

SERMON XXVIII.

At St. Paul's,
Decemb. 27.
1646.

JOHN 5. 14.

Afterward Jesus findeth him in the Temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole : sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

THe prudent Physician's care is not only perfectly to cure the present disease, but withal to prevent an after-relapse, which otherwise might prove more dangerous : and accordingly the Lord Jesus, our *Phœbus Medicus*, the Son of righteousness, that hath *healing in his wings*, in the beginning of the Chapter comes as a loving Physician to the Pool of Bethesda, as to a publick Hospital of impotent diseased people, *vers. 2.* and of all the multitude he most graciously visits one that had most need of pity and help ; whose disease Interpreters conceive was most dangerous, and for time grown Chronical ; the Text saith of *thirty eight years continuance*, *vers. 5.* (drooping Christian die not of despair, for thou shalt not of thy disease though never so desperate, if Christ undertake the cure, for) him he healed, *vers. 7, 8.* for his body : and so much was wrought on his soul, that from Bethesda's Porch, *v. 2.* he was now got to the Temple in the Text, most likely to return thanks to God for his recovery : but his Saviour was not as yet savingly made known to him. And therefore, to perfect the cure in healing his soul, and to prevent a relapse of both soul and body into a worse malady, he calls about there the second time to meet him, and after his cure prescribes him a Diet, this Recipe, *Behold thou art made whole : sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*

*Medicina par-
res dua
ὁ ἰατρὴν, θε-
οῦ πνεύματι.*

*Dulcis medi-
cus in visis
Nosocomium
Et pro ca-
teris maxi-
me laboran-
tibus.*

*Ut mos erat.
Luc. 18. 10.
Act. 3. 1, 8.
Grosius.*

In which words two things are implied, and two things in-joyed : The first thing implied in these words, *μὴ ἐτι ἁμαρτάνῃς*, *sin no more*, was, that after his recovery without better care taken he was in danger to sin again. The second, this ; that, if he did revolt to his former sin, he was in eminent danger to relapse into a worse malady, in these words *ἵνα μὴ χεῖρόν τι, &c.* *lest a worse thing come unto thee.*

P p p

Whereupon

Whereupon the two things prescribed and enjoyned (and the first a means of the second) are, 1. A serious consideration of the Mercy he had received in those words, *ἰδοὺ ὅτις γεγόνας, Behold, thou art made whole.* 2. A studious care that he would avoid the like sin, if he would not incur a greater danger, in those words, *μὴκέτι ἁμαρτάνῃς, Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.* Like as the Angel charged Lot, now gotten out of Sodom, to *flie for his life*, and not *look back*, lest Vengeance should overtake him, *Gen. 19. 17.* Or as if the Physician before spoken of should say thus to his Patient, whose wantonness or other disorder had brought him into some dangerous disease, which yet through his skill and care and pains were now cured : Friend, let this fair scape be a fair warning to you, that you never play the like wanton, lest you come to be in a worse case, and then meet not with so easie a Cure ; but it may prove to be utterly incurable.

The two things implied will afford two *Observations* ; and the two other enjoyned will fitly serve for a double *Application*.

Dott. I.

And the first Note from the first thing implied is this : That after healing Mercy we are in great danger, without better care taken, to *sin again*, as before, if not worse than ever : For you may be assured that our Saviour's Caveat was no *idle word*. *Sin no more* to this recovered sinner was a *Watch word*, that spake his danger of a new Surprise : An *Item*, that told him, that, if he looked not to it, he was likely to run into a further Arrear, even after his old *Debt* was paid, and he had a new Stock to set up with : And to this purpose observe in this Instance these three particulars.

First, That Christ contents not himself with his first healing Visit : But seeth that he had need of a second meeting with, to prevent an after-clap. As the Apostles, whom they at first converted, they after visited and confirmed, *Acts 14. 21, 22. & 15. 32. & 36. 41.*

Secondly, And this after-meeting and second dose of Spiritual Physick he gave him *in the Temple*, though he were then (it's likely) in a good mind, and hopefully in a good way.

