

sting of conscience, and flash of a lightning conviction, may be restrained from sin, yet his natural inclination to it remains, though suspended at the present, and may be carried the quite contrary way. As the stream of a river, by the force of the tide, is carried against its natural current, yet slides down its channel with its wonted calmness upon the removal of the force, so a good man, under the violence of some lust, hath not his new nature changed, though at present it is restrained by an extrinsic force. So that as the one, upon the taking off his conviction, returns to his sin, so the other, upon the removal of his fetters, returns to his holiness with a greater spirit and delight. A wicked man may sometimes do a good action, but he continues not in it; as a planet is sometimes retrograde, but soon returns to its direct course. When their conscience pinches them, they awake out of their trance. So a good man may sin through infirmity, but he will revoke it by repentance. The seed of God remains in him, as the sap in the root of a tree, that recovers the leaves the next return of the sun at the spring. He may sink by nature and rise again by grace; but the devil, who sinned at the beginning, fell and never rose more.

Use, of examination.

If you find yourselves in these cases, in a course of known sin, resolution to commit it, were it not for such bars—unwillingness to know God's pleasure and injunction; despising admonitions and reproofs; a settled love of it; a full consent of will, without any antecedent, concomitant, or consequent dissent; tumbling in it without rising by repentance; a circle of sinning and repenting without abhorrence of sin—you may conclude yourselves in an unregenerate state; you sin like the devil, who sinned from the beginning.

A DISCOURSE OF THE PARDON OF SIN.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity.—Ps. XXXII. 1, 2.

THIS psalm, as Grotius thinks, was made to be sung upon the annual day of the Jewish expiation, when a general confession of their sins was made. It is one of David's penitential psalms, supposed to be composed by him after the murder of Uriah, and the pronouncing of his pardon by Nathan, ver. 5, and rather a psalm of thanksgiving. It is called *Maschil*, a psalm of understanding. *Maschil* is translated *eruditio, intelligentia*, and notes some excellent doctrine in the psalm, not known by the light of nature. Blessed, *אַשְׁרֵי*, blessednesses. *Ex omni parte beatus*. Three words there are to discover the nature of sin, and three words to discover the nature of pardon.

פֶּשַׁע, Transgression. Prevarication. Some understand by it sins of omission and commission.

הַטָּמֵה, Sin. Some understand those inward inclinations, lusts, and motions, whereby the soul swerves from the law of God, and which are the immediate causes of external sins.

עֵץ, Iniquity. Notes original sin, the root of all. Three words that note pardon.

נָשָׂא, Levatus, forgiven, eased, *נָשָׂא*, signifies to take away, to bear, to carry away. Two words in Scripture are chiefly used to denote remission, *כָּפַר*, to expiate; *נָשָׂא*, to bear or carry away: the one signifies the manner whereby

it is done, viz., atonement; the other the effect of this expiation, carrying away: one notes the meritorious cause, the other the consequent.

כִּסָּף, *Covered*. Alluding to the covering of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. Menochius thinks it alludes to the manner of writing among the Hebrews, which he thinks to be the same with that of the Romans; as writing with a pencil upon wax spread upon tables, which when they would blot out, they made the wax plain, and drawing it over the writing, covered the former letters. And so it is equivalent with that expression of 'blotting out sin,' as in the other allusion it is with 'casting sin into the depths of the sea.'

יִחַשֵׁב, *Impute*. Not charging upon account. As sin is a defection from the law, so it is forgiven; as it is offensive to God's holiness, so it is covered; as it is a debt involving man in a debt of punishment, so it is not imputed; they all note the certainty, and extent, and perfection of pardon: the three words expressing sin here, being the same that are used by God in the declaration of his name, Exod. xxxiv. 7. Here are to be considered,

I. The nature of pardon.

II. The author of it, God.

III. The extent of it, transgression, sin, iniquity.

IV. The manner of it, implied, by faith in Christ.

The apostle quoting this place, Rom. iv. 7, to prove justification by faith; as sin is not imputed, so something is imputed instead of it. Covering implies something wherewith a thing is covered, as well as the act whereby it is covered.

V. The effect of it, blessedness.

I shall not divide them into distinct propositions, but take the words in order as they lie.

I. The nature of pardon.

1. Consider the words, and what notes they will afford to us.

(1.) Covering, as it alludes to the manner of writing, and so is the same with blotting out: Isa. xliii. 25, 'I, even I, am he that blots out thy transgression;' whereby is implied, that sin is a debt, and pardon is the remitting of it. It notes,

[1.] The nullity of the debt. A crossed book will not stand good in law, because the crossing of the book implies the satisfaction of the debt. A debt may be read in our manner of writing in a crossed book, but it cannot be pleaded. God may after pardon read our sins in the book of his omniscience, but not charge them upon us at the bar of his justice.

[2.] God's willingness to pardon. Blots, not razeth. He engraves them not upon marble, he writes them not with a pen of iron, or point of a diamond; writing upon wax is easily made plain.

[3.] The extent of it. Blotting serves for a great debt as well as a small; a thousand pound may as well, and as soon, be dashed out by a blot as a thousand pence.

[4.] The quickness of it upon repentance. It takes more time to write a debt in a book, than to cross it out; one blow would obliterate a great deal of writing upon wax. Sins that have been contracting many years, when God pardons, he blots out in a moment.

(2.) Covering, as it alludes to the drowning the Egyptians, is expressed by casting into the depths of the sea: Micah vii. 19, 'Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.'

This notes also,

[1.] God's willingness to pardon. Casts them, not lays them gently aside, but flings them away with violence, as things that he cannot endure the sight of, and is resolved never to take notice of them more.

* [2.] God's reality in pardon. He will cast their sins as far as the arm of his omnipotency can reach; if there be any place further than the depths of the sea, thither they shall be thrown out of the sight of his justice.

[3.] The extent. *All* their sins. The sea covered Egyptian princes as well as the people. The mighty lord, as well as the common soldier, sank like lead in those mighty waters.

[4.] The duration of it. The sea vomits up nothing that it takes into its lower bowels; things cast into the depths of the ocean never appear more. Rivers may be turned and drained, but who can lave out the ocean?

2. Not imputing. Not putting upon account, not charging the debt in a legal process. To this is equivalent the expression of not remembering: Isa. xliii. 25, 'I will not remember their sins.' An act of oblivion is passed upon sin. This notes,

(1.) That God will not exact the debt of thee. God doth not absolutely forget sin, for what he knows never slips out of his knowledge. So that his not remembering is rather an act of his will than a defect in his understanding. As when an act of oblivion is passed, the fact committed is not physically forgotten, but legally, because the fear of punishment is removed. God puts them out of the memory of his wrath, though not out of the memory of his knowledge. He doth remember them paternally to chastise thee for them, though not judicially to condemn thee.

(2.) Not upbraid thee. Not with a scornful upbraiding mention them to cast thee off, but with a merciful renewing the remembrance of them upon thy conscience, to excite thy repentance, and keep thee within the due bounds of humility and reverence.

More particularly the nature of pardon may be explained in these propositions. We must not think that these expressions, as they denote pardon, do intimate in this act the taking away of the being of sin, nature of sin, or demerit of sin.

1. The being and inherency of sin is not taken away. Though sin be not imputed to us, yet it is inherent in us. The being remains, though the power be dethroned. By pardon God takes away sin, not as it is a pollution of the soul, but as it is an inducement to wrath. Though remission and sanctification are concomitants, yet they are distinct acts, and wrought in a distinct manner.

2. The nature of sin is not taken away. Justification is a relative change of the person, not of the sin; for though God will not by an act of his justice punish the person pardoned, yet by his holiness he cannot but hate the sin, because though it be pardoned, it is still contrary to God, and enmity against him. It is not a change of the native malice of the sin, but a non-imputation of it to the offender. Though the person sinning be free from any indictment, yet sin is not freed from its *malitia*, and opposition to God. For though the law doth not condemn a justified person because he is translated into another state, yet it condemns the acts of sin, though the guilt of those acts doth not redound upon the person, to bring the wrath of God upon him. Though David had the sins of murder and adultery pardoned, yet this pardon did not make David a righteous person in those acts, for it was murder and adultery still, and the change was not in his sin, but in his soul and state.

3. The demerit of sin is not taken away. As pardon doth not alter sin's nature, so neither doth it alter sin's demerit, for to merit damnation belongs to the nature of it; so that we may look upon ourselves as deserving hell, though the sin whereby we deserve it be remitted. Pardon frees us from actual condemnation, but not, as considered in our own persons, from the

desert of condemnation. As when a king pardons a thief, he doth not make the theft to become formally no theft, or to be meritoriously no capital crime. Upon those two grounds of the nature and demerit of sin, a justified person is to bewail it, and I question not but the consideration of this doth add to the triumph and hallelujahs of the glorified souls, whose chief work being to praise God for redemption, they cannot but think of the nature and demerit of that from which they were redeemed, Rev. v. 13.

