

QUEST. II.

WHETHER OR NOT ALL SINS, PAST, PRESENT, AND TO COME, ARE
PARDONED TOGETHER AND AT ONCE ?

THIS question hath much affinity with the former ; and what is already said, may contribute to clear our way in answer to this. I mind not here to consider the doctrine of the deluded Antinomians, who assert, that men are justified and actually pardoned from all eternity ; and so not only before they believe, but before they are born ; not distinguishing between active and passive justification. The former, being an imminent act in God, and a constant will to pardon such persons as he hath chosen to everlasting life, is no doubt from eternity, and complete from that date. But the latter a transient act, exercised not only about, but terminated on the creature living and believing, whereby he is actually pardoned, and judicially declared righteous, while he stands trembling before the tribunal of God ; and so cannot be from eternity.

Their doctrine in this is flatly opposite to the Scriptures ; which declare all men once and by nature to be children of wrath, and under condemnation, and unpardoned ; and truly overturns both law and gospel at one blow ; the law, in that the case being so as they pretend, there is no need of it to accuse, convince, condemn, and to stop every mouth, and to make all the world guilty before God. And no better friends are they to the gospel, which proclaims salvation to lost sinners. Yet none greater pretenders to the purity of the gospel than they ; none seem to cry up free grace more, which nevertheless in very deed they labour to hide, while they set off the law altogether, without which a man shall never have a right taste of the grace of God. They cry down the law and a legal walk ; which is, no doubt, the bane of many professors ; but plucking up the law out of the conscience in the matter of justification, and a sinner's acceptance with God, they root it out of the heart in the matter of sanctification. So true is it, *Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt.*

But had more care been taken of preserving pure and entire the doctrine of free grace, it would no doubt have prevented the delusion of many simple and well-meaning people, and cut off the occasion of crying down good works, and the study of holiness, under pretence of sacrificing all to free grace, from others led merely by their own licentious humours. And therefore, if I mistake not, the greatest noise that Antinomianism hath made in the church in these later centuries, hath been after a deluge of superstition ; formality,

and ignorance of the doctrine of the gospel, had overwhelmed the church, and sermons sounded rather like Seneca's morals, than Paul's doctrine of Christ crucified, and the riches of God's grace. So was it in the time of the reformation from Popery; so in the time of Britain's struggling with and wading out from Prelacy and Arminianism, &c. How dangerous is it to set up morality instead of the power of godliness, and life of faith? to turn the covenant of grace into a bastard covenant of works; and to mix the law with the gospel, which is indeed accounted by the Spirit of God another gospel, the preacher whereof is devoted to a curse? Gal. i. 6, 8.

And indeed nothing is more incident to men than this; for it is as natural to them to seek to go to heaven by the covenant of works. as it is for fishes to swim, or birds to fly; we being naturally disposed to apprehend God as a great lord and master, and ourselves as his servants, who must work for wages. And so it comes to pass, they consider God absolutely, forgetting Christ the way to the Father; and this while their consciences remain in darkness, without any illumination: for indeed, if the conscience were awakened, the sight of Majesty would dazzle our eyes. Wherefore Luther,* on Psal. cxxx. saith, "Often and willingly do I inculcate this, that you should shut your eyes and your ears, and say, You know no God out of Christ." On the other hand, until the conscience is indeed enlightened, and the soul sees what a holy God it hath to do with, how hard is it to attain suitable apprehensions of the riches of his grace? And therefore the woful remains of corruption whereby we are inclined to measure God's ways by our own, start that question, concerning the privileges of the saints, "How can these things be?" and, with Peter, in a fit cry out, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man." But to the question.

In this point the orthodox themselves do not agree; which is the more to be lamented, and the rather to be considered and seriously weighed, that it is not a mere speculation, but a very practical point, and cannot but have great influence on the frame of the spirit, whatsoever way the judgment goes. This may be absolutely said of the wrong side of this controversy, but not without some qualification concerning the right; seeing experience testifieth, that although the truth in its own nature is apt to have influence upon the heart for a holy walk, yet it hath not that actually at all times; truth known, without the blowings of the Spirit, being as wild-fire, giving light, but not heat. To which part of the controversy do this aptitude to influence the heart to the love of Christ, and the

* Cit. Burroughs on Hos. p. 729.

study of a holy walk, belong? The determination thereof were to determine the doubt; which we leave to its proper place.

In those points which are the most weighty in the matter of the pardon of sin, the orthodox do agree: As, 1. That God firmly purposing from all eternity to pardon the sins of the elect, laid them wholly on Jesus Christ. 2. That the Lord Jesus hath fully satisfied the justice of God for all the sins of all his elect, so as he hath left nothing of the price to be paid by them. 3. That, upon these grounds, all the sins of believers are virtually pardoned. 4. That no believer shall ever be damned, that is, sent into the place of torment, for any sin; but shall certainly and infallibly be saved. 5. *Lastly*, That, upon the soul's union with Christ by faith, when God pardons one sin, he pardons all sins actually which are committed, commonly called all sins past and present. Only they differ in their sentiments touching the pardon of sin yet not committed.

The question then is this, Whether or not all the sins of a believer, past, present, and to come, are actually pardoned upon the soul's first believing on Christ? or, Whether their sins to come are only virtually pardoned, and not actually till such time as they renew their faith and repentance in order to the pardon thereof? Some simply assert the former; others the latter.

According to what hath been said upon the former question, I assert, That all the sins of an elect soul, past, present, and to come, are together and at once pardoned, touching the actual obligation to eternal wrath, upon his first believing in the Lord Jesus, and justification before God; so that in no moment of time there, after he can be supposed to be actually liable to eternal wrath. And in this sense I embrace the opinion of those that stand for pardon of all sins *simul et semel*. I think I need not insist much in proving this assertion, so long as the arguments before adduced stand in force: for if the sins of believers, even while unrepented of, do not make them actually liable to eternal punishment, this position stands good; unless there be any found to say, that they are pardoned always as soon as committed; or, with the Antinomians, that they are pardoned from all eternity. But I shall adduce these following arguments for proof of what is asserted.

ARGUMENT I. The Lord promiseth not to remember his people's sins, Is. xliii. 25. "I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Now, how are they not remembered, if they be at any time, after they are brought within the covenant, unpardoned, and the poor souls laid under a sentence of eternal death for them? If this be not to remember

sins, nothing is. It is certain, that remembering cannot be properly attributed to God; but God is then said to remember sins, when he does that which men do when they remember the faults of others. And who will not say, that a judge remembers a malefactor's crime, when he hath passed the sentence of death on him; or a bankrupt's debt, when he obligeth him to pay the same by a judicial sentence? Say not, that remembrance of sin is sometimes put for the punishment of it, therefore it must be so understood in this matter: for though I will not deny but it is so taken in the scripture; yet to fasten that upon the promises of pardon, touching the obligation to eternal wrath, is dangerous; in regard that then ye must assert, that what evil is inflicted on the elect unconverted, is laid on them by way of vindictive justice, and for satisfaction; which is too much positively to determine. It clearly follows, in regard the not remembering of sin is a privilege which is new, and supposeth that God remembered their sin before; not only does he promise not to remember them, but to remember them no more; Jer. xxxi. 34; Heb. viii. 12. Which confirms what was before said of the Lord's remembering the sins of the elect unconverted; and further plainly lets us see, that God will alter his former course and way of dealing with them in respect of their sins. So much does that NO MORE import evidently; as Job xxxiv. 32. "If I have done iniquity, I will do NO MORE." Ezek. xxi. ult. "Thou shalt be NO MORE remembered." Now, what was God's way of dealing with them before they were brought into covenant? It was not to send them to hell for their sins; but it was not to pardon them, but to let them lie under the sentence of eternal wrath, ay and until they made application to Christ by faith, and repented them of their sins likewise, as some say; on what grounds we shall see afterwards. And where is there any alteration of the Lord's way of dealing with them, if their sins remain still unpardoned as to the obligation to eternal wrath, till they again believe and repent? It is still, I hope, the same faith and the same repentance. There is no doubt, but there is a vast difference betwixt the Lord's way of dealing with the elect unconverted and converted, considered in bulk, even by this way of our adversaries. But as to the precise point of the pardon of sins, of which alone we now speak, there is no difference at all left. Yet this promise holds out a quite contrary course, as is declared. Further, the scripture speaking of the pardon of sin, extends it to *all sin*, without distinction, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Ye shall be clean from *all* your filthiness, and from *all* your idols will I cleanse you. That this is a promise of justifica-

tion, and pardon of sin, in the removal of the guilt of it, is plain, as the following promise is of sanctification. And so Sedgwick, no friend to this doctrine, understands it. And on the text, indeed, if that be not a promise of pardon, there is none there. It will perhaps be said, that this promise secures the believer of the pardon of all his sins sooner or later, but not together and at once. But pray let it be considered, that the text tells us expressly, that it shall be then when he "sprinkles clean water on them, gives them a new heart, takes away the stoney heart," &c.; which is undeniably then when they are first brought into Christ. If you say, it respects only sins that are committed; I answer, *Non distinguendum ubi lex non distinguit*. But then future sins are not comprehended here: and what have they then to lippen to for the pardon of these sins? It must surely be a great strait that will drive men to exclude hence the pardon of future sins; and if they will suffer them to be included, I say again, the text tells us when this cleansing shall be. The Apostle Paul delivers the same doctrine, Col. ii. 13. "quicken'd together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; where we see *all* trespasses simply were forgiven them when they were quicken'd with Christ.* Upon this text saith a judicious commentator, But that we are quicken'd to eternal life, is evident from this, that all sins are forgiven on which our eternal death did depend. Now, I say, it is as evident that our death depended on all our sins, past, present, and to come; for it was all these that were the cause of Christ's death. And this the subsequent verse doth confirm. I shall only add that scripture, Num. xxiii. 21. "He beholdeth not iniquity, neither does he see perverseness in Israel;" thus read and cited by Amesius† upon this head. Upon which he saith, "Because justification hath left no place to condemnation;" and tells us, that future sins are pardoned in the subject, or person sinning. It is true, he calls this pardon of future sins but a virtual pardon: but, if I mistake not, it is the very same thing that we assert.