Thirdly, And this *Item* and advice (*sin no more*) beset on both sides with very forcible Arguments, to make it more effectual. Before it you have *Beneficium acceptum* ; he is put in mind of the Benefit received, to make his Ingenuity blush : *Be-*

bold,

bold; thou art made whole, sin no more. After it is set *Futurum judicium*, a worse mischief that's likely to follow upon his second miscarriage, that so he might tremble and fear, and do no more so presumptuously. *Sin not, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*

All which three hold forth thus much to us.

1. That after Christ hath in mercy *visited* us, we have need that a second time he should *meet* with us. As *Manoah* after the first message by the Angel, that he should have a Child, desired that he might come again the second time, and tell them *how they should order it*, Judg. 13. 8, 12. After we are raised up, and set on our Legs, we have need to be taught, how we should walk to prevent an after-stumble, *Psal.* 40. 2. After a *θεραπευτικόν* of a *πρωφλακτικόν*, after a Cordial to recover from a former *Qualm*, an Antidote to fortific us against an after-Poyson.

2. And this before we distemper our selves after our Recovery, when in a most hopeful way to a perfect Cure. Christ after our most comfortable up-risings need again visit us further, to instruct and direct us, though he find us in the *Temple*, though in never so good a temper and posture.

3. And then he had need deal more seriously with us, as here, by representing both the Mercies we have received, and the return of Judgments, which upon fresh miscarriages we may fear, on every side to keep us in; and all this, because (as we have it in the Doctrine) we are then very subject to break out: When God hath tied us with *thickest Cords of Love*, then most petulantly to *break asunder all Bonds of Obedience*. Thus not only *Pharaoh* upon every respite grows *more hard*; and *Tyre* after *seventy years Captivity*, returns to her former *Hire*, *Isa.* 23. 17. as though they had been delivered only to *do all abominations*, *Jer.* 7. 10. The Mad-man unbound, that he might be free to do the more Mischief. But even *Jacob's Sons*, when reconciled to their Brother, are in danger to *fall out among themselves*, *Gen.* 45. 24. *Lot*, when snatcht as a brand out of *Sodom's* burning, then scorcht with unnatural flames, *Gen.* 19. *David*, when at ease, plays the wanton, *2 Sam.* 11. *Uzziah*, when become strong, grows stiff, *2 Chron.* 26. 16. And *Hezekiah*, when miraculously recovered (and some think of the Plague) that swelling being down, his Heart begins to swell, he grows *Proud*, and rendered not according to the Benefits done unto him, *2 Chron.* 32. 25. The

story of *Israel* both under their Judges and Kings at large sheweth, what a *backsliding People* they were, how ready then most to forget their Duty, when God had remembred them in Mercy, and as soon as ever delivered from their Enemies Tyranny, to relapse into their former Idolatry : *After they had rest, they did evil again before thee*, saith *Nehemiah*, Chap 9. 28. No sooner got out of *Egypt*, and through the Sea, but they fall a *murmuring*, and *tempting*, and going a *Whoring* from God in the Wilderness : When brought back afterward from *Babylon*, if not what returning to *Idolatry*, yet what closing with *Idolaters* ? What strange Marriages, what grasping of the World, and robbing of God, what building of their own Houses and neglecting of God's, did the Prophets that then lived, complain of ? *And after all this is come upon us, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our Iniquities deserve, and hast given us such a deliverance as this : Should we again break thy Commandments ?* Saith blushing *Ezra*, Chap 9. 13, 14. That question saith they should not, but implieth they did. And after Christ ; though for a time in those best Times, when *the Churches had rest, they were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost were multiplied*, Acts 9. 31, yet afterwards when in *Constantine's* time Persecution ceased, then Superstition, and Ambition, and Covetousness increased ; the Voice from Heaven then cried, *Venenum in Ecclesiam* : When the Enemy left off to wound from without, the old Serpent began to poyson within, which proved more dangerous.