4. The guilt of sin, or obligation to punishment, is taken away by pardon. Sin committed doth presently, by virtue of the law transgressed, bind over the sinner to death, but pardon makes void this obligation, so that God no longer accounts us persons obnoxious to him. *Peccatum remitti non aliud est quam non imputari ad penam.** It is a revoking the sentence of the law against the sinner, and God renouncing, upon the account of the satisfaction made by Christ to his justice, any right to punish a believer, doth actually discharge him, upon his believing, from that sentence of the law under which he lay in the state of unbelief; and also as he parts with this right to punish, so he confers a right upon a believer humbly to challenge it, upon the account of the satisfaction wrought by his surety. God hath not only in his own mind and resolution parted with this right of punishing, but also given an express declaration of his will: 2 Cor. v. 19, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,' *i. e.* openly renouncing upon Christ's account the right to punish, whence follows the non-imputation of sin, 'not imputing their trespasses unto them.' The justice of God will not suffer that that sin which is pardoned should be punished, for can that be justice in a prince, to pardon a thief, and yet to bring him to the gallows for that fact? Though the malefactor doth justly deserve it, yet after a pardon and the word passed, it is not justly inflicted. God indeed doth punish for that sin which is pardoned. Though Nathan, by God's commission, had declared David's sin pardoned, yet the sword was to stick in the bowels of his family: 2 Sam. xii. 10, 15, 'The sword shall never depart from thy house.' 'The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.' But,

(1.) It is not a punishment in order to satisfaction, because Christ's satisfaction had no flaw in it, and stood in need of nothing to eke it out; but it is for the vindication of the honour of God's holiness, that he might not be thought an approver of sin; and this was the reason of David's punishment in the death of his child by Bathsheba: 2 Sam. xii. 14, 'Because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.'

(2.) It is not so much penal as medicinal. A judge commands a hand to be cut off, that is for punishment; a physician and a father order the same, but for the patient's cure, and the preservation of the body. And though God after pardon acts not towards his people in the nature of a judge, yet he never lays aside the authority and affection of a father. We are delivered from a judge's wrath, but not from a father's anger. In that remarkable dumbness inflicted upon Zacharias for his unbelief, Luke i. 18, 20, there was a confirmation of his faith, as well as the chastisement of his incredulity. The angel, upon his unbelieving desire of a sign, gives him a testimony of the truth of his errand, but such an one that should make him feel in some measure the smart of his unbelief.

(3.) If it be penal, it is not the eternal punishment due to sin. It is but temporary, and not embittered by wrath, which is the gall of punishment.

This taking off the obligation to punishment is the true nature of pardon:

* Durand. lib. iv. dict. i. q. 7. For sin to be pardoned is nothing else but not to be imputed in order to punishment.

which will be evident from 2 Sam. xix. 19, 'Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me.' Shimei desires David not to impute iniquity, and not to remember it. It was not in David's power absolutely to forget it, and Shimei's confessing the fact with those circumstances in ver. 20, was enough to recall it to David's memory, if he had forgot it; but he desires David not to bring him to satisfy the penalty of the law for reviling his sovereign.

II. The author of pardon, God. For pardon is the sovereign prerogative of God, whereby he doth acquit a believing sinner from all obligation to satisfactory punishment, upon the account of the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ apprehended by faith.

1. It is God's act. Remission is the creditor's, not the debtor's, act; though the debtor be obliged in justice to pay the debt, yet there is no obligation upon the creditor to demand the debt, because it is at his liberty to renounce or maintain his right to it; and God hath as much power as man to relax his right, provided it be with a salvo to his own honour, and the holiness of his nature, which he cannot deny for the sinner's safety, as the apostle tells us 'God cannot deny himself.' Yet properly, say some, though sin be a debt, God is not to be considered in pardon as a creditor, because sin is not a pecuniary debt, but a criminal, and so God is to be considered as a governor, lawgiver, guardian, and executor of his laws, and so may dispense with the severities of them. If an inferior person tear an indictment, it may be brought again into court, but if the chief magistrate order the casting it out, who can plead it? It is God's act; and if God justifies, who can condemn? Rom. viii. 33, 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies, who shall condemn?' That God absolves thee that hath power to condemn thee; that God who enacted the law whereby thou art sentenced, proclaims the gospel whereby thou art reconciled. It is an offended God who is a forgiving God: that God whose name thou hast profaned, whose patience thou hast abused, whose laws thou hast violated, whose mercy thou hast slighted, whose justice thou hast dared, and whose glory thou hast stained.

2. It is not only his act, but his prerogative, and he only can do it. God is the party wronged. *Nemo potest remittere de jure alieno.* This prerogative he glories in as peculiar to himself; the thoughts of this honour are so sweet to him, that he repeats it twice, as a title he will not share with another: Isa. xliii. 25, 'I, even I, am he that blots out thy transgressions.' Pardon-ing offenders is one of a prince's royalties. And this is reckoned among his regalia, as a choice flower and jewel in his crown: Exod. xxxiv. 7, 'Forgiving iniquity, transgressions, and sins.' A prince punisheth by his ministers, but pardons by himself. And, indeed, God is never so glorious as in acts of mercy; justice makes him terrible, but mercy renders him amiable. When Moses desired to see God in his royalty, and best perfections, he displays himself in his goodness: Exod. xxxiii. 18, 'Shew me thy glory.' Ver. 19, 'I will make all my goodness pass before thee; I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.' And though the apostles had a power of remission and binding, that was only ministerial and declarative, like that prophetic power which Jeremiah had to root up nations and destroy, Jer. i. 10, *i. e.* to declare God's will in such and such judgments, as he should send him to pronounce. Men cannot pardon an infinite wrong done to an infinite justice. Forgiveness belongs to God, as,

- (1.) Proprietor. He hath a greater right to us than we have to ourselves.
- (2.) Sovereign. He is Lord over us, as we are his creatures.
- (3.) Governor of us, as we are parts of the world.
- (4.) It is an act of his mercy, not our merit. Though there be a condi-

tional connection between pardon, and repentance, and faith, yet there is no meritorious connection ariseth from the nature of those graces, but remission flows from the gracious indulgence of the promise.

It is the very tenderness of mercy, the meltings of the inward bowels : Luke i. 78, 'To give knowledge of salvation, and remission of their sins, through the tender mercies of our God.' *σπλαγχνὰ ἐλέους*, an inexhaustible mercy : Ps. lxxxvi. 5, 'Thou, Lord, art ready to forgive, and art plenteous in mercy.' A 'multitude of tender mercies,' Ps. li. 1. What arithmetic can count all the bubblings up of mercy in the breast of God, and all the glances and all the doles of his pardoning grace towards his creatures ? And he keeps this mercy by him, as in a treasury, to this purpose : Exod. xxxiv. 7, 'Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity,' &c. ; and is still as full as ever, as the sun, which hath influenced so many animals and vegetables, and expelled so much darkness and cold, is still as a strong man able to run the same race, and perform by its light and heat the same operations. When mercy shews itself in state with all its train, it is but to usher in pardoning grace, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7 ; not a letter, not an attribute that makes up the composition of that name, but is a friend and votary of mercy. And that latter clause a learned man explains of God's clemency ; 'He will by no means clear the guilty ; visiting the iniquity of the fathers,' &c., which he renders thus : He will not utterly cut off and destroy ; but, when he doth visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, it shall be but to the third or fourth generation, not for ever. This name of God is urged by Moses : Num. xiv. 17, 'Now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great ; the Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty ; visiting the iniquity,' &c. 'Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy.' Where Moses repeats this clause more particularly than he doth the other parts of his name ; which surely he would not have done, and pleaded it as a motive to God to pardon Israel, if he had not understood it of God's clemency ; for otherwise he had dwelt more upon the argument of justice than upon that of mercy, which had not been proper to edge his present petition with. Nay, it is such pure mercy, the genuine birth of mercy, that it partakes of its very name, as children bear the name of their father : Heb. viii. 12, 'I will be merciful to their iniquity,' which in the prophet, Jer. xxxi. 34, whence the apostle quotes it, is, 'I will forgive their iniquity.'

That it is so, will appear ; because

(1.) No attribute could be the first motive of pardon but this. His justice would loudly cry for vengeance, and flame out against ungrateful sinners. His holiness would make him abhor not only the embraces but the very sight of such filthy creatures as we are. His power would attend to receive and execute the commands of his justice and holiness, did not compassion step in to qualify.

(2.) Unconstrained mercy. Men pardon many times, because they are too weak to punish ; but God wants not power to inflict judgments, neither doth man want weakness to sink under it : Rom. v. 6, 'When we were without strength, Christ died for us.' God wanted not sufficient reason to justify a severe proceeding, both in the quality of sin, every sin being a contrariety to the law, sovereignty, work, glory, yea, the very being of God. Now for God to pardon that which would pull him out of his throne, hath blemished the creation, robs him of his honour, must be an act of the richest and purest mercy ; and in the quantity, multitudes of sins of this cursed quality, as numerous as motes in the sunbeams. It is impossible for the

nimblest angel to write down the extravagances of men committed in the space of twenty-four hours, if he could know all the operations of their souls as well as their outward actions; all those God doth see, *simul et semel*, and yet is ready to pardon in the midst of numberless provocations.

(3.) Resolved and designed mercy. It is not through inadvertency and insensibleness of the aggravating circumstances of them; God must needs know the nature and circumstances of all those sins he himself laid upon Christ; yea, God hath an actuated knowledge of all when he is about to pardon, Isa. xliii. 22. ³ God reckons up their sins of omissions; they had been weary of him, and had not brought to him their small cattle; had preferred their lambs and kids before his service; wearied him with their iniquities; endeavoured to tire him out of the government of the world. What could one have expected after this black scroll, but fire-balls of wrath? Yet he blots them out, ver. 25, though all those sins were fresh in his memory. Nay, the name we have profaned becomes our solicitor: Ezek. xxxvi. 22, 'For my holy name's sake which you have profaned.'

