

Let it lie deep in thy inmost soul. Be thou little, and base, and mean, and vile (beyond what words can express) in thy own eyes; amazed and humbled to the dust by the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Be serious. Let the whole stream of thy thoughts, words, and actions flow from the deepest conviction that thou standest on the edge of the great gulf, thou and all the children of men, just ready to drop in, either into everlasting glory or everlasting burnings! Let thy soul be filled with mildness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering towards all men;—at the same time that all which is in thee is athirst for God, the living God; longing to awake up after his likeness, and to be satisfied with it! Be thou a lover of God and of all mankind! In this spirit do and suffer all things! Thus show thy faith by thy works; thus “do the will of thy Father which is in heaven!” And, as sure as thou now walkest with God on earth, thou shalt also reign with him in glory!

SERMON XXXIV

THE ORIGINAL, NATURE, PROPERTY, AND USE OF THE LAW

“*Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*” Romans vii. 12.

1. **PERHAPS** there are few subjects within the whole compass of religion so little understood as this. The reader of this Epistle is usually told, by the law St. Paul means the Jewish law; and so, apprehending himself to have no concern therewith, passes on without farther thought about it. Indeed some are not satisfied with this account; but observing the Epistle is directed to the Romans, thence infer that the Apostle in the beginning of this chapter alludes to the old Roman law. But as they have no more concern with this, than with the ceremonial law of Moses, so they spend not much thought on what they suppose is occasionally mentioned, barely to illustrate another thing.

2. But a careful observer of the Apostle's discourse will not be content with these light explications of it. And the more he weighs the words, the more convinced he will be, that St. Paul, by the law mentioned in this chapter, does not mean either the ancient law of Rome, or the ceremonial law of Moses. This will clearly appear to all who attentively consider the tenor of his discourse. He begins the chapter, "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,)" to them who have been instructed therein from their youth, "that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?" (What! the law of Rome only, or the ceremonial law? No, surely; but the moral law.) "For," to give a plain instance, "the woman which hath a husband is bound by the" moral "law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: But if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress though she be married to another man." From this particular instance the Apostle proceeds to draw that general conclusion: "Wherefore, my brethren," by a plain parity of reason, "ye also are become dead to the law," the whole Mosaic institution, "by the body of Christ," offered for you, and bringing you under a new dispensation: "That ye should" without any blame "be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead;" and hath thereby given proof of his authority to make the change; "that we should bring forth fruit unto God." And this we can do now, whereas before we could not: "For when we were in the flesh," under the power of the flesh, that is, of corrupt nature, which was necessarily the case till we knew the power of Christ's resurrection, "the motions of sins, which were by the law,"—which were shown and inflamed by the Mosaic law, not conquered,—"did work in our members,"—broke out various ways,—"to bring forth fruit unto death." "But now we are delivered from the law;" from that whole moral, as well as ceremonial economy; "that being dead whereby we were held;"—that entire institution being now as it were dead, and having no more authority over us, than the husband, when dead, hath over his wife: "That we should serve him,"—who died for us and rose again, "in newness of spirit;"—in a new spiritual dispensation; "and not in the oldness of the letter;"—with

a bare outward service, according to the letter of the Mosaic institution. (Verses 1—6.)

3. The Apostle, having gone thus far in proving that the Christian had set aside the Jewish dispensation, and that the moral law itself, though it could never pass away, yet stood on a different foundation from what it did before,—now stops to propose and answer an objection: “What shall we say then? Is the law sin?” So some might infer from a misapprehension of those words, “the motions of sins, which were by the law.” “God forbid!” saith the Apostle, that we should say so. Nay, the law is an irreconcilable enemy to sin; searching it out, wherever it is. “I had not known sin, but by the law: For I had not known lust,” evil desire, to be sin, “except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” (Verse 7.) After opening this farther, in the four following verses, he subjoins this general conclusion, with regard more especially to the moral law, from which the preceding instance was taken: “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.”

4. In order to explain and enforce these deep words, so little regarded, because so little understood, I shall endeavour to show, First, the original of this law: Secondly, the nature thereof: Thirdly, the properties; that it is holy, and just, and good: And, Fourthly, the uses of it.

