

Preached at Lincolns Inne.

Second Sermon on

PSAL. 38.4. *FOR MINE INIQUITIES ARE GONE
OVER MY HEAD, AS A HEAVY BURDEN, THEY
ARE TOO HEAVY FOR ME.*

AS THE Philosopher says, if a man could see *vertue*, he would *love* it, so if a man could see *sin*, he would *hate* it. But as the *eye* sees every thing but *it selfe*, so does *sinne*, too. It sees *Beauty*, and *Honour*, and *Riches*, but it sees not it selfe, not the sinfull coveting, and compassing of all these. To make, though not sin, yet the *sinner* to see himselfe, for the explication, and application of these words, we brought you these two lights; first, the *Multiplicity* of sin, in that elegancy of the holy Ghost, *supergressæ sunt, Mine iniquities are gone over my head*, and the *weight*, and *oppression* of sin, in that, *Gravata nimis, As a heavy burden they are too heavy for me*; In the first, how *numerous*, how manifold they are, in the other, how grievous, how insupportable; first, how many hands, then how fast hold sinne lays upon me. The first of these two, was our exercise the last day, when we proposed and proceeded in these words, in which we presented to you, the dangerous multiplicity of sinne, in those pieces, which constituted that part. But because, as men, how many soever, make but a Multitude, or a Throng, and not an Army, if they be unarmed, so sin, how manifold, and multiform so ever, might seem a passable thing, if it might be easily shaken off, we come now to imprint in you a sense of the *weight* and *oppression* thereof, *As a heavy burthen, they are too heavy for mee*; The particular degrees whereof, we laid down the last day, in our generall division of the whole Text, and shall now pursue them, according to our order proposed then.

First then, sinne is *heavy*. Does not the sinner finde it so? No marvail, nothing is heavy in his proper place, in his own Sphear, in his own Center, when it is where it would be, nothing is heavy. He that lies under water finds no burthen of all that water that lies upon him; but if he were out of it, how heavy would a small quantity of that water seem to him, if he were to carry it in a vessell? An *habitually sinner* is the naturall place, the Center of sinne, and he feels no weight in it, but if the grace of God raise him out of it, that he come to walke, and walke in the ways of godlinesse, not onely his watery Tympanies, and his dropsies, those waters which by actuall and habituall sinnes he hath contracted, but that water, of which he is properly made, the water that is in him naturally, infused from his parents, *Originall sinne*, will be sensible to him, and oppresse him. Scarce any man considers the weight of Originall sinne; And yet, as the strongest tentations fall upon us when wee are weakest, in our *death-bed*, so the heaviest sinne seises us, when wee are weakest; as soon as wee are any thing, we are sinners, and there, where there can be no more tentations ministred to us, then was to the Angels that fell in heaven, that is, in *our mothers womb*, when no world, nor flesh, nor Devill could present a provocation to sinne to us, when no faculty of ours is able to embrace, or second a provocation to sin, yet there, in that weaknesse, we are under the weight of Originall sin. And truly, if at this time, God would vouchsafe mee my choice, whether hee should pardon me all those actuall and habituall sins, which I have committed in my life, or extinguish Originall sinne in me, I should chuse to be delivered from Originall sin, because, though I be delivered from the *imputation* thereof, by *Baptism*, so that I shall not fall under a condemnation for Originall sin onely, yet it still remains in me, and practises upon me, and occasions all the other sins, that I commit: now, for all my actuall and habituall sins, I know God hath instituted meanes in his Church, the *Word*, and the *Sacraments*, for my reparation; But with what a holy alacrity, with what a heavenly joy, with what a cheerfull peace, should I come to the participation of these meanes and seals of my reconciliation, and pardon of all my sins, if I knew my selfe to be delivered from Originall sinne, from that snake in my bosome, from that poyson in my blood, from that leaven and tartar in all my actions, that casts me