(4.) Delightful and pleasant mercy. He delights in pardoning mercy, as a father delights in his children. He is therefore called the Father of mercy: Micah vii. 18, 'He pardons iniquity, and retains not his anger for ever, because he delights in mercy.' Never did we take so much pleasure in sinning as God doth in forgiving; never did any penitent take so much pleasure in receiving, as God doth in giving, a pardon. He so much delights in it that he counts it his wealth: riches of grace, riches of mercy, glorious riches of mercy. No attribute else is called his riches. He sighs when he must draw his sword: Hosea xi. 8, 'How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim!' but when he blots out iniquity, then it is, 'I, even I, am he that blots out your transgressions for my name's sake.' His delight in this is equal to the delight he hath in his name. This is pure mercy, to change the tribunal of justice into a throne of grace, to bestow pardons where he might inflict punishments, and to put on the deportment of a father instead of that of a judge.

4. The act of his justice. Those attributes which seem contrary are joined together to produce forgiveness; yet God is not to be considered in pardon only as *judex*, but *paternus judex*. There is a composition of judge and father in this act; free grace on God's part, but justice upon the account of Christ. That God will accept of a satisfaction, is mercy; that he will not forgive without a satisfaction, is justice. Mercy forgives it in us, though justice did punish it in Christ. Christ by his death paid the debt, and God, by the resurrection of Christ, discharged the debt; and therefore the justice of God is engaged to bestow pardon upon a believer. God set forth Christ as 'a propitiation, that he might be just, and therefore a justifier of him that believes,' Rom. iii. 26. Either the debt is paid or not; if not, then Christ's death is in vain. If it be, then God's justice is so equitable as not to demand a second payment. Therefore another apostle joins *faithful* and *righteous*. It might have been faithful and merciful, faithful and loving, but faithful and righteous, or just, takes in the attribute which is most terrible to man: 1 John i. 9, 'He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,' *δίκαιος*. Isaiah joins both together, 'a just God and a Saviour,' Isa. xlv. 21, so that here is unspeakable comfort. That which engaged God formerly to punish man, engageth him now to pardon a believer; that which moved him to punish Christ, doth excite him to forgive thee.

5. The act of his power. It is a sign of a noble and generous mind to pass over offences and injuries. Sick and indigent persons are the most peevish and impatient, and least able to concoct an injury. And when we kindle into a flame upon the least sparks of a wrong, the apostle tells us we

are overcome of evil : Rom. xii. 21, 'Be not overcome of evil.' We become captives to our angry passions. Speedy revenge in us being an act of weakness, the contrary must be an act of power over ourselves. God's not executing the fierceness of his anger, is laid upon his being a God and not man : Hosea xi. 9. God's infinite power gives a rise to pardon : Micah vii. 18, 'Who is a God like to thee, that pardons iniquity ?' Junius and Tremellius render it, 'Who is a *strong* God ?' and the Hebrew שׁוֹמֵר will bear it. 'Let the power of my Lord be great,' saith Moses, Num. xiv. 17. The word *jigdal* is written with a great *jod*, to shew, say the Jews, that it is more than an ordinary power to command one's self when injured. Therefore, when God proclaims his pardoning name, he ushers it in with names of power : 'The Lord, the Lord God,' Exod. xxxiv. 6. It is a greater work to forgive than to prevent the commission of sin, as it is a greater work to raise a dead man than to cure a sick man : one is a work of art, the other belongs only to omnipotency.

III. The manner of it. How it is carried on.

1. On God's part by Christ.

(1.) By his death. He is the scape-goat upon whom our sins are laid, Isa. liii. 6. Our sins are made Christ's, and Christ's righteousness is made ours. He is said to be 'made sin for us,' and we are said to be 'made the righteousness of God in him,' 2 Cor. v. 21 ; a blessed exchange for us. He bore that wrath, endured those torments, suffered those strokes of justice which were due to us. The pardon of sin doth cost us confessions and tears, but it cost Christ blood and unknown pains (as the Greek liturgy, Δι' ἀγνῶστων κρίπτων, have mercy on us).

[1.] Laid upon him by God. God appropriates this work to himself : Zech. iii. 9, 'I will engrave the engraving thereof,' speaking of the stone, which is the same with his servant the branch. As a stone is cut with a chisel, which makes deep furrows in it, so did God deal with Christ, and that in order to the taking away of sin : 'I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day,' viz. the day of Christ's suffering. By that offering of himself, he shall perfectly satisfy me. Therefore it is called 'the will of God,' in order to the taking away sin, Heb. x. 9, 10, compared with ver. 11, 12, 'I come to do thy will, by which will we are sanctified,' which will was to take away sin ; for, ver. 11, that was the end of his sacrifice, the legal sacrifices not being able to do it. God did not only consent to it, or give a bare grant, but it was a propense and affectionate motion of his heart : Isa. liii. 10, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him ;' hence did the angels sing at his birth, 'Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards men.' The peace he was to procure was the fruit of God's will towards us.

[2.] Voluntarily undertaken by Christ : Heb. x. 5, 7, 'Lo I come, I delight to do thy will, O my God.' Willingness in the entrance of the work, willingness to take a body, and willingness to lay down that body. He had as it were a fever of affection, a combustion in his bowels till it was finished. In his greatest agonies he did not repent of his undertaking, or desire to give it over. He cried indeed to his Father that this cup might pass from him, but he presently submits : If there be no other way to save sinners, I will pass on through death and hell to do it. When he was afflicted and oppressed, he murmured not at it : Isa. liii. 7, 'He opened not his mouth, he opened not his mouth.' It is twice repeated, to shew his willingness. And God was highly pleased with him for this very reason, because he did 'pour out his soul,' and 'bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors ;' all which expressions denote his earnestness and readiness in it.

(2.) By his resurrection. His death is the payment, his resurrection the

discharge : Rom. iv. 25, 'Who was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification.' Not that we are formally justified by the resurrection of Christ, but that thereby God declared that whosoever believes in him should be justified upon that believing ; for if Christ had not risen, there had been no certainty of the payment of the debt. In his death he pays the sum, as he is our surety ; and in his resurrection he hath his *quietus est* out of God's exchequer. God will not have this payment from Christ, which he hath acknowledged himself publicly to be satisfied with, and from believers too ; for upon his resurrection he sent him to bless men : Acts iii. 26, 'God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you.' How ? 'In turning away every one of you from his iniquity,' it being a great encouragement to turn men from sin, when God hath thus declared them pardonable by the resurrection of his Son.

2. On our parts by faith. Faith is as necessary in an instrumental way, as Christ in a meritorious way : Acts xxvi. 18, 'That they may receive forgiveness of sins by faith that is in me.' Christ purchaseth a pardon, but faith only puts us in possession of a pardon ; yet it cannot from its own worth challenge forgiveness at the hands of God, but upon the account of Christ, who hath merited forgiveness. Though the king grants a pardon to a condemned malefactor, yet he may be executed unless he pleads it the next assizes, though he hath it lying by him ; so unless we sue it out, and accept of it by faith, all Christ's purchase will not advantage us. Faith looks not barely upon the sufferings of Christ, but upon his end and design in it. It looks not upon his passion as a story, but as a testament ; and you seldom find the death of Christ mentioned in the New Testament without expressing the end of it. This forgiveness by Christ's death as the meritorious cause, shews,

(1.) God's willingness to pardon. If God did delight in the death of Christ, it was not surely simply in his death ; for could a father delight to tear out the bowels of his son ? The afflictions of his people go to his heart ; much more would the sufferings of his darling. God had more delight in forgiveness than grief at his Son's sufferings ; for he never repented it, though our Saviour besought him with tears ; and that God who was never deaf to any that called upon him, nor ever will be, would not hear his only Son in the request to take the cup from him, or abate anything of the weight of his sufferings, because it was necessary for the pardon of sin, *necessitate decreti*, if not *naturæ*. God repented of making the world, but never of forgiving sin ; so that the pardon of sin is more pleasing to him than the sufferings of his Son were grievous ; otherwise whatsoever the Father would have done by instruments, yet surely he himself would not have been the executioner of him. But in this affair there were not only instruments, Judas to betray him, the Jews to accuse him, the disciples to forsake him, Pilate to condemn him, the soldiers to mock and crucify him, and thieves to revile him, but God himself : Isa. liii. 10, 'Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief : thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.' His own Father that loved him (as Abraham in the type) puts as it were the knife to the throat of his only Son, which surely God would not have done had not pardon of sin been infinitely pleasing to him. And how great a pleasure must that be, that swallowed up all grief at his Son's sufferings ! Yea, he seemed to love our salvation more than he loved the life of his Son, since the end is always more amiable than the means, and the means only lovely as they respect the end.