ARGUMENT II. Let us take a view of the sacraments, and see how they favour this full remission at once. The pardon of sin is at least among the first of the benefits of the covenant, sealed by the sacraments; and surely, if the sacraments seal the pardon of all sins, past, present, and to come, they are all pardoned; for God sets not his seal but to a truth. Again, a seal presupposeth a deed done; for a thing must be before the being of it can be confirmed. This is so evident, that I cannot think how it can be

* *Zanch. Com. in loc.*

† *Medulla theol. p. 142.*

denied with any colour of reason. The stress of the argument lies then in the proof of that, That the sacraments seal the pardon of sins, past, present, and to come. That they seal the pardon of sin, I mean in the lawful use of them, or when they are conferred on believers, I think none will deny amongst the orthodox ; they who acknowledge them at all to be seals, will acknowledge this likewise. That they seal the pardon of all sins, past, present, and to come, the Scripture teacheth us, 1 Pet. iii. 21. "Baptism now saveth us." There are many opinions about the efficacy of the sacraments, and how baptism is said to save us, which I shall not now meddle with; but take for granted, what is proven by the learned among Protestant divines, That the efficacy of the sacraments doth consist in effectual obsignation and application. So then baptism saveth us from sin, in so far as it seals our salvation therefrom : but if we be for one moment under the guilt of it, where is our salvation from it? for one sin is damning as well as a thousand. Therefore all must be pardoned at once. And learned Rutherford doubts not to say,* that Christ communicates to believers at first such a remission as he hath obtained ; but he hath, saith he, obtained the remission of all sin : therefore such a remission doth he communicate to us : And addeth,† that there is no reason why he should communicate to us the purchased remission by halves. Further, Mark tells us, (chap. i. 4.), that "John baptized for the remission of sins;" and Peter calls those pricked at the heart to be "baptized for the remission of sins," Acts ii. 38. But will any exclude from this future sins? Surely so their comfort would have been exceeding lame; knowing that immediately after they would run into a new score, and then they are just where they were before; their baptism having not sealed the remission of these, but only of sins committed before or in baptism. And so this sacrament should rather be administered to the party when a-dying, than when new-born. But if future sins be included here, as certainly they are, then the remission of them is sealed, and consequently is before; for they are not called to be baptized in order to obtain a remission, (the scripture knoweth no such doctrine); but in order to their getting the remission obtained, sealed, in testimony of the remission of sins, as Piscator‡ expounds it. The same may be said of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. So then baptism seals unto worthy receivers (as also does the other sacrament) full freedom from eternal punishments, in the pardon of all

*Exerc. p. 36.

† Ibid. p. 37.

‡ Schol. in loc.

sin, in that respect, together and at once. And so Ursin,* after he hath shewed that the outward baptism is a seal of the inward, tells us, that so is sin abolished in baptism, that we are freed from the guilt of sin, God's wrath, and eternal punishment. To the same purpose says Zanchius,† Indwelling sin actually remains, but is taken away as to the guilt. And baptism is ordained for that end, that we may be freed from all guilt of punishment due to sin. The thing signified, says Beza,‡ and verily represented, is the aspersion or sprinkling of the death and passion of Jesus, in remission of sins.

If it be said, That the sacraments do indeed seal the pardon of future sins, but that is only conditionally; whereas the remission of sins committed is sealed absolutely: I answer, This distinction is to be rejected. For a seal, as a seal, doth absolutely confirm the thing sealed, especially where the benefit made over is a free gift, as the pardon of sin is. Were there a thousand conditions in a bargain, the seal confirms the same absolutely. So, if we will make any thing of conditional sealing, it must be the sealing of some conditional promise of the pardon of sin, and that to a believer, touching the obligation to eternal wrath: which is a mere begging of the question; for we know of no such promise in the Bible. But this is not the sealing of a remission. When a king pardons a traitor, and formally gives it under his hand and seal, the pardon is then sealed; but not when he writes an obligation, and seals it, wherein he obligeth himself to pardon him for whatsoever he may afterwards do treasonably, upon condition he do so and so. Here the obligation, which is conditional, is only sealed; not a remission. But we have heard, that the scripture holds forth baptism as a seal of the remission of sin; of remission actually conferred, not merely promised, as a thing to come. So teacheth Wendelin,|| in answer to the Popish objection, Infants are baptized for the remission of sins; *Ergo*, Sins are pardoned by baptism in the Popish sense. He answers, "I deny the consequence. The reason is, Because to be baptized for the remission of sins, is by baptism to be confirmed of the remission of sin. So of old, adult persons were baptized by the Apostles for the remission of sins, which by faith they had received before baptism. So John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, Mark i. 4. who nevertheless baptized none but those who had before professed repentance, and believed the gospel." It is in vain to talk of the conditional sealing of the remission of sin: for the sacraments are seals of the covenant; but the covenant must be made ere it be sealed: unless we will say,

* Miscell. de bapt. th. 10.

† Com. in Eph. v. digress. de bapt.

‡ Confess. point. 4. art. 47.

|| Syst. Theol. p. 438.

that God sets his seal to a blank, which no wise man will do. Now, faith is that which enters the soul into covenant; and then, and not till then, do the sacraments, though before received, seal the covenant. So that, although an elect infant be baptized, or an adult person partake of the sacrament of the supper, being unregenerate, the sacraments seal no saving benefit to them any manner of way; unless you either say, that the unregenerate, and such as have no saving good from God, are in covenant with God, or that God sets his seal to a blank; both which are most absurd. We speak not now of an external federal relation; for no saving benefits depend thereon. And what else is the meaning of that so frequently inculcated by the generality of Protestant divines, for ought I can learn, that the efficacy of baptism is not tied to the time of its administration? We heard before wherein the efficacy of it doth consist. It seems then, it doth not always effectually seal any saving benefit at that time; and what is the reason of that, but that the party hath nothing of that nature to be sealed? The Lord does indeed call all men that hear the gospel, to believe; and tells them, that if they will believe, they shall be justified, pardoned, &c. But this is an offer of the covenant, and not the covenant itself, to which the seals are appended; otherwise every one to whom the gospel offer comes, ought not to be debarred from, but invited, encouraged, and pressed to receive the sacraments, as seals appointed of God to confirm them in the belief of the Lord's willingness to help them; that, being so persuaded, they might embrace the gospel offer, and so the heavenly pearls should be cast before dogs and swine. But the sacraments are confirming, not converting ordinances; appointed for friends, not for foes*. Moreover, as in civil contracts, some things are *ipso facto* dispensed and given over by the one party to the other, and some things are promised to be given at such or such times, one seal serves for both; yet this seal confirms the former, as actually made over to the party for the present time; the latter, as to be given him at such a time: so it is in the covenant of grace. There are some things actually made over *in presenti* to the believer, such as justification, reconciliation, adoption, sanctification begun; there are other things promised to be given at such times as God sees meet afterwards, such as, progressive sanctification, final victory over sin, &c. Of the former kind is the pardon of sin, as hath been already said. And there is no promise in the Bible for the remission of sin in the sense pleaded for, made to a justified person; no more than there is of

* God ordaineth the sacraments to believers as believers, and because they are within the covenant; and their interest in the covenant is the only true right to the seals. *Rutherf. Due Right of Presb.* What infants to be baptized?

formal justification, reconciliation with God, and adoption. So that there must needs be a difference betwixt a sealing the pardon of sin, and a sealing the promises of the covenant; though one seal serves for both. From all which it appears, that there is no conditional sealing of the pardon of sin, either before or after the soul is brought to Christ; but seeing, upon our first believing in Christ, the sacraments seal to us remission of all sins, past, present, and to come, absolutely, all are together and at once pardoned. And so Calvin teacheth.* “Baptism (says he) bringeth three things to our faith. This is the first which the Lord setteth out unto us, that it should be a token and proof of our cleansing; or (to express my mind better) it is like to a certain sealed charter, whereby he confirmeth unto us, that all our sins are so defaced, cancelled, and blotted out, that they may never come into his sight, nor be rehearsed, nor be imputed. For he willeth, that all they that believe, should be baptized into forgiveness of sins.” And again a little after.† “Neither is it to be thought, that baptism is applied only to the time past.—But thus we ought to think, that at what time soever we be baptized, we are at once washed and cleansed for all our life. Therefore, so oft as we fall, we must go back to the remembrance of baptism; and therewith we must arm our mind, that it may be always certain and assured of the forgiveness of sin.”