into Relapses of those sins which I have repented? And what a cloud upon the best serenity of my conscience, what an interruption, what a dis-continuance from the sincerity and integrity of that joy, which belongs to a man truly reconciled to God, in the pardon of his former sins, must it needs be still to know, and to know by lamentable experiences, that though I wash my selfe with Soap, and Nitre, and Snow-water, mine own cloathes will defile me again, though I have washed my selfe in the tears of Repentance, and in the blood of my Saviour, though I have no guiltinesse of any former sin upon me at that present, yet I have a sense of a *root* of sin, that is not grub'd up, of *Originall sinne*, that will cast me back again. Scarce any man considers the weight, the oppression of Originall sinne. No man can say, that an Akorn weighs as much as an Oak; yet in truth, there is an Oak in that Akorn: no man considers that Originall sinne weighs as much as Actuell, or Habituell, yet in truth, all our Actuell and Habituell sins are in Originall. Therefore Saint *Pauls* vehement, and frequent prayer to God, to that purpose, could not deliver him from Originall sin, and that *stimulus carnis*, that provocation of the flesh, that *Messenger of Satan*, which rises out of that, God would give him *sufficient grace*, it should not worke to his destruction, but yet he should have it: Nay, the infinite merit of Christ Jesus himself, that works so upon all actuell and habituell sins, as that after that merit is applyed to them, those sins are no sins, works not so upon Originall sin, but that, though I be eased in the *Dominion*, and *Imputation* thereof, yet the same Originall sin is in me still; and though God doe deliver me from eternall death, due to mine actuell and habituell sins, yet from the temporall death, due to Originall sin, he delivers not his dearest Saints.

Thus sin is heavy in the *seed*, in the *grain*, in the *akorn*, how much more when it is a *field* of Corn, a *barn* of grain, a *forest* of Oaks, in the multiplication, and complication of sin in sin? And yet wee consider the weight of sin another way too, for as Christ feels all the afflictions of his children, so his children will feel all the wounds that are inflicted upon him; even the sins of other men; as *Lots* righteous soule was grieved with sins of others. If others sin by my example and provocation, or by my connivence and permission, when I have authority, their sin lies heavyer upon me, then upon themselves; for

they have but the *weight of their own sinne*; and I have *mine*, and *theirs* upon me; and though I cannot have *two souls* to suffer, and though there cannot be two *everlastingnesses* in the torments of hell, yet I shall have two measures of those unmeasurable torments upon my soul. But if I have no interest in the sins of other men, by any occasion ministred by me, yet I cannot chuse but feel a weight, a burthen of a holy anguish, and compassion and indignation, because every one of these sins inflict a new wound upon my Saviour, when my Saviour says to him, that does but injure me, *Why persecutest thou me*, and feels the blow upon himselfe, shall not I say to him that wounds my Saviour, *Why woundest thou me*, and groane under the weight of my brothers sin, and my Fathers, my Makers, my Saviours wound? If a man of my blood, or allyance, doe a shamefull act, I am affected with it; If a man of my calling, or *profession*, doe a scandalous act, I feel my self concerned in his fault; God hath made all *mankinde* of *one blood*, and all *Christians* of *one calling*, and the sins of every man concern every man, both in that respect, that *I*, that is, *This nature*, is in that man that sins that sin; and *I*, that is, *This nature*, is in that Christ, who is wounded by that sin. The weight of sin, were it but Originall sin, were it but the sins of other men, is an insupportable weight.

But if a sinner will take a true balance, and try the right weight of sin, let him goe about to leave his sin, and then he shall see how close, and how heavily it stook to him. Then one sin will lay the weight, of *seelinesse*, of *falshood*, of *inconstancy*, of *dishonour*, of *ill nature*, if you goe about to leave it: and another sin will lay the weight of *poverty*, of *disestimation* upon you, if you goe about to leave it. One sin will lay your *pleasures* upon you, another your *profit*, another your *Honour*, another your *Duty* to wife and children, and weigh you down with these. Goe but out of the water, goe but about to leave a sin, and you will finde the weight of it, and the hardnesse to cast it off. *Gravatae sunt, Mine iniquities are heavy*, (that was our first) and *gravatae nimis*, they are *too heavy*, which is a second circumstance.