(2.) The certainty of forgiveness. God must deny Christ's payment before he can deny thy pardon. God will not deny what his Son hath earned so dearly, and what he earned was for us and not for himself. Did God

pardon many before Christ died, and will he not pardon believing souls since Christ died? Some were certainly saved before the coming of Christ: upon what account? Not for their own righteousness; that is but a rag, and could not merit infinite grace. Not by the law; that thundered nothing but death, and condemned millions, but never breathed a pardon to one person. Or was it by their vehement supplications? Those could not make an infinite righteousness mutable; justice must be preferred before the cries of malefactors; and if those could have done it, God would not have been at the expense of his Son's blood. Therefore, it must be upon this account, Rom. iii. 25, 'for the remission of sins that are past.' Did God pardon upon trust? and will he not much more upon payment? Did he forgive when there was only a promise of payment, and some thousands of years to run out before it was to be made? and will he not much more forgive, since he hath all the debt paid into his hands? Would God remit sin when Christ had nothing under his hand to shew for it? and now that he hath a public testimony and acquittance, will he not much more do it? Seeing his purging our sins, or expiating them by his death, was the ground of his exaltation to the honour of sitting at the right hand of God in our natures: Heb. i. 3, 'When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;' it is a certain evidence of the grant of pardon upon the account of this sacrifice to those that seek it in God's methods, since God hath shewn himself so pleased with it. For it is clear, that because Christ 'loved righteousness and hated iniquity,' *i. e.* kept up the honour of God's justice and holiness by the offering himself to death, that God hath given him a portion above all his fellows.

(8.) The extent of it. Both to original and actual sin: John i. 29, 'Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world;' sin of the world, the sin of human nature, that first sin of Adam. Of this mind is Austin, and others, that original sin is not imputed to any to condemnation since the death of Christ. But howsoever this be, it is certain it is taken away from believers as to its imputation. Christ was 'made sin for us,' 2 Cor. v. 21, to bear all sin. It had been an imperfect payment to have paid the interest, and let the principal remain; or to have paid the principal, and let the interest remain. 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,' Rom. viii. 1, and therefore no damning matter or guilt left in arrear. It had been folly else for the apostle to have published a defying challenge to the whole creation to have brought an indictment against a justified person (Rom. viii. 33, 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?'), if the least crime remained unremitted for the justice of God, the severity of the law, the acuteness of conscience, or the malice of the devil to draw up into a charge. Since the end of his coming was 'to destroy the works of the devil,' whereby he had acquired a power over man, he leaves not therefore any one sin of a believer unsatisfied for, which may continue, and establish the devil's right over him. If the redemption only of the Jews, with the exclusion of the Gentiles, in the first compact seemed to displease him, to shed his blood for small sins only would have been as little to his content. It had been too low a work for so great a Saviour to have undergone those unknown sufferings for debts of a smaller value, and to shed that inestimable blood for the payment of farthings, and leave talents unsatisfied. Certainly, God sent not his Son, but with an intention his blood should be improved to the highest uses for those that perform the covenant conditions, and that Father who would have us honour his Son as we honour himself, will surely honour his Son's satisfaction in the extensive effects of it, as he would honour his own mercy, since they are both so

straitly linked together. And it is as much for the glory of Christ's satisfaction, as for the honour of his Father's mercy, to pass by the greatest transgressions.

(4.) The continuance of it. Thou art pardoned, and yet thou sinnest; but Christ hath paid and never runs more upon the score. Thou art pardoned and dost daily forfeit, and needest a daily renewal; but Christ hath purchased, and never sins away his purchase. God exacted a price suitable to the debt he foresaw men would owe him, for he knew how much the sum would amount unto. When he gave Christ, he intended him for the justification of many offences, Rom. v. 16. 'The free gift is of many offences unto justification,' speaking of the gift of God, ver. 15. And therefore since God cannot be mistaken in the greatness of the sum, because of his infinite knowledge, it had been a greater act of wisdom not to provide any remedy at all, than not to do it thoroughly. If the continuance of that imperfect remission of Adam and the patriarchs was drawn out for above three thousand years and more, and the enjoyment of happiness made good to them merely upon Christ's undertaking, surely it will be much more upon his actual performing, Rom. iii. 25. There was then a *πάρεσις*, now an *ἀφεσις*; they had a continuance of freedom from punishment by his mediatorship and sponson, much more shall believers have a continuance of pardon by his actual sacrifice, upon which the validity of all the former mediatory acts did depend, since now there is no more remembrance of sin by the continuance of legal sacrifices, his being so absolutely complete. Therefore God hath erected a standing office of advocacy for Christ, 1 John ii. 1, in heaven, for the representing of his wounds and satisfaction, and bespeaking a continuance of grace to us. He is said to be 'the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world,' John i. 29; not *ὁ ἀεὶς*, hath taken, or *ὁ ἀεὶς*, will take, but *ὁ ἀεὶς*, which notes, *actum perpetuum*, the constant effect of his death. And since, as I said before, Christ hath an higher portion than others, because he loved righteousness, in this portion he hath a joy and gladness; but his joy would certainly be sullied, if pardon should not be continued to those for whom he purchased it.

(5.) The worth of it. That must be of incomparable value that was purchased at so great a price as the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. (So it is called by reason of the union of the divine nature with the human, constituting one person.) It is blood, which all the gold and silver, and the stones and dust of the earth turned into pearls, could not equal. God understood the worth of it, who in justice would require no more of his Son at least than the thing was worth, not a drop of blood more than the value of it. Neither surely would Christ, who could not be mistaken in the just price, have parted with more than was necessary for the purchase of it. It would have beggared the whole creation to have paid a price for it. The prayers and services of a gracious soul, though God delights in them, could not be a sufficient recompence. And the bare mercy of God, without the concurrence of his provoked justice, could not grant it, though his bowels naturally are troubled at the afflictions of his creatures.

IV. Extensiveness, fulness, or perfectness of pardon. 1. In the act; forgiving, covering, not imputing. 2. In the object; iniquities, transgressions, and sins.

1. Perfect in respect of state. God retains no hatred against a pardoned person. He never imputes sin formally, because he no more remembers it, though virtually he may, to aggravate the offence a believer hath fallen into after his justification. So Job possessed the sins of his youth. And Christ tacitly put Peter in remembrance of his denial of him. The grant is com-

plete here, though all the fruits of remission are not enjoyed till the day of judgment, and therefore in Scripture sin is said then to be forgiven. It is a question whether believers' sins will be mentioned at the day of judgment. Some think they will, because all men are to give an account. Methinks there is some evidence to the contrary. Our Saviour never mentioned the unworthy carriage of his disciples to him in his sufferings, and after his resurrection seems to have removed from him all remembrance of it. It is not to be expected, that a loving husband will lay open the faults of his tender spouse upon the day of the public solemnisation of the nuptials. But if it be otherwise, it is not to upbraid them, but to enhance their admirations of his grace. He will discover their graces as well as their sin, and unstop the bottles of their tears, as well as open the book of their transgressions. Our Saviour, upon Mary's anointing him, applauds her affection, but mentions not her former iniquity.

It must needs be perfect.

(1.) All God's actions are suitable to his nature. What God doth, he doth as a God. And is he perfect in his other works, and not in his mercy, which is the choicest flower in his crown? God sees blacker circumstances in our sins, than an enraged conscience or a malicious devil can represent; but God pardons not according to our apprehensions, which though great in a tempestuous conscience, yet are not so high as God's knowledge of it.

(2.) The cause of pardon is perfect. Both the mercy of God and the merits of Christ are immutably perfect. It is for his own glory, his own mercies' sake, that he pardons. He will not dim the lustre of his own crown, by leaving the effect of his glory imperfect, or satisfying the importunities of his mercy by halves. The saints in heaven have not a more perfect righteousness, whereby they continue their standing, than those on earth have; for, though inherent righteousness here is stained, yet imputed, upon which pardon is founded, is altogether spotless. A righteousness that, being infinite in respect of the person, hath a sufficiency for devils, had it a congruity; but it hath both for us, because manifested in our natures.

2. In respect of the objects. Sinful nature, sinful habits, sinful dispositions, pardoned at once, though never so heinous.

(1.) For quality. There was no limitation as to the deepness of the wounds caused by the fiery serpents in the wilderness; the precept of looking upon them, extended to the cure of all, let the sting reach never so deep, the wound be never so wide or sharp, and his sight be never so weak, if he could but cast his eye on the brazen one. The commission Christ gave to his disciples, was to preach the gospel to every creature, Mark xvi. 15, every human creature; the worst as well as the best. Though you meet with monstrous sinners in the likeness of beasts, and devils, except none from suing out a pardon in the court of mercy. The almightiness of his mercy doth as much transcend our highest iniquities, as it doth our shallowest apprehensions. Our sins, as well as our substance, are but as the dust of the balance, as easily to be blown away by his grace, as the other puffed into nothing by his power. No sin is excepted in the gospel, but that against the Holy Ghost, because it doth not stand with the honour of God to pardon them who wilfully scorn the means, and account the Redeemer no better than an impostor. No man can expect, in reason, he should be saved by mercy, who, by a wilful malice against the Son of God, tramples upon the free offers of grace, and provokes mercy itself to put on the deportment of justice, and call in revenging wrath to its assistance, for the vindication of its despised honour. The infinite grace of God dissolves the greatest mists,

as well as the smallest exhalations, and melts the thick clouds of sin, as well as the little icicles.

