

and make them minister to our own selfish and worldly desires and ends, then we make God to serve with our sins. "Thou hast wearied me," says God again, "with thine iniquities." Sin in us is like a burden and a grief to the blessed God, it wearies, and it grieves Him to see it. Just observe the marked antithesis in the passage. God had not made them to serve with their sacrifices, but they had made God to serve with their sins. He had not burdened or tired them with His commands, but they had tired Him with their disobedience. Unprofitable and wicked servants! God was careful of their comfort, but they were careless of His honour. And yet, what is God's Word even to such, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Instead of those words of withering condemnation which one might expect to hear after such a review of their sin, and which might justly have been spoken, we hear words of tender compassion and grace.

John Newton once said, "To return evil for good, is devil-like. To return good for good is man-like. But to return good for evil is God-like." "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions," saith God to those who have sinned against him, to those who have disobeyed his voice, despised His service, set at nought His warnings, misused His gifts, and rejected His grace. Those of you who have not yet come to repentance, who have presumed upon the goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering of God, who have misused these as an encouragement to continue in sin, have in an awful sense made God to serve with your sins, pressing in to the service of sin that very goodness and mercy which should form the most persuasive motive to repentance. Yet even to you, in long-suffering grace, God sends this message once again, "I, even I, am

He that blotteth out thy transgressions." O the richness of the goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering of God.— "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage! He retaineth not His anger forever, because He delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities, and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." O, reader, despise *not* the riches of God's goodness by making light of His forgiveness, by refusing to turn that ye may obtain mercy from Him.

II. God blots our sins out of His book, so that no record of them remains to come up against us in the judgment. The expression used in our text indicates a record, a book, on which all our sins are set down. That word in the Psalms, "If thou, Lord, shouldest *mark* iniquity," conveys the same thought, and so also does that word in the book of the prophet Jeremiah, "Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is *marked* before me, saith the Lord God."

Every man carries within him God's servant, who is engaged continually in keeping the record of his sins. Our conscience, that wonderful faculty wherewith God has endowed every man, is able to take down our words as fast as they are spoken, and our thoughts as fast as they are conceived. Its record, so far as we ourselves are concerned, is indelible; it is laid up beyond our reach in God's safe keeping, no hand but God's can blot that record out. Men foolishly conceive that their memory is the keeper of this record, and that, when their sins have dropped out of their own mind, they shall meet them no more. But the record remains nevertheless, to be produced and opened at the proper time. Even in this life its terrible