Some weight, some *balast* is necessary to make a ship goe steady; we are not without advantage, in having *some sinne*; some *concupiscence*, some *tentation* is not too heavy for us. The greatest sins that ever were committed, were committed by them, who had *no*

former sinne, to push them on to that sin: The first *Angels* sin, and the sin of *Adam* are noted to be the most desperate and the most irrecoverable sins, and they were committed, when they had no former sin in them. The *Angels* punishment is pardoned in *no part*; *Adams* punishment is pardoned in *no man*, in this world. Now such sins as those, that is, sins that are never pardoned, no man commits now; not now, when he hath the weight of former sins to push him on. Though there be a heavy guiltinesse in *Originall sin*, yet I have an argument, a plea for mercy out of that, *Lord, my strength is not the strength of stones, nor my flesh brasse; Lord, no man can bring a clean thing out of uncleannesse; Lord, no man can say after, I have cleansed my heart, I am free from sinne*, I could not be borne cleane, I could not cleanse my selfe since. It magnifies Gods glory, it amplifies mans happinesse, that he is subject to tentation. If man had been made *impeccable*, that he could not have sinned, he had not been so happy; for then, he could onely have enjoyed that state, in which he was created, and not have risen to any *better*; because that better estate, is a reward of our willing obedience to God, in such things, as we might have disobeyed him in. Therefore when the Apostle was in danger, of growing too light, *lest he should be exalted out of measure, through the abundance of revelation*, (says that Scripture) he had a weight hung upon him; There was something *given him*, therefore it was a benefit, *a gift*; And it was *Angelus, an Angel*, that was given him; But it was not a good Angel, a Tutelar, a Gardian Angel, to present *good motions* unto him, but it was *Angelus Satanae, a messenger of Satan, sent*, as he says, *to buffet him*; and yet this hostile Angel, this *messenger of Satan* was a benefit, *a gift*, and a fore-runner, and some kind of *Inducer* of that *Grace*, which was *sufficient for him*; and it would not have appeared to us, no nor to himselfe, that he had had so much of that grace, if he had not had this tentation. God is as powerfull upon us when he delivers us *from* tentation, that it doe not overtake us; but not so apparent, so evident, so manifest, as when he delivers us *in* a tentation, that it doe not overcome us: some weight does but *ballast* us, as some enemies never doe us more harme, but occasion us, to arme and to stand upon our gard. Therefore, this weight that is complained of here, is not *In carne*, in our naturall flesh; (though in *that* be no *goodnesse*) it is nothing that God from

the beginning hath imprinted in our nature, not that *peccability*, and *possibility* of sinning; nor it is not *in stimulo carnis*, in these accessory tentations, and provocations which awaken, and provoke the malignity of this flesh, and put a sting into it; we doe not consider this heavy weight to be the *naturall possibility* which was in man, *before Originall sinne* entred, nor to be that naturall pronenesse to sinne, which is *originall sinne it selfe*. But it is, when we our selves whet that sting, when we labour to breake hedges, and to steale wood, and gather up a stick out of one sin, and a stick out of another, and to make a fagot to load us, in this life, and burne us in the next, in multiplying sins, and aggravating circumstances, so it is *Heavy*, so it is *too heavy*, *It is too heavy for me*, (for that's also another circumstance) *for David himselfe*, for any man even in *David's* state.

Though this consideration might be enlarged, and usefully carried into this expostulation, can sin be too heavy for *me*, any burden of sin sink *me* into a dejection of spirit, that am wrapped up in the *Covenant*, borne of *Christian Parents*, that am bred up in an *Orthodox*, in a *Reformed Church*, that can perswade my selfe sometimes, that I am of the *number of the elect*; Can any sin be too heavy for *me*, can I doubt of the execution of his *first purpose* upon me, or doubt of the efficacy of his *ordinances* here in the Church, what sin soever I commit, can any sins be too heavy for me? yet it is enough that in this Sea, God holds no man up by the chin so, but that if he sin in confidence of that sustentation, he shall sink. But in this personall respect in our text, we consider onely with what weights *David* weighed his sins, when hee found here that they were too heavy for him. He weighed his sin with his punishment, and in his punishment hee saw the anger, and *indignation of God*, and when we see sin through that spectacle, through an *angry God*, it appears great, and red, and fearefull unto us; when *David* came to see himselfe in his infirmity, in his deformity, when his body could not bear the punishment here in this world, he considered how insupportable a weight the sin, and the anger of God upon that sin, would be in the world to come. For *me* that rise to preferment by my sin, for *me* that come to satisfie my *carnall appetites* by my sin, my sin is not too heavy; But for *me* that suffer *penury* in the bottome of a plentiful state exhausted by my sin, for *me* that languish under *diseases* and putre-

