



# SINNE

## THE GREATEST EVIL.

2 SAM. 24. 10.

*And now, I beseech thee, Take away the iniquity of thy servant: for I have done very foolishly.*



THE occasion of these words, was the hand of God upon the Children of Israel, for Davids Sin of Numbring the people.

You read in Verse 2. That David commanded Joab to go and number the people; and; at the first, Joab he dissuaded him.

But you will say, *Was it not lawful to number the people?* Did not Moses the same in the Wilderness, and Joshua, and Nehemiah?

Yea; But Joab saw the pride of Davids heart in it; as appears by his answer in Verse 3.--*And Joab said unto the King, Now the Lord thy God adde unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundred fold. But why doth my Lord the King delight in this thing? notwithstanding the Kings word prevailed against Joab; though indeed to his trouble, and Israels cost.*

Happy had it been for David, and Israel too, if the work had not been done. But Joab goes, and the number is brought in; There were *Eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew sword, and the men of Judah were Five hundred thousand.*

Well, But what was the *Fruit* ? what was the *Effect* of this ?

1. You read,---*Dauids heart smote him*, Verse 10. that is, *His Conscience accused him*. If *Conscience* be not a *Bridle*, it will be a *Whip* ; if it be not a *Curb*, it will be a *Scourge* ; if you will not hear the *Warnings*, you shall feel the *Lashings* of *Conscience* ; if it do not restrain from sin, *Monendo*, by *Admonition*, it will put us to *Pain* in sin, *Mordendo*, by *Contrition*.

2. But there was not all, *God would punish him for the sin* ; And you may read the *Sin* in the *Punishment* : He had *Gloried* in the *Number*, and therefore *God would Lessen the Number*.

Yet he puts it to his choice, which of the *Three judgements* he propounds (whether *Seven years Famine*, or *Three moneths flight before his Enemies*, or *Three days Pestilence*) he would take.

Every one was *Flagellum Mundans*, A *sweeping Scourge*.

But mark *Dauids* behaviour, *God threatens judgement*, and *David* goes and *Mourns* for sin : For *Dauids heart smiting*, and his *Prayer*, though set before, yet seem to be afterward, and an effect of the *Prophets* discovery of sin ; as appears by the Verse following the Text ; For---“ *When David was up in the morning, the word of the Lord came unto Gad Dauids Seer*---where you see it is rendred as a reason, why *his heart smote him*, and why he *prayed* thus---because the *Prophet* had been with him, and had convinced him of his sin, and denounced *Gods judgements* against him ; whereupon *Dauids heart smote him*, and he *prays*---“ *Take away the iniquity of thy servant ; for I have done very foolishly*.

But here it may be demanded. *Why, when God threatened judgement, David should go and pray for pardon of sin ?* why did he not desire *God* rather *To forbear his strokes ? To avert and turn away his wrath ?* Than meerly *To Beg pardon of sin ?* or, if he had desired this, yet why did he not *Beg the other*, as well as that, and joyn them together in the same *Petition* ?

*Ans. 1.* To teach us in all the pressures and evils upon our *Outward man*, to turn our thoughts *Inward*, and lament sin.

2. Because he saw sin the *Cause of judgement* ; and therefore desires the removing of this, that so the other might be withdrawn also.

3. Because he knew the *judgement* could never be removed in *Mercy*, unless the sin were taken away. Every *Preservation* is but a *Reservation* ; every *Deliverance* is in *justice*, not in *mercy*, if sin be not taken away.

4. He was more apprehensive of the *Dishonor of God*, by his sin, than of any *judgement* that his sin had brought upon him. Or,

5. He sees sin *The Greatest Evil*, and therefore seeks the redress of that, rather than of any other Evil---*Take away the iniquity of thy servants*.

In the Text you may observe Two Parts of Prayer :

I. Confession.

II. Petition.

1. Confession, with self-judging---For I have done very foolishly.

2. Petition---Take away the iniquity of thy servants, joyned with faith. Or here you have,

1. The Petitioner, David, set forth from his Relation---Thy Servant.

2. The Petitioned : God.

3. The Petition it self---Take away, or Pardon the iniquity of thy servant; for the phrase seems to have respect to the Scape-Goat, a Type of Christ, which was to Carry away the sins of the people into the wilderness, Levit. 16, 22. thereby signifying Christs taking away sin.

There is little difficulty in the words, but what we may make a difficulty.

It is indeed it would be a making of difficulties, to go about to expound that which is so plain, rather than an unfolding of them, if I should tell you of the several distinctions men make of sin, Three words in the Hebrew, עוֹן חַטָּאת וְפְשָׁעָא By one they will have Exod. 34.7. to be meant Original Sin; by another, Infirmities; by the other your Grosser Sins. But upon examination, I finde them used promiscuously; and therefore such distinctions of them hath no bottom.

The letter of the words, and outward face of the Text, speaks Three Doctrines.

1. That Gods servants may commit sin, commit iniquity---The iniquity of thy servant.

2. Fresh sinnings must have Fresh repentings; If you Renew your sins, you must Renew your Sorrows.

3. There needs fresh pardon, for fresh revoltings: Take away. He doth not say, Assure me it is taken away; but--Take away. But this will not be the subject of my discourse now.

That which I intend to speak to, shall be,

The Time and Occasion of these words; which was, when Gods judgements were threatned against him.

1. Sin truly is, and Gods people do apprehend it to be, The Greatest Evil in the world. Doct. 1.

He doth not say, Take away the Plague, take away the Judgement threatned; but, Take away this Sin. He lookt upon sin as the Greatest Evil.

2. When God threatens to punish sin, it is the best way to run Doct. 2. unto God to Take away sin. Or, When Gods hand is either Felt or Feared, it should be a Christians wisdom To Repent of sin. To Desist sin removed.

*Doctr.* We begin with the first,  
That sin truly is, and Gods people do apprehend it to be, The  
Greatest Evil in the world.

We will take it, 1. In its Pieces, 2. We will close them.

1. The Doctrine doth part it self into Two parts :

1. That sin is the Greatest Evil in the world.

2. That Gods people apprehend it to be the Greatest evil in  
the world.

1. For the first, That sin is the greatest Evil in the world : I may  
shew this,  
Sin the greatest  
evil in the  
world,

1. By Collation and Comparison of this with other evils.

2. By Demonstration and Proof of it to you.

1. If you Compare the Evil of sin, with other evils, you shall  
see how short All other kinde of Evils are to this Evil of  
Sin.

1. 1. Most of all, other evils are but outward : They are but such  
as are on the Body, the Estate, the Name ; but this is An Inward  
Evil. An evil upon the Soul, which is the Greatest of Evils.

2. 2. All other evils are but of a temporal nature : They have  
An End, Poverty, Sicknes, Disgrace, all these are great evils ; but  
these, and all other, they have An End : Death puts the conclusion  
to them all. But This Evil of sin is of an Eternal nature, that  
shall never have end. Eternity it self shall put no period to  
this.

3. 3. All other evils do not make a man the subject of Gods wrath  
and hatred. A man may have all other evils, and yet be in the  
Love of God. Thou maist be Poor, and yet Precious in Gods  
esteem ; thou maist be under all Kinde of miseries, and yet Dear  
in Gods thoughts to thee.

But now this is an evil, that makes the soul the subject of  
Gods wrath and hatred.

As the Absence of all other goods, the Presence of all created  
evils, will not make thee Hateful to God, if Sin be not there :  
So the Presence of all other goods, and Absence of all other  
evils, will not render thee Lovely, if sin be there.

4. 4. All other Evils do but oppose your well-being, nay, and your  
well-being for present (for they cannot rob you of future happiness)  
But this opposeth your well-being for ever : For you cannot be  
Happy, if you be not Holy ; Nay, this opposeth your Being.  
It brought Death ; you would sin your selves into Nothing  
again, if God did not hold you up To be, that you might Be  
miserable for sin.

5. 5. All other evils are but Destructive to a mans self : fight  
but against Particulars : But this is contrary to the Universal  
Good, contrary to God ; and (as far as it may) Destructive to  
the very Being of God : As I shall shew hereafter.

6. 6. All other evils are Gods creatures, and so far good. He  
owns

owns all the rest, he is the Author of all the rest--- *Is there any evil in the City that I have not done?* Amos 3. 6. meaning, All the Evil of Punishment Penal, not Sinful Evil: But this is the Devils Creature, yea, and worse than he, being *All sin*.

7. All other Evils are Gods Phylick, and used as Medicines, either,

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1. For prevention of this. Or,

2. For the cure of this.

1. For prevention of this---That you might not be condemned with the world, he lays afflictions and evils upon you, 1 Cor. 11. 32.

He suffered Satan to tempt Paul, and gave him up to his buffetings, which yet is the *Greatest Evil* in the world next to sin, the *Greatest penal Evil* in the world: And all to prevent sin; as the Apostle himself saith, 2 Cor. 12. 7.---God sent a Messenger of Satan to buffet him---And what was the reason? why it was to prevent sin---Lest he should be exalted above measure: that is, lest he should be proud. And as he useth all other Evils for Prevention. So,

2. For the cure of sin. And you know, no Medicine can be so bad, as is this Disease. Now all other Evils God hath laid upon his people for the cure of sin, or for the recovery of them out of the state of sin.

And to speak as much as I can at once, *There is not so much evil in the Damnation of a Thousand worlds of men for sin; As there is evil in the Least sin; the least sinful thought* that riseth upon your spirits; inasmuch as the good of these, falls short of the good and glory of God.

Thus you see, by Collation and Comparison of this Evil with others (in which I might much more enlarge my self) that, of all Evils, Sin is the greatest Evil, We will now come to

2. The Demonstration of the Point.

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Demonstration  
ons.

## I. Demonstration.

1. That which fighteth against, and opposeth the greatest Good, must needs be the greatest Evil. But now Sin opposeth and fighteth against the greatest Good. Hence a Father calls sin, *Deicidium*, God-slaughter, that which strikes against the Being and Essence of God, that which (were it strong enough) were it *Infinitely evil*, as God is *Infinitely good*, would labor to Un-Be God. God is *Summum Bonum*; and indeed, *Non datur Summum Malum*, sin cannot be infinite.

1. Demonstration or Reason  
Sin opposeth the greatest good &  
1. God.

If Sin were as evil, as God is good; that is, *Adequately*, and *Proportionably*; if *Infinitely evil*, as God is good, sin would be Too hard for God to pardon, it would be Too hard for God to subdue, Too hard for God to Conquer; Sin would endeavor to conquer God.

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Indeed, there is *more evil* in the *least sin*, than there is *good* in any, nay *all the Angels of Heaven*; and therefore you see it conquered them, spoiled all their goodness, made them Devils; which it could not have done, if the good in them had been greater than the Evil in sin.

And, though it be not able to conquer God, to overcome him (there is more *goodness* in God, than *Evil in Ten Thousand Hells of sin*; and so it cannot overcome the *power of God, the mercy of God, the holiness of God*) yet it fights against God, and makes party against him every day. It musters up all its strength against God, and comes into open field to *Bid Defiance* against him every day.

Nay, when it is beaten out of the open field, by the *power of God*, and his *Ordinances*, then it hath *strong Holds*, as the Apostle tells us, *2 Cor. 10. 4.* and from thence fights against him, and opposeth him; there it lusts against him, it wills against him, the heart riseth against him.

