



our feet in the path of Peace, and excite us to his Fear and Service. Here this Command is broken,

1. *By reading or speaking of the Word with a common frame of Spirit.* We read, in *Pfal. 138.* *Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.* And that is one thing that belongs to the Character of a godly Man, *Ijai. 66. 2. He trembleth at God's Word.* For Men therefore to apply themselves to the Holy Scriptures, with ordinary thoughts or opinions of it, and pay no more deference to it, than they do to Writings merely humane, is to undervalue it, and to forget the Author of it: it is to put a slight upon the Divine Oracles, and that is nothing less than to profane them, and not to look upon them to be, as indeed they are; the Word of God.

2. *By careless neglect of Reading & Hearing the Word of God.* God doth by his Word impart to us his Counsel, and hath made it to be the great *Medium* of our acquainting ourselves with him, and maintaining that Fellowship with him in which our present Blessedness doth consist: It is that from which we are to take the direction for the right ordering our whole Lives, if we would serve God aright, and know the way of our Peace. Hence that, in *Joh. 5. 39. Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.* For Men therefore, either to live without Bibles, or let them lie mouldring by them, without making them the man of their Counsel; either not to read them at all, or not to meditate on them frequently, is to despise Communion with God: it is to undervalue God himself, yea, to live without God in the World; which must needs be prodigious profaneness: for this Command is broken by Omission as well as Commission.

3. *By not giving a divine Credit to the Word of God.* This Word is God's Testimony, and we are to receive it as such, and by so doing we honour God, *Joh. 3. 33. He that receiveth his testimony, hath set to his seal, that God is true.* We therefore greatly dishonour him, when we do not thus do. Nor is it enough to pay an humane Credit to it, or entertain it merely with an historical Faith, as we do the Writings of Wise, Intelligent, and Faithful Men: but if we do not look upon it to be given by the Inspiration of the unerring Spirit, with whom it is impossible to lie or deceive; and thereupon adventure our trust; yea our Souls upon it for Eternity, we cast reproach upon that God whose Word it is. Hence that, *1 Joh. 5. 10. He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.* And what horrid profaneness is this?

4. *By denying, and much more making a ridicule of revealed Religion.* Revealed Religion, is that of God which is made known to us in the Holy Scriptures; in all of which, and in every part, the way of Life is declared to us. When therefore we call the Truth of these in question, deny the possibility of the things,

SERMON CLXVI.

Thirdly, **I**N respect of God's Word: In which he hath recorded his Name, and made discovery to us of his holy Pleasure, and given it to us for our directory to guide

things, or flout at them as if ridiculous, or turn them all into meer Allegories and uncertainties, they herein highly reproach the Author of them. It is the complaint which God makes of that People, Hof. 8. 12. *I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing. i. e. they were Riddles, inextricable Mysteries, contemptible Fables, fit to be believed by none but such as had forfeited their reason, and therefore to be despised by Men of Understanding.*

AND here we may take up a bitter Lamentation over the *Drism* which so horribly prevails in this perilous Age that we live in; in which there are so many that employ all their Wit & Malice, to droll upon the Scriptures, and render them as senseless, unintelligible and self-contradicting: and persuading us, that it is to unman our selves, to suffer our Reason to be captivated by the Mysteries revealed in the Word of God. And how far they have gained upon the pride of Men to dethrone the Scriptures, and set up the *Diana* of depraved Reason in the room of them, and offer up to their Shrines, and pay their Devotions to *that*: Which is none of the least reasons of the horrid debaucheries with which the Christian World is overspread.

5. *BY abusing any part of the holy Word, in a jocular way.* How common a thing is it grown among vain Men, to make their facetious and drolling Discourses from the Word of God? When Men either make a jeer at, or fetch their jests from the Holy Scriptures; when they use any portion or expression of the Word in a jeering way, by taunts or girds; for which the Prophet in the Name of God reproves & threatens them, *Jer. 23. 33, &c.* And when Men seek to make sport to themselves and others, by using of the words of Scripture to set out their Merriment, as if the Word of God were for Men to play withal; they hereby violate this Command. And how many are there, who never count themselves sufficiently witty, unless they are thus profanely wicked?

