

**THE CHRISTIAN'S END.**

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## THE CHRISTIAN'S END.

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### NOTE.

'The Christian's End' was published in 1639, in a thin volume, with a finely engraved portait of Sibbes prefixed. The impression must have been very limited, as it is among the least frequently occurring of his books, and brings a high price. The title-page is given below.\*

G.

### \* THE CHRISTIANS END.

OR,

The sweet Sovereignty of CHRIST,  
over his members in life and death.  
Wherein is contained the whole scope of the  
godly MANS life, with divers Rules, Mo-  
tives and Incouragements, to live and  
die to IESUS CHRIST.

Being the substance of five SERMONS preached  
to the Honorable Society of *Grayes* Inne, by  
that Learned and faithfull Minister of *Gods*  
*Word*, RICHARD SIBBES, D.D. .  
and sometimes Preacher to that  
Honorable Societio.

1. COR. 6. 20.

*Yee are bought with a price, &c.*

HEB. 11. 4.

*He being dead, yet speaketh.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by *Thomas Harper*, for *Lawrence Chapman*, and  
are to be sold at his shop at Chancery lane end  
next Holborne, 1639.

# THE CHRISTIAN'S END.

## THE FIRST SERMON.

*None of us liveth to himself, and none of us dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*—ROM. XIV. 7, 8.

THE scope of the chapter in the former part of it, is to discover to the Romans, and in them to us all, how to carry ourselves to others in matters of indifferency. As there is difference of things in the world—some good, some ill, and some of a middle nature—so there are different affections in men. About these things of a middle nature some are strong, and they are prone to despise the weaker, for they know their liberty; some more weak, and they are prone to censure and complain of them that be strong, as all weakness is full of impatience. Thus it was with the Romans. The strong despised the weaker, as ignorant; the weaker censured, and in their hearts condemned, the strong, as too adventurous.

The apostle sheweth here an excellent peaceable spirit, hating contention as an evil thing in a church. In a family, when children fall together by the ears, the father taketh up the quarrel, by beating them both. So in a church, while people fall a-contending and breaking the bonds of love, God taketh them in hand. And therefore the apostle taketh them off from this danger by\* despising one another, and presseth it by a reason in the fourth verse, drawn,

First, *From their relations.* 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?'

Secondly, *From their aims.* They do it both out of religious respects. 'He that eateth, eateth to the Lord; he that eateth not, eateth not to the Lord; he that regardeth not a day, regardeth it not to the Lord; he that doth it, doth it to the Lord.' And therefore if both have a religious respect, censure may be forborne.

There is that force in a good aim, that in some actions of an indifferent nature they may be done, or not be done; and God may bear with both, though he allow not of either's carelessness in searching out the truth. Till the time of growth, God beareth with them, so their aims be gracious, their fault being simple ignorance, not malicious pertinancy.† When St Paul saw the hypocritical aims of the Galatians in things of indifferent natures, he

\* Qu. 'of'?—ED.

† That is, 'pertinaciousness.'—G.

would not yield a whit to them. But the defect of the Romans was in their knowledge, not in their wills; they did it with respect to the Lord. And therefore as in Acts xiii. 18, God is said *ἐργαστοφύειν* (an excellent word), to bear with their manners in the wilderness, dispensing with many things, as putting away of wives, &c.; not that he liked that course, but he would set up a meek kind of government, not taking advantage to cast them off. So he dealt with the Romans. Now, shall God be merciful and indulgent, and man severe?

1. In the text you have a general reason why they that did it, or did it not, did or did it not 'to the Lord.' 'For none liveth to himself, or dieth to himself; but whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.'

2. In this reason here is, first, a general negative: 'None of us liveth to himself, none of us dieth to himself'—a figurative speech and rhetorical expression, beginning and ending alike. Secondly, There is a general affirmative; when he hath taken them off from themselves, he assigneth them to a true Lord: 'Whether we live, we live to the Lord; whether we die, we die to the Lord.' And this is set down with a disjunction: we neither live to ourselves, nor die to ourselves.

3. And, thirdly, a general ground that wrappeth up all: 'Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.' And therefore in reason we should live to him and die to him.

4. Fourthly, There is the ground of all, in that that followeth: 'For to this end Christ died and rose again, that he might be Lord of life and death.' So here is reason upon reason, and ground upon ground.

*Conclusion.* The sum of all is, we cannot certainly conclude of life or death. For we live but for a while; and when we have acted our part upon the stage we die, and go to another world. Of life and death we can make no reckoning. As soon as we begin to live, we begin to die. For some part of our life is taken away daily; as it is with a sum, the more you take away, the less remaineth. But certain it is, living and dying, 'we are the Lord's.' We ought therefore to have a conjunctive consideration. I now live, yet that is not my comfort; but sure I am, 'whether I live or die, I am the Lord's.'

He riseth from a general to a particular, which may teach us this point of wisdom.

First, *That to have good general truths is an excellent point of wisdom, for they have affluence\* into all particulars.* A comprehension of principles is the ground of prudence for direction in particular cases. There is no art but hath some general maxims, as in law, in physic, and in the mathematics, there be canons or principles, call them what you will, that have influence into all particulars. So religion hath general rules, which should be deposited in memory at all times; that on all occasions we may see how particulars spring from and agree to the generals. Therefore we should labour to treasure up in our memory good principles, for men work in all things according to their principles. If they have good principles, or general truths, they work answerably. And the reason of any error in a Christian's life is from false principles.

Men of a bad conscience, whose *synteresis* (being the part of the soul that preserveth principles) is corrupt, they think they do God good service in killing of men, from an abominable principle, John xvi. 2. As in popery, which is grounded upon false principles, making men's traditions a rule of faith.

\* That is, 'flowing to' = adaptation or application.—G.

Therefore it is good to have general true grounds. Mark how the Scripture is frequent this way. What an excellent general rule is that of Christ. 'Seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be cast upon you,' Mat. vi. 33. Carry that along, and what a light doth it give into all our actions. What need we by indirect courses seek to be great in the world, if we take Christ's method?

Again, Our Saviour Christ in his ordinary speech delivered it as a general rule, 'It is better to give than to receive,' Acts xx. 35, which containeth a direction to men to be public and liberal. St Paul's ordinary course was so: 'Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men,' &c., 2 Cor. v. 11. What an influence hath this into our conversations, 'That I must do, as I must give account at the day of judgment.' And so what use made he of the glorious state to come, in that house 'and building of God not made with hands, not seen, but apprehended only by faith,' 2 Cor. v. 1. It enabled him to do and suffer all things that became a Christian to do and suffer. If a man have that principle and mindeth it, 'that all things work together for the best to them that love God,' Rom. viii. 28, what can discourage him? He knoweth in the issue all shall be for the best, and God will not fail him nor forsake him in his way, 'but giveth his angels charge over him,' Ps. xci. 11. So Christ's direction. One thing is necessary, how may it rectify\* us when we trouble ourselves about many impertinences? If these generalists† were always present upon solicitations to sin or discomfort, 'It shall go well with the righteous, and it shall not go well with the wicked; if we take good courses it shall be well, if ill courses sin will be bitter:' it would be a marvellous help and advantage in all particulars of our lives.

The second general observation is this, *that as we must get good principles laid up in store upon all occasion, so we must specially have gracious aims.* Men are as their aims are. Noble spirits have noble aims (a). Christians are of an higher rank than ordinary men, and therefore they have higher aims. Religion giveth command to all other particulars, and prescribeth to them a general end. It taketh a man off from a false end, and pitcheth him upon a true end. It taketh him from himself, the great idol that man naturally setteth up above God and above Christ, and above heaven and happiness, and telleth him that the true end of all is to live to Christ; and that on good grounds, 'for we are his,' and his by good title: 'he died for us, that he might be Lord both of quick and dead,' Acts x. 42. As in state policy, those that are governors in a state they prescribe ends of trades, and reduce them to a serviceableness of state—if they find anything hurtful, they look to it as it stands in reference to the common good—so religion considereth of all particulars as they have reference to Christ and the main end, taking us off from false ends, and prescribing the last and best end, and directing all particulars to that end. But we shall see this better in the unfolding of the words.

The first thing he begins in the general is, to take us off from false ends: 'None of us liveth to himself.'

(1.) First, To live to ourselves is not altogether to be taken in a civil sense. A man liveth to himself *when he liveth privately or retiredly: Bene vixit, qui benè latuit* (b). So a man may do in some things, especially in times of persecution; but this ordinarily is not good. A man is a creature for communion; and God hath fitted him for communion by speech and

\* That is, = 'put us right.'—G.

† Qu. 'generals,' or 'generalities'?—G.

other endowments, that there may be preserved a communion of saints. But because a retired life is sometimes good, it is not here mainly aimed at.

(2.) Again, secondly, we live to ourselves *when we mind ourselves altogether, and not one another*; when we have more respect to ourselves, than to God or to our Christian brother. And this is even contrary to nature. We see in nature, that a particular nature will in some cases yield to a general, and thwart itself. The fire is a light body, and in the natural motion of it mounteth upward; yet this body will go downwards to preserve whole the universal nature from a vacuum, from emptiness, that the fulness and solidity in nature may not be disturbed. And we see heavy bodies go upward for the same end. As a man will venture the hand to save his head, and to save his body, so it should be in society and government; particular men should venture themselves for the prince or state, for the head or for the body.

