SERMON XXVIII.

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 Phebus 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, ver. 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, ver. 5. (drooping Christian die not of despair, for thou shalt not of thy disease though never so desperate, if Christ undertake the cure,) him he healed, ver. 7, 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.

In which words two things are implied, and two things joyned: The first thing implied in these words, μὴ ἐπέσκεψαι, 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 ἱνα μὴ καταστῇ τί, &c. left a worse thing come unto thee.

Whereupon
Whereupon the two things prescribed and injoyed (and the first a means of the second) are, 1. A serious consideration of the Mercy he had received in those words, ἵνα γεγονές, 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, μὴ ἐμπεπληρεῖ, Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. Like as the Angel charged Lot, now gotten out of Sodom, to flee 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 escape 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 injoyed 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 Debts 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 feeleth 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 Phyick 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) be the two 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: Behold,
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 ἐκπέμψειν αὐτοῦ of a ἔφυλακτον, after a Cordial to recover from a former Qualm, an Antidote to fortifie us against an after-Poison.

2. And this before we distemper ourselves 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 pertinaciously 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 snatched 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, so relapse into their former Idolatry: After they had rest, they did evil again before thee, faith Nebemiah, Chap. 9. 28. No sooner got cut 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 blustering Ezra, Chap. 9. 13, 14. That question faith they should not, but implicitly 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 poison 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 hit 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 damn'd up for a time, but, as soon as it hath its free course, returns to its former Channel. It's the besotted 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, falls a marrying strange wives, Ezra 10. 2. When David’s at rest from his wretched 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 old 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 joins 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, do 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 Pot, which else would boil 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 left 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 forfeit: Something he gives to encourage, 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.

Ref. 1.

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 Winterfrost 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 weaknesses 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 heal, 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 o τυφλός was taken away, was more openly discovered, 2 Thess. 2. 7, 8. And Jordan, when the Preist'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...
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Thus then these prickings Thorns hedge 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 Sailors, 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 Luss, which Sicknes weakened, 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 enforced 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 signifies 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 sicknes, 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 Mischief will befall us. Sin no more, faith our Saviour, lest a worse thing come unto thee: he faith left it do, but he thereby implies, and it is his meaning, if thou dost, for certain it will. A Relapse into a bodily Diseafe 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
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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 escape? faith 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, Aulum, 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 Leprosy 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 disposition 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.

1. In regard of punishment, τὸ ἐγκαταχέθη παθήματος, faith 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 χειρίζεται ἷς 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 faith, 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 Obstination 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 God's great goodness, Neh. 9. 25. when we serve him in it, ver. 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, when God from us hath Dishonour by them:
them: and, were there nothing else, if there be any ingenuity in us, we cannot but have less joy in the enjoyment of them, when we cannot but with Ezra 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 Battle, so that the Victory that day was turned into Mourning, because they heard say the King was grieved for his Son. Whatever 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 rejoice 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 bad, and that he should have bad; but because his Sons proved desperate wantons, God sets a Non-plus on their Heads with an Absit.* It's fitter for them that will know how better to use it: But why should the Child keep such a Knife in his hand to spoil it, and it may be to kill himself with it? In this case, Hos. 2. 9. הַיְּשָׁנָה הנִּי, הַיְּשָׁנָה faith God: He will take away his Corn, nay, recover his VVool. The Legatee proves an Usurper, and therefore Receipiam, 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 דַּלָּה 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 them; as the new cloth takes something out of the old garment, and so the rent is made worse, Mark. 2. 21. If Esau despise his birth-right, God shoots
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 are 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 forwardly and fallily with him after that he hath had mercy on us. 

Wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hast consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping? is all that Ezra 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 Jebsurun when grown fat begin to kick? to forfake God that made him, and lightly to esteem the God of his Salvation? ver. 15, 18. but what follows? ver. 19. When the Lord saw it, he abhorr'd them, because of the provoking of his sons and daughters. It's an unmanly sin: man loathes it; a most angodly sin: God abhors it in all, especially in a Jebsurun, and that signifies 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 treats 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 Israelites shall rather
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 ingrati-
tude.

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 en-
deavoured to fasten on them all obligations to obedience: besides
the tye 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 Impe tus 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 Afflict-
tions and Mercies.

Sometimes indeed afflictions are the last; as pinching and pine-
ing 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 Lenticiles will not do, corrosives, fear-
ings, 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 be-
fore 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 unexercised, 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 harsh-
ness, 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 Isra-
eelites want of Food, he in Mercy gave them Bread from Heaven,
be faith, 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 trial 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 four Grapes, what can God do more, but quite extirpate? if after tryal thus made of all means, of the last and best, we continue ill or prove worse than before, then, Reprobate silver call them, for the Lord hath rejected them. Jer. 6. 29. 30. Menab, Menab, Timab, Upharsin, God hath again and again numbered and weighed us, and we are found light, nay, heavy-hearted and immovable, 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 powerfullest 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.

Of both which the Use and Application should have been in the more full opening and enforcing the other two things here enjoined.

1. A serious and heedful Consideration and Review of the Mercy received, Is. behold, thou art made whole, faith our Saviour: he sets an Eye 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 
be bold, and consider, and for ever remember with all thankfulness. And would he not have us of this City and Kingdom be 
bold 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 
パーラレル, of that perfect Soundness, which Peter told the Jews 
that lame man had attained in the presence of them all, Acts 3. 16. 
The Humours in this great and greatly diseased Body are yet in an 
harry: 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 Sanballats and Tobias, (whom our 
Healing wounds and cuts to the heart) even they to their grief 
hear and see, יי עלת וארעה (as the phrase is Neb. 4. 7.) 
that an healing Plaister is mercifully applied to our bleeding 
Wounds, that, unless we be stupid and fainless, we cannot but 
with the Woman, when her bloody Issue was slope, know and feel 
what is done in us, Matth. 5. 33; and, unless lothsomly ingrateful, 
say, as it is, Ezek. 31. 26. הינק נל הינק 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, be bold, be bold thy former Wound, and 
thy present Cure. Be bold εἴς ἀλον εἰς όξα, 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 woefully corrupt-
ced, now graciosly 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 
bioy. Prophet's words, Come and bebold the Works of the Lord: we 
might
might of late have added, as it’s there, what desolations he hath made; but now what Restaurations, what Salvation he hath wrought in the Earth! He maketh Wars to cease, he breaketh the Bow, and cuttesth 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 let us up our Eben-exer with this impress upon it, Hebera hath the Lord helped us. Bebold thus far, O England, thou art made whole, and what remains? but

2. The second duty enjoined 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 embittered? Were your publick Church-Assemblies ever so neglected? In your civil Meetings your Elections and other Affairs ever with such confusion? I had almost laid brutish rage (as of late) to transact, 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 wouldest have made a better return, left 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, left my soul depart from thee, left 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
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 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 joyes? 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 Judah's NEMEIN, that there be no remedy? 2 Chron. 36. 16. O why should Israel's stubborness, when come to the borders of Canaan, drive them back to the Red Sea again? why should we cast poison into the wound that's healing? O why will we dye? O pitty 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 pitty yourselves, yet pitty the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes and that which your soul pitieth, 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 four 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.