When sin is beaten out of the field, yet a long time it will be, before it be beaten out of *strong Holds*.

When sin in *Practise* is overcome and conquered, yet sin in *Affection* is hard to be overcome: That Contrariety that is between God and your Heart is hard to be conquered.

It will cost you many a battel, many an assault, before you can conquer sin in its *strong Holds*, overcome sin in the *Heart*.

Though sometimes it may seem to be overcome, and to render up all: yet afterwards it gathers together again; and will make new and fresh assaults upon you, to weaken and to wound you.

Nay, and herein lies the *Malignity*, the *poisonous and venomous nature* of sin, that, though God hath conquered it, though it be never so weakned, yet will it act against God, spit its venome still.

An Emblem of it you have in the Thief upon the Cross; that when he was nailed upon the Cross, his hands and feet made fast, and had but one member loose; yet that *one member* could spit its venome at Christ, revile Christ; so, though God hath crucified sin, yet so long as there is any life in it, it will act it self, and spit venome against God, which shews that *Great Contrariety* betwixt God and sin.

And this *Contrariety* and *Opposition* of the *Chiefest Good*, must needs shew sin to be the *Greatest Evil*.

## 2. Demonstration.

*2. That which is Universally Evil; all Evil, and no good, must needs be the Greatest Evil in the world: But sin is All evil.*

*S. Demonstr.*  
That universally  
evil, All evil.

As we say of God, *There is no Evil in him, He is All Good, Quodcumq; in Deo Deus est*: So I may say of Sin; *There is no Good in it, It is All Evil, Quodcumq; in Peccato Peccatum est.*

There is *some good* in the *worst things* in the world; and some thing in the *worst things*, to make them capable of our *choice* of them, in some cases; *some good in sickness, some good in Death*: But now there is *no good* in sin, nor can any considerations in the world make sin the *Object* of our *Choice*. Though you might avoid *Death* by sin; yet, because sin is *Universally Evil*, and *No good* in it, you may not make use of sin to avoid *Death*.

And therefore you shall read, That, when the Apostle would speak the *worst* of sin, he could finde no *Name worse* than its *Own* to set it out by, *Rom. 7. 13. ad finem*----*Ἀμαρτωλὸς Ἀμαρτία*-- *Sinful-sin*. He calls it *Sinful-sin*, Nothing but Sin.

## 3. Demonstration.

3. That, which is the sole Object of Gods hatred, must needs be the Greatest evil: But sin is the sole Object. Not onely the Object, but the sole Object of Gods hatred: He hates nothing but Sin.

3. Demonstration.  
Sin the sole object of Gods hatred.

His love runs in divers streams towards all things he hath made; But his hatred runs in *One Chanel* alone, and that is, Towards Sin.

If *Man* were made the *Center* of all other Evils in the world, God could Love him under *All*, if sin were not there. And, if there be a *Confluence* of all other Goods, *Health, Beauty, Riches, Learning, &c.* God hates you, if *Sin* alone be there, Gods love cannot be there, but his wrath abideth there.

## 4. Demonstration.

4. That which separates the soul from the chief good; that, which divides between the soul, and God the chiefest good, must needs be the Greatest Evil: But sin divides betwixt God and the soul, *Isa. 59. 2.* --- *Your iniquities have Separated betwixt you and your God: Betwixt your souls, and my Grace; your souls, and my Comforts; your souls, and my Blessings.*

4. Demonstration.  
Sin separates the soul from the chief Good (i.e.) God.

It was said of *Naaman*, That he was a *Great man*, an *Honorable man*, a *mighty man of War*: But he was a *Leper*, *2 Kings 5. 1.* So, whatever *Ornaments* a man hath, whatever *Gifts, Parts, Riches, Beauty, &c.* yet, if he be a *Leper*: though a *Learned man*, a *Rich man*, But a *Wicked man*, that spoils all the rest.

## 5. Demonstration.

## 5. Demonstration.

5. Demonstr.  
Sin is the root  
of all other  
evils.

5. *That, which is the ground and cause of all other Evils, mu  
needs be the Greatest Evil: But sin is the cause of all other  
Evils.*

Is the *Old world* drowned with water? it is for sin. Is *Sodom*  
destroyed with fire, and turned into an *Asphaltite-lake* to this day,  
it is for sin. Is *Jerusalem* laid on heaps? Sin hath done it. Should  
I enter on this, I should finde no end.

1. Of National  
evils.

1. Sin is the cause of *All National Evils*: We will name some  
and but name them.

1. Wars.

1. *Wars.* Judg. 5. 8. --- *They chose new Gods: Then was War in th  
Gates.* James 4. 1. *From whence come wars and fightings among you?  
is it not from your lusts?*

1. Famine.

2. *Famine.* Psal. 107. 34. --- *He turneth a fruitful land into  
Desert, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* Amos 4. 6. ---  
*Therefore (sc. for their sins) have I given you cleanness of teeth i  
all your Cities, and scarceness of bread in all your places, &c.*

3. Pestilence.

3. *Pestilence*; as *David's* sin here of *Numbring* the people. Rea  
Deut. 28. 21. --- *The Lord shall make the pestilence to cleave to thee  
ill he hath consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to pos  
sess it.*

And as sin is the cause of National, so also,

2. Of Personal  
evils.

2. *Of personal Evils*; and those are,

1. *Temporal.*

2. *Spiritual.*

3. *Eternal.*

Sin is the Cause, the Meriting, the Procuring Cause of all  
All Evils are but the Births of sin; sin is a *Big-bellied Evil*, an  
all other Evils are but the births of sin.

1. On Body.

Those upon your *Bodies*; Sicknes, Aches, Pains, Weak  
nesses.

2. On Soul.

Those upon your *souls*; Fears, Heart-breakings, Terrors  
Horrors. If you could rip up sin, you would finde all these t  
lie in the bowels of the least sin.

Shall I tell you? Sin was the *first Founder* of *Hell*; that which  
laid the *Corner-stone* of that *Dark Vault*: for, before *Sin*, ther  
was no *Hell*.

Nay, and it is *Sin* that *Built up Hell*, and hath fitted *Hell* wit  
those *Treasures* and *Riches* of *Wrath*, *Fire* and *Brimstone*.

Nay, and that which still *Addes* to it, and increaseth the *Fewel*  
Rom. 2. 5. --- *It treasures up wrath against the day of wrath.*

And therefore being an *Universal Evil*, a *Catholick Evil*, th  
*Womb* of *Evils*, and *Cause* of *all*, it must needs be *The Greatest  
Evil*.

## 6. Demonstration.

6. That which is worse than the Utmost Evil, must needs be the Greatest Evil: But sin is worse than the Utmost Evil. That, which is Greater than the Greatest Evil, must needs be Exceeding Great. Hell is the Utmost Evil; but Sin is worse than Hell it self. Hell separate from sin is but miserable, not sinful: A Penal Evil, not A Sinful Evil.

6. Demonstr.  
Sin worse than  
the utmost  
Evil.

I say, separate Hell from sin (though we cannot really separate Hell from sin, yet an Intellectual Separation we may make: we may in our Understandings abstract Hell from sin) And then, I say, sin is worse than Hell; because Hell is but A Penal Evil, sin is A Sinful Evil; And there is no Penal Evil so bad as A Sinful Evil. There is good in the Punishment, the good of Justice: But no good in sin: And therefore sin in it self is the Greatest Evil.

Now we come to the Second, which is the Main. As sin is in it self, so

2. In the Apprehensions of Gods people, sin is the Greatest Evil.

1. Their sighs for sin.

2. Their sufferings to avoid sin do shew, they apprehend sin the Greatest Evil.

1. Their sighs for sin,---you may look into Davids Penitential Psalms, and see what sighs and groans for sin. Look into Psalm 51. Why, what was the reason of them? All the Sufferings, all the Evils in the world, would not so much have affected him, as his sin. Paul, Rom. 7. 24.---Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death! The Death of his body was nothing to him, in comparison of This Body of Death.

Paul went through many tribulations, endured a great deal of sufferings (as you may read 2 Cor. 11, 23, 24, 25. at large) yet all these Scourges, these Prisons and Persecutions, did not go so much to his heart, as sin, even the presence, though not the power of sin. Though he suffered much, yet we do not read, that ever he cried, OH! for all; And yet he doth for Sin, OH! miserable man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin!--So Peter, Manasseh, &c.

2. Their sufferings to avoid sin. Daniel was content to be thrown into the Den of Lyons, the three Children into the Fire, Paul and Silas into the Stocks; and many of Gods people have chosen to embrace Prisons, Stakes, Fire; and the hottest Persecutions, rather than sin.

Which doth plainly evidence to us, They esteemed Sin the Greatest Evil.

1. Greater Than Poverty; which yet is a great evil. Melius est  
C c Panem

## Sin the Greatest Evil.

*Panem mendicare, quam Fidem perdere.* Better to Beg, saith one, than to sin,---*Heb. 11. 24.* to the 28.--*Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of sin for a season.* The like of that Christian-*Moses Galeacius Caracciolus*, who was a Noble Prince and Marques, who yet, that he might not sin, left and forsook all he had, and betook himself to live meanly with the people of God, meerly to enjoy the Ordinances. And *Musculus*, a man of excellent Learning, and a famous Divine, who rather than sin, would close with any condition.

The Story tells us, That being driven out of all he had, he was content, rather than sin, to betake himself to a *Poor Trade*, to be a *Weaver*, to get bread to maintain his wife and children. Afterwards, being cast out of that way, the world looking upon it as *too good* for him, he betook himself to work with a *Spade* in the *Common Ditch of the Town*, to get his living. He could down with any condition, rather than sin.

Nay, they have not onely apprehended sin a Greater Evil than Poverty: But,

2. Greater than Prisons, greater than Death it self. It was the speech of *Ambrose*,---*Vultis in vincula rapere? Vultis in Mortem? Voluptas est mihi*---Will you cast me into Prison? will you take away my life? All this is desirable to me, rather than to sin.

When *Eudoxia* the Empress threatened *Chrysostome*, whom she afterward banished. He sends to her, Gotell her, saith he---*Nil, nisi Peccatum, timeo*---I fear nothing in the world but sin.

3. Nay, they have apprehended sin a Greater evil than Death--*Basil* speaks of a *Rich Virgin*, who being condemned to the fire, and sentenced to lose her estate, because she would not *Worship Idols*; yet afterward was promised life and restitution of estate, if she would; She replied,---*Valeat vita, Pereat Pecunia*---Farewel life, let money perish. Look through the *Ten Bloody Persecutions*, and our *Late Marian-days*, and you shall finde many instances to this purpose.

4. Nay, yet further, They have not onely apprehended sin a Greater Evil than Death, but yet more, A Greater Evil than Hell it self.

It was the speech of *Chrysostome*---*Ego sic censeo, sic assidue predicabo, &c.*---I thus think, and thus will I ever preach, that it is more bitter to sin against Christ, than to Suffer the Torments of Hell.

*Anselm* saith,--That if on the one side were presented unto him the Evil of sin, and on the other side the Torments of Hell; he would rather choose to fall into Hell, than to fall into sin---At such a distance were their hearts set against sin: And nothing more ordinary than such expressions as these from the Saints, in temptations, in troubles of spirit, or in clearing their own hearts--Rather stay

*slay me;-- Rather Damp me;-- Rather cast me into Hell, than let me sin against thee &c.*

But this shall be sufficient to clear the *Doctrinal* part. We come to the Application.