(3.) But in a more large and religious sense. To live to a man's self is *to make himself his last end*, his *terminus reductivus*, to reduce all to himself, and make religion and everything serviceable to himself. When a man will serve himself of God for base ends, because his service will advance him; as the Shechemites were circumcised for Dinah, Gen xxxiv. 1, *seq.*

And to die to ourselves is much like it.

(1.) A man dieth to himself, *when he regardeth himself in death, and is regarded much of nobody else*. Persons that have an absolute being of themselves, that have no kindred, not much acquaintance, or have been little fruitful in their lives, die to themselves in a civil sense; that is, no man mourneth for them, saying, 'Ah, my brother,' 1 Kings xiii. 30. They were of little use in their lives, and so little missed in their deaths.

And usually they that live thus to themselves, they die to themselves, little regarded, little lamented. Only this oftentimes, they do most good when they die; as we say of swine, 'They are never good till dead.'

(2.) But this is meant in a theological higher sense. No Christian 'dieth to himself'; that is, *dieth unregarded of God and of good men*. As he liveth not to himself but to Christ, so he dieth not to himself: 'Precious to the Lord is the death of all his saints,' Ps. cxvi. 15. He is not *despotos*,\* without lord and master; but 'whether he liveth or dieth, he is the Lord's.' So much for the negative part, which we see may be taken both actively and passively.

But this clause will be better understood by adding the other. 'Whether we live, we live to the Lord; or whether we die, we die to the Lord.'

*Quest.* What is it to live to the Lord?

*Ans.* First, *To acknowledge the Lord in all our ways to be our Lord, to whom we owe ourselves.*

And secondly, *Thereupon to resign ourselves to the Lord in our whole carriage*, so as to obey him, to give up ourselves to be disposed of him, and directed by him as he pleaseth.

And then, thirdly, *to refer all things to his glory as our last end, and to endeavour that God and Christ may be known and magnified in the world*. When we labour to practise what we pray for, according to that first petition, Hallowed be thy name, his religion and truth, and whatsoever else is God's, may be advanced, set high, published, and enlarged; that he may be known and worshipped; that he may be to us what he is in himself, the great God, 'Lord of quick and dead.' So by our giving respect to him suitable to our knowledge of him.

\* Qu. '*adespotos*'?—ED.

Fourthly and lastly, He that liveth to the Lord *comforteth himself in this, that the Lord taketh notice of him in everything.* For it is a phrase importing a direction to a duty; and likewise to confirm and comfort us in this, that we do our duty. We do not serve a dead master, but one that taketh notice of us 'living and dying.'

(1.) So 'to die to the Lord' is to *acknowledge Christ* 'to be the Lord of life' and the 'Lord of death,' of death as well as of life. 'He hath the keys of hell and of death,' Rev. i. 18, and the disposing of both. Therefore we must resign up ourselves to him in death.

(2.) And then study to *honour him by death in any kind*, yea, by martyrdom, if he shall call us to seal the truth of religion with blood.

(3.) And then to *acknowledge him to be owner of us, and one that will receive us dying*, as he took notice of us living. And so the words are a privilege as well as a duty. As it is sealed up in the last words, 'whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.' Thus I have unfolded the text.

He first premiseth the general negative: 'No man liveth to himself, no man dieth to himself.' You must apply this to Christians only, that are true professors and members of Christ. For other men, that are not in Christ, and have not the Spirit of Christ, 'they live to themselves, and die to themselves,' and aim at themselves in all things; and therefore they are not the Lord's. Therefore it is a fearful condition to live and die to ourselves.

Yet you have some kind of men, not only in their particular persons, but in their callings, are all for themselves. But why should I call it calling; for there is no calling but it is for public good. As an usurer, for whose good is he? Let all sink or swim, what careth he? So times hold, and months and years continue, he will have his returns. And such are they that live in a course of oppression, that live by the ruin and spoil of others.

But there is a more subtle living to a man's self, as all men do that have not the Spirit of Christ; they live within that circle, self. The devil keepeth them that they go not out of it; so that self doth run through all their actions, their civil actions, yea, their religious actions, which are all tainted with self-respects.

Ever since the fall it is so. Man withdraweth himself from God's government, and setteth up himself instead of God, and thought to have a secured happiness from God, in eating the forbidden fruit, and therefore would not depend upon God to be happy. He saw another way to be like God. God hath highest place in our heart by order of creation, and according to the degrees of excellency in things should our esteem of them be, 'everything being beautiful in his place,' Eccles. iii. 11. But where God is put down,—as he is in all men till they be in Christ,—something self-love sets up in the heart above God. Hence cometh the necessity of this method of taking us off from ourselves before we can live to Christ; because self-love is an impediment and block in the way between us and Christ, heaven and happiness. And therefore Christ begins the gospel with self-denial: 'Whosoever will be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me,' Mat. xvi. 24.

Now there be four degrees of self.

There is, 1. Natural self. 2. Civil self. 3. Sinful self. 4. Religious self.

(1.) First, *Natural self* is the state we are in as men.

(2.) Secondly, *Civil*, as we are poor, or rich, or honourable, according to our several places in the commonwealth.



(3.) Thirdly, *Sinful self* is, as we are carried to sinful lusts and the creature.

(4.) Fourthly, *Religious self* is our condition in Christ, when we are engrafted into him and made new creatures.

'Now we must not live to ourselves.'

1. First, Not to our *natural self*. We must not live only to live. For as all other creatures are to serve us, so we are to serve something else that is better. For that that is not of itself, cannot be for itself. Now we have not beings from ourselves, but from God. He giveth us beings, and a being in that rank of creatures wherein we are. Therefore our natural self must be to a higher end. A man is not the end of things. There is another end than he, and that is God, who is of himself, and hath made all other things for himself, and therefore riches, and honours, and the like.

2. We should not live to our *civil self*. Nature teacheth us that, having spirits, we are not for anything meaner than ourselves. We do not live here to be rich, to be great, to command others; for these things do not answer the soul of man.

[1.] First, *Nothing that hath an end can be a chief end*. That that hath *finem consummatum* cannot be *finis consummans*. That that hath an end consuming itself, cannot be an end perfecting\* itself. We have a journey beyond all things, and that cannot be our end that leaveth us in the way. Riches and honour are determined† in death. Let our preferments be never so great, though to the monarchy of the whole world, yet we have a being beyond them. They have consumptions in themselves.

[2.] And then they be *inferior*. No truth in them can fill up the understanding; no good in them can fill up the will. But the understanding can pierce through them. And the will, in relishing and tasting the good of them, can look on them as east commodities. It can quickly suck out all the sweet that is in them. Therefore they cannot be a man's end, because he hath larger parts than they can fill.

[3.] That that must be a man's end *must be larger than the soul*; and that wherein he can rest, it must be some universal good, fit for all turns and purposes. Now there is nothing in the world that hath more than a particular service, for men's particular service, for men's particular ends. Honour can do something, but not all things. Riches cannot command health, they cannot cure a fit of an ague; they be for a particular good only. They can command many things, but not all things. Men consider what they can do, and therefore desire them. But they consider not what they cannot do, and therefore they rest in them. That which is a man's last end must be a satisfying, general, universal good, an immortal good, of equal continuance with him, as nothing in the world is.

[4.] It must be such a good *as he cannot offend or be defiled withal*, such as he cannot misuse. And what is there in the world, but Christ and the best things, but a man is prone to defile himself in? Knowledge is the best thing, but that worketh like leaven, it swells: as the apostle saith, 'Knowledge puffeth up,' 1 Cor. viii. 1. Therefore we must live to no worldly thing.

3. And much less must we live to *sinful self*. Some things are to be denied in way of competition and in opposition, but some things are to be denied absolutely. Absolutely a man must not own, or live to a base lust, pride, or sensuality. He oweth nothing to these but mortification. 'We

\* Qu. 'perfect in'?—Ed.

† That is, 'ended.'—G.

are not debtors to the flesh,' saith the apostle, Rom. viii. 12. Therefore when a proud vindictive motion ariseth, say, I owe no suit or service to the flesh. What should these do in a heart dedicated to God, consecrated to Christ? I am not mine own, much less Satan's, or lusts'; which be objects of mortification, but no way worthy of my service. Absolute denial is required here.

Of other things, a denial is required only as they stand in competition with Christ. In that case a man must sacrifice Isaac, not only his sinful self, but natural self also, his life and bodily liberty, the dearest thing in the world, and whatsoever is sweet, for Christ.

He having taken us off from ourselves, assigneth us to a true Lord. 'We live to the Lord, and die to the Lord.' It had not been enough to say, 'We ought not to live to ourselves, or die to ourselves,' if he had not told whom we must live to, and die to. For naturally man will never leave anything, though but an apparent good, till he knoweth something better. A man will not part with a bad master till he hath a better service. Therefore he sheweth where to bestow ourselves; namely, upon Christ, who hath care of us both in life and death.

