

AGGRAVATION OF SIN

Was that then which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.—ROM. VII. 13.

WE find our apostle in the 9th verse to have been alive, but struck upon the sudden dead, by an apparition presented to him in the glass of the law, of 'the sinfulness of sin.' 'Sin revived,' says the 9th verse, 'appeared to be sin,' says the 13th verse, looks but like itself, 'above measure sinful;' and he falls down dead at the very sight of it; 'I died,' says he in the 9th; 'it wrought death in me,' says the 13th, that is, an apprehension of death and hell, as due to that estate I was then in. But yet as the life of sin was the death of Paul, so this death of his was but a preparation to a new life, 'I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live to God,' Gal. ii. 19. And here he likewise speaks of God's work upon him at his first conversion; for then it was that he relates how sin became in his esteem, so 'above measure sinful.'

The subject then to be insisted on is the sinfulness of sin, a subject therefore as necessary as any other, because if ever we be saved, sin must first appear to us all, as it did here to him, 'above measure sinful.'

And first, because all knowledge begins at the effects, which are obvious to sense, and interpreters of the nature of things, therefore we will begin this demonstration of the evil of sin, from the mischievous effects it hath filled the world withal, it having done nothing but wrought mischief since it came into the world, and all the mischief that hath been done, it alone hath done, but especially towards the poor soul of man, the miserable subject of it.

Which, *first*, it hath debased the soul of man, the noblest creature under heaven, and highest allied, made to be a companion fit for God himself, but sin hath stript it of its first native excellency, as it did Reuben, Gen. xlix. 4, debased the soul more worth than all the world, as Christ himself saith, that only went to the price of it; yet sin hath made it a drudge and slave to every creature it was made to rule; therefore the prodigal as a type is said to serve swine, and feed on husks, so as every vanity masters it. Therefore we find in Scripture, that men are said to be 'servants to wine,' Titus ii. 3, servants to riches, and divers lusts, &c.

And hence it is that *shame* attends upon it, Rom. vi. 21. Now shame

ariseth out of an apprehension of some excellency debased ; and by how much the excellency is greater, by so much is the shame the greater ; and therefore unutterable confusion will one day befall sinners, because sin is the debasement of an invaluable excellency.

Secondly, It not only debaseth it, but defiles it also ; and indeed there was nothing else that could defile it, Mat. xv. 20, for the soul is a most pure beam, bearing the image of the Father of lights, as far surpassing the sun in pureness as the sun doth a clod of earth ; and yet all the dirt in the world cannot defile the sun, all the clouds that seek to muffle it, it scatters them all ; but sin hath defiled the soul, yea, *one sin*, the least, defiles it *in an instant, totally, eternally*.

(*First.*) *One sin* did it in the fall of Adam, Rom. v. 17, ‘one offence’ polluted him, and all the world. Now suppose you should see one drop of darkness seizing on the sun, and putting out that light and eye of heaven, and to loosen it out of the orb it moves in, and cause it to drop down a lump of darkness, you would say it were a strange darkness ; this sin did then in the soul, to which yet the sun is but as a taper.

(*Secondly.*) It defiles it thus *in an instant*. Take the most glorious angel in heaven, and let one of the least sins seize upon his heart, he would in an instant fall down from heaven, stript of all his glory, the ugliest creature that ever was beheld. You would count that the strongest of all poisons, that would poison in an instant ; as Nero* boiled a poison to that height, that it killed Germanicus as soon as he received it ; now such an one is sin.

(*Thirdly.*) Sin defiles it *totally*. It rests not in one member only, but beginning at the understanding, eats into the will and affections, soaks through all. Those diseases we account strongest, which seize not on a joint or a member only, but strike rottenness through the whole body.

(*Fourthly.*) It defiles *eternally*, it being *aterna macula*, a stain which no ‘nitre or soap’ or any creature can ‘wash out,’ Jer. ii. 22. There was once let in a deluge of water, and the world was all overflowed with it ; it washed away sinners indeed, but not one sin. And the world shall be afire again at the latter day, and all that fire, and those flames in hell that follow, shall not purge out one sin.