I. 1. I shall, First, endeavour to show the original of the moral law, often called “the law,” by way of eminence. Now this is not, as some may have possibly imagined, of so late an institution as the time of Moses. Noah declared it to men long before that time, and Enoch before him. But we may trace its original higher still, even beyond the foundation of the world; to that period, unknown indeed to men, but doubtless enrolled in the annals of eternity, when “the morning stars” first “sang together,” being newly called into existence. It pleased the great Creator to make these, his first-born sons, intelligent beings, that they might know Him that created them. For this end he endued them with understanding, to discern truth from falsehood, good from evil; and, as a necessary result of this, with liberty,—a capacity of choosing the one and refusing the other. By this they were, likewise, enabled to offer him a free and willing service; a service rewardable in itself, as well as most acceptable to their gracious Master.

2. To employ all the faculties which he had given them,

particularly their understanding and liberty, he gave them a law, a complete model of all truth, so far as is intelligible to a finite being; and of all good, so far as angelic minds were capable of embracing it. It was also the design of their beneficent Governor herein to make way for a continual increase of their happiness; seeing every instance of obedience to that law would both add to the perfection of their nature, and entitle them to an higher reward, which the righteous Judge would give in its season.

3. In like manner, when God, in his appointed time, had created a new order of intelligent beings, when he had raised man from the dust of the earth, breathed into him the breath of life, and caused him to become a living soul, endued with power to choose good or evil; he gave to this free, intelligent creature, the same law as to his first-born children; not wrote, indeed, upon tables of stone, or any corruptible substance, but engraven on his heart by the finger of God; wrote in the inmost spirit both of men and of angels; to the intent it might never be far off, never hard to be understood, but always at hand, and always shining with clear light, even as the sun in the midst of heaven.

4. Such was the original of the law of God. With regard to man, it was coeval with his nature; but with regard to the elder sons of God, it shone in its full splendour "or ever the mountains were brought forth, or the earth and the round world were made." But it was not long before man rebelled against God, and, by breaking this glorious law, well nigh effaced it out of his heart; the eyes of his understanding being darkened in the same measure as his soul was "alienated from the life of God." And yet God did not despise the work of his own hands; but, being reconciled to man through the Son of his love, he, in some measure, re-inscribed the law on the heart of his dark, sinful creature. "He" again "showed thee, O man, what is good," although not as in the beginning, "even to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

5. And this he showed, not only to our first parents, but likewise to all their posterity, by "that true light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world." But, notwithstanding this light, all flesh had, in process of time, "corrupted their way before him;" till he chose out of mankind a peculiar people, to whom he gave a more perfect knowledge of his law:

And the heads of this, because they were slow of understanding, he wrote on two tables of stone ; which he commanded the fathers to teach their children, through all succeeding generations.

6. And thus it is, that the law of God is now made known to them that know not God. They hear, with the hearing of the ear, the things that were written aforetime for our instruction. But this does not suffice : They cannot, by this means, comprehend the height, and depth, and length, and breadth thereof. God alone can reveal this by his Spirit. And so he does to all that truly believe, in consequence of that gracious promise made to all the Israel of God : “ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel. And this shall be the covenant that I will make ; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” (Jer. xxxi. 31, &c.)

II. 1. The nature of that law which was originally given to angels in heaven and man in paradise, and which God has so mercifully promised to write afresh in the hearts of all true believers, was the Second thing I proposed to show. In order to which, I would first observe, that although the “ law ” and the “ commandment ” are sometimes differently taken, (the commandment meaning but a part of the law,) yet, in the text, they are used as equivalent terms, implying one and the same thing. But we cannot understand here, either by one or the other, the ceremonial law. It is not the ceremonial law, whereof the Apostle says, in the words above recited, “ I had not known sin but by the law : ” This is too plain to need a proof. Neither is it the ceremonial law which saith, in the words immediately subjoined, “ Thou shalt not covet.” Therefore the ceremonial law has no place in the present question.

2. Neither can we understand by the law mentioned in the text the Mosaic dispensation. It is true, the word is sometimes so understood ; as when the Apostle says, speaking to the Galatians, (iii. 17,) “ The covenant that was confirmed before ; ” namely, with Abraham, the father of the faithful ; “ the law, ” that is, the Mosaic dispensation,—“ which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul.” But it cannot be understood so in the text ; for the Apostle never bestows so high commendations as these upon that imperfect and shadowy dispensation. He nowhere affirms the Mosaic to be a spiritual

law; or, that it is holy, and just, and good. Neither is it true, that God will write that law in the hearts of those whose iniquities he remembers no more. It remains, that "the law," eminently so termed, is no other than the moral law.