6. *BY perverting of the Word of God, for the establishing and maintaining of false Doctrines.* When wicked Men profess Principles, unsound, erroneous or heretical, and go about to force in the Word of God to the patronage of them, and accordingly strain it to a sense contrary to the analogy of Faith, and contradictory to it self; this is an horrible abuse of it. When Men go about to torture the Scriptures, to make them to confess things which they abhor, is an Affront offered that carries the highest indignity in it. And yet how many are there that so do. *1 Tim. 6. 5.* For indeed, hereby they reflect upon God, and make him the Patron of Error and Blasphemies; yea, to be rash and ignorant, not to know his own Mind, and to contradict himself; than which, what greater indignity can be offered to the Allwise God?

7. *BY misapplying the Scriptures to them-*

selves or others. When Men make a wrong practical Judgment of the Word of God they do abuse it: As when they misapply the Promises to themselves, and draw Comfort from them, when it doth not belong to them; or apply the Threatnings to their Neighbours when provoked, which they have no just warrant for from the Word of God: or when they encourage wicked Men in their leud Courses by the words of the Scripture falsely applied: Thus also when they justify any sinful action or course from the Word, when it indeed condemns it; or when they take offence at that in others, and censure them for it, which the Word hath not forbidden, but it is either a lawful Liberty, or possibly a Command: To approve that which God hates and forbids, or to find fault with that which he both condemns and abhors, and to justify this Sin by the Scriptures, is to take his Name in vain.

Fourthly, *IN respect of God's Works.* In these he makes himself known to us; and as he is to be Reverenced in and for them, so there is a carriage towards them in which we may discover our irreverence; which is also here forbidden, viz.

1. *WHEN we do not give to God the Honour of his Work of Creation.* God hath made himself known by giving being to the World, and all things in it; and they do all of them bear upon them the impressions by which he is to be known and glorified. We are therefore told, *Psal. 19. 1. The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handy work.* And *Rom. 1. 19, 20. Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.* Now in this regard we dishonour God in two points.

(1.) *WHEN we do not acknowledge him to be the Author of these Works, but ascribe them to some other prime Cause.* The Works of Creation are glorious. He then who gave being to them, must needs be discovered to be so by them. His Name is engraven on them, and therefore to erase that, or put another instead of it, is to disgrace him, and the way to extinguish his fear. Hence that, *Jer. 5. 22. Fear ye not me saith the Lord? will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bounds of the sea, by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it.* To say the World is Eternal, or to ascribe its Original to fate, or to chance, or any being besides him, or in partnership with him, is to advance them into his Throne, and give his Glory to them, which is both Idolatry, and a robbing him of his Glory, and contrary to that Reverence which is due to him.

(2.) *WHEN we neglect to observe his Perfections which shine forth in them, and to glorify him-*

him accordingly. God hath left a legible Character of his Divine Attributes on these Works of his, which may be read and understood by the improvement of Nature's light; and there is not the most despicable Worm, but bears this stamp upon it. His Infinite Wisdom, Power and Goodness are relucant in them; and they carry with them powerful Motives to excite us to love, fear, & serve him. And it becomes our duty to search after these Perfections in them, and adore him accordingly. *Pfal 111. 2. The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.* And therefore not to do so, is to despise him.

2. *WHEN we do not acknowledge him in his Works of Providence, but terminate our selves on our selves, or some other second Being.* The Supream Efficiency of God in all the things that are done in the World, calls for our Adoration, *Jer. 10. 7. Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms there is none like unto thee.* And there is a fearful threatening against such as do not regard them, *Pfal. 28. 5. God then, is not revered by those; who though they see the things, yet do not mind the Maker of them, but let them come and go without any remarks.* When we ascribe all the Changes that fall out in the World to meer Casualty, or ludibrious Fortune, and look no higher than Creatures in them. If we accomplish any Undertakings, we ascribe it to our selves, and say with him, *Dan. 4. 30. The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? Hence we have that caution, Jer. 9. 23, 24. Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches. but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight saith the Lord.* When we receive any benefit by the Creature, we pay our thanks and homage unto that, but not unto Him; whose meer Instrument it was. When we receive unkindness from these, we rake notice of their injury, and seek our revenge upon them, but take no notice of Him whose Axes & Hammers they are. We hereby with-hold that due respect from God, which belongs to him, and so cast Contempt upon his Name.