ARGUMENT. III. If a believer, at his first entrance into covenant with God, and union with Jesus Christ, be reputed in law to have fully satisfied the law, for all sins, past, present, and to come; then he is actually absolved from the guilt of the same. The connection is evident: for if the law be satisfied, it can demand no more; when the payment and satisfaction is made, and sustained in law, before the bar of God, as the payment and satisfaction of such a person, what can hinder the absolution, or the getting up of the discharge? But so it is, that an elect person, upon his union with Jesus Christ by faith, is reputed in the court of heaven, to have actually, though not personally, satisfied the law for all his sins, past, present, and to come; *Ergo*, Then they are altogether and at once discharged. The assumption appears true; because Christ and the believer are but one person in law, as the cautioner and principal debtor, the advocate and his client, the husband and wife; yea much more than any of these, in so far as our union with Christ is a more strait union than any of those among men. So the Lord Jesus Christ having fully satisfied for all sins, and the believer being one with him, it is true, that they have suffered and satisfied in him; and the

* Inst. lib. 4. cap. 15. § 1.

† Section 3.

judgment of God, being according to truth, doth surely go this way.* “in virtue of this conjunction, (says Beza), and spiritual marriage by faith, he taketh all our miseries upon himself, and we do receive all his treasures of him.” So teacheth Zanchius:† “For (says he) by our incorporation with Christ, his whole passion becomes ours, because we are made one flesh and blood; and by the passion of Christ, all punishment due to sin is taken away.”‡ Luther delivers the same, in these words:§ “Thus he (to wit, Christ) happily making an exchange with us, took on our sinful person, and gifted to us his innocent and victorious person. Herewith we being arrayed and clothed, are freed from the curse of the law, because Christ himself willingly became a curse for us.”§ And truly the scripture speaks of Christ and Adam, as if there had never been any other men in the world but they, they being the two public persons, in which are all mankind. Now, as Jesus the second Adam entered into the same covenant that the first Adam did, (for Christ purchased heaven and glory for his people, according to the strictest terms of the covenant of works); so by him was done for the elect whatsoever the first Adam had undone for all mankind. Wherefore the case stands thus: that like as whatsoever the first Adam did, or befel him, is reckoned as done by, and to have befallen all mankind; so whatsoever the second Adam did, or befel him, as head of his people, is reckoned to their account. So then as in Adam they sinned, eating of the tree, so in Christ they suffered hanging on the tree; as in the first Adam they broke the law, in the second Adam they repaired the breach thereof. And as it is then, and not till then, that we become the children of Adam by natural generation, we are reputed to have sinned in him; so it is then, and not till then, that we become the children of Christ by faith and regeneration, we are reputed to have suffered in him. Mr. Gibbons, in his sermon intitled, “The nature of justification opened,” (it should have been said overturned), is much piqued at this doctrine; and tells us, it is the fundamental mistake of the Antinomians, to think, that a believer is righteous in the sight of God with the self-same active and passive righteousness wherewith Christ was righteous; as though believers suffered in Christ, and obeyed in Christ, and were as righteous in God’s esteem as Christ himself, having his personal righteousness made personally theirs by imputation. But we need not wonder to hear this¶ from one who tells us, that the covenant of works is not fully executed; that it is not abrogated, but is in part executed on be-

* Confess. point 4. art. 9.

† Com. in Eph. *dig. de bapt.* cap. 3. th. 7. ‡ Com. in Gal. iii. 14.

§ 1 Cor. xv. 45. 46. 47. § Morning Exercise 1659, p. 423. ¶ p. 413, 414.

lievers, yet dispensed with by superinducing a new covenant of grace over it; and that the threatenings of the law are no more predictions of the event, than "thou shalt," and "thou shalt not," in the command;* that the terms on which sinners are justified, are, *first*, Faith. People would expect a *secondly* here; but that were too barefaced. Therefore says he, Then this faith hath two daughters that inseparably attend her, 1. Repentance. 2. Newness of life. Surely he understands this in the matter of justification, not of sanctification;† for we suppose he speaks sense, and to the purpose in hand. Further, that God accepteth of, imputeth unto sinners faith in Jesus Christ as their righteousness; which faith justifies *formaliter et ratione sui*, as it is covenant-keeping, &c. Surely this learned man knew other adversaries to him of better credit than Antinomians; but he seems to dissemble it, to make his doctrine take place the more easily. It is well known, that is the doctrine taught by the body of Protestant divines, That the imputed righteousness of Christ is our righteousness before God; and that faith doth no way justify us but instrumentally or correlatively; that all our righteousness for justification is without us. And till their arguments against the Arminian way of justification by faith be overturned, his doctrine cannot have place. He invidiously talks of Christ's personal righteousness made personally theirs, and believers being as righteous in God's esteem as Christ himself. We disclaim all pretences to the righteousness of Christ as the second person in the glorious Trinity, commonly called his essential righteousness; but we know no righteousness else upon which we can venture our souls, but the righteousness of Christ as our Redeemer,‡ resulting from his perfect active and passive obedience; and fear not to say with the Apostle, 1 John iii. 7, that "he that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous; not in regard of quantity, but verity; there being a finite application of an infinite righteousness, not in respect of the full value of it, but in so far as our necessity craves it. || Righteousness considered formally with respect to the rule of righteousness simply, is not capable of degrees, though it be in respect of the subject of it; one righteous person being infinitely more noble than another; the excellency of the agent or patient giving value to the obedience, active or passive. But it is evident, that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us merely under the former notion, as it denotes a conformity to the rule of righteousness. Now, I pray you consider what the law,

* Morning Exercises, p. 415. 417.

† p. 422. 420.

‡ Isaac Ambrose's Media, p. 4.

|| See Owen on justific. p. 509.

which is the rule of righteousness, doth require; even to love the Lord with all the heart, and with all the soul. But there is no possibility of going beyond that; and if the person come not up to it, he is not at all righteous; and it is nothing else but conformity to the law that denominates a person under a law, righteous. Wherefore degrees of comparison here are unreasonable. But we need not marvel to hear them speak of degrees of righteousness, or conformity to the law, who bring forth a new rule of righteousness, besides that which was given at first, as this learned man does. I had always thought, that as there is but one God, and he unchangeable, so there had been but one rule of righteousness, and that unchangeable; and that that had been fully expressed in the first covenant its commands contained in the decalogue. But now we are taught otherwise: Righteousness (says he) is a conformity to the law; he that fulfils the law, is righteous in the eye of the law. Now, the law of the new covenant runs thus, "He that believeth, shall not perish;" so that a believer keeps and fulfils this law, and therefore faith is imputed to him for righteousness. This is a new sort of a law indeed, where there is no commandment at all. But I think it is God that fulfils this law, and not the believer: for the accomplishment or fulfilling of it is in the salvation of the believer; which the scripture tells us is not of ourselvæs, but is the work of God alone. But let us consider it in form of a law, thus, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved;" and let us suppose the rule of righteousness to be here found. I say, that this requires either perfect believing, or not. If it require perfect faith, then the judgment of God is not according to truth, in pronouncing men righteous according to this law; for no man in this life is perfect in faith: If it require not perfect faith, then all the unbelief and doubtings in a man's heart, where there is anything of faith, are no sins against this law of grace; which is absurd: yea and so they are no sins at all; for, as hath been already proven, believers are dead to the law of works. Moreover, believing, or faith, being in several degrees in several persons, one is more righteous than another, or more conformed to the law than another; and the least measure of true faith being a fulfilling of this law, any further degree of it must be a work of supererogation, the law being more than fulfilled; all which are absurd. In fine, this doctrine makes the gospel to overturn the law, and maketh Christ the end of the law for destruction, not for consummation, for "righteousness, to every one that believeth; because the righteousness of the law must be put out of doors, before this new righteousness can be brought in. But Christ hath plainly told us, that heaven and earth shall sooner pass away than

one jot or tittle of the law. And how does it reflect upon the justice, purity, and holiness of God, to accept us as righteous in his sight formally on the account of a righteousness which is as filthy rags? for such is our faith *formaliter et ratione sui*.