Thirdly, It hath robbed the soul of the ‘image of God,’ deprived us of ‘the glory of God,’ Rom. iii. 33, the image of God’s holiness, which is his beauty and ours. We were beautiful and all glorious once within, which though but an accident is more worth than all men’s souls devoid of it, it being a likeness unto God, ‘a divine nature,’ without which no man shall see God. Though man in innocency had all perfections united in him *viâ eminentiæ*, that are to be found in other creatures, yet this was more worth than all ; for all the rest made him not like to God, as this did ; without which all paradise could not make Adam happy, which when he had lost, he was left naked, though those his other perfections remained with him, which is ‘profitable for all things,’ as the apostle says. The least dram of which, the whole world embalanced with, would be found too light, without which the glorious angels would be damned devils, the saints in heaven damned ghosts, this it hath robbed man of.

Fourthly, It hath robbed man even of God himself. ‘Your sins separate,’ says God, ‘betwixt you and me ;’ and therefore they are said to ‘live

* That is, Tiberius Nero. Suetonius only says, that Germanicus died at Antioch, not without suspicion of poison ; and again, that the common belief was that he died through the treachery of Tiberius, by the agency of C. Piso.—Ed.

without God in the world;’ and in robbing a man of God, it robs him of all things, for ‘all things are ours,’ but so far as God is ours, of God whose face makes heaven, he is all in all, ‘his lovingkindness is better than life,’ and containeth beauty, honours, riches, all, yea, they are but a drop to him.

But its mischief hath not stayed here, but as the leprosy of the lepers in the old law sometimes infected their houses, garments, so it hath hurled confusion over all the world, brought a vanity on the creature,’ Rom. viii. 20, and a curse; and had not Christ undertook the shattered condition of the world to uphold it, Heb. i. 3, it had fallen about Adam’s ears.

And though the old walls and ruinous palace of the world stands to this day, yet the beauty, the gloss, and glory of the hangings is soiled and marred with many imperfections cast upon every creature.

But as the house of the leper was to be pulled down, and traitors’ houses use to be made jakes, so the world (if Christ had not stepped in) had shrunk into its first nothing; and you will say, that is a strong carrion that retains not only infection in itself, but infects all the air about; so this, that not the soul the subject of it only, but all the world.

Lastly, It was the first founder of hell, and laid the first corner-stone thereof. Sin alone brought in and filled that bottomless gulf with all the fire, and brimstone, and treasures of wrath, which shall never be burnt and consumed. And this crucified and pierced Christ himself, poured on him his Father’s wrath, the enduring of which for sin was such as that all the angels in heaven had cracked and sunk under it.

But yet this estimate is but taken from the effects of it; the essence of it, which is the cause of all these evils, must needs have much more mischief in it. Shall I speak the least evil I can say of it? It contains all evils else in it; therefore, James i. 21, the apostle calls it ‘filthiness, and abundance of superfluity,’ or excrement, as it were, of naughtiness, *περὶσσεια τῆς κακίας*. As if so transcendent, that if all evils were to have an excrement, a scum, a superfluity, sin is it, as being the abstracted quintessence of all evil—an evil which, in nature and essence of it, virtually and eminently contains all evils of what kind soever that are in the world, insomuch as in the Scriptures you shall find that all the evils in the world serve but to answer for it, and to give names to it. Hence sin, it is called poison, and sinners serpents; sin is called a vomit, sinners dogs; sin the stench of graves, and they rotten sepulchres; sin mire, sinners sows; and sin darkness, blindness, shame, nakedness, folly, madness, death, whatsoever is filthy, defective, infective, painful. Now as the Holy Ghost says of Nabal, ‘as is his name, so is he;’ so may we say of sin: for if Adam gave names to all things according to their nature, much more God, ‘who calls things as they are.’ Surely God would not slander sin, though it be his only enemy. And besides, there is reason for this, for it is the cause of all evils. God sowed nothing but good seed in the world; ‘He beheld, and saw all things were very good.’ It is sin hath sown the tares, all those evils that have come up, sorrows and diseases, both unto men and beasts. Now whatsoever is in the effect, is *viâ eminentiæ* in the cause. Surely therefore it is to the soul of man, the miserable vessel and subject of it, all that which poison, death, and sickness is unto the other creatures, and to the body; and in that it is all these to the soul, it is therefore more than all these to it, for *corruptio optimi pessima*; by how much the soul exceeds all other creatures, by so much must sin, which is the corruption, poison, death, and sickness of it, exceed all other evils.

