

covenant, are enjoined by the law of Christ, and are peculiar to those who *are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God had before ordained that they should walk in them*; or, for which God hath before prepared us, that we should walk therein. All commands are founded upon relationship subsisting between the law-giver and his subjects, and according to the nature of the relationship, are all the commands given to be understood. If God be considered as a Creator only, and the man (supposed to be addressed) as his creature only, then the command is to be explained as the voice of the law, as a rule of justification by works, and of condemnation for sin. But if the Law-giver be esteemed as an adopting Father, or as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and his seed; then the command is to be considered as the language of law, as in the hand of Christ, as the Head of the new creation, or as King in Zion. But in neither of these cases can we bring any proof that the “unconverted are commanded, exhorted, and invited to believe in Christ for salvation.”

Now, what things soever the law saith, as connected with the covenant of salvation, it saith to the new-born seed of Christ: the unregenerate multitude have nothing to do with it, in this supernatural use for which it is designed in the kingdom of Christ. It is peculiar to his covenant seed, as adopted in him, as truly as it belongs to all mankind, as from the beginning comprehended in Adam, their common parent and federal head by creation and covenant. In the one case it is a rule of justification; in the other it is a rule of sanctification to the justified, requiring spiritual obedience by faith in Jesus, for the carrying on of holy communion with God, as the God of all grace and evangelical holiness, upon the foundation of a given and forfeitable interest in everlasting favour, in and through Christ the Lord of Glory.

By keeping the preceding distinctions in view, we shall be able to explain the passages made use of by Mr. F. so as to make it plainly appear that he has very wrongly applied them, and that they have no such signification as that for which he has contended.

SECTION XX.

O THAT THERE WERE SUCH AN HEART IN THEM, THAT THEY WOULD FEAR ME, AND KEEP ALL MY COMMANDMENTS ALWAYS, THAT IT MIGHT BE WELL WITH THEM, AND WITH THEIR CHILDREN FOR EVER.—Deut. v. 29.

MR. FULLER adduces this passage to prove that the spiritual fear of God is the duty of unregenerate men. But a very little attention to the words themselves, together with the context, must make it abundantly evident that he is egregiously mistaken.

1. The words are neither a command, an invitation, nor an exhortation, therefore, they can never be suitable to *prove* his position.

2. They are the words of God, spoken of Israel, his chosen and redeemed people, whom he had just been acknowledging, by taking them into covenant with himself, to be his people above all people on the face of the earth. But what can this have to do with men in general?

3. The *fear* desired in these words was such, that if Israel walked in it *always*, it should not only be well with *them* in *temporal* things, but, also *with their children* after them. But *evangelical* fear and spiritual obedience have no such promise that I remember.

4. Not spiritual blessings, but temporal benefits, are promised to the fear of God in the above passage. This appears clearly from the context, as in v. 16, and v. 33.—“*Honour thy father and thy mother, as THE LORD THY GOD hath commanded thee, that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee in THE LAND which the Lord thy God giveth THEE. Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that YE may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.*” Now, I ask, what all this has to do with proving, that “*men without distinction*” are commanded to have and exercise evangelical fear, as the regenerate people of God are enabled to do, through interest in Christ Jesus, the head of the elect world?

5. *Eternal life*, in the heavenly Canaan, is no where promised on the condition of the creature’s obedience to

the commands of God. This shows that the words under investigation are by no means to Mr. F.'s purpose.

6. If Israel did not fear the Lord their God, and keep all his commandments in the sense of the text under notice, they were to be punished with destruction by famine, pestilence, nakedness, sword, captivity, and slavery. In this way their disobedience was often chastised; but as they never had the promise of heaven by their covenant, so they never were threatened with hell for the breach of it. But Mr. F. is reasoning to show that God inflicts eternal damnation on men for not exercising godly fear in a truly evangelical sense of the word: therefore, though the portion of scripture under consideration has the word *fear* in it, yet it by no means proves that it is the duty of *all* men to fear God, as *some* men do through the Spirit of Christ.