(2.) The quantity. Hath God ever put a restraint upon his grace and promise, that we shall find mercy if we sin but to such a number, and no more? It is not agreeable to the greatness and majesty of God's mercy, to remit one part of the debt, and to exact the other. It consists not with the motive of pardon, which is his own love, to be both a friend and an enemy at the same time, in pardoning some, and charging others; and thus his grace would rather be a mockery and derision of men. Neither doth it consist with the end of pardon, which is salvation; for to give an half pardon is to give no salvation, since, if the least guilt remains unremitted, it gives justice an unanswerable plea against us. What profit would it be to have some forgiven, and be damned for the remainder? Had any one sin for which Christ was to have made a compensation remained unsatisfied, the Redeemer could not have risen. So if the smallest sin remains unblotted, it will hinder our rising from the power of eternal death, and make the pardon of all the rest as a nullity in law. But it is the glory of God to pass by all: Prov. xix. 31, 'It is his glory to pass over a transgression.' It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence. It is a discovery of an inward principle or property, which is an honour for a man to be known the master of. If it be his glory to pass by a single and small injury, then to pass by the more heinous and numerous offences, is a more transcendent honour, because it evidenceth this property to be in him in a more triumphant strength and power. So that it is a clearer evidence of the illustrious vigour of mercy in God, to pass by mountains and heaped up transgressions, than to forgive only some few iniquities of a lesser guilt: Jer. xxxiii. 8, 'I will cleanse them from all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned against me, and whereby they have transgressed against me.' Therefore, when God tells the Jews that he would give them a general discharge in the fullest terms imaginable, to remove all jealousy from men, either because of the number, or the aggravations of their sins, he knew not how to leave expressing the delight he had in it, and the honour which accrued to him by it: 'It shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and honour before all the nations of the earth.' He would get himself an honourable name by the large riches of his clemency. Mercy is as infinite as any other attribute, as infinite as God himself. And as his power can create incomprehensible multitudes of worlds, and his justice kindle unconceivable hells, so can his mercy remit innumerable sins.

3. Perfect in respect of duration. Because the handwriting of ordinances is taken away: Col. ii. 14, 15, 'Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;' which was the ceremonial law, wherein they did, by their continual presenting sacrifices, and imposition of hands upon them, sign a bill or bond against themselves, whereby a conscience of sin was retained, Heb. x. 2, 3, and a remembrance of sin renewed. They could not settle the conscience in any firm place, Heb. ix. 9; they were compelled to do that every day, whereby they did confess that sin did remain, and want an expiation. Hence is the law called 'a ministration of condemnation,' 2 Cor. iii. 9, because it puts them in mind of condemnation, and compelled the people to do that which testified that the curse was yet to be abolished by virtue of a better sacrifice. This handwriting, which was so contrary to us, was taken away, nailed to his cross, torn in pieces, wholly cancelled, no more to be put in suit. Whence, in opposition to this continual remembrance of sin under the legal administration, we read, under the New Testament, of

God's remembering sin no more, Heb. x. 3, 17. Christ hath so compounded the business with divine justice, that we have the sins remitted, never returning upon us, and the renewal also of remissions upon daily sins, if we truly repent. For though there be a blacker tincture in sins after conversion, as being more deeply stained with ingratitude, yet the covenant of God stands firm, and he will not take away his kindness, Isa. liv. 9, 10. And there is a greater affection in God to his children than to his enemies; for these he loves before their conversion with a love of benevolence, but those with a love of complacency. Will not God be as ready to continue his grace to those that are penitent, as to offer it to offending rebels? Will he refuse it to his friends, when he entreats his enemies? Not that any should think that, because of this duration, they have liberty to sin, and, upon some trivial repentance, are restored to God's favour. No; where Christ is made righteousness, he is made sanctification. His spirit and merit go together. A new nature, and a new state, are concomitants; and he that sins upon presumption of the grand sacrifice, never had any share in it.

V. The effect of pardon. That is blessedness.

1. The greatest evil is taken away, sin, and the dreadful consequents of it. Other evils are temporal, but those know no period in a doleful eternity. There is more evil in sin, than good in all the creatures. Sin stripped the fallen angels of their excellency, and dispossessed them of the seat of blessedness. It fights against God, it disparages all his attributes, it deforms and destroys the creature, Rom. vii. 13. Other evils may have some mixture of good to make them tolerable, but sin being exceedingly sinful, without the mixture of any good, engenders nothing but destruction and endless damnation. Into what miseries, afflictions, sorrows, hath that one sin of Adam hurled all his posterity! what screechings, wounds, pangs, horrors, doth it make in troubled consciences! How did it deface the beauty of the Son of God, that created and upheld the world, with sorrow in his agonies, and the stroke of death on the cross! How many thousands, millions of poor creatures have been damned for sin, and are never like to cease roaring under an inevitable justice! Ask the damned, and their groans, yellings, howlings, will read thee a dreadful lecture of sin's sinfulness, and the punishment of it. And is it not then an inestimable blessedness to be delivered from that which hath wrought such deplorable executions in the world?

2. The greatest blessings are conferred. Pardon is God's family-blessing, and the peculiar mercy of his choicest darlings. He hands out other things to wicked men, but he deals out this only to his children.

(1.) The favour of God. Sin makes thee Satan's drudge, but pardon makes thee God's favourite. We may be sick to death, with Lazarus, and be God's friends; sold to slavery, with Joseph, and yet be dear to him; thrown into a lion's den, with Daniel, and be greatly beloved; poor, with Lazarus, who had only dogs for surgeons to dress his sores, and yet have a title to Abraham's bosom. But we can never be beloved if we are unpardoned; no share in his friendship, his love, his inheritance, without a pardon. All created evils cannot make us loathsome in a justified state, nor all created goods make us lovely under guilt. Sin is the only object of God's hatred; while this remains, his holiness cannot but hate us; when this is removed, his righteousness cannot but love us. Remission and favour are inseparable, and can never be disjoined. It is by this he makes us as a diadem upon his head, a bracelet on his arm; it is by this he writes us upon the palms of his hands, makes us his peculiar treasure, even as the apple of his eye, which nature hath so carefully fenced.

(2.) Access to God. A prince may discard a favourite for some guilt, and

though he may restore him to his liberty in the commonwealth, yet he may not admit him to the favour of his wonted privacies. But a pardoned man hath an access to God, to a standing and perpetually settled grace: Rom. v. 1, 2, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access.' Guilt frights us, and makes us loathe the very sight of God; pardon encourageth us to come near to him. Guilt respects him as a judge; pardon, as a friend. Who can confidently or hopefully call upon an angry and condemning God? But who cannot but hopefully call upon a forgiving God? Sin is the partition wall between God and us, and pardon is the demolishing of it. Forgiveness is never bestowed, but the sceptre is held out to invite us to come into God's presence. And what can be more desirable than to have not only the favour of, but a free access at any time to, the Lord of heaven and earth, and at length an everlasting being with him?

(3.) Peace of conscience. There must needs be fair weather when heaven smiles upon us. All other things breed disquietness. Sin was a thorn in David's crown; his throne and sceptre were but miserable comforters, while his guilt overwhelmed him. The glory of the world is no sovereign plaster for a wounded spirit. Other enjoyments may please the sense, but this only can gratify the soul. God's thunder made Moses tremble, Heb. xii. 21; but the probability of a gracious pardon would make a damned soul smile in the midst of tormenting flames. How often hath the sense of it raised the hearts of martyrs, and made the sufferers sing, while the spectators wept! though this, I must confess, is not always an inseparable concomitant. There is much difference between a pardon and the comfort of it; that may pass the seal of the king without the knowledge of the malefactor. Pardon, indeed, always gives the *jus ad rem*, a right to peace of conscience, but not always *jus in re*, the possession of it. There may be an actual separation between pardon and actual peace, but not between pardon and the ground of peace.

(4.) It sweetens all mercies. Other mercies are a ring, but pardon is the diamond in it. A justified person may say, I have temporal mercies and a pardon too; I live in repute in the world, and God's favour too; riches increase, and my peace with God doth not diminish. I have health with a pardon, friends with a pardon, as Job, chap. xxix. 3, 6, 7; among all other blessings this he counts the chiefest, that God's candle shined upon his head. A prisoner for some capital crime may have all outward accommodations for lodging, diet, attendance, without a real happiness, when he expects to be called to his trial before a severe judge, from whom there is no appeal, and that will certainly both pass, and cause to be executed, a sentence of death upon him. So, though a man wallows in all outward contents, he cannot write himself blessed, while the wrath of God hangs over his head, and he knows not how soon he may be summoned before God's tribunal, and hear that terrible voice, 'Go, thou cursed.' What comfort can a man take in houses, land, health, when he considers he owes more than all his estate is worth? So, what comfort can a man have in anything in this world, when he may hourly expect an arrest from God, and a demand of all his debts, and he hath not so much as one farthing of his own, or any interest in a sufficient surety? We may have honour and a curse, wealth and a curse, children and a curse, health and long life and a curse, learning and a curse, but we can never have pardon and a curse. Our outward things may be gifts, but not blessings, without a pardon.

(5.) It sweetens all afflictions. A frown with a pardon is better than a thousand smiles without it. Sin is the sting of crosses, and remission is a taking the sting out of them. A sight of heaven will mitigate a cross on

earth. The stones about Stephen's ears did scarce afflict him, when he saw his Saviour open heaven to entertain him. To see death staring us in the face, and an angry and offended God above, ready to charge all our guilt, is a doleful spectacle. 'Look upon my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins,' saith the psalmist, Ps. xxv. 18. Sin doth embitter, and adds weight to an affliction, but the removal of sin doth both lighten it and sweeten it.

Use 1. An unpardoned man is a miserable man. Such a state lays you open to all the miseries on earth, and all the torments in hell. The poorest beggar with a pardon is higher than the greatest prince without it. How can we enjoy a quiet hour, if our debt be not remitted, since we owe more than we are able to pay? You may die with a forfeited reputation, and yet be happy; but what happiness, if you die with unpardoned guilt?