## 1. Confessary.

1. If sin be the *Greatest Evil* in the world; Then let us fall down and admire the *Wisdom of God*; and adore the *Goodness of God*, who, out of the *Greatest Evil*, could bring the *Greatest Good*: who makes the *Greatest Evil*, an *Occasion of the Greatest Good* that ever was wrought.

Bernard was so taken up with the thoughts of it, that he saith,-- *Felix Culpa, qua talem meruit Redemptorem!*--Happy fault, which occasioned such a Redeemer!

We should be humbled for the fault, & bless God for the Remedy; and withal, admire that wisdom and that goodness, which hath taken occasion by mans wickedness, to declare his own goodness; by mans sin, to make known and express the infiniteness of his wisdom, power, mercy, justice, &c. That this should be an occasion to draw out all his *Glorious Attributes*: That he should bring *Good out of Evil*, *Life out of Death*, *Heaven out of Hell*, *Good out of sin*, *Cordials out of Poyson*.

Let us never doubt, never suspect, but God can bring good out of any thing; turn the *Greatest Evils* to the advancement of his Glory, and the good of his people; who can, out of sin and Hell, bring good. What is it to turn Afflictions, Persecutions, the Plots and Malice of men? What is it to turn Troubles, Wars, &c. to his own Glory, and Advancement of his own cause? who was able to turn Sin to all this?

He, that can turn the *Evil of sin*, which is *Pure Evil*, and the *Greatest Evil*; can much more turn the *Evil of Trouble*, to the good of his people.

This made the *Apostle* say, that-- *All things should work together for good to them that love God, &c.* He, that hath experience of this, needs not to doubt of any thing else. That God, that can turn Sin, can turn Afflictions, Crosses, Persecutions, &c. to the good of his Church and people.

## 2. Confessary.

2. Hence conclude then, That it is the *Saddest punishment*, the *Fearfullest judgement in the world*, To be given up to sin. This is the utmost punishment that God inflicteth upon men; and therefore the *Greatest of all Punishments*.

God doth usually proceed by *Degrees*; in the ways of his judgements: first, he begins with lesser; if lesser will not do, then he proceeds to greater, he will punish yet *Seven times more*; and still the further he goes, the greater are his strokes.

Now this is the *finishing, the concluding stroke*; this is the *last punishment*, and the Greatest of all other, *To give a man up to the state of sin*; To say to a man, *Thou that art filthy, be filthy still, and thou that art unclean, be unclean still*. This he tells them in *Ezek. 24. 13*--*Because I would have washed thee, purged thee, and thou wouldst not be purged; therefore thou shalt not be purged*. And so he tells the Israelites--*Because you would have altars to sin; therefore altars shall be to you to sin*, *Hol. 8. 11*.

Oh! There is no sadder judgement in the world, than for a man *To be given up to his own hearts lust*. This sets an Eternal night of Darkneis.

*A Meipso me libera, Domine*, saith *Augustine*, *Good Lord deliver me from my self*. You had better be given up to the lusts of men, to the malice and cruelties of blood-thirsty men; better to be given up to the utmost rage and malice of our bloody Cavaliers and Irish Rebels, than to be delivered up to *Your selves*; to the lusts of your own hearts. Nay, you had better to be *Given up to Satan*, than to be *Given up to your selves, your sins*.

The *Incestuous person* was *Delivered up to Satan*, as you read, *1 Cor. 5. 5*. And was restored again, and the better for it. But we never read of any, who were *Delivered up to themselves*, who ever returned: never any, who were *Given up to the lusts of their own hearts*, that ever recovered. Better then *To be delivered up to Satan than to sin*; inasmuch, as *All Penal Evils* fall short of *Sinful Evils*.

It is Judicial, in respect of God, who may punish one sin with another, and curse sin with hardness of heart. But this is a sinful evil in respect of us; we bring the writing and the wax, and God puts to the seal, and then we are shut up for ever.

And you are in the High-way to this, who *Go on in sin, and will not be reformed*; when God hath laboured by Sickness, Afflictions, to recover you, you are in the way to this *Final Doom*--*You that are filthy, be filthy still, &c.*

### 3. Confessary.

3. Confessary!

3. If sin be the *Greatest Evil* in the world, Then see what fools they are, who seek to rid themselves of other Evils, by the Admission of sin. He who labors to prevent other evils, or remove other evils; by the admission of sin, runs into the greatest evil of all. He kills himself, to save himself; he destroys himself, to preserve himself---*He that thus saves his life, doth lose his life*.

There were never any times so bad, but Gods people might have been safe in them, if they would have admitted of sin. But they have seen their safety to lie in Suffering, when they could have no safety, but in the Admission of sin: You see it in the practice of the *Three Children*,  
It

It was the speech of the *Primitive Christians*, when they were threatened with Prisons and Death, if they would not renounce *Christ--Parce precor, Imperator, Tu Carcerem, Ille Gehennam--* S are, good Emperor, thou threaten'st a Prison, but *Christ Hell*.

When *Cyprian* was sentenced to dye upon the same ground, the Governor perswaded with him, that he should pity himself; and rather Renounce his error, than lose his life, and consult a little on it--He answers him--*Fac quod tibi preceptum est: In re tam justa nullæ est consultatio: Sir, you are my Judge, you are none of my Counsellor: In so clear and just a cause there needs no Counsel. I will not dishonor the justness of my cause, to enter into Parlee, and Consultation, whether to suffer, or sin.* The like of that *Virgin* whereof *Basil* speaks; who bade adieu to estate and life, rather than abandon her Profession.

Oh! it were a sad thing to secure our selves by that, which is our ruine; to purchase our liberty by bondage; our safety by sin. You see what it cost *F. Spira*, and *Cranmer* in *Queen Maries* days, who knew not how to be avenged on himself for his act, but by Burning that hand first, that had subscribed to sin.

It is better to be still in Prison, than for sin to set open the Prison door: Inasimuch as its better to be *Gods Prisoner*, than the *Devils Freeman*. Better to lose all, than to preserve our estates by the admission of sin.

And therefore, whatever your troubles are, whatever your fears, whatever your dangers, bevvare of preserving your selves, or purchasing liberty, or life it self, at so dear a rate, as by the admission of sin; by Dishonoring God, and wounding your own conscience. Beware of getting *Man your Friend*, by purchasing God to be your Enemy.

We know not yet what our times may come unto; but it is out of the reach of the power or malice of men, To make you miserable, if they do not first make you sinful.

#### 4 Confectary.

4. If sin separately considered, be so great an Evil: What then is sin circumstantiated? sin against knowledge, against means? If there be so much evil in sin, in the least sin; what then in the greatest? If Atomes be so great; How great then are Mountains? If impertinent thoughts be so sinful, as having more sin in them, than all the treasures of heaven (besides God and Christ) can expiate; what then are rebellious thoughts, contrived Murders, speculative Adulteries, contemplative wickedness, covetous Aims and Ends, contempts of God, slighings, and undervaluing of his ways? If there be so much sin and hell in a vain idle word; what a hell of sin; what mountains of wrath in your Carrion-communications, your stinking discourses, your bloody and horrid oaths and blasphemies?

Nay,

Nay; if there be so much evil in *one sin*, and *one sin* simply considered: what shall we think of *sin compounded*, *sin circumstantiated*, *sin made exceeding sinful*? *sins* against knowledge, against means, against mercies? Oh! sit down and consider one sin, and see much in it.

Such a sin I committed against knowledge; such a one against checks of conscience, such a one against the motions of the Spirit, &c. and tell me, if the least sin be not exceeding sinful.

### §. Confessary.

3. Confessary

If sin be so great an evil, then see *what fools they are*, who make a mock at sin. Prov. 14.9--*Fools make a mock at sin*; they sport at sin. It is a sport to swear, to be drunk, &c. they will sin for sport and recreation. It is their recreation to do evil, to drink, to swear, to lye, to profane Gods-day--- These are *Fools*. What, Natural Fools? No: he that goes about with a Whistle, and a Bable, and a Coat, is in far better case than he. He is a Spiritual Fool, the greatest Fool.

Will you sport with poyson? will you sport your selves with Hell? nay worse, Will you recreate your selves, with destroying your selves? will you sport your selves with that, which was so bitter to Christ? and will be so to thee, if ever thou be pardoned.

Who would sport at that, which is the *misery* of lost men and Devils, both here, and in Hell to eternity?

One would think this poor sport and recreation, to tear in pieces the flesh, and wound, and shed the blood of *A Stranger*, of *An Enemy*; but how much more of *Our Dearest Friend*?

Thou, who sportest at sin, dost so with Christ, *sportest thy self in killing Christ, crucifying Christ, tearing the flesh of Christ* again. Every oath is a dagger to his heart, as the spear to his side again.

It is the highest piece of a Devilish nature in the world, *To sport at sin*: None but Devils do it. It is the *Burden of God*, he complains of it; and he accounts it an ease, when he is rid of you---*Ab! I will ease me of my adversaries*, Isa. 1.24.

It is the Wounding of Christ, the Grief of the Spirit, the Trouble of Angels, the destruction of the Creatures. Will you sport at that, which hath brought all evil on man, all on Christ? which hath made Hell, fuelled Hell, and the Torment of souls for ever?

Oh! make not that your joy, which was Christs sorrow, and will be yours eternally, if now your joy in sin, be not turned to sorrow for sin.

6. Conf

6. Confessary.

6. If sin be the Greatest evil, Then see the utter impossibility of any thing under heaven, to relieve and help us from under the guilt of sin, save JESUS CHRIST onely. c. confessary.

Hast thou committed but one sin? thou hast done that which all the Treasures of Righteousness in Heaven and Earth are not able to relieve thee, or help thee in, save JESUS CHRIST.

There is as much required for the answering the guilt of one sin, as the guilt of a thousand.

Infinite Righteousness is required for one, and no more is required for a thousand: And that Righteousness none but Christ alone hath.

Nothing can relieve us, but that which is Adequate in righteousness to the Evil of sin. Now there is no righteousness in the world, that is proportionable to the Evil of sin, but the Righteousness of Christ.

1. Our own, you know is too short; it is called *A menstruous rag*. A rag, and therefore cannot cover us—*Menstruous*, and therefore though it should cover us, yet it would but cover filth with filth; as the Prophet speaks, *Isa. 30.1.*—*They cover, but not with the covering of my Spirit, that they might add sin to sin; that is, the sin of their righteousness, to the sin of their unrighteousness. They cover a blot, with a blot; add sin to sin, dung to dung.*

2. Nor will the righteousness of the Law be large enough, if it were supposed that a man were able to fulfil all that righteousness, and keep the whole Law—Present obedience, though supposed to be Adequate to the Righteousness of the Law, will never answer for former offences and disobediences.

The Law indeed is strong enough to damn a thousand, but cannot save one; it can pour Hell, and Wrath, and Condemnation upon a World of sinners; but is not able to pour Grace, or to give Justification to one—The Apostle tells us, *Rom. 8.3.4.*—*What the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh: God (sending his own son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin) condemned sin in the flesh—The same Apostle also tells us, Gal. 3.21.*—*If there had been a Law given, which could have given life, righteousness should have been by the Law. The Apostle tells us again, Gal. 3.17.*—*The Law was given four hundred and thirty years after the promise, to shew we must not work, that we may be justified; but be justified, that we may be able to work. If God had intended The Law, the instrument of Justification, he would have given the Law Four hundred and thirty years before the Promise.*

3. Nay yet further, It is not the righteousness of Angels (which yet

yet is a Greater Righteousness than that of the Law; inasmuch as the Angels were above *Man in Innocency*) because this also is but a *created Righteousness*, a *finite Righteousness*, and no way proportionable to the evil of sin. If it had, one sin had not spoiled those glorious Angels of their Goodness at once, and made them Devils: which that sin doing shews, There was more evil in sin, than Good or Righteousness in them.

