and false pleasures, the concupiscencies of the flesh, and the inordinate love of ourselves: hence, too, all the calls and encouragements to *prayer*, because prayer is nothing else but the habitual turning of the desire to GOD: hence likewise the laws respecting repentance, self-renunciation, and self-denial, since all these duties are grounded solely in their expediency to turn the desire of the soul out of that which is not GOD, that so it may cleave to GOD with a purer, more fervent, and more fixed affection.

The *first* condition, then, to receive the divine mercy, is this which relateth to the love, "*Shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love ME.*" But there is a *second* condition of the same indispensable obligation, and which consequently has an equal claim on our attention, viz. the *keeping the commandments*, and therefore it is said, "*of them that love ME and keep MY commandments.*"

Let me press this condition also on your most serious consideration, if ever you hope to partake of the inestimable blessings of the DIVINE MERCY.

We find a distinction here made between *loving GOD and keeping His commandments*. The distinction is of the greatest importance to be attended to, and is this. To *love GOD* has relation to the

internal state of our hearts, or to our willingness to receive into ourselves the communications of the divine love. But to *keep* GOD's *commandments* has relation to the reception of the truths of GOD's MOST HOLY WORD in our understandings, because the *commandments of* GOD are those truths, and to *keep* these truths is to suffer them to enlighten our understandings, and thus to influence our lives and conversations.

The reason, then, why this latter condition is here insisted on of *keeping* GOD's *commandments*, is founded in the greatest depths of the divine wisdom, and is briefly this. As the perfection of the life of GOD consists in the union of His divine *love* and *wisdom*, and their consequent *operation*, but not in any one of those three principles separate from the other two, in like manner the perfection of the life of man consists in a similar three-fold conjunction of heavenly principles, whether we call them love, wisdom, and operation; or charity, faith, and good works. For until the love of GOD, or charity, be conjoined with the wisdom of GOD, or truth, and be thus brought into operation, that is, into exercise, into action, or into practice, through a conformity of life in the outward man and his works, it is a mere visionary, fanciful, perishable, and unfixed thing, without body, substance, or reality.

The same remark will apply to *wisdom*, or *truth*, if separated from love and charity, and also to *operation*, or *works*, if separated from the living principles from GOD, which alone sanctify them by connecting them with GOD. The LORD accordingly declares concerning such *separated truth*, that it is as *a house built on the sand, and when the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon it, it fell, and great was the fall of it.* (Matt. vii. 26, 27.)

Hence the LORD's declaration to His true disciples, "*He that hath MY commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth ME;*" (John xiv. 21.) and in another place, "*If ye keep MY commandments ye shall abide in MY love.*" (John xv. 10.) Hence, too, the many calls and encouragements throughout the Scriptures to *good works; to bring forth good fruit; to let our light shine before men;* the ground and reason of all which precepts is, that unless the love of GOD in the inner man become conjoined with heavenly truths in the understanding, and be thus rendered operative and fruitful in the outward man, it will soon perish and die away; whereas if it be rendered operative and fruitful in good works, through the habitual practice and exercise of mercy, according to the laws of charity, which are the blessed eternal truths of GOD'S MOST HOLY WORD,

it then becometh fixed ; it then advanceth the soul continually in the regeneration ; it then groweth day by day unto a divine perfection, acquiring a body, a form, an angelic beauty, and power, and excellency, whereby it will rejoice eternally in the Paradise of GOD.

Would we wish then, Beloved, to find and experience in our hearts the blessed operative influences of the DIVINE MERCY ? Would we wish, through that influence, to be purged from the defilements of sin, and to be made the living children of the MOST HIGH, according to the holy image in which He is willing to renew and regenerate us, and render us meet for His kingdom ? Then let the words of my text have an everlasting place in our remembrance, “ *Shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love ME and keep MY commandments.*” Let us learn from these words, that there must necessarily be a preparation to receive mercy, otherwise the mercy of GOD cannot profit us. Let us learn further, in what that preparation principally consists, that it is in *loving GOD* and *keeping His commandments* ; and that to *love GOD* respects the inward state of our hearts or desires ; whilst to *keep His commandments* implies a corresponding outward state in our lives or actions. Let us keep our eyes then ever fixed on these two unchangeable conditions, imposed by the wisdom of

the ETERNAL, for our reception of His most precious gift of MERCY. Let us write the *first* on our hearts, the *second* on our hands, and let us be faithful and obedient to both; to the *first*, in turning our desires entirely unto GOD from all that which is not GOD, or which we cannot hold and enjoy in GOD; to the *second*, in bringing our lives and actions, our daily words and works, into conformity to such holy desires, so that our outward man may be a corresponding form of the divine image in our inner man. Thus shall ye escape all delusion of a vain and false worship of GOD: Thus shall we be devout, and our devotion will be solid and substantial, not light, not uncertain, not transient, not unprofitable: For thus the eternal, unspeakable mercy of JESUS CHRIST will have admission into our inner man, and will descend thence into our outward man, making us humble, meek, merciful, and charitable *within*, and rendering us fruitful *without*, in all those good works of which the GREAT SAVIOUR speaks in these words of high commendation, “*Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your FATHER which is in Heaven.*” (Matt. v. 16.) AMEN.



## SERMON XXIX.

Exod. xx. 7.

*Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy GOD in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.*

**T**HE ten commandments, it has been already shewn in some former discourses, contain the laws and words of eternal life. None, therefore, can enter into life but by keeping the commandments. For life, which is eternal life, consisteth in having conjunction with **GOD**, in being formed after His image, in breathing His spirit, in partaking of His life, and all these blessings are effected in man by and through the commandments, and in proportion to man's understanding of them and obedience to them. For if man doth not understand, or doth not obey the commandments, it is then impossible he should ever have conjunction with **GOD**, or be formed after His image, or breathe His spirit, or be partaker of His life: but whosoever, with a sincere and fervent desire, setteth himself diligently to consider, and obediently to practise, the holy commandments, such an one from that moment begins to enter into conjunction with **GOD**, and is

daily renewed in His image, in His spirit, and in His life.

Such then being the blessed and holy nature of the law of the ten commandments, may I now bespeak your serious attention to that which falleth next in order under our consideration, and which is thus expressed in the words of my text, “*Thou shalt not take the name,*” &c.

None can rightly understand these words, consequently none can rightly practise or profit by them, unless he first consider well what is meant by the *name* of GOD, and secondly, what is meant by *taking His name in vain*.

I shall endeavour, in discoursing on these words, to lead you to a right understanding of these two particulars, and first, of the *name of GOD*.

Too many, alas! in thinking of the *name of GOD*, which we are here forbidden to *take in vain*, confine their thoughts merely to the *outward name*, and think that they keep this commandment according to its full extent, if they are only careful never to profane GOD's *holy name* in their ordinary discourse.

But surely by the *name* of the GREAT and HOLY GOD something more is meant, and intended to be expressed, than the mere *outward name*.

For *name*, we know, signifies all *that* by which any thing or any person is made known so as to be distinguished from other things or persons; it has therefore regard to, and is expressive of, the nature, the quality, the particular character of any thing or person; on which account we have all of us a new *name* given us at our baptism, called our *Christian name*, and intended to express that new nature, quality, and character, to which by baptism we are introduced.

In this sense of the word, then, when applied to the **DIVINE BEING**, *name* signifies all *that* by which the **GREAT** and **HOLY GOD** is made known and distinguished, as to **His** nature, **His** quality, and **His** particular character,

Now the **GREAT** and **HOLY GOD** has deigned to unveil Himself, or make Himself known unto man, in three particular and distinct characters, first, as a **CREATOR**; secondly, as a **REDEEMER**; thirdly, as a **REGENERATOR** or **SANCTIFIER**. The name of **GOD**, therefore, is applicable to, and expressive of, these **His** three essential divine characters, and of all the wonders of **His** working towards us under each character; as first, of a **CREATOR**,

*Name*, when applied to **GOD** as a **CREATOR**, denotes, and is expressive of, all **His** mercy, and

goodness, and wisdom, and power, in the creation and preservation of the universe, and of all things therein contained. The outward visible world, therefore, in which we dwell, the creatures and things contained in it, ourselves, our souls, and bodies, all things both within us and without us, bear the stamp and signature of the **MOST HIGH** and **HOLY GOD**, and are continually declaring unto us, if our ears were open to hear, and our eyes to see, the *name* of His sacred *creating* Majesty, that is to say, the greatness of His power, the depths of His mercy, and the infinity of His wisdom.

But **GOD** hath been pleased further to make Himself known to man as a **REDEEMER**. For when man by sin separated himself from his **GOD**, **GOD** was inclined in mercy to seek man, and for this purpose He took upon Him the human nature, which He finally glorified, or made **DIVINE**, and dwelt here below amongst men as a Friend and a Brother, and fought against, and subdued all our spiritual enemies, rendering thereby salvation possible to all true believers in Him, under this His new and holy redeeming character. *Name*, then, when applied to **GOD** as a **REDEEMER**, is particularly expressive of this His tender mercy in assuming, and dwelling in, and glorifying His human nature, and thus saving His lost creatures.

The **LORD** and **SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST**, therefore, as to His **DIVINE HUMANITY**, is in a more especial and sublime manner the *name of GOD*, because in Him **GOD** is man, and man is **GOD**, and by and through Him fallen man hath access unto the otherwise unaccessible **DIVINITY**, and obtaineth deliverance from sin, and is made a child of **GOD** and an heir of eternal life.

But 3rdly. **GOD** hath been pleased to make Himself known unto man as a **REGENERATOR** and **SANCTIFIER**. Under this character He is represented, in Holy Scripture, as ever working in the hearts of men by His **HOLY WORD**, or **SPIRIT**, and the intent of this working is to turn man's heart unto Himself; to purge and purify it from the defilements of sin in the love of this world and the flesh; and finally, to fit and prepare it as a clean habitation for Himself, wherein He may display all the wonders of His kingdom and glory. *Name*, then, when applied to **GOD** as a **REGENERATOR** and **SANCTIFIER**, denotes the operation of His **HOLY WORD**, or **SPIRIT**, with all the particular and various workings and manifestations thereof in the hearts of men, whereby He is continually striving to put down all the false imaginations of the fallen or corrupt nature, and to renew man in the blessed and pure image of His own heavenly love, wisdom, and peace.

Behold here, then, what we are principally to understand by the *name of GOD*! It is expressive of His *creating* power as displayed in all the works of creation. It is expressive of His *redeeming* power as displayed in the **GLORIFIED HUMANITY** of **JESUS CHRIST**, and in all His works of redemption. And it is expressive of His *regenerating* and *sanctifying* power, as manifested in His **HOLY WORD**, or **SPIRIT**, in all His various workings and operations on the souls of men.

Let us proceed now to consider, secondly, what is to be understood, by *taking this name of GOD in vain*.

The mere literal Christian, who looks no further than to the *outward name of GOD*, imagines, that by taking this name in vain, is meant only the profane use of **GOD**'s name in common discourse.

And indeed this is one sense in which the *name of GOD* may be *taken in vain*, and too frequently is *taken in vain*, by the wanton licentiousness of unholy tongues, to the great offence of all serious Christians, and the provoking and calling down of **GOD**'s just judgment upon a sinful people. But surely it must be plain, from what hath been said concerning the *name of GOD*, that there is a further and more interior sense in which it may be *taken in vain*.

For to take a thing in vain manifestly means to make it vain or unprofitable to us, as when we despise it, make light of it, and reject it.

To know, therefore, whether we are at any time taking the *name of GOD in vain*, we are not to consider our words only, but our thoughts also, not our language, so much as the principles and persuasions which govern our lives.

As for example. In regard to the *creating name of GOD*; if we wish to know whether we are *taking this name in vain*, we ought to enter seriously into the hidden recesses of our minds, and there, in the presence of that **GREAT NAME** and **HOLY CREATING POWER**, we ought to examine, most scrupulously, how we find ourselves affected by the wonders of *creation*. And if our devout adoration has never yet been excited by those wonders; if we have seen the works of **GOD**, and not at the same time seen and confessed His astonishing wisdom, and power, and goodness displayed in them, and in every part of them; we have then too much reason to conclude, that we are *taking in vain*, or making vain to ourselves, the holy *creating name of the MOST HIGH*.

In like manner, in regard to the *redeeming and regenerating name of GOD*; if we wish to know whether we are *taking this HIGH and HOLY*

**NAME** *in vain*, we are to consider, not so much the expressions of our tongues, as the sentiments of our hearts; not so much our speech, as our affections: We are to consider, I say, what influence this **HIGH** and **HOLY NAME** of **GOD** hath on our wills, and understandings, and lives. Are we made sensible of this *redeeming* and *regenerating* power in ourselves, subduing sin, checking every disorderly appetite, controuling our passions, and introducing the order of **Heaven** into the little kingdom of our own minds? Do we rank under its standard? Do we fight its battles? Do we attend to its victories and celebrate its triumphs? If so, happy are we, for then the *redeeming* and *regenerating name* of **GOD** is sanctified by us, and is no longer a vain and unprofitable name. But if not so; if we are yet strangers to the power, and strength, and operation, and conquest of this **HOLY NAME** in our own bosoms and lives; it is then too plain that we render it *vain* to us, and thus offend against the commandment of our **GOD**.

To conclude. Have we any of us been convinced, from what has been now said, that we have been guilty of *taking the name of the LORD our GOD in vain*, and is it our sincere wish and desire no longer thus to offend? Oh then let us pray earnestly to our **HEAVENLY FATHER** to enable us to watch against all evil desires, against all



vain and impure thoughts, against every forbidden concupiscence of the love of this world and the flesh, and more especially against the more secret defilements of an ungodly self-love. For these are the things, and these only, which *take GOD's name in vain*, and whilst these things are cherished and remain in us, it will be impossible for us to behold, and more impossible to profit by, either the *creating*, the *redeeming*, or the *regenerating NAME and POWER OF OUR GOD*. But if we would put away these things, then would our work be done, for then should we keep the holy commandment: Then should we know the three-fold *name of our GOD*, as our **CREATOR**, as our **REDEEMER**, and as our **REGENERATOR**, and knowing, we should profit by it, rejoicing in it with joy unspeakable and full of glory, growing daily in its holy and pure spirit, till we were formed after its blessed image in all righteousness, wisdom, peace, purity, and every other grace of that heavenly kingdom, which is *not meat and drink, but righteousness, joy, and peace, in the HOLY GHOST*.  
**AMEN.**



# SERMON XXX.

---

Exod. xx. 7.

*For the LORD will not hold him guiltless that  
taketh HIS NAME in vain.*

**H**AVING endeavoured to shew, in a former discourse, what is to be understood by the *name* of the LORD, and what by *taking it in vain*, I shall now proceed further to shew what is implied in the awful declaration, that the LORD *will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.*

It is impossible, however, that this can be clearly seen, unless it be first considered, and considered seriously, what is meant by *guilt*, or by being *guilty* before the LORD. Let this then be the first object of our enquiry.

Now all *guilt*, on the part of man, implies these two things, first, that man has the knowledge of a law; and secondly, that he voluntarily and intentionally offends against that knowledge. For if he be ignorant of a law, he cannot possibly in such case offend against it; or if he offends against a law, and yet does not offend voluntarily and inten-

tionally, he is still *not guilty*. Thus *infants* can never be accounted *guilty*, because they are both ignorant of a law, and at the same time incapable of offending against it voluntarily and intentionally.

It is on this ground that no man is *guilty* before GOD on account of his hereditary evils, or of those corrupt inclinations which he derives by birth from his parents. For evil, and the *guilt* of evil, are distinct things. It is possible a man may be in much evil, that is to say, he may have many disorderly inclinations, and he may even, in some instances, have given way to those inclinations, and yet he may have no *guilt*, because guilt arises from his *voluntarily* cherishing such inclinations when he has been instructed that he ought not to cherish them, and from his not repenting of his fault in case those inclinations have at any time led him to commit sin.

Man, then, is not guilty before GOD on account either of his natural ignorance, his natural infirmities, or the natural disorders of his love and life, even though they were a thousand times greater than they are, since these are things over which he had no controul, and which it was not in his power to prevent. But he becomes *guilty before GOD*, when he is instructed concerning his disorders, and does not correct them; when he is acquainted with his natural ignorance, and does not

seek and apply the knowledge which GOD presents to him for its removal; when he discovers his natural infirmities, and is careless in his application to that **DIVINE POWER** and **STRENGTH** which is proffered from above to assist him. This, and this alone, is what properly constitutes man *guilty* at any time before his **MAKER**. If therefore we would know the measure of our *guilt* in the sight of Heaven, we are to consider, not how ignorant, how infirm, how corrupt and disorderly we are *by nature*, nor yet how far we have at times been led away by our disorders and corruptions; but we are to consider how far we have endeavoured, in sincerity and truth before **GOD**, to correct and amend these our natural imperfections and transgressions. Have we laboured to supplant our natural ignorance by divine knowledge; our natural infirmities by divine strength; our natural corruptions and disorders by those divine graces, virtues, and excellencies, which **GOD**, by His **HOLY SPIRIT**, is continually disposed to operate and produce in us? When we feel ourselves under the influence of any sin, or sinful affection, such as selfish pride and vanity, worldly covetousness and fleshly sensuality, or any other inordinate appetite, passion, or desire, do we say to ourselves that such things are sinful in the sight of **GOD**, and do we reject them from our hearts accordingly, through that **DIVINE POWER** and **SPIRIT** with

which GOD continually supplies us? The answers to these questions will at once determine how far we are any of us *guilty* or *guiltless* before the GOD of Heaven.

I have been the more particular on this interesting subject, because there is too much reason to fear, that in general it is not sufficiently thought of and attended to even by Christians. Thus some well-disposed Christians frequently charge themselves with a larger share of guilt than belongs to them, merely because they mistake their evil, natural inclinations, for sin, and fancy they are *guilty* of every enormity to which they feel themselves tempted, and which they may inconsiderately have indulged, not aware that the natural inclination is not *in itself* sin, and that temptation to evil brings with it no *guilt*, only so far as it is wilfully cherished and indulged in. And thus, too, on the other hand, many *careless* Christians impute to themselves a *less* share of guilt than perhaps belongs to them, urging their natural ignorance and evil propensities as an apology for their crimes, without ever reflecting, as they ought, that GOD is ever at hand and disposed to supply them with power to correct that ignorance and those propensities, and that therefore they are *guilty* in not applying for that power, as they ought, and in not using it according to the purposes of the

Divine Giver, for their purification and deliverance from sin.