But yet this is the least ill that can be said of it. There is, secondly, some further transcendent peculiar mischief in it, that is not to be found in all other evils, as will appear in many instances.

For, first, all other evils God proclaims himself the author of, and owns them all; though sin be the meritorious cause of all, yet God the efficient and disposing cause. 'There is no evil in the city, but I have done it.' He only disclaimeth this, James i. 13, as a bastard of some other's breeding, for he is 'the Father of lights,' verse 17.

Secondly, The utmost extremity of the evil of punishment God the Son underwent, had a cup mingled him of his Father, more bitter than if all the evils in the world had been strained in, and he drank it off heartily to the bottom; but not a drop of sin, though sweetened with the offer of all the world, would go down with him.

Thirdly, Other evils the saints have chosen and embraced as good, and refused the greatest good things the world had as evil, when they came in competition with sin. So 'Moses chose rather to suffer, much rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin,' Heb. xi. 24-28. So Chrysostom, when Eudoxia the empress threatened him, Go tell her, says he, *Nil nisi peccatum timeo*, I fear nothing but sin.

Fourthly, Take the devil himself, whom you all conceive to be more full of mischief than all the evils in the world, called therefore in the abstract 'spiritual wickedness,' Eph. vi. 12, yet it was but sin that first spoiled him, and it is sin that possesseth the very devils; he was a glorious angel till he was acquainted with it, and could there be a separation made between him and sin, he would be again of as good, sweet, and amiable a nature as any creature in earth or heaven.

Fifthly, Though other things are evil, yet nothing makes the creature accursed but sin; as all good things in the world do not make a man a blessed man, so nor all the evils accursed. God says not, Blessed are the honourable, and the rich, nor that accursed are the poor; but 'Cursed is the man that continues not in all things,' Gal. iii. 10, a curse to the least sin; and, on the contrary, 'Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven,' &c., Rom. iv. 7.

Sixthly, God hates nothing but sin. Were all evils swept down into one man, God hates him not simply for them, not because thou art poor and disgraced, but only because sinful. It is sin he hates, Rev. ii. 15, Isa. xxvii. 11, yea, it alone; and whereas other attributes are diversely communicated in their effects to several things, as his love and goodness, himself, his Son, his children, have all a share in, yet all the hatred, which is as large as his love, is solely poured out upon, and wholly, and limited only unto sin.

All the question will be, What transcendency of evil is in the essence of it, that makes it above all other evils, and hated, and it only, by God, Christ, the saints, &c., more than any other evil?

Why? It is enmity with God, Rom. viii. 7. Abstracts, we know, speak essences; the meaning is, it is directly contrary to God, as any thing could be, for contrary it is to God, and all that is his.

As, 1. Contrary to his essence, to his existence, and being God; for it makes man hate him, Rom. i. 30, and as 'he that hateth his brother is a murderer,' 1 John iii. 15, so he that hateth God may be said to be a murderer of him, and wisheth that he were not. *Peccatum est Deicidium*.

2. Contrary it is to all his attributes, which are his name. Men are jealous

of their names. God's name is himself; as (1.) it makes a man slight God's goodness, and to seek happiness in the creature, as if he were able to be happy without him; and (2.), it deposeth his sovereignty, and sets up other gods before his face; (3.) it contemns his truth, power, and justice; and (4.), turns his grace into wantonness.

And as to himself, so to whatever is his, or dear to him. Besides, a king hath three things in an especial manner dear to him: his laws, his favourites, his image stamped upon his coin; and so hath God.

First, His laws and ordinances: God never gave law, but it hath been broken by sin; *ἀνομία* is the definition of it, 'the transgression of the law,' 1 John iii. 4; yea, it is called 'destroying the law,' Ps. cxix. 126. And know that God's law, the least tittle of it, is more dear to him than all the world. For, ere the least tittle of it shall be broken, heaven and earth shall pass. The least sin, therefore, which is a breach of the least law, is worse than the destruction of the world; and for his worship (as envying God should have any) it turns his ordinances into sin.

Secondly, For his favourites, God hath but a few poor ones; upon whom because God hath set his love, sin hath set his hatred.