3. Now, this law is an incorruptible picture of the High and Holy ONE that inhabiteth eternity. It is He whom, in his essence, no man hath seen or can see, made visible to men and angels. It is the face of God unveiled; God manifested to his creatures as they are able to bear it; manifested to give, and not to destroy, life,—that they may see God and live. It is the heart of God disclosed to man. Yea, in some sense, we may apply to this law what the Apostle says of his Son: It is *απαυγασμα της δοξης, και χαρακτηρ της υποστασεως αυτου*,—*the streaming forth or out-beaming of his glory, the express image of his person.*

4. "If virtue," said the ancient Heathen, "could assume such a shape as that we could behold her with our eyes, what wonderful love would she excite in us!" If virtue could do this! It is done already. The law of God is all virtues in one, in such a shape as to be beheld with open face by all those whose eyes God hath enlightened. What is the law but divine virtue and wisdom assuming a visible form? What is it but the original ideas of truth and good, which were lodged in the uncreated mind from eternity, now drawn forth and clothed with such a vehicle as to appear even to human understanding?

5. If we survey the law of God in another point of view, it is supreme, unchangeable reason; it is unalterable rectitude: it is the everlasting fitness of all things that are or ever were created. I am sensible, what a shortness, and even impropriety, there is, in these and all other human expressions, when we endeavour by these faint pictures to shadow out the deep things of God. Nevertheless, we have no better, indeed no other way, during this our infant state of existence. As we now "know" but "in part," so we are constrained to "prophecy," that is, speak of the things of God, "in part" also. "We cannot order our speech by reason of darkness," while we are in this house of clay. While I am "a child," I must "speak as a child:" But I shall soon "put away childish things:" For "when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away."

6. But to return. The law of God (speaking after the

manner of men) is a copy of the eternal mind, a transcript of the divine nature : Yea, it is the fairest offspring of the everlasting Father, the brightest efflux of his essential wisdom, the visible beauty of the Most High. It is the delight and wonder of cherubim and seraphim, and all the company of heaven, and the glory and joy of every wise believer, every well-instructed child of God upon earth.

III. 1. Such is the nature of the ever-blessed law of God. I am, in the Third place, to show the properties of it :—Not all ; for that would exceed the wisdom of an angel ; but those only which are mentioned in the text. These are three : It is holy, just, and good. And, First, the law is holy.

2. In this expression the Apostle does not appear to speak of its effects, but rather of its nature : As St. James, speaking of the same thing under another name, says, “ The wisdom from above ” (which is no other than this law written in our heart) “ is first pure ; ” (iii. 17 ;) *αγνη*,—*chaste, spotless ;* eternally and essentially *holy*. And, consequently, when it is transcribed into the life, as well as the soul, it is (as the same Apostle terms it, i. 27) *θρησκεια καθαρα και αμιατος*,—*pure religion and undefiled ;* or, the pure, clean, unpolluted worship of God.

3. It is, indeed, in the highest degree, pure, chaste, clean, holy. Otherwise it could not be the immediate offspring, and much less the express resemblance, of God, who is essential holiness. It is pure from all sin, clean and unspotted from any touch of evil. It is a chaste virgin, incapable of any defilement, of any mixture with that which is unclean or unholy. It has no fellowship with sin of any kind : For “ what communion hath light with darkness ? ” As sin is, in its very nature, enmity to God, so his law is enmity to sin.

4. Therefore it is that the Apostle rejects with such abhorrence that blasphemous supposition, that the law of God is either sin itself, or the cause of sin. God forbid that we should suppose it is the cause of sin, because it is the discoverer of it ; because it detects the hidden things of darkness, and drags them out into open day. It is true, by this means, (as the Apostle observes, Rom. vii. 13,) “ sin appears to be sin.” All its disguises are torn away, and it appears in its native deformity. It is true likewise, that “ sin, by the commandment, becomes exceeding sinful : ” Being now committed against light and