You will observe that I am here speaking of *guilt in the sight of GOD*, or that guilt which brings with it eternal condemnation, and not of *guilt in the sight of men*, which subjects the guilty person to temporal judgment. For there are two degrees of *guilt*, which ought carefully to be distinguished from each other. The one is guilt arising from a breach of the divine law, and the other is guilt arising from the breach of human laws. Every wise man will endeavour to avoid both these degrees of guilt, but he will discern clearly, at the same time, that he may avoid the *latter*, that is to say, he may be found innocent and guiltless before men, and yet he may not avoid the *former*, since it is possible to be innocent in the sight of men, and yet to be guilty of every enormity in the sight of GOD.

From this view now of the nature and meaning of *guilt* and *guiltiness*, we may be enabled to discover the deep ground and reason why the ALMIGHTY declares so peremptorily, that *He will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain*.

For to *take the name of GOD in vain*, it has been already shewn in a former discourse, is not merely to profane His *name* by an irreverent application

of it in our common discourse, but it is to make vain and unprofitable to us all that which is signified by His *name*, viz. His divine goodness, power, and wisdom, as displayed in His wonderful works of *creation*, of *redemption*, and of *regeneration*.

The single question then concerning *guilt* or *guiltiness* in the sight of GOD, is this. Do we make vain and unprofitable to ourselves the *creating*, *redeeming*, and *regenerating* operation of GOD, or do we make it profitable and beneficial to us? In other words, have we ever considered, so as to be rightly affected by, the goodness, wisdom, and power of GOD, as manifested in the works of *creation*? Have we also ever considered, so as to be rightly affected by, the same goodness, wisdom, and power, as manifested and brought near to us in the no less sublime works of *redemption* and *regeneration*? And since we can never know but from the temper, spirit, and tendency of our lives, whether we have rightly considered and been affected by the above grand objects, therefore a further question remains, how far the temper, spirit, and tendency of our lives are formed from, and in agreement with, the *creating*, *redeeming*, and *regenerating* operation of our GOD, or otherwise?

Behold here the true test and criterion of human guilt before GOD, and the only true test and cri-

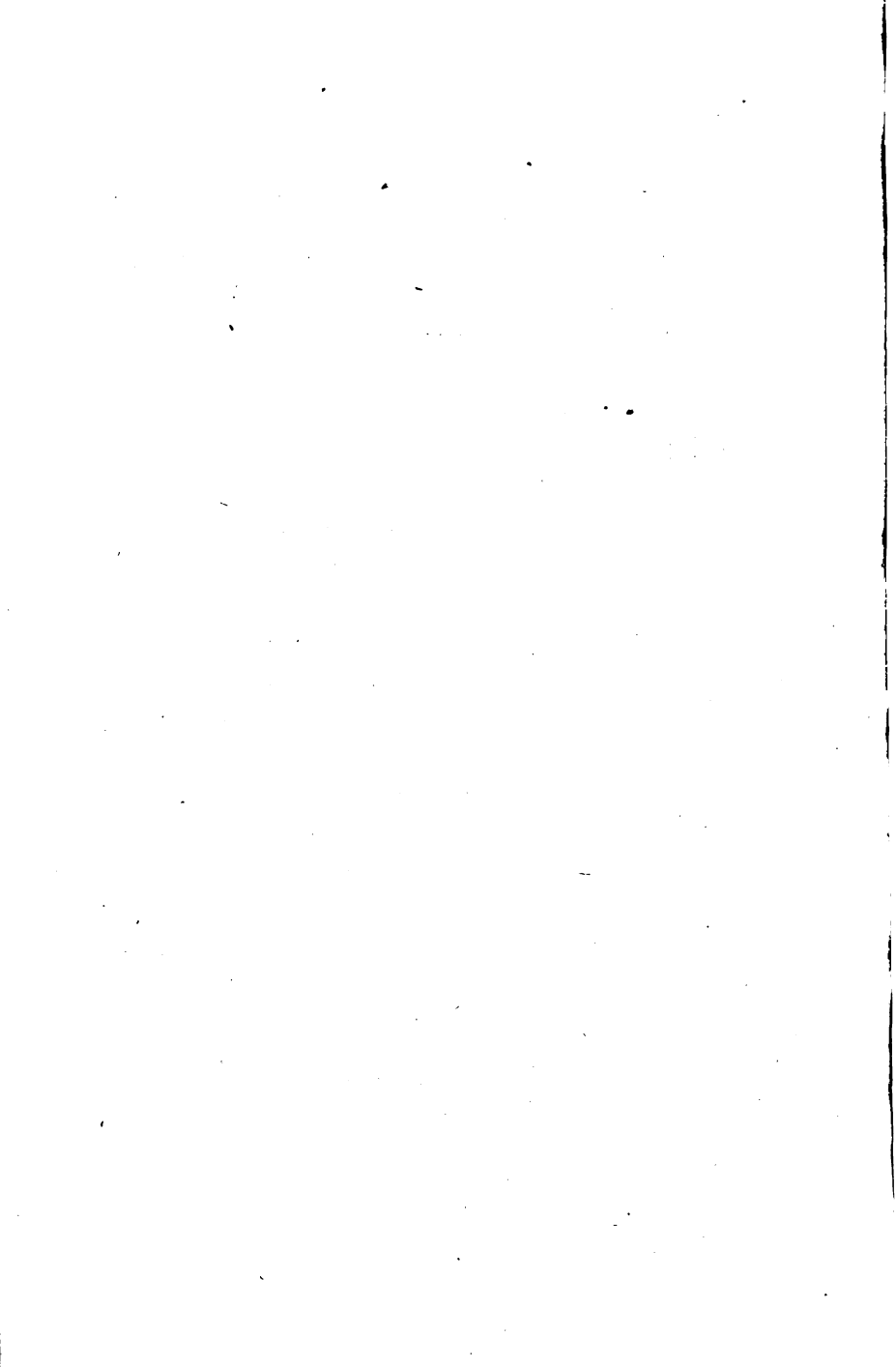


terion which can be depended on. GOD does not account us guilty because we are born in ignorance, but because we do not apply to His *creating, redeeming, and regenerating* wisdom to correct our ignorance. GOD, again, does not account us guilty on account of our natural infirmities, but because we do not apply to Him for His *creating, redeeming, and regenerating* power to remove them. And lastly, GOD does not impute guilt to us because we are born in evil; because we are naturally corrupt, and liable to be led astray by our passions, our appetites, our worldly and selfish affections; nor even because, at times, we have been led astray; but He imputes guilt to us because we wilfully and deliberately continue in this miserable bondage, without ever bestirring ourselves to lay hold of His DIVINE ARM, which is ever stretched out to effect our deliverance. He imputes therefore guilt to us because we love our sins, and are unwilling to part with our polluted pleasures, thus making *vain*, because never applying to that *redeeming and regenerating* power and grace which He continually, in His mercy, communicates, to elevate us above our corruptions, to restore in us the blessed order of His own kingdom, and finally to make us His pure, innocent, and beloved children.

To conclude. Do we wish then no longer to be *held guilty* in the sight of the MOST HIGH, but

rather to be proclaimed *guiltless* and without offence? Do we wish thus to cancel that most terrible of all sentences against ourselves, *I will not hold him guiltless*, and to substitute in its place that most blessed and welcome sentence, *Well done thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy LORD?* Then let us begin with exploring diligently in our own minds and consciences, through the light of **GOD'S MOST HOLY WORD** or **SPIRIT**, the deep and hidden source of all human guilt, as estimated in the sight of **GOD**. Let us continue this exploration until we discover, or rather until **GOD** by His eternal truth discovers to us, that guilt before **GOD** does not consist in our natural evils, but in not applying faithfully and sincerely to **GOD** for their removal; thus it does not consist in our being naturally *proud*, but in not applying to **JESUS CHRIST** for the spirit of His humility; nor in our being naturally *covetous*, but in our not rejecting that evil through the contentment which **GOD** inspires; nor in our being naturally full of malice, hatred, envy, concupiscence, and every other corrupt affection and appetite, but in never looking upwards to the **GREAT REDEEMING** and **REGENERATING NAME** and **POWER** of our **GOD** to deliver us from such deadly enormities, through the influence and operation of His own pure spirit of love and charity, of gentleness, patience, purity, and every other heavenly

grace and virtue. And when we have made this grand discovery concerning the nature of guilt, and what it really is in the sight of GOD, then let us next proceed, in the spirit of a true repentance and conversion, to form our lives accordingly. Let us, I say, no longer *take the name of the LORD our GOD in vain*, by rendering it useless and unprofitable to us, but rather let us avail ourselves of that **MOST HOLY NAME**, by applying it effectually to the root of all our disorders. Do we ask how it is to be effectually applied? I answer, by correcting our natural ignorance through the reception and illumination of the **DIVINE WISDOM**; by rejecting all our natural evils from our hearts and lives through the influence and operation of the **DIVINE GOODNESS, MERCY, and PURITY**; by opposing to our passions the forbearance of **JESUS CHRIST**; to our natural pride, His humility; to our natural love of gain and glory, His heavenly-mindedness, contentment, and self-denial. If we would submit our lives to some such regulations as these, then would all *guilt* and its attendant miseries be soon banished from our bosoms, and in their place would be established the blessed kingdom of purity and peace from that **GREAT GOD and SAVIOUR**, who saith still to all His penitent and purified children, who come unto Him for that happy purpose, *My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth.* AMEN.



# SERMON XXXI.

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Exod. xx. 8.

*Remember the SABBATH-DAY to keep it holy.*

**T**HIS commandment is one of those holy and eternal laws which were promulgated by GOD to Moses from Mount Sinai, for the direction and edification of His people in all ages. Whether it be considered therefore in the sanctity of its origin, or in the importance of its end, it has every claim both upon our notice and upon our obedience.

Before, however, we proceed to the consideration of this commandment, it may be expedient to observe concerning it, that like all the rest of the holy commandments, it hath two senses, a *natural* or *literal* sense, and a *spiritual* or *more interior* sense, in both which it is highly edifying to be understood, and profitable to be observed.

I shall, in my present discourse, bespeak your attention to the *natural* or *literal* sense of this commandment, whilst I endeavour to point out to you, according to that sense, first, what is meant by the **SABBATH-DAY**; secondly, what by *remembering* it; and thirdly, what by *keeping it holy*.

And 1st. I shall endeavour to shew what is meant by the **SABBATH-DAY** in its natural or literal sense.

Every one knows that the Sabbath-Day, according to this sense, is every *seventh* day, appointed by **ALMIGHTY GOD** as a day of rest from worldly labour and employment, and as a day of instruction in holy things, or such things as relate more particularly to the concerns of the soul, the interests of another world, and the knowledge and service of **GOD**.

But though every one knows this to be the meaning of the Sabbath-Day, yet perhaps few, comparatively, consider the true ground and origin of the appointment of this day, or *why* it came originally to be thus set apart of **GOD** as a day of rest, and as a day of particular attention to holy things.

Permit me then briefly to point out to you the true ground and origin of the Sabbath-Day; because if this be well understood and considered, it will not fail to impress every serious mind with a wonderful degree of reverence for that sacred day, which will tend greatly to fix it in his remembrance, with all that veneration for its divine sanctity and solemnity which is necessary to keep it holy.

We read, in the second chapter of Genesis, concerning the institution of the Sabbath, that GOD *blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from all His work which GOD created and made.*

In these words we learn the true ground and origin of the *Sabbath-Day*, and that it was instituted because of GOD's *resting from His work*; that it was therefore intended to be a standing sign and token of that rest unto all generations; that it was accordingly designed to call men continually to the remembrance of that rest, so that as often as the Sabbath returned, they might be led to the blessed recollection of the accomplishment of the works of GOD, of the fulfilling of His operations, and of the glorious rest which succeedeth the divine labour.

*Sabbath*, therefore, in its proper signification, meaneth *rest*. But what we are to understand by rest when applied to GOD, I shall consider more particularly when we come to treat of the Sabbath in its *spiritual* or *more interior* sense. Suffice it at present to observe, that the ground and origin of the Sabbath-Day is, even according to its natural or literal meaning, most holy; that it is an outward, continual, natural sign of things most spiritual and divine; that it is representative of *the rest of GOD*; that it is an appointment to commemorate and prepare men for that rest; that as often therefore as it

returns, it was intended to excite in man heavenly affections and thoughts, to turn his heart and his understanding unto GOD, to raise him above the things of time and sense, and by a holy intercourse with his CREATOR, to prepare him for that eternal rest which is the ever blessed Sabbath reserved for those who love and obey the LORD who made Heaven and earth.

And this leads me to consider, secondly, what we are to understand, in a *natural* or *literal* sense, by *remembering* the Sabbath-Day.

To *remember* any thing is to love it, to take delight in it, to make it an object of our regard and affection, because common experience shews, that whatever is the chief object of our love, that also is ever uppermost in our *remembrance*. JESUS CHRIST therefore, when in instituting the holy sacrament of His BODY and BLOOD, He applied this form of words, *Do this in remembrance of ME*, meant to teach us, that the great end and design of that blessed sacrament is, that we might be led thereby to exalt Him at all times as the supreme object of our best love and regard.

To *remember*, then, the Sabbath-Day, is to be thus affected with love and delight towards it; it is to have pleasure in it as in a day of particular satisfaction and importance to us; it is to be sensible in our hearts of its peculiar holiness, so that as often



as it returns, it may cause to us a return of joy and comfort, it may excite in us a remembrance of our true bliss. This and this alone, is to *remember* the Sabbath, for without such an affection towards it, who cannot see, that any other *remembrance* must be of little or no avail?

But to *remember the Sabbath* also implies, a taking delight in the duties and exercises to which we are on that day particularly called; for the Sabbath, we have shewn, was appointed as a day of instruction in holy things, as a day of holy meditation, as a day to elevate our thoughts unto GOD, as a day to raise us above the things of time and sense, and lead us to a holy and ever blessed intercourse with our gracious CREATOR. To *remember* this day, then, is to take delight in all these holy and edifying exercises, and so to delight in them, that we may find the real blessing and comfort which they are calculated to communicate. But what shall we say, if these holy exercises, intended for our edification on the Sabbath-Day, should *not* be delighted in? What shall we say, if they should be altogether neglected, and if other exercises, of an opposite tendency, should be substituted in their place? Surely in such case we must be obliged to confess, that the Sabbath-Day is *not* remembered, and that the commandment of GOD, so far from being obeyed, is disregarded, forgotten, and profaned.

But we are further required to *keep the Sabbath-Day holy*. Let me bespeak your particular attention to what is here, and in other parts of Scripture, meant by keeping any thing holy.

To keep a thing holy is to preserve it from the defilements of what is unholy. The **SABBATH-DAY** in itself is most holy, and nothing that we can do on our parts can possibly add any thing to its intrinsic holiness, or take any thing away from it. Nevertheless it is possible that, *with respect to ourselves*, we may keep it holy, or, *with respect to ourselves*, we may make it unholy.

We keep the Sabbath *holy*, as was said, when we preserve it from the defilements of things unholy. Things unholy are the inordinate love of ourselves, the inordinate love of the world, the lusts of the flesh, together with all the evil, vain, and foolish thoughts, cares, designs, and purposes, which have their birth from such unholy love. To put away then these unholy things from us, is to keep the Sabbath-Day holy, but if these things are not put away, it will then be in vain for us to think of keeping it holy.

For it is not by any mere external form of worship only, that we can sanctify the Sabbath of the **LORD OF HOSTS**: It is not the mere assembling together in His temple, howsoever expedient and

commendable this duty may be: It is not the mere repeating of verbal prayers, whatsoever may be their excellence and their sanctity: It is not the hearing of **GOD'S WORD**: It is not the singing of **Psalms**: It is not the partaking of holy ordinances: It is not any or all of these things which can make the Sabbath a holy day unto us: For if our hearts be defiled in the mean time by unholy affections; if our understandings be occupied by unholy thoughts and purposes relating merely to this world and the flesh; how plain is it to see, that the Sabbath, in such case, with respect to ourselves, is defiled, notwithstanding our external sanctity in the church of **GOD**!

On this occasion therefore, we cannot too frequently examine ourselves by the tenor of the interesting questions proposed by the prophet, "*Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the HIGH GOD? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil?*" Neither can we lay too closely to heart the answer to those questions, "*He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy GOD?*" (Micah vi. 6 to 9.)

Let us learn then from these words, that it is a pure, sincere, penitent, and upright heart, which can alone keep the **SABBATH-DAY** *holy*: It is a heart that earnestly desires the things of **GOD**: It is a heart that sincerely renounces the vain love of itself, of the world, and the flesh, as its greatest enemies: It is a heart that pants after renovation of nature through conjunction with the **GREAT** and **HOLY GOD**: It is a heart that, feeling the corruptions of sin, and fearful of their consequences, is for ever labouring to gain spiritual victory, and to become the pure image and temple of its **GOD**: To such a heart the Sabbath-Day is ever a day of holiness; it is a delightful day; it is a day of advancement in the ways of **GOD**; a day of light, a day of purification, a day of admittance into **GOD**'s presence, a day of victory over the world and the flesh: It is, in short, what it properly signifies, a day of rest, for being kept holy by such a heart, through the putting away of unholy and unclean thoughts and desires, every restless passion is allayed, every tumultuous perplexing thought is pacified, every sinful affection is subdued, and the pure, penitent, and humble soul, findeth its eternal Sabbath of rest already begun in the bosom of the mercy of its **GOD**.

To conclude. May we all, Beloved, through the unspeakable mercy of our **GOD** and **SAVIOUR**,

thus enter into His heavenly rest! For this purpose may we ever be careful to remember the Sabbath-Day to *keep it holy!* As often as it returns, may we ponder deeply on the true ground and reason of its institution! May we be led, by such consideration, to see the holiness of GOD in it, and how it is a continual sign and representative to us of the rest of GOD! This will not fail to excite in us a wonderful reverence for the holy day, and it will never dawn upon us, but it will call GOD to our remembrance, and excite in our souls earnest longings after that *eternal Sabbath of rest which remaineth for them that love Him.* Thus shall we be led to *remember* the Sabbath-Day, for then it will be truly our *delight*, and in the language of the prophet, *the holy of the LORD will be honourable.* But above all, let us take heed to *keep it holy.* This, it has been already seen, is done by putting away from us unholy things, such as the inordinate love of ourselves, of this world, and the flesh. Were we to meet each returning Sabbath in such a state of preparedness, waiting and looking for *the rest of GOD* in the purity and penitence of humble hearts, what blessings might we not expect from it! Surely GOD would then be peculiarly present with us on that day: Surely when we assembled in His house with such dispositions, we should find His HOLY SPIRIT near us, ready to comfort, to enlighten, and protect us: Surely when His WORD

was read, it would then become fruitful in our hearts, it would take root, and bring forth in *some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, and some thirty*: Surely when we poured out our souls in prayer, our prayers would then reach unto GOD, and draw down the blessing of His mercy upon us: Surely when we joined in songs to celebrate His praise, our praises would then be pleasing to Him, and He would accept them: Surely when we left the house of GOD, GOD would still be with us, and whether at church or at home, we should find His presence, we should cherish it in our hearts, we should advance both ourselves and others in His knowledge and love, and to do this would be the delight of our souls. Oh then that there were such a heart in us, that we did truly *remember the SABBATH-DAY, and keep it holy!* For then should we soon rise out of the regions of sin, and sorrow, and condemnation, into the blessed Paradise of the holiness, peace, and salvation of our GOD. AMEN.