Lastly, For his image, even in a man's own breast; the law of the members fights against the law of the mind, and endeavoureth to expel it, though a man should be damned for it, Gal. v. 17. 'The flesh,' namely, sin, 'lusteth against the spirit,' for they are contraries. Contrary, indeed, for methinks though it hates that image in others, that yet it should spare it in a man's self, out of self love; but yet, though a man should be damned, if this image be expelled, it yet laboureth to do this, so deadly is that hatred, a man hates himself as holy, so far as he is sinful.

It abounds now so high as our thoughts can follow it no farther. Divines say, it aspires unto infinity, the object against whom it is thus contrary unto being God, who is infinite, they tell us, that objectively sin itself is infinite. Sure I am, the worth of the object or party offended, aggravates the offence; an ill word against the king is high treason, not the greatest indignity to another man. Sure I also am, that God was so offended with it, as though he loves his Son as himself, yet he, though without sin, being but 'made sin' by imputation, yet God 'spared him not;' and because the creatures could not strike a stroke hard enough, he himself was 'pleased to bruise him,' Isa. liii. 16. 'He spared not his own Son,' Rom. viii. 32. His love might have overcome him to have passed by it to his Son; at least a word of his mouth might have pacified him; yet so great was his hatred of it, and offence at it, as he poured the vials of his wrath on him. Neither would entreaty serve, for 'though he cried with strong cries it should pass from him,' God would not till he had outwrestled it.

And as the person offended aggravates the offence, as before, so also the person suffering, being God and man, argues the abounding sinfulness of it. For, for what crime did you ever hear a king was put to death? their persons being esteemed in worth above all crime, as civil. Christ was the King of kings.

And yet there is one consideration more to make the measure of its iniquity fully full, and to abound to flowing over, and that is this, that the least sin, virtually, more or less, contains all sin in the nature of it. I mean not that all are equal, therefore I add more or less; and I prove it thus: because Adam by one offence contracted the stain of all, no sooner did one sin seize upon his heart, but he had all sins in him.

And so every sin in us, by a miraculous multiplication, inclines our nature more to every sin than it was before; it makes the pollution of nature of a deeper die, not only to that species of sin whereof it is the proper individual act, but to all else. As, bring one candle into a room, the light spreads all over; and then another, the light is all over more increased: so it is in sin, for the least cuts the soul off from God, and then it is ready to go a whoring after every vanity that will entice it or entertain it.

And this shews the fulness of the evil of it, in that it contains not only all other evils in the world in it, but also all of its own kind. As you would count that a strange poison the least drop of which contains the force of all poison in it; that a strange disease, the least infection whereof brought the body subject to all diseases: yet such an one is sin, the least making the soul more prone and subject to all.

And now you see it is a perfect evil; and though indeed it cannot be said to be the chiefest in that full sense wherein God is said to be the chiefest good, because if it were as bad as God is good, how could he pardon it, subdue it, bring it to nothing as he doth? And then how could it have addition to it, one sin being more sinful than another? Ezek. viii. 15, John xix. 11. But yet it hath some analogy of being the chiefest evil, as God the chiefest good.

For, *first*, as God is the chiefest good, who therefore is to be loved for himself, and other things but for his sake, so also is sin the chiefest evil, because it is simply to be avoided for itself; but other evils become good, yea, desirable, when compared with it.

Secondly, As God is the chiefest good, because he is the greatest happiness to himself, so sin, the greatest evil to itself, for there can be no worse punishment of it than itself; therefore when God would give a man over as an enemy he means never to deal withal more, he gives him up to sin.

And *thirdly*, it is so evil, as it cannot have a worse epithet given it than itself; and therefore the apostle, when he would speak his worst of it, and wind up his expression highest, *usque ad hyperbolem*, calls it by its own name, sinful sin, ἀμαρτωλὸς ἀμαρτία, Rom. vii. 13, that as in God being the greatest good, *quicquid est in Deo est Deus ipse*, therefore his attributes and names are but himself, *idem predicatur de seipso*; so it is with sin, *quicquid est in peccato, peccatum est*, &c., he can call it no worse than by its own name, 'sinful sin.'

Use I. And what have I been speaking of all this while? Why! but of one sin in the general nature of it. There is not a man here, but hath millions of them, as many as the sands upon the sea shore; yea, as there would be atoms were all the world pounded to dust, it exceeds in number also; and therefore, ere we go any further, let all our thoughts break off here in wonderment at the abounding of sin above all things else: for other things if they be great, they are but a few; if many, they are but small; the world it is a big one indeed, but yet there is but one; the sands, though innumerable, yet they are but small; your sinfulness exceeds in both.