As the preceding remarks fully show that the words quoted have no tendency to uphold Mr. F.'s sentiments, so a further statement of their import will go to evidence the same conclusion. Unregenerate sinners are neither spoken of, nor spoken to, distinctly, in the passage. Nor, is the *fear* mentioned, expressive of what we always mean, by the fruit of the Spirit of Christ. But we must understand the Lord as speaking *according to the tenor of the law, as the rule of justification by works, if we allow these words to be applicable to men in general.* Then it will operate against, rather than for, Mr. F.'s sentiment; for the requirements of law are entirely apart from evangelical graces. The fear required by the law of nature is, what would have been required if no gospel had ever been promulgated in the world; therefore, it can have no reference to salvation.

The Lord condescended to speak after the manner of men, and thus he speaks of himself as desiring that such a heart were in them, as they professed to have, that they might fear him as they promised. He testifies, by such language, what would be grateful to him, or what he would approve of in his ancient people. There seems to be some weight also laid upon the word *always*, in this place, as though the Lord should say, They fear me *now*, and adhere to all my commandments: O that this might be *always* the case. He saw they would not always so act, and, therefore, intimates the uncertainty of their regard to his ways. He says, *They have well said all that they have spoken*

O that there were such an heart in them, that they would *always* so say, and so do. But nothing arises here in behalf of Mr. F.'s views concerning the duty of men in general. On the contrary, the words seem to allow, that the people spoken of in them were, at the time, possessed of the fear of God; but that the Lord saw that it would not continue, as HE desired it should do, *always*.

It is very plain that these words were spoken of Israel, and not of men in general: that they were occasioned by their having said, *All that the Lord our God shall say, we will hear, and do.** Also, that the commandments referred to were what they had just heard, and which were given them by the hand of Moses, and were partly moral, and partly ceremonial or circumstantial. Now, this code of law (in covenant form), belonged to them in particular, in distinction from other nations. Hence, the Lord their God began with this distinguishing preface, when he uttered the decalogue; "*I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the House of bondage.*" But this he does not now say to men in general, neither does he say to all who hear the gospel, *I am the Lord your God, who hath chosen you to eternal life, and redeemed you from this present evil world, and delivered you from a state of bondage.* Why, therefore, do our preachers speak and write as though he had so said? Yet, without such preface, their duty-system must prove baseless and absurd. Not that I think there is no baseness in it, but I mean it is without proper foundation.

The fear and obedience meant in the words were such as became the duty of the Israelites, in consequence of their being taken into special covenant with God at Sinai. The promises which stood as motives to obedience, pointed to them only, and the threatenings were such as could take place on no other people but them, all of which well agrees with the Lord's address unto them; *I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt keep my statutes.* How inconsistent then must it be to adduce such a passage of scripture, as that under notice, to prove what is the duty of "*men without distinction.*" But God desired *Israel* to fear him according to *the law*; therefore, Mr. F. concluded that he must desire *all men* to fear him according to *the gospel*: the more so, as *Israel* had *the law*, and men to explain it to them; while

* Verse 27.

all men have not *the gospel*, nor ever will! "It cannot be denied that the word *fear* is in the text." True; and it is in many other places, where we cannot well suppose it to mean, that godly, *filial fear*, which is peculiar to the adopted sons in Christ Jesus, who have received the Spirit of adoption, crying, *Abba, Father*.

For instance; "*And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses.*"* Now, can it be thought that all the host of Israel possessed special faith, as regenerate persons now do through the Spirit? or, that the fear they possessed was what we always mean by the fear of God, as enjoyed under the power of sovereign grace? *That* mental and bodily reverence they showed for the great Creator of the sea and the dry land, when they saw his wonders in the deep, and witnessed the overthrow of the Egyptians therein, is called fearing God; and their acknowledging the truth of what Moses declared to them, is called believing. But, in such testimony we have no proper ground to conclude, that all Israel were partakers of like precious faith with true christians. If this be granted, then it follows, that the fear of God here desired was not spiritual, but, merely natural and moral reverence and worship, according to the tenor of the Mosaic ritual.

Again, *Ye shall FEAR every man his mother and his father, and keep my Sabbaths: I am the Lord your God.*† Here the fear of parents is enjoined as duty, and the fear of God in keeping his Sabbaths. These words are an epitome of the fourth and fifth commandments, contained in the Sinai covenant, but afford another instance, that words spoken to that peculiar people are not proper grounds to reason upon, in proving the duty of men without distinction. The motive to the fifth commandment is, *that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* And the ground of obligation, as to both the commandments, is expressed, *I am the Lord your God*—Does God speak thus to men without distinction? Let the true fear of God be the act of regenerate men, required by the law of Christ as King of saints, and things will harmonize. They, being

* Exod. xiv. 31.