Well then, This shews the *utter impossibility of any other under heaven, or in heaven, to Free us from the Evil of sin, but JESUS CHRIST*. Nothing but Infiniteness can deal with sin. It must be *Infinite wisdom--To finde out a way*. It must be *Infinite mercy--To pardon*. *Infinite power--To subdue*. *Infinite merit--To purge and cleanse*. And *Infinite Grace--To destroy sin*.

However you think of sin, yet this hath been the Great Enemy which God and Grace have been contending withal, ever since the world began.

And it hath put *All-God* to it, even the *Infiniteness of the infinite God* to rescue us, and to save us out of the Hands and Power of sin.

His infinite Wisdom, Power, Mercy, Truth, Holiness, have been all employed to *conquer sin*; I say, *so to conquer sin*, as to *save you the sinners*.

The *Great design of God in sending Christ into the world*; his Incarnation, Humiliation, Death, Passion, all were about this, *The conquering and destroying of sin*.

How *Great an Enemy* was this, that God must send out his *Son to conquer it*? He can arm Flies, Lice, Frogs, the meanest of Creatures, to overthrow the Greatest Power and Puissance of the earth: but no less than *his Son was strong enough to conquer sin*.

You may think of sin as meanly as you will; swallow it without fear; live in it without sense; commit it without remorse; yet assure your selves, that this, you make so slight of, required *No less than the infinite power of God, to conquer; the infinite mercy of God, to pardon; the infinite merit of Christ, to answer for it*. It was that which fetcht the Dearest Blood from the Heart of Christ, and will have *Thine too*, if thou gettest not an interest in him,

#### 7. Confectary.

2. *confectary.*

7. If sin be the Greatest Evil, *Then see how much we are bound to CHRIST, who hath born your sins, who hath born All the evil for you: you, who have an Interest in him.*

Oh, the Love of CHRIST! that he should bear sin, which is more than all miseries! a greater evil than Death, than Hell it self is!

If there were one in the world, that were content *to be Poor* for you, *to Bear Pains* for you, *to be Sick* for you, *to be Arrested* for you, *to go to Prison* for you, *to Dye* for you; nay, *to Bear the Wrath of God* for you, nay, *the pains of Hell* for you: How would you think your selves bound to such an one for doing it?

Why, This hath CHRIST done for you. He hath *Born sin*, which is a *Greater Evil* than all these: *An evil*, that hath *All these evils* in the bowels of it. Such, as none but Christ was *Able to Bear*.

If God laid the *least sin* upon thee, *pure sin* (which none but CHRIST did ever bear here in this world) it would crush thee to pieces with the weight of it, though all the *Pillars of Heaven*, all the *Glorious Angels*, should contribute their strength to thee, to help thee to bear thee up.

The *least sin* doth deserve and draw down an infinite wrath, which nor thou, nor all the Angels in Heaven are able to stand under.

The Damned bear it in Hell. They bear it, and cannot bear it. They are slain with it, but cannot dye. Ever consuming, never consumed.

And therefore how much are you bound to CHRIST! who hath *Born sin*, a *Greater evil* than *All other Evils*; and with sin, *All the Torments*, and *Wrath*, and *Justice due to sin*.

All the world is not able to express that *Torment* which Christ indured, when he did *Bear sin*, when he did *sweat drops of blood*, *clods of blood*; when he wrestled with the justice, did bear the wrath of God; when he cryed out,---*My GOD! my GOD! Why hast thou forsaken me!*--A strange speech from him, who was the Son of God.

*Gravis Sanguis.*

Which made the Fathers of the Greek Church say, “*Δι’ ἄγνωστον νόστον, &c.* By vertue of thy unknown labors, and those sufferings not revealed to man, Have mercy on us.

It is no dishonor to Christ, to say, *That whatever the sufferings of the Damned were In Pondere, Christ indured; though not In Specie, for the kinde.*

And therefore let me say again, *How much are you bound to Christ, who hath born your sins for you!* And the more bound, because it was a *Voluntary act* of Christ: none could inforce or constrain him to it. Now the *more willingly* a *Courtesie* is done, the better it is. This doth inhanche and heighten a courtesie, when it is done *Willingly*.

We use to say of such good turns, which come willingly, that we do account them double courtesies. The will doth make all Great. As the more vwill there is in sin, the Greater is the sin: And this makes *The Sin against the Holy Ghost*. It is done--*Destinatâ Malitiâ*--with devilishness and desperateness of will.

## Sin the Greatest Evil.

The more Will there is in *Service*, the more acceptable that *Service* is: Whatever you do for God, the more Will there is in it; the more *God esteems* it; vvhhere, on the contrary--*Si quid boni Triste feceris, Fit de te magis, quam à te.* So here, The more Will there vvas in this Great act of Christ, the more are vve bound to Christ for it.

Now if you look upon it, from the *Beginning* to the *End*, you shall finde nothing but *Meer Love*, meer good-will in it.

His first undertaking of it was *Voluntary*. It was a *Voluntary Agreement* betwixt God and Christ: *A willing Contract* made in heaven with God, *That he would undertake this great work.*

And, he came into the world with as-much *Willingness*, Heb. 10. 5, 6, 7--*Wherefore, when he comes into the world, he saith-- Sacrifice and Offerings thou wouldst not have. In burnt-offerings, and sacrifices for sin thou hast no pleasure--Then said I,--Lo, I come to do thy will; O God--Setting forth the Freeness and Willingness of Christ to undertake this work.*

And hence the Angels sung at his *Incarnation*---*Good will to Men.* It was nothing but meer *Good will*.

And, when he was in the world, he carryed on the work with as much *Good will*. He tells us--*For this end was I born, and for this end came I into the world*---Nay, and he saith---*He was in pain till the hour came; viz. in pain of love, till the hour came.*

And, when the hour came, though it was a *Black and Dismal-hour*, called, *The hour of Darknes*; yet he would not desert us, he would not leave us. If he had, *He had left us in Hell, without all recovery.* But he would go through with it, though it made him (so far as he was man) to *strange at the work of his own mercy.* Nay, *He would bear sin, and bear wrath, and would lay down the utmost drop of blood in his body.*

Oh! Oh! Think with your selves, you, that are *The People of God*, *How much you are bound to Christ.*

How may we say, with Bernard--*Tu Vita mea: Ego mors tua: Tu Justitia mea: Ego Peccatum tuum. Tu calum meum: Ego Gehenna tua. Tu Divitia mee: Ego Paupertas tua*---*Thou art my Life, am thy Death. Thou my Righteousness, I thy Sin. Thou my Heaven, I thy Hell. Thou my Riches, I thy Poverty.* Oh! how are you bound to Christ, who hath born sin!

2. But yet more, How are you bound to Christ, who hath *Su Born sin*, as we shall not bear it: *So paid the Debt, as we are discharged?* Col 2. 14.---*Blotting out the Hand-writing of Ordinances, that was against us, and contrary to us, taking it away, and nailing it to his Cross.* As the Death of Christ was our payment, so the Resurrection of Christ is our discharge, *Rom. 4. ult. Who was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification.* Are we not *Justified by his blood?* Yea, we are; and therefore he did not rise formally, to justify us; but to declare, that we were justified, that we were acquitted, that our sins were pardoned.

Had

Had Christ been still in Prison, under the chains of death, we could not have had any Assurance that our debt had been discharged: As the Apostle saith elsewhere--If Christ be not risen, we are yet in our sins. But now Christ being Arrested, cast into Prison, laid in the Grave, and having Broken the bands of Death, in which it was not possible for him to be held; Having Risen again; By this is declared, That our sins are discharged.

If indeed Christ had so born sin, as that yet we should bear it; What were we the better? But Christ having so born sin, as that we shall not bear it, How infinitely are we bound to Christ for this!

Christ hath left nothing for us to do, but, To receive what he hath Purchased, and laid up in the hands of a Father: Nothing, but, Sue out an Acquittance; yea, And at the hands of him, who is just, and will not deceive us; at the Hands of him who will certainly bestow whatever his Son hath so dearly earned at his hands.

If a man Dye, and leave Legacies in the hands of such who are faithful; may we not go and require them? When Christ Dyed, he intrusted All his Merits into the hands of his Father; and he hath left nothing for us to do, But go, and require all.

God entered into Bond and Covenant with Christ, That, if he would Bear sin, we should not bear them. That, if he would Dye for sin, He would Pardon sin; for all that is included in Isa. 53--He shall see the Travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.

Well, now Christ hath done this, and having done it, he hath given all his fathers bills & bonds into our hands; & withal, a letter of attorney, whereby we are enabled to call for all this, at the hands of God.

It was for us, that Christ undertook the work, and all that Christ did, it was to engage God to us: first to satisfy him, and then to engage him; to make God our debtor, vvho vvhere once his debtors. And, as long as there is any of the Blood of Christ to give out (which will never be spent, it is an everlasting righteousness) so long is the mercy of God, nay, the justice of God engaged, to bestow it on us, vvho by faith come over to him.

And there remains nothing for us to do, in point of justification, but, To sue out all that that Christ hath purchased.

We live in the vvorld; as if vve vvhere to purchase a pardon, vvhen vve are onely to receive a pardon.

God arresteth us for the Debt of sin; But do you think it is, that we should pay it? alas poor creatures! No, it is but to drive us out of our selves, and to bring us over unto Christ, vvho hath already paid the debt.

And, Oh! how should this make us advance Christ, admire Christ, prize Christ! What should indear our hearts more to Christ, than his, That he hath born our sins, and so born them, as we shall never ear them? if vve have an interest in him.

#### 8. Confessary.

8. If sin be the Greatest Evil, Then it calls out, 1. For the Greatest Sorrow. 2. For the Greatest Hatred. 3. For the Greatest Care to avoid it. 4. For the Greatest Care to be rid of it.

1. Sin calls for  
greatest sorrow.

If sin be the *Greatest Evil*, Then it must have *The Greatest Sorrow*. No affliction, no trouble, no evil, should be so bitter to us, as sin; because sin is the *Greatest Evil*.

It is a sad thing to see our hearts tender, and sensibly affected with *Lesser evils and troubles*; and yet to be hard and insensible for sin, which is the *Greatest of evils*.

It would therefore be our wisdom, when any other evils be upon us, *To turn all our sighs, tears and sorrows upon sin*.

It is an Aphorism in *Physick*---*Erumpens sanguis, venâ scētâ sistitur*: If a man bleed vehemently in one place, they let him bleed in another, and so turn the stream of blood another way.

It should be our wisdom, when our souls bleed, and our hearts mourn for other evils, *to turn all those mourning affections upon sin*: Let them run in the right chanel.

Those tears must be wept over again, which are not shed for sin. Sorrow is like *Mercuries Influence*: Good, if it be joyned with a Good; Bad, if it be joyned with a Bad Planet.