knowledge, being stripped even of the poor plea of ignorance, it loses its excuse, as well as disguise, and becomes far more odious both to God and man. Yea, and it is true, that "sin worketh death by that which is good;" which in itself is pure and holy. When it is dragged out to light, it rages the more: When it is restrained, it bursts out with great violence. Thus the Apostle, (speaking in the person of one who was convinced of sin, but not yet delivered from it,) "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment" detecting and endeavouring to restrain it, disdained the restraint, and so much the more "wrought in me all manner of concupiscence;" (verse 8;) all manner of foolish and hurtful desire, which that commandment sought to restrain. Thus, "when the commandment came, sin revived:" (Verse 9:) It fretted and raged the more. But this is no stain on the commandment. Though it is abused, it cannot be defiled. This only proves that "the heart of man is desperately wicked." But "the law" of God "is holy" still.

5. And it is, Secondly, just. It renders to all their due. It prescribes exactly what is right, precisely what ought to be done, said, or thought, both with regard to the Author of our being, with regard to ourselves, and with regard to every creature which he has made. It is adapted, in all respects, to the nature of things, of the whole universe, and every individual. It is suited to all the circumstances of each, and to all their mutual relations, whether such as have existed from the beginning, or such as commenced in any following period. It is exactly agreeable to the fitnesses of things, whether essential or accidental. It clashes with none of these in any degree; nor is ever unconnected with them. If the word be taken in that sense, there is nothing arbitrary in the law of God. Although still the whole and every part thereof is totally dependent upon his will; so that, "Thy will be done," is the supreme, universal law, both in earth and heaven.

6. "But is the will of God the cause of his law? Is his will the original of right and wrong? Is a thing *therefore* right, because God wills it? or does he will it because it is right?"

I fear this celebrated question is more curious than useful. And perhaps in the manner it is usually treated of, it does not so well consist with the regard that is due from a creature to the Creator and Governor of all things. It is hardly decent for

man to call the supreme God to give an account to him. Nevertheless, with awe and reverence we may speak a little. The Lord pardon us if we speak amiss!

7. It seems then, that the whole difficulty arises from considering God's will as distinct from God: Otherwise it vanishes away. For none can doubt but God is the cause of the law of God. But the will of God is God himself. It is God considered as willing thus or thus. Consequently, to say that the will of God, or that God himself, is the cause of the law, is one and the same thing.

8. Again: If the law, the immutable rule of right and wrong, depends upon the nature and fitnesses of things, and on their essential relations to each other; (I do not say, their eternal relations; because the eternal relation of things existing in time, is little less than a contradiction;) if, I say, this depends on the nature and relations of things, then it must depend on God, or the will of God; because those things themselves, with all their relations, are the works of his hands. By his will, "for his pleasure" alone, they all "are and were created."

9. And yet it may be granted, (which is probably all that a considerate person would contend for,) that in every particular case, God wills this or this, (suppose, that men should honour their parents,) because it is right, agreeable to the fitness of things, to the relation wherein they stand.

10. The law then is right and just concerning all things. And it is good as well as just. This we may easily infer from the fountain whence it flowed. For what was this, but the goodness of God? What but goodness alone inclined him to impart that divine copy of himself to the holy angels? To what else can we impute his bestowing upon man the same transcript of his own nature? And what but tender love constrained him afresh to manifest his will to fallen man,—either to Adam, or any of his seed, who like him were "come short of the glory of God?" Was it not mere love that moved him to publish his law after the understandings of men were darkened? and to send his Prophets to declare that law to the blind, thoughtless children of men? Doubtless his goodness it was which raised up Enoch and Noah to be Preachers of righteousness; which caused Abraham, his friend, and Isaac, and Jacob to bear witness to his truth. It was his goodness

alone, which, when "darkness had covered the earth, and thick darkness the people," gave a written law to Moses and, through him, to the nation whom He had chosen. It was love which explained these living oracles by David and all the Prophets that followed; until, when the fulness of time was come, he sent his only-begotten Son, "not to destroy the law, but to fulfil," confirm every jot and tittle thereof; till, having wrote it in the hearts of all his children, and put all his enemies under his feet, "he shall deliver up" his mediatorial "kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all."

11. And this law, which the goodness of God gave at first, and has preserved through all ages, is, like the fountain from whence it springs, full of goodness and benignity; it is mild and kind; it is, as the Psalmist expresses it, "sweeter than honey and the honey-comb." It is winning and amiable. It includes "whatsoever things are lovely or of good report. If there be any virtue, if there be any praise" before God and his holy angels, they are all comprised in this; wherein are hid all the treasures of the divine wisdom, and knowledge, and love.