(1.) There must either be pardon or punishment. The law doth oblige either to obedience or suffering: the commands of it must be observed, or the penalty endured. God will not relax the punishment without a valuable consideration. If it be not executed, the creature may accuse God of want of wisdom in enacting it, or defect of power in maintaining it. Therefore there must be an exact observance of the law, which no creature after the first deviation is able to do; or an undergoing the penalty of it, which no sinner is able to bear. There must therefore be a remission of this punishment for the good of the creature, and the satisfaction of the law by a surety, for the honour of God's justice. If we have not therefore an interest in the surety, the purchaser of remission, we must lie under the severity of the law in our persons.

(2.) You can call nothing an act of God's love towards you, while you remain unpardoned. What is there you do enjoy, which may not consist with his hatred as well as his love? Have we knowledge? So have devils. Have we riches? So had Nabal and Cain. Have we honour? So had Pharaoh and Herod. Have we sermons? So had Judas, the best that ever were preached. Nothing, nothing but a pardon, is properly a blessing. How can that man take pleasure in anything he hath, when all the threatenings in the book of God are so many arrows directed against him?

(3.) All the time thou livest unpardoned, thy debts mount the higher. Every new sin is an adding a figure to the former sum, and every figure after the three first adds a thousand. Every act of sin adds not only the guilt proper to that single act upon it, but draws a new universal guilt from all the rest committed before, because the persisting in any one sin is a renewed approbation of all the former acts of rebellion committed against God.

(4.) It is that God, who would have pardoned thee if thou wouldst have accepted of it, who will condemn if thou dost utterly refuse it. It is that God thou hast provoked, offended, and dishonoured. That power which would have been manifested in forgiving thee, will be glorified in condemning thee. That justice which would have signed thy absolution, if thou hadst accepted of its terms, will sign the writ of execution upon thy refusal of them. Nay, the mercy that would have saved thee, will have no compassion on thee. The law condemns thee, because thou hast transgressed it, and mercy will reject thee, because thou hast despised it. The gospel, wherein pardon was proclaimed, will acquit others, but condemn thee. God would be false to his own word, if, after thy slighting so many promises of grace and threatenings of wrath, thou shouldst be spared.

Use 2. Of comfort.

Pardon of sin may make thee hope for all other blessings. Hath God done the hardest, and will he stick at the easiest? Hath he overthrown mountains, and shall molehills stop him? It is an easier thing to waft thee to heaven, than it was at first to remit thy guilt: Rom. v. 10, 'For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life.' To this the death and resurrection of the Son of God was necessary, and there was to be composition and agreement made between mercy and justice. But since this is completed, the Redeemer saves thee by his life; since he hath died for thy remission, there is no need of his dying for thy further salvation. Seeing he hath made manifestation of his pardoning grace unto thee, he will not cease till he hath brought thee into a perfect state. For to what purpose should the creditor forgive the smaller part of the debt, and cast the creditor into prison for an unpayable sum.

(1.) If once pardoned, thou wilt be always pardoned. For the first pardon Christ paid his blood, for the continuance he doth but plead his blood, and we cannot be without a pardon till Christ be without a plea. He merited the continuance as well as the first remission. Will our Saviour be more backward to intercede for pardon, than he was to bleed and pray for it on earth? Would not our dearest Saviour let sin go unremitted, when he was to contest with the Father's wrath? and will he let it go unpardoned when he is only to solicit his Father's mercy? Thou shalt not want the daily renewals of it, since he has only to present his blood in the most holy place, seeing an ignominious and painful death did not scare him from the purchase of it upon the cross. As God's heart is more ready to give than we are to ask forgiveness, so is Christ's heart more ready to plead for the continuance of it, than we are daily to beg it; for he loves his people more than they can love him, or love themselves. Our praying is according to self-love, but Christ's intercession is according to his own infinite love, with a more intense fervency.

(2.) Thou art above the reach of all accusations. Shall the law condemn thee? No. 'Thou art 'not under the law, but under grace.' And if grace hath forgiven thee, the law cannot sentence thee. Shall conscience? No. Conscience is but the echo of the law within us: that must speak what God speaks. God's Spirit and a believer's spirit are joint witnesses: Rom. viii. 16, 'For the Spirit itself bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.' Conscience is sprinkled by the blood of Christ, which quite changeth the tenor of its commission. Will God condemn thee? No. That were to lose the glory of all his pardoning mercy hitherto conferred upon thee; that were to fling away the vast revenue grace hath all this while been gathering for him; yea, it were to deny his own covenant and promise. Shall Christ condemn thee? No. That were to discard all his offices, to undo his death, and belie his merits. Did he sweat and bleed, pray and die for thee, and will he now condemn thee? Hath he been pleading for thee in heaven all this time, and will he now at the upshot cast thee off? Shall we imagine the severity of a judge more pleasing to him than the charity of an advocate, since his primary intention in coming was to save the world, not to condemn it? No. It would not be for his honour to pay the price and to lose the purchase.

(3.) There will be a solemn justification of thee at the last day. Thou art here pardoned in law, and then thou shalt be justified by a final sentence; there is a secret grant here, but a public manifestation of it hereafter. Thy pardon was passed by the Spirit of God in thy own conscience, it will then be passed by the Son of God in thy own hearing. That Saviour that did merit it upon

his cross, will pronounce it upon his throne. The book shall be laid out of sight; there shall be no more writing in the book of God's omniscience to charge thee, or of thy conscience to affright thee. His fatherly anger shall for ever cease; and as all disposition to sin, so all paternal correction for it shall be for ever abolished, and forgiveness be fully complete in all the glorious effects of it.

(4.) Faith doth interest us in all this, though it be weak. The grant of a pardon doth not depend upon the strength of faith, though the sense of a pardon doth. A weak faith, as a palsy person, may not so well read a pardon, though it may receive it. As a strong faith gives more glory to God, so it receives more comfort from him. Christ made no difference in his prayer, John xvii., between the feeblest and stoutest believer. His lambs as well as sheep were to be fed by his apostle with gospel comforts; and even those lambs, Isa. xl. 11, he himself carries in his bosom. Strong faith doth not entitle us to it because it is strong, or a feeble faith debar us from it because it is weak; but it is for the sake of a mighty Saviour that we are pardoned. It is the same Christ that justifies thee as well as Abraham, the father of the faithful; it is the same righteousness whereby thou art justified as well as Paul and the most beloved disciple.

Use 3. Of examination.

Consider whether your sins are pardoned. Will you examine whether your estates are sure, and will you not examine whether your souls are sure?

Here I shall, 1, remove false signs whereon men rest, and think themselves pardoned.

(1.) The littleness of sin is no ground of pardon. Oh, some may say, my sins are little; some tricks of youth, some petty oaths, or the like. The Scripture saith that drunkards, fornicators, extortioners, and covetous, shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven; not great drunkards only, but those that are drunk but now and then, as well as those that are drunkards every day.

[1.] Dost thou know the malignity of the least sin? No sin can be called absolutely (though it may comparatively) little. Is it a little God who is offended by sin? Is it a little wrath which is poured down on sin? Is it a little Christ that hath died for sin? Is it a little soul that is destroyed by sin? And is it a little hell that is prepared for sin? Is not the least sin *deicidium*, as much as in a man lieth, a destroying of God? Did not Christ shed his blood for the least as well as for the greatest? Is not hell kindled by the breath of the Lord for the least as well as the greatest sins? Is that little which is God's burden, Christ's wound, the Spirit's grief, the penitent's sorrow, and the devil's hell? Every drop of poison is poison, every drop of hell is hell, every part of sin is sin, and hath the destroying and condemning nature of sin. Can angels expiate the least sin, or can a thousand worlds be a sufficient recompence for the injury that is done to God by the least sin?

[2.] The less thy sin, the less the excuse for thyself. It is the aggravation of their injustice, that they 'sold the righteous for a pair of shoes,' Amos ii. 6. Dost thou undervalue God so as to sell a righteous and eternal God so cheap, for a little sin? Is a little sin dearer to thee than the favour of the great God? Is a little sin dearer to thee than an eternal hell is grievous? To endanger thy soul for a trifle, to lose God for a bubble, is a confounding aggravation of it; as it was of Judas his sin, that he would sell his Saviour for a little silver, for so small a sum. Sin is not little in respect of the formality of it, but in respect of the matter, in respect of the temptation; and this littleness is an aggravation of sin.

[3.] Dost thou know how God hath punished the least sin? A drop of sin may bring a deluge of misery. An atom of sin is strong enough to overturn a world. It was but an apple that poisoned Adam and his whole posterity. Less sins are punished in hell than are pardoned here. God casts off Saul for less sins than he pardoned David for. How many ships have been destroyed upon small sands as well as great rocks!

(2.) Fewness of sins is no argument of pardon. Conceive, if thou canst, the amiableness and lustre of the angels, how far beyond the glory of the sun it was; yet one sin divested them of all their glory. It was but one sin kindled hell for the fallen angels; every sin must receive 'a just recompence of reward,' Heb. ii. 2. Shall one single sin entitle thee to hell, what will millions of sins then entitle thee to? One sin is too much against God. Had thy iniquities been never so few, Christ must have died to answer the pleas of his Father's justice against thee. Every sin is rebellion against God as a sovereign, undutifulness to God as a father,* contempt of God as a governor, and preferring the devil before God; the devil that would damn thee, before God that made thee and preserves thee; a preferring the devil's temptations before God's promises.