4. This is to be laid down for a ground; *had we not a better being in Christ than in ourselves, he would never take us from ourselves, for God never biddeth us to our loss.* We have a better condition in Christ than we can have in the world. It is our gain and advantage to live and die to Christ; though it be to the loss of natural self, of civil self, and whatsoever else, yet it is our advantage. It is *mercatorium*, not a loss, but a trading. We have a better for worse. No man ever parted with anything for religion, or a public good, but God made it up in a better kind. Though God should not make it up in this world, in the same kind, yet in religion there be all things better than in the world. If we lose honour here, we have honour from God. If we lose riches, we have them made up in grace here, in glory hereafter. If we lose liberty, we have it in the enlargement of a good conscience. If we lose friends, we get a God for a friend, who can make our enemies friends. If we lose life, we are put into possession of eternal life, and therefore we need not stand at the bargain. We have a better being in Christ than in ourselves. Water is not lost when it emptieth itself into the sea, for there it is in its proper element. A Christian is not lost when he loseth himself in his God, in his Saviour; for in him he hath a better being than in himself. He is brought nearer the fountain: 'I desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is the best of all,' saith the apostle, Philip. i. 23. Religion is a most excellent condition; for as he 'that saveth his life shall lose it, so he that loseth his life shall save it,' Mat. x. 39.

All our comforts have a better being in Christ than in ourselves; and therefore we should labour to have communion with him, and to strengthen our faith in Christ, and be in love with our happy condition in him, which yieldeth comfort in life and death. And all by virtue of the death of Christ, and the resurrection of Christ. As he saith afterward, 'Christ both died and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.'

The resurrection of Christ is the consummation of all. 'If Christ had not risen again,' where had our comfort been? But the very thought of it, that we are engrafted in one who hath not only purchased us by his death—'for we are the price of his blood;' but to make it clear that it is so, is now in heaven as our head, having overcome death, and intending to bring all his body where he is, as it was his will 'that where he is, we

should be also,' John xvii. 24—is a glorious thought. The glory of Christian religion is in the resurrection of Christ; and to consider that we that are creeping here on earth shall be members of him that is glorious in heaven, 'Lord of heaven and earth,' who not only 'died for us, but is risen again,' and will make us all, both in body and soul, conformable to his glorious self, as the apostle saith to the Philippians, Philip. iii. 10, cannot but infuse life and vigour into all our actions, estates, and conditions, be they never so mean, and have a wonderful influence into the whole life of a Christian.

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## THE SECOND SERMON.

*None of us liveth to himself, and none of us dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*—ROM. XIV. 7, 8.

1. First, The general scope of the apostle is, to take us off from our false ends: 'None of us liveth to himself,' &c.

2. Secondly, To assign us to the true object, to whom we ought to dedicate ourselves, that is, 'to the Lord.'

3. Thirdly, The ground of all, 'Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.'

4. And then, fourthly, the spring of all: 'Christ both died and rose again, that he might be Lord both of quick and dead.'

There is a concatenation and knitting together of divine truths, they following one another by a necessity of consequence. As from the body of the sun, there is a natural issue of beams; and as in plants derivation\* from the root into the branch; so there is from Christ into all truths. Grant him to be the second Adam, and grant him Lord of the living and of the dead, and it will follow, we ought to live to him. If we grant we ought to live to Christ, then we must grant we ought not to live to ourselves. For we ought to live to Christ. Why to Christ? Because he is Lord both of life and death. Why is he Lord? Because he hath purchased it by his blood. How do we know he hath purchased it by his death satisfactorily? Because he is risen again, and sitteth at the right hand of God to make all good for us. Things are best to us when they are digested and made our own by the presence of good principles. But here is the mischief: Sin is ready, and good principles are not engrafted into us; but if divine truths were as near as corruption is, then we could withstand and repel all temptations.

As travellers have the end of their journey in their thoughts habitually, though not actually—for every step they take is in virtue of their end—so we should consider that we are all travellers in the way to heaven, and every step of our life should be to that end.

The ignorance of this maketh the life of most men to be but a digression from the main, as if they were brought into the world only to satisfy base lusts, and to seek themselves, to serve Satan and sin, the professed enemies of God, which are not only digressions, but motives† to hell and eternal destruction. What a pitiful thing is it, that creatures should come

\* That is, 'communication.'—G.

† That is, 'motions.'—G.

into the world and live, some twenty, some forty, some more\* years, and go out of the world again, not knowing wherefore they lived.

Good reason it is we should live to Christ, acknowledge him in all our ways, live answerable to our knowledge, resign up ourselves to his government, and seek his glory in all things; that we may make Christ known in the world; that all that see us may see Christ in us, and perceive our love to him 'that hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.' 1 Peter ii. 9.

And also to acknowledge him to be Lord of our life; and in death to resign ourselves to him 'as a faithful Creator;' knowing that he taketh care of us in life and death.

1. For we are not our own: 'We are bought with a price,' as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. vi. 20.

2. Again, Ourselves are our greatest enemies. There is no such flatterer as the bosom flatterer. That enemy self, that we have in our bosoms, betrayeth us to Satan, else all the devils in hell could not hurt us. Self is our own enemy and God's enemy. Nay, enemy is too easy, too good a word: the best thing in us is enmity itself against God.

3. By woful experiment† we find that which hath brought all the misery that the world ever felt hath been self-will. Men will be turned upside down, rather than their wills shall be crossed. But doth not this provoke God? Shall a piece of earth strive against him? and will not he break it to powder? Surely God will set us a mark to shoot at, and will triumph and get himself victory and glory over those creatures that will have their wills. Hell is fit for such. God will be sure to have his will of them. When the creature shall set his will against God's will, when an earthen pot shall set itself against a mace of brass, which will have the worst, think you?

4. If we live to ourselves, we lie open to Satan. But, on the contrary part, a man that liveth to God is fit for any gracious motions, whatsoever they be. He is fit for God and a blessed communion of saints.

5. Man is a reasonable creature, made for God, And if you grant there is a God, you must grant that man is to do service to that God. God is the creditor and man the debtor, and of necessity there must be an obligation.

Now, to shew the nature of this living to Christ.

(1.) First, *It imports a vital operation*, an exercise that proceeds from life. Now, as natural life springeth from union of the body with the soul, so the union of the soul with Christ bringeth into the soul true principles of an holy and spiritual life. For Christ and the soul cannot touch one another, but presently he infuseth a living principle. All artificial motions proceed from something without. And such are the self-seeking Christians that do only act a part in religion; but those that truly live to God and Christ, they have an inward instinct that inclines them to holiness.

(2.) Secondly, *There is entireness in a Christian course*, so that he liveth to none but Christ. Life is not only taken for the space of his being in the world, but for the improving of all the furtherances of our life to Christ. As to bestow ourselves upon him, in all the civil relations we have in the world, by being obedient to him and to others in him and for him; and in whatsoever callings we are, not only in our natural life, but also in our civil life, to go on in a constant tenor all the whole course of our lives aiming at Christ; not to set ourselves in our callings to get riches—for

\* Spelled 'moe,' as in Spenser.—G.

† That is, 'experience.'—G.

those shall be cast in by the way—God alloweth us riches, but not to be our ends, but that we may serve him and honour him. There is no time to sin, but a time for everything else.

(3.) Thirdly, In our living to Christ there must be *evenness and uniformity*. We must not live to Christ for a fit, but constantly; not to do now and then a good action, but to make it our course, our trade, to live to Christ entirely, constantly, uniformly.

(4.) Fourthly, And then living to the Lord implieth, *that all Christians' counsel and advice is how to live to Christ*. Heaven is always before him, because his way is to God and to Christ. Other men will rage and swell, though they know well enough they are out of the way, when they be put in mind of it. But a gracious man is glad to have any Scripture opened that may give him more light, either by a discovery of a sin or duty, because he now knoweth an enemy and friend, which before he knew not, and hath learned a duty which before he was ignorant of; for it is his scope and endeavour to set himself in the way of living to Christ.

(5.) Fifthly, He that liveth to Christ hath likewise this quality, *he is not carried on his course by false winds*; he doth not sail by a false compass. Though the world encourageth or discourageth him, all is one, he regardeth it not. His care is wholly taken up in the service of his God. And with Joshua, think the world what it will, 'he and his house will serve the Lord,' Josh. xxiv. 15; and with holy David will resolve to be yet 'more vile for God's glory,' 2 Sam. vi. 22. And though he getteth disgrace in the world, he regardeth it not, but is willing to suffer it, so that his God may be honoured, knowing he shall not be a loser by the bargain.

Other men, if so be they are disgraced, they are so shallow in religion, that they are quickly taken off, because the truth hath no root in them, like the bad and naughty\* ground. And not only so, but they will speak contrary to the truths in their consciences; but, alas! one day they shall know that God accounteth them as his enemies.

(6.) Sixthly, Again, a true Christian *will live to the church of Christ*. For we are members of Christ. We ought to labour for the advancement of the truth of his religion, the kingdom of Christ; and to be of the same spirit with good Nehemiah, 'that all may be well with us, when the church of God prospereth,' ii. 20, and groweth up in the world, getting victory over all her enemies.

Now carnal men live not at all to Christ; they care not whether religion sinketh or swimmeth. Tell them of heavenly matters, Tush, they are not for them. But God doth hate such persons; for as they regard not to serve God, or to own Christ in their lives, so he will not own them at their deaths. As in prosperity they are not on his side, neither will own his part, which one day will prove the best, so in times of trouble they cannot expect or look for any favour or mercy from him.

