

not; and we have borne their iniquities.”—Such was the nature of the threat contained in the denunciation against the sin of idolatry. But God also promised that blessings should follow their obedience, “I will shew mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.” The haters of God, or the disobedient were threatened with temporal calamities, extending to the third or fourth generation of their children, but “the lovers of God” or the obedient who should keep these his commandments were encouraged by the promise that God would shew mercy unto their children unto the *thousandth* generation, or to the remotest ages.—Thus the idolatries of the Jewish nation drew down on their children the Babylonish captivity of seventy years, including the third and fourth generation of the offenders—while the righteous posterity of the true Israelites, in the regeneration, will flourish till the end of the world. Thus infinitely does the goodness of God transcend his severity.—If ye hearken to his judgments and keep and do them, if ye will honour and obey him as your God then, and on no other conditions will “the Lord thy God keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy fathers.” From this, and indeed from the whole of Scripture, it is plain that God deals with us according to a positive relation contracted between us by a covenant and agreement—that he will be our God and Saviour, provided we hearken to his voice and do his will.

* In application of this subject to our own circumstances though we have not the contagion of Heathen Idolatrous worship as the Jews had, and though we may be in no danger of running into the equally idolatrous worship of images, saints and martyrs as practiced by some of our neighbours, yet let us beware of another species of idolatry, which is the more dangerous, because it is not quite so apparent. Have we no false gods of our own creation—Does the great God of the universe occupy the first place in our thoughts and affections, or do we sometimes rob him of the worship due to his holy name and transfer it to the objects of sense and animal gratification? He who makes a God of his pleasure renders to this idol the homage of his senses. He who makes a god of his wealth, renders to this idol the homage of his mind. Each are equally idolaters, though the latter is the more hopeless and determined of the two.—The former is goaded on to his idolatry by the power of appetite.—But this is a power which soon palls and sickens its most determined votary; and it is a power which acts only by occasional and unsteady impulses.—But the

* The Reader will find many of the following observations in the Sermons of Dr. Chalmers.