† Lev. xix. 3.

sons, are enabled to evidence a true filial fear. But, Mr. F. wants the fruit without the root: no man can fear *as a son*, without first being a son. And it would be absurd to exhort any man to be a son of God. But, if we suppose him to be a son born of the Spirit, we may exhort him to revere his heavenly Father. Still, if God did not choose to become a Father to *Judas* by sovereign adoption, he, doubtless, excused him from all obligation to that kind of reverence, which is founded in such special relationship. Such characters are dealt with according to the law of their creation state. And that fear which is man's duty by law, would have been his duty had no Saviour ever appeared. Natural duties and moral virtues ought not to be confounded with christian graces: they are entirely distinct in their nature and end.

*And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bond-men in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand, that he might give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God as he hath commanded us.** In these words, also, we have the fear of the Lord mentioned by Israel as their righteousness, and as being the procuring cause of their preservation on the earth, and of their welfare and longevity in the land of Canaan. But this shows that the phrase, *to fear the Lord our God*, is not always expressive of spiritual worship, according to the gospel of Jesus Christ; therefore, we cannot reason from these Old Testament passages conclusively, as to the service demanded of the New Testament worshipper. Besides, it is evident, the *fear* spoken of was founded in the covenant relation subsisting between Jehovah and Israel, his chosen people: he is called, *the Lord their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that he might give them*, not an inheritance that fadeth not away, *but the land of Canaan, which he sware unto their fathers*. Their fear of the Lord was to be *for their good*,

* Deut. vi. 20—25.

but not for their eternal good, as a nation at large; because the fear, of which they as a body were capable, was not spiritual. But as many of them as were truly blessed with supernatural grace, by an eternal interest in the heavenly covenant, possessed a special faith and filial fear; and such Israelites worshipped in the Spirit, without confidence in the flesh. *Their* dispositions were fruits of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them; while the far greater part of their nation, being but natural men, rose no higher in their acts than nature's own principle was suited unto, in the forms of godliness to which they were all bound to pay constant attention; and, therefore, the acts of these natural men could only be what we call moral virtue, accompanied with an orderly and stedfast adherence to the forms of worship delivered unto them, as a body, by the hand of Moses. And it is very manifest that so long as they walked, as a nation, in a morally upright manner, and kept themselves from idolatry, attending to the worship of Jehovah according to the ritual of Moses, they prospered. It was *for their good*, and *they were preserved alive*. But when they indulged in immoral practices and forsook the worship of God, and bowed down to the idols of the nations, they were chastened with the rod of men and became captives, and were obliged to serve other nations: the sword, famine, pestilence, and death, were sent among them. But a dispensation of this peculiar kind ought not to be blended with gospel concerns. And when any one takes a text from the writings of Moses and the Prophets, he should aim to explain it according to the sense of the context; and having shown the difference between the dispensation of Moses and that of Christ, proceed to preach upon the words according to the covenant of grace, clearly distinguishing as he advances, between their conditional and national covenant, and that sovereign one by which the elect of God in Christ Jesus are saved to eternal glory. These observations are made to enable the reader to understand the difference between the two dispensations, called the old and new covenant; and to lead him to observe the very different meaning of the same phrase of words, when connected with one of those dispensations, from what it has when joined with the other. Therefore, when the Lord said of Israel, *O that they would fear me, &c.* we are to understand, as I have already shown, that he would

approve of their doing as they had said in the 27th verse of that chapter; which can only be understood of a natural and moral obedience and worship, as above described. For the land of Canaan included no spiritual blessing; and it would be absurd to suppose that God held out only a *natural object* and *end* to a *spiritual faith* and *fear*: which yet must be supposed, if we were to admit that a spiritual fear and obedience were designed in the words under investigation.