# SERMON XXXII.

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Exod. xx. 8.

*Remember the SABBATH-DAY to keep it holy.*

**H**AVING already, in a former discourse, considered the *natural* or *literal* sense of these words, and endeavoured to shew, according to this sense, what is meant by *remembering the SABBATH-DAY*, and *keeping it holy*, I shall now proceed, as I proposed, to a consideration of the *spiritual Sabbath*, endeavouring to shew what it involves, and what is the additional duty of *remembering it* and *keeping it holy*.

The *outward* or *natural* Sabbath, we have already seen, is the *seventh day*, which was appointed of **GOD** to be kept holy in commemoration of **His rest**. The rest of **GOD**, therefore, is the true inward or spiritual Sabbath, in which the outward or literal Sabbath is grounded, and from which it is derived. But it will be asked, What are we to understand by the *rest of God*? Can it be said of **GOD** that **He** ever labours, or that **He** has ever occasion for rest? Doth the work of the **ALMIGHTY** cause weariness to **Him**, or doth **He** find it

needful to cease from work that He may refresh Himself? These questions are of weighty importance, and the consideration of them, as it may tend to suggest lessons of the deepest spiritual instruction, so will it tend also to lead us to a right understanding of what is meant by the *spiritual Sabbath*.

May I then bespeak your present serious attention to the interesting subject, whilst I proceed, in as brief a manner as possible, to shew what is signified in Holy Scripture by GOD's *rest*, and thence point out the nature of the true *spiritual Sabbath*, together with the duty of *remembering* and *keeping it holy*.

And 1st. With respect to GOD's *rest*.

We frequently read, in Holy Scripture, of GOD's *rest*, and likewise of His *labour*, of His *work*, and even of His *weariness*. These expressions, however, it must be very plain, when applied to GOD, are not to be understood *literally*. We are not to suppose, for instance, that GOD is ever weary, or that He ever labours, according to the common acceptation of the words, or that He is more or less *at rest* at one time than another.

Nevertheless all these expressions have a most weighty and edifying meaning, when rightly understood, and therefore it becomes us all, if we



would truly profit by our Bibles, and see the *wondrous things* therein contained, to offer up our most earnest and continual prayers to **JESUS CHRIST**, the **GOD** of Heaven, and the **LIGHT OF THE**

- **WORLD**, that He would *open our understandings*, as He once *opened the understandings* of His first disciples, that we *may understand the Scriptures*, and discerning thus the true sense of the expressions applied in the divine volume, may attain to a right knowledge of **GOD** and of ourselves.

If we were faithful and earnest in such supplication, out of penitent and devout hearts, we should then soon be enabled to see, by the light of the eternal truth, what is spiritually meant by the *labour* of **GOD**, and what by His *rest*. For it would then be given us to perceive, that **GOD** labours, or is said to labour, to bring man into repentance and obedience; to purify him from all the defilements of sin; to subdue in him all the rebellious lusts of corrupt nature; thus to regain in man His own kingdom, to stamp in him His own image, and to rule over him as His own proper child or subject. And we should perceive further, that **GOD** *rests*, or is said to *rest*, when this blessed work is accomplished, that is, when man is brought to an entire obedience, when he is cleansed from sin, delivered from rebellious lusts, and made a willing child or subject of **GOD**, according to the blessed spirit of His **HOLY WORD** or **WILL**.

According to this sense of the terms *labour* and *rest*, **GOD** *most eminently* laboured, when He appeared here upon earth in the person of **JESUS CHRIST**, and wrought the great and infinitely blessed work of our redemption, by combating and subduing our spiritual foes, the powers of darkness: And He *most eminently* rested, when, after the accomplishment of this blessed work, He united the human nature fully to the **DIVINE**, and the **DIVINE** to the human, and in this union became the **GOD** and **SAVIOUR** of all those who believed in Him, and approached Him with humble, penitent, and obedient hearts.

That this is the true meaning of *labour* and *rest*, when applied to **GOD**, might be abundantly proved, if it were needful, from various passages in Holy Scripture, as where **GOD** is said *to be wearied with the sins of the wicked*, and on the contrary, *to smell a savour of rest* over the righteous. Thus He is represented also as *striving*, by His spirit, with the disobedient, and *to rest* in love over the obedient who keep His commandments.

Behold here then the true spiritual meaning of the **SABBATH-DAY**, opened to us in all its clearness, its fulness, and its importance!

The true spiritual Sabbath denotes the *rest of GOD*, which was *most eminent* when the work of

our redemption was accomplished, when the powers of darkness were subdued, and the divine and human natures were made One in the person of **JESUS CHRIST**. But it denotes also the *rest of GOD* at this day, in the converted, penitent, and obedient soul, implying that all evil passions are subdued, that the oppositions excited by sin against the divine will cease; that the soul is rendered humble, supple, submissive to the **HOLY SPIRIT** of the mercy and love of **GOD**; that, in short, the kingdom of Satan in the ungodly lusts of the natural mind is destroyed, and in its place the kingdom of the spirit of **JESUS CHRIST**, the spirit of power, the spirit of meekness, the spirit of patience, the spirit of unfeigned love, charity, and well-doing, is exalted to an unlimited dominion.

And as this is what is meant by the true spiritual Sabbath, so by the six days' labour is to be understood every conflict or struggle previous to this Sabbath; *most eminently* the conflicts and struggles, the sorrows and sufferings of the **GREAT REDEEMER** under His combats with the powers of darkness in the days of His flesh; and in a *subordinate* sense, the conflicts and struggles, the sorrows and the sufferings of the followers of that **REDEEMER**, whilst they also *put on the whole armour of GOD*, and fight against sin. Frequent mention is made, in Holy Scripture, of such spiri-

tual labour and conflict: It is called by a variety of names, such as trouble, warfare, temptation, affliction, persecution, and the like; all which terms, in their spiritual meaning, denote the opposition made through disorderly lusts in the soul against the full establishment of the divine rest or peace. For experience teaches, as well as the **WORD OF GOD** testifies, that the kingdom of the mercy, and peace, and truth of **JESUS CHRIST**, cannot be established but by the removal of their opposites in the soul, and that these opposites cannot be removed without resistance, and it is in resistance that the faithful soul experiences what is called labour, trial, temptation, and the like.

That this is the true meaning of the *spiritual Sabbath*, and of the *six days' labour*, might be proved also, were it needful, from abundant testimonies of Holy Scripture. On this occasion I shall beg leave to mention only two of the most remarkable. The first is in the prophet **Isaiab**, in these words, "*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.*" (**Isaiab** lviii. 13, 14.) The second is from the epistle to

the Hebrews, in these words, “ *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of GOD; for he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as GOD did from His.*” (Heb. iv. 9, 10.) From these two passages we are taught plainly, that the *true Sabbath*, or the *true rest*, consisteth in not doing our own ways, in not finding our own pleasure, in not speaking our own words, that is, in not living or acting under the influence of our own spirits, but of the **SPIRIT OF GOD**; and that the *true labour* is to live under the guidance and government of our own spirits, and to do our own works, that is, to be the slaves of our own unconverted, unmortified wills, not brought into subjection to the will and the guidance of **GOD**, and thus not submitted to that blessed yoke, of which it is written, “ *Take my yoke upon you and learn of ME, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*” (Matt. xi. 29.)

Thus then have I endeavoured to point out the true spiritual meaning of the **SABBATH-DAY**, and of the *six days*’ previous labour. May I now bespeak your attention a moment longer, whilst, according to this sense of the words, I press upon you the important duties urged in my text, “ *Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy.*”

And 1st. *Remember the Sabbath-Day*, agreeable to its above spiritual signification. Remember therefore the eternal rest into which your REDEEMER is entered, having accomplished the great work of your redemption. Remember also your own eternal destination, the blessed state for which you were created, the rest of the peace of GOD, when all your corruptions shall be subdued; when the banner of the divine victory shall be displayed; when you shall hear the shout of conquest, and behold the MIGHTY CONQUEROR proclaiming the everlasting reign of His divine peace and consolation. Keep this rest ever uppermost in your minds; be often telling your souls of it; represent to yourselves its manifold glories and comforts; impress it upon your hearts in such characters that the deceitful things of this world and the flesh may never again efface it. But oh, consider well what this *rest* is, and what it means—that it is the rest of GOD. But GOD cannot enter into His *rest*, as we have already shewn, till sin be subdued and removed, for sin ever causes labour, sorrow, and weariness. Consider this then again with all possible attention. Is sin subdued in you? Do you find a removal of self-will, of self-wisdom, of self-love, of pride and vanity, of worldly covetousness and sensuality, and of every other evil lust of corrupt nature? Are your hearts brought thus to abasement, to humiliation, to submission before GOD, and thereby to true love and charity?

But the commandment says further, Remember the Sabbath-Day *to keep it holy.*

Let me, lastly, press this precept on your observation. The SABBATH-DAY, we have shewn, is the rest and peace of GOD in all humble, penitent, and obedient souls. It is therefore the opening of the kingdom of Heaven: It is a manifestation of the glories of GOD: It is a dawning of the eternal life and light shining more and more unto the perfect day. Let us then keep this SABBATH for ever holy. If we have at any time tasted its comforts; if we have been made partakers of the gift of GOD; then from henceforth and for ever, let us be careful to preserve from defilement the holy things which we have received. Let not the world and the flesh again ensnare us in their polluting pleasures: Let not the bad passions of our hearts again rise up to disturb us: Let us keep *our loins girded, and our lamps burning*: Let us not suffer the HOLY GOD to be molested in His sacred and ever blessed resting-place. It is written in the prophet, "*Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation.*" (Isaiah xxxiii. 20.) Let us keep then our eyes ever fixed upon this *heavenly Jerusalem*, this habitation of the MOST HIGH within us, that we may ever see it a *quiet habitation*. Thus shall we *keep the SABBATH-DAY HOLY*, and it will finally be to us that everlasting day of rest,

peace, and rejoicing in GOD's kingdom, of which it is written, "*Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders ; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy GOD thy glory.*" (Isaiah lx. 18, 19.) AMEN.



# SERMON XXXIII.

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Exod. xx. 12.

*Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee.*

**I**N treating on these words, I propose to consider them, as we have already considered the foregoing commandments, viz. according to their two-fold senses, that which is *natural* or *literal*, and that which is *spiritual*, or more *remote from the letter*. And first, let us regard them according to their *natural* or *literal* sense. In this sense they are directed especially as a lesson of instruction to three orders of persons ;

1st. To children in respect to their parents ;  
2ndly. to subjects in respect to their rulers ; 3rdly. to people in respect to their spiritual teachers and pastors.

And 1st. The commandment before us contains a weighty lesson of instruction and admonition to all young persons, in respect to the honour due from them to their natural parents.

May I bespeak the attention of all such young persons as are here present, whilst I endeavour to explain and enforce the nature of the duty here enjoined you so solemnly of **GOD**.

Let this commandment lead you to reflect, that your parents are the authors, under **GOD**, of your natural life. They have been the instrumental means of bringing you into being : They have also preserved and cherished the life which they have given, so that you owe unto them, in subordination to **GOD**, all that you enjoy of temporal life, with all its comforts.

But your parents have not only given you natural or temporal life, for they are appointed, under **GOD**, to lead you to the knowledge of spiritual or eternal life. They are intended, through providence, to be your introducers to the kingdom of Heaven, by their precepts and by their examples. Accordingly they watch over and have care of your souls as well as your bodies : They pray to **GOD** for you ; they instruct you themselves ; they lead you to the instruction of others ; they train you up for immortality ; thus they stand in the character not only of natural, but of spiritual parents to you, begetting you to a lively hope of a resurrection from the dead to reign hereafter in the everlasting glories of **GOD**'s kingdom.

To you, therefore, who are as yet under the care and leading of your earthly parents, the words of the commandment are most emphatically addressed, "*Honour thy father and thy mother.*"

May these holy words never be forgotten by you! May they lead you to a right reverence for those to whom you are so infinitely indebted! May they teach you to behold in your parents the image and authority of GOD! to respect their instructions, to obey their commands, to treasure up their counsels, to be fearful on any occasion of shewing them the slightest mark of disrespect or irreverence! Thus will ye fulfil the commandment of GOD, and to you will be extended the annexed blessing, "*Thy days shall be long in the land which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee.*"

You may perhaps urge, in contradiction to the spirit of the heavenly commandment, that your parents are unreasonable and harsh in their requirements, and that therefore you are no longer under the obligation to obey what is contrary to reason and to equity; but it is to be noted, that the unreasonableness of your parents can never affect the sanction of the divine law. GOD doth not specify any exemption of this sort to the general command, and therefore unless the requirements of your parents are in direct opposition to the requirements of GOD, you are still bound to honour and to obey.

notwithstanding any appearance of a want of reason and of right in what they require.

But 2ndly. The words of my text, in their natural or literal sense, are directed as a lesson of instruction to subjects in respect to their rulers.

For kings, and those in authority under them, have always been considered, in one sense, as the fathers of their people, since they execute the authority of GOD over subjects in the way of civil or temporal jurisdiction, and are the appointed ministers of providence for the preservation of external order, decency of manners, and uprightness of conduct, by rewarding the obedient and punishing the disobedient. Thus, in the present dispensation of things in this lower world, they that are in civil authority execute the counsels of GOD, and carry on the great plans of His providence, whilst they provide, under GOD, for the external security, peace, and well-being of those over whom they preside.

Well therefore may the words of the commandment, in their natural sense, be extended to such rulers and governors here below, and adorable is the wisdom which points them out as objects deserving of our honour. Let us therefore learn from that wisdom a right reverence and respect for the laws of civil jurisdiction, and for those who are

entrusted with the execution of them. Let us regard rulers under their sacred characters, as *ministers of GOD to us for good*. Let us behold in their authority the authority of GOD. Such honourable respect will tend to check in us that spirit of disobedience, of murmuring, and of censure, towards those who are set over us, which is not only destructive of civil society, but is also repugnant to Christian morals, and prejudicial to our Christian character; at the same time it will frame in us such habits of obedience, of submission, of deference and respect to *the powers ordained of GOD*, as will be most beneficial to our own hearts, and also to the community to which we belong.

And as, in the former case respecting natural parents, their unreasonableness and their harshness supply no just ground of disobedience and opposition on the part of the child, in like manner, respecting temporal rulers, or political parents, it is well to be noted, that the honour and obedience due to them are not at all affected by their characters and their conduct, whether reasonable or unreasonable. *Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's*, is an eternal law of justice and equity, independent on Cæsar himself, whether he be just or unjust; if therefore it should happen at any time that the rulers of a nation forget their obligations, it is no reason at all why the people ruled should forget their's.

But lastly. The commandment in my text extends also to all mankind in regard to their spiritual teachers and pastors.

For pastors and teachers of **GOD'S MOST HOLY WORD** have, in all ages of the church, been considered under the venerable character and title of the *fathers* of **GOD'S** people.

Thus the apostle saith to his Corinthian brethren,  
 “ *Though ye have ten thousand instructors in*  
 “ **CHRIST**, *yet have ye not many fathers ; for in*  
 “ **CHRIST JESUS** *I have begotten you through the*  
 “ *Gospel.*”

In this instance, then, let us adore the counsel and providence of **GOD**, that as in the natural birth he useth the ministry of natural parents to bring forth the inhabitants of the earth, and to continue natural life here below, so in the spiritual birth, or the regeneration, He also employs the ministry of spiritual parents to bring forth children unto His kingdom, and to propagate spiritual and eternal life.

These spiritual parents are all such as He has enriched with the knowledge and love of Himself, and appointed thus to dispense to others from Himself a portion of the same spirit, to form in them the same heavenly image, and beget them to the same heavenly and ever-blessed life.

Let it here however be well observed, that it is not for any pastor, or teacher, as of himself, to exercise this spiritual power, since on this occasion he is only as a minister, ministering to others that **WORD OF LIFE** which he himself has received, and by this **WORD**, not by himself, or by any power of his own, begetting in others the same life.

Permit me now, according to this sense of the commandment, to press upon you the weighty obligation of fulfilling its sacred requirements, by honouring your spiritual parents, the ministers of the **WORD OF GOD**.

Hath it been your happy lot to have found a *father* in **CHRIST**? Have you experienced in your hearts a beginning and formation of heavenly life, through the ministry of **GOD'S HOLY WORD**? You will then want no exhortations to *honour*, in this sense, your *father* and *mother*. For you will behold in your spiritual teachers and pastors the ministers of **GOD**; you will honour them, not on their own account, (for honour is not due to any child of man merely on his own account) but on account of their ministry; you will receive the **WORD OF GOD** gladly at their mouths; you will treasure it up in your hearts, and suffer it to influence your lives and conversations; you will remember their continual prayers and labours for

you, how they watch over you as they that are to give account ; how your *blood will be required at their hands*, if you perish through their fault ; and how, on the contrary, you will be *their joy, and crown of rejoicing*, if you suffer them to lead you to the kingdom of GOD. These considerations will not fail to impress upon you a due reverence for your spiritual teachers and pastors, a reverence, let it be observed, which they do not, and dare not seek for their own sakes, but as it is connected with your everlasting interests and the glory of GOD.