And next, let all our thoughts be wound up to the most deep and intense consideration of our estates; for if one sin abounds thus, what tongue can express, or heart can conceive their misery, who, to use the apostle's phrase, 1 Cor. xv., 'are yet in their sins'? that is, stand bound to God in their own single bond only, to answer for all their sins themselves, and cannot

in the estate wherein yet they stand of impenitency and unbelief, plead the benefit of Christ's death, to take off and ease them of the guilt of one sin, but all their sins are yet all their own, which to a man in Christ they are not; for his own bonds are cancelled and given in, and Christ entered into bonds for him, and all his sins translated upon him.

Now for a proper character of their estate, and suitable to this expression :

First, then a man's sins may be said to be still his own, when he committeth sin out of his own, that is, the full frame and inclination of his heart. Thus the devil is said to sin, John viii. 44, ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου, 'out of his own,' the whole frame of his spirit is in it; which a man in Christ cannot be so fully said to do, for he hath a new creature in him 'that sinneth not,' 1 John iii. 1, 9, that can say even when he sins, 'It is not I, but sin.'

And secondly, then sin is a man's own, when he hates it not, but loves it: 'The world loves his own,' saith Christ, John xv. 27, and so doth a wicked man his sin 'more than any good,' which is David's character, Ps. lii. 3.

And thirdly, what is a man's own, he nourisheth and cherisheth; therefore Eph. v. 19, 'No man hates his own flesh, but loveth it and cherisheth it;' so do men their sins, when they are their own. Those great and rich oppressors, James v. 5, are said to 'nourish their hearts in wantonness,' and in pleasure, 'as in a day of slaughter;' as living upon the cream of sinning, and having such plenty, they pick out none but the sweetest bits to nourish their hearts withal.

Fourthly, so what a man provides for, that is his own; so says the apostle, 'A man that provides not for his own is worse,' &c. When therefore men make provision for the flesh, as the phrase is, Rom. xiii. 14, have their caterers and contrivers of their lusts, and whose chiefest care is every morning what pleasures of sin they have that day to be enjoyed, it is a sign that their sins are their own.

In a word, when men live in sin, it is the expression used, 1 Tim. v. 6, 'She that lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.' When the revenues of the comfort of men's lives come in from the pleasures of sin, and that supplies them with all those necessaries that belong to life; as when it is their element they 'drink in like water;' their meat, 'they eat the bread of wickedness,' Prov. iv. 17, and it goes down, and troubleth them not; their sleep also, 'they cannot sleep till they have done or contrived some mischief,' ver. 16; their apparel, as when 'violence and oppression covers them as a garment, and pride compasseth them as a chain,' Ps. lxxiii.; their recreation also, 'It is a pastime for a fool to do wickedly,' he makes sport and brags of it, Prov. x. 23; yea, their health, being sick and discontented, when their lusts are not satisfied, as Ahab was for Naboth's vineyard, 'Amnon grew lean' when he could not enjoy his paramour.

All these, as they live in their sins here, and so are dead whilst they live, and so are miserable, making the greatest evil their chiefest good; so when they come to die, as we all must do one day, and how soon and how suddenly we know not; we carry our souls, our precious souls, as precious water in a brittle glass, soon cracked, and then we are 'spilt like water which none can gather up again,' 2 Sam. xiv. 14; or but as a candle in a paper lantern, in clay walls, full of crannies, often but a little cold comes in and blows the candle out; and then, without a thorough change of heart before, wrought from all sin to all godliness, they will die in their sins. And all, and the utmost of all, miseries is spoken in that one word; and

therefore Christ, when he would sum up all miseries in one expression, tells the Pharisees they should 'die in their sins,' John viii. 28.