I think, indeed, this author does rationally yoke these two together, viz. a believer's being righteous in the sight of God with the self-same righteousness wherewith Christ (as Redeemer, head, and representative of his) is righteous; and a believer's suffering and obeying in Christ; for these indeed *se mutuo ponunt et tollunt*; and this obligeth those that acknowledge the immediate imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, to acknowledge also our being reputed, upon our union with him, to have suffered in him for all sins, past, present, and to come; which being granted, they must needs yield the pardon of the same, in the sense pleaded for. But why should a believer suffering in Christ be thought such a gross point of Antinomianism? That we sinned in Adam, I suppose he will not deny; and if so in the first Adam, why may we not be said to have suffered in Christ the second Adam, who was no less a public person in his suffering, than the first in his sinning. The Apostle Eph. ii. 6. tells us, that believers were raised up in him; which must needs suppose that they died in him. But he is very plain in this point, Gal. ii. 20. "I am crucified with Christ." Hereby he proves, that he was dead to the law through the law, for the law had crucified him with Christ: wherefore it had no more to require of him, than the law of a land of a malefactor hanged for his crime. This scripture hath led Luther* into that fundamental mistake of the Antinomians: "For (says he) I am crucified and dead with Christ through faith." And that none may mistake his meaning, he tells us, that the Apostle doth not speak here of con-crucifixion of intimation or example, but of that sublime con-crucifixion, where Christ alone doth all, but the believer is crucified with him through faith. Fergusson† tells us, that the threatening of death, Gen. ii. 17. is fulfilled in the elect; so that they die, and yet their lives are spared; for they are reckoned in law to have died, when Christ their surety died for them. Zanchius‡ favours this doctrine much: for he says, that whatsoever was done to our head Christ, that is partly done to his whole body, and so to each member already; and partly to be done. Beza is in this point Antinomian in grain;|| "Although thou (says he) hast satisfied for

* Com. in loc.

† Com. in loc. doct. 3.

‡ Com. in Eph. ii. 6. observ. 1.

|| Confess. point 4. art. 23. See art 23,

the pain of thy sins in the person of Jesus Christ, and that thou art also clothed with his righteousness, &c." And Rutherford,* though a great adversary to the Antinomians, as is well known by his learned writings against them, hath yet fallen into this fundamental mistake of theirs: "for (says he) Christ's dying and satisfying, is ours; he dying in our stead and place, and we dying in him legally, (not physically); and so are we not only by his satisfaction, which is made ours, and by faith applied to us, negatively freed from hell; but positively righteous." The Apostle teacheth believers so to think of themselves. Rom. vi. 10, 11. "For in that he died, he died unto sin (*i. e.* for sin) once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God and Christ, *en Christo*, &c. Where we see plainly that believers are called to reckon or conclude themselves to be dead unto sin; that is, for sin, as is plain from the 10th verse, otherwise they do not reckon concerning themselves as they do concerning Christ. The Apostle taketh it for granted, that believers have all laid down this conclusion, or have made this reckoning, "That Christ died to sin," that is, suffered for it: here is another conclusion he would have them to make, "Likewise reckon ye also," viz. that ye are dead to sin, and this by way of syllogistical deduction from the former, *Houto kai humeis logizesthe*; where the medium is our union with Christ, sealed in baptism, ver. 4. "For if Christ died to sin, then we being one with him," died to it also, viz. in his person, as the text hath it, in Christ. Whereas indeed our dying to sin in point of sanctification, is in our own person, not in the person of Jesus Christ, as is manifest. From what is said it appears, that a believer is reputed to have satisfied for all sins, past, present and to come, at his union with Christ by faith; and consequently that all his sins are then pardoned *simul et semel*.

If any shall say, That although we be reputed thus to have satisfied the law for all sins past, present, and to come; yet it no more follows that we have the pardon of them† in our own persons, than that we are glorified in our own persons at our first believing in Christ; for both are the fruits of the same purchase: I answer, That this is to confound our absolute and relative state, and to make them go on alike by degress: which is absurd. But pray you let it be considered, that there are two things in Christ's obedience to the law as the representative of his people; *First*, The payment of a debt; *Secondly*, A purchase of some positive benefits. The

* Influences of the life, &c. p. 43.

† Future sins.

debt being paid, and the payment of it for such a person being sustained in law, the discharge cannot be kept up; but justice *ipso facto* looseth the man from the obligation, as is manifest. But as to these other blessings, there is no such necessity of their being made immediately forthcoming unto them; only they have immediately a right to them all given them; and thus especially when the payer or purchaser consents to the delay of giving up these things to those for whom they are purchased; as it is in this case. This we see plainly in the way of human contracts. As when a man pays his debt to the creditor, and purchaseth a piece of ground from him; the very paying of the money in justice looseth him from his former bond or obligation, and gives him a right to the land; but does not put him actually in possession thereof at that very time.

ARGUMENT IV. The Scripture plainly holds out unto us, that the Lord, in dealing with believers, considereth them as in Christ Jesus, and not as they are in themselves; and it cannot be otherwise, seeing the union made up betwixt Christ and a soul by faith, is a lasting, even an everlasting union; so that after their union with Christ, at the first moment of believing, they never more stand before God on their own bottom, otherwise God should be to them, even as to others, "a consuming fire." But if we account a believer to lie one moment under unpardoned sin, he must be considered abstractedly from Christ, and dealt with judicially as he is in himself; or if otherwise, it reflects no small dishonour on the Mediator, the person who is one with him, being condemned by the law. And the truth is, that a person being once united to Christ by faith, whatever is chargeable on that person must be laid to the charge of Christ, and he is answerable for it; and the same may be exacted of him, as the debt contracted by the wife is chargeable on the husband; but "by once offering up of himself he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." To this purpose speaks holy John Careless* in his letter to William Tymes: "He hath clothed us in all his merits, and taken to himself all our sin; so that if any should be now condemned for the same, it must needs be Jesus Christ, who hath taken them upon him. But indeed he hath made satisfaction for them to the uttermost; so that, for his sake, they shall never be imputed to us if they were a thousand times more than they be." Thus he; and that most truly, because the elect person being once united to Christ, the Lord Jesus is reputed to have

* Suffering Saint's Mirror, p. 66.

taken on all his sins in particular, whether past, present, or to come; so that now, if any person be reputed guilty, or actually liable to eternal wrath, it must be Christ himself, who is legally the sinner in point of guilt, though the fault was never transferred on him; therefore, if the sin be unpardoned for the least moment, it must be to him, and not to us; for though they be ours by commission, yet he hath undertaken and bound himself to answer for them. Among men there are two sorts of sureties. Some become sureties for others, so as the creditor hath still a right to crave the principal debtor, who, notwithstanding of the suretiship, remains still liable: in which case, if the principal party fail to pay after diligence used for the same, the creditor falls on the surety. Some do so become sureties for others, that the principal debtor is *eo ipso* relieved and discharged; there being no hopes at all of payment from the principal. This last way Christ is surety for his people, and not the first way: for the Lord knowing that it was utterly impossible for man to satisfy by himself, must needs be supposed to make no other bargain; but "laying help upon one that is mighty," he simply passeth the sinner in his own person, and takes Christ for all; who says to the Father, "If you take me let these go their way. And so, as it is said, Isa. liii. 7. *Niggas Vchu Nagnanch, He* (to wit, the Father) exacted, and he (to wit, Christ) answered; or he was answered, viz. by Christ. So Rabbi David* judgeth the word in *Niphil* should be expounded. A godly writer tells us, that God laid all on him, that he might be sure of satisfaction; protesting, that he would not deal with us, nor so much as expect any payment from us.† Wherefore in law Christ is the sinner, and the believer goes free; and if so, then the sin, if it be at all unpardoned, it must be to him, and not to us. None will stumble at this, who consider matters duly. Luther‡ doubts not to say, Christ was a sinner, and that there was none a greater sinner than he; and that whatsoever sins we do commit, or shall in time to come, commit, they are as proper to Christ, as if he himself had committed them. "In sum (says he) sin must become Christ's proper sin or we perish."§ Rivet defends Illyricus against Bellarmine, in that he says, Christ might most truly be called the sinner. Bellarmine (says he) contends, that Christ may attribute our sins unto himself; and that truly, as I believe, for he cannot lie; therefore he might also truly call himself the sinner, while he sustained our person; who nevertheless was in himself innocent. What blasphemy

* *Cit. Pagnino in lex.* † Marrow of Mod. Div. p. 27. ‡ Com. in Gal. iii. 13.

§ In P-al. xxii. 1.

and impiety is here? The same is taught by Hemmingius, Taunovius, Witsius, Rutherford, and Bridge.* The Apostle puts it out of doubt, that it is Christ who speaks to the Father Psal. xl. see Heb. x. and in the 12th verse of that Psal. he calls the sins the burden whercof he bears, his iniquities. And it cannot be denied, but that he was made sin; which is more than to be a sinner, in so far as the abstract signifies somewhat more exquisite than the concrete, if we will believe the learned Rivit, *loco supra citato*. From all which I conclude, that seeing Christ is made the sinner in law, and the Lord passeth the man thus, upon Christ's undertaking the charge, all sins, past, present, and to come, are together and at once pardoned, viz. as soon as the soul is one with Christ by faith.