To conclude. May we all then learn, from what hath been said, to pay a due honour and respect to all the subordinate establishments of GOD in our several relationships with them ! May children learn to honour GOD in their parents, subjects to honour Him in their rulers, and people to honour Him in their teachers and spiritual pastors ! Thus will all men and all things serve to lead us unto GOD ; and thus seeing and honouring GOD in the inferior forms and channels of His divine administration over us, and being obedient to His manifestations, counsels, judgments, mercies, and kind dispensations hereby conveyed to us, we may hope through all to ascend unto Him, in all to glorify Him, till, finally, we are brought by all to praise and exalt His holy name as *the All in All*

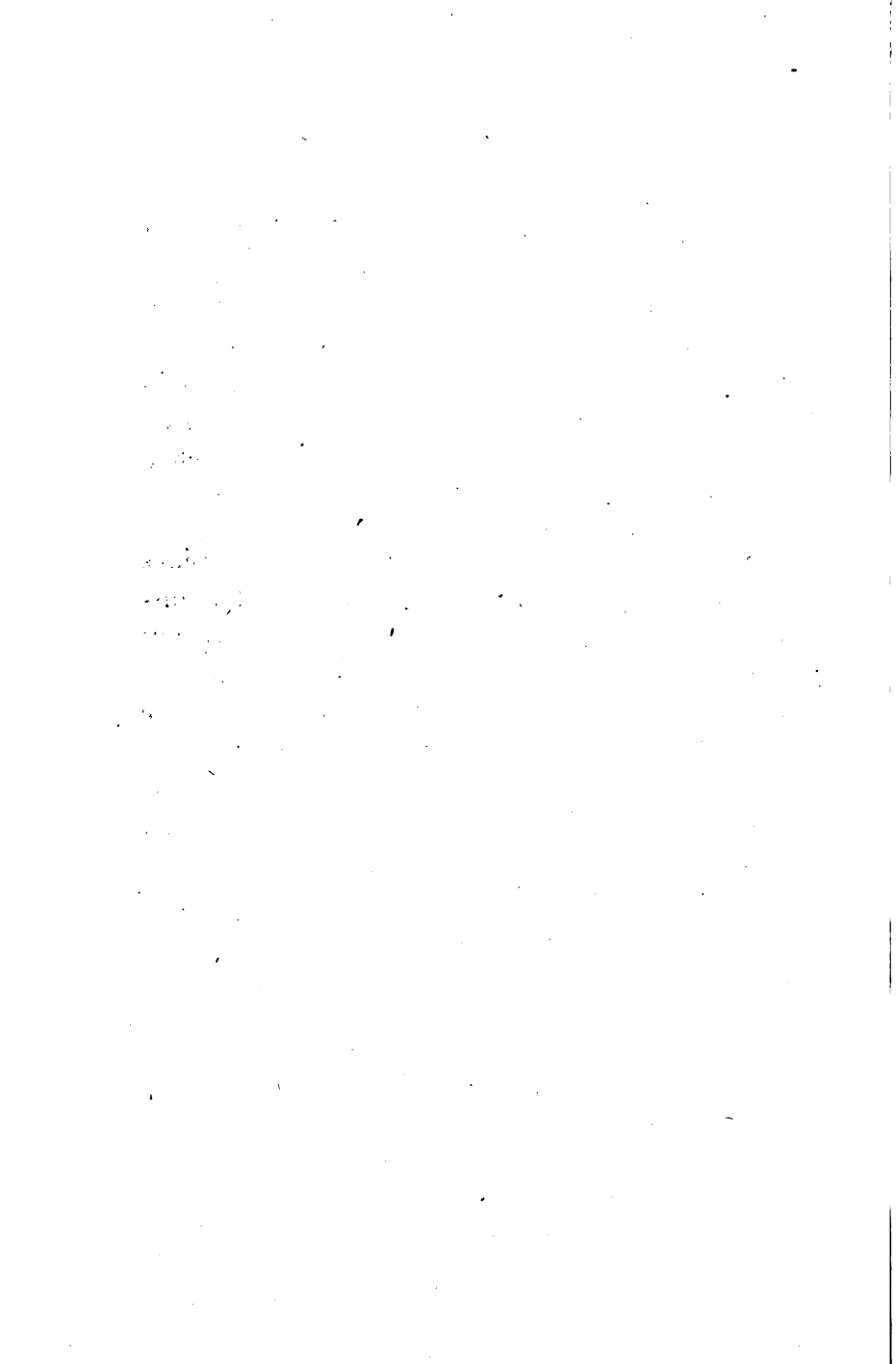


of blessing and of life in ourselves and in all other things.

**GOD**, it is plain, could effect every purpose of good here below by His own *immediate* power and operation, without the instrumentality of man. But in His mercy and wisdom He has decreed to take man into a kind of partnership with Him in the promotion of good, that so man may be partaker also of the happiness resulting from such a partnership.

Let us then learn, in our several relationships here below, to respect, as the mediate and ministering agents of **GOD**, all who are appointed over us for our good, whether they be our natural, our civil, or our spiritual parents; and then in all we shall see and exalt the **GREAT** and **HOLY GOD**, which is the great end of the commandment, the great design of all subordinate authority, whether domestic, civil, or spiritual, because it is the great eternal law of blessing, of righteousness, and of life, in that kingdom where **GOD** is *All in All*.

**AMEN.**



## SERMON XXXIV.

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Exod. xx. 12.

*Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee.*

**I**N a former discourse on these words, I endeavoured to point out and enforce their *natural* or *literal* sense, as relating to the duty of children towards their natural parents, of subjects towards their rulers, and of people towards their spiritual teachers and pastors.

I shall now proceed, as I purposed, to point out and enforce the *spiritual* sense of this commandment, by endeavouring to shew, according to that sense, what we are to understand by *father* and *mother*, and what is the *honour* due unto them.

It cannot surely sound strange in the ears of a congregation of Christians, to be told of a *spiritual father* and *mother*, that is to say, of parents, from whom we are to derive our *spiritual* birth and education.

For we are all taught, by the wisdom of GOD, to acknowledge, that *except we be born again we cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven*, (John iii. 3.) in other words, that except a *new man* be born and formed in us, altogether distinct from the old or natural man, of different dispositions, of a different way of thinking, of a different mode and ground of acting, we cannot be meet to have any *inheritance with the saints in light*.

This, I say, we are all taught from infancy to acknowledge; and further, we learn also, from the conclusions of reason, as well as from the light of revelation, that this new man cannot possibly beget himself, because every rational mind must plainly see, that it is impossible for any creature to be its own creator. As therefore the old or natural man could never have had existence unless there had been parents of that existence, and as his existence thus proves the prior existence of his parents, in like manner the new or spiritual man is indebted for his existence to *spiritual parents*, and his existence therefore in like manner demonstrates the prior existence of those parents.

But who then shall we say are these spiritual parents to whom the new or spiritual man owes at once his being and his birth? This is a question which, it is to be feared, but few consider, and to which few can give a proper answer. We can all

see the necessity of a spiritual father and mother to produce a spiritual birth, that is, a child of GOD, or a true Christian, but then we do not all so clearly see, and so seriously consider, who is that *spiritual father*, and who is that *spiritual mother*, from whom this blessed birth is derived.

And yet to see and consider this must surely be allowed, by every serious mind, to be a matter of the utmost importance, for unless we know our *spiritual father* and *mother*, who and what they are, how is it possible we can rightly *honour* them? And unless we rightly *honour* them, how can we rightly keep the commandment? And unless we keep the commandment, what ground have we to hope for a participation of the annexed blessing?

I am persuaded, therefore, that all amongst you, who fear GOD, and are seeking salvation, will give me an attentive and patient hearing, whilst I endeavour to point out and make known to you these your *spiritual parents*, that so you may be led rightly to *honour* them, and thus secure to yourselves the blessing resulting from that honour. And as a child, suppose, that had never seen and known his earthly parents, would exceedingly rejoice if any one should inform him where he might see and become acquainted with them, especially if his parents were persons of high worldly rank and dignity, even so shall we rejoice, but with a joy infi-

nately higher in degree and eminence, when we come to see and become acquainted with our heavenly parents, and especially when we discover their transcendent, because divine rank and dignity.

But to proceed. The **ALMIGHTY**, in His **MOST HOLY WORD**, has been pleased to supply us with the fullest and most satisfactory information, in an endless variety of passages, concerning these our *spiritual parents*. For we there learn, that the new man in the regeneration is a *child of GOD*: He is therefore said to be *begotten of GOD*, and to be *born of GOD*; and it is in this sense especially that **GOD**, or the **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, is emphatically called **FATHER, MAKER, and CREATOR**, but especially the **Father, Maker, and Creator** of the new man in the regeneration, agreeable to the tenor of those most interesting and edifying words, “*To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of GOD.*” (John i. 12.)

But this is not all, for from the same source of heavenly truth we are made acquainted with divers particulars relating to this new birth. We learn, for instance, that it is not produced immediately and instantaneously by **GOD**, but by means of His **HOLY WORD**, and by multiplied processes and operations in regard to that Word, both of an internal and external kind, which processes and

operations surpass all human comprehension to conceive, and all human speech to utter.

Suffice it then to observe, that in this great and astonishing work, the **GOD** of **Heaven**, whose high and holy name is **JESUS CHRIST**, exerteth two particular and distinct operations, one *internal* and the other *external*, and that with respect to the first He is called a **FATHER** in the regeneration, and with respect to the other He is called a **MOTHER**.

As for example. We all allow, or we all ought to allow, (since we are continually taught it in the Holy Scriptures of truth,) that **GOD**, or our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, exerteth a continual *internal* operation, by means of His internal **WORD** or **SPIRIT**, upon the hearts of all mankind, whereby He is ever labouring to reform them, to renew them, to beget them in His own image, and fashion them after His own likeness; and this testimony of the Holy Scriptures is confirmed by the experience of all serious Christians who diligently attend to what passes in their own minds and consciences.

We must also allow further, since daily experience convinces us of the truth, that the same **GOD** and **LORD** exerteth also what may be called an *external* operation upon us by means of His *external* **WORD**, and by means also of sound and whole-

some doctrines of heavenly truth thence derived. For who hath not been made sensible, at one time or other, of this external operation of the **MOST HIGH**? Who hath not heard or read the **WORD OF GOD**, and the doctrines of truth thence derived? And who hath not felt himself affected by that **Word**, and those doctrines, in proportion to the earnestness and attention with which he heard, and read them?

Here then permit me only to observe, that **GOD**, or the **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, in respect to His *internal* operation upon our souls, is called a **FATHER** in the regeneration, and in respect to His *external* operation, He is called a **MOTHER**; or in other words, He begets man anew, and makes him His child, by the spirit of heavenly love and charity *from within*, operating upon the spirit of heavenly truth or knowledge *from without*.

Behold here then, Beloved, our true **FATHER** and our true **MOTHER** in the regeneration! Our true *Father* is the divine love of **JESUS CHRIST** manifesting itself, or desiring to manifest itself, as a begetting, regenerating power of heavenly life in the inmost principle of our hearts or wills, whilst our true *Mother* is the divine wisdom or truth of **JESUS CHRIST** and His **WORD**, manifesting itself, or desiring to manifest itself, as a cherisher, nourisher, and power to bring forth that heavenly



life in our understandings. Or in other words, our FATHER is *Charity* from JESUS CHRIST, our MOTHER is *Faith* from Him; our FATHER is the DIVINE GOODNESS, our MOTHER is the DIVINE TRUTH; our FATHER therefore is the SPIRIT or WORD OF GOD received and operating *internally*, our MOTHER is the same Spirit and Word received and operating *externally*.

This subject may be further elucidated by the consideration, that in the Sacred Scriptures JESUS CHRIST is so frequently called by the holy and significant name of BRIDEGROOM and HUSBAND, in regard to His church or people, and that His church or people, on the other hand, are so frequently called His *Bride* and *Wife*. But what shall we say is the true and proper ground of this sacred relationship? No other can be assigned than this, that JESUS CHRIST and His church are united in a *holy marriage*, as love and wisdom, or as goodness and truth are united, JESUS CHRIST being the SUPREME LOVE or GOODNESS, and His church, by virtue of the reception of His HOLY WORD, being a form of the purest *wisdom* or *truth*. Hence are derived all the various progenies of graces, virtues, and excellencies, which are to be found amongst mankind. All, I say, are derived, like so many families, from this union of love and of wisdom, or of goodness and of truth,

and without this union no grace, no virtue, no excellence, can possibly be produced. For if we examine this subject deeply, and with an enlightened eye, we shall then be enabled to discern clearly, that love of itself, without wisdom, can produce nothing, and that wisdom, in like manner, of herself, without love, is alike barren and unproductive! For the same reason, goodness of itself, without truth, and truth of itself without goodness, can yield no fruit, being totally incapable of multiplication and increase. Hence then it may plainly be seen, as by the light of a noon-day sun, that every regenerate man is the offspring of the divine love and wisdom united, and that consequently the divine love is properly the *Father*, and the divine wisdom the *Mother*, of every grace, virtue, and excellence, which enter into the composition of that child of the MOST HIGH.

But what is the sacred and edifying conclusion at which we are now arrived, and how do all the petty distinctions of human birth and descent vanish before it! We have all of us, it appears, *spiritual parents*, a spiritual *father* and a spiritual *mother*, as far exceeding in dignity, in origin, and in duration, all the parents which the most renowned princes of this world can boast, as Heaven is superior to earth, GOD to man, and eternity to time. Let us then lift up our heads, first to ac-

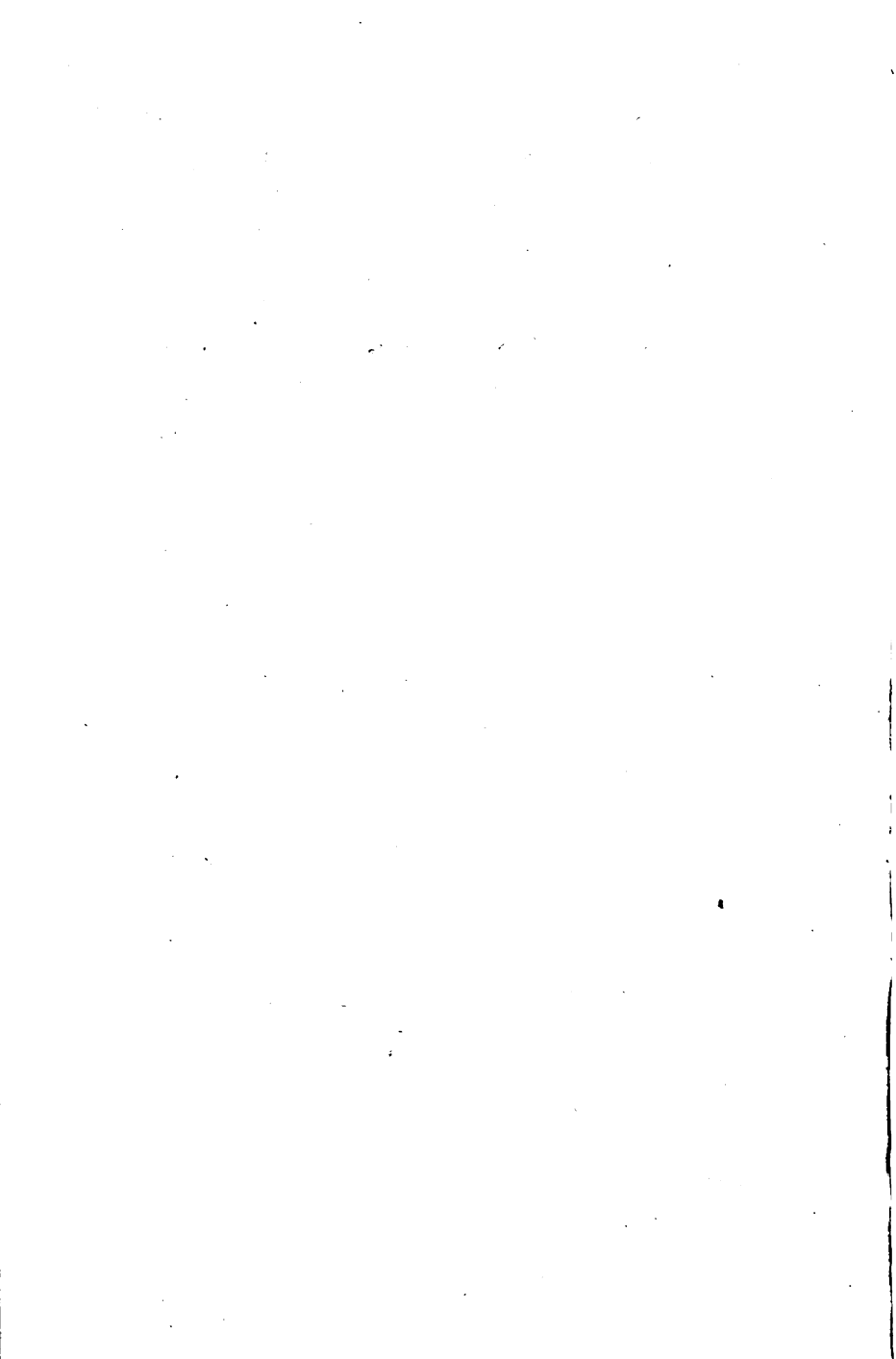
knowledge, and then to venerate this our high parentage, this transcendence of our birth and our formation! We have, perhaps, been accustomed to view ourselves only as the descendants of earthly parents, and those possibly not the most honourable in the eyes of men. But henceforth let us learn to recognize our heavenly descent. Let us claim, as our *birth-right*, the *kindred* proper to us as men, but especially as Christians, so as to discern clearly to what *family* we belong, and who are our *progenitors*. This is the *first* step towards *honouring* our spiritual *father* and *mother*, for until we know and acknowledge who they are, and what is their superior *nobility* and *dignity*, it is impossible for us to *honour* them aright.

Let us not, however, stop here, but proceed to the *second* step necessary to conduct us to a just and proper *honour* of those to whom we owe so much. Is it asked what this *second* step is? I wish to reply, every wise and good child of high birth is not content merely with knowing and acknowledging his parents, but he delights in doing their will, in obeying their counsels, in executing their commands, and thus in living a life in agreement with the dignity of his parentage. Behold here then the true *honour* which our *spiritual parents*, the divine love and wisdom, require of us, and which they require, not for their own sakes,

but for our's, that we may enter into all the happiness of our high and heavenly birth! We must submit our wills to their's, until our wills and their's be one; we must hearken to the voice of our *spiritual father*, ever commanding us to make His love the measure of our own; and we must hearken to the voice of our *spiritual mother*, ever instilling into our minds the bright and edifying lessons of her eternal wisdom. We must thus have a *two-fold* respect, both to the one and to the other, recollecting that love without wisdom is nothing, and that wisdom, in like manner, is nothing without love. Thus we must labour to unite in our minds the love of our *father* with the wisdom of our *mother*, and to form our lives in agreement with both, and then we may hope to become, finally, their pure, wise, and happy children, and to *honour* them with the high *honour* due to their name.

Then, too, if we continue faithful in this blessed work, we may rest satisfied in the comfortable persuasion, that, sooner or later, we shall experience the blessing of the annexed promise, "*Thy days shall be long in the land which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee.*" For then our heavenly parents will acknowledge us for their own children. They will also discover to us their high rank and dignity. They will convince us, too, that by virtue

of our birth, we are heirs of a great kingdom, and they will besides give us a foresight and foretaste of the glories of that kingdom. We shall perceive thus, that by *the land which the LORD our GOD giveth*, is meant the kingdom of Heaven, and in this kingdom we shall be assured, to our unspeakable joy, there is *length of days*, because it is *an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, which passeth not away*. AMEN.