Use II. And let us consider further, that if sin be thus above measure sinful, that hell, that followeth death, is then likewise above measure fearful; and so it is intimated to be a punishment without measure, Jer. xxx. 11, compared with Isa. xxvii., 'Punish them as I punish thee,' says God to his own, 'but I will punish thee in measure.' And, indeed, sin being committed against God, the King of kings, it can never be punished enough. But as the killing of a king is amongst men a crime so heinous that no tortures can exceed the desert of it, we use to say all torments are too little, and death too good, for such a crime. Now, *peccatum est Deicidium*, as I said before, a destroying God as much as in us lies; and therefore none but God himself can give it a full punishment; therefore it is called 'a falling into God's hands,' Heb. x. 31, which, as he says there, is 'fearful.' For if his breath blows us to destruction, Job iv. 9, for we are but dust heaps, yea, his nod, 'he nods to destruction,' Ps. lxxx. 16; then what is the weight of his hands, even of those hands 'which span the heavens, and hold the earth in the hollow of them'? Isa. xl. 12. And if God take it into his hands to punish, he will be sure to do unto the full. Sin is man's work, and punishment is God's, and God will shew himself as perfect in his work as man in his.

If sin be *malum catholicum*, as hath been said, that contains all evils in it; then the punishment God will inflict shall be *malum catholicum* also, containing in it all miseries. It is 'a cup full of mixture,' so called Ps. lxxv. 8, as into which God hath strained the quintessence of all miseries, and 'the wicked of the earth must drink the dregs of it,' though it be eternity unto the bottom. And if one sin deserves a hell, a punishment above measure, what will millions of millions do? And we read that 'every sin shall receive a just recompence,' Heb. ii. 2. Oh let us then take heed of dying in our sins, and therefore of living in them; for we shall lie in prison till we have paid the very utmost farthing.

And therefore if all this that I have said of it will not engender answerable apprehensions of it in you, this being but painting the toad, which you can look upon and handle without affrightment, I wish that if without danger you could but lay your ears to hell, that standing as it were behind the screen, you might hear sin spoken of in its own dialect by the oldest sons of perdition there, to hear what Cain says of murdering his brother Abel; what Saul of his persecuting David and the priests of Jehovah; what Balaam and Ahithophel say of their cursed counsels and policies; what Ahab says of his oppression of Naboth; what Judas of treason; and hear what expressions they have, with what horrors, yellings, groans, distractions, the least sin is there spoken of. If God should take any man's soul here, and as he rapt his* into the third heavens, where he saw grace in its fullest brightness; so carry any one's soul into those chambers of death, as Solomon calls them, and leading him through all, from chamber to chamber, shew him the visions of darkness, and he there hear all those bedlams cry out, one of this sin, another of that, and see sin as it looks in hell! But there is one aggravation more of the evil and misery sin brings upon men I have not spoken of yet, that it blinds their eyes and hardens their hearts, that they do not see nor lament their misery till they be in hell, and then it is too late.

* That is, 'Paul's.'—ED.

Use III. But what, doth sin so exceed in sinfulness, and is the venom of it boiled up to such a height of mischief, that there should be no name in heaven and earth able to grapple with it and destroy it? Is there no antidote, no balm in Gilead more sovereign than it is deadly? Surely yes; God would never have suffered so potent and malicious an enemy to have set foot in his dominions, but that he knew how to conquer it, and that not by punishing of it only in hell, but by destroying it; only it is too potent for all the creatures to encounter with. This victory is alone reserved for Christ, it can die by no other hand, that he may have the glory of it; which therefore is the top of his glory as mediator, and his highest title, the memory of which he bears written in his name JESUS, 'for he shall save his people from their sins,' Mat. i. 21. And therefore the apostle Paul, his chiefest herald, proclaims this victory with a world of solemnity and triumph, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, that gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ;' which yet again adds to the demonstration of the sinfulness of it, for the strength of sin was such, that, like Goliath, it would have defied the whole host of heaven and earth. 'It was not possible the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin,' Heb. x. 4; nor would the riches of the world or the blood of men have been a sufficient ransom. 'Will the Lord be pleased with rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression?' No, says he, there is no proportion, for thy first-born is but the fruit of thy body, and sin is the 'sin of the soul,' Micah vi. 7. It must cost more to redeem a soul than so, Ps. xlix. 7. No; couldst thou bring rivers of tears instead of rivers of oil—which, if anything were like to pacify God, yet they are but the excrements of thy brains, but sin is the sin of thy heart—yea, all the righteousness that we could ever do, cannot make amends for one sin; for suppose it perfect, whenas yet it is but 'dung,' Mal. ii. 3, and 'a menstruous cloth,' yet thou owest it already as thou art a creature, and one debt cannot pay another. If then we should go a begging to all the angels who never sinned, let them lay all their stock together, it would beggar them all to pay for one sin. No; it is not the merit of angels will do it, for sin is the transgression, the destruction of the law, and the least *iota* is more worth than heaven and all that is therein.