ARGUMENT. V. The love of God, called the love of complacency, is as God himself, unchangeable; "for whom he once loves, he loves to the end;"† and "nothing can separate them from it."‡ Though the emanations of it towards believers may be stopt for a time in great measure, yet that love as it is in God still remains, *quoad affectum*, as they say, though not *quoad effectum*. The due consideration of this, which is not controverted amongst the orthodox, and is plainly proven by them against the patrons of the saints falling away, will necessitate the asserting of the pardon of all sins, *simul et semel*; so as the believer is never, after his union with Christ, by any sin, for one moment actually liable to eternal wrath. For that liableness to God's wrath, and the unchangeableness of God's love, are incompatible. Which I prove thus. For a sinner to be liable *in actu secundo* to eternal death, is nothing else but to be under a sentence of eternal death as a sinner; that is to say, the law condemns him as such, though the sentence never be executed. Now, what is the law of God, but a transcript of the holy nature of God? so that God himself is surely set against those whom the law is against; otherwise God is changeable, or the law is not a true copy of his nature; both which are more than absurd. It comes in effect to this, that God approves whom the law disaproves; that is, God hates the man, hath no delight in him at all; seeing he that is guilty of one, is guilty of all: and yet at the same time he loves him, and delights in him; which is a flat contradiction. If any shall say, that the sinner may be hated of God as he is in himself, yet beloved as united to Christ, it is granted; but it makes nothing to the purpose: for while we speak of a believer as he is in himself, it is merely a notion of our minds by precision;

* Hem on Jam. digress. of rep. Taun. in Psal. pass. p. 253. Wits. Exer. p. 378. Christ's Dying, p. 570. Christ in Travel, p. 110.

† John.

‡ Rom.

but really and indeed he is ever in Christ, and the Lord's judgment is according to truth; so he never deals with a believer, but as he is indeed in Christ, as was said before. And if to adjudge a person to eternal wrath be not to hate him, I confess I understand not what can be made of God's hatred against a person; for it is certain it is no passion in him, as it is in us. Rutherford tells us,* that there is no reason why God should communicate the purchased remission by halves, (*per partes*), unless he loved and hated also the self-same person from eternity; which is inconsistent. So saith Piscator,† God hates them whose sins he hath not pardoned; and this, while he teacheth, that, by the forgiveness of sin, which we seek in the Lord's prayer, is meant the sense of pardon. There is one thing, I foresee, will readily be said against this, to invalidate the argument; that is, that the Lord Jesus Christ was condemned by the law, yet still beloved of God; and therefore they are not inconsistent. To this I answer, There is in sin the fault, and the guilt arising therefrom: the latter, not the former, was transferred on Christ; but an unpardoned sinner lies under both. Hence ariseth a vast difference betwixt the law's condemning of Christ, and its condemning us. While the law condemns a sinner, who is formally such and in himself, it declares him to be sinful, and opposite to God; which is the formal notion under which he is hated of God; and therefore it adjudgeth him to eternal wrath. But here Christ is innocent; only the punishment is exacted of him, seeing he came in the room of condemned sinners, and undertook voluntarily to satisfy for them: wherefore God cannot but delight in him, seeing there was no sinful evil in him, only a penal evil is inflicted on him. But the law, finding one sin in the sinner uncovered with the righteousness of Christ, leaves him in no other case than it did Adam guilty of the first, viz. condemned, and one whom God had no delight in.

ARGUMENT VI. If all sins, past, present, and to come, be not pardoned at once, when the soul is united to Christ by faith; then a believer at one and the same time is adjudged to eternal death. That he is adjudged to eternal life, in so far as he is a believer, the scripture plainly teacheth; "for he that believeth, hath everlasting life:" and that he is adjudged to eternal death upon the account of sins not yet pardoned, though committed, is no less evident; seeing, according to this doctrine, sin is not pardoned in respect of the obligation to eternal wrath, till he renew the acts of faith and repentance; which is nothing else, than that he is

* *Exer. apol. pro divina gratia.* p. 37. † *Obs. in orat. Dom.*

actually bound over thereto. And so the man is legally dead and legally alive at one and the same time. Whoso shall reconcile these, *erit mihi magnus Apollo*. But I shall stand no more on this; but conclude with the following argument.

ARGUMENT VII. ult. This doctrine, teaching the pardon of all sins together and at once, upon the soul's believing at first on Christ, hath the advantage of the other, in two respects.

I. In that it is most adapted to the grand design of the gospel; which is, to exalt the riches of the free grace of God in Jesus Christ. For, *first*, who sees not the grace of God far more exalted in giving out a full and complete remission of all sins, past, present, and to come, together and at once; than in giving out remission by halves; as the giving up of a bond wholly and at once, speaks out more favour than now and then particular receipts and discharges. Let none say, that it is too much boldness for us, thus to lay down methods and rules for God's exalting his grace; and if this were true, then he should sanctify us wholly at our union with Christ, as well as pardon all sins, past, present, and to come. We say, that we do not take upon us to lay down or propose rules that way; but understanding the exalting of grace to be the great design of the gospel, we may well be allowed to consider what doth most contribute thereto. And whatever other way the Lord might, in his boundless wisdom, have fallen upon, for bringing about that end, I confidently aver, That none in the world can devise a way how grace might have been more exalted than it is by this way laid down in the gospel. And with the same confidence I say, that the gradual sanctification of believers doth more exalt the riches of grace, than if God had made believers perfectly holy at the first moment of believing, as I shall afterwards make appear. So sweetly doth the perfect pardon of sin, and the imperfect sanctification of believers, contribute to the grand design of the gospel. *Secondly*, It doth also exalt the grace of God more, that the sinner being once united to Christ by faith, hath a free and full remission of all sins, past, present, and to come, than that the pardon of future sins should be suspended on the acts of our believing and repenting.

II. It is most adapted to excite believers to the serious practice of godliness, to a holy and strict gospel-walk. Which appears, *first*, In that it doth natively fill the heart with love to God, the mainspring of gospel obedience, and the most powerful incentive to a tender walk. It is true, the man who apprehends sins past and present forgiven, cannot but love much; but he who apprehends sins, past, present, and to come, to be forgiven, must love more. Here then are two debtors to the grace of God; I think I may well

propose our Lord's question, Luke vii. 42. "Which of them will love him most?" and will acquiesce in Simon's answer, seeing Christ approved it, "I suppose that he to whom he forgave most," ver. 43. *Secondly*, As this doctrine furnishes the children of God best, with love to constrain them, and cords of a man to draw them;* so it doth remove the fear of eternal wrath, which keeps the soul in bondage, fills the heart with confusion, dashes and mars us in our access to God, and looks like slavery rather than the glorious liberty of sons. But the doctrine of the pardon of future sins only upon after repentance, &c. cherisheth this fear; so as men must be continually under it, in regard they are continually sinning; and though a man be in this moment perfectly freed from an actual obligation to eternal wrath, yet the very next moment he is again brought under it: so that in very deed it is a perfect rack to the conscience, and would effectually prove so were it as firmly believed as is pretended. It is needless to distinguish here betwixt greater and lesser sins: for sin as sin lays the soul under God's wrath, where it is in a capacity of actual obligation thereto, as was said before. Whatever influence the soul's apprehension of its liableness to eternal wrath, under sin till it be repented of, may be supposed to have, I think it is plain, that one great end of Christ's death was to deliver us, that we might serve him without fear of what the law or vindictive justice of God may do to us.† Luther, who was a man very much exercised with conflicts of conscience, is very plain this way;‡ "Wherefore, (says he), if sin torment thee, if death terrify thee, think it is but a vain spectre, and an illusion of the devil, as certainly it is. For in very deed there is no more sin, no more curse, no more death, no devil; because Christ hath overcome and abolished all these. There is no defect in the thing, but in our belief; for it is difficult for reason to believe these so inestimable benefits." And elsewhere:§ "Hence (says he) it follows, that, in respect of the conscience, we are altogether free from the law; therefore that schoolmaster ought not to be troublesome to it with his terrors, threats, and captivity." And again,§ "We ought, without the conscience, to make a God of it, (the law); but within the conscience, it is a devil," &c. And a little after, "Let him (Christ) alone reign in righteousness, security, joy, and life; that the conscience being glad, may sleep in Christ, without any sense of law, sin, and death." These expressions are somewhat unusual;

* Rom. viii. 15. † John iv. 18.

‡ Luke i. 74, 75. † Com. in Gal. iii. 13. p. (mih) 466. † cap. iii. 25, p. 566.

§ Cap. iv. 3. p. 591. p. 592.

but the matter is heavenly and sublime, and the very marrow of the life of faith, and savours much of Paul's elevated spirit, while treating of the doctrine of free grace, or rather of the Spirit of Christ. Agreeably to this doth Calvin teach :* "The law (says he) hath no place in the consciences of the faithful before the judgment-seat of God. The second part (of Christian liberty†) is, that consciences obey the law, not as compelled by the necessity of the law, but being free from the yoke of the law itself, of their own accord they obey the will of God. For because they abide in perpetual terrors, so long as they be under the dominion of the law, they shall never be, with cheerful readiness, framed to the obedience of God, unless they first have this liberty given them. On the other side,‡ if being delivered from this severe exacting of the law, they hear that they be called with fatherly gentleness, they will with great cheerfulness answer his call." So Beza:§ "Forasmuch (says he) as Jesus Christ hath, by one infinite obedience, made satisfaction to the infinite Majesty of God, it followeth, that my iniquities can no more fray nor trouble me; my accounts being assuredly erased by the precious blood of Christ."

