

(says Moses to the people of Israel) if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other Gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you, this day, that ye shall surely perish." But besides what is forbidden in this commandment there are particular duties positively enjoined.—1st, That God only is to be worshipped. This is confirmed by Christ when he says "It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 2d, That he is to be worshipped both in body and spirit—"The hour cometh and now is (said our Saviour to the Samaritan woman) when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him—God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship him in spirit and in truth." And 3dly, that to such worshippers he hath promised his especial mercy—"Now we know that God heareth no sinners—but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth."

This Commandment appears to have been framed with a view to the worship of the Egyptians. To any people who had not been conversant with the customs of Egypt, it might have been sufficient to say "thou shalt make no graven image, nor frame any similitude of things." But for the sake of the Israelites, the Commandment is dilated and the nature of the particular objects pointed out—they were not to make to themselves "an image or likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above," alluding to the sun and moon; "or that is in the earth beneath" alluding to man or beast or creeping thing, "or that is in the water under the earth" alluding to fish or the crocodile—all of which were objects of adoration to the Egyptians. And how prone the Israelites were to this symbolical worship and how necessary it was to warn them against it, may be seen by the threat and the blessings which immediately follow—"For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." We cannot suppose that God is jealous for himself, lest he should suffer by the follies of his people, but jealous for their welfare, and for his Church, lest our ideas of his nature and attributes, and consequently of the duties which we owe to him should become so depraved, and our minds so darkened with superstitious hopes and fears, that we should depart from the fidelity we have vowed to him and fall into that grievous state of degradation which St. Paul describes as the consequences of idolatry—and which always have been its consequences in all times and places. "I will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children." There is an apparent harshness in this declaration, with which the minds of the most pious men have been sometimes sensibly affected.—But it is only apparent.—For the difficulty and objection to these words are removed when we con-