3. *WHEN we abuse the Mercies of God, which he confers upon us.* God bestows his favours upon Men to engage them to love and honour him, they are to serve him therewithal. When therefore they abuse them, they abuse his Goodness, and him in it. And this is done,

(1.) *BT Intemperance:* When we abuse the good things of God to nourish our carnal lusts withal. It is true, Intemperance it self is a Sin against the Second Table; but considered, as God's kindness is hereby abused, and turn-

ed into wantonness, and we dishonour him by his own Works, so it is *profaneness*, and a violation of this Command. For, when we serve Sin with that which we are bound to serve God with, we cast contempt on his Name, and despise his Command, who hath bidden us to serve him with our Substance, and improve all that we have to help us to do it with cheerfulness.

(2.) *BT Carnal Security.* When we make those things which are given us by God, to be our Gods; and put them in his place, by trusting in them, and fortifying our selves with them against him, and think we can live well enough without him under the shadow of these. This is an abuse of them, and highly reflects upon him. This therefore is given as the Character of ungodly Men, *Job. 21. 13, 14. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us: for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* And is one great Article which God draws up against those proud Men, *Isai 28. 14. Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men that rule this people which is in Jerusalem.* When Men eat and are full, and then forget God, as those are charged, *Hos. 13. 6. According to their pasture, so were they filled: they were filled, and their heart was exalted: therefore have they forgotten me.* This is an high affront.

(3.) *BT Unthankfulness.* We receive kindness from God every day, tho' we deserve none at all from him; but we confess not our Obligation, nor think our selves beholden to him; and so do neither confess it to him, nor judge how we may make suitable returns for it: This is base Ingratitude, and what God chargeth on the very Heathen, as a thing highly provoking to him, *Rom. 1. 21.* And for which he expostulates with that ungrateful People, *Deut. 32. 6. Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee and established thee?* And is far from coming to that gracious frame of the Psalmist, *Psal. 116. 12. What shall I render unto the Lord, for all his benefits towards me?* And is directly contrary to the end of these Mercies, *Psal. 105. ult.*

(4.) *BT hardning our Hearts against his Counsels and Warnings.* God expects that his Goodness should lead us to Repentance, but if we are hardned by it, we abuse it. Hence that Expostulation, *Rom. 2. 4, 5. Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up to thy self wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* When God's Mercies make us proud, too good to be spoken to, so that we cannot bear to be reproved, and stop our ear at all Warnings, and refuse to receive instruction from him; what higher scorn can we cast upon him? This therefore is a complaint which God himself maketh on this account, *Jer. 22. 25.* 4.

4. *WHEN we murmur against, and quarrel with him under adverse Providences.* This proceeds from the same root of irreverence with the former; for they that despise God's Goodness, will fret at him, when he lays his afflicting Hand upon him. It is because Men think themselves worthy of, and that God owes them all their good things, that their Hearts rise up against him, and they think and speak reproachfully of him. Which shows the vile esteem they have of his precious Name. And how often were the Children of Israel at this in the Wilderness; and how many cautions are there laid in against it, in the Holy Scriptures? Now hereby we act contrary to our great duty of silent Submission to God, and improving his Corrections to Repentance; for it hardens us against it. Hence those complaints, Jer. 5. 3. *Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return.* And, Isai. 1. 5. *Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will rebel more & more.* And when it ariseth to that, in 2 Kin. 6. 33. *Behold, this evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer.* Men are then arrived at the height of profaness. Thus many ways may this Command be violated. For wheresoever God's Name is to be seen, and it is disregarded, then it is taken in vain.

QUESTION LVI.

WHAT is the Reason annexed to the Third Commandment?

ANSWER.

THE Reason annexed to the Third Commandment is, that however the Breakers of this Commandment may escape punishment from Men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous Judgment.