In this Case :

1. Former sins are wont to be relapsed into. What this Man's sin in the Text was, is not certain ; but though thirty eight years before committed, yet our Saviour's Caveat to him intimates, might long after be returned to, with the *Dog to his vomit* before cast up, and the *Sow when washed, to her wallowing again in the mire*. After one fit of the Gout and Stone, the Man is very subject to be sick again of the same Disease ; as *Israel* upon every new deliverance to their old Idolatry ; the River damm'd up for a time, but, as soon as it hath its free course, returns to its former Channel. It's the befotted Drunkard's Catch, *When I shall awake, I will seek it yet again*, Prov. 23. 35. As bad Ground, when well manured, brings forth the same Weeds, but more rank than formerly, and it may be some new ones beside. For,

2. So secondly, as old sins are usually returned to, so oft-times new ones are *de novo* fallen into. *Nadab* and *Abihu*, when newly put into their Office offer *strange fire*, Lev. 10. 1. upon *new Mercies* *new sins* instead of *new ways*. *Israel*, when but *now* delivered from *Egypt*, begins to *worship strange Gods*, which their fathers *knew not*, Jer. 19. 4. *new Gods*, Judg. 5. 8. And *Judah*, when newly returned from Captivity, fall a *marrying strange wives*, Ezra 10. 2. When *David's* at rest from his wonted enemies, then a *stranger* comes, with whom he was not before acquainted, 2 Sam. 12. 4. And when the Christian Church was rid of Heathenish Persecutors their o'd bad Neighbours, then Superstition and Idolatry crowd in, who before were strangers. Never are we more in danger of being foiled with a renewed charge or a new on-set, than when we are ready to cry *Victoria*. To prevent which, God's care of our safety is very observable in these two particulars in Scripture.

1. That when he intends a perfect Rescue, to his *delivering* Mercy he joyns *guiding* Mercy ; his preventing and following Grace keep company. *Thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy Reward.* He both leads the Van, and brings up the Rear, Isa. 58. 8. v. 10. *Thy Light shall rise in Obscurity* ; there the Prison door is opened and *Light* is let in : but he had need be *led by the hand*, when he is got out, and therefore *vers. 11.* it's added, *and the Lord shall guide thee continually* : answerable to that, 2 Chron. 32. 22. *The Lord saved Hezekiah and Jerusalem, and the Lord guided them on every side* ; and they had need of it, for *vers. 25.* when God did but a little leave him the better to *prove* him, you know how desperately he stumbled at the first step ; and therefore in all our Deliverances let this be one of our Prayers, *Lord as thou hast delivered us, so do not now leave us, but still lead us* : as thou hast reached me thy hand to *pluck me out of the Snare*, so lend me it still to lead me in the Way : which, when come out of straits, we are in most danger to go astray from ; as a man whilst in a narrow deep Lane cannot so readily go out of his way, but when got out to a wide Common, where there are many paths which may deceive him, he hath most need of a Guide : Nor have we more need of Deliverance from danger, when we are in it, than we have of Guidance, when got out of it, which God therefore in mercy grants, when he means to compleat his Mercy.

2. And secondly therefore also is wont not to perfect a Mercy or Deliverance

Deliverance at the first, nor, it may be, at all in this life, but leaves a *Canaanite*, when *Israel* is in *Canaan*, an *Hadad*, a *Rezon*, and a *Jeroboam*, whilst *Solomon* sits *peaceably* on his *Throne*, to allay the heat of the *Por*, which else would boyl over. Few such *Mornings* like that 2 *Sam.* 23. 4. in which there is *no Cloud*, or if so in the morning, yet not usually so all the day, to keep us the better in, who else would be running out, and playing the wantons in the *Sunshine*. Christ was never *lost* but once in the *Crowd*, *Luke* 2. 43. Nor God ever so often as in the crowds of his *Mercy*: and therefore something we shall have, that we do not pine, and yet not all that we would have, that we do not surfeit: Something he gives to incourage, but still something he withholds, the better to nurture us, and to force us still to wait upon him; who else (like ill-nurtured children when they have got all they desire) should be then most like to run-away farthest from him; some Worm in our fairest Apple, and some Blemish in our greatest Beauty; some bitter in our greatest sweet, to make all medicinal. In our greatest enjoyments something shall be wanting, or cros to our desires, which may be as a constant *Memento*, and really say, *sin no more*, because else we shall be then *ready to sin more than ever*.

Reas. I.

For, first, it is not in the nature or power of Affliction (unless sanctified) to mortify Corruption, that, as soon as we are freed from the one, we should be rid of the other. The Winter-frost may nip the Weeds, and keep them under ground; but yet so, as that they sprout out again the next spring. *Solomon* speaks of a *Fool in the Mortar*, and *Jeremiah* of *Dross in the Furnace*. This Cripple in the Text, though after *thirty eight years* weakness he had been healed by Christ, did not yet know Christ at the first; and some may never; and then no wonder, if, notwithstanding all, they prove never the *better*, but much the *worse*.