## SERMON XXXV.

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Exod. xx. 13.

*Thou shalt not kill, or, as it is otherwise rendered,  
Thou shalt do no murder.*

**I**T is a great and fatal error with the generality of mankind, that they regard only the *outsides* of virtue and of vice as they appear before men; whilst they are careless about their *inward* forms and characters as they appear in the sight of GOD. Thus they measure themselves and their actions only by an *external* law. They fancy they are free from sin if they keep clear of the *outward* act; and that they practise holiness if the deeds of their *outward* man alone be holy. Thus they grievously deceive and impose upon their own souls, mistaking shadows of things for substances, and appearances for realities, whilst they forget that law which *requireth truth in the inward parts*, and which hath prescribed, as an indispensable rule of life to every child of man, “*Cleanse first the inside of the cup and platter, that the outside may be clean also.*” (Matt. xxiii. 26.)

It were easy to evince the truth of the above observation in a variety of instances, but in none

is it more verified than in respect to the great sin forbidden in my text. For how few consider the true nature and essential character of the sin of *murder* ! How many fancy themselves clear of this sin, because they never committed it in its *outward* form ! How many are dreadfully guilty, on this occasion, who yet do not know or apprehend their guilt ! All which cometh to pass merely for want of looking beyond the *surfaces* of vice and virtue, and contemplating them according to their *inward essences* and *real characters*.

To preserve you, Beloved, from such an unhappy delusion ; to open your eyes to the true nature of that terrible sin forbidden in my text ; to deliver you from its deadly guilt ; to fit and prepare your minds thus for the illuminations of the light of charity, and that ye may come to know and apprehend in yourselves the heavenly and ever-blessed life of that holy virtue ; may I now bespeak your patient hearing, whilst I endeavour to unfold to you the true nature and meaning of the sin of *murder*, both as to its *external* and *internal* characters.

*Murder*, we all know, consisteth in taking away the bodily life of another premeditatedly and with malice ; I say, premeditatedly and with malice, because the mere destruction of another's life, if it be by what is called accident, and with-



out malicious intention, doth not constitute *murder*, but is regarded as a lesser crime, both by the laws of GOD and of man.

To take away, therefore, the bodily life of another, is the *outward form* of murder; to do it premeditatedly and with malice, is its *inward form* or *essence*.

Hence it is plain that premeditated malice or hatred towards any one constituteth the real guilt and essential character of the sin of *murder*, and accordingly it is declared by the apostle, that *he who hateth his brother is a murderer*. (1 John, iii. 15.)

But how awful is this consideration! For we learn from it that there is murder in every malicious and hateful temper which the heart of man indulgeth against any of his fellow-creatures, and though the fear of human laws may prevent his perpetrating the outward act; though his hands may be restrained from external violence by external motives, such as the loss of reputation, or the fear of temporal judicatures; yet in the sight of GOD such a person is a *real murderer*, inasmuch as the very spirit and essential guilt of *murder* abideth in his heart.

Let us ponder awhile on this consideration, that it may have its due effect upon us. We are but

too apt to regard malice, hatred, enmity, contempt of others, unreasonable aversion, and the like corrupt tempers, exercised towards our fellow-creatures, as things of small account which do not much concern us. But have we ever considered what these things are in themselves? Have we ever considered, I say, that so far as they are wilfully indulged, they are *murders*, whether brought forth into outward act or not? Have we ever considered, therefore, that we may be committing murder in our hearts whilst our hands are innocent and unstained; and that in the sight of GOD we may be shedders of human blood, whilst in the sight of men we bear the character of harmless, inoffensive, and even compassionate Christians?

But further. Murder, in its genuine sense, hath still a more extended signification. For we may not only hurt and destroy the *bodily life* of another, but we may also hurt and destroy his *spiritual life*, that is, the life of his *soul* or *spirit*, and as spiritual life is of an infinitely higher value and importance in the sight of GOD than bodily life, so the guilt of hurting or destroying it must of necessity rise in the same proportion.

As murder, however, according to this sense, is little considered by the generality of persons, and yet is of the utmost importance to be considered, it may be expedient to dwell more particularly upon the subject.

Every one knoweth, or may know, that the life of man is two-fold, since he hath *temporal* or *corporeal* life, which appertaineth to the body, and he hath *spiritual* or *eternal* life, which appertaineth to his soul. The former is common to him with the brutes that perish ; the latter he possesses by virtue of his conjunction with GOD, whereby he was intended to partake of a blessed immortality.

Now it is possible that man may suffer injury in respect to both these kinds of life, or be totally deprived of them, for he is deprived of temporal or bodily life by what is called temporal death ; and he is deprived of eternal or spiritual life by what is called eternal or spiritual death.

But what shall we say is eternal or spiritual death ? and in what doth this terrible deprivation of life consist ? The question, Beloved, is of the first importance to every serious and considerate mind, and the answer to it will lead us directly to a right understanding of the true nature of *spiritual murder*.

Now the scriptures of truth declare, that eternal or spiritual death consisteth in being void of love towards GOD and charity towards our neighbour. The soul in itself can never *die*, in the common acceptance of the word, so as to cease to exist ; but it is said to die, and it doth really die the

most dreadful of all deaths, when it ceaseth to love **GOD** and its neighbour; when it no longer breatheth, or hath a desire to breathe this divine, and blessed, and only heavenly life of love and charity from **GOD**; when living only to itself, and under the influence of evil passions and unsanctified affections, it hath no perception of, no relish for, the eternal joys and delights of righteousness, mercy, charity, truth, and all that *wisdom which is from above*.

Here, then, every enlightened mind will be enabled to see and distinguish the true nature and meaning of what may be called *spiritual murder*, or the hurting or destroying spiritual life.

For spiritual life, we have seen, is love towards **GOD** and charity towards our neighbour: Whosoever, therefore, either in will, thought, word, or deed, premeditatedly and maliciously, either in himself or another, hurteth and destroyeth this heavenly and eternal life, this image of the **MOST HIGH GOD**, he is a *spiritual murderer*; he offendeth against the real sense of the commandment; he is highly guilty, therefore, in the sight of **GOD**; and though he may possibly never imbrue his hands in the *bodily* blood of any of his fellow-creatures, being restrained by external laws; though he may possibly pass amongst men for an innocent and guiltless person; yet doubtless his real name

and character in GOD's book is that of a *shedder of spiritual blood*, and, sooner or later, he must experience in himself all the force of that just but terrible sentence, *Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed.* (Gen. ix. 6.)

Every sinful affection, therefore, wilfully cherished, is a *'murderer*; so also is every corrupt thought, every bad temper, every base and criminal action; and that for this plain and eternal reason, because every such affection, such thought, such temper, and such action, deliberately indulged in, and not restrained by higher principles, has a direct and immediate tendency to destroy in the soul of man the life and the image of the GREAT and HOLY GOD, and thereby plunge him into the most terrible of all deaths, a death to the life of righteousness, of Heaven, and of all true peace and joy,

Having thus endeavoured to point out to you the true nature and full extent of the sin of *murder*, I shall beg leave further to trespass on your patience, whilst I give you a few cautions and exhortations which may tend to preserve you from incurring the guilt of so great a sin.

And 1st. Would you keep clear of this sin in *spirit* as well as in *deed*? Then watch well over every temper of malice, hatred, aversion, or con-

tempt towards any person or any creature of **GOD**, because in every such temper there assuredly dwelleth the spirit and guilt of *murder*. If then you discover at any time any such temper to arise in you, regard it as the essential *seed of murder*; consider it as another *Cain* who would go forth to slay his brother *Abel*; make haste, therefore, to confess your sin unto **GOD**, and pray to **Him**, out of a penitent and sincere heart, to put away your sin, and to give you grace to love and honour your fellow-creatures as you would have them love and honour you.

2ndly. Would you wish not only to be preserved from the guilt of hurting and destroying your neighbour's *bodily* life, but of hurting and destroying also his *spiritual* life? Then watch well in yourselves over every purpose, thought, word, and deed, of the natural or sensual man in you, that is opposite to the pure love of **GOD** and charity towards your neighbour; regard all defiled affections as the murderers of **GOD**'s image; call them the crucifiers of **JESUS CHRIST**; consider them as so many wicked *Herods*, so many *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, in your own heart and life, going about to shed the blood of the just. And if at any time you discover such affections in yourselves, confess them before the **GOD** of mercy; supplicate **His** grace incessantly, and out of a pure repentance,

that henceforth no such defiled things may have place in you, but that you may be enabled to love **GOD** above all things, and your neighbour as yourselves, and to fulfil all the righteous laws of such heavenly love: learn thus of **GOD** to honour and respect His holy image, all His manifestations, all His appearances, all His mercies, all His laws and ordinances, whether in yourself or in any of the creatures of **GOD**; and make it your chief labour not to defile, not to destroy this image, but rather to purify, to perfect, to strengthen, to make it more and more alive in every creature capable of receiving it; for this purpose be careful to walk blameless in all the ways of **GOD**'s commandments; attend to, and obey the divine law of life in yourselves, and lead others to attend to, and obey the same by your good examples. Thus and thus only will ye escape all the pollution and guilt of the great sin of *murder*. But ye will not only escape pollution and guilt. For it is the blessed privilege of those who keep **GOD**'s commandments, that in so doing they attain unto purity and peace of heart and conscience. In proportion, therefore, and as ye arise out of the pollution and guilt of *murder*; as ye are delivered, through the grace and mercy of the **HOLY ONE**, from so great a death; as ye depart out of this kingdom of satan and all iniquity; ye will be translated into the blessed kingdom of **JESUS CHRIST**; ye will be

admitted amongst the societies of blessed innocent spirits; ye will recover in yourselves the divine image; ye will rejoice at its recovery in your fellow-saints; ye will love all, but ye will love those especially in whom you discover any features of the divine likeness, any resemblance of that eternal beauty which is the source of all good. Thus, finally, being purified from all the defilements of sin, consisting in the malice, hatred, unrighteousness, and uncharitableness of an evil, selfish, and worldly love, and being renewed in the blessed spirit of mercy, meekness, and charity, ye will enter into the rest of GOD, and your eternal lot will be with those that love Him and keep His commandments. AMEN.



# SERMON XXXVI.

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Exod. xx. 14.

*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

**EVERY** one knows, that by adultery is meant all uncleanness of the flesh, whether in act or in discourse, or even in thought and concupiscence. For it is possible to commit this sin in the *spirit*, or the *inner man*, before **GOD**, when yet the *body* or *outward man* shall be kept entirely clean, and shall appear clean in the sight of men. Every one therefore knows, that in this commandment is imposed on every Christian the sacred and eternal obligation to *keep his body in temperance, soberness, and chastity*; and for this purpose to set a watch also over all inward thoughts, desires, and affections.

But though all this be well known, yet few, it is to be feared, consider the inward ground of this commandment; few look further than to its outward or literal sense; few are at the pains to examine the sin of adultery in its inward spiritual origin; and yet it is by such an examination only that we can come at the true knowledge of this

tremendous evil, and thus escape all the pollution, condemnation, and destruction, which ever attend its footsteps.

May I then beg your present serious attention whilst I endeavour to open and explain to you the internal ground, nature, and essence of that sin.

It is not possible however to do this without first considering the nature of that connection which subsists between the soul of man and its **GOD**, its **CREATOR**, and **REDEEMER**, and therefore I shall first endeavour to unfold to you the nature of this sacred connection.

That **GOD**, or the **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, hath an internal connection or communication with the soul of every man, is a great Scripture doctrine, which none can be ignorant of who cast a serious eye upon the sacred pages of the eternal truth.

That by virtue of such connection or communication the **LORD** is disposed to bless all His creatures, by entering into an eternal covenant of conjunction with them; by gathering them unto Himself; by replenishing them with the fulness of all spiritual blessing from Himself, and delivering them from the power and the curse of every evil; is a truth equally manifested and confirmed by the same holy and high authority.

This connection or communication of GOD with the soul, and of the soul with GOD, is, in the same Word of Truth, frequently called and compared to a *marriage*, in which marriage the LORD JESUS CHRIST is represented under the figure of the BRIDEGROOM or HUSBAND, and the believing soul under the figure of the *Bride* or *Wife*.

Hence come those numberless expressions in Scripture, denoting this holy relationship and representation, as where the kingdom of Heaven is compared to a *marriage*; (Matt. xxii. 1 to 15. Chap. xxv. 1 to 14.) where the preparation for that kingdom is described by the figure of putting on *the marriage garment*; (Matt. xxii. 12.) where the LORD is represented as rejoicing over true believers *as a Bridegroom rejoiceth over the Bride*; (Isaiah lxii. 5.) where the true church, or the truly faithful soul, is called *the Bride, the Lamb's Wife*; (Rev. xxi. 9.) where, lastly, it is written, "*Blessed are they who are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb*;" (Rev. xix. 9.) not to mention divers other expressions of a similar kind, grounded in the same deep and holy signification.

I shall only observe, further, concerning this connection or communication of the soul with GOD, that it is common to every man that is born into the world; it is the blessed privilege of every fallen son of Adam; but let it be well observed, it

doth not follow, because all have *connection* with GOD, that all have *conjunction* with Him, for *conjunction* implies somewhat more than mere *connection*, as in a worldly way, we know, people may be *connected* together, and yet not *joined together* by the bond of mutual affection: and just so it is between the soul and GOD. For the most wicked and abandoned have *connection* with GOD, because they receive life continually from Him, and with life the power of converting themselves to GOD and of entering thereby into conjunction; but it is the blessed privilege of the converted and penitent soul alone to have *conjunction* with GOD, that is, to enter into *marriage-union* with Him, which union implies a preparation on the part of the soul, and a meetness thereby to love GOD as it is beloved by Him, therefore JESUS CHRIST says, speaking of this conjunction, *Abide in ME, and I in you*, to instruct us, that the abiding must be *mutual*, otherwise conjunction cannot be effected.

Here, then, if our eyes be opened to see at all into the nature of this our connection and communication with GOD, and particularly of our conjunction with Him, we shall be enabled to see clearly into the true ground, nature, and essence of *spiritual adultery*, from whence all outward adultery proceeds.

For *spiritual adultery*, it will here be seen, consists in the deliberate indulgence of every evil lust

and false imagination of the natural man, which may have a tendency to divert from, or to defile, or to destroy the holy conjunction which the **LORD** is desirous to effect between Himself and every soul of man.

For all *true conjunction*, or *marriage-union*, it must be very plain, depends altogether on the strength and purity of reciprocal love. If this love then be wanting there can be no conjunction; or if this love be perverted or defiled, then the conjunction must, of necessity, in the same proportion be weakened or utterly destroyed.

Every inordinate affection, therefore, every earthly lust, every vain desire, every idle thought, which hath a tendency to weaken, to pervert, or defile our love towards **GOD**, to lessen our joy in Him, to make us less earnest about the things of His kingdom, this is an *adulterous* lust; this is a rebel against the holy commandment; this therefore is an enemy to **GOD** and our own souls, inasmuch as it would *put asunder what GOD would join together*, and thereby break the marriage-union betwixt us and **GOD**, on which depends all our blessedness, whether in time or in eternity.

And here we may discover the true reason why the Jews, of old, were so often reproved by **GOD** as *adulterers* and *adulteresses*. It was not only be-

cause they were false to the marriage-tye one with another, but it was because they were false to their **GOD**; they did not abide in His love; they broke this *marriage-bond* of eternal obligation, by suffering worldly, selfish, carnal affections, to have a place in that sanctuary of their hearts which should have been preserved clean and pure as the chaste *bride-chamber* of the heavenly **BRIDE-GROOM**.

Behold here too, Beloved, the source of much adultery, which, it is to be feared, doth unhappily abound at this day amongst professing Christians, calling aloud for divine reproof, and threatening our earth with destruction and desolation!

How few amongst us do aright consider! how fewer still are rightly faithful to the marriage-tye betwixt **GOD** and our own souls! How is this holy bond slighted! how is it defiled! how is it in danger of being for ever broken and destroyed by every *adulterous* lust that presseth to be accepted! How many doth the love of this world allure away and make false to the pure delights of the heavenly marriage! How many hearts doth covetousness turn from **GOD**! How many affections doth pleasure ensnare and sensuality pollute! How many defile themselves with the concupiscencies of the flesh! How many are seduced from the love of **GOD** by the more secret, insinuating artifices of

self-love! Where, in short, shall we find that pure and faithful soul, which, having made itself ready for the BRIDEGROOM, and prepared to *enter in with Him to the marriage*, is careful to preserve itself clean from all defilement, that it may become the pure *Bride and Wife* of JESUS CHRIST?

To conclude. When the beloved John was favoured, in vision, with a sight of the New Jerusalem; when he was called by the especial invitation of the MOST HIGH to behold the glories of the heavenly city, we read that one of the seven angels came and talked to him, saying, “*Come hither, I will shew thee the Bride, the LAMB’S Wife. And he carried him away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed him that great city the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from GOD, having the glory of GOD, and her light was like unto a stone most precious.*” (Rev. xxi. 9, 10, 11.)