faction contracted by my sin, for *me* upon whom the hand of God lies heavy in any *affliction* for my sin, for *me*, my sins are too heavy. Till I come to hear that voice, *Come unto me all you that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you*, till I come to consider my sin in the mercy of God, and not onely in his justice, in his punishments, my sins will be too heavy for me; for, though that be a good way, to consider the justice of God, yet it is not a good *end*; I must *stop*, but not *stay* at it, I must consider my sin in his justice, how *powerfull* a God I have provoked; but I must passe through his justice to his mercy; his justice is my *way*, but his mercy is my *lodging*; for wee cannot tell by the construction and origination of the words, whether *Cain* said, *My sin is greater then can bee pardoned*, or, *my punishment is greater then can bee borne*: But it needes not bee disputed; for it is all one; He that considers *onely* the anger of God in the *punishment*, will thinke his sin unpardonable, *his sinne will be too heavy for him*. But as a *feaver* is well spent, when the patient is fit to take physick, so if God give me physick, if I take his corrections as *medicines*, and not as *punishments*, then my disease is well spent, my danger is well overcome; If I have buryed my sins in the wounds of my Saviour, they cannot be too heavy for me, for they are not upon me at all; But if I take them out again, by relapsing into them, or imagine them to rise again, by a suspicion and jealousie in God, that he hath not forgiven them, because his hand lies still upon me, in some afflictions, so, in such a relapse, so, in such a jealous *mis-interpretation* of Gods proceeding with me, *my sins are too heavy for me*; for *me*, because I do not sustain my self by those helps that God puts into my hands.

It is *heavy, too heavy, too heavy for me*, says *David*; if you consider the *elect themselves*, their election will not beare them out in their sins. But here we consider the insupportablenesse, in that, wherein the holy Ghost hath presented it, *Quia onus*, because it lies upon me, in the nature and quality of a *Burden*, *Mine iniquities are as a burden, too heavy for me*. When all this is packed up upon me, that I am first under a *Calamity*, a *sicknesse*, a *scorne*, an *imprisonment*, a *penury*, and then upon that calamity, there is laid the *anger* and *indignation of God*, and then upon that, the *weight of mine own sinnes*; this is too much to settle me, it is enough to sinke me, it is a

burden, in which the danger arises from the last addition, in that, which is last laid on: for, as the *sceptique Philosopher* pleases himselfe in that argumentation, that either a penny makes a man rich, or he can never be rich, for says he, if he be not rich yet, the addition of a penny more would make him rich: or if not that penny, yet another, or another, so that at last it is the *addition of a penny* that makes him rich; so without any such fallacious or facetious circumvention in our case, it is the last addition, that that we look on last, that makes our burden insupportable, when upon our calamity we see the anger of God piled up, and upon that, *our sin*, when I come to see my sin, in that glasse, not in a Saviour bleeding for me, but in a Judge frowning upon mee; when my sins are so far off from me, as that they are the *last thing* that I see; for, if I would look upon my sins, first, with a remorsefull, a tearfull, a repentant eye, either I should see no anger, no calamity; or it would not seem strange to me, that God should bee angry, nor strange, that I should suffer calamities, when God is angry; Therefore is sin heavy as a burden, because it is the last thing that I lay upon my selfe, and feel not that till a heavy load of calamity and anger be upon me before. But then, as when we come to be unloaded of a burden, that that was last laid on, is first taken off, so when we come, by any meanes, though by the sense of a calamity, or of the anger of God, to a sense of our sin, before the calamity it selfe be taken off, the sin is forgiven. When the Prophet found *David* in this state, the first act that the Prophet came to was the *Transtulit peccatum, God hath taken away thy sinne*, but the calamity was not yet taken away. The *child* begot in sin *shall surely die*, though the sin be pardoned. The *fruit* of the tree may be preserved and kept, after the tree it selfe is cut down and burnt; The fruit, and off-spring of our sin, calamity, may continue upon us, after God hath removed the guiltinesse of the sin from us. In the course of civility, our parents goe out before us, in the course of Mortality, our parents die before us; In the course of Gods mercy, it is so too; The sin that begot the calamity, is dead, and gone, the calamity, the child, and off-spring of that sin, is alive and powerfull upon us. But for the most part, as if I would lift *an iron chain* from the ground, if I take but the first linke, and draw up that, the whole chain follows, so if by my repentance, I remove the uppermost weight of my