2. For that Corruption, which Affliction doth not *beal*, it doth, at most but *curb*; and when that *Curb* in a Deliverance is removed, the Corruption is the more fully and violently manifested and exerted; as Antichrist, when the *ὁ κατέχων* was *taken away*, was more openly discovered, 2 *Thess.* 2. 7, 8. And *Jordan*, when the *Priest's feet were once out of it*, (and so that Dam as it were broken down) runs down his Channel more violently than before. In times of danger and trouble Conscience often proves a Shrew, and will chide, and God's angry, and we fear will strike. *The Angel stands in the way with a drawn Sword to stop us*: and when
seen

seen will make a *Balaam stand still*. Thus then these pricking *Thorns bedge up the way*, and a stormy day shuts the door, and keeps us in : but the next fair blast that opens it, makes the wanton run out with the more eagerness. As the hunger-starved Man with his food, the longer he was before kept from it, the more greedily he now falls to it ; as much as he pined before, he surfeits now : as they are wont to say of Sailers, that they are not more *calm* in a *Storm*, than they *storm* in a *Calm*, or when got to Shore.

3. As in this case the Affliction was but a *Curb* ; so the Deliverance and Mercy proves a *Snare*, adds Fewel to that Flame, which the former rainy day quenched, or at least kept down, strengthen's the recovered man's Lust, which Sickness weakned, affords matter for the rich man's Pride, which his Poverty humbled, entertains the Wanton and Worlding with other company, whom Straits and Dangers for that time inforced to seek after God, and made him glad of his acquaintance. As in Bloud-letting, upon the return of the Bloud we are then most ready to faint ; I wish that after our Bloud-shed, upon the return of Mercies our former Reformation, that seemed to have some life in it, do not quite dy away, and that *Ephraim* and *Manasseh* do not continue *Brothers* still ; the one's Name signifieth Plenty or *Fruitfulness*, and the other's *Forgetfulness*, that in the plenty of restored Mercies we did not forget our Misery, and our selves and our God altogether. The Lord make good that Promise *Job 5. 24.* to us, that, when being kept long from home, we may *visit our Tabernacles, and not sin* ; to which we are very subject. The sick man hath not need of more care and wariness in the depth of his sickness, than of a fair and safe up-rising out of his sick-bed upon his recovery ; as nothing more easie in that case, than to fall into a Relapse, so nothing is more dangerous. Nothing more easie ; There you have this first point, that after healing Mercy we are subject to return to our former Sins. And in that I said, *nothing more dangerous*, we have the second.

That, if upon such Deliverance we do fall back into Sin, we shall be in great danger, that some greater Mischiefe will befall us. *Sin no more*, saith our Saviour, *lest a worse thing come unto thee* : he saith *lest* it do, but he thereby implyes, and it is his meaning, if thou doest, for certain it will. A Relapse into a bodily Disease after a Recovery useth not to be more dangerous, than a Backsliding into Sin after a Deliverance oft proves desperate. *After all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and seeing that thou our God hast punished*

Doct. 2.

nished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such a deliverance as this; should we again break thy Commandments? wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping? saith Ezra 9. 13, 14. As if he had said, if after such misery to drive us, and such mercy to draw us, we break now with God, *Alium, conclamatum est*, we are broken wholly and irrecoverably: the House so on fire, that it cannot be saved, the Consumption so far gone that it cannot be cured. It's the breaking of the Bone, that was newly set after a former breaking, and that's more dangerous; a new Wound in an old one, and that's hardly cured; like that *Plague of Leprosie broken out of the Boyl*, which made the Person wholly *unclean* in the Law, Lev. 13. 20. Or like the Man in the Gospel, into whom the *unclean spirit* after dispossession maketh re-entry with seven other spirits worse than himself; and so his last state proves worse than the first, Matth. 12. 45. and that place speaks us every way worse, if we prove not better, after we have been so well dealt with. *Worse* in point of punishment; and that, because worse in point of sin.

Chemnitius.