And to add one thing more, though it must be our chief aim to look to Christ, yet God allows us to look also to our own salvation, how to be saved and happy in another world. God hath joined these two together, as one chief end and good. The one, that he might be glorified; the other, that we might be happy: and both these are attained by honouring and serving him. And this is no self-love; for we cannot seek our salvation but in honouring God and yielding† the means that he hath sanctified for us, which is to cast ourselves on him for our salvation in his way. Thus

\* Cf. Mat. xiii. 3, *seq.*, 'Naughty' = worthless.—G.

† Qu. 'yielding to'?—Ed.

our happiness and God's chief end agree together. As when there be two lines about a centre, one drawn within the other, a third line cannot be drawn from the utmost line to the centre without cutting the line within, because it is included within the other, so our salvation and happiness is within the glory of God, and we live to Christ, not only in serving him, but in seeking our own souls; and what a sweetness is this in God, that in seeking our own good we should glorify him.

This likewise teacheth us to live to Christ in a way of humility and self-denial. God will not deny to teach the humble and lowly soul his ways. And thus a gracious man is fit for all the counsels of God, as a carnal heart is fit for all the services of the devil. Therefore let us dedicate ourselves and services to God, for happy are they that can lose themselves in God, and be swallowed up in the love of Christ. Certainly, there is never better finding of ourselves, than when we are thus lost. And therefore I beseech you, whatsoever our corruptions have been heretofore; let us now know it is heavenly wisdom to seek Christ's glory in the use of the blessed means sanctified for that end.

Surely we have all been baptized; and what is our baptism, but the renouncing of the world, the flesh, and the devil? Our life is for nothing but to live unto God. And having entered into covenant in baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that we intend seriously to lead a new life, we must not trifle with God; he will not be dallied with. It is not only sufficient that we have spent our precious time amiss, but more than sufficient. For time will come, if we belong to Christ, in which we shall lament for spending our time in the pursuit of our own vanities.

For if we live according to our own lusts, we are but rebels under God's livery; we are but traitors fighting under his banner. And how can we give account at the day of judgment of our lives, that have been nothing else but a constant service for Christ's enemies under the colour of religion? This would\* seriously be thought upon.

Therefore, as we know a great deal, and are beholding to God for living in times and places where there is abundance of the truth revealed, so we ought to make it our life and course to honour him, to be vigorous in his service, and to stir up the grace of God in us; to awaken ourselves and to live to Christ, and to put this *quare* to our souls, Whom do I serve? myself or Christ? him or his enemies?

Out of the text you may see that a Christian will learn how to carry himself, not only to himself, but to Christ. His carriage to himself is to live as a Christian exercised in his duty and calling. His carriage to Christ is to live to him and die to him. And for this end he taketh this course, to search out himself what is unsound and corrupt in him; and when he hath found himself, then he abhorreth himself, and judgeth himself. And having found out corruption in his heart, he not only loatheth it, but crucifieth it; and this is the course that a Christian taketh with himself in the searching and discovery of his sins.

And this being done, he setteth up Christ in the place of self, which ruleth in all men till they be Christians indeed, either by way of admission or covenant. But when grace hath once taken place in the heart, then the soul begins to live to Christ, and that conscionably,† entirely, and uniformly; consulting with all things how to help and further that life. Other men consult how they may keep their honours and reputations in the world. But a Christian having other aims, deviseth not only ways to

\* Qu. 'should'?—G.

† That is, 'conscientiously.'—G.

live to Christ, but how to be better more and more, how to get into Christ, and how to grow up in him, knowing that by living to Christ here he shall live with him for ever hereafter. This is the course of a true Christian, that looketh to have benefit by Christ.

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### THE THIRD SERMON.

*None of us liveth to himself, and none of us dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*—ROM. XIV. 7, 8.

We have heard from the apostle's general negative, that self must be removed out of the way, before we can live or die to Christ. Self, indeed, will come in everything till the Spirit of Christ be all in all in us. It is like Esau, that came first out of the womb. It will appear first in all consultations. And therefore it is the method of our blessed Saviour; 'Whosoever will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up my cross,' Mat. xvi. 24. And it will be easy so to do when we have denied ourselves.

From the apostle's general affirmative, we have shewed that to live to the Lord is to acknowledge ourselves to be his, and him to be ours; and answerably to do him service, to resign up ourselves to him, to seek his glory, and honour, and credit in all things, and to be well persuaded that he will stick to us. So that it is a comfort as well as a duty.

To die to the Lord is to be willing to give up ourselves to him when the time cometh, and to submit to him for the manner of our death, whether he will call us home to himself by a quiet or troublesome death, by a bloody or dry death, with confidence that he will receive our souls.

That we may be directed to pitch upon a right end, we may know by the principles of nature a man is not for himself; and from the order that God hath placed him in, all things below are for him, but he is for something above himself. He is not of himself, and therefore not to himself. God only is of himself, by himself, and to himself. Everything under God is of God, and by God, and therefore to God. As Saint Augustine saith, 'Thou hast made us for thee, and our hearts rest not till we come to thee;'<sup>\*</sup> as the rivers never rest till they discharge themselves into the ocean.

And being not his own end, it is his wisdom and understanding to look principally to that which is his last and best and main end, which is God, and union and communion with God in Christ, who is God in our nature, God-man, the best of all, and therefore it is fit he should be the last. He communicateth all good to them that be his, and preserveth all the good he communicateth. He is for ever with them, and cannot fail to do them good, as long as he fails not to be good. He is the original cause, and the communicating cause, and the maintaining cause of all good.

Now it is the nature of the utmost and furthest end to stir up to every action leading to that end; for every deliberate rational action that is done with advertisement and observation, and is not an action of fancy or common nature, must fall under the consideration of an end, or else we cannot give account for it, as we must for every word, desire, and thought.

<sup>\*</sup> Cf. note *h*, Vol. I. p. 294.—G.

Now the end stirreth us up to all means leading to that end, either immediately as they are the services of God properly, or else remotely. As things that help reason and furtherances thereunto, as the apostle willetteth 'that whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do,' 1 Cor. x. 31, all should be done to the glory of God, because these maintain us in health and strength, and that health and strength enable us to God's service. And in this sense every action a Christian doth is a service of God; for the end doth advance it and raise it above itself, and make it spiritual: as recreation to cheer him to diligence in his calling, the serving of his brother, and the like. Some actions are holy in the stuff and matter of them, others are such for the end to which they are directed. For the meanest action becomes holy, if an holy end be put upon it.

And therefore the actions of the second table are the service of God as well as the first, as they do all agree in the end. No man violateth a magistrate in the second table, but he wrongeth God in the first. No man stealeth, or committeth adultery, or disgraceth his neighbour by false witness, which is prohibited in the second, but it is for want of fear of God commanded in the first.

Duties of the second rightly performed are in virtue of the commandments of the first, when they are done not only from human and lower grounds, as things good in themselves, but also because God and Christ have commanded them; and that is included in the general words of 'living to the Lord;' for to live is comprehensive, and includeth all our actions, from the beginning to the end and closing up of our days. Whatsoever actions fall within the term of life ought to be referred to God as the last end.

1. The reason is, *Christ hath redeemed our persons, and our times, and all that we are, or have, or can do*; all our ability, our whole *posse*, is Christ's, and not our own. I must be filled up with actions suitable to Christ, therefore if I could do a thousand times more than I do, it were all due to him. Myself, my time, my advantages, my calling, and all, are his.

2. Again, 'As the end stirs up to actions of all kinds, so it *prescribeth a measure to those actions, to do them, so far as shall be advantageous to that end*. As he that hath a race to run will measure his diet suitable to that end, so he that hath an aim 'to live to Christ' will use all things here as may serve that turn. He will use the world as if he used it not, will buy as if he possessed not, will marry as if he married not. Not that he will be slight or superficial in these things; but he will do them no further than may be advantageous to the enjoying of Christ here, as comfortably as he can, and for ever hereafter.

Indeed, no man can set measures to his desire of happiness, that being a vast ocean; his main end cannot be desired too much. For as it is his good and happiness, it is larger than himself, yea, his thoughts and desires are too short to reach it. But though a man desires not health too much, yet he may desire too much physic. The measure must be in our pursuit of inferior things, because therein we are apt to exceed. And that advantage a Christian hath in setting a right end. He will not be drowned in the world, nor live to recreations, but to a farther aim, and which prescribes a measure and duration to all things else.

3. The end likewise *maketh everything that tendeth to the end lovely*. It maketh the cross lovely, for by it we grow better, and get more in large communion with Christ. Welcome is poverty, or disgrace, or whatsoever



that maketh a man live more to Christ, and die to himself. Men call for physie, though in itself distasteful, as it is in order to health; an end which we desire without end. So it is the disposition of a gracious soul, if Christ bestow himself on him, communicate his gracious Spirit, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of the image of God. Let God lay upon us what he will, yet it will appear lovely.