load, *my sin*, all the rest, the declaration of the anger of God, and the calamities that I suffer, will follow my sin, and depart from me. But still our first care must be to take off the last weight, the last that comes to our sense, *The sin*.

You have met, I am sure, in old *Apophthegms*, an answer of a Philosopher celebrated, that being asked, *what was the heaviest thing in the world*, answered, *Senex Tyrannus, An old Tyran*; For a Tyran, at first, dares not proceed so severely; but when he is established, and hath continued *long*, he prescribes in his injuries, and those injuries become *Laws*. As sin is a *Tyran*, so he is got *over our head, in Dominio*, as we shewed you in the *supergressæ sunt*, in our former part; As he is an *old Tyran*, so he is *the heaviest burden* that can be imagined; An inveterate sin, is an inveterate sore, we may hold out with it, but hardly cure it; we may slumber it, but hardly kill it. Weigh sin in *heaven*; heaven could not *beare* it, in the *Angels*; They fell: In the *waters*; The Sea could not *beare* it in *Jonas*; He was cast in: In the *earth*; That could not *beare* it in *Dathan*, and *Abiram*; They were swallowed: And because all the inhabitants of the earth are sin it selfe, *The earth it selfe shall reel to and fro, as a Drunkard, and shall be removed like a Cottage, and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall and not rise againe*; There's the totall, the finall fall, proper to the wicked; they shall *fall*; so shall the godly; And *fall every day*; and *fall seven times a day*; but they shall *rise againe* and *stand in judgement*; *The wicked shall not doe so*; They shall *rise*, rise to judgement; and they shall stand, *stand for judgement*, stand *to receive judgement*; and then, *not fall*, but *be cast out*, out of the presence of God, and *cast down*, down into an impossibility of rising, for ever, for ever, for ever. There is a lively expressing of this deadly weight, this burden in the Prophet *Zechary*. First, there was a certaine vessell, a measure shewed, and the Angel said, *Hic est oculus, This is the sight*, (says our first translation) *This is the resemblance through all the earth*, (says our second) That is, to this measure, and to that that is figured in it, every man must look, this every man must take into his consideration; what is it? In this measure sate a woman whose name was *Wickednesse*; At first, this woman, this wickednesse, *sate up* in this vessell, she had not filled the measure, she was not laid securely in it, she was not prostrate,