Now, I shall consider the objections against this doctrine; and shall handle them in the same order as Sedgwick§ hath them gathered together. That learned man delivereth them not as his; but tells us after all, that his own judgment inclines to that opinion, That all the sins past of a believer are (at once) forgiven, and all his future sins are remitted unto him upon renewed acts of believing and repenting, for Christ's sake.

OBJECT. 1. Heb. viii. 12. "Their iniquities I will remember no more." "Not to remember iniquity any more," doth in common sense suppose, that that iniquity was before; for if it never was, it cannot be said to be remembered at all. So that passage, Jer. xxxi. 34. "I will forgive their iniquity;" and Jer. xxxiii. 8. "I will pardon all their iniquities," do suppose an iniquity or offence committed; for if it be not yet committed, how can it properly be said to be forgiven? So Is. xliii. 25. "I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions; but debts which were never as yet made, may not be entered into the book, and therefore cannot be said to be blotted out.

ANSW. I have already shown, in what sense the Lord saith, he will remember their sins no more; which is no way infringed by this objection, and doth very well agree with the scripture dialect. But as for that criticism upon the word remember, that in common

* Instit. lib. 3. cap. 19. § 2. † Section 4. ‡ Section 5.

§ Confess. point 4. art. 10. p. (*mihî*) 42.

§ On the cov. p. 427.—430.

sense it supposeth that the thing was before ; I say it is weak, to say no worse of it : for the most sensible mere man that ever was in the world since the fall, and inspired by the holy Ghost too, useth the word of that which only was to be, Eccl. xi. 8. " Let him remember the days of darkness, for they SHALL BE many." And what will ye say to find it used of a thing that never so much as was to be ? So David useth it concerning Judas, Psal. cix. 16. " Because he remembered not to show mercy." A learned critic tells us,* that, in the holy language, to remember, does not necessarily presuppose any precedent knowledge which was forgot, and afterwards comes into mind ; but as we see, says he, it is taken simply for the knowledge of any thing, and speaking of the thing known. Now, when it is applied to God, it is certain the existence of the thing, and his knowledge of it, cannot be separated, for the least moment.† The learned Gentleman Leigh tells us, that the Hebrew word signifies to make mention of a thing. And I think it is to be observed, that the Apostle, in translating it, useth not a compound, but a simple word, *ou me mnestho eti* ;‡ which may very well be so translated, as well as the verbal is in almost all the places of the new Testament. In the Greek, *mnemoneue*, which signifies to remember, *memini*, *recordor*, 2 Tim. ii. 8. Rev. xviii. 5. Luke. xvii. 32, &c. So the Septuagint use it, Exod. xiii. 3. And one tells us, it answers to the Hebrew word *zachar* ; and yet we find it used of a thing that was to come, to wit, the departure out of Egypt, which was long after Joseph's death ; but by faith Joseph remembered it, *emnemoneuse*, Heb. xi. 22. But why should men go so strictly to work about the notation of the word ? for if so it be, it is certain God can no more be said properly to remember a thing than to forget it. And as unhappy are the adversaries in their criticism on the words pardoning and forgiving their importing the actual commission of sin. The apostle tells us, 1 Tim. iii. 16. that " Christ was justified in the spirit," viz. absolved from the guilt of the elects' sins which he had voluntarily taken upon him and satisfied for ; yet some of these were not then committed, nor are they to this day, notwithstanding he was justified in respect of them. 2 Kings. v. 18. " In this thing" (says Naaman) " the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon ; when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon, &c. Upon this there is a question proposed, Whether or not Naaman deprecates and seeks that to

* Rivet in Psal. xxii. 28.

† Crit Sac.

‡ Heb. viii. 12, *mneia* Rom i. 9. Eph. i. 16. &c.

be forgiven which he did before his conversion, or that which he was to do after his conversion? Wendelin tells us,* that some modern interpreters embrace the first; but mostly all others the latter; which he himself holds likewise. And of that judgment, he says, are the Chaldee, Greek interpreters, Jerome, Pagnin, Luther, Vatablus, Munster, Junius, and Tremellius; the French, Italian, and Spanish translators. However it be, I remark, for the purpose in hand, that many learned men are not so fond upon the pretended import of the word pardon, but that sometimes, for their part, they will suffer it to respect sin not yet committed. And I would challenge any man to give me a solid answer and reason, why sin may not be forgiven before it be committed, as well as satisfied for at the dearest rate before the actors be *in rerum natura*. I think the first may at least as easily be as the latter, of which no true Christian will doubt; and I would leave it to the judgment of any unbiassed person, whether or not the exacting of satisfaction for sins not only not yet committed, but even the actors of which are not yet in being, seems to be more liable to inconveniences, than the pardon of sins, though not yet committed, yet satisfied for, the person now even at the time living and believing in him who died for the ungodly? Wherefore it is strange, that Bishop Downhame's gravity permits him to be so wanton on this point, as to tell us, that this cannot be, unless we make God like the Pope, who forehand forgave sins to come. Will his Lordship allow the Pope to take money aforehand for sins to come, and not allow him to give people what they have bought with their money? But no more of this. If we did not too much measure God's way's by man's ways, perhaps there would be less difficulty in this matter. Only we know, that, as to him with whom we have to do, all is present before his eyes; there is neither time past nor time to come with him. No better is that which they would make of the word blotting out. If the future sins of believers were not in God's debt-book, how came justice to exact payment of the Lord Jesus Christ for them? Scripture tells us, that "in the volume of God's book it was written† concerning Christ, that he came to do the will of the Father‡. What was that will, but that he should lay down his life for his sheep, or die for the sins of the elect? If Christ's sufferings were written in that book, it is reasonable to suppose the cause of them might be found there also. But if things must needs actually be before they be put in God's book, David

* Syst. Theol. p. 562.

† Psal. xl. 7.

‡ John x. 18.

has been in a great mistake, while he tells us, that all his members were written in God's book, when as yet THERE WAS NONE OF THEM.

OBJECT. 2. Other scriptures purposely speaking of the forgiveness of sins have a restrainedness unto sins committed, and look only at them, Jer. xxxiii. 8, whereby they have sinned,—have transgressed. Mark, have sinned, and have transgressed, respecting the sins past, not what they shall commit, Ezek. xviii. 22. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him. 1 John ii. 1. If any man sin; as if sin must be committed before he make intercession for the pardon of it. So in the Old Testament there was no sacrifice for any future sin.

ANSWER. As for the first two scriptures, that they have a respect to past sins, I do not deny; but that they respect these only is said, not proven. If they be restrained to past sins, what comes of present sins, the second member of this tripartite division, very little, if at all, used, for anything that I have yet learned, by any but those of late? others that went before, being content with the phrase of pardon of sin, simply, or all sin, universally, as the scripture speaks. "It hath been (says Isaac Ambrose) commonly said by some of our best divines, that justification is transacted in our first union and incorporation into Christ; at which time it is conceived, that the pardon of all sin is sealed to the believer at once." If then it be restrained, I say, to sins past, then this assertion is false, That all sins, past, and present, are forgiven at once; which the adversaries themselves do hold true. But these clauses, have sinned, and have transgressed, are plainly set down, not to distinguish their past and present, from their future sins; that would have been but small comfort to a man with a deceitful heart, that is ever sinning; but to press the sense of their sins upon their consciences, and to hold them before their eyes, that they might be the more affected therewith, and see the grace of God in Christ more. If we must consider that, Ezek. xviii. 22. all his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned; pray take in likewise the following clause, In the righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Here are sins that he hath committed; and righteousness that he hath done. If the sins that he hath committed be exclusive, in point of remission, of the sins he shall commit; then his righteousness that he hath done, which must be understood, in a gospel sense, of the righteousness of Christ received by faith, must, by virtue of the antithesis, be exclusive of the righteousness he shall do, in point of pardon, or legal life. And so the doctrine of obtaining the pardon

of future sins by the renewed acts of faith and repentance, falls to the ground: their life being appropriated to the righteousness they have done, as much as the not mentioning of their sins is to those that they have committed. Let no man tell me here, that the Lord is speaking to them in the tenor of the covenant of works, and according to the law, I acknowledge, that the phrase of doing righteousness, looks like the legal dispensation of the covenant of grace under the Old Testament. But the law strictly so called, or the covenant of works, knows nothing of repentance and turning from sin, nor of the pardon of sin, here mentioned. Nay, though a man under the influence of the covenant of works could turn from sin indeed, that covenant would not allow his former sins not to be mentioned. As for that place, 1 John ii. 1. it makes nothing against us, in regard the Apostle is there speaking of believers who have an Advocate with the Father, and are actually pardoned as to the obligation to eternal wrath, but do fall under God's fatherly displeasure by their after sins, for removal of which they must employ the Advocate. But take it as ye will, there is no necessity of the actual commission of sin before intercession can be made anent it, no more than before satisfaction be made for it. But this was spoken to at large already. As to what is said of the sacrifices under the Old Testament, we are sure of two things; *First*, That they were types of the true sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, as suffering for sinners; *Secondly*, That the sacrifice of Christ was for all sins, past, present, and to come; and therefore the believing Jews who were taught the mystery of Christ behaved to understand it so.