4. It prescribeth likewise a *right order to every duty*. For as the end sets one thing above another, so a wise man that looketh to his best end will do the main work first, and other things in the second place, according to our Saviour's counsel, 'Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be cast upon you,' Mat. vi. 33. Some indeed love to be all in by-works, and in the mean time neglect and slight the main. But our care should be so to use the world that we may not lose Christ, or communion with him in better things; so to look to things temporal, as that we lose not things eternal. For as things are in themselves, so they should be to us. Now as some thing is better than another, so we should conceive of them, and affect them as better than another, and labour to do them before another, as deserving the first place. And that is the reason the saints have so prized and entertained communion with God and Christ. 'One thing I desire,' saith the prophet; that is, 'to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever,' Ps. xxvii. 4. And 'one thing is necessary,' saith Christ, Luke x. 41. Other things be necessary in their order, but to have communion with God is the main thing necessary.

*Use.* Let us therefore often consider of the end of our life in this world, and take shame to ourselves that we have let so much water run besides \* the mill, that we have let so much precious time, and strength, and dear advantages be lost. Too much strength hath been spent in the service of sin and our base lusts, which we can give no account of. How many scandalous blasphemous words are many guilty of, which help only to advantage their destruction, if God be not merciful.

Now a little to shew the guise of the world, and the difference of it from the actions of God's children, for these words employ † a restraint to God's people as well as an extension.

*Obj.* The Christian's whole life is only to Christ; but what is the life of a man out of Christ?

*Ans.* His first aims being corrupt, 'God is not in all his thoughts,' as the psalmist speaks, Ps. x. 4, neither to have communion with him here in grace, nor in glory hereafter. Therefore whatsoever good he doth, a false end poisoneth it. If a man, misunderstanding of a thing, be from a false principle, he misunderstands it grossly. As, if an house be built upon a weak foundation, such is all the fabric, though otherwise never so costly; if the principles be naught, the conclusions drawn from thence must needs be naught also. As in physie, if the first concoction be naught, the second can never be good. So if a man's ends are naught, if he seek himself, or doth things only from foreign motives, out of terror of conscience, or for vain glory, or to be seen of men, his corrupt aim spoileth all his actions; yea, he reduceth religion to himself, because he will enjoy his pleasures the better. He will act some part of religion, lest conscience should bark and clamour against him. This self will moderate religion, and restrain it to such a measure as may stand with his lusts and sinful customs.

If he loveth others, it is in order to himself, because he hath use of them,

\* That is, 'beside' = past.—G.

† Qu. 'imply'?—Ed.

as they comply with him in wicked courses, and so help to bear him out the better.

And if any man stands in the ways of his ends of honour or riches, he removeth them by disgrace, though it amounteth to slandering; as undermining and rising by others' ruins, because self, his idol and main end, must not be crossed. He desireth to be somebody in the flesh. All things must be measured by that, yea, religion, and acquaintance, and all; and whatsoever stands in the way, it crieth down with them, but however it killeth them in the esteem of others, that they themselves might be thought something; and thus all is turned clean contrary upside down.

But a gracious man's end and aim is to get out of himself and his corrupt nature, and to order all his actions in reference to that, and all his acquaintance and communion with others as may help his communion with God. And whatsoever is an impediment to that he laboureth to remove.

But to give you some directions how to live, not to ourselves, but to live and die to the Lord.

First, We must have a spiritual life from him, for life is but the issue of life.

We must live by faith, from union with Christ by faith, and then live to Christ.

And again, we must do it constantly and uniformly. No part of our lives must be alienated from Christ; all must be done in order to him; even our recreations must have some good aims in them.

*Motives.* Now do but consider we are his. We are not our own, but his, and therefore we ought to live to him, bringing in all our strength, all our advantages, our callings. That we may do service to him in our places, we are redeemed even from ourselves. A world of people think they be redeemed to live as they list. But because God is merciful, and Christ a Saviour, may you therefore live like libertines? No. You are redeemed from yourselves, not to yourselves.

And to former rules delivered let me add, that this living to Christ (though naturally we count it bondage, because it is the acknowledging of a superior) is the most perfect liberty, *Deo servire, est regnare (c)*. For he that serveth that which is better and larger than himself, that hath more good and ability than himself, he doth advance himself by his service, and freeth himself from the service of all inferiors. For the more dependent any man is on Christ in his service and in expectation of reward from him, the more independent is he upon the world. And indeed who is free in his thoughts and desires from base engagements to the creature, but he that sets up Christ highest in his soul, and suffers him to prescribe rules to him in his life? Which is freer in the world than they that have hearts freed from overmuch love of earthly things, overmuch fear of earthly things, overmuch delight in earthly things? He useth them as helps to the main, but is not engaged or enthralled to any. *Quanto subjectior, tanto liberior*. The more subject the more free, is St Augustine's rule (*d*). And it is undoubtedly so. You shall find by experience that the soul is never at a more gracious liberty, than when Christ is all in all. We see it in the example of Zaccheus. When once he believed in Christ, presently, 'Half my goods I give to the poor,' Luke xix. 8. St Paul, that was all for the world and vain-glory, can say now, 'My life is not dear to me, so I may finish my course with joy,' Acts xx. 24. 'In comparison of Christ, all is dung,' Philip. iii. 8. When Moses had seen God that was invisible, he

was freed from all base dependence on the favour of Pharaoh ; nay, he esteemed the reproaches of Christ better than all the riches of Egypt,' Heb. xi. 28. And that makes men's stomachs inwardly to rise against Christians, because they be not men to serve times and turns. They will not prostitute their consciences and religion for any man's pleasure ; whereas other men, though naturally never so stout and strong in parts, yet having base aims, and hearts fastened to the world, will debase their very natures, and when their end cometh in competition with honesty, they love it more than goodness. As Christ telleth the Pharisees, ' You cannot believe, that seek honour one of another,' John v. 44.

This is it that maketh a Christian better than his neighbour, because he hath a better aim. All other men have narrow spirits, whose hearts are not filled with the enlarging spirit of grace and of Christ. But the course of the children of God is a course contrary to the stream of the world. Let others take what course they will, it matters not ; they will look to themselves. It is good for them to draw near to God, and to be guided by his Spirit. A Christian seeks communion with him that is all in all, with an infinite good, with God in Christ, and Christ God-man, and happiness. Another man is straitened in his affections to some particular good, that is meaner than himself, which maketh him a base-spirited man. He that enlargeth his heart to seek out a condition that is larger and better than himself, is both wise and happy. One would require no more to Christianity, but to have sanctified judgments, that God is God, and Christ is Christ, and the word is the word, and rules that cannot be denied are true, unless he will be an atheistical beast below himself. And therefore Lactantius saith well, ' Religion is the true wisdom ' (e). Let a man be judicious, and he must needs be a Christian ; the necessity and excellency of it standing upon such undeniable grounds.

*Obj.* Oh but I shall lose my reputation, saith the doubtful heart of man, and be counted a fool. I shall lose my friends and contentment, if I come to be religious, and serious indeed.

*Ans.* These be idle objections, as if they were not in this kind better in religion than in the world : as if God did bid us to our loss, as if Christ bid us follow him to our disadvantage. Surely no ! He is Lord of heaven and earth, and can recompense us in this world. But what is all pleasure here to the pleasure of a good conscience ? What is friendship here to communion with God, and friendship with Christ, and the protection of angels ? What are riches to him that is the fountain of all riches ? Did not Moses know what he did, when he forsook Pharaoh's court ? or Paul, when he said, ' to be with Christ is best of all ? ' Philip. i. 23. Did not Abraham know what he did, when he left his father's house and followed God, though to the giving up of Isaac, whom he knew God could raise up again, he being all-sufficient ? Heb. xi. 19. Perhaps I lose a friend, or petty pleasure, or contentment, but that was but a particular good, serving for a particular turn only. But instead thereof I have God, that is all-sufficient for all turns, that is near to me, and never nearer than when I deny anything for his sake. A man hath never more of God than when he denieth himself most for God ; for in what measure we empty ourselves of love to any creature, in that measure God fills the soul with contentments of an higher kind. We have within that particular good, which we parted with ; and we have peace and grace, which is incomparably above it. Think of that, and it will be an infinite encouragement to live to Christ.

And therefore take these rules. Seek the end in the means ? I can

have Christ my end, my riches, pleasures, friends. It is well. But if I cannot have my end with these things, away with them! When they be gone, the end will remain. Christ will continue, though they leave us. We may enjoy anything here, if the main end can be enjoyed with them. If not, let us be willingly stripped of all, for we shall be stripped of them by death. God hath enough. He hath all things at command; and hath wisdom enough a thousand ways to provide, that we shall not be losers by him, no, not in this life.

Consider then what it is to give ourselves to the Lord. When we give ourselves, we give all things else with ourselves. 'They gave themselves to the Lord,' 2 Cor. viii. 5, and then they would easily part with their goods, as the apostle saith.

But we will never give ourselves to the Lord, till we consider what he hath done for us. He hath given himself wholly for us; left heaven for us; denied himself for us; made himself of no reputation for us; became a worm and no man, a curse for us. And in way of requital we should answer him, with giving ourselves and all we have to him. This is to be a Christian to purpose. Christ hath given himself to me, and therefore I will give my goods, myself, my life to Christ, that is, in affection and preparation of spirit, though not in action. And in action too, when he calleth for them. I am not mine own; he hath myself. And *fructus sequitur fundum*. He shall have whatsoever is mine. If he call me to suffer losses, crosses, disgrace, or death itself, welcome all. I am his: and therefore whatsoever is mine is his. And it is no more than he hath done for me. He went so low, that he could not be lower, and be God. He hath advanced my nature as high as my nature could be advanced, by union with his person; and he will advance my person to heaven. And therefore the martyrs were willing to part with their lives. 'They loved not their lives to death,' as Christ's phrase is. 'He that loveth his life shall lose his life,' Mat. x. 39. 'My life is not dear to me,' saith St Paul, Acts xx. 24, so ready was he to resign all for Christ.

