


S E R M O N C L I I .

Q U E S T I O N X L I I .

 *WHAT is the Sum of the Ten Commandments ?*

A N S W E R .

THE Sum of the Ten Commandments is, to Love the Lord our God with all our Heart, with all our Soul, with all our Strength, and with all our Mind, and our Neighbour as our selves.

 THE Moral Law being given to Man for a Rule to direct him, in the ordering of his whole Life so as to please God, God not only saw meet to revive it, when Man's Sin had defaced that fair engraving of it, which was at first written upon his Heart, but also to reduce it to the general and comprehensive Heads, which might help us the better to understand and remember it. In the Proclamation of this Law on Mount Sinai, it pleased God to reduce it to Ten Commands; of which, how far they comprize the Substance of that whole Law, we have considered under the former. But he saw good afterwards to commit these Precepts to Writing; for which he made choice of two Tables of Stone, on which he himself engraved them, *Exod. 34. 28.* I shall not insist on the *Reasons*, why he wrote them on *Tables of Stone*; probably it might be, partly to signify *the Hardness of*

Heart which Man had contracted by Sin. For the natural Man's Heart is called an *Heart of Stone*, *Ezek. 36. 26.* Partly to express the *Durability of the Moral Law*, it being an *Unchangeable Rule of Obedience* given to Man; whereas the *Ceremonial Law* was *Temporary*, and in time to vanish away. Hence we find such expressions; *Job 19. 23, 24. O that my words were now written oh that they were printed in a book ! That they were graven with an iron pen, and laid in the rock for ever !* But that which will be direction to our present Consideration, is, that God wrote these upon two distinct Tables; which leads us to a yet more comprehensive distribution of the moral Law, and that which reduceth the Sum of it into a narrower compass. Had God seen meet, he could have written them all upon one Table; and why he did it rather upon Two, we may be informed both from the Scriptures, and from the Nature of the thing it self. We may gather this from the recapitulation of the whole Law under two Heads, by our Saviour, *Mat. 22. 37, &c.* So that there is no moral Precept, but it is reducible to one of these; and the matter of the Commands themselves will convincingly infer it. And this will be evidenced by a particular Explication of the Answer before us, which is taken from those words of our Saviour; who perfectly understood the Mind of God, and the Nature of his Law.

THERE are then, two Things here to be observed, in which the Sum of these Ten Com-

Commandments is comprized, viz. 1. *There is something general, or wherein they all agree, viz. Love.* 2. *There is something specific, or a distribution of this Love into its diverse Objects, which are God and our Neighbour, and diverse Degrees.* And something may be spoken to each of these, to make way for a more distinct handling of them.

I. *THERE is something in general, in which all the Commands do agree:* They may all be summed up in one Word, and that is *Love*, Rom. 13. 10. *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.* For the whole Law is nothing else but a Rule of Love: and for that reason, all Obedience is expressed under that Title. This therefore makes one essential part of fallen Man's Religion, 2 Tim. 1. 13. *Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith & love which is in Christ Jesus.* Obedience is called Love Meronymically, because, if it be true, it ever proceeds from that Principle, which is rooted in the Will, and operates by the Affections; and because Love is the root of all the chuling Affections, it very aptly serves to set forth this Principle of new Obedience; as it implies the choice of the Will, which is discovered in and by the Activity of this Love. And there are two Things which it points us to,

1. *THAT there is no Command in the moral Law, but what is in itself exceeding lovely & desirable.* Certainly where Love is required, there is an Object exhibited that is suited to attract it, and a Duty very agreeable to the Nature of the Subject. Sin indeed hath defiled our Nature, and sown prejudices in our Hearts against the Law of God, and filled them with enmity. Rom. 8. 7. But the Law it self, in every Article or Canon of it, is so accommodated to the Nature of Man, as it was in its Integrity, that nothing could be more obliging; and where the Spirit of God hath renewed his Image in any, it is lovely to them, so far as renewed. And indeed, there is no property in the Law of God, but what renders it amiable, Psal. 19. 7, &c.