It is not so much the Sorrow, as the Ground and Spring of the Sorrow. The object of it is to be taken notice of. Sorrow was naught in *Judas*, good in *Peter*; it was naught in *Saul*, good in *David*. In the one, it was a Sorrow to death; in the other, a Sorrow to cure the wound of Death. In the one, *worldly*; in the other, *godly*. *Worldly sorrow causeth death*. And such is all sorrow, that hath not sin for the ground, grace for the principle, God for the end.

Where sin is apprehended the *Greatest evil*, it will have the *Greatest sorrow*: Sorrow to exceed all other sorrows.

1. *Though not ever in quantity and bulk, yet in quality and worth*: A little Gold is worth a great deal of Earth and Rubbish.

2. *Though not in strength, yet in length and continuance*: Other sorrows are but like a *Land-flood*, for a time, occasioned by a *Storm*, which, when that is over, the flood is down. This *Godly sorrow* doth arise from a *spring*, and having a *fountain* to continue it, it is *Permanent*, when the other is gone. This is the difference between the *Godly*, and the other.

Gods people, their sorrows, which are *Spiritual*, do arise from a *spring*; their *worldly*, from a *storm*, a *tempest*. The wicked, their *spiritual sorrows* arise from a *storm*, some present vvringing of Conscience, fear of vvrath; and their *vworldly sorrows* arise from a *spring*.

Where sin is apprehended the *Greatest Evil*, there it shall have the *Greatest sorrow*.

1. *A sorrow Proportionable to the Measures and Greatness of Sin*.

2. *A sorrow Proportionable to the Merits and Desert of Sin*.

As the merit of sin is infinite, so the sorrow for it must be an infinite sorrow. Infinite, I say, *Non Actū, sed Affectū*, not in the act and expression, but in the Desire and Affection of the soul.

He, whose Heart and Eyes dry up together, whose Expression in Tears, and Affection of Sorrow, do end together; though he had wept a sea of Tears, he had not yet truly wept for sin.

Where sorrow is Godly, it hath Affections of mourning, when the expression of mourning ceaseth; because every drop of tears doth arise from a spring of tears within.

As every Act of Faith doth arise from a believing disposition; an habit of faith within; every act of Love, from a Principle of love within: So every expression of sorrow from an affection of sorrow in the spirit---Hence we read, 1 Sam. 7. 6. their sorrow is exprest by this Metaphor---They drew water (as out of a well) and poured it out before the Lord. Their eyes did not empty, so fast as their hearts filled. Their eyes could not pour it forth, so fast as their hearts did yield it up. All their Expressions of Mourning did fall short of those Affections of Sorrow which were in the heart.

This is sorrow for sin: A sorrow proportioned to the measure, to the demerit of sin: A sorrow, that doth exceed all other sorrows; though not in quantity, yet in quality; though not in strength, yet in length and continuance.

2. Is sin the Greatest Evil, Then it calls out for the Greatest Hatred. Nothing is properly the Object of Hatred, but Evil: And that not All kind of Evil: but sinful Evil---Penal Evils are rather the Objects of Fear; than of Hatred, because these are Improperly Evil.

2. Sin calls for the greatest Hatred.

Nothing indeed is evil; but what makes us evil: and these may be a means to make us good; and therefore are not properly evil, and so an Object of hatred.

Sinful evil is properly the object of hatred, because this is properly evil: and being the Greatest of Evils, should therefore have the greatest of our hatred, Psal. 92. 10---You that love the Lord, see that you Hate evil. It is not enough for you, to be angry with sin, and displeased with sin; for so a man may be with his Friend, one whom he loves, upon some discourtesie: Nor is it enough that you should strike sin; for so many do to day, and embrace it to morrow: But you must endeavor to kill sin. Hatred labors after the Un-being of that it hates: Nothing but the destruction and blood of it, will satisfy the soul that truly hates sin.

There is a great deal of mistake in men, concerning this point. I might shew you the secret deceits of the spirit, concerning it in brief, and how far those come short of hatred of sin.

1. If

1. *A man may fall out with a sinner, by whom he hath been drawn into sin, and yet not Hate the sin; execute the Traytor, and yet like the Treason.*

2. *A man may fall out with himself for sin, and yet not hate sin; When he hath brought some inconvenience to himself by his sin, which otherwise he liketh well enough.*

3. *A man may fall out with sin, and yet not hate sin: Cast away the coal, when burnt with the fire that is in it, and yet not offended with the blackness of it, or the defilement which he getteth by it.*

3. Sin calls for the greatest care to avoid it.

3. If sin be the *Greatest Evil*, Then it calls out for the *Greatest Care to avoid it*. Men are naturally afraid to fall into evil. What study, vvhhat care, vvhhat endeavors to *prevent Evil*? Did you apprehend sin to be the *Greatest of Evils*, there vvhould be no less care to avoid sin. You vvhould endeavor to walk closely and exactly with God; to *Beware of all the Occasions, Allurements, &c* which might draw you to sin. You would watch in all *Times*, in all *Companies*, good and bad, in all *Places*: None are so secure, but you may fall into sin, if you be neglective of your *Christian Watch*.

Thus, where sin is apprehended to be the *Greatest Evil*, there will be the *Greatest care and circumspection* against sin. Such a man

1. He is *Acquainted with the falls of others*, which are to him, not *Land-Marks to Walk by*: but *Sea-Marks, and Rocks to Shun*.

2. He is *acquainted with the weakness and wickedness of his own heart and spirit*; and therefore watches.

He knows he cannot trust *any member alone*, without a *Guard upon it*.

The *eye* are full of sin: *Adultery, Pride, Envy, lusts of the Eye*, 1 John 2.16. And he cannot trust his eyes, without *Jobs Covenant* - *I have made a Covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think on a maid?* Chap. 31.1.

The *Tongue* is full of sin: *Of Cursings, Murmurings, Revilings, Vain-Communications*: And there is no trusting of it, without *David's Bridle*, Psal. 39. 7--*I will keep my mouth, as with a Bridle, that I offend not with my Tongue*. He knows his own weakness and wickedness; and therefore dares not trust *any member*, without his *Keeper*.

3. Such a man; he is *acquainted with the power and policy of Satan*: who, as *Luther* calls him, is *Non Promotus, sed Expertus Doctor*. A subtle enemy, whose *Temptations* are called---*Τὰ δόλη τὰ σατανᾶ*, Rev. 2.24.--*Τὰ νόημα τὰ αὐτῶ*, 1 Cor. 2.11.--*Τὰς μεθοδεύας τῆς πλάνης*, Eph. 4.14.

He suits his temptations according too.

4. Such an one, he is *acquainted with the danger and deceitfulness of sin*; and how it is

1. Deceitful

1. Deceitful in its Object.
2. Deceitful in its Arguments.
3. Deceitful in its Pretences and Excuses. Nullum vitium sine atrocinitio.

4. Deceitful in its Inroads.

5. Deceitful in its Promises. And therefore will he keep an holy reumspction, an humble, awful, jealous fear over his own spirit, lest he should fall into sin. He looks on sin, as his Greatest Evil; and is Greatest care and endeavors are to avoid sin.

4. If sin be the Greatest Evil, Then should it be our chiefest endeavors to be rid of sin. Every man would labor to be rid of Evil, and the Greater the Evil, the greater is our desire to be rid thereof.

4. Sin calls for Greatest endeavors to be rid of it.

Now sin is the Greatest of Evils: How much more then could we labour and endeavor to be Rid of the Greatest of evils?

Alas! Alas! what are all other Evils, to the Evil of Sin? which makes our good, evil. And yet to see the vile ness of mens spirits, they would fain be rid of all other evils, but not of Sin:

Pharaoh--Take away this Death, this Plague. They complain of evil caused, but not of the evil causing--of the evil punishing not of the evil punished--Flagella dolent: Quare Flagellantur, dolent, saith Augustine: They howl under the present scourges and afflictions, but never lament the sin; they would fain be rid the Pain, but yet they would fain keep the Tooh. Whereas till sin be removed, the afflictions will not be removed. they be, yet not in mercy, but in judgement: And your present Deliverance doth but Reserve you for a severer stroke. Where on the contrary, If sin be removed, the affliction will be moved: They are like the Body and the Shadow; Remove the Body, and the Shadow must needs be removed. Sin is the Body; Afflictions be but the Shadow.

Or, if the Afflictions do continue; yet, if God take away the Evil of the Evil is taken way. Sin is the sting of every affliction. Sin is that which imbitters every Cross: And sin taken away, that which is Vindictive is taken way, and that which is Medicinal, and for Salvation, doth remain: It is more fruitful, than penal: All for merciful ends, and out of merciful respects; when sin is taken away.

1. If sin be the Greatest Evil, Then let us rather choose to fall into the Greatest Evil in the world, than into the least evil of

All other Evils have some Good in them, and are to be the evils of Choice, in case we cannot avoid them, but we must not of sin. Thus you see Moses did; as you may read, Heb. 11. He chose rather to be afflicted with the people God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

But

But now sin, it is *All-evil*, and *No-good*; and there is nothing in the world should make us to *chuse sin*.

2. Is sin the *Greatest Evil*? Let this then put us on to *pity* and *pray for such*, who are under a *State of sin*. You *pity sick Friends*, *poor Friends*, *undone Friends*. But alas! what are all these evils, to the *evil of sin*? what is *Poverty*? what is *Sickness*? what is *anything*, to the *evil of Sin*? All these are but *Outward*: this is an *Inward Evil*. All these are but of a *Temporal nature*; *Death* but a *Conclusion* to them all. But this is of an *Eternal nature*. All other will never make you the *Object of Gods wrath* and *hatred*.

And therefore spend some tears, put up some prayers for such, who are under the *state of sin*. O (saith *Abraham*) that *Ismael might live in thy sight*! So say thou, *There is such a Friend*, and such a *Friend*, a *Brother*, a *Father*, &c. who lies under *sin*, is in a *state of sin*; Oh! that thou wouldst *pity their souls*! Oh! that thou wouldst *snatch them out of the state of sin*!

3. If sin be so *Great an Evil*, Let us then *fall down and Admire*,

1. *The greatness of Gods Patience in bearing with sinners.*

2. *The greatness of Gods mercy in pardoning sin.*

1. Admire Gods  
patience in  
bearing with  
sinners.

1. Here *Admire the greatness of Gods patience in bearing with sinners*. It may be thou hast been an *Unclean Sinner*, a *Drunken sinner*, a *Swearing-wretch*, these *twenty, thirty, forty*, it may be *threescore years*, and more. And hath God spared thee? Oh! here see the *wonder of Gods patience*!

If it were not, that God is *Almighty* in the *power of his patience*, it had been *impossible* he should have *spared thee so long*. He tells us so, *Hos. 11. 9. I am God, and not man---* I will not enter into the city, viz. to destroy it. So *Mal. 3. 6.---* I am *JEHOVAH*, I change not--Therefore ye sons of *Jacob* are not consumed; *Implying*, if he had not been God, if he had not been *Almighty* in the *power of his patience*, they had certainly been *cut off long before*.