There are two things in this account which demand our serious attention, and which, if well considered, will be a sure preservative against spiritual adultery. 1st. The *sight of the Bride, the LAMB’S Wife*: and 2ndly. *Her ornaments; she had the glory of GOD, and her light was like unto a stone most precious.*

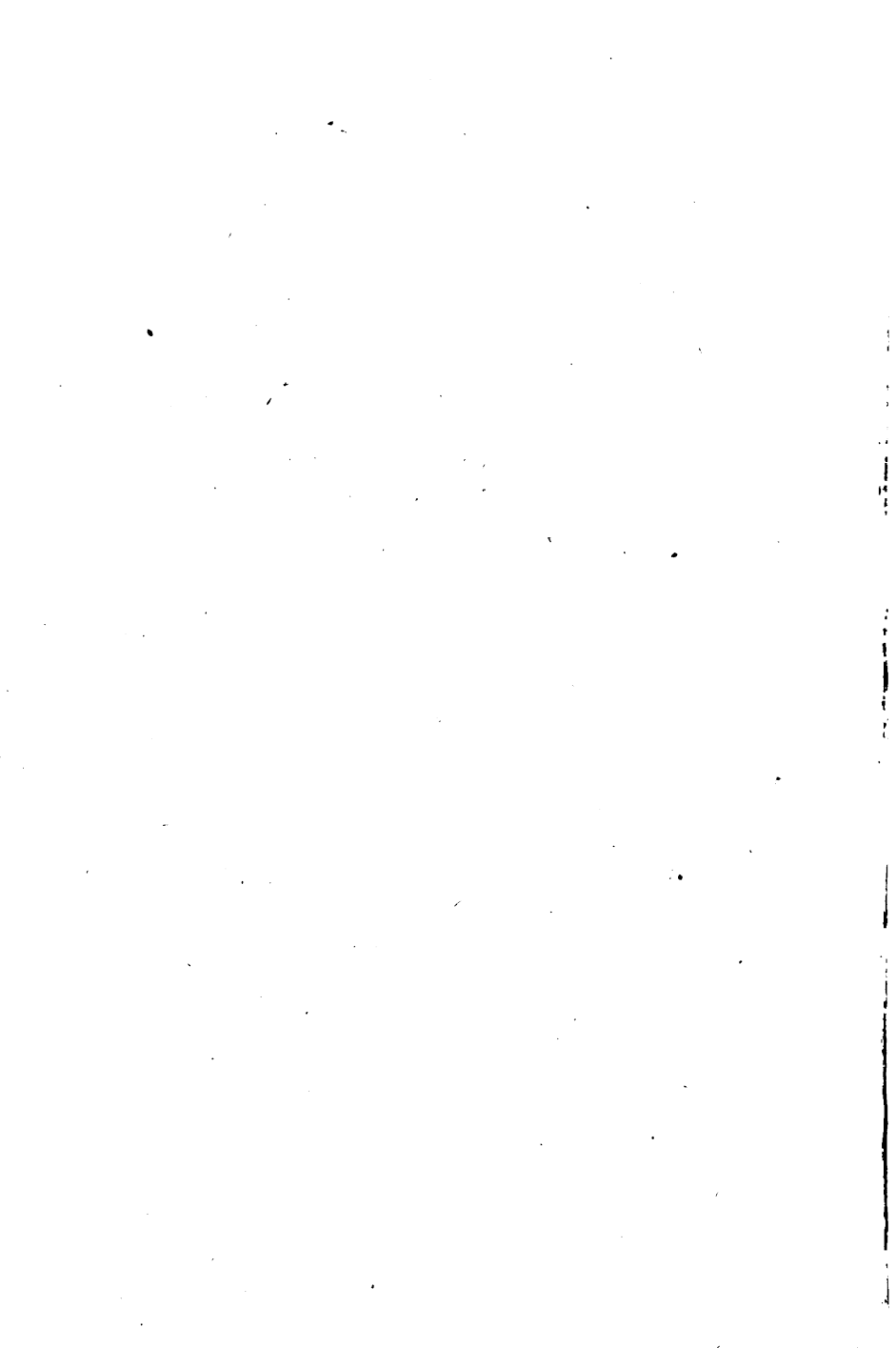
Do we wish then, Beloved, to come out of all defilement of adulterous lusts, and to be prepared

as a *holy Bride and Wife* of the LAMB JESUS CHRIST, and to have joy in Him, and He in us, and to enter into the bonds of an eternal marriage with Him? Let us then attend well to the counsel of the heavenly messenger, saying to us as he said unto John, *Come hither, I will shew thee the Bride, the LAMB's Wife.* Let us go up with him unto the *great and high mountain*, the mountain of the divine love and purity: Let us contemplate there, in the inmost recesses of our souls, the glories of the New Jerusalem: Let us consider the holiness which be-fitteth all those who are to have a part in that city, and are to be stiled by the sacred name and character of the *Bride, the LAMB's Wife.* They must *have the glory of GOD, and their light must be like unto a stone most precious*; in other words, they must be purified both in will and in understanding, through the PURE WORD OF GOD, from all the defilements of an earthly, selfish, and carnal love.

Oh then let us consider well these things. Let us set the *glories of GOD* and the New Jerusalem ever before our eyes. Let us look upon ourselves as intended, and consecrated by the divine mercy, to have a part in the heavenly city; to become *the Bride, the LAMB's Wife*; to enter in with Him to the *marriage.* These holy considerations will preserve us from the defilements of every adulterous lust; they will administer light, whereby we



may discover all the approaches of unclean affections and thoughts; and they will administer strength also to combat and renounce them; and thus if we continue patient, steady, and faithful, waiting for the perfect purification, they will finally introduce us to all that blessing of which the prophet spake, when he said, "*Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate, but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.*" (Isaiah lxii. 4.) AMEN.



# SERMON XXXVII.

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Exod. xx. 15.

*Thou shalt not steal.*

**I**T is the great end of the commandments of **GOD** to restore man to purity, order, and uprightness in heart and life, and thereby to peace in **GOD**. Man, by nature, is separated from this peace, because by nature he is full of impurity and disorder, and far from the ways of uprightness; for by nature he loves himself and the world better than **GOD** and his neighbour. In proportion however as through divine grace he becomes obedient to the commandments of **GOD**, in the same proportion his heart and life are rendered pure, his nature is restored to order, his paths become upright, he acquaints and conjoins himself with **GOD**, and is at peace with Him.

The commandments of **GOD** however cannot be the means of restoring man to purity, order, and uprightness, but by pointing out to him, and leading him to depart from, the ways of impurity, of disorder, and unrighteousness. It is therefore said, *Thou shalt do NO murder; Thou shalt NOT commit*

*adultery* ; and in the words of the text, *Thou shalt NOT steal*, to instruct us, that we must first *cease to do evil* before we can *learn to do well* ; in other words, we must restrain in ourselves, by a vigorous self-denial, all the corrupt propensities of our natures, before we can receive from **GOD** all those pure and heavenly affections, graces, and virtues, which are to be our preparation for **His** eternal kingdom.

We have already considered the corrupt propensities of our natures, as pointed out in the sins of *murder* and *adultery*, under all their several forms and manifestations, whether *natural* or *spiritual*. May I now bespeak your attention whilst I endeavour to point out to you another natural propensity equally corrupt and mischievous, as expressed in this commandment, *Thou shalt not steal*. And may the **GOD** of peace and love incline all our hearts to hearken diligently to **His** heavenly counsel, as manifested in this divine law, that so examining our lives by the tenor of its purity and wisdom, we may discover all our departures from **His** rest, may amend our ways, and finally return to the bosom of peace in the love and favour of our **ALMIGHTY FATHER** and **REDEEMER** !

*Stealing* or *theft*, like *murder* and *adultery*, is of two kinds, for there is *natural* stealing and there is *spiritual* stealing : We may rob our neigh-

*bour*, we may also rob GOD: It is a sin therefore which enters very deeply into our natures, and if it be not checked in time is most fatal and destructive: It is also a sin of a very subtle and delusive nature, so that unless we are at the pains to examine ourselves very attentively concerning it, and by a very clear light from GOD and His Word, we shall never be able to discover it in all its windings and secret workings.

For 1st. With respect to *natural* theft, or what relates to our *neighbour*, we may rob him, or steal from him, in an indefinite variety of ways. It is not only by a violent invasion of his property, or by laying our hands on his possessions, that we may sin against the commandment, but we are robbers of our neighbour by every act of fraud, of insincerity, and injustice. We do not, perhaps, break into our neighbour's house and spoil his goods; but do we consider, that every design to over-reach our neighbour, or to impose upon him in our dealings with him, or to take advantage of his ignorance and our own skill, is, in every instance, a species of forbidden theft, and as criminal therefore in the sight of GOD as to break into our neighbour's house? Do we consider also, that we may rob our neighbour of his reputation, by thinking and speaking contemptuously of him *ourselves*, or leading *others* to think and speak contemp-

tuously of him? Yea, it is possible we may rob him of what is still dearer to him, viz. his spiritual possessions, his faith, his charity, his good principles, his persuasions relating to GOD and his duty. For in whatever instance, either by word or deed, we endeavour to weaken our neighbour's belief in GOD and His law, and to slacken his zeal in the practice of what is good, we are so far guilty of theft, the more heinous and abominable, as it has a tendency to deprive our neighbour of his most valuable property and possessions.

And oh! may all well consider this, who are desirous to return into the paths of uprightness, and to be found faithful before GOD, and pure from all fraud and injustice! There are too many, it is to be feared, who have but very limited notions, and very ill-informed or ill-regulated consciences in this respect; too many, who would tremble to think of invading their neighbour's worldly goods, and who yet make very light of secret acts of fraud, and insincerity, and injustice; too many who are tender and scrupulous of injuring their neighbour's *property*, who yet are very heedless about his *good name* and *reputation*; too many who would think it a grievous crime to deprive their neighbour of his fame or of his fortune, who yet think it no crime to deprive him of what is infinitely more precious, viz. his good principles, his faith in GOD

and another world, his zeal for GOD's service, his hopes of eternal bliss; whilst by their evil examples, by their words and actions, they make no scruple of endeavouring to weaken the foundation of their neighbour's faith, and hope, and charity. And yet how plain is it to see that all such instances of fraud, injustice, insincerity, and theft against our neighbour, are sins at the same time against GOD, being destructive of all heavenly purity, order, and uprightness, and of course, until they be renounced, they must inevitably prevent the offending soul from entering into the enjoyments of the divine rest and peace, which are the blessings of GOD's salvation!

For it ought never to be forgotten by Christians, that *moral* life and its virtues are the *foundations* of *religious* life and its virtues, and consequently that if *morality* be taken away from *religion*, the latter will soon become like a house without a foundation, which cannot stand, because it has nothing to stand upon.

But 2ndly. The sin of stealing extends further than to our neighbour, for it extends even to GOD Himself, so that it is possible we may be guilty of this sin by committing it thus in a *spiritual* as well as in a *natural* sense.

It is according to this *spiritual* sense that the LORD thus reproveth the people of Israel by the



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seeking only to become humble, meek, merciful, just, and upright, that so out of a pure heart he may render unto all their due, *unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto GOD the things that are GOD's?*

But, Beloved, rare and scarce to be found as such a holy temper may be, it is nevertheless what we are all called to attain, because it is the temper and spirit of the Gospel and of all its precepts: It is that temper and spirit which can alone enter into the kingdom of Heaven. We are therefore not only called to it, as being called to and born for Heaven, but we have also power given us, if we will use it faithfully, whereby we may infallibly, and without doubt, secure to ourselves the blessed treasure. For who hath not power, if he would seek it and use it, to keep this short commandment, *Thou shalt not steal?* Who cannot examine himself touching his sincerity in this case with GOD and his neighbour? Who cannot repress and renounce in himself, if he was so disposed, all tempers and inclinations to fraud, to injustice, to insincerity, both as to his fellow-creatures and the **ALMIGHTY GOD?** Who cannot believe, and consider, and say to himself, that all such things are infernal and diabolical, being opposite to the laws and order of **GOD** and **Heaven**, and therefore that he will separate himself from the ac-

cursed thing? And yet who doth not see, that every faithful endeavour, on this occasion, will assuredly be crowned with success, and that for this eternal reason, because the **LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT** is assuredly present with man in every such sincere purpose, joining thus man to **Himself**, and **Himself** to man, and thus exalting man into the regions of eternal purity, order, and peace, by regeneration, whilst it is man's labour to come out of the regions of impurity, disorder, and misery, by repentance and obedience?

Oh then that we did all aright consider these things and lay them seriously to heart! Oh that we did consider, that all is comprehended in the one word **JUSTICE**, properly understood, and that therefore to become **JUST**, just towards **GOD**, and just towards our neighbour, this is to fulfil all righteousness; this is to love **GOD** above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves; this is to be born again from above, and to be made the children of **GOD**; this is to dwell in **GOD**, and to have **GOD** dwelling in us; this, in short, is our best, our only qualification to have admittance into that *holy city* the *New Jerusalem*, which is described to us as *lying four-square*, (*Rev. xxi. 16.*) because *four-square* is the type and figure of the most perfect **JUSTICE**. If then we would gain admittance into this *holy city*, may we recollect this its distinguish-

ing character, and may we also be found *four-square* in all our purposes, thoughts, words, and works! AMEN.

# SERMON XXXVIII.

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Exod. xx. 16.

*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*

**I**N the foregoing discourses on the holy commandments of the Decalogue, I have endeavoured to point out the pre-eminent sanctity of these laws of eternal life in their several senses, both natural and spiritual. I have endeavoured to shew how, by the observance of these laws, conjunction is effected between the obedient soul and its **GOD**; how the powers of evil and darkness are removed, and how the contrary powers of good and of light are exalted; how Heaven is hereby opened, and the true believer, advancing daily in the purification and regeneration, is admitted daily to purer states of righteousness, joy, and peace, in the body and kingdom of **JESUS CHRIST**.

I shall now proceed to shew how the same blessed effects are accomplished by the commandment in my text, *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour*, and how, by a sincere obedience to this commandment, the faithful and peni-

tent soul is delivered from the natural evils of its fallen and sinful state, and restored to purity, peace, and uprightness, in the image and likeness of its **GOD**.

Before any one however can keep this commandment, it will be necessary to understand it aright, and before he can understand it aright, it will be necessary for him to consider and ponder well what is here meant by *bearing false witness*.

Let me then bespeak your serious attention whilst I endeavour to open and explain to you the true ground, nature, and malignant tendency of this sin, that so you may be led diligently to examine yourselves concerning it, and by examination to discover it, and by discovering to shun it, and by shunning it, to attain unto all that purity, blessing, and comfort, which the **LAW** and the **WORD OF GOD** never fail to open and communicate to every sincere and obedient soul.

The sin of *bearing false witness*, like all the other sins forbidden in the other commandments, may be considered in two senses, a *natural* or *literal* sense, and a *spiritual* or *internal* sense.

According to the *natural* or *literal* sense, false witness relates to a man's tongue, or to the words of his lips, and implies a disagreement between his outward expressions and the real thoughts of his

heart, in his dealings and intercourse with his neighbour; thus it implies in it a disagreement between the tongue and the truth, which disagreement involves in it that terrible sin against which the Psalmist so earnestly prays, when he says, “*Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.*”

This is the *natural* or *literal* sense of *false witness*, and we cannot be enough careful to avoid it according to this sense, by watching over all the language of our lips, that so it may ever be agreeable to the real and inward sentiments of our minds, and also to that eternal truth which ought to direct, influence, and govern those sentiments.

On all occasions, therefore, we ought never to speak without consulting the spirit of the eternal truth, and of that charity which is always in connection with it, since if truth and charity do not sanctify our words, our tongues, in such case, must of necessity be destitute of those heavenly graces, and consequently must of necessity bear not a true but a *false witness*.

But the natural sin of *false witness* has still a further extent, for it denotes not only the disagreement between a man's thoughts and his words, and the eternal truth, but also between his will and his actions, and in general between his inner and his

outer man, inasmuch as that which is *without* is a sort of witness to that which is *within*; if therefore that which is *without* disagrees in any respect with that which is *within*, then it is a *false witness*, and man in this case is said to *bear false witness*.

I could greatly wish, Beloved, to call your earnest attention to the important consideration here suggested, inasmuch as your sincerity, uprightness, and consequent acceptance with GOD, through the keeping of His commandment, must altogether depend upon such attention.

Every considerate person, who reflects at all on what passes within him, must know, that he has an *outward* man and an *inward* man, and these two parts or principles of his constitution are so framed, that they may be at variance and disagreement with each other, or, on the contrary, that they may be united and act in agreement together.

As for example. It is possible a man's outward words and works may be at variance with his inward thoughts and affections, as when the outward words and works are pure and holy, whilst the inward thoughts and affections are impure and unholy.

Hence come the various kinds of hypocrisy, of artifice, of false dealing, of dissimulation amongst men, whereby they impose upon each other, and



upon themselves most of all, every one of which abominable vices has its ground in the sin of *false witness* forbidden in the commandment, and consisting in the disagreement or variance between the outward and the inner man.

Having thus considered the *natural* or *literal* sense of the great sin of *bearing false witness*, I shall now proceed to consider the commandment according to its *spiritual* or *more internal* meaning and signification, in which meaning and signification it has relation to the witness which we bear in our affections and thoughts, our lives and conversations, to the **LIFE**, or **SPIRIT**, or **WORD**, or **LAW** of **GOD**, which is the very inmost principle of our being.

May we all consider this matter, Beloved, with the seriousness it deserves!

Our happiness, both in time and in eternity, must of necessity altogether depend upon this *witness*, that is, on the agreement or disagreement of our inner man with this inmost principle of our lives, this **LAW**, or **SPIRIT**, or **LIFE** of our **GOD**, by which we have connection with **GOD**, and by which we may attain, through obedience, unto a blessed and eternal conjunction with Him.

For this **LAW**, **LIFE**, **SPIRIT**, or **WORD** of our **GOD**, let it be observed, is a law, life, spirit, and word, of unutterable, unchangeable, never-

ceasing mercy, love, compassion, good-will, charity towards every creature in the universe of creation, whereby it blesses all according to their capacities of bliss, and is infinitely desirous to remove, excuse, and put away the sins, imperfections, infirmities, and miseries of all.

Here then let us all remember, and engrave deep on our hearts, this awful and instructive lesson, that so far as we submit the affections and thoughts of our inner man, together with the words and works of our outward man, to be guided, influenced, and governed, in obedience to, and agreement with, this law of the **DIVINE LOVE**, and **MERCY**, and **TRUTH**, in our inmost man, so far we enter into conjunction with **GOD**, so far we *dwell in GOD* and *GOD in us*, we are *one with GOD* and *GOD with us*; we thus bear a *true and faithful witness* to the **MERCY**, **LOVE**, and **TRUTH** of **GOD**, and our lot therefore will assuredly be amongst those happy ones who keep the commandments of **JESUS CHRIST**.

But then, on the contrary, let us equally remember and engrave on our hearts, that so far as we do not submit our affections and thoughts, our words and works, to be thus guided, influenced, and governed by the eternal **LAW** and **LOVE** of **GOD** in our hearts, or inner man, so far we are at variance and disagreement with Him; so far we do not *dwell in GOD*, or *GOD in us*, we are not

*one with GOD, and GOD with us; we thus bear a false witness to the LIFE, the LOVE, the MERCY, and the TRUTH of GOD, and consequently, unless we repent, our eternal lot must of necessity be with those who have no respect unto the commandment of JESUS CHRIST.*

To conclude. We have seen from what hath been said, the true ground, nature, and consequence of the sin of *false witness* forbidden in the commandment.