2. *THAT true Obedience is of Choice, and not by Compulsion.* The Affections are the Instruments of the Will, by which it exerts itself in the Imperate Actions, and is therefore to be judged of by them. They are the Feet of the Soul, which carry it to or from the Object which it hath either chosen or rejected, and are accordingly signals of those Elicit Actions: Where then our Love is exerted and exercised about any thing, it is a witness that we have chosen that thing, upon an high esteem of, and value for it. For this Election being an act of a Cause by Counsel, it argues, that the Soul hath discovered that in the Law, which hath satisfied him of the worth and excellence of it, for which it hath rationally given it the preference to every other thing. And he can say of it, as, Psal. 119. 72. *The law of thy mouth is better unto me, than thousands of gold and silver.* And this choice

is not made on the account of any external or adventitious Advantages, which he apprehends that he may gain by his Obedience, which often allures Hypocrites to a temporary compliance, and they are pleased in it, as long as that lasts, but from the intrinsecal goodness and worth of the Law, which they are persuaded of, and can testify for it, as he, Rom. 7. 12. *Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.* And let Men's pretended Conformity to the Law be otherwise never so exact, yet if it wants this Principle to animate it, it will not be accepted by God as Obedience. And where this Love doth influence, he will accept and reward it in Christ, notwithstanding much imperfection adhering to it.

II. *THERE is something specific, in which this Love is diversified, and that is with respect to the next and immediate Objects about which it is to be employed, or unto which it is to apply it self, and the different degrees of this Love in regard of the diverse Objects of it.* Both of these may be considered jointly, i.e. We may together with each of these Objects, consider the degree which is required in our Love to either of them; and that will appear by the consideration of the diverse Nature of the Objects, and different ground of the Obligation lying upon us to our loving of them. Now the Objects commended to us in this distribution are two, viz. God and our Neighbour. And as by God we are to understand the Infinitely Glorious, First Being, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who, tho' they are Three Persons, are yet but One God, of the same undivided Essence: So by our Neighbour we are to understand comprehensively the Creature, or all Second Beings, so far as we stand related to them, and owe a Duty to them: But it more especially refers to Mankind, who are of the same Nature with us, and there is some relation or other which we bear unto them, in every of which there are Duties enjoyned us by the Law of God. Now for the right stating of this matter, let us observe the following Particulars,

1. *THAT the First Table of the moral Law, points us to the Duties of Love, which we owe to God immediately & ultimately; the Second Table contains the Duties that we owe to our Neighbour mediately & subordinately.* On this Account the Four first Commands comprehend the First Table, as is apparent in the very matter of them: And the Six latter Commands constitute the Second Table, as is alike obvious. On this account, all moral Duty is distributed into Worship and Charity, and for this reason all Obedience is divided into Holiness and Righteousness, and therefore the Image of God, which is the Principle over-powering of us to this Obedience is so distributed, Eph. 4. 24. *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness.*

2. *THAT this distribution of the Objects, is not Universal, or of things co-ordinate, and opposite.*

posse, but of things subordinate. God and our Neighbour do not stand upon even ground, so as that these must divide our Love and Obedience between them; but though it may seem to be a Paradox, yet it is a great Truth, that God must have all our Love, and yet our Neighbour must have some of it too; He must have our whole Heart and Soul, and yet the other must have our hearty & undivided Love; and this would be a contradiction, if it were not for this subordination. But here is a manifest Solution of it, viz. God stands as the ultimate Object, and highest End and Center of all our Love, to whom it is to be directed finally and intentionally: but the Creature in some things stands between us and God, and is to taste of our Love as it goeth along to him, tho' still it is to pass thro' the Creature, and not to rest till it determines in him: As a River that in its course washeth the Shore, and refresheth the Lands it runs through, but yet goes along and ceaseth not till it falls into the Ocean, where it loseth it self. And the reason of this is, because God is the chief Good, and last End of all things: Whereas, tho' other things may bear the relation of an End to some things, that are in subordination to them, yet in order to the last End, they are all but Media, and he is the End of them. And hence, what a Man doth for the subordinate End nextly, he doth it virtually and intentionally for the last End. And hence, let a Man love his Neighbour never so passionately, yet if it be ultimately for any other respect but for God, & for his Glory, his love will not be reckoned to him for Obedience.