Only, though it be thus unconquerably sinful by all created powers, it hath not gone beyond the price that Christ hath paid for it. The apostle compares to this very purpose sin and Christ's righteousness together, Rom. v. 15, 20. It is true, says he, that 'sin abounds,' and that one sin, *το παράπτωμα*, and instanceth in Adam's sin, which staineth all men's natures to the end of the world; yet, says he, the 'gift of righteousness by Christ abounds much more,' abounds to flowing over, *ὑπερεπλήσionασε*, says the apostle, 1 Tim. i. 14, as the sea doth above mole-hills, Mal. vii. 14.* Though therefore it would undo all the angels, yet Christ's riches are unsearchable, Eph. iii. 8. He hath such riches of merit as are able to pay all thy debts the very first day of thy marriage with him, though thou hadst been a sinner millions of years afore the creation to this day; and when that is done, there is enough left to purchase thee more grace and glory than all the angels have in heaven. In a word, he is 'able to save to the utmost all that come to God by him,' Heb. vii. 5, let their sins be what they will.

But then we must come to him, and to God by him, and take him as

* This is of course a misprint. I suppose the reference is to Micah vii. 19.—Ed.

our lord, and king, and head, and husband, as he is freely tendered; we must be made one with him, and have our hearts divorced from all our sins for ever. And why not now? Do we yet look for another Christ? and to allude to us as Naomi said to Ruth, Is there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? So say I, Hath God any more such sons? Or is not this Christ good enough? or are we afraid of being happy too soon in being married to him?

But yet if we will have Christ indeed, without whom we are undone, 'how shall we then continue in sin,' Rom. vi., which is thus above measure sinful? No, not in one. The apostle speaks there in the language of impossibility and inconsistency. Christ and the reign of one sin, they cannot stand together.

And, indeed, we will not so much as take Christ until first we have seen more or less this vision here, and sin appear to us, as to him, above measure sinful. Naturally we slight it, and make a mock of, and account it preciseness to stick and make conscience of it; but if once sin thus appears to any but in its own colours, that man will look upon the least sin then as upon hell itself, and like a man affrighted fear in all his ways lest he should meet with sin, and starts at the very appearance of it: he weeps if sin do but see him, and he do but see it in himself and others, and cries out, as Joseph did, 'How shall I do this, and sin?' And then a man will make out for Christ as a condemned man for life, as a man that can no longer live, Oh, give me Christ, or else I die; and then, if upon this Christ appears to him, and 'manifests himself,' as his promise is to them that seek him, John xiv. 21, his heart thereupon will much more detest and loathe it; he saw it evil afore, but then it comes to have a new tincture added, which makes it infinitely more sinful in his eyes, for he then looks upon every sin as guilty of Christ's blood, as dyed with it, though 'covered by it.' 'The grace of God appearing, teacheth us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts.' 'The love of Christ constrains him.' Thinks he, Shall I live in that for which Christ died? Shall that be my life which was his death? Did he that never knew sin undergo the torment for it, and shall I be so unkind as to enjoy the pleasure of it? No; but as David, when he was very thirsty, and had water of the well of Bethlehem brought him, with the hazard of men's lives, poured it on the ground, for, says he, 'It is the blood of these men,' so says he, even when the cup of pleasures is at his very lips, It cost the blood of Christ, and so pours it upon the ground. And as the love of Christ constrains him, so the power of Christ doth change him. Kings may pardon traitors, but they cannot change their hearts; but Christ pardons none he doth not make new creatures, and 'all old things pass away,' because he makes them friends, favourites to live with and delight in; and if men 'put on Christ, and have learned him, as the truth is in Jesus, they put off as concerning the former conversation the old man, with the deceitful lusts,' Eph. iv. 21, 22, and he ceaseth from sin, that is, from the course of any known sin. They are the apostle's own words which shall judge us; and if we should expect salvation from him upon any other terms, we are deceived, for Christ is 'the author of salvation to them only that obey him,' Heb. v. 9.