(3.) The commonness of sin is no argument of pardon. Many angels combined in the first conspiracy against God; but as they were companions in sin, so are they companions in torments. The commonness of Sodom's sin made the louder cry, and hastened the severer judgment; not one inhabitant escaped, but only righteous Lot and his family. Common sins will have common plagues. It doth rather aggravate thy sin than plead for pardon, when thou wilt rather follow men's example to offend God than conform to God's law to please him. Sin was common in the old world, for 'all flesh had corrupted their ways,' Gen. vi. 12; and all were swept away by the destroying deluge. To walk according to the course of the world, is so far from being a foundation of pardon, that it is made a character of a child of the devil. To walk according to the course of the world, is to walk according to the pattern of the devil, and to be in the number of the children of wrath: Eph. ii. 2, 'Wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air.'

(4.) Forbearance of punishment is no argument of pardon: Eccles. viii. 11, 'Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.' Forbearance is made use of by men, to make them sin more desperately, more headily. 'Fully set:' all checks silenced and stopped. Forbearance is no acquittance; it argues not God's forgiving the debt; the debt is due, though it be not presently sued for; and the longer the debt remains unpaid, the greater sum will the interest amount to; because the longer God doth forbear punishment, the longer time thou hast for repentance; the account for that time will run high.

That God doth not punish, is an argument of his patience, not of his pardoning mercy. God laughs at sinners; he sees their day is coming, though they may be jocund and confident of a pardon. God's forbearance may be justice; he may be brewing the cup and mixing that which thou art to drink. Prisoners may be reprieved one assize, and executed the next; reprieve of execution is no allowance of the crime, or change of the sentence.

(5.) Prosperity is no sign of pardon. Oh, I am not only borne with, and forborne; but I have a great addition of outward contentments since my sin!

That which you make an argument of pardon, may be an argument of condemnation.

* Burges.

Asaph was much troubled at the prosperity of the wicked ; but at last saith, 'Pride compasseth them as a chain, and violence covers them as a garment,' Ps. lxxiii. 6. That kindness which should have made them melt, made them presume ; that which should broach thy repentance, inflames thy pride ; thy goods may increase thy sins.

(6.) Forgetfulness of thy sin, and commission long ago, is no sign of pardon ; and therefore having no checks for them, is no sign of pardon. God doth not forget, though thou dost ; no sin slips from the memory of his knowledge, though now he doth cast many sins away from the memory of his justice. In regard of God's eternity, the first sins are accounted as committed this moment ; for in that there is no succession of time, and the sins thou hast committed twenty years ago, are as fresh as if thou hadst acted them all since thy coming into the congregation. Joseph's brethren, Gen. xxxvii. 25, laboured to wipe out the thoughts of their late cruelty by their eating and drinking, when the cries and tears of their brother were fresh in their memory, and might have damped their jollity. His affliction troubled them not ; his relation to them, his youth, and their father's love to him, could not make them relent. But twenty-two years after, conscience began to fly in their faces, when awakened by a powerful affliction, Gen. xlii. 21. Is not thy conscience oftentimes a remembrancer to thee of thy old forgotten sins, and doth it not turn over the old records thou hadst quite forgot ?

(7.) Hopes of God's mercy are no grounds of thy being pardoned. God's mercy is not barely enough, for then Christ needed not have died for sin ; nor Christ's death enough, without the condition of that covenant whereby God will make over the interest and merits of his death to thee. God's mercy must be considered, but in God's own way. God is merciful, but his mercy must not abolish his truth. Doth not a judge's mercy consist with condemning a malefactor ? God hath been merciful to thee, and thou wouldst not accept of it ; thou wouldst not hear mercy speak in a day of grace, why then should not justice speak in a day of vengeance ? Thou wouldst not hear a God of mercy when he cried to thee, how then should mercy hear thee when thou comest to beg ?

2. Some false grounds why those that are pardoned think themselves not pardoned.

(1.) Great afflictions are not signs of an unpardoned state. Moses had sinned by unbelief, Aaron by making a golden calf ; God pardoned their sin, but took vengeance on their inventions : Ps. xcix. 8, 'Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance.' Nathan, in his message to David, brings at once both pardon and punishment. The sin is removed, but the sword must still stick in the bowels of his family : 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14, 'The Lord hath put away thy sin ; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.' God may afflict temporally, when he resolves not to punish eternally. What ! because he will not condemn thee as a judge, will he not chastise thee as a father ? We may well bear a scourge in one hand, when we have a pardon sealed in the other. God pardons thy sin, but there is need of affliction to subdue that stout, stubborn heart of thine. God doth visit with rods when he is resolved not utterly to take away his loving-kindness from a people, Ps. lxxxix. 32, 33.

(2.) Terrors of conscience are no sign of an unpardoned state. We find a pardoned David having broken bones and a racked conscience after Nathan had pronounced his pardon, when there was no remorse before, Ps. li. He had the grant of a pardon, but the comfort of a pardon was wanting. God

may scorch thy soul when he gives a pardon, not that justice is thereby satisfied, but sin more imbittered to thee. By a pardon thou dost relish his mercy, and by the torments thou mayest have in thy soul, thou wilt understand his justice. He shews thee what he freely gives, but he would have thee know what thou hast fully deserved ; he gives thee pardon, but gall and wormwood with it, that thou mayest know what the purchase of it did cost thy Saviour. The physic which heals, causeth pain. That physic which doth not make thee sick, is not like to bring thee health. God pardons thee, that thou mayest be saved ; he terrifies thee withal, that thou mayest not be induced by temptations to sin.

(3.) Sense of sin is no argument of an unpardoned state. A pardon may be granted when the poor condemned man expects to be haled out to execution. Mary stands weeping behind her Saviour when Christ was declaring her pardon to Simon ; that much was forgiven her, and afterwards Christ turns to her, and cheers her with the news of it, Luke vii. 44-47. He pronounceth her pardon, ver. 48, and the comfort of it : ver. 50, 'Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace.' The heavens may drop, when now and then the sun may steal a beam through the clouds. There may be a pardon where there are not always the sensible effects of a pardon. We find, after the stilling of a storm, the ragings and rollings of the sea. A penitent's wound may ache afresh when a Saviour's blood drops in mercy.

(4.) The remainders of sin are not a sign of an unpardoned state. Though a disease be mastered by physic, there may be some grudgings of it in a person. Though sin be pardoned, yet the dregs of sin will be remaining, and sometimes stirring. Christ hath enlivened us, not by wholly destroying, but pardoning, sin. Pardon takes away the guilt of sin, grace takes away the power of sin, but neither pardon nor infusion of grace takes away the nature, and all motions of sin ; for in purging out an humour, some dregs still remain behind : Col. ii. 13, 'And you hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.'

3. What are the true signs of a pardoned man ?

(1.) Sincerity in our walk. A spirit without guile is made the character of a pardoned man in the text. There may be failings in the life, yet no guile in the heart ; such a man is a pardoned man. A heart that hath no mixtures, no pretences or excuses for sin, no private reserves for God ; a heart that, as the needle in a compass, stands right for the interest and glory of God, and answers to the profession as an echo to the voice ; a heart that would thrust out any sin that harboured there, would not have an atom of any filth odious to the eye of God lurk there. Where this sincerity is, a willingness and readiness to obey God (which is the condition of the covenant), the substance of the covenant is kept, though some particular articles of it may be broken. Grace, the pardoning grace of God, is with them that love Christ in sincerity : Eph. vi. 24, 'Grace be with all them that love Christ Jesus in sincerity.' Not a man excluded that is sincere, though he hath not so sparkling a flame as another, yet, if he be sincere, the crown of pardoning grace, and that of consummating grace, will be set upon his head.

(2.) Mourning for sin. A tender heart is a sign of a pardoned state, when sin discontents thee, because it displeaseth God. What showers of tears did Mary Magdalene weep after a pardon ! Love to God, like a gentle fire, sets the soul a-melting. Tears that come from love are never without pardoning mercy. God's bowels do first stir our mournings. It is impossible a gracious heart can read a pardon with dry eyes ; it is the least it thinks it can do, as it were, like Mary Magdalene, to wash Christ's feet with its tears, when it hath been washed itself with Christ's blood. The soul cannot enough

hate that which God hath been merciful in the pardon of. Forgiveness is like the warmth of the spring ; it draws out the sap of the tree, the tears of the soul, which else would scarcely stir. If God hath given thee repentance, it is sure enough that he hath given thee a pardon ; for if he did not mean to give thee that, he would never have given thee the other.

(3.) Fearfulness of sin. Whosoever knows the bitterness of sin, and the benefit of a pardon, can never confidently rush into it. A pardoned man will never go about to forfeit that which he hath newly received. Forgiveness from God doth produce fear in the creature : Ps. cxxx. 4, ' But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' It is a sign we have repented and got pardon, if we find, after that exercise of repentance and prayer, our hatred of sin increaseth, especially of that sin we were guilty of before.