IT is said, *The Lord will not hold him guiltless.* The word signifies to cleanse or make innocent, guiltless. And it is observed, that in *Hiphil*, it doth not signify to make a Person so, but to treat him as such. The word is sometimes applied to Sanctification, and sometimes to Justification. And here it is used in the latter sense, viz. for the applying of the justifying Sentence unto him. And there is a *Meichis* in the words, wherein more is intended than expressed, as is usual in such negative Expressions, which are frequently made use of in the Word of God. The meaning is, he will certainly declare him to be guilty, and proceed with him as such. Our *Catechism* emphatically sets out the intention of it. In which two Things are to be observed,

1. *A Supposition that such may escape Punishment from Men.* And it tacitly points at the

Atheism and Presumption of vain Men, who are ready to feed themselves with Confidence that if they are not detected and censured by Men, they are secure, and need to fear no danger. This therefore is granted. And it is a thing very observable, that such Sins as are against the First Table, are little regarded or testified against by humane Authority, and particularly those that are breaches of this Command. Many of them indeed lye out of the reach of Civil Censures, being covered under the Cloak of Hypocrisy. And as for those that are open and notorious, either there are no Laws armed against them, Men fondly pretending, that the Legislative Power of Civil Rulers, extends only to Second Table Duties; or if there be any such, they are not proportioned to the merit of the Offence, but to the supposed damage which humane Society may suffer by them, which they think is but little; which makes vain Men think it no great Sin to dishonour God, by vain Swearing, Cursing, or using of God's Name Indubiously; or because these things are grown so common and customary, that such profane Persons are little taken notice of, and there be but few that dare give their Testimony against it, because they themselves are involved in the same Guilt. Now the wickedness of Mens Hearts takes advantage by this impunity, and because the fear of God is not before their eyes, and they have little Occasion to be afraid of Men, they are imboldened thus to transgress.

2. *An Assertion to take off the force of this Supposition; They shall not escape the righteous Judgment of God.* And this is the emphasis of such discrete Propositions, and the meaning of it is, that it is but a poor Argument of Impunity, because we can avoid Civil Penalties, if mean while God stands armed with Vengeance, to execute upon all such profane Persons. And that he so doth, we are fully assured. Here then let us observe,

1. *THAT God is the Supreme Governour of the World.* Tho' he hath put Men into place of Authority, and required of them to represent him, in executing of righteous Judgments upon the Transgressors of his Law, yet he hath not left it so in their hands, but that he looks after it; and though they are defective in their duty, yet he will appear to be a Righteous Judge, Psal. 11. 7. *For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright.* Hence that of Abraham, Gen. 18. 25. — *Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?*

2. *THAT God is jealous for his Great Name.* He therefore in the former Command calls himself a jealous God. See also, Exod. 34. 14. *For the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.* God must have a last End in all his Works of Efficiency, and that could be no other but his own Glory, Prov. 16. 4. *The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.* Rom. 11. 36. *For of him, and through him, and to him are all things:*

to whom be glory for ever. He therefore will not lose it for want of looking after it; and because he can recover it in despite of all that would rob him of it, he will do so. He himself hath said, *Iſai.* 42. 8. *I am the Lord, that is my Name, and my glory will I not give to another.* And he will be as good as his word. And because he knows that sinful Men, who were appointed actively to glorify him, have fallen short of it, he watchfully looks after them, and will call them to an Account for it.

3. *THAT* God sees and knows all the Affronts that sinful Men do offer to his great Name, and is highly provoked by them. Oftentimes Men see not, nor know of such things, so that if they would, they have not the advantage to bear a Testimony against such things; but God is an Eye and Ear Witness of all the Affronts that are thus offered to his Glory. The breakers of this Command do reproach him to his Face; His Anger is therefore greatly incensed by it; they by such Sins dare him, bid a challenge to him, and he is displeas'd highly by them.

4. *THAT* hence God will certainly, sooner or later, recover his Glory of such. If they profane his Name, he will sanctify it, *Ezek.* 36. 22, 23. And therefore, though possibly they may for a while, not only escape the Penalty from Men, but also prosper in their wickedness, and God himself seem to take no notice of them, but let them alone; yet he will take the Occasion to let them know to their cost, that his jealous Eye did not slumber, *Pſal.* 50. 21, 22. And here observe,

(1.) *THAT* they are every moment exposed to Divine Vengeance. They have no safety, but are always in danger. Of every such Person it may be said, as *Job.* 15. 26. *He runneth upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his buckler.* And certainly he who enters the lists to contend with the Great GOD, is highly daring, and hath no reason to hope that he shall escape. For who ever resisted God and prospered? And therefore wo to him that thus striveth with his Maker. The Curse of God is out against them, the Sword of Vengeance is up to cut them off, and there is nothing but Arbitrary Patience that holds it back. For we are told, *Pſal.* 7. 11. *God is angry with the wicked every day.*