1. In regard of punishment, τὰ ἔχῃα χείερα, saith the Text there: *his last state worse than his first*, and yet the first bad and sad enough, when he was possessed with a devil: and χείεον τι, a worse thing here (in the Text) a worse Disease or Mischief is coming upon thee, though that, he was now Cured of, had been for nature very grievous, and for thirty eight years continuance very tedious. The instances of *Jerusalem*, the Eastern Churches and others fully make out this, That no people or persons have been sadder spectacles of Judgment, than they that have been Mirrors of Mercy and Deliverance when abused; not more eminent in the one, than remarkable for the other: as the Psalmist saith, that wicked men spring and flourish, that they may be destroyed for ever, Psal. 92. 7. And as God told Pharaoh, that for this very cause he had delivered and raised him up, that upon his Obstinacy he might shew his Power in his heavier Down-fall, Exod. 9. 16. Upon our unworthy carriage after mercies:

1. At best we lose a great deal of the Comfort of them. Then we may indeed and without check delight in Gods great goodness, Neh. 9. 25. when we serve him in it, vers. 35. but we mingle our Wine with Water, nay put so much Aloes into our sweetest Cup, as we add Sin to God's sweeter Mercies. It's pity we should have Comfort in them, which God from us hath Dishonour by them:

them: and, were there nothing else, if there be any ingenuity *De facto.* in us, we cannot but have less joy in the enjoyment of them, when we cannot but with *Extra* chap. 9. 6. blush as oft as we think of our abuse of them. As a Parent oft-times is not so much joyed as ashamed of a sweet Child if ill nurtured; or as it was with the *People of Israel*, 2 Sam. 19. 2, 3. of whom it's said, that in the day of their Triumph *they stole away, as people ashamed use to steal away when they flee in Battel, so that the Victory that day was turned into Mourning, because they heard say the King was grieved for his Son.* Whatsoever or how great soever the Mercy or Deliverance is, we have lost the Comfort of it, when God by our sins hath lost the Honour of it.

There's more to be ashamed of, than to be rejoiced in, and the greater the occasion was of joy, the more matter there is of shame and grief. How can the Child heartily rejoyce in the abused favour of his Father, when he hears say that the King grieves for the undutiful miscarriage of his Son? By miscarriage after Mercies we make our Candle burn dim, and our Cloud a clear day. We rob our selves of the comfort of them even in the enjoying of them.

2. Nay, this is the ready way wholly to be deprived of them. If Children would go to Bed in the dark, let them play the wantons by the Candle-light. *This Eli had, and that he should have had*; but because his Sons proved desperate wantons, God sets a Non-plus on their Heads with an *Abfit*. * It's fitter for * Be it far from them that will know how better to use it: But why should the me. 1 Sam. 2. 30. Child keep such a Knife in his hand to spoil it, and it may be to kill himself with it? In this case, *Hof. 2. 9.* *לִקְחֹתִי* nay, *הַצֵּלְתִּי* saith God: He will take away his Corn, nay, recover his *VVool*. The Legatee proves an *Usurper*, and therefore *Recipiam*, *Eripiam*. God useth with more force and fury, to snatch away such imprisoned Mercies, when they are abused, and He not acknowledged. And this is *חֲרָצָה* *Ti* in the Text. It's worse to loose it, than never to have had it, as coming from more anger in God, and with greater reproach to us, to be degraded of that Honour to which he had exalted us, and for God to repent that he had been so good unto us.

3. And yet worse, because abused Mercies, when they are taken away, are not wont to go alone, but to take others along with God shoots them; as the new cloth takes something out of the old garment, and Casts it out. so the rent is made worse, Mark. 2. 21. If Esau despise his birth-

he had done, and we have ill requited, than to grant us what we then never so mournfully sue for, as he did in the like case to the children of Israel, Judg. 10. 10, to 15. I have again and again delivered you, and you have still forsaken me and served other Gods, I will therefore deliver you no more : Go and cry unto the gods that ye have chosen, and let them deliver you in your tribulation. Never expect God in after-straits either at all, or at least not so readily as in former troubles, to hear us, if we deal fromardly and falsly with him after that he hath had mercy on us. *Wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?* is all that Exra can expect from a God so abused and provoked. And thus every way in point of Misery and Judgment it's likely to be worse with us, which is very sad, and yet very just, because it's every way worse in point of sin.