(4.) Sanctification. God never pardons but he subdues sin : Micah vii. 19, ' He will subdue our iniquity, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.' Both are put together. In the Lord's prayer, desires to be rid of all evil, and not to be led into any temptation, follow immediately upon the desire of pardon. A justified person and a sanctified nature are inseparable : Rom. viii. 1, ' There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ ;' there is pardon, but how shall I know that I am pardoned ? If you ' walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' We never sincerely desire pardon, but we desire purging ; and God never gives the one, but he bestows the other. If thou hast an interest in a pardoning Christ, thou wilt have the effects of a sanctifying Spirit. Where God's grace forgives all sin, he will give us grace to forsake all sin. It is his covenant to turn away ungodliness, when he takes away the punishment of sin : Rom. xi. 26, 27, ' The Deliverer shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.' The applications of God's grace to us are attended with the infusions of God's grace into us. When he puts his law into the heart, he remembers sin no more, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.

(5.) Forgiving others. In the Lord's prayer we pray, ' Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.' Our Saviour comments upon this petition, to shew that pardon cannot be without this condition in Mat. xviii., from ver. 23 to the 35th. Christ makes it at least a *causa sine qua non* of pardon : Luke xi. 4, ' And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.'

(6.) Affectionate love to God and Christ. When we desire to glorify him by his grace, as well as be glorified by it. It is the injury done to God by our sins which doth most affect that heart upon which the Spirit of God is poured : Zech. xii. 10, ' They shall mourn over him, or be in bitterness for him.' The soul is more concerned for Christ than for itself. When there is too much of self in our desires for it, God delays the manifestation of it to the heart, that we may come up to purer strains. Christ certainly shed his blood for their remission, who are willing to shed theirs for his glory. Else Christ, whose glory it is to outstrip the hottest affection of his creature, would be behind-hand with him in love. That soul that would spend its all upon Christ, he will not suffer to stand long sobbing before him, Luke vii. 47.

Use 4. Of exhortation.

(1.) To those who are careless of it. Oh, by all means seek it ! Will it at last comfort thee to think of thy mirth and pleasures, how honourable, how rich, or how well stored with friends thou hast been ? What should take up thy heart, busy thy thoughts, or employ thy endeavours, but this that concerns thy eternal state ? Wilt thou sin away the time of God's

patience, and thine own happiness? Is it not a time which God hath allotted thee to get a pardon in? What would Cain, Judas, Pilate, Herod, and all the black regiment, give for the very hopes of it? Oh prize that here which thou wilt hereafter esteem infinitely valuable, and call thyself fool and madman a thousand times, for neglecting the opportunity of getting! The anger of a king is as the roaring of a lion; what then are the frowns of an infinite just God? Why is thy strength and affection spent about other things? Would a forlorn malefactor leading to execution listen cheerfully to anything but the news of his prince's clemency? Seek it,

[1.] Earnestly. Pardon is an inestimable blessing, and must not be sought with faint and tired affections.

[2.] Presently. Is it not full time seriously to set about it? Thou hast lost too many days already, and wilt thou be so senseless as to let another slip? How knowest thou but if thou dost refuse it this day, thou mayest be incapable of it to-morrow? There is but a step, a few minutes, between thee and death, and delays in great emergencies are dangerous.

[3.] Universally. Content not yourselves with seeking a pardon for grisly, staring sins, which fright the conscience with every look, but seek the pardon of your inward secret spiritual sins; while you beg most for the pardon of those, sanctifying grace will come in as well as justifying; the more you pray against the guilt of them, the more you will hate the filth of them."

(2.) To those that seek a pardon, and yet are in doubt of it. Secure sinners, that understand not the evil of sin, think it is an easy thing, and that forgiveness will be granted of course. But those that groan under the burden of their iniquity, imagine it more difficult than indeed it is. Presumption wrongs God in his justice, and every degree of despair or doubting, in his mercy.

[1.] God is willing to pardon. Ephraim doth but desire that God would turn him, and God presently cries out, 'Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child?' Jer. xxxi. 18, 20. 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus.' A penitent Ephraim is instantly a pleasant child. Ephraim strikes upon his thigh with confession, and God speaks to his heart with affection. God doth, as it were, take the words out of Ephraim's mouth, as though he watched for the first look of Ephraim towards him, or the first breath of a supplication. God is more willing to pardon sin than we are to sin; because we sin with reluctancy, natural conscience checking us, but God hath no check when he goes to pardon. He 'waits to be gracious,' Isa. xxx. 18, 'therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you: and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you.' He hath waited all the time of your sinning, to have an opportunity to shew grace to you; and now you give it him by repenting, will he lose the fruit of his waiting? It is the end of Christ's exaltation, whether it be meant of his being lifted up on the cross, or his exaltation in heaven; it is true of both, that his end is to have mercy upon you.

[2.] God will pardon the greatest sins. His infinite compassion cannot exhaust itself by a frequent remission. Mercy holds proportion to justice; as his justice punisheth little sins as well as great, so doth mercy pass by great sins as well as little. Your highest sins are the sins of men, but the mercy offered is the mercy of a God.

The debt you owe is a vast debt, but Christ's satisfaction is of a greater value; and a king's revenue may well pay a beggar's debts, though she owe many thousands the first day of marriage. Multiplied sins upon repentance shall meet with multiplied pardons: Isa. lv. 7, *ירבה לסלות*, 'abund-

antly pardon.' We cannot vie our sins with God's mercy. The grace of God, and the righteousness of Christ, which are necessary for the remission of one sin, are infinite, and no more is requisite for the pardon of the greatest, yea, of the sins of the whole world, if they were upon thy single score. The grace conferred upon Paul was more than would suit his necessity: 1 Tim. i. 14, *ὑπερπελάσυνας*, superabound; 'and the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant,' enough to have pardoned a whole world as well as Paul; like the sun, that emits as much heat in his beams upon one puddle, as is enough not only to exhale the moisture of that, but of a hundred more. Suppose thou art the greatest sinner that ever was yet extant in the world, do not think that God, who hath snatched so many firebrands of hell out of the devil's hands, will neglect such an opportunity to make his grace illustrious upon thy humble soul. If God hath given thee repentance, it is a certain evidence he will follow it with a pardon, though thy sins be of a deeper scarlet than ever yet was seen upon the earth; for if he did not mean to bestow this, he would never have bestowed upon thee the necessary condition of it. Is there not a sinner can equal thee? Then surely God is wiser than to lose the highest opportunity he yet had to evidence his superlative grace. And therefore,

[1.] Continue thy humiliations. There must be a conformity between Christ and thee. He was humbled when he purchased remission, and you must be humbled when you receive it. God will not part with that very cheap, that cost his Son so dear: though thou art not at the expense of the blood of thy soul, thou must be at the expense of the blood of thy sins. When a man comes to be deeply affected with his sin, then God sends a message of peace: Isa. vi. 6, 7, 'Then flew one of the seraphims, and laid a live coal upon his mouth, and said, Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.' When, ver. 5, he had cried out, 'Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips.' The way to have a debt forgiven is to acknowledge it: Ps. xxxii. 5, 'I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord: and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.' God stood as ready to forgive David's unrighteousness, as he was ready to confess it. Mercy will not save a man without making him sensible of, and humbled for, his iniquity. Put thy business, therefore, into Christ's hands, and submit to what terms he will impose upon thee.

[2.] In thy supplications plead his glory. You find this the constant argument the people of God in the Scripture use for the prevailing with God for forgiveness. That argument is most comfortably pleaded, which God loves most, and whereunto he orders all his actions. No stronger motive can be used to him to grant it, than that whereby he excites himself to bestow it. When thou beggest other things, thou mayest dishonour God; but God cannot be a loser of his glory in granting this. Lord, if thou turnest me into hell, where is the glory of thy mercy upon thy creature? Nay, where is the glory of thy justice, my eternal torments not being able to compensate the injury done to thee by sin, so much as the suffering of thy only Son, whose death I desire to share in, and whose terms I am willing to submit to?

3. Exhortation to those that are pardoned.

1. Admire this grace of God. To pardon one sin is a greater thing than to create a world; to pardon one sin is greater than to damn a world. God can create a world without the death of a creature; he can damn a world without the death of a creator; but in pardoning there must be the death of the creator, the Son of God.

2. Serve God much. Is the guilt of sin, the cord that bound thee, taken

off? It is fit that when thou art so unfettered, thou shouldst run the ways of God's commandments. A sense of pardon of sin makes the soul willing and ready to run upon God's errands, and to obey his commandments: Isa. vi. 8, 'I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send? Then said I, Here am I.' Then when he had received assurance that his iniquity was taken away, ver. 7, God's pardon set thee upon a new stock, and therefore he expects thou shouldst be full of new clusters.

3. Be more fearful of sin. Dispute with thyself, Hath God pardoned the guilt of sin that it shall not damn me, and shall I wallow in the mire of sin to pollute myself? Oh, thy sins after pardon have a blacker circumstance than the sins of devils, or the sins of wicked men, for theirs are not against pardoning mercy, not against special love. Oh, thaw thy heart every morning with a meditation on pardon, and sin will not so easily freeze it in the day-time. When thou art tempted to sin, consider what thoughts thou hadst when thou wert sueing for pardon, how earnest thou wert for it, what promises and vows thou didst make, and consider the love God shewed thee in pardoning. Do not blur thy pardon, so easily wound thy conscience, or weaken thy faith.

4. Be content with what God gives thee. If he gives thee heaven, will he deny thee earth? He that bestows upon thee the pardon of sin, would surely pour into thy bosom the gold of both the Indies, were it necessary for thee. But thou hast got a greater happiness; for it is not said, Blessed is he that wallows in wealth, honour, and a confluence of worldly prosperity, but, 'Blessed is he whose sin is forgiven, and whose iniquity is covered.'