12. And it is good in its effects, as well as in its nature. As the tree is, so are its fruits. The fruits of the law of God written in the heart are "righteousness, and peace, and assurance for ever." Or rather, the law itself is righteousness, filling the soul with a peace which passeth all understanding, and causing us to rejoice evermore, in the testimony of a good conscience toward God. It is not so properly a pledge, as "an earnest, of our inheritance," being a part of the purchased possession. It is God made manifest in our flesh, and bringing with him eternal life; assuring us by that pure and perfect love, that we are "sealed unto the day of redemption;" that he will "spare us as a man spareth his own son that serveth him," "in the day when he maketh up his jewels;" and that there remaineth for us "a crown of glory which fadeth not away."

IV. 1. It remains only to show, in the Fourth and last place, the uses of the law. And the First use of it, without question, is, to convince the world of sin. This is, indeed, the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost; who can work it without any means at all, or by whatever means it pleaseth him, however insufficient in themselves, or even improper, to produce such an effect. And, accordingly, some there are whose hearts have been broken

in pieces in a moment, either in sickness or in health, without any visible cause, or any outward means whatever; and others (one in an age) have been awakened to a sense of the "wrath of God abiding on them," by hearing, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." But it is the ordinary method of the Spirit of God to convict sinners by the law. It is this which, being set home on the conscience, generally breaketh the rocks in pieces. It is more especially this part of the word of God which is ζων και ενεργης,—*quick and powerful*, full of life and energy, "and sharper than any two-edged sword." This, in the hand of God and of those whom he hath sent, pierces through all the folds of a deceitful heart, and "divides asunder even the soul and the spirit;" yea, as it were, the very "joints and marrow." By this is the sinner discovered to himself. All his fig-leaves are torn away, and he sees that he is "wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked." The law flashes conviction on every side. He feels himself a mere sinner. He has nothing to pay. His "mouth is stopped," and he stands "guilty before God."

2. 'To slay the sinner is, then, the First use of the law; to destroy the life and strength wherein he trusts, and convince him that he is dead while he liveth; not only under the sentence of death, but actually dead unto God, void of all spiritual life, "dead in trespasses and sins." The Second use of it is, to bring him unto life, unto Christ, that he may live. It is true, in performing both these offices, it acts the part of a severe school-master. It drives us by force, rather than draws us by love. And yet love is the spring of all. It is the spirit of love which, by this painful means, tears away our confidence in the flesh, which leaves us no broken reed whereon to trust, and so constrains the sinner, stripped of all, to cry out in the bitterness of his soul, or groan in the depth of his heart,

I give up every plea beside,—
Lord, I am damn'd; but thou hast died.

3. The Third use of the law is, to keep us alive. It is the grand means whereby the blessed Spirit prepares the believer for larger communications of the life of God.

I am afraid this great and important truth is little understood, not only by the world, but even by many whom God hath taken out of the world, who are real children of God by

faith. Many of these lay it down as an unquestioned truth, that when we come to Christ, we have done with the law; and that, in this sense, "Christ is the end of the law to every one that believeth." "The end of the law:"—So he is, "for righteousness," for justification, "to every one that believeth." Herein the law is at an end. It justifies none, but only brings them to Christ; who is also, in another respect, the end or scope of the law,—the point at which it continually aims. But when it has brought us to him, it has yet a farther office, namely, to keep us with him. For it is continually exciting all believers, the more they see of its height, and depth, and length, and breadth, to exhort one another so much the more,—

Closer and closer let us cleave
To his beloved embrace;
Expect his fulness to receive,
And grace to answer grace.

4. Allowing then, that every believer has done with the law, as it means the Jewish ceremonial law, or the entire Mosaic dispensation; (for these Christ hath taken out of the way;) yea, allowing we have done with the moral law, as a means of procuring our justification; for we are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus;" yet, in another sense, we have not done with this law: For it is still of unspeakable use, First, in convincing us of the sin that yet remains both in our hearts and lives, and thereby keeping us close to Christ, that his blood may cleanse us every moment; Secondly, in deriving strength from our Head into his living members, whereby he empowers them to do what his law commands; and, Thirdly, in confirming our hope of whatsoever it commands and we have not yet attained,—of receiving grace upon grace, till we are in actual possession of the fulness of his promises.