1. It proves so in the Consequents of it : they usually growing the worst of men, who grow worse after best of Mercies, even most unprofitable and abominable, whom neither Afflictions, nor deliverances can work upon : as that's a rotten tooth, that can neither endure cold water, nor hot : and what you cannot preserve either in Brine or Sugar will be sure to corrupt and putrify.

2. Nay it is so in the cause of it ; two of the worst of sins being the chief ingredients into it, viz. Abominable Ingratitude, and Invincible Obstinacy.

1. *Hateful Ingratitude, so to render evil for good :* we would not do so with man, and do we thus requite the Lord, foolish People and Unwise ? Deut. 32. 6. *Is he not thy Father that hath bought thee ?* &c. Thy God and Saviour that hath redeemed thee ? and doth *Jeshurun* when grown fat begin to kick ? to forsake God that made him, and lightly to esteem the God of his Salvation ? vers. 15, 18. but what follows ? vers. 19. *When the Lord saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons and daughters.* It's an unmanly sin : man loaths it ; a most ungodly sin : God abhors it in all, especially in a *Jeshurun*, and that signifieth an upright people ; it's matter of highest provocation, if he find it in his sons and daughters. With others this despising of the riches of the goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of God treasures up wrath against the day of wrath, Rom. 2. 4. 5. And even in the dearest of God's children God so ill takes it, that if the most upright *Hezekiah* make such returns, he shall smart for it, 2 Chron. 32. 25. compared with 2 King. 20. 17, 18. *Let them so ungratefully abuse such a mercy, the very worst of the Heavens shall*

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rather have it, than they continue owners of it, *Ezek. 7. 24.* A return in this case God expects, but it's a return of praise and obedience, and not a return to *our sin* ; that's most hateful ingratitude.

2. Most desperate Obstinacy, as standing out against God when he hath gone through a full course of all means, of the very last and most likely, and which usually are wont to be most effectual : for when God hath delivered his people from straits, he hath endeavoured to fasten on them all obligations to obedience : besides the tie of the Word in his Command there hath been the bond of affliction in their by-past misery, and the *thick cord* of love in their present deliverance : and shall this *three-fold cord* be so easily broken ? It's not the Heroick *Impetus* of the Spirit of God coming upon us, as sometimes upon *Sampson*, but from the insult of some *evil spirit* more fierce than ordinarily, as in the Gospel, that none of all, not all these *chains and fetters can hold us*, nor any thing tame us ; a tough bad humour which strongest Physick cannot purge, and which is the Physicians, last receipt, for such are Afflictions and Mercies.

Judg. 15. 14.
Marth. 8. 28.
with Mark 5.
3. 4.

Sometimes indeed afflictions are the last ; as pinching and pinching Poverty at last brought home the Prodigal, *Luke 15.* As a Winter-frost helps to kill these Weeds, which in Summer sprung up and multiplied. When *Lenitives* will not do, *corrosives*, scarings, cuttings off sometimes work the Cure. But what hope, if after all the Gangrene creep on still ?

It may be you will say, sometimes that may be preserved in Sugar, that will not in Brine, and when God hath not been before in the *Wind and Earthquake*, and *Fire*, he may be after, in *the still voice*, *1. King. 19. 11, 12, 13.* And therefore God, that he may leave no means untried, like a careful tender-hearted Father to a stubborn Child, whom he would not lose, will try whether mildness, as a Summer-Sun, will not melt that heart, which harshness, as a winter frost, hardned. You are told of a stone that will move at the gentle touch of a finger more than with the violent rush of your whole body : and such stones sometimes are our hard hearts ; and therefore God, that *delights not in the death of a sinner*, and with the goodness of whose Nature this sweet way of Mercy most agrees, is willing, as at first, to begin with it ; so, after other sharper means used, at last to end with it. When after the *Israelites* want of Food, he in Mercy gave them Bread from Heaven, he saith, it was that he *might prove them*, whether they would walk