(2.) *THERE* have been those in this World, who have been made the amazing Instances of God's Holy Indignation on this account. God hath cut them off by some stupendous Judgments, and hung them up in Chains as Monuments of his Jealousy, and to teach others to beware how they profane his Great & Fearful Name. He hath therefore threatened to make the Plagues of these Men Wonderful, *Deut.* 28. 58, 59. *If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayst fear this glorious and fearful Name, THE LORD THY GOD. Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of*

long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. Did he not so, by the two Sons of Aaron, when they offered strange Fire, *Lev.* 10. *begin.* And Moses gives the reason of it, *ver.* 3. Did he not so by the two Profane Sons of Eli; hence the fearful threatenings against them, *1 Sam.* 2. 31, &c. and the reason is render'd, *ver.* 20.

(3.) *BUT* if they meet with no remarkable temporary Judgments in this Life, yet Eternal Vengeance is reserved for them, in the World to come. This Life is a time of God's forbearance, and Profane Sinners abuse it to horrible Licentiousness: and because they feel not the Hand of Vengeance, they embolden themselves in their Gigantick Attempts against Heaven; but there is a Day of Recompence coming, when God will render to all according to their Deeds; then shall these Blasphemers of God know, to their Eternal Confusion, that God kept an exact register of all their Indignities, which they affronted Him withal, He himself hath said, *Deut.* 32. 33, 34. *Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps. Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures?* Such Men therefore, are now laying up for themselves treasures of Wrath, &c. *Rom.* 2. 7. *But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thy self wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* We are therefore assured of this, *Pſal.* 139. 19, 20. *Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain.* And though there is Mercy for the Penitent, even for this Sin also; yet if they Live & Dye in it, the Guilt of it shall follow them to the Great Judgment, and they shall feel to their Eternal Confusion, how fearful a thing it is to Despise the Holy Name of God.

USE. *AND* may we not here take up a sad Lamentation, for the horrible abounding of this Sin in the Christian World? Nor need we to look abroad, or affect ourselves with the reports of other Places, where it cries aloud to Heaven for Vengeance, bidding us to expect some dreadful Judgments to come upon them, for this very thing: but we have reason, with Tears of Blood, to bewail the growth of this Abomination in our own Land, which might once have been called a Land of Uprightness. Time was, when Cursing and Swearing seem'd to be strangers among us, and scarce once to be heard in Seven Years. But alas! how far otherwise is it now? So that not Men only, but even Children in the Streets, have gotten their Mouths blistered with such Profaness: besides the many other ways, in which this Command is fearfully Violated, too numerous to be now recounted. Wonder not then if God be risen from His Holy Place, and threatens Vengeance for this upon a Profane Generation. And it tells us what we may well expect as like to ensue, when those who have his Name called upon them,

do so wofully despise it. Let us then take heed to ourselves, and Fear and Tremble at the tokens of God's Judgments, and do what in us lies to put away this Iniquity from the midst of us; and let us be found Mourners in *Zion* for this Abomination: the Prophet could once say, Jer. 23. 10. *For the land is full of adulterers, for because of swearing the land mourneth*: And let us expect no better, except this among other Crying Sins, be put away from among us. And if we will be like other Places, in imitating their Heaven-daring Sins, let us not think it strange if God make us share with them in the Effects of His Wrath, which he is now making way for being poured on a Profane Generation. And let us look to ourselves and to our Families

in this regard: Labour we to get a reverend respect to the Name of God in all things, to be filled with Love to him, and an awful dread of his Glorious Perfections, a Reverence to His Sanctuary, to Tremble at His Word, to be afraid of His Judgments; and let us give warning to others, and bear a due Testimony against those Sins in our Places, and Pray hard to God, that He would for Christ's sake forgive this Sin also to our Land, and pour out a Spirit of Repentance and Reformation upon us Universally; and if we thus do in Sincerity, we shall find God Propitious to us, and it may be we shall be hidden in the Day of His Indignation.

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S E R M O N CLXVII.