OBJECT. 3. Those qualifications which God himself makes with respect to the forgiveness of sins do necessarily suppose a precedent commission of them: 2 Chron. vii. 14. "If my people—shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face," &c. 1 John i. 9. "If we confess," &c. Prov. xxviii. 13. "He that confesseth and forsaketh shall find mercy." Acts iii. 19. "Repent ye,—that your sins may be blotted out." Doth God put us to humble our hearts to pray for the pardon of sins not yet committed? Would he have us to confess and forsake those sins? Wherefore, if these things be required for forgiveness, and yet respect only sins that are past, as indeed they do, all are not pardoned at once.

ANSWER. Somewhat of this nature I have met with before in the first objection against the first question. I think it strange, that men, when they hear the pardon of sin spoken of in any place of scripture do presently fancy to themselves, that is the taking off the obligation to eternal wrath. As for that 2 Chron. vii. 14. it

relates to the taking off of temporary strokes from the people, as is evident from the text. "I will forgive their sin." How? "I will heal their land." What is the disease? The shutting up of heaven that there is no rain, &c. So Rutherford* expounds it. And that forgiveness they might have, and no doubt some had, and yet lie under God's wrath for ever. But suppose it did relate to the pardon of sin in the sense pleaded for, there are more conditional qualifications here, than the adversaries themselves will readily require as absolutely necessary. There is prayer made in the temple, ver. 14, 15. which I hope they will not say was, even under the Old Testament, necessary simply for the pardon of sin. The second scripture alleged I have already spoken to, and may afterwards speak to it further. The last of them will also be considered afterwards. Wherefore I leave them for the time. As for that, "He that confesseth and forsaketh, shall have mercy;" it seems to be that which hath most weight for that which is pleaded; but yet the weakness of it, we hope, will appear. That the argument then may be the more closely answered, I shall reduce it into this form. The soul's humbling of itself, confessing, forsaking, and turning from sin, respect only sins past, and cannot be where sin is not actually committed; but these qualifications mentioned, are necessarily required to the obtaining of the pardon of sin: *Ergo*. No sin can be pardoned till it be committed, and so all is not pardoned at once. I distinguish the major, The soul's humiliation, confessing, and forsaking, &c. considered and taken explicitly, respect only sins past, and cannot be where sin is not actually committed; I grant: considered virtually, they respect only sins past, &c. I deny; for so they reach to future sins also. Apply this distinction to the minor: These qualifications are necessarily required to the obtaining of the pardon of sin, if they be taken explicitly, I deny; and so will our antagonists, so long as that remains true, "Who can understand his errors?" That they are requisite as considered virtually, *transeat*. But what can be made of that against us? Nothing at all in the point in hand: for this virtual humbling, confessing, &c. takes in future sins as well as past sins, and present, which we know not: for a man who is truly humbled for one sin, is virtually humbled for all, past, present, and to come; seeing he is humbled for it, confesseth, forsaketh, and turns from it as sin; for *a qua tali ad omne valet consequentia*. Will our adversaries deny, that a believer's future sins are virtually pardoned upon his first entry into the state of justification? If they be vir-

* Christ's dying, p. 36.

tually pardoned, why not virtually confessed and forsaken, especially seeing they make confession, &c. so necessary antecedently to pardon. And truly this may as well be said of future sins, as of those sins which we neither know, nor yet shall ever after know in time; for as to us *De non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio*. Thus I think the weakness of this argument doth sufficiently appear. I shall not further meddle with the assumption here; but in what sense we understand repentance to relate to the pardon of sin, will afterwards be declared.

OBJECT. 4. If all sins, past, present, and to come, are forgiven at once unto believers, then no believer is to pray unto God for the forgiveness of any sin which he commits, after he is once brought into Christ; yet Jesus Christ doth teach even believers to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses," Matth. vi. 12; Luke xi. 4. To this may be added for confirmation, that the children of God do accordingly pray daily for the pardon of sin, as may be seen every where in the lives of the saints.

ANSWER. 1. Our Lord here teacheth believers to pray for the sense of pardon, and manifestation of the same to their own souls; and that prayer suits believers very well, though all their sins, past, present, and to come, are already pardoned before the Lord in the sense pleaded for. And though it may be hard to find where pardon is used precisely for the manifestation thereof, yet he is a great stranger in the scripture who knows not, that therein things are frequently said to be or be done, when the same is only manifested. We find the Apostle tells us, that "Abraham was justified by works,"* not formally, but manifestatively; his justification which he had long before, being then plainly evidenced. But as for those who are of opinion, that there is no pardon mentioned in the scriptures, but what respects the obligation to eternal wrath, there needs to be no great difficulty in finding such a place as may convince them, that pardon is used sometimes for the sense or manifestation of pardon precisely and only; and which may rationally convince any man, that pardon is not always taken for the removal of the obligation to eternal wrath, formally considered; Matth. vi. 14 "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." Not unlike to this is that, Luke vi. 37. "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." We may see plainly here, that our forgiveness is required as previous to God's forgiveness; and the following verse tells us, that there can be no hope of forgiveness, so long as we do not forgive others. Mark, to whom he speaks; even to be-

* James ii. 21.

lievers, who may call God Father; yet, under a temptation, may be led away with a revengeful spirit against those who have done them wrong; but till they lay it down, God will not forgive them. Now, will any man who is orthodox, suspend our formal remission of sin at the hand of God, on our remission of offences done to us, as previous to God's formal act of removing the obligation to eternal wrath? This the Papists would indeed have to establish our justification by works. But the scripture teacheth us, that God's forgiving us formally considered, is the cause of our forgiving others; and so must go before it, as the cause before the effect. A judicious interpreter* tells us, that our remission is posterior to the divine remission; as Christ teacheth in the parable of the king and the servants, Matth. xviii.; for the king forgave first, the servant behoved to forgive after: "I forgave thee all that debt, shouldst thou not also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant?" And a little after, pursuing the cause against the Papists, he will not so much as yield it to be a cause of remission *sine qua non*. Bayn† speaks very pithily to the same purpose: "Our forgiving (says he) followeth, and doth not go before forgiveness (divine): for none can forgive his brother, that doth not love his brother, none can love his brother truly, that loveth not God; none can love God, but those that are first loved of him, and have their sins covered by him. And this forgiveness of God is an action of his *simul et semel*." And afterwards he concludes; "When the scripture therefore bids us forgive that we may be forgiven, it meaneth the sense, that we may feel sealed to our spirits of God's pardon." Now if it be not a formal remission touching the obligation to eternal wrath, and yet all pardon have respect to that obligation, it must needs be understood of the manifestation of that pardon. Seeing then the scripture mentioned is an argument to enforce the duty enjoined in the petition, it is very reasonable, that we understand the petition the same way; as we said before, that we are here taught to pray for the sense of pardon, not for a formal pardon, as it respects eternal wrath. And we prove it by the argument used already, thus: the forgiveness mentioned in this petition is posterior to our forgiving others; but it is the manifestation of forgiveness, not the formal pardon, that is posterior to our forgiveness: *Ergo*. The assumption is proven already. I prove the proposition: *First*, We seek this remission as a benefit we yet want, but speak of our remission as a duty we in the present do. *Secondly*, How can we seek of God, that he would forgive us as we forgive others, if we have not

* *Pareus in loc.*

† Com. on Eph. iv. 32. p. 569.

done it, or are doing it? Surely that were to pray for the shutting up of God's bowels of mercy on us, rather than the opening of them; "For if we forgive not men, God will not forgive us?" ver. 15. *Thirdly*, That these words, "as we forgive them that trespass against us, are an argument, though not to move God to forgive, yet to move us to believe that God will forgive us, I think will not be denied by any sober person. But if it be such an argument, then the soul must feel itself endued with this qualification, ere it can certainly determine that God will forgive its sin; and the confidence of hearing cannot be in greater degree than the feeling of that qualification. *Fourthly*, That it is so to be understood, appears from the parallel place, Luke. xi. 4. "Forgive us—for we also forgive; *kai gar hemeis aphiemien*. Picator expounds forgiveness in the petition, plainly of the manifestation of pardon. "Christ (says he) by devine remission* in this place understands the sense of it in our minds, which is the sense of faith; signifying, that it cannot be that we by faith can feel the divine remission, unless we be conscious to ourselves of our remission whereby we have forgiven others." That we pray here then for the sense of pardon, is evident from what is said; and so far I acquiece in it: but I mean not to say, that pardon is taken here or elsewhere only for the manifestation of pardon. But it seems no less evident to me, that, upon what is said, they that understand it only of the manifestation of pardon, may hold their ground against those who acknowledge no pardon but what respects the obligation to eternal wrath. But in regard that a soul may have the sense of pardon touching the obligation to eternal wrath continuing with him, and that he is still obliged daily to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses," in respect of which he can only pray in such a case for the continuance of it; and seeing the words are apt to beget in us a conception of a formal pardon, and that the scripture teaches us another sort of a formal pardon than what respects God's eternal wrath; I do not judge, that the sense of pardon is all that we are taught to pray for in this petition. Therefore,