Israel are expressly said to fear the Lord, by Solomon, in his prayer at the dedication of the temple; *That all the people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel.** Now, must not the *fear*, in these words, be understood, so as not to suppose that all the Israelites were in a spiritual state? If this be admitted, then such words as those at the head of this section can be no proper ground of argument for Mr. F.'s sentiment. And if it be said that all Israel were supposed to be in a spiritual state, then the Lord's exhorting *them* could not be to Mr. F.'s purpose, because his aim was to prove that unregenerate men were exhorted to perform those very acts, which arise from a regenerate state of heart! We have another portion to the same purpose in Haggai, "*Then Zerubbabel and Joshua, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the people did fear before the Lord. Then spake Haggai the Lord's messenger, in the Lord's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the Lord. And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, and the spirit of Joshua, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people, and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of Hosts, their God.*"† Were all these people *in a regenerate state*? It could scarcely be supposed by Mr. Fuller himself. Yet they *feared God*, they *obeyed his voice*, they wrought in his house, and he was with them as their God. Therefore, the Old Testament must be explained according to the nature of that dispensation which came by Moses. And we find, the fear of God does not always mean a spiritual act, as it always does when we speak of his fear according to the gospel of Jesus. Thus it clearly appears that the scriptures Mr. F. quotes from the Old Testament are no way conclusive on

* 1 Kings viii. 43.

† Chap. i. 12. 14.

his behalf. Quoting scriptures by the sound of words may make a show, but on close trial it will ever prove delusive. Similar observations would arise from a review of 2 Chron. xix. 5—9; Josh. xxii. 25; Neh. v. 9—13; Jer. iii. 8; 1 Sam. xii. 24, 25; with other passages of like construction.

Should it be said, that as the Apostles addressed the public bodies of professing christians as being really what they professed to be, although many of them might not be truly regenerate persons, so the Israelites being all a professing people, God spoke to them and of them as being what they professed to be, although very many of them were not truly gracious people, this would still operate strongly against Mr. F.'s sentiments concerning exhortations; because he is not pleading for exhortations to the regenerate, but to the unregenerate.

DR. GILL observes, that, "The words are so rendered by some, as that they express no wish or desire in God, but rather what was to be desired by the *Israelites* themselves; so the *Arabic* version, *It should be wished for by them, that such an heart would continue in them*; that is, such an heart as they professed to have in ver. 27. The Lord takes notice of this declaration in ver. 28; and then adds in ver. 29, according to this version, that a *continuance* of such an heart to hear and to do should be very desirable by them."

There are a people who do fear God in the evangelical sense of the word, and the fear they possess is not a production of nature but of grace. Godly fear is the reverential temper of a new-born child. He that is born of the Spirit is sure of possessing, and will be sure to evidence this holy fear; but if it be the fruit of regeneration, it cannot be the root of it, nor exist prior to it. It is the gift of God who putteth his fear in the hearts of his chosen, and keeps them from turning away from after him. Of this truly sovereign and saving bestowment of his love, he does not say, *O that there were such an heart in them*; but he freely and powerfully imparts the blessing, and cherishes the disposition by the doctrine of grace, and the sanctifying influence of his Holy Spirit. As it is a fruit of the Spirit, so it is an evidence of salvation, and glorifies the Saviour. Where there is no faith, holy fear has no existence, but the more full and bright the vision of faith

is found, the more filial fear prevails, and sin is abhorred. It is by faith I see the glory of God; and by true fear I bow before and adore his Majesty. Fear always supposes faith, hope, and love; and ever clothes these spiritual exercises with becoming reverence at the divine throne. This evangelical disposition is binding on all the spiritual family of God, who are called to revere their eternal Father, and to follow him as dear children.

This holy fear involves "*the keeping of the Lord's commandments continually,*" in the newness of life and of the spirit according to the nature of the gospel covenant. They who fear God hate evil and love righteousness; they are dead to sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Satan is dethroned in them, and Christ is exalted in their mind and affection: their hearts are set on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God as their Head and representative. It is by virtue of interest in him, that they are raised up to fear God in the midst of his enemies; and, according to the same interest, we know it shall "*be well with them for ever.*" "*Yet, surely, I know it shall be well with them that fear God,*" said Solomon. It shall be well with them for ever and ever. For though Israel's inheritance as a nation endured but a while, spiritual fear has the promise of an heritage that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for all those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in the gospel, unto eternal salvation, which is now ready to be revealed. The favour of thus fearing God is peculiar to the seed of the second Adam; and being dispensed by his heavenly covenant, and through his obedience and death, the non-elect have nothing to do with it, any more than they have with the crown of glory. The fear binding on them belongs to this earthly world only, and is what would have been required by the law of their creation state, had no Redeemer ever appeared. The law of works demands the same moral dispositions of one as another: hearing or not hearing the gospel makes no *essential* difference.