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in his Law, or no, Exod. 16. 4. So that, if after Judgments we have a return of Mercies, we had need take heed, for it may be then we go upon our last and strongest trial. In Afflictions God indeed strongly tryeth us, whether we will cleave to him in want of Mercies; but by Mercies he maketh fullest tryal of us, whether we will serve and obey him, whether we will set upon our Journey for Heaven in such fair Way and Weather, when we have nothing to hinder us, and whether we will build, when the Scaffold is built, and all Tools and Materials ready, that we want nothing that might help us. And then, *Isa. 5.* if after all Mercies, yet *few Grapes*, what can God do more, but quite extirpate? If after tryal thus made of all means, of the last and best, we continue as ill or prove worse than before, then, *Reprobate silver call them*, for *the Lord hath rejected them*, Jer. 6. 29, 30. *Meneb, Meneb, Tekel Upharfin*, God hath again and again *numbered and weighed us*, and *we are found light*, nay, heavy-hearted and immoveable, and what then follows? *Peres, thy Kingdom is divided*: the Lord knows, so is ours miserably. And the Lord grant that which is added do not follow, *and is given to the Medes and Persians*, that God *give us not up* to our Enemies, who after all this variety of power-fullest means will not yet give up our selves to him in a way of Obedience. For, if after *we are made whole*, *we sin again*, as we are over-prone, which was the first point, it cannot be avoided, but that every way, both in point of sin and misery, it will be worse with us, which was the second point here implied.

Dan. 5. 25,
to 30.

Use.

Of both which the Use and Application should have been in the more full opening and inforcing the other two things here enjoyed

1. A serious and heedful Consideration and Review of the Mercy received, *ide, behold, thou art made whole*, saith our Saviour: he sets an *Ecce* upon it, as to set forth the remarkableness of the Mercy, so to put him in mind of his Duty, and that was to take a diligent and exact survey of the Mercy: and because being *made whole* speaks a former Disease and a present Cure, he is called to think of both of them together, and to compare them together, how weak before he was, and how well now; before not able to crawl, he can now *rise up and walk*: he, that could not before carry himself from the *Porch* to the *Pool*, can now carry his bed from the *Pool* through the *City*. He, that for many years together was *made sick with delayed Hopes*, and quite *cut to the heart* with vexatious Disappointments, hath with the speaking of a word his

his Health perfectly restored, and his longing Desires in an instant fully accomplished. All this our Saviour would have him wisely behold, and consider, and for ever remember with all thankfulness. And would he not have us of this City and Kingdom behold with the like care a greater Cure? Indeed I cannot say to England, thou art perfectly made whole, we are yet come short of that *ὁλολυγία*, of that perfect Soundness, which Peter told the Jews that some man had attained in the presence of them all, Acts 3. 16. The Humours in this great and greatly diseased Body are yet in a hurry: we bleed still, at best our Wounds are but in healing, and not yet fully whole. But yet, humble and hearty thanks be to our heavenly Physician, we cannot but see, as it were, this poor Man in the Text arising, our *Sambalas* and *Tubiabs*, (whom our Healing wounds and cuts to the heart) even they to their grief hear and see, *כִּי עָלְתָה מְרִיבָה* (as the phrase is *Neb.* 4. 7.) that an healing Plaster is mercifully applyed to our bleeding Wounds, that, unless we be stupid and senseless, we cannot but with the Woman, when her bloody Issue was stoppt, *know and feel what is done in us*, Matth. 5. 33. and, unless lothsomly ingrateful, say, as it is, *עָמַל לֹא עָמַל* *this is not this*, we are not what we were; that a great change is wrought in the Patient, and we hope in a healing way, so that though not wholly, yet in part, though not absolutely, yet comparatively in regard of what we were, we are made whole. And therefore O London, O England, Behold, Behold thy former Wound, and thy present Cure. Behold *ἐξ ὧν εἰς οἶα*, from what depths of Misery, into which thy sins had cast thee, to what hopeful and happy beginnings of Health and Peace the healing hand of thy pitiful Physician hath raised thee; thy Religion wofully corrupted, now graciously begun to be reformed; thy Liberty before enslaved, now vindicated; a most unnatural and bloody War the other day most eagerly prosecuted by the malice of Man, more powerfully and miraculously ceased through the Mercies of God. This poor Man, that had been sick so long could not have believed that ever he should have been well so soon; nor had we Faith to believe, that were so hastily dying away in the beginning of the last year, we should be so happily recovering by the end of this. Let therefore the Voice of the Cryer, and through God's Mercy not now (as that might have been) in a Wilderness, call out all your heedfullest attentions, and let an unworthy Minister use the holy Prophet's words, *Come and behold the Works of the Lord*: we might