2. I answer, We pray here also for a formal pardon. For understanding of which, let us remember the distinction formerly made betwixt pardon of sin as it relates to the obligation whereby the sinner is bound over to eternal wrath, and that which respects the obligation whereby the soul is bound over to temporary strokes. That pardon of sin is in scripture used in the last sense, hath been already proven, and it is very commonly so taken. I shall adduce

* Schol. & obs. in Mat. vi. 12. 14.

some other instances. 2 Kings. xxiv. 4. "And also for the innocent blood which he shed, which the Lord would not pardon." Jer. v. 1. "Run, through the streets of Jerusalem, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it." Would not the Lord pardon the bloodshed by Manasseh (to them that were involved in the guilt with him) as to the obligation to eternal wrath? Manasseh himself was pardoned in that sense, and doubtless God passed no such peremptory sentence on the rest that were involved in his guilt. But the context plainly tells us, it is meant of temporary strokes that came upon the Jews by the hands of their enemies. Is that the gospel offer to pardon Jerusalem as to the obligation to eternal wrath, if there were found but a few among them* that sought the truth? No, sure; though the Lord averts temporal strokes on that account many times. The believing and repenting people of God still under temporary strokes complain, Lam. iii. 42. saying, "We have transgressed, and have rebelled, and thou hast not pardoned." But will God hold his people under obligation to eternal wrath, though believing, repenting, confessing, and forsaking? Is. xl. 2. "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins;" not in a way of vindictive justice, surely, but of temporary strokes from fatherly displeasure. I say then, that in this petition we are taught to pray daily for the pardon of sin, as it respects temporary strokes, and fatherly displeasure; but no otherwise, even no more than that God would justify us, and adopt us, &c. which are done already perfectly. And that this is the formal pardon which we are commanded to seek, is plain from that we are directed to go to a father for it. To conclude: we are taught there to pray for the sense of pardon as touching the obligation to eternal wrath, and for a formal pardon respecting temporary strokes; or, if you please, call it only that formal forgiveness just now mentioned, so that ye include the other in it, as a certain species in the general kind. For the confirmation of the objection, what the practice of the saints is *de facto*, is not the question; but what it ought be *de jure*, or in point of right. When the children of God have lost sight of their interest in Christ, what wonder is it that they pray as those who have no part in him? But such a practice is grounded on a mistake, and therefore is not warrantable. But that their prayers are actually sometimes for the removal of temporary anger, when they pray for pardon of sin, though some may understand them otherwise, is

* Or a magistrate, as Caryl understands it.

evident: As when David, Psal. xxv. "Lifting up his soul to God," ver. 1; "trusting in him," ver. 2; "waiting on him all the day," ver. 5; recalling to mind former experiences of God's loving-kindness, ver. 6; and conscious to himself of those acts; yet prays, ver. 7. "that the Lord would not remember the sins of his youth:" can it be supposed, that he thought they were unpardoned as to the guilt of eternal wrath still? Or did the church think so, Psal. lxxix. 8. when she prays, "O remember not against us former sins?" It is plain both aim at the guilt of temporary strokes, that may be brought on after they are, by their pardon, put out of hazard of eternal wrath. I shall conclude this answer with what Mr. Rutherford* says: "Our deliverance from misery is twofold, as our misery is. *First*, There is a guilt of sin, or our obligation to eternal wrath; the other misery is the blot of internal guilt of sin. In regard of the former, we are freely and perfectly justified, and pardoned at once from all sins in our person and state. Through the sense of this, and in regard of deliverance from temporal judgments, and doubtings, and fears of eternal wrath, every day, while we seek daily bread, we desire that our sins may be forgiven."

OBJECT. 5. It is possible, that a believing person may fall into such a sin or sins of scandal, for which he may be justly cast out from the visible church; and, upon his neglect or practice of repentance, he stands bound or loosed from his sin, not only in earth, but also in heaven; for so Christ himself delivers it to us in Matth. xviii. 18. But this cannot possibly be, if all sins be already pardoned in heaven; for then they are always loosed, and never bound in heaven.

ANSWER. That it is possible a believer may fall into such sins, for which he may be justly so treated by the church; and that what the church does that way in that case is ratified in heaven, I doubt not. But that such a person is bound over, upon his contumacy, either in heaven or earth, to eternal wrath, or loosed upon his repentance therefrom, I do utterly refuse: and till that be proven, the argument is of no force. I will not here enter upon an inquiry into the nature of excommunication. But the screwing it up so high in the case supposed, is so far from confirming the hypothesis of adversaries, that it doth exceedingly weaken it: for by this the sin of a believer may be loosed in heaven, and yet bound on the earth, and the church in her duty still as to that person. Put the case, (which may very well supposed), that the excommunicate believer, thinking himself (though wrongously) lesed by the sentence of

* Dying and Drawing, p. 593.

excommunication, goes over seas into a far country, where there is no church at all, and is there touched with the sense of his sin, renews his faith and repentance, and sues for a pardon, or the removal of the obligation to eternal wrath; he cannot but have it, even according to the principles of our adversaries: yet still he is bound on earth; and if so, bound in heaven too, as we heard just now: and so his sin is both pardoned and unpardoned in heaven at one and the self-same time—pardoned, because he has repented; unpardoned, because he still lies under the sentence. And if this binding of a believer's sin on earth and in heaven respect the obligation to eternal wrath, it seems to me natively to follow, that a believer in a state of excommunication is in a state of condemnation. For, as one says* well, "If there were any sin remaining, a man is still in the state of condemnation." How powerful is truth! If we turn over but another leaf before that in which this argument is applauded as Achillean† indeed by the learned man, we shall find him telling us, that if God did yet hold you guilty, ye could not say, that ye have peace with God; for God is not at peace with you, nor are ye at peace with him, while enmity continues between you; and so it doth while any sin remains unpardoned.‡ And after he hath told us there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, he adds, "And verily, if all condemnation be removed, all sin is pardoned; if any one sin remained unpardoned, then condemnation would still be in force upon us for that one sin." But if we shall understand this binding and loosing of a believer's sin with respect to temporary anger or temporal judgments, the matter is plain, and the absurdity is evited: for though the man in such a case may, by the renewing of his faith and repentance, recover the sense of his pardon touching the obligation to eternal wrath; yet, till he be loosed on earth, he is not loosed in heaven from the temporary judgment he was laid under; but still he feels the weight of God's fatherly displeasure, having no access to the communion of the church; which is no doubt a very heavy band to a tender heart, and will make such an one go with a bowed down back.

OBJECT. 6. If all sins, past, present, and to come, are forgiven at once, then a justified person, in the midst of the grossest sins, may rejoice in God, as much as when he humbles his soul, repents, and seeks his face.

ANSWER. This objection is justly raised against Antinomians, who deny a believer's liableness, either to eternal wrath or temporary strokes for sin. But it can, with no colour or shadow of reason, be

* Brook's Golden Key, p. 74. † Sedgwick on the Covenant, p. 425. ‡ P. 253.

brought against us, who are taught, that the frowns of our dearest Father are bitter as death. See more above.

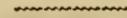
OBJECT. 7. Forgiveness of sin is a judicial act in God, as the contrary act of condemning is. Now, the judge neither condemns nor forgives offences which are not extant.

ANSWER. This objection is of a piece with the first, and does truly strike at the root of the doctrine of the gospel, and quite overturns the satisfaction of Christ; and is as unadvisedly objected here by the adversaries, as some do object that logical maxim, *Non-entis nulla sunt accidentia*. It is dangerous to endeavour to regulate the procedure of the omniscient judge, according to the order of human policy. It was a judicial act in God, "for sin to condemn sin in the flesh"* of Christ; but wo to us that live now, if it was only sin that was extant which was thus condemned.

OBJECT. 8. ult. The continual work of Christ in heaven as our intercessor, 1 John ii. 1. and the daily suing out of pardon in his name, seems to carry much in it for the acquiring of daily pardon.

ANSWER. It does so for pardon; that is, the taking off of temporary strokes. And that we might be sure of what we sue daily for, he left that comfortable word with his people before he ascended into heaven, "I go to your Father and my Father, to your God and my God." But of this before.

I conclude with that of the Apostle, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."



QUEST. III.

WHETHER OR NOT REPENTANCE BE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO THE OBTAINING OF THE PARDON OF SIN?

HAVING, in the former questions, had so frequent occasion to speak of repentance and its relation to the pardon of sin, I shall endeavour to clear what I have hinted at before in this matter. I do not now speak of the repentance that may be found in Cain and Judas, arising merely from the sense of God's wrath, which is called legal

* Rom. viii.