5. How clearly does this agree with the experience of every true believer! While he cries out, "O what love have I unto thy law! all the day long is my study in it;" he sees daily, in that divine mirror, more and more of his own sinfulness. He sees more and more clearly, that he is still a sinner in all things,—that neither his heart nor his ways are right before God; and that every moment sends him to Christ. This shows him the meaning of what is written, "Thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, Holiness to the Lord. And it

shall be upon Aaron's forehead," (the type of our great High Priest,) "that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts;" (so far are our prayers or holy things from atoning for the rest of our sin!) "and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord." (Exodus xxviii. 36, 38.)

6. To explain this by a single instance: The law says, "Thou shalt not kill;" and hereby, (as our Lord teaches,) forbids not only outward acts, but every unkind word or thought. Now, the more I look into this perfect law, the more I feel how far I come short of it; and the more I feel this, the more I feel my need of his blood to atone for all my sin, and of his Spirit to purify my heart, and make me "perfect and entire, lacking nothing."

7. Therefore I cannot spare the law one moment, no more than I can spare Christ; seeing I now want it as much to keep me to Christ, as I ever wanted it to bring me to him. Otherwise, this "evil heart of unbelief" would immediately "depart from the living God." Indeed each is continually sending me to the other,—the law to Christ, and Christ to the law. On the one hand, the height and depth of the law constrain me to fly to the love of God in Christ; on the other, the love of God in Christ endears the law to me "above gold or precious stones;" seeing I know every part of it is a gracious promise which my Lord will fulfil in its season.

8. Who art thou then, O man, that "judgest the law, and speakest evil of the law?"—that rankest it with sin, Satan, and death, and sendest them all to hell together? The Apostle James esteemed judging or "speaking evil of the law" so enormous a piece of wickedness, that he knew not how to aggravate the guilt of judging our brethren more, than by showing it included this. "So now," says he, "thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge!" A judge of that which God hath ordained to judge thee! So thou hast set up thyself in the judgment-seat of Christ, and cast down the rule whereby he will judge the world! O take knowledge what advantage Satan hath gained over thee; and, for the time to come, never think or speak lightly of, much less dress up as a scarecrow, this blessed instrument of the grace of God. Yea, love and value it for the sake of Him from whom it came, and of Him to

whom it leads. Let it be thy glory and joy, next to the cross of Christ. Declare its praise, and make it honourable before all men.

9. And if thou art throughly convinced, that it is the offspring of God, that it is the copy of all his imitable perfections, and that it is "holy, and just, and good," but especially to them that believe; then, instead of casting it away as a polluted thing, see that thou cleave to it more and more. Never let the law of mercy and truth, of love to God and man, of lowliness, meekness, and purity, forsake thee. "Bind it about thy neck; write it on the table of thy heart." Keep close to the law, if thou wilt keep close to Christ; hold it fast; let it not go. Let this continually lead thee to the atoning blood, continually confirm thy hope, till all the "righteousness of the law is fulfilled in thee," and thou art "filled with all the fulness of God."

10. And if thy Lord hath already fulfilled his word, if he hath already "written his law in thy heart," then "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made thee free." Thou art not only made free from Jewish ceremonies, from the guilt of sin, and the fear of hell; (these are so far from being the whole, that they are the least and lowest part of Christian liberty;) but, what is infinitely more, from the power of sin, from serving the devil, from offending God. O stand fast in this liberty; in comparison of which, all the rest is not even worthy to be named! Stand fast in loving God with all thy heart, and serving him with all thy strength! This is perfect freedom; thus to keep his law, and to walk in all his commandments blameless. "Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." I do not mean of Jewish bondage; nor yet of bondage to the fear of hell: These I trust are far from thee. But beware of being entangled again with the yoke of sin, of any inward or outward transgression of the law. Abhor sin far more than death or hell; abhor sin itself, far more than the punishment of it. Beware of the bondage of pride, of desire, of anger; of every evil temper, or word, or work. "Look unto Jesus;" and in order thereto, look more and more into the perfect law, "the law of liberty;" and "continue therein;" so shalt thou daily "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."