3. *THAT on this Subordination is founded the reason of the difference in the quality & degree of the love that we owe to God & to the Creature.* There is a love due to both, but it neither acts in the same manner, nor is it to be in the same degree. Doubtless there is a difference between the respect that we bear to the End, and to the Means serving to it, which cannot but diversify our esteem of the Objects; for the End is ever to be loved for itself, whereas the Means are to be valued according to their serviceableness to the End, and for the sake of that, and therefore not merely for their own sake. And hence our Love to God, and our Love to our Neighbour, are very differently express'd in our Answer, agreeable to the Word of God, of which indeed they are a part. We may therefore briefly consider the import of each manner of expression here used, which will give us a clear discovery of the difference.

1. *THE Love of God required of us, is to be with all the Heart, &c.* The cumulation of these expressions, in *Mat. 22. 37.* and fetcht from *Deut. 6. 5.* is emphatical; and serves to shew with what intenseness and largeness it should exert it self. I shall not be so critical as to enquire, Whether there be diverse things intended in Heart, Soul & Mind: Or, Whether they are Synonimical; surely

they comprize under them a most superlative and extensive Love; and may in particular point us to these things,

1. *THAT we ought to Love God with our whole Man.* That all our Faculties & Powers both of Soul & Body, are to be devoted to him and his Service. For this Love is the root of Obedience, and therefore it must extend equally with that; and we owe our Spirit; Soul, and Body to his Service, *1 Thes. 5. 23;* *1 Cor. 6. 20.* As our Love must have a deep fixation in our Heart, else it cannot be cordial and sincere, so it must exert it self in our Life and Actions, else we may well question whether we love him at all.

2. *THE whole of our whole Man must be devoted to him and to his Service.* As we are not to reserve any power in us for any other Object; so neither are we to divide any between him and others. It is all the Heart, &c. it is to be his alone. It is like a Conjugal Love, which one alone can share in, and if any go about to divide it, they destroy it. It is such a Love, as none in Heaven or Earth may be Partners with him, *Psal. 73. 25.* Nay all our love to the choicest of Creatures is to be hated in comparison with it. Hence that, *Luk. 14. 26.* *If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.* And on this account our Saviour hath such an expression, *Mat. 6. 24.* *No man can serve two masters.*

3. *THAT highest degree of Love from the whole Man, must be set upon him.* This also is implied, in all our Heart, &c. it saith; that we cannot love God too much; there can be no excess in the Love it self, though there may be error in the manner of expressing it, which will be, if we go beside the Command which directs and regulates it; on pretence of over-doing; but that we cannot love God enough; much less over-love him, is therein evident, because he is an Object of superlative Goodness. Our Saviour tells us, in *Mat. 19. 17.* *There is none good but one, that is God. i.e.* There is none whose Goodness is comparable to his; that all Goodness is Originally centred in him; and that they are but rays of his Goodness, which are to be seen in the Creature. Hence we cannot love him so well, but that he deserves more. His Goodness is increased and infinite; but our Love, when we have extended it to the outside of its Capacity remains finite, and he only can love himself with an adequate Love.

4. *THAT God is to be loved by us for himself, or for his own sake.* The reason of our loving him, is to be sought and found in him alone. It is true, the discoveries which he makes of himself to us in his Word and Works, in which he hath made himself known to us to be an Object every way suitable for us to place our hope and trust in, are the next motives to stimulate us to Love him. And hence we are to Love him, both because he is Good in himself, and Good to

us, yet these two must stand in subordination. And the ground of this is, because our Love is to influence our Obedience. And the great Test of the sincerity of our Obedience is, that we make his Glory our last End in all that we do; which we cannot do, unless we Love him for his own sake. Besides, it is a Rule, that Goodness is the Object of the closing Affections, the primitive whercof is Love. Now God is Goodness itself, whereas other things are only good by participation: and because his Goodness is in himself, we cannot Love him, unless it be for himself.