*Reason.* The reason is, which I desire may not be forgotten, we have a better being in God than in ourselves. If we lose our natural life, we have in him a better life. If we lose our riches, we have them in heavenly treasures. The water is not lost that runneth into the sea; it is in the ocean still, its better receptacle.

It was St Paul's desire 'to be dissolved and to be with Christ, which is best of all,' Philip. i. 23. But if he will have me to serve the church here and enjoy my life longer, his will be done. So he liveth to the Lord, and dieth to the Lord; and whatsoever cometh, he is *in utrumque paratus* (f): whether he liveth or dieth, he is the Lord's.

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#### THE FOURTH SERMON.

*For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*—ROM. XIV. 7, 8.

In these words the apostle taketh us off from ourselves, and assigneth us to a true end. As the first thing that grace doth, is to set God and Christ in his own place, the heart; so, in the second place, it begets a regard of

ourselves, such as may stand with the love of Christ. For till Christ hath a place in the heart, by our coming to some degrees of self-denial, self hindereth us in all our whole course, both of believing and doing. For we have naturally contrary principles to all articles of faith, and contrary motions to all the commands of God. It hinders us in our duties to God, to others, to ourselves. And therefore to what I formerly said, I may add this consideration,

*Doct. That it is no easy thing to be a Christian.* If we were required to renounce anything else, we might obtain it of ourselves, sooner than deny ourselves; for what is nearer to ourselves than ourselves? 'Thousand rivers of oil, the first fruits of the body, would be given for the sin of the soul,' Micah vi. 7. That outward mortification, so much magnified in popery, is nothing to the renouncing of a lust. But if we would be Christians to purpose, we must be stripped of ourselves; as they say of the serpent, he must part with the old slough. We must have an higher principle than ourselves before we can do it. A Christian is above himself, and better than himself, and stronger than himself, because he hath a better self than himself. And by virtue of that better self, which is grace in his heart, he is able to bring under all his other self, not only his sinful self, but his natural self; neither his life nor anything is dear unto him, in comparison of Christ.

Therefore we must not have conceits of religion as easy. Indeed, if we had sanctified judgments, and hearts set at liberty, it were an easy thing. If we had judgments to see, that we are never more ourselves, than when we are not ourselves; that we have a better being in Christ than in ourselves; that ourselves are our worst enemies—if the judgment were thus possessed, and the will and affections made answerable to this judgment, it were easy to deny ourselves. But self hinders the knowledge of itself all it can. *Peccatum impedit sui cognitionem*: sin naturally hinders the knowledge of its own foulness. That which should discern sin is clouded, and that which should hate sin is engaged to sin. So that under the use of means we must labour to know our condition, and the foulness and danger of that condition. And that is the excellency of God's ordinances and divine truths, that by them we come to know ourselves. But I will not enlarge myself in that.

What it is to live and die to the Lord we have declared. That it is to make Christ his chief aim and end, and do all in virtue of that end. Then is a Christian in his right temper, when God's end, Christ's end, and his end have the same centre—a qualification very excellent.

That that makes God delight in his children so much is, that they have the same end, the same God, the same Spirit with Christ. It is so excellent to prefix a right end to all our actions, that it spiritualiseth common actions. As St Paul saith of servants, 'They serve the Lord in serving their masters,' Eph. vi. 5. Whatsoever the stuff of our actions be, yet in that aim and spirit in which they be done, they may be services of the Lord.

Now life implieth the whole course of our actions. All our actions should be to the Lord immediately and directly, or mediately and reductively, as they are quickened by the Spirit of God. And that is the excellency of a Christian. He considers of everything as it helpeth his last end; as on the other side, a base worldling considers religion, and all things else, as they suit to his worldly aims. But to speak of the next point.

'Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.'

*Inference.* This is the inference drawn from the former two generals, negative and affirmative. 'None of us liveth to ourselves, or dieth to ourselves.' And from thence it is inferred, 'whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.'

And as it is an inference raised from the former, so we may consider it as a cause why we must 'live to the Lord, and die to the Lord: for whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.'

The words are a certain bottom and foundation for a Christian's comfort in the uncertainty of his condition here, being between life and death. Sure he is of death, as of life; but when to die, and how long to live, he is uncertain. But be that as it will be, this is certain, 'living and dying, he is the Lord's.'

So that, take the whole condition of a Christian, take him in all estate of life or death, which two divide the whole condition of man, for all men may be ranked into these two orders of 'quick and dead;' I say, consider a Christian in either of them, Christ is Lord of both. 'Take him in a condition of life, while he liveth 'he is the Lord's.' When he giveth up his breath, 'he is the Lord's.' So that, come of him what will in this uncertain condition, this is certain and sure, 'he is the Lord's.'

Now a Lord is he that hath *dominium*\* *in rem et personam* (g), right to persons and things, and the disposing of them *pro arbitrio*, as it pleaseth himself; and so Christ 'is Lord both of life and death.'

1. First, In general, *as he is Lord of all creatures by creation*, God having given 'all power into his hands, both in heaven and earth,' Mat. xxviii. 18.

2. Secondly, *In a more particular manner and right.* He is Lord of all those that be his by a peculiar gift from all eternity. God hath given us to Christ in his eternal electing love. 'Thine they were, and thou gavest them me,' saith Christ, John xvii. 6.

3. Thirdly, And then we are Christ's *by his own purchase.* We are the price of his blood. 'We are bought with a price,' 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'not of gold or silver, but with his precious blood,' 1 Peter i. 18; by that price God's justice is satisfied. God so gave us to Christ, that he gave him to redeem and shed his blood for us, that his justice might be no loser.

4. Fourthly, *We are his by conquest.* For he being so excellent a person as God-man, hath rescued us from all our enemies, sin, Satan, death, hell, and whatsoever else. What have they to do with us, when God's justice is once satisfied?

5. Fifthly, Those that are true believers are his in regard of a *peculiar interest between him and them.* They give themselves over to him by a contract of marriage and covenant, and therefore he is Lord of them, by their yielding of themselves to him as a Lord. They take him for a Lord, as well as for a Saviour, and that is the foundation of the spiritual marriage and the covenant of grace on both sides. Christ giveth himself to us, and we by the Spirit of Christ have grace to give ourselves back again to him.

By our own voluntary contract, we have given up ourselves to him in our effectual calling, which is our answer to God's call, when he calleth on us to believe, to take him; and the soul answers, 'Lord, I believe, and accept thee.' This by St Peter is termed the answer of a good conscience, 1 Peter iii. 16, and is, when we can say, I am thine, thou art mine, and I yield myself to thee, to be disposed of by thee. No Christian can claim Christ his Lord, but this contract hath passed between his soul and Christ.

\* Qu. '*dominium*' ?—ED.

So that if you look to God the Father, we are Christ's by *donation* ; if you regard Christ himself, we are his by *purchase* ; if we regard the enemies we have, we are Christ's by *conquest* ; if we regard ourselves, we are his by *voluntary acceptance of the covenant of grace*, and by contract passed between him and us ; yea, and Christ is so our Lord, as that he is our *husband* ; our Lord, as our *king* ; our Lord, as our *head*. We owe to him a subjection, as subjects ; a subjection, as his *spouse* ; a subjection, as his *disciples*, to be taught by him our Lord and Master.

Now the term of *Lord* is usually given to Christ, rather than to God the Father, both in the New Testament and the Old too.

And if there were no other reason for it, it is enough that God so styleth him.

But, secondly, God in the second person hath done those things that make him our Lord, more than the Father or Holy Ghost. For he in the second person hath taken our nature, and died and rose again for us ; and hath conquered all our enemies. He hath in the second person made us his spouse, his members, and in all degrees of nearness to him. And because God in the second person hath done all, therefore in the second person he is more termed Lord than God the Father or the Holy Ghost. And therefore, Acts ii. 36, God the Father 'hath made him Lord and Christ.'

This is a point of wonderful comfort, and not only a comfort, but a direction how to carry ourselves. It is not only a point of dignity and prerogative, but a duty.

1. First, It is a grand comfort 'we are the Lord's,' and the Lord's in a peculiar manner, as before. The devil is the Lord's, the earth is the Lord's ; all is the Lord's. But we are the Lord's by eternal donation, by purchase, by conquest, by voluntary yielding to him. And therefore it is a most excellent condition.

*Quest.* What is the Lord ?

*Ans.* If we be Christ's, we have him for Lord ; that is, Lord of life, Lord of glory, Lord of grace ; that is, Lord of lords, King of kings. He is an independent Lord. None is above him, the Father and he agreeing together ; if you know one, you know both. He is an absolute Lord, a free Lord ; he hath no dependence at all upon any creature whatsoever. An eternal Lord ; we have an eternal being in him ; for we are when we are dead. And therefore the apostle divideth it : 'Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.' We have a substance\* when we be dead, and a Lord of equal continuance with ourselves, a king for ever. Therefore it is a point of wonderful comfort.