If men be *daily provoked* and *irritated* with *injuries*, and do not come out to *revenge*, we attribute it either to their *Puillanimity*, or to their *Impotency*; either to their want of *courage*, or want of *Power*. But now it is not so with God, *His patience is his power*. *Numb. 14. 17, 18.* when God had threatened to destroy them, *Moses* prays to God to *forbear them*, and he calls that *Act of his patience*, no less than *his power---* Now, I beseech thee, let the *power of my Lord* be great, according as thou hast spoken--*The Lord is long-suffering, &c.* where you see, he makes his *patience his power*. And so it is indeed, if you consider what sin is. Shall I say no more of it, than this, which God saith, *Levit. 26. 21. It is contrary to God.*

1 It is *contrary to the works of God*. As soon as God set up and perfected the frame of the world, sin gave a shrewd shake to all, it *unpin'd* this frame, and had like to have pull'd all in pieces again. And had it not been for the *promise of Christ*, all this frame had fallen in pieces again.

1 Sin contrary to Gods works.

If a man should come into a curious Artificers shop, and should with one blow dash in pieces a *Piece of Art*, which cost him many years study and pains the contriving of it. How could he bear with it? Thus sin did, and yet that God should forbear, Oh! Omnipotent patience!

2. But yet further; It is *Contrary to Gods nature*. God is *holy*, sin *unholy*; God is *pure*, sin is *filthy*; and therefore compar'd still to the most *filthiest things* in the world, to the *Poyson of Aspes*, to *Ulcers*, *Soars*, &c. If all the *Noysom Pollution*s in the world met in one *common Sink*, it would never equal the *Pollution of sin*.

2 Sin contrary to Gods Nature.

God is *good*, perfect *Good*: Sin is *evil*, universally *evil*. There is *good* in all other things, *Plague*, *Sickness*, *Hell* it self, in a kinde, hath a *good* in it: *None in sin*.

Sin is the *Practical-blasphemy* of all the name of God. It is the *Dare of his Justice*, the *Rape of his Mercy*, the *Fear of his Patience*, the *Slight of his Power*, the *Contempt of his Love*: It is every way *contrary to God*.

3. It is *contrary to the will of God*. God bids us---*Do this*; Sin saith---*I will not do it*---*Sanctifie my Sabbath*---*I will not sanctifie it*. Here is *Contradiction*: And who can endure *Contradiction*?

3 Sin contrary to the will of God.

It is set down as a *great piece of Christs sufferings*, Heb. 12.3. ---*That he indur'd the contradiction of sinners against himself*: certainly it was a *great suffering*. How can a *Wise man* indure to be *contradicted by a fool*? And here, that *Christ*, who was *The Wisdom of the Father*, should bear with such contradiction from *fools*; here was a *great piece of Suffering*.

Now sin is a *contradiction of God*: Sets *Will*, against *Wisdom*; and the *Hell of a wicked Will*, against an *Heaven of Infinite Wisdom*. And that God should bear with such sinners; here is a *Wonder*.

You know in all the *Creatures*, *Contrariety* makes all the *Combustion*: It makes all the *war* in nature, it causeth one *Element* to fight against another: *Fire* against *Water*, *Water* against *Fire*: It will make very *Stones* to sweat, and burst asunder.

Travel through the whole *Creation*, and you shall not see *Any Creature*, that can bear with its *Contrary*. And that God and Sin should be *Contrary*; and yet the *Sinner* live in the world: Here is a *Wonder*, a *Wonder of Patience*.

Admire Gods  
mercy in par-  
doning sin.

2. Is sin so Great an Evil? Let us then fall down, and Admire the greatness of Gods mercy in pardoning sin.

You see how the Prophet cries out and Admires, Mic. 7. 18--- *Who is a God like unto thee! That pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the Transgressions of the remnant of his heritage!*

It is one of the Greatest works, that God doth in the world, To pardon sin. A work in which he declares, All his glorious Attributes: His Wisdom, his Power, his Justice, his Mercy, his Holiness, &c. in pardoning sin.

Men that have cheap and slight thoughts of Gods Pardoning-Mercy; have thereby an evident sign, They never had a pardon: never knew what it was indeed, To have a pardon.

If ever any work in the world did put God to it, then this of the Pardon of sin. And, if ever God do intend thee any good, he will instruct thee, and rectifie thy judgement in this, Touching the Pardon of sin.

Therefore doth God humble men, at their Bringing-in, To raise up their esteem of a pardon, To advance the greatness of his own Mercy, in Pardoning sin.

And indeed we should not need such great Preparations and Humiliations in coming to Christ, if we had but Greater thoughts of the Pardon of sin.

Men make no more of a Pardon, than to Cry God Mercy. Swear an oath, and then say,--God forgive me. Or say,--Lord have mercy on me, when I dye.

It was said of Lewis the 11. King of France, that He wore a Crucifix in his hat, and when he had sinned, he would but kiss his Crucifix, and then all was done. And so the Papists make it no more but a Crucifix, and a Confession. Ah! my Brethren, if ever God mean good to you, he will make you Know what a Pardon is. Isa. 55. 7. when God would draw men up, to Shew them a Pardon; he calls them Above all the World---My thoughts are not as your thoughts; nor your ways, my ways, saith the Lord. If they were, then I could not multiply Pardons: But as the Heavens are higher than earth, so are my thoughts above your thoughts, and my ways above your ways. I am infinite.

If Gods Creating-mercy were so great, as David vvith doubled Admiration sets it out, Psal. 8. 1. and the last verses,--O Lord, our Lord! how wonderful is thy Name in all the world: who hast set thy Glory above the Heavens. What is then his Pardoning Mercy?

3. Lastly, Is sin so Great an Evil? Then see What cause we have to humble our souls before God this day, That vve have had such slight thoughts of sin, vvho hath thus judged sin to be the Greatest of all Evils: What slight thoughts have vve of sin? vve can vvallowv it, vvithout fear; vve can live in it, vvithout sense; vve can commit it, vvithout remorse. All vvich shewv

we have but slight thoughts of sin, we do not apprehend sin to be such an evil as indeed it is.

Nay, How faulty are Gods people themselves here? What mean thoughts have they of sin?

They are not so watchful against it, not so Burdened, vvith it, not so troubled for it, as they ought to be. All vvhich shewvs, hat though sin do appear to them, to be *A great Evil*, and, *the Greatest of all other Evils*, yet they do not apprehend it o be so Great an Evil as it is.

Now, that you may be able to have some suitable conceptions f sin to the greatness of it; that you may be able to see sin xceeding sinful, I will briefly present it to you in these Six ilasses:

1. Look upon it, *In the Glas of Nature*; which, though it e but a *Dim-Glas*, a *Blown-Glas*: Sin hath dimmed it; yet this able to discover a great deal of the evil of sin. The ery *Heathen* themselves have seen and judged many sins to be *the greatest of evils*.

Though *Spiritual sins* were hid from them, their light was ot able to discover *Infidelity*, and *Gospel-sins*; yet *Moral-sins* hey have discovered, and have avoided them, and would azard themselves; nay, and suffer too, rather than they would ommit such sins. The examples of *Plato*, *Scipio*, *Cato*, and many thers, will clear this.

And all this was discovered by the *Glas of Nature*, done by *Nature*; but not by *meer Nature fallen*, but by *Nature well-bu- inded*, by *Nature improved*, by the implantation of *Moral Princi- les*, together with *Restraining Grace*, and other *common gifts of ic Spirit*.

The *Greatness* of their *Hatred* against sin, the *Greatness* of their are to avoid sin, the *Greatness* of their *Sufferings*, rather than ey would commit sin, might be enough to discover to us, the eatness of the *Evil of sin*. But pass by this.

2. The second *Glas*, wherein you may see the greatness of sin, *The Glas of the Law*.

A *Glas* which discovers sin in all its *Dimensions*, the *Guilt*, *merit*, *Filthiness* and *Sinfulness* of sin. Hence the *Apostle*, om. 7. 7. saith---*I had not known sin, but by the Law*; that is, *I ad not known sin so hainous as it is*, *I had not known sin in the ideness and latitude of it*: *I had not known the sinfulness of sin*, it had not been for the *Law*, if the *Law* had not been a *Glas* , have discovered sin to me. This discovered sin in its *Greatness*: avoid, *Psal. 119. 96*---*I have seen an end of all Perfection*, but *thy aw is exceeding broad*; that is, by revealing the compass of sin proportion to its *Wideness*, and *Greatness*.

Oh! This will discover to thee *more nakedness in one sin*, than l the world can cover; *more indigency in one sin*, than all the

## Sin the Greatest Evil.

*Treasures of created righteousness* in heaven and earth are able to supply; *more obliquity and injustice in one sin*, in a very wandering thought, than all the Deaths of Men, and Annihilations of Angels are able to Expiate.

Search into the Law, and thou shalt discover *Thousands of sins* which fall under *Any One Law of God*. Oh! Here is a *Glass*!

3. Look upon sin in *The Glass of the Griefs, Woundings, Peirings, and Sorrows*, which the Saints have found,

1. In their Admissions, and first Entrance into the state of Grace.

2. In their Relapsings and Turnings again to folly.

1. For the first: See what *Groans, Humiliations*, they have indured in their first admissions into an estate of Grace, in *Mannaheth*, 2 Chron. 33. 12. in *Paul*, Acts 9. in the Converted Jews, Acts 2. 37. when the nails which peirced Christ, now stuck in their hearts, as the arrow in the stags side.

How many of the Saints have there been, who have been cast into a bed of miserable sorrow, lain bed-rid under the stroke of Justice perhaps for many years: And all this for sin. No age is without a *Thousand examples* of it.

2. Look upon the sorrows and breakings, which the Saints have indured upon their Relapsing into sin. See in *Peter*, in *David*: Read what sad expressions he hath in *Psalms* 6. from vers. 1. to vers. 7. and in *Psalms* 32. 3, 4, 5 verses. So *Psalms* 51.

How doth he complain how his--Soul is troubled--his bones are broken--his eyes are consumed with sorrow--his bed swims with tears? And all this for sin---Here is a *Glass*, wherein you may see the *Evil of sin* to be the *Greatest Evil*.

Yea, and the *least sin*, when God sets it on, will do all this.

4. Look upon sin in *Adam*; and there see the greatness of it. That one sin of *Adam*, hath brought *All the Miseries, Sicknes, Death, &c.* upon *All his Posterity* since that time.

It hath been the *Damnation* of thousands of millions of men; and still it runs on. *Gods justice is still unsatisfied*; if it were, there would be a stop: We should *Dye no more, Be sick no more, &c.*

Oh! Here you may see sin; sin in its Extensiveness.

5. Look upon sin in *Christ*: See there what *Humblings, what Breakings, what Woundings, what Peirings, what Wrath* it brought upon *Christ himself*. It was that, which mingled that *Bitter Cup, with such woful ingredients*; which, had we but sipp of it, when it was so tempered, would have laid our souls under more wrath, than *All the damned in Hell* do suffer. *Christ did Bear Pure Justice for sin.*

Nay,

Nay, it made him, who was God as well as man, sanctified by the Spirit to that work, strengthened by the Deity, To sweat drops of blood, and even to struggle, and seem to draw back, and pray against the work of his own Mercy, and to decline the business of his own coming into the world.

Ah! none knows but Christ, nor is a finite understanding able to conceive, what Christ underwent, when he was to Bear sin, and with that To wrestle with the infinite wrath and justice of the infinite God; the Terrors of death, and the Powers of the world to come. Here is a Glass, wherein you may see The greatness of sin, The wideness of sin, The guilt of sin, The demerit of sin: All which are let out to the life, in the Death, Sufferings, Breakings and Woundings of the Son of God.