II. *THE Love by which we are to love our Neighbour, is to be as our selves.* This Rule needs a little Explaining, because many are mistaken about it, and too often abuse it. And here I shall first in general, observe something about it, and then offer a more particular Account of it.

1. *IN General: It plainly indigitates an inferior degree of Love to the former, in respect of the immediate Object.* There is no proportion between the Love we owe to our selves, and that which we owe to God. It is true, Christ saith, this Second Commandment is like the First, *Mat. 22. 39.* For it agrees with it, 1. *In the Authority by which it is enjoyned.* God who requires us to love him, hath commanded us to love our Neighbour; and therefore as well to be obeyed. 2. *In the Genus, it is Love:* And so it must be as real, as sincere, as truly without dissimulation as that. 3. *In the Doctrine of Religion:* It doth not belong to an inferior Art, or Science, but to Divinity, as well as the other, *Jam. 1. 27.* 4. *In inseparable Conjunction.* We cannot have the one Love without the other. The absence of one is a certain evidence that the other is not in us, 1 *Joh. 4. 20.* *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* But as his Love terminates on the Creature, as its next and immediate Object, so it cannot require an equal degree with the former; for that would be to make the Creature equal with God, and pay it a divine Honour.

2. *IN Particular:* That we may rightly observe what is implied in *Loving our Neighbour as our selves,* let these few Particulars be observed,

1. *THAT every Man owes a Love to himself.* There is indeed a sinful self-love which the Word of God condemns, it being irregular, and tending to the Man's own hurt. But there is a Love which is due to a Man's self, without which he cannot perform the duties of the Law which belong to himself. For so far as Duty reacheth, Love must extend; for without it, there is no Obedience. Love and Hatred are contraries, as we are told, *Eph. 5. 29.*

2. *THAT this self-love may be regular, the Man must love himself in order unto God.* He is not his own last End, and therefore ought not to pay to himself the highest respect. He was not made for himself, but for God, and

will lose the end of his being, if he does not consecrate himself to God, *Prov. 16. 4.*

And here observe,

(1.) *EVERY Man is to seek his own Good.* Hence that, *Prov. 9. 12.* *If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thy self: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.* He is to seek after his outward and bodily Comfort, his Health, his comfortable Support in this Life, his own good Name, &c. Above all he is to seek his own Salvation, and give all diligence to secure it, and work it out, *Phil. 2. 12.* No Man is to be willing to be damned, but should use utmost endeavours to be saved. He should be profitable to himself, *Job 22. 2.* Hence Godly Men have both Prayed and used Means on these accounts; and there are Precepts for this abundant in the Word of God.

(2.) *BUT this must be, with an entire respect to the Glory of God.* God hath in his infinite Wisdom connected his own Glory and Man's Salvation, in an entire subordination; and therefore we may not separate these: But in seeking our Blessedness, we must study how he may be glorified in it. We ought therefore willingly to part with all our temporary Interests when the Glory of God requires it; and we ought therefore insatiably to pursue our Eternal Salvation; because else, we shall not actually glorify him.

(3.) *HENCE, we are to pursue our own Good in no other way but such wherein God may be glorified.* In all our outward Concerns we must keep close to the Rules of Righteousness and Honesty, and not part one hairs breadth from them, tho' it were to gain all the Wealth and Grandeur in the World, and count every thing ill gotten, in obtaining whercof, we give occasion that the Name of God be evil spoken of. And in seeking our own Salvation, we must comply with that Method which God hath in Infinite Wisdom laid out for the advancement of the Glory of his Grace; and accordingly to renounce our own righteousness, our own worthiness, our own strength of free-will, and come to him for the Waters of Life, without Money, without Price, *Jai. 55. 1.* And be willing to be nothing in our selves, that he may be all in all.