*Obj.* But you will say, Freedom is a sweet thing, especially freedom from government, so as to have no lord to control us ; therefore how can this be so excellent estate, to have Christ our Lord ?

*Ans.* 1. Beloved, *we are creatures*. We are neither of ourselves, nor by ourselves, nor for ourselves.

2. Besides, *we have enemies greater than ourselves, the powers of hell* ; and therefore, if we had not a better above us, what would become of us, but to be totally subjected under the power of enemies ? It is the happiness of the inferior, to be in full subjection to the superior. It is the happiness of beasts to be under man, that they may keep from destruction. It is the happiness of the weak, to have tutors and governors. It is the perfection of inferiors, to yield a gracious subjection to that that is better than themselves.

\* Qu. 'subsistence' = being? But cf. page 320, last line.—G.

For everything is perfected by being subject to that which is better ; and therefore we, especially in our lapsed condition, seeing we are our own greatest enemies.

2. *God in love will not trust us with ourselves since the fall, but will have our happiness to be dependent and subject to another—to a God in our nature, an excellent Lord ; and therefore an excellent Lord, because, what I spake before, Christ hath all the authority in heaven and earth committed to him, not only over us, but over our enemies, that they shall not do us harm. And, indeed, he cannot be Lord of the church, but he must be Lord of all creatures in heaven and earth, that no creature may prejudice his church. He hath universal authority over all things, and all for the church's cause.*

4. *And then he hath all the good qualities of a Lord : not only authority, but wisdom and strength and power and bounty and goodness, and whatsoever may make him a gracious Lord. And therefore it is our perfection to be in subjection to this Lord.*

To set forth a little the excellency of this Lord.

He hath the sweetness of all superiors whatsoever ; as he hath taken the name of all superiority that is sweet and lovely, so he hath the affections of all, and eminently more than all. He is a Lord, as a husband ; he loveth more than any husband can do. He is a Lord, as a king ; he can do more for us than any king. 'He hath all power in heaven, and earth, and hell, over the devils themselves.' 'All knees bow to him, of things in heaven and in earth, and under the earth,' Philip. ii. 10. And he is Lord as an head. Whatsoever superiority is near and dear, that he is to his church.

He requires service. Ay, but he is such a Lord as enableth us to serve him, 'helpeth our infirmities by his Spirit,' Rom. viii. 29. Without him we can do nothing, but in him we can do all.

And as he enableth us to perform service, so doth he reward every service, every good thought ; nothing is lost that is done for Christ's sake, not a cup of cold water. He giveth strength to perform, accepteth it as a work of his Spirit, and then rewardeth it. He is so a Lord, as he standeth for his ; so a Lord, as he appeareth for us now in heaven, against all accusations of Satan. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's people ? For Christ maketh intercession for them. He stood for his disciples here on earth, and upon any occasion was ready to defend them ; and he is as ready in heaven to stand for his subjects and servants, and will answer all accusations of a malicious world against his church and children, 'and will bring forth their righteousness to light, as the noonday,' Ps. xxxvii. 6. He standeth for their credit, and engageth himself for the defence and protection of his Mount Zion, his church.

And to add one thing more out of the text concerning the excellency of this Lord : he is an unchangeable Lord. His love is as himself, and his care as himself, eternal : 'for whether we live or die, we are his.' What other people that are under a government can say so ? For all their governors' love and care endeth in death. In the mean time their minds are variable, their affections may die before themselves ; as how many have been cast off in their old days ! But God will not do so. 'Forsake me not in my grey hairs,' saith David, Ps. lxxi. 18. He is our Lord while we live, and he leaveth us not when we leave to live, but is our God to death, in death, and after death, and for ever. It is a relation that holds for eternity, as our Saviour Christ saith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He



is the God of Abraham. Abraham is dead; Isaac and Jacob rotten in their graves. Ay, but their souls are in heaven; and because he is their whole God, their bodies shall be raised again and united with their souls, and be for ever with the Lord.

In all the vicissitude and intercourse of things in this world, we need something to stick to; and this the Christian hath to stick to, that never faileth. He is the Lord's, and the Lord is his; he is Christ's, and Christ is his. Christ hath a love that is as himself, unchangeable. 'Whom the Lord loveth, he loveth to the end,' John xiii. 1. The promises made in Christ are as Christ—the promises of grace here, and glory hereafter certain. As his nature and love is unchangeable, so the fruit of his love in his gracious promises is always certain. They are the everlasting portion of the church.

The good things promised are everlasting likewise. We may build upon them. We cannot build on riches here, or life here, but we may build on eternal life, eternal glory and happiness.

So that, cast a Christian into what condition you will, he hath God and Christ in covenant with him, and the love of Christ, and all the gracious promises and the things promised. And these do not vary. Life varieth: we may live now, die to-morrow; but whether we live or die, these four things mentioned are certainly ours.

A Christian cannot say of anything here, that it will be his long. His estate is his now, and many ways there are to take it away; his friends are his now, but their friendship may decline; anything in the world may be so ours to-day, as not ours to-morrow. And therefore, were it not that in this variety of conditions we had something that is afterward, where were our comfort? We may outlive all comfort here, but we cannot outlive our happiness in Christ: 'for whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.'

To speak of this a little, as it yieldeth comfort in death. 'We are the Lord's,' not only while we live, but when we die. Why? Because we have a being in Christ when we die. Christ is a living root; because I live, you shall live also.' This Lord is the 'Lord of life;' and therefore whosoever is one with the Lord of life, he can indeed never die. Death is only a change of a natural gracious life here, to a glorious life in another world; from the church warfaring here, to the church triumphant in heaven.

It is not properly death, for misery dieth, death itself dieth; we do not die. Death overthroweth itself, but a Christian's life is hid with Christ; and when he dieth he dieth to live, and is found in Christ at the day of judgment, and shall be for ever with Christ. Therefore it is no great matter what kind of death a Christian dieth, because he dieth in the Lord.

'Blessed are they that die in the Lord,' Rev. xiv. 13. He saith not, them that die a fair death. A wretch, an opposer, an hypocrite may do so, and go to hell. But blessed are they that die in the Lord, because Christ is their Lord in death; and so saith the apostle, Heb. xi. 13, 'All these died in faith.' He saith not, they all died a fair death, for they did not, but many of them died a bloody death; yet they 'all died in faith,' and so they died in the Lord.

And therefore when we read in the histories of the church that some were torn in pieces with wild beasts, that 'they gave the bodies of the saints to the fowls of heaven,' as David hath it, Ps. lxxix. 2, which may discourage some to be Christians, let us not think that any matter; 'they died in faith.' And as the psalmist saith, 'precious to the Lord is the

death of all his saints,' Ps. cxvi. 15; for he taketh notice of them in their lives, not only in their lives, but the hairs of their head, they being all numbered. He taketh notice of the tears that fall from their eyes, and will not he take notice of their blood? He taketh notice of their persons, their hairs, their tears, and will he part with their lives for nothing? No. He will be paid for the lives of his children. When he parts with them, his enemies shall be sure to pay for it. He will be avenged on them for it, as the blood of Naboth was on Ahab. So he will be revenged on all the persecutors of his church, and take a strict account of every drop of blood that hath been shed, for their persons are precious. God taketh special notice of them. They are his members, his spouse, and near unto him.

And then he will not have them die till they have done their work. He taketh special notice of them all their life. And when they have done what they came for, as Christ saith of himself, 'I have done the work thou gavest me to do,' John xvii. 4, then he sendeth for them home. They die not at adventure, but under the care of one that knoweth them well both in life and death.

And therefore it is that God so revenged the persecutors of his church, for the blood of his saints, from the blood of Abel unto this day.

And as the 'death of his saints are precious,' so are all things that the saints have. Their credit is precious, their goods are precious. God taketh notice of everything they part with for his sake. As he and all his is ours—himself, his happiness, his Spirit, his privileges—so when we are his, all ours are his. He taketh care of our lives, of our deaths, of our credits, of our riches, of our estates. We part with nothing for him but he considers it, and will reward it abundantly.

'He that dieth in the Lord is a blessed man;' so saith the Spirit, Rev. xiv. 13. The flesh will not say so, but rather will infer who would be so religious, for such venture their lives, and are counted as the offscouring of the world. The devil will teach this lesson, and the world. As they have lived in the flesh, and will sell all to be somebody in the world, though they go to hell when they have done. But, saith the Spirit, blessed are they who not only die for the Lord as martyrs, but that die in the Lord; whether to seal the truth of God with their blood, or otherwise, they die happily; and so this is a ground of special comfort.

And as it is a ground of special comfort, so it is a ground of direction. 'Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.' Therefore it may be a foundation of living to the Lord. If we be the Lord's, surely we ought to live to him. If we be his, all our endeavours, whatsoever is ours, are his. *Fructus* and *fundus*, go together, the fruit and the soil; and therefore if we be the Lord's in life and death, we must not live to ourselves as our own, but give ourselves to him, and not to anything else; we are not our own, nor man's, but the Lord's. And therefore we ought not to yield up ourselves to our self-wills, self-wit, self-love, to be at our own disposing, and to live as we list. We are redeemed from ourselves, yea, from all our vain conversations.