You, that make light of sin, go to Christ, and ask him, How heavy it was; even that, which you make so light of, which pressed him down to the ground. And the least sin would have pressed thee, and all the pillars of heaven, to the Bottom of Hell for ever.

6. A sixth Glass. Look upon sin in the Damnation of the Soul for ever; that nothing would satisfy the justice of God; but the Destruction of the Creature. No Sickness, no Prisons; no Blood, no sufferings, but the Sufferings of Hell: And those not for a Time, but for Ever. Ah! see here the greatness of sin; which might be further amplified by the consideration of the preciousness of the soul, which yet sin ruins to all eternity. And therefore would you know sin? Quare Damnavos, Ask the damned what it is. Lay thy Ear to Hell, and hear those Skreechings, those howlings, those Roarings of the Damned. And all this is for sin. Oh they are dear-bought pleasures, which must be thus paid or with everlasting pains.

Thus you see what sin is by all these Glasses: And therefore, Oh! how ought we to be Humbled for our slight thoughts of sin, which is so great an Evil?

H. S. E.

Now if it be so, Then see what need we have to aggravate sin to the utmost in our confessions of sin; because all we can say of it, will fall infinitely short of the Heinousness of sin.

You can aggravate no sin so high, as to raise it above itself, as to make sin greater than it is. You can have no diminishing Glass, to greatness sin above the greatness of it. You have such Glasses, to make greater other things above their own bigness, which are able to present small things great; mean things, of vast greatness: But you have no Glass to multiply sin, and make sin appear Bigger than it is.

The sufferings of the Saints, the sorrows of the Saints; the sufferings

## Sin the Greatest Evil.

*sufferings* of the *Damned* are too short; The *Glaſs* of the *Law*, the *Glaſs* of *Christs* *sufferings* (which is the *greatest*) this doth not shew *ſin* greater than it is: It doth but diſcover *ſin* in its *juſt Proportions* and *Dimensions*.

It had not been *juſtice* in *God*, to have required *more blood*, and to put his *own Son* to *more ſuffering*, than *ſin* deſerved. Nor would this have ſtood with *Gods Love*, his *Pity* and *Mercy* to his *Son*, to have put him to *more than ſin* deſerved.

Though now there be *mercy* more than enough for the *greatest ſinners*; as the *Apoſtle* ſaith, *1 Tim. 1. 14.* yet there was not *juſtice* more than enough exerciſed upon *Chriſt* for the *demerit* and *guilt* of *ſin*.

The *Death* of *Chriſt* was--*Ἀντίλυτρον*--*An Adequate Ransome* for our ſouls and ſins: And yet there is a *Redundancy* of *merit*, an *Overflowing* of *merit* in the *Satisfaction* of *Chriſt*, to *Ransome* a *thouſand worlds* more to that, if need were. As *ſin* is *infinite*, in regard of the *Object*; ſo *Satisfaction* is *infinite*, in reſpect of the *Merit*.

Hence *Christs* death is not onely ſaid to be *A Satisfaction*, but *A Purchase*; not onely *A Payment*, but *A Purchase*.

*A Satisfaction* it was to the *juſtice* of *God* for *ſin*, *Fall*. And *A Purchase* of all good things from the *Mercy* of *God*; to which his *juſtice*, in reſpect of the *Validity* and *Worth* of *Christs* *Satisfaction*, is *Bound* to us. But this by way of *Diſgreſſion*.

See then, what need there is, To *Aggravate ſin* to the utmoſt; becauſe we cannot *multiply ſin* to the *greatneſs* of it. There will be many *ſingular* fruits of ſo doing.

1. *This will breed ſhame and conſuſion of ſpirit* for *ſin*.

2. *This will make you advance, and reſiſh mercy* better.

When the debt ſeems little, we are ready and apt to *undervalue* a *pardon*. But, when *ſin* appears *exceeding ſinful*, this doth make us *value mercy*, *prize* a *pardon*.

When *ſin* is ſeen the *greatest Evil*, *Mercy* and *Pardon* will be apprehended the *greatest Good*.

3. *This puts us into the neereſt diſpoſition, To forſake ſin*. As he, who *extenuates ſin*, is reſolved to *continue in ſin*; ſo he, who *truly aggravates ſin*, deſires to be rid of it.

4. *Besides, It breeds* 4. *Diſplacency with our ſelves*, when we conſider, *How ill* we have dealt with *God*.

5. *It produceth ſelf-judging, and ſelf-condemnation*: as we ſee in *David*, *Pſal. 51*.

6. *It will produce ſpiritual ſoftneſs, and tenderneſs of heart* for *ſin*. But this I muſt paſs over.

U S E.

If sin be the Greatest Evil, Then it is the Greatest Mercy in the world to be rid of sin. The greater the evil is, the greater the mercy to be rid of it. But now sin is the Greatest Evil.

And therefore you shall see it set down as the only mercy that comes in by Christ, *Mat. 1. 25*--He shall be called *JESUS*, because he shall save his people from their sins.

As if all other things coming in by Christ, were included in his one, He shall save his people from their sins. He doth not say--*tee shall save his people from Hell, &c.* but, *From sin*: From no other evil in the world. And this is the Greatest Mercy.

When God would speak the utmost, even the greatest thought of Mercy, that ever came upon his heart; when he would set down the greatest work of Mercy, that ever the God of Mercy thought: he saith no more, but, *He shall save his people from their sins.*

Sin was the utmost Evil; and therefore the saving from sin was the greatest good. And hence *David*, *Psal 31. 1, 2.* saith--*Blessed is whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered: Blessed is at man, to whom the Lord imputeth not sin.*

Indeed, we have mean thoughts, cheap thoughts of pardon of sin; and the reason is, because we have slight thoughts of sin: But, if God once open our understanding, and make us see the vastness and wideness of the evil of sin; and, if that he should joyn a strong sense to that sight, and make us feel what sin is; if he could let but the least sparkle of his wrath fall upon our spirits for sin, it would make our faces gather blackness; we should quickly change our note, and say,--*Oh! Blessed, and for ever blessed: they, whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.*

But, lest I should seem to Beat the air, we will therefore Circumstantiate this Mercy a little; and you shall see the Greatness of it.

Though indeed, this were enough, to tell you, that sin is the greatest Evil: Thence would necessarily follow, That it is the greatest Mercy in the world, To be rid of sin; which will more fully appear, if we consider the following particulars:

1. First then, *The pardon of sin is the dearest-bought Mercy*; and that is something to shew the Greatness of the Mercy.

You know, the Greater the sum is, that is to be paid for the purchase of a thing (provided there be no want of wisdom in the Buyer, nor want of Honesty in the Seller) the Greater still, and of more worth is the Thing bought or Purchased.

But now This Mercy, Pardon of sin, was a Mercy dear-bought: cost Blood, *Mat. 26. 28.* and that--*Not the blood of Bulls and Goats;*

*Goats*; for that it was impossible it should take away sins, as the Apostle hath it, *Heb. 10.4.* What then was it? Why it was *The Precious blood of Christ*, *1 Pet. 1.18, 19.* -- You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation; but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and spot. And this, *The Blood of God*, *Acts 20. 28.*--- Feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own Blood.

Now sit down, and think what a Mercy that must needs be, which is the *Price of blood*, and that of the *Son of God*.

There was no *Want of Wisdom* in the Buyer, he could not be over-reacht, he knew the worth of the Commodity: Nor was there want of justice or goodness in the Seller. He was just, and would not take one drop of blood more than the thing was worth: And he was *A Father too*, and therefore would not put his Son to more sufferings, and require more than the thing was worth.

2. *This is the purest Mercy of all other, The Pardon of sin.* A mercy that comes from the Heart and Good-will of God to you.

God may give you all other things, and hate you. You may be *Rich*, and yet *Reprobates*; *Great* in the world here, and be *Damned* hereafter. *Dives* may have wealth, *Hered Eloquence*, *Saul Command*, *Agrippa Glorious Apparel*: a man may do wickedly, and yet prosper. These things are not *Truly good*, nor *Truly evil*. If good, the wicked should not have them: If evil, the Saints should not have them. These are such things as God reacheth from his *Hand*, not from his *Heart*: they are *general favors*, not *special Love*.

But this is a *Peculiar-Favor*, the *Saints Peculiar*, *Pure-Mercy*, a mercy that came from the Bowels of mercy, the *Heart of Mercy*.

3. *This is the Freest Mercy of all other, Pardon of sin.*

1. *There was nothing to engage God to do it.*

2. *Nor was there any thing, we could do, to purchase it.*

All our Prayers, our Tears, our Services, could not purchase the *Pardon of one sin*. If for the *Active Part* we could do as much, and for the *Passive part* we could suffer as much as all the Saints, put together, have done from the beginning of the world to this day.

If we should weep as many Tears, as the *Sea holds drops*; if we should humble our selves as many days, as the world hath stood minutes from the creation, &c. All this were *Too short* to purchase us the *Pardon of one sin*, though vve did all vvithout sin.

But Alas! All that ever vve can do, is so far from striking off

off any Former score, that we do but set our selves further in debt thereby: So far are we from purchasing a Pardon, that we do but increase our Treason--*Operamur, non in justificationem: sed ex justificatione*: we must not work, that we may be justified: but we are justified, that we may work.---So that it is the Freest-Mercy.

And therefore in Scripture you read it all attributed to Grace, *Tit. 3.7*---We are justified freely by his Grace---*Rom. 3.24*---Being justified freely by his Grace,---*Rom. 4.5*---God justifies the ungodly---There is no motive in us, All is from God. And you shall see it plain, one place for two: In *Isa. 43*, Verse 23, 24, 25. ---Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, nor hast thou made me drink with the fat of thy Sacrifices: But thou hast made me serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities---*I, I, am he*, that putteth away thy iniquities, for my own names sake, and will not remember thy sins. Would a man have expected this? this sheweth freeness, when not onely no deservings, (as it is *v. 23*. and former part of *v. 24*. Thou hast not, &c. but contrary deservings, Thou hast wearied mee with thine iniquities. Oh infinite, oh freest mercy. God is mercifull only because hee will be mercifull.

4 It is an *Intituling Mercy*: A Mercy that *Intitles* you to more Good than I am able to expresse, or you able to conceive. It is a Mercy, that doth interest you in all other Mercies. It *Intitles* you to all the Good on Earth, to All the glory of Heaven. Nay, it is a *Mercy-making-Mercy*. A mercy, that makes all other things Mercy to you.

1. Good things are mercies. Your Riches, your Greatness, your Possessions, your Husbands, your Wives, Children, &c. all these things are no Blessings, till they be joynd with a Pardon; and that makes them all blessings. Nay, not onely Good things: But,

2. Evil things are Mercies to you. Pardon of sin makes Poverty, Afflictions, Sicknes, Death it self a Mercy: Like the *Unicorns horn*, it takes away the venome and poyson of every Water: Like the *Philosophers-stone*, it turns All into Gold. So saith the Apostle--All things work together for good unto them that love God. A Sanctified-Cross, is better than an Unsanctified Comfort. A loss in Mercy, is better than an enjoyment in Wrath. \*

You are never able to make it good, that God doth bestow any thing in mercy, till sin be forgiven. Guilt of sin upon you doth turn the nature of things, and makes those things which are good in themselves, evil to you.