From the preceding remarks, I trust it will appear to the attentive reader, that the words at the head of this section afford no support to the sentiment of Mr. F.* Nor can it ever be proved, that it is the duty of unregenerate men

* He meant them to support his 6th proposition, but they utterly fail of doing so. See page 6 of this work.

to fear God, as those do who are born of the Spirit; to whom he appears in the character of the God of all grace and glory, in and through Christ Jesus. But this character was unknown to Adam in Eden; neither has the law of man's creation state any reference to it, in its commands or threatenings to men in general. It will not curse and condemn a man because he is not found in Christ, but because he is found in sin, and is void of perfect righteousness.

SECTION XXI.

HEAR, OIK ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; AND THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THINE HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIGHT.—Deut. vi, 5.

THESE words are brought to prove, that “spiritual love is required of all men *without distinction*.” Our author tells us, “The people of Israel, like all other people, were composed of good and bad men; but they were all required to love Jehovah.” Then shortly after adds, “It is true, there are favours for which the regenerate are obliged to love him, which are not common to the unregenerate.”* But how then are we to believe, that they were all required to love God *without distinction*? Here seems to arise something like contradiction; therefore one of the assertions must be erroneous. By blending different portions of holy writ together which ought to be kept apart, Mr. F. deceives the reader, with an appearance of truth on his side. Thus he has joined Paul's words, 1 Cor. ii. 9, and Rom. viii. 28, with the above passage from Moses. The words of Moses were spoken to the whole Israelitish nation: those of Paul, to two Christian churches of Jesus Christ. But it does not follow that because the word *love* is in each of these passages, it must have precisely the same signification. In the same chapter, we find Moses urging the Israelites to their duty towards their own God, *lest the anger of the Lord thy God* (says he) *be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.*† Now, are we to understand that unless the nation of Israel loved the Lord with the same spiritual love, wherewith the saints in Christ, at Rome and

* Page 77.

† Verse 15.

Corinth, loved him, they were to be extirpated from the earth? No man in his senses will affirm such a sentiment. And Mr. F. himself has said, that the people of Israel were partly composed of *bad men*; and he might have said the *far greater* part. Does not this fully show that the *love* required of them, as a body at large, was merely of a natural and moral kind, agreeing with the *fear* which we have seen in the former section was required of them?

Mr. F. "The moral part of those precepts which God gave to Israel on tables of stone were binding on all mankind."* True: but not as dispensed from Sinai by the hand of Moses, as Israel's mediator. And I have already shown that the covenant of works, which belongs to all mankind by nature, does not require evangelical graces.†

I. In the words at the head of this section we have, *The persons exhorted: Hear, O ISRAEL!* Allowing the words to contain an exhortation to Israel, what proof arises from hence that *all men* are bound to love God with all their hearts, in the sense pleaded for? Does Israel mean all unregenerate men? If not, how are the words applicable to Mr. F.'s purpose? It was the duty of God's chosen people Israel, whom he had called to his feet, to hear his law, to love him as their covenant God; therefore it must be the duty of unregenerate Gentiles, the greater part of whom he hath not chosen nor redeemed, to love him as their covenant God; the same as though he had both chosen and redeemed them!! Yet, Mr. F. owns, "there are favours for which the regenerate are obliged to love him, which are not common to the unregenerate." Neither did God require Israel to love him as above stated before they had received evidence of his favour to them in their deliverance from captivity. Duty grows on the root of favour. The preface to the commandments is, *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.* It is therefore manifest, that the persons exhorted in the words under notice, are not "unregenerate persons, having opportunity to hear the gospel," so not suited to Mr. F.'s purpose. *Hear, O Israel!* and, *Hear, O unregenerate sinners!* are not phrases of the same import.

II. *The Exhortation:* thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart. The phrase, *with all thine heart*, seems to denote that they were to love God unfeignedly, sincerely,

* Page 77.

† Section III.