3: *THIS regular self-love, is the Rule of our loving our Neighbour.* As our Love ought not to center in our selves, but to extend to others, so in our application of it, we ought to take our measures from our self-love, to regulate us in our love to others. And this ought specially to extend to all that are capable of the same Rule & Happiness with our selves. But for a more clear discovery of this Rule, let us observe,

1. *THERE are diverse Degrees of Neighbourhood.* The Word Neighbour is very comprehensive; it comprehends in it all Mankind, with whom we may have any civil Commerce, and so the greatest Strangers, and the worst of Men. And it involves all the several Relations, Natural, Civil and Religious that Men may

may bear each to other. So that in this respect, some may be our nearer Neighbours than others. A Brother is nearer than a Stranger, &c.

2. *THAT* hence there do necessarily flow diverse degrees of this Love. That we are to Love all equally alike, is in vain asserted by some, and flows from the ignorance of the Relations which God hath fixed among Men; unto which he hath annexed those special Duties, which are to be discharged by a special Love one to another. There are some to whom we owe only a love of Benevolence, which commands our Beneficence: but others deserve our love of Complacency. Hence that in Psal. 16. 3. *But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight.* There are some whom we ought to be more concerned for than others. Here,

(1.) *EVERY* Man owes the first & principal of this Love to himself. Every Man is his own next Neighbour. The Rule laid down doth not require a parity, but only a similitude. I owe Charity to others, but it must begin at home. I may not suffer my self to starve, to keep another alive. I ought to do all I can for the Salvation of others, but my first care is the Salvation of my own Soul, and if others will perish, I must see to save my self.

(2.) *LET* it be the same Love for kind, that a Man owes to himself and to his Neighbour. And that in all respects. Tho' there is a difference in the extensiveness, yet they are not two sorts of Love, but one. And here,

[1.] *HE* ought to Love his Neighbour for God, i.e. in Obedience to God, and that he may therein honour God. And therefore whatsoever unloveliness he may see in him, or provocation given to engage his hatred against him, yet Love to God and respect to his Glory should preponderate. Hence our Saviour urgeth his Exhortation, Mar. 5. 44, 45. *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, & pray for them which despitefully use & persecute you: That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

[2.] *HE* ought to desire & endeavour the same good for his Neighbour, which he doth for himself. He should seek his Neighbours outward Prosperity, and rejoyce in it, and mourn with

him in his Adversity, Rom. 12. 15. *Rejoyce with them that do rejoyce, and weep with them that weep.* And he should long for and endeavour, as far as in him lies, in his Station, the Spiritual Good and Salvation of his Neighbour, Rom. 10. 1. 9. 1, 2. He should be thankful to God for any tokens of his kindness to another, and not malign him for it.

[3.] *HE* ought to do all this with the same Sincerity. It is the direction given, Rom. 12. 9. *Let love be without dissimulation: abhor that which is evil.* His Love to his Neighbour must not be outside and Complemental, but inward and Cordial. For it is a duty that he firstly owes to God, who requires the Heart in all, and searcheth the Hearts of all, and cannot but be displeas'd if he sees us Hypocritical in any part of our Obedience.

USE I. *WE* may hence learn the Unreasonableness of Sin, in that it is contradictory to the Rule of Love. God hath required nothing in his Law, but Love; and shall any be so brutish as to reject such a Law, which is so suited to the natural inclination of the reasonable Creature? Let this thought then make Sin evil and hateful to us, in that it destroys the most noble Affection in us, and must needs in that very regard make us miserable.

USE II. *LET* this serve to commend the Law of God unto us for our Love. And certainly that which hath nothing but Love in it deserves to be Loved by us. And well might David exclaim, Psal. 119. 97. *Oh how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.* And let this encourage us in a cheerful Obedience to the Law, to consider the sweetness of it; for such is Love, and all that affords help to it. The Psalmist had such a resentment when he said, Psal. 19. 10. *More to be desired are they then gold, yea, then much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb.* Here we are pointed to the best Objects of our Love, and to the best Rules both for the obtaining, exciting, and exercising of it, and let it encourage us to consider, that if we thus Love God and our Neighbour, it will render our present Life very pleasant, and bring us at length to dwell in the fulness of the Love of God for ever.

[APRIL 8. 1701.]

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