Some think Christ died, and therefore they may be vain, especially at the solemn time of Christ's nativity. The devil hath so prevailed with the world, and will till there be a new face of the church; they never honour the devil more than when they seem to honour Christ. For, say they, Christ came to set us at liberty. Did he so? But it was to deliver us from wickedness; yea, from vain conversations, and not to purchase us

liberty to live as we list.\* 'Our tongues are our own,' say they in the psalms, Ps. xii. 4. Ay, but Christ saith, they are not your own, they are his. And if they be not Christ's, they are the devil's. Our thoughts are not our own, but all should be dedicated to Christ. Therefore we should be content that Christ should set up a regiment† in our souls, that he may rule our thoughts, desires, our language, and members, that they may be all 'weapons of righteousness,' Rom. vi. 13.

We have nothing our own, much less sin, from which we are redeemed. And not only from gross sins, but from such conversations as are vain in themselves, and will be vain to thee.

And when we are redeemed from sin, and from vain conversations, we are redeemed from ourselves, from the world, from the devil; whom now hath a man to serve? None but this Lord. We have renounced all other in baptism, and we are revolters and rebels, and renounce our covenant in baptism, if we renounce not the world and the lusts of it in our lives.

Ourselves we must not serve. For we are redeemed from ourselves, and not only from our carnal selves, but natural selves. Christ is Lord of our natures. And a Christian ought to say, Lord, of thee I had this body; of thee I had this life of mine, these goods of mine, this credit of mine, this reputation and place in the world. As I had all from thee, so I return all to thee again.

And as we are not our own, we must not be other men's. 'We are not servants of men,' as the apostle saith, Rom. viii. 12, *seq.*‡ We must not take upon trust the opinions that others would put upon us, or what we list ourselves in religion. We must not have men's persons in admiration, for advantage. We must not idolise any creature, for as we are not our own, so we are not any other's, but we are the Lord's.

The happiness of a Christian is to be independent on the creatures. He may use them as subordinate helps, but he is to depend only on this Lord, what to believe, what to speak; and not to take up this or that opinion to please this or that man, thereby to rise to greatness.

It is a base thing to say, I believe as my parents believe. Are you your parents'? Your parents are the servants of this great Lord, whose you are, and to whom it is your duty to yield yourselves.

*Use 1.* And therefore, in solicitation to any sin, make that use of it, that the holy apostle doth in that gross sin that reigns so much in the world, and brings many to hell, defilement of body. Saith he, 'Our bodies are bought with a price,' 1 Cor. vi. 20. 'And shall I take the members of Christ, and make them members of an harlot?' 1 Cor. vi. 15. So when we are tempted by corruption, and Satan joining with it, reason thus: Shall I defile this body of mine? My body is not mine, it is the Lord's; my members are not mine, they be dedicated and consecrated to him. What should such base abominable thoughts do in a heart consecrated to Christ? I am his, my thoughts his; my desires should be his.

Let those that be given to swearing, and blaspheming, and idle talk, consider that their tongues are not their own; and yet for whom do they employ their tongues as an instrument, but for Satan?

*Use 2.* So when we come to die, make use of it, not only for comfort, but for duty. 'We are Christ's,' and therefore if he doth call us by any kind of death, if he sends for us by a bloody death, go to Christ that way, because he is Lord, and disposeth of whatsoever befalleth us, and determineth

\* That is, 'choose.'—G.

† Qu. 'Gal. i. 10'?—Ed.

‡ That is, 'government.'—G.

by what death we shall glorify him. Be of Saint Paul's resolution, to 'glorify God both living and dying,' Phil. iii. 13, *seq.* He knew God should be glorified by his death as well as by his life. So we may glorify Christ by any death, be content to yield ourselves any kind of way to him.

There be two virtues we ought specially to exercise in the hour of death : assurance of faith that we are Christ's, and a resignation to his will, that in faith and in obedience we may commit ourselves to him, as to a faithful Creator and Redeemer. This is our duty.

And it is no easy matter to do this. Many bequeath themselves to God, but, alas ! they have alienated themselves before to the world. They have given their bodies to wine, to women, as the Scripture phrase is, Rev. xiv. 4. Or they have given their spirits to the world. As we use to say in our common speech of some men, they are given to the world. But when they have given their strength to the flesh before, and do at time of death bequeath their spirits to the Lord, will he own them ? Alas ! they are alienated before, and so put out of their own disposing. And therefore ordinarily, unless the Lord work a miracle, it is impossible to die in the Lord, if a man have not lived to the Lord before ; which may teach us to give ourselves really to him in our lifetime, that our lives being a service to Christ, we may comfortably die to him, and have our souls to dispose of.

The like subjection must be shewed in all conditions whatsoever. If God will have me to honour him in a mean calling, I am not mine own, I am his ; my life, and all my condition of life, are only to him. My calling, my estate, it may be, is low, that my pride may be humbled. But God hath set me in my calling ; he will have me to honour him in it. In the meanest calling, a man shall have enough to give an account of ;\* and therefore there is no reason to be ashamed of our calling. I am the Lord's, in my life, in all the passages of it ; in my calling, in all the troubles of it, I am to look for support and protection and provision and direction from God. I am here by his appointment. And therefore he that hath set me in this place will provide for me, protect me, guide me by his Spirit what to do in my place. And so it is a ground for contentation in all conditions.

You see, then, there is great reason why we should not live to ourselves, but to the Lord ; that we should not die to ourselves, but to the Lord. For it is a great comfort, and a special duty ; and therefore, in a word, we cannot have a more comfortable experiment in all divine truths than this, that God in Christ hath passed over himself to be ours, and we have passed over ourselves to him, if we have grace to do it. And then to plead and improve it when it is done, there is not a comfort of greater comprehension ; and therefore the apostle dwelleth on the point, 'No man liveth to himself, no man dieth to himself ; but we live to the Lord, and die to the Lord.' To what end is all this, but that we should settle it as a bottom and ground of comfort and contentment and happiness, that we are not our own, but the Lord's ?

Think, therefore, of this one thing, that we are his, that hath a command in heaven and earth, to whom all knees bow with subjection ; his that is Lord of lords, and King of kings, that is Lord *paramount* ; who will not suffer anything to befall his church, or any particular Christian, that shall not be for their good, for he hath all power in heaven and earth for that purpose, and for ever. What a comfort is it in life and death, in the midst of oppositions here, or from the powers of hell, that we have a Lord that is commander

\* Cf. note i, Vol. I. page 294.—G.

of all, 'Lord of life or death.' He 'hath the keys of hell and death.' Himself hath conquered all, and he will conquer all in us by little and little. What happiness is it, I say, to be under such a Lord !

### THE FIFTH SERMON.

*For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*—ROM. XIV. 7, 8.

There is nothing more available to the living of a Christian's life than to have the eye of the soul on his main end and scope. And then to be furnished with some maxims and principles to direct our lives to that scope. Where the parts are most noble and large, there the aim and scope is most excellent. Now a true Christian, being raised above others, hath an end and scope above other men; and that indeed maketh him a Christian in good earnest, when God by his Spirit discovers an higher excellency than the world can afford, and setteth our hearts towards it.

Now the apostle setteth down the scope of our whole condition, both of life and death. First, negatively, 'No man liveth to himself;' 'no man dieth to himself.'

Then, affirmatively, 'We live to the Lord, and die to the Lord.'

And he giveth the ground of both: 'Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.'

If we live to the Lord, we shall have a being after life. A Christian is, when he is not; when he is not here, he hath a being in heaven; and suitably to his several conditions he hath a Lord to own him in all. Now he liveth, yet cannot build on life, nor anything below, because life is short and uncertain. But this he may build on: 'Whether he liveth or dieth, he is the Lord's.'

Now Christ is said in Scripture to be Lord oftener than God, because God in the second person hath appeared in our nature, overcome all our enemies, hath triumphed, and is now in heaven in our nature; and because *Lord* is a word of authority and sovereignty. And God hath made him governor of quick and dead.

He is a Lord in regard of God the Father, by donation. God hath given the elect to him before all worlds.

He is Lord in regard of himself, by conquest over the enemies of our salvation.

And then by ransom. He hath paid a price to divine justice for us. For though God gave Christ to us from all eternity, and us to Christ, yet on these terms, that he should ransom us. God will not have his justice a loser; therefore Christ must pay a price to divine justice. Such was his mercy, and the glory of his mercy, to find out such a way to satisfy justice, that God should die.

No attribute of God must be a loser; he must have the honour of all his attributes; and therefore of his justice. And here is the glory of his wisdom, in contriving a way that mercy may triumph and justice may be satisfied.

And then he is Lord by our voluntary submission to him; for we set a crown upon his head when we subject ourselves to him.

He is our Lord in all estates, 'living or dying;' at all times, without limitation; in all conditions, whether it be a life of prosperity or adversity, let us die by what manner of death soever.

And so I shewed we are the Lord's in a double sense: in regard of our carriage to him, and in regard of his care over us; both must be included. We are not the Lord's only for that he taketh care of us, and without our service; nor that we do him service without his care of us; but he is