5. It is an *irrevocable-mercy*---God may give in other mercies, and call for them again. Indeed other things are rather lent, than given: Lent Husband, Lent Wife, &c. Hence they are said to be but Talents in our hands, and we Stewards of them

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for a time. God may call for them when he pleaseth; or we may forfeit them, and lose them.

How often do we forfeit and lose good things, because of our unworthy walking in the enjoyment thereof? *Hos. 2. 8, 9--I will take away my corn in the time thereof; my wine, and my flax in their season. [Mine]* It was Gods. And, would you know the reason? see in the former verse, Because they did not acknowledge him as the giver of them, but bestowed them on *Baal*, as though he had given them.

But now this *Mercy* is an *irrevocable Mercy*: A *Mercy* that God never recalls; A *Mercy*, God never repents of--The gifts and graces of God are without repentance--And it is a *Mercy* never forfeited.

We may forfeit the sense of a pardon, we may forfeit the comfort of a pardon; nay, we may forfeit the knowledge of a pardon. I say, you may sin away the sense, the comfort, the knowledge of a pardon: as it was with *David*.

But we shall never forfeit a pardon. *Quod Scripsi, Scripsi.* If all this foreseen could not hinder God from giving out a pardon; neither can it make God repent of a pardon, when he hath given it.

Now the *Stability of the Mercy* is that, which adds a great deal of worth to the *Mercy*. As things that are *Evil*; so much more things that are good, are heightened from the consideration of the continuance of them, the *Stability* and *Lastingness* of them.

Now this is a *Stable Mercy*. Take but one *Place*, *Isa. 54. 8, 9, 10---* For this is as the waters of *Noah* unto me: For, as I have sworn that the waters of *Noah* should no more go over the earth: So have I sworn, that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. --Yet further--For the mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed: but my kindness shall never depart from thee, nor shall the *Covenant of my peace* be removed.

This is the difference betwixt the *Covenant of Works*, and the *Covenant of Grace*. The one, is *Temporary*; the other, is *Eternal*. It is a *Temporary Covenant*, though an *Eternal Rule*: The other is *Eternal*, and *Immutable*.

6. *Pardon of sin* is an *Universal Mercy*, the *Womb of Mercy*, a *Productive-Mercy*; all other mercies grow upon this *Tree of Forgiveness of sin*. It is a *Tree*, the *Root* whereof is in *Christ*; and the *Fruit* thereof are *All good things on Earth, and Glory in Heaven*. There are *seven glorious Fruits of Pardon of sin*; which I will but name, and so come to the *Last Use*.

1. *Reconciliation with God*, *2 Cor. 5. 19*. Admission into his favour. He, who before was an *Enemy*, is now become thy *Friend*; for nothing makes God an *Enemy*, but *sin*. And such a *Friend* he is, who will be a *Friend in life*, a *friend in Death*, when all other *Friends* forsake; and a *Friend after death*.

2. *Adoption*

2. *Adoption of Children*: which followeth upon our pardon in justification.

3. *Access to God*, as to a Father, with child-like boldness. Sin was that *μεγα χάσμα*--that great Gulf betwixt God and us. Sin the Partition-wall betwixt God and us: now sin being pardoned, this Partition-wall is taken down, and there is Access to God, and Access with boldness.

4. *Acceptation of our Services*: Till sin be pardoned, there is no Acceptation of any service: Till our persons be accepted and reconcil'd, our performances are abominable: But now sin being pardoned, here is acceptance for all our services. He drinks the milk as well as the wine, Cant. 5. 1. And eats the honey-comb with the Honey, &c.

5. *Sanctification of every condition to us*: When sin is removed which was the curse in all.

6. *Supportation under Crosses*: Upon removal of sin, which was in all, the heaviest burden.

7. *Participation of all the priviledges of the Covenant*: These are the inseparable fruits of pardon.

There are other, as Peace, Joy, Comfort, Rom. 5. 1. which indeed are not so much Fruits of pardon, as Fruits of Assurance of pardon; not the next, but the remoter fruits of pardon.

U S E.

Lastly, Is sin the *Greatest Evil* in the world? Oh then! let us, Above all things in the world, labour to get our selves rid of it: Get a pardon of sin. Say with David--Oh! Take away the iniquity of thy servant.

What will the enjoyment of all other goods profit thee, if thy ins be not pardoned? what profit had Dives of his wealth? Saul of his Kingdom? &c.

It is a thing greatly to be lamented to see, How active and serious men are, about removing of other evils on them, and the purchasing and procuring of other goods; but yet how slight, how superficial they are about getting Pardon of sin.

Thy Person is under the Guilt of Sin. Thou standest a condemned man and woman---*Damnatus untequam Natus*. And God hath given thee time, and that time is not a time of Reprieve onely; but is a time, that God hath afforded thee to get a pardon in.

And it cost no less than the Blood of Christ, to procure thee his time; it was that that made a stop of the present proceedings of Gods justice against thee; else thou hadst been in Hell long ago.

And wilt thou Squander away This Time? wilt thou Neglect this Business? wilt thou eat away, sleep away, nay, drink away, in away a Pardon?

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If there were a man *condemned to dye*, and yet were, out of *Mercy, Reprieved*, That hee might procure his Pardon, and the King were willing to grant him a pardon; would you not think that man deserves to dy, who shall now spend this time in drinking, in reveling, &c? why this is your case.

But yet there is another sort that will seek for a pardon; but they seek it coldly, they seek it formally, they seek it sleightly and superficially, they seek it as if they had no need of it; as if they could do well enough, though they wanted a Pardon.

There is a great deal of dallying with God, about this Great business. Most men in the World do but Trifle with God about it.

I will name you five or six sorts of men, who are Triflers with God, in this main, and concerning matter; and these none of the meanest neither. I shall not now deal with your Debaucht People; but such as will seem to do somewhat for a pardon.

1. Such, who will seek, and perhaps cry earnestly; but yet still continue in the practice of those sins, which they beg a pardon of.

I speak not now of *Sins of Course*. -- *Peccata quotidiana incuriosis*: Sins of daily incurision: Sins of Infirmitie, weakness and Imperfections in Duty; These the best, notwithstanding their daily praying for pardon of, do yet too often fall into.

But I speak of *grosser-sins*. -- *Peccata Vastantia Conscientiam*: Sins wounding and gashing the Conscience. And this is a fearfull thing, fearfull dallying with God.

What would you think of such a man, who should come to beg a Pardon; and yet, before the Pardon were given out, should run to commit new acts of Treason? This is thy case.

I see many of you living in a Course of sin; Potting, swilling, swearing. I am ashamed to name them.

Do you pray for a Pardon? Or do you not pray? If you do not pray, you are no better than Atheists. And do you pray for a Pardon, and yet live in the practice of those sins, you beg pardon of? Oh! what fearfull dallying with God is here!

Oh! you little think what a strong tye this is against sin, To pray for the pardon of sin. What? Have you been confessing sin, humbling your souls for sin; begging of Pardon of Sin? And, no sooner turn your backs upon God, but return to Sin? Ah! This is fearfull dallying indeed.

And this is a Fearfull aggravation of Sin; you think to have something come in for your dayes of Humiliation, for your prayers for pardon of Sin; you think there is some good in it. Why? you have begged a Pardon, though you have Sin'd; yet you have prayed, and therefore hope, that notwithstanding your sins; God will hear your prayers.

But

But dost thou live in sin, and confess sin? Dost thou practice sin? and yet pray for pardon of sin? Dost thou commit sin; and yet humble thyself for sin.

Oh! These are Great Aggravations of sin: these do alledge more weight to sin.

Do you think it would be an Extermination, or an Aggravation, for a Malefactor to beg a pardon, and yet run to the same Rebellion again? would he think this To lessen his sin, because he hath formerly beg'd a Pardon? No certainly, he would look upon this as a Greater Aggravation. Why this is thy case.

And this you shall see, was *Israel's spirit*, which was so much displeasing to God, *Jer. 3. 4.*---Thou art my Father; and the Guide of my youth--They gave God good words, compass him about with good expressions. But, saith the Lord--*This hast thou done, and yet done as much evil as thou couldst, v. 5.*

2. A second sort, who dally with God, are such, who seek the pardon of some sins, but yet keep up the love and liking of others. Thou art, it may be, *Pinched and Troubled for some gross sins*, and thou beg'st a pardon for them; when, it may be, there is some *Running-Issue of corruption within*, which thou overlook'st; some *secret Haunt of Villany*, that thy heart runs out after; which thou canst not leave, which thou hast no mind to part withal.

Oh! Thou vain man! Thou maist cry all thy life, and shalt never get good. Thou maist pray as long as thou wilt: That *One sin*, kept with love and liking, will Turn all thy prayers into sin. God will never regard the Prayers of a sin-regarding-sinner. *Psal. 66. 18.*--If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: though I should never act it in my life.

Didst thou know the Tenor of the Covenant of Grace and Mercy, the Strictness of the Gospel, and Severity of Mercy it self against sin; thou wouldst see, There were an impossibility of having one sin forgiven, as long as one sin is unforaken.

Justification and Sanctification: Gods forgiving, and our forgoing, are equally as large one as the other. As God justifies from the guilt of all sin; so he sanctifies from the Corruption of all Sin.

Grace in God forgives all Sin. And,

Grace in us makes us forgo all Sin: where sin is forgiven, there sin is foraken.

3. A Third sort, are they, Who seek a pardon of Sin, without sense of Sin; who seek forgiveness of Sin, without remorse for sin: Men, who are never troubled with any sense, with any compunction of heart for sin.

Would you not take it for a dallying with you; if one had greatly offended you, and should come to desire you your forgiveness, without any sense or remorse of it? What do you think God will do?

This is certain--Without blood there is no Remission of Sin, as the

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Apostle speaks--Christ was wounded, and thou must be wounded too, before thou hast a pardon--Christ did bleed, and conscience must bleed, before ever he give a pardon.

It was a speech of Bradford--He never left a duty, till, &c.

Will a man in good earnest beg a pardon, who was never attached for Treason, or so much as throughly sensible, that he is guilty of it?

4. A Fourth sort, are such, as cry for Forgiveness, but yet never look after their Prayers. Would you not think it a slighting, if a man, who had offended you, should come and beg a pardon; and as soon as he had said a few words to you, should turn his back, and go away, and never expect, nor wait for an answer from you?

Why thus do you deal with God: You put up prayers, but look not after them. He, who begs in earnest, Oh! he will Diligently observe, what Answer, what Return God makes: He will observe what word of Comfort God lets fall, what intimations God will afford to his spirit, and will be exceeding chary of them. As you see Benhadads servants did, 1 Kings 20.31, 32, 33. After they had put up their requests, the Text saith--The men did diligently observe, whether anything would come from Ahab, and did hastily catch at it. So should we do: Come with sackcloth, put up our prayers with remorse; and, when that is done, when we have prayed our prayers, let us wait our prayers, to see what intimations we shall receive from heaven. Thus David, Psal. 85.8.--I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for he will speak Peace to his people, and to his Saints, &c. Psal. 5.3--In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and I will look up.

5. A Fifth sort, who dally with God, are they, who follow not their prayers with endeavors to get assurance, that their Sins are pardoned. Who search not into the Covenant of Grace, acquaint not themselves with the Promises of Grace; search not into the Word of Grace, frequent not the Means of Grace: These men dally, who frequent not the Word, Sacraments, &c. and such like Means for the Assurance of Pardon.