might of late have added, as it's there, *what desolations be bath made*; but now what Restorations, what Salvation he hath wrought in the Earth! He maketh Wars to cease, he breaketh the Bow, and cutteth the Spear in sunder, and burneth the Chariot in the fire, Psal. 46. 8, 9, &c. Truly the Lord hath so wrought his wonderful Works, that they ought to be full in our eye and heart for the present, and to be *bad* for the future in *everlasting remembrance*. O set up our Eben-ezer with this impress upon it, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us*. Behold thus far, O England, thou art made whole, and what remains? but

2. The second duty injoyed in the following word, *sin*, *O sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee*. Sin no more! Now the Lord be more merciful, for I fear many of us *sin more than ever*. Oppressions in many more aggravated, Heresies more openly maintained, Christ, the Holy Ghost, and Holy Scriptures more horribly blasphemed, Factions and Divisions more multiplied, the *Scene only changed*, but the same or a *worse* part acted; the *Weapons* struck out of the hands of *Enemies*, and more taken up by *Brethren and Friends*: Were Christians ever so mutually estranged and imbittered? Were your publick Church-Assemblies ever so neglected? In your civil Meetings your Elections and other Affairs ever with such confusion? I had almost said brutish rage (as of late) so transacted, as though we had put off Christianity, and Civility and Humanity together? But *think in all your hearts and all your souls*, Is this to *sin no more*? Is it not to *revolt more and more*? O think that you see God angrily looking upon you, and saying, but *do you thus requite me, O foolish people and unwise*? Think that you see Jesus Christ standing and weeping over you, and saying as once, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, if thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace*, thou wouldst have made a better return, lest, before thou art aware, *they be hid from thine eyes*. I charge thee once more, *sin no more*, serve me thus no more, *O do not this abominable thing that I hate*, Jer. 44. 4. at last, *be thou instructed O Jerusalem*, O England, *lest my soul depart from thee, lest I make thee desolate, a Land not inhabited*, Jer. 6. 8.

Do we remember our former fears and troubles? were they not bad enough, that we now grow *worse*, that they may be renewed and aggravated?

Do we remember our resolutions, vows and promises that we then made to prevail with God for Mercy? were they that we

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we would be worse than ever if God would deliver us, and do we think that upon those terms he would have helped us? Do we consider to what happiness we have for the present arrived? to an Harbour after a Tempest, to a day of joy and gladness after the sad times of our griefs and fears. And shall our sins damp our joys? drive us again into the deep, and overcloud our Sun in a *clear day*? unless we be weary of our Mercies, let us not *weary* Amos 8. 9. *our God by our sins*: *Noli gemmam perdere in die festo*, is an Arabick Proverb, O do not that in a good day, which will undo all the comfort of it.

Or lastly do we think what yet we may be? Are we so absolutely cured, that we are past all possibility of a relapse? May not the wound rankle and grow angry, and then come to *Judab's* מַדְרֵאן, that there be *no remedy*? 2 Chron. 36. 16. O why should *Israel's* stubbornness, when come to the borders of *Canaan*, drive them back to the Red Sea again? why should we cast poyson into the wound that's healing? O why will we dye? O pity a tender *Mother*, a dear Native Country, which beseecheth you by the *Womb that bare you, and by the Breasts that gave you suck*, that now that she is recovering, you would not be a means of her *death* that first gave you *breath*. If you will not pity yourselves, yet pity *the excellency of your strength, the desire* Ezek. 24. 21, *of your eyes and that which your soul pityeth, your sons and your daughters*; which may do God more service, than ever you have done, when you are dead and gone. *Eat not the sour Grapes, that their teeth be not set on edge*, that instead of *rising up and calling us blessed*, they do not *gnash their teeth and curse us*, that by our sins in this *Crisis*, when we might have made both our selves and them happy, have utterly undone both without recovery. I might in this kind say much, yet when I had said all, I could say no more than the Text doth. And therefore when I have done speaking, let these words of your Saviour be ever sounding in your ears, *Behold, you are made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto you.*

Amen. Lord Jesus.