Do we wish then to avoid this sin, and to come thereby into agreement with our LORD GOD, and to stand in uprightness before Him, and to rise out of the regions of separation and disunion, and to have our lot with those that fear GOD and keep His commandments? Oh then let us enter seriously into the inner chambers of our own hearts; let us each of us there, in the sacred presence of JESUS CHRIST, and by the light of His WORD, examine well all our departures from uprightness, every disagreement between our *outward* man with our *inner*, and our *inner* man with the LAW OF GOD in the *inmost* principle of our beings. Let us call upon our consciences, and compel them to give us a sincere answer to some such questions as those:—Do I suffer the law of divine charity, mercy, justice, and judgment, in my inmost man, to regulate all my affections and thoughts, my words and actions? Do I judge my neighbour,

and think and speak of him under the influence of this heavenly law? Do I take no delight in contemning, censuring, and disparaging my neighbour contrary to this law? Does my tongue at all times bear a faithful witness to my sentiments, my sentiments to my affections and desires, my affections and desires to the **WILL** and the **WORD** of **GOD**? Are all my works, employments, and dealings with my fellow-creatures, framed according to this rule? Is my whole man thus brought into unity and the *true witness*, or doth it still continue in the dis-unity and *false witness*? In short, am I labouring to become a complete image and likeness of **JESUS CHRIST** in all the parts, and powers, and principles of my being, as a *branch of the TRUE VINE*, or am I as a *branch broken off, and fit only to be burned, by bearing a false witness*, and not yielding myself up entirely, with all my thoughts, affections, words, and works, to bear a true testimony? Blessed is the man who has the courage to deal sincerely with himself in asking these questions, and acting accordingly. Blessed is the man who shall not be afraid to enter thus into the sanctuary, and weigh himself in its balance, standing in the presence of **JESUS CHRIST**! Blessed is the man who shall thus keep the commandment, and be thereby enabled to *bear a true witness* in will, thought, word, and work, unto the **MERCY** and **TRUTH** of **JESUS CHRIST**! **AMEN.**

## SERMON XXXIX.

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Exod. xx. 17.

*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*

**I**T has been frequently observed by good and wise men, as a distinguishing excellence of the divine law, that it extends its controul not only over the actions, but also over the hearts, and to the passions of mankind, striking thus at the root of evil, and so making *the tree good, and its fruit good*. This is remarkably the case with the particular law in my text, *Thou shalt not covet*. For this is a law directed manifestly to the regulation of the mind, or the inner man of the heart. It passes by the external deeds of the body, and enters immediately into the interior recesses of man's spirit, to purge and to renew them. Thus the revelation of **GOD** declares the spirituality of its origin, by asserting its power over the souls as well as over the bodies of men.

In explaining to you the sacred and full import of the commandment in my text, it will be necessary to consider these two things,

1st. The nature and extent of the sin of covetousness ;

2ndly. The heavenly design and excellent tendency of the prohibition of this sin, to all such as diligently attend to and observe it.

And 1st. with respect to the nature and extent of the sin of covetousness.

This sin is generally understood as relating only to the inordinate love and desire of money, and we call him alone a *covetous* person who is eager in the pursuit, and happy in the accumulation of worldly wealth.

And indeed, according to this sense of the sin of covetousness, nothing can well be conceived more defiling and destructive. For when the inordinate love of money is permitted to exalt itself in the human mind and affections, it presently begins to exercise its lawless and mischievous dominion, by compelling man to sacrifice on its altar all the good things of Heaven and eternal life. Man thus becomes an abominable worshipper of gold, whilst the love of GOD and his neighbour, with all their heavenly graces, virtues, joys, and bles-

sings, are regarded as things of inferior value in his darkened understanding. Well therefore might the GOD of mercy, according to this sense only, promulgate the eternal law of prohibition, *Thou shalt not covet.*

But surely it must be plain to every considerate person, that the sin of covetousness is of a greater extent than this. For to *covet* is to *desire*, and we may desire many things beside worldly wealth that are alike hurtful to us and destructive of our true happiness.

As for example. We may covet or desire vain glory as well as vain riches; we may covet or desire not only our neighbour's estate, but also his other *earthly* possessions, his *house*, his *wife*, his *man-servant*, his *maid-servant*, his *ox*, and his *ass*; yea, we may extend our covetousness still further; we may covet his *spiritual* possessions, the graces of his mind, the perfections of his understanding, the reputation of his virtues, &c. &c.

But neither yet here doth an evil covetousness rest contented, for where this dreadful spirit prevails, it is not to be satisfied with all that this world can give it, whether in the way of wealth, or of glory, or of any other excellence. It reaches therefore unto another world; it covets even the things that are of GOD Himself; it would desire

for itself even the divine power and perfections ; it would have its own will and wisdom exalted above every other will and wisdom ; it wishes to be somewhat else than what GOD hath made it ; it is not content to be what it is, and where it is, and to abide in the order of GOD, and under the arrangements of His ALMIGHTY PROVIDENCE, but it seeks and covets *to be* what GOD hath not designed it should be, and *to have* what GOD in His mercy hath denied it ; and thus it opposes all the counsels of Heaven, and sets itself to fight against the ALMIGHTY DISPOSER of all things.

Let this terrible extent then of the sin of covetousness never be forgotten by us : Let us remember that it prevails more or less in every one of us, by nature, before we become converted to GOD, and enter into the ways of true repentance. Thus it prevails in every desire of our hearts that is not according to the will of GOD ; that is not fully satisfied and contented with His disposal of events ; both with what He has given us, and with what He has refused to give ; both with temporal blessings, or such as relate to this world, and with eternal blessings, or such as relate to another world. The sin of covetousness, therefore, operates not only in the inordinate love of wealth, or in the lust of vain glory, or in the desire of appropriating to ourselves what GOD has given to our neighbour, but



it operates also in every motion or tendency of our hearts that is not entirely submissive to **GOD**; that is not alike thankful to **Him** for what **He** has given us, and for what **He** has not given; for what **He** hath made us, and for what **He** hath not made us.

And this leads me to consider what **I** secondly proposed, viz. the heavenly design and blessed tendency of the commandment in my text, to all such as diligently observe and keep it.

We have already shewn, in several former discourses on the foregoing commandments, that the great end of the law and of the Gospel is to deliver man from the native corruptions and miseries of his fallen and sinful state, and by bringing him back to **GOD**, and fashioning him after a divine image and likeness, to restore him to all that purity, power, and peace in **GOD**, for which he was originally created.

This great and blessed end is in no commandment more observable than in that at present under our consideration. For one of the chief and fundamental disorders of our present fallen and sinful state, is that of an evil covetousness, according to the extent of the word, as just now explained; and it is therefore by the removal of this disorder that we can alone hope to attain unto the purity, power,

and peace of that divine life and likeness for which we were created.

For how plain is it to see, that the spirit of covetousness and the **SPIRIT OF GOD** cannot possibly dwell together in the same habitation! For the spirit of covetousness is a restless spirit, but the **SPIRIT OF GOD** is quiet and peaceable; the spirit of covetousness is never to be satisfied, but the **SPIRIT OF GOD** is always contented; the spirit of covetousness is ever murmuring and repining, but the **SPIRIT OF GOD** is ever thankful and cheerful; the spirit of covetousness inclines man to wish better to himself than to his neighbour, and to be sad and envious at its neighbour's prosperity, but the **SPIRIT OF GOD** inclines him to wish as well to his neighbour as to himself, and to rejoice in another's joy alike as in his own; the spirit of covetousness would accumulate all to its own use, but the **SPIRIT OF GOD** is communicative to all, possessing nothing as its own, but for the use of others; the spirit of covetousness, like Martha in the Gospel, *is cumbered and careful about many things*, but the **SPIRIT OF GOD**, like the pious Mary, regards *only one thing needful*; the spirit of covetousness is unwilling to submit to the will of **GOD**, and wishes to be somewhat else than what **GOD** has made it, and to have somewhat else besides what **GOD** has given it, but the **SPIRIT OF**

**GOD** in man is submissive to the will of **GOD**, and is ever thankful to **GOD** that it is what it is, and that it has what it has, wishing and willing nothing but what **GOD** wishes and wills towards it. The spirit of covetousness, in short, is the source of all evil in man; it opens in him the kingdom of hell and darkness, and forms him after an infernal image; but the **SPIRIT OF GOD**, on the contrary, is in man the source of all good, opening in him the kingdom of light and Heaven, and forming him thereby after a heavenly image and likeness.

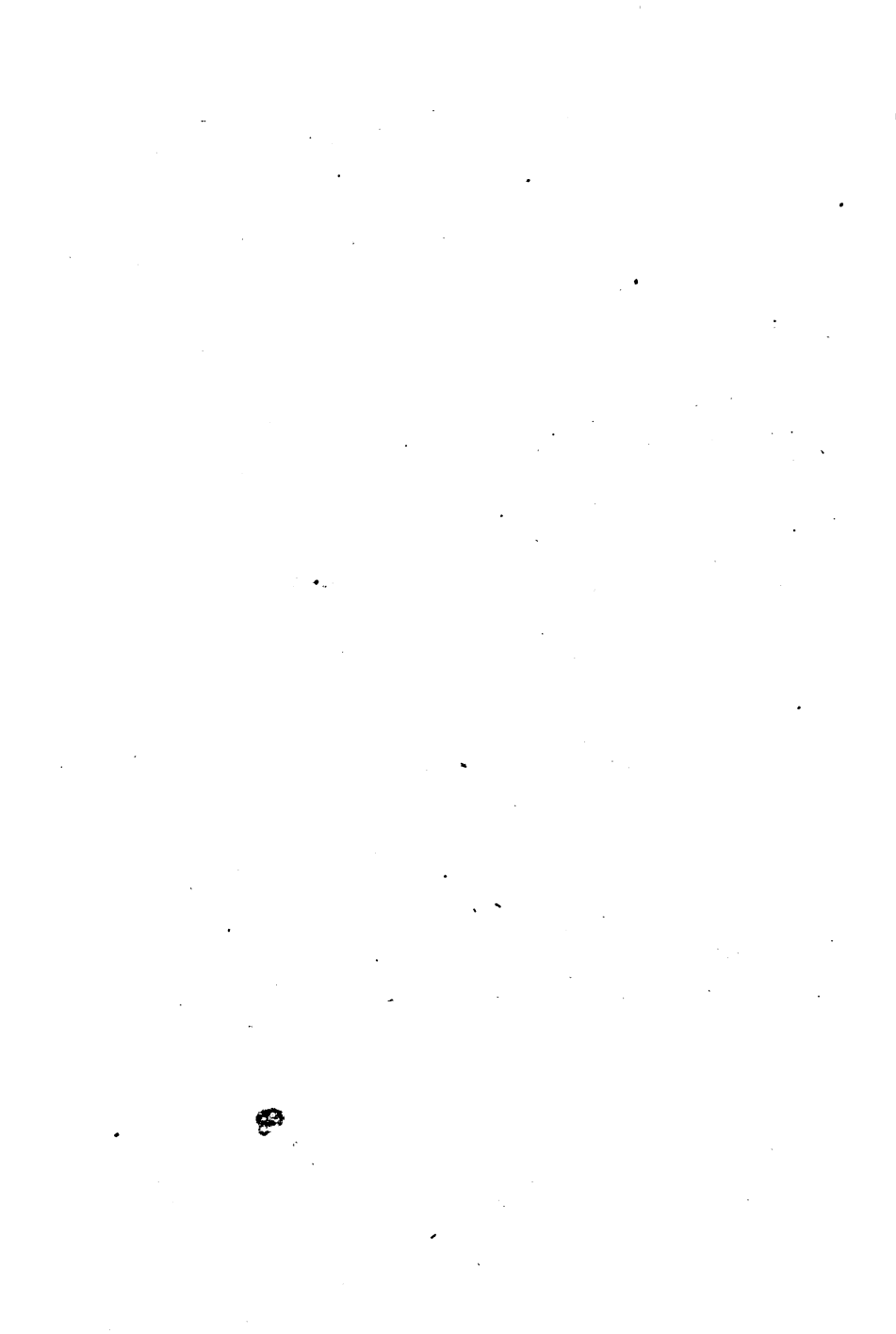
Here then, if we be willing to open our eyes to divine light, we may all of us be enabled to see and rejoice in the blessed and heavenly tendency of the commandment before us. We may discover, I say, that this sacred law would lead us to put away from us all those corrupt and covetous concupiscencies within us which are opposite to the **SPIRIT OF GOD**, and which are consequently infernal and diabolical, that so the **SPIRIT OF GOD** might get admission to us, and might have its due operation within us, forming us after its own heavenly image and likeness, and thus finally restoring us to the purity, power, and peace, of a divine life and kingdom.

Do we wish then, Beloved, to attain unto that purity, power, and peace, of a divine life and kingdom, which our **GOD** continually and ardently

willeth to bestow upon us? Oh then let us *take heed and beware of covetousness*, according to the counsel of our **GOD** : Let us search well our own hearts, that no lurking lust of this abominable, infernal spirit, may have place in us : Let us, for this purpose, beg of our gracious **LORD** to give us His divine and pure light, that so we may examine well the secret chambers of our souls, and let no concupiscence escape : Let us learn to moderate our desires, to be *temperate in all things*, and having food and raiment to be therewith content : Let the prayer of the Psalmist be ever uppermost in our hearts, “ *Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies, and not to covetousness :*” Let us often bethink ourselves of the vanity of every thing but **GOD** : This thought will tend gradually to wean our hearts from the creatures and fix them upon the **CREATOR**, and it is in the love of the **GREAT and GOOD CREATOR** that we can alone escape the evils of covetousness, and enter into the rest and purity of a divine contentment, since nothing less than **GOD** can ever satisfy the heart of man. Let us then renounce the love of all which is not **GOD**, or which we cannot possess and enjoy in **GOD**, for **GOD**, and from **GOD** ; and let us cleave to the **LIVING GOD**, the **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, with all our heart, and soul, and strength, beseeching Him that we may love Him above all things and our neighbour as ourselves, and that no inferior love of the things of

this world and the flesh, or any covetous lust whatsoever, may ever deprive us of the consolations of that heavenly love: And then He will give us of His love, which is the Gospel-pearl of great price, and we shall be fully content and satisfied, and we shall, with the Apostle, count all things else but *as dung and dross*, knowing, that whilst we have **JESUS CHRIST** and His love in our hearts, *we have all things and abound*. Thus shall we rise above all the evils of covetousness and vain concupiscencies, and being exalted into the regions of a divine contentment, we shall know the *peace of GOD which passeth all understanding*, and shall experience a daily growth and renewal in the divine life and image.

And may the **MERCIFUL LORD** impress these things deep in our hearts, that they may bring forth fruit in us unto salvation, being received by us, not as the words of man only, but as the eternal counsels of the **GOD OF LOVE and TRUTH**, desiring to make His blessings known, and to reveal Himself and His holy will unto us, and unto every creature! **AMEN.**



# SERMON XL.

Psalm cxix. 104.

*Through Thy commandments I get understanding,  
therefore I hate all evil [or false] ways.*

**H**AVING endeavoured to point out, in the foregoing discourses, the proper meaning and divine import of the *Ten Commandments*, it may not, in the last place, be either uninteresting, or unedifying, to consider the genuine effects which the devout observance of the Heaven-born laws has a tendency to produce in the minds and lives of those for whose use they have been delivered.

These effects are described in the words of the text, under a *two-fold* view,

1st. In regard to the *understanding* of man, on which occasion it is written, *Through Thy commandments I get understanding*; and

2ndly. In regard to the *will*, or *love* of man, on which occasion it is further written, *I hate all evil [or false] ways*.

To begin with the first of these effects.

There is, perhaps, no term in language more generally mistaken, or misunderstood, than the term *understanding*. For it is no uncommon thing to say of men, that they have *understanding*, merely because we find that they can think, and reason, and talk, with much sagacity and penetration, with extensive knowledge and learning, about the things of this world.

But it surely deserves well to be considered, that if a man's sagacity and penetration; if his knowledge and his learning, be confined to the things of this world *only*; that is to say, if he be very *quick-sighted*, and gifted even with superior skill in *temporal* concerns, whilst in the mean time he is *dim-sighted* and without skill respecting his *eternal* welfare; in this case he has no pretensions at all to be called a man of *understanding*; agreeable to the declaration of the ETERNAL TRUTH, *Are not they without understanding that work wickedness?*

For let us enquire, what is it we mean by *understanding*? Surely common sense teaches, that one distinguishing character of this high faculty is, *to know the real value of things about us, and to act accordingly*. For instance, if a man had his choice of two crowns, one made of *straw*, and the other of *gold*, and he should chuse the *crown of straw* in preference to the *crown of gold*, we should without hesitation decide, and decide justly, that he was



*not* a man of *understanding*. Yet what comparison is there between the choice of crowns here supposed, and the choice of that **ETERNAL CROWN OF GLORY** which the Gospel presents to our acceptance?

If then we see a man so blinded by his corruptions as to be more affected with the concerns of the present life than of that which is to come; if we see him so infatuated by his passions as to exalt the perishable wealth, and glory, and pleasure of this world, above the wealth, the glory, and pleasure which come from **GOD**; why shall we not, in this case, pass the same consistent judgment? Why shall we not therefore say, that this deluded man hath chosen the *crown of straw* in preference to the **CROWN OF GOLD**, and in so doing hath proved, to a demonstration, that he also is *without understanding*?

From this view, then, of the obvious sense and meaning of the term *understanding*, it will evidently appear, what is implied in the words of revealed wisdom, “*Through Thy commandments I get understanding.*”

For the commandments of **GOD**, it must be confessed, do not communicate *understanding* according to the general apprehension of this high faculty; that is to say, they do not impart what the

world often mis-calls and mistakes for wisdom ; No—these eternal laws of the knowledge of the **MOST HIGH** make known to man a wisdom infinitely higher in degree, infinitely more blessed in its end. For they reveal to him the science of his everlasting destination. They bring him acquainted with the **GOD** who made him, and who also redeemed him, and they instruct him how he may become the *child of that GOD*, and live for ever. Thus they connect man with eternity ; they draw aside the veil of time, the *face of the covering cast over all people*, and they present to his view a glorious and an everlasting world prepared for the children of wisdom.

By reading therefore the **HOLY COMMANDMENTS**, we ascend, as it were, with Moses into the holy mount ; and hear the trump of the archangel, and the voice of **GOD**. We are introduced into the divine presence, and see, with Daniel, the “ *Ancient of Days sitting on His throne, whilst thousand thousands minister unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before Him.*” (Dan. vii. 9, 10.)

But to be more particular on this interesting subject. There cannot be a greater riddle than the present state of man, if we suppose him uninstructed by the revelation of **GOD**. For his wants and his possessions, his sorrows and his joys,

his weaknesses and his powers, his fears and his hopes, his follies and his capacities of knowledge, are alike mysterious and perplexing. All demonstrate that he was made for something more than this world, but none of them can prove what that something is for which he was made. Blessed then for ever be that revelation of the **MOST HIGH** which explains this riddle, which unravels this mystery!