not groveling, but her nobler part, *her head*, was yet out of danger, *she sate up in it*. But before the Vision departs, she is plunged wholly into that measure; (into *darknesse*, into *blindnesse*) and not for a time; for, then, *there was a cover*, (says the text) and *a great cover*, and *a great cover of Lead put upon that vessell*; and so, a perpetuall imprisonment, no hope to get out; and *heavy fetters*, no ease to be had within; Hard ground to tread upon, and heavy burdens to carry; first a *cover*, that is, an *excuse*; a *great cover*, that is, a *defence*, and a *glory*; at last, *of Lead*; all determines in *Desperation*. This is when the multiplicity and indifferencie to lesser sins, and the habituall custome of some particular sin, meet in the aggravating of the burden: for then, they are *heavier then the sand of the Sea*, says the holy Ghost: where he expresses the greatest weight by the least thing; Nothing lesse then a graine of *sand*, nothing *heavier then the sands of the Sea*, nothing easier to resist then a *first tentation*, or a *single sinne* in it selfe, nothing heavier, nor harder to deuest, then *sinnes complicated* in one another, or then *an old Tyran*, and *custome* in any one sin. And therefore it was evermore a familiar phrase with the *Prophets*, when they were to declare the sins, or to denounce the punishments of those sins upon the people, to call it by this word, *Onus visionis*, *Onus Babylonis*, *Onus Ninives*, *O the burden of Babylon*, *the burden of Niniveh*. And because some of those *woes*, those *Judgements*, those *burdens*, did not always fall upon that people presently, they came to mock the *Prophets*, and say to them, *Now, what is the burden of the Lord*, *What Burden have you to preach to us*, and to talke of now? Say unto them, says God to the Prophet there; *This is the Burden of the Lord*, *I will even forsake you*. And, as it is elegantly, emphatically, vehemently added, *Every mans word shall be his burden*; That which he *says*, shall be that that shall be laid to his charge; His *scorning*, his idle questioning of the Prophet, *What burden now*, *what plague*, *what famine*, *what warre* now? *Is not all well for all your crying* The burden of the Lord? *Every mans word shall be his burden*, the *deriding* of Gods Ordinance, and of the denouncing of his Judgements in that Ordinance, shall be their burden, that is, aggravate those Judgements upon them. Nay, there is a heavier weight then that, added; *Ye shall say no more* (says God to the Prophet) *the burden of the Lord*, that is, you shall not bestow

so much care upon this people, as to tell them, that the Lord threatens them. Gods presence in anger, and in punishments, is a heavy, but Gods absence, and dereliction, a much heavier burden; As (if extremes will admit comparison) the everlasting losse of the sight of God in hell, is a greater torment, then any lakes of inextinguishable Brimstone, then any gnawing of the incessant worme, then any gnashing of teeth can present unto us.

Now, let no man ease himself upon that fallacy, *sin cannot be*, nor sin cannot induce such burdens as you talk of, for many men are come to *wealth*, and by that *wealth*, to *honour*, who, if they had admitted a tendernesse in their consciences, and forborn some sins, had lost both; for, are they without burden, because they have *wealth*, and *honour*? In the Originall language, the same word, that is here, a *burden*, *Chabad*, signifies *honour*, and *wealth*, as well as a *burden*. And therefore says the Prophet, *Woe unto him that loadeth himselfe with thick clay. Non densantur nisi per laborem*; There goes much pains to the laying of it thus thick upon us; The multiplying of riches is a laborious thing; and then it is a new pain to bleed out those riches for a *new office*, or a *new title*; *Et tamen lutum*, says that Father, when all is done, we are but roughcast with durt; All those *Riches*, all those *Honours* are a *Burden*, upon the *just* man, they are but a multiplying of *fears*, that they shall lose them; upon the *securest* man, they are but a multiplying of *duties* and *obligations*; for the more they have, the more they have to answer; and upon the *unjust*, they are a multiplying of everlasting torments. *They possess months of vanity, and wearisom nights are appointed them*. Men are as weary of the *day*, upon *Carpets* and *Cushions*, as at the plough. And the labourers wearinesse, is to a good end; but for these men, *They weary themselves to commit iniquity*. Some doe, and some doe not; All doe. *The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them*; Why? *Because he knows not how to goe to the City*. He that directs not his labours to the right end, the glory of God, he goes not to Jerusalem, the City of holy peace, but his sinfull labours shall bee a burden to him; and his Riches, and his Office, and his Honour hee shall not be able to put off, then when he puts off his body in his death-bed; He shall not have that happinesse, which he, till then, thought a misery, *To carry nothing out of this world*, for his Riches, his Office, his

Honour shall follow him into the next world, and clog his soule there. But we proposed this consideration of this Metaphor, *That sinne is a burden*, (as there is an infinite sweetnesse, and infinite latitude in every Metaphor, in every elegancy of the Scripture, and therefore I may have leave to be loath to depart from it) in some particular inconveniences, that a *burden* brings, and it is time to come to them.