For from the **WORD OF GOD** we learn, that man is not now what he was originally created to be; he is only the *ruin* of a man: Sin and transgression, we discover, have entailed upon him infirmity, misery, defilement, fear, and condemnation, evils which he was never intended to have known. But the same **HOLY WORD**, which thus acquaints us with our corruptions, consoles us also with the blessed view of the provisions made of **GOD** for our recovery. A **REDEEMER** is there held forth to us, whose name is **JESUS CHRIST**, and the nature of our connection with this **GOD-MAN** is such, that if we believe in, and obey Him in true faith and love, we begin to rise from that moment superior to all disorders; the understanding is enlightened, sin is removed, and the ruin is repaired. Though weak in ourselves, yet in this **REDEEMING GOD** we have all strength; though ignorant, in Him we have all knowledge; though

siuful, through the **OMNIPOTENT SAVIOUR** we have the power to attain unto purification ; though miserable, yet by virtue of our connection with the infinitely blessed Majesty of **JESUS CHRIST**, our miseries are made the sources of our purest joys, and the Scripture is fulfilled, *Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.* (John xvi. 20.)

Thus the commandments of the **MOST HIGH** opening our understandings to the knowledge of Himself, not as our **CREATOR** only, but as our **REDEEMER** also ; not merely as the *first* parent of our life, but as a *second* parent by restoration and regeneration ; the divine commandments, I say, delivering us from the darkness of error, and from the perplexities of our own reasonings, are *a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our paths*, to conduct us through our present vale of tears back again to our first Paradise in the friendship and favour of a **REDEEMING GOD** !

How the *commandments of GOD* lead to the full possession of this Paradise, will appear from considering the second effect which they produce in the hearts and lives of those who receive them, as expressed in these words of my text, *Therefore I hate all evil ways.*

The first operation of the *commandments of GOD* is to enlighten the *understanding* ; the next is to

*reform and purify the will or love, by exterminating all evil. The first effect leads to the second, and without the second, is in itself incomplete and fruitless, for mere knowledge or understanding alone cannot possibly save us: We can only be saved by the love, which is the life or practice of what we know.*

It is remarkable that the Psalmist, in speaking of this second effect, doth not say, *Therefore I forsake all evil ways, or therefore I cease to walk in evil ways, but he says, Therefore I hate all evil ways.*

The expression is full of the instruction of wisdom to all such as are capable of discerning it, and the wisdom it contains is this. To *hate* evil is to reject it fully from the heart and life; for what a man *hates* is entirely and totally separated from him, because it is separated from his love, which properly constitutes himself: Whereas a man may *cease to do evil*, that is, he may cease to commit external acts of evil, and yet it is possible he may not, on this account, be separated and clean from evil; because it is possible he may not yet *hate* evil; he may not reject it from his love; in which case the evil still remains cherished and rooted in his heart, notwithstanding its separation from his actions. Thus, for instance, a man may not commit *murder, nor adultery, nor theft, nor false*

*witness*, in the *external* act; yet if he doth not *hate* murder, *hate* adultery, *hate* theft, and *hate* false witness in his heart, in other words, if he doth not separate his love and affections from such evils, because they are abominable in the sight of GOD, he may still in his heart be both a *murderer*, an *adulterer*, a *thief*, and a *false witness*, consequently, whatsoever his pretences, or whatsoever his attainments may be, he has no religion.

A further instruction of wisdom to be collected from this expression, **Therefore I HATE all evil ways**, is this. *Evil* cannot be *hated* unless its *opposite* be *loved*, that is, unless GOD, His SPIRIT, His WISDOM, and the things of His kingdom be loved above all other things. The *hatred* therefore of *evil* necessarily implies, that a man loves GOD and his neighbour; and the love of GOD as necessarily implies, that his heart has undergone some great change; that he is no longer what he was by nature; but that in consequence of a reception of the *commandments of GOD*, he is made a *new man*, or, as the Scripture expresseth it, he is a *new creature*, *old things are passed away*, and *all things become new*.

Let me bespeak your particular, your most awakened attention to this further blessed effect of the *commandments of GOD*.

Both experience and the **WORD OF GOD** teach, that man is naturally born to the love of evil, so as to delight in evil more than in good. Who amongst us doth not bear a sad testimony to this awful, this tremendous truth? Who amongst us, I say, that hath attended to the inward workings of his own heart, is not forced to confess, that he naturally loves himself better than his neighbour, and the world better than his **GOD**; and that in consequence of such defiled, perverse love, he is naturally proud, wrathful, envious, covetous, impatient, sensual, seeking the pleasures and glories of his temporal life with an infinitely more ardent desire than he seeks the joys and righteousness of his eternal life? Thus defiled, thus miserable is man in his natural, unconverted state, before he becomes acquainted with, and receptive of, the *commandments of GOD*. But mark now the blessed change, which is the effect of a right understanding and reception of these heaven-born laws. No sooner do they gain admission into the heart of this defiled child of Adam, than he presently begins to *hate all evil ways*. The mystery of iniquity and of the kingdom of darkness is made manifest in his penitent bosom through the heavenly light of the **DIVINE TRUTH**, and being manifested, it is presently destroyed, by the same **POWER FROM ON HIGH**. Humility is hereby implanted in the place of pride, meekness in the place of wrath, charity in the

place of hatred, and the den of thieves and wild beasts is thus converted into a holy house of prayer, of righteousness, and of peace. The true believer therefore finds verified in his humble bosom what **JESUS CHRIST** once declared to His disciples, when He said, "*Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*" (John xv. 3.) For, having this **ETERNAL WORD** of **JESUS CHRIST** formed in his heart; being born again of this incorruptible seed of the **ETERNAL TRUTH**; he is enabled to love and to delight in **GOD** above all things; and therefore, as the apostle expresseth it, he *cannot sin because he is born of GOD.* (1 John, iii. 9.)

*The axe, in short, is laid unto the root of the tree,* and by sincere repentance, in consequence of the reception of *the commandments* of the **MOST HIGH**, the tree of iniquity and defilement, of condemnation and death, is cut down, and in its place, through the admission of the **GRACE** of the **GREAT REDEEMER**, is implanted *the Tree of Life*, bearing the fruit of righteousness, joy, and peace, in the **HOLY GHOST**; Paradise is thus restored in the bosoms of the penitent; they are introduced again into the heavenly garden; and are made again *living images and likenesses* of their **GOD**.

Such is the happy effect, such the heavenly, the astonishing change produced in the life of man by *the commandments of GOD.*



To conclude. From what has been said much serious reflection will necessarily be excited in our minds, if we are concerned, as we ought to be, about our everlasting salvation.

Such reflection also will lead us to enquire, how we feel ourselves affected towards the **COMMANDMENTS OF GOD**? Do we believe that in these holy laws **JESUS CHRIST** Himself is ever speaking to us; and do we therefore connect them with **JESUS CHRIST** and approach them with reverence, as we would approach unto **JESUS CHRIST** Himself? Do we also approach and read them, I do not say *occasionally*, or according to rules which *custom* has established, for this we may do, and yet find little or no benefit from our reading: But do we read them *regularly* and *devoutly*, under the persuasion that they are our spiritual food and nourishment; and that as our bodies cannot live unless they are frequently refreshed and recruited by *material* food, no more can our souls, unless they, in like manner, are daily refreshed and recruited by this **WORD OF THE LIVING GOD**.

But this **WORD**, we learn, was designed to give us *understanding*. If then we are rightly solicitous about our eternal well-being, we shall be led to enquire further, Have we as yet *gotten understanding* from the *commandments of the MOST HIGH*? and by virtue of such *understanding*, do

we see and comprehend, that what we before called understanding was not understanding? That whilst we were without the light of the **DIVINE WISDOM**, we were ignorant, foolish, insane, howsoever we might fancy ourselves enlightened more than others by the wisdom of this world? Do we therefore now see, what the wisdom of this world cannot see, that our eternal interest is infinitely above every other interest; that the love of **GOD** is infinitely dearer than every other love; that to depart from iniquity is the highest and the only wisdom; and that to connect ourselves with **JESUS CHRIST**, in His **SPIRIT**, and His **KINGDOM**, by repentance, and faith, and well-doing, this is the great end of human life, and every other end, separate from this, is at once the proof and the effect of the most extreme folly and delusion? Such will be the blessed conviction of our *understanding*, if it be formed from the *commandments* of the **ALLWISE GOD**.

But *understanding*, we learn, leads to something more than *conviction*; for, if it be genuine, it produces also a *change* in the life from evil to good; *therefore* saith the Psalmist, *I hate all evil ways*. Hath our understanding then produced this its proper, its blessed effect? Through the **SPIRIT** of the *commandments* of **GOD**, which is the **SPIRIT** of **JESUS CHRIST**, do we find sin subdued in us?

Have we gained the victory over our corruptions? We once loved the world, its gain, its glory, and its pleasures, more than **GOD**. Do we now, by virtue of the spirit of the **GREAT REDEEMER**, love Him and His kingdom better than the world? We once also loved ourselves more than our neighbour, and were accordingly proud and wrathful, envious and malicious, impatient and unjust. Do we now experience the blessed influences of the *commandments of GOD*, in enabling us to love our neighbour as ourselves; and of consequence to be meek and lowly, patient and forgiving, just and merciful? In short, are we become what **JESUS CHRIST** is most ardently desirous we should become, His free-born children, redeemed from the power of the wicked one, rescued from the tyranny of our passions, and thus set at liberty to re-seek and re-gain our lost life, wisdom, and blessedness, in an eternal conjunction with Him our **SAVIOUR GOD**?

Some such questions as these, seriously proposed and conscientiously answered, will soon discover to us how far we have as yet profited, or otherwise, by the *commandments* of the **MOST HIGH**.

And may the **GRACE OF GOD**, *which bringeth salvation*, dispose all our hearts to enter into a most serious examination of ourselves in a point which so infinitely concerns us! May we no longer frus-

trate the purposes of the ALMIGHTY in giving us His *commandments*, but rather apply them to the blessed end of redemption and regeneration for which He gave them! Thus, as it is written, that in old time the *children of Israel had light in their dwellings*, (Exod. x. 23.) and were preserved from the plagues which destroyed the Egyptians; and were brought forth from the accursed land into a good land; in like manner, we also, in the present evil days of darkness, of judgment, and of tribulation, shall be blessed, preserved, and delivered by the same heavenly light, being enabled to say, with the beloved apostle of old, “*We know that the SON of GOD is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son JESUS CHRIST. This is the TRUE GOD and eternal life.*” (1 John, v. 20.) AMEN.

# SERMON XLI.

Romans vi. 14.

*Ye are not under the law but under GRACE.*

**S**T. Peter, speaking of St. Paul's Epistles, beareth this testimony concerning them, "*That there are in them some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.*" (2 Pet. iii. 16.) This observation is in no case more verified than in the words of my text, and in other similar passages, where St. Paul takes occasion to speak of the difference between what he calls the *law of works* and the *law of faith*. (Rom. iii. 27.) These passages have, in all ages of the church, been most unhappily *wrested by the unstable and unlearned to their own destruction*, whilst persons of such character have been led to conclude, on the Apostle's authority, that the law of faith had set aside the law of good works, and that being justified by the **FREE GRACE OF GOD**, they were set at liberty from the restraints of the law. Hence hath come upon many minds a fatal carelessness as to godly life and conversation. Trusting to **GRACE alone** and the **ME-**

RITS OF CHRIST, men have come to be regardless of obedience to CHRIST. They have continued the servants of sin from a false idea that CHRIST hath destroyed the dominion of sin. They have not attained unto righteousness from an idea equally false, that they are justified by the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST. In short, there is too much reason to fear, that by some such unhappy *wresting* of the Scriptures, whereby the great duties of repentance and obedience have been made void, the generality of Christians have fallen greatly short of those measures of purity and true holiness to which they were called, and to which otherwise they might have attained.

That we, however, of this congregation, may no longer deceive ourselves, or suffer ourselves to be deceived in a matter of such infinite importance to our best interests, I propose in my present discourse to consider the great Apostle's meaning in the words of my text, *Ye are not under the law but under grace* ; and to shew in what sense this, and other similar passages in St. Paul's Epistles are to be understood, that so we may not *wrest them to our own destruction*.

From the earliest accounts of the propagation of the Gospel, we learn with what difficulty it was received by the Jewish converts, or those who had been educated in the ritual observances of the Mosaical law.

They retained for a long time their prejudices in favour of circumcision and other such external ordinances. They could not be brought to dispense with these things, and to walk in simplicity of obedience to the spirit of that pure and free law of life which CHRIST had taught. They contended, therefore, that though they received and followed the doctrines of CHRIST, yet it was expedient still to continue in the observance of the ceremonial law, and to walk after the traditions of their fathers.

This subject caused much debate in the church at that time, even amongst the Apostles themselves, some of whom were inclined to favour the prejudices of the Jewish converts, whilst others as strenuously opposed them. St. Paul was of the number of the latter, and in the Epistle from whence the words of my text are taken, as well as in other Epistles, he endeavours to convince all the Jews who embraced Christianity, that they were set free from the observance of the ceremonial law; for *by the deeds of the law*, saith he, *shall no flesh be justified in His sight*; and again, “*Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law;*” and in the words of my text, “*Ye are not under the law but under grace.*”

From this account of the matter, then, we may see clearly what was the Apostle’s drift and design

in all his Epistles, where he gives grace and faith the preference above the law and its works. For by *the law*, on these occasions, he meant the *ceremonial law*, consisting in external ordinances, in *meats*, in *drinks*, in *holy days*, in *the new moons*, all which he calls a *shadow of things to come* ; *which shadow was to be done away*. His reasoning, therefore, throughout, on this subject, will stand thus, and was intended as an awful lesson of Gospel-instruction to all the Jewish converts at that time to whom it was addressed—*Ye are not now under the law*, nor any longer bound to the observance of those ceremonial rites which were heretofore enjoined, and were as *school-masters to bring you unto CHRIST*. These things were but *shadows of good things to come*, but the substance of those good things being come, in the Divine Person of **JESUS CHRIST**, the *shadows are done away*. Ye are therefore now at full liberty to come from under the bondage of such observances, for *ye are now under grace*. Ye are called to a new covenant with **GOD** in **JESUS CHRIST**, even the covenant of grace and faith. By this new covenant ye are freed from the old covenant of the works of the law in ceremonial observances, for by this new covenant ye are brought near unto **GOD** ; ye are taught a more internal and spiritual worship of Him ; the veil of the external and dead law is removed, and ye are admitted to become the children of the internal and living law in the **HOLY**



**OF HOLIES.** Ye are therefore henceforth no longer to seek justification or acceptance with **GOD** through *works*, that is, the ceremonial works of the outward law of Moses, but ye are to seek justification and divine acceptance through *grace* and *faith* in **JESUS CHRIST**, that is, by believing faithfully in this **GREAT MANIFESTED GOD** and **SAVIOUR**, and walking obediently, according to the internal purifying spirit of His Gospel, influencing your hearts and understandings, your words and works, and thus renewing you in the spirit of your minds, and making you the pure and blessed children of **GOD** through its regenerating influences, which is the one great end both of the law and of the Gospel.

Having thus then endeavoured to explain to you the 'Apostle's true drift and design in the words of my text, and in other similar passages of his various Epistles, I shall now beg your serious attention to a few practical observations on what has been said.

And 1st. Take heed how ye suppose at any time that the spirit of the law and of the Gospel are contrary to each other, for the law and the Gospel differ from each other only as *shadow* and *substance*, as that which is *under a veil*, and that which is *without a veil*: Their spirit or internal meaning is precisely the same: The universal doctrine of each is *love to GOD* and *charity towards*

*man*, operating in all good thoughts and good works of a holy life, whereby the soul is made clean from sin, brought nigh unto **GOD**, admitted to a communion with Heaven, and restored to a divine image and likeness. Under the law **CHRIST** was hid; under the Gospel He is made manifest and revealed, and brought near unto man, whilst the purifying Word of His truth is opened in a greater clearness, power, and fulness, through the removal of those external ordinances under which it was before covered. But let it ever be remembered, that the real internal spirit, intention, and design of the Law and of the Gospel, are one and the same, viz. the recovery and renovation of fallen man through repentance and regeneration.

2ndly. When you read in St. Paul's Epistles of the *law and the works of the law* being made void, remember, that hereby is meant the *mere ceremonial law*, and its outward observances only, not the law of the Decalogue, and the other laws leading to godliness. For the law of the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, with all the other laws called the law and the prophets, remain still, and must of necessity ever remain, in their full force. *Heaven and earth may pass away, but these words of JEHOVAH shall not pass away*: Accordingly **JESUS CHRIST** Himself declares, that He came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil. (Matt. v. 17.) Think it not, therefore, a

matter of indifference whether you keep the law of the Ten Commandments or not; for without keeping it you can never get to Heaven; inasmuch as the very life and spirit of Heaven is in that law; and you cannot be admitted to Heaven any further than as the same life and spirit operate in you. Believe, then, that in keeping this law, and doing what it enjoins, you have conjunction with **JESUS CHRIST** and communion with His kingdom.

Lastly. Take heed how you give in to that fatal, destructive imagination, that **CHRIST** has taken away the curse of the law and fulfilled it for you, and therefore that you are justified by what He has done without keeping the law yourselves, and by obedience removing the curse from yourselves. **CHRIST** has indeed delivered and set us at liberty from the bondage of the ceremonial law of carnal ordinances, and by fulfilling the whole spirit thereof in His own person, He hath shewn us how, and given us power, to fulfil it also: but let us remember, that it is our duty to follow Him in this great work. What **CHRIST** hath done can be of no avail unless we do somewhat ourselves. It will not remove sin in us to believe that **CHRIST** has overcome sin; nor will it renew us in righteousness and the purity of a divine image, to believe that **CHRIST** fulfilled the whole law—No, if we would be clean from sin, we must ourselves renounce all its forms, and ways, and workings; we must by

repentance render it abominable to us, otherwise it will abide with us, and will attend us with all its condemnation into another life : And if we would be renewed in righteousness, we must walk in the ways of righteousness : we must cherish the divine grace and holy spirit of **JESUS CHRIST**, who is the fountain of righteousness, in our own bosoms ; we must bring forth its fruits in all the good and useful works of a holy life ; otherwise righteousness can never acquire its form and become fixed in us, consequently it can bring us no blessedness in another life. Thus and thus only shall we escape the curse of the law, and arising out of the bondage of sin into *the liberty of the children of GOD*, through sincere repentance and obedience to **JESUS CHRIST**, we shall no longer *wrest the Scriptures to our destruction*, with the *unlearned and unstable*, but shall make the holy commandment unto us a word of eternal life in our own hearts, freeing us from all our natural defilements, and renewing us in its own divine image of purity, power, peace, and righteousness. May the **GREAT SAVIOUR** give to each of us His grace to enable us, by a right understanding, to see the excellence, and by an obedient practice, to rejoice in the comfort of this His evangelical and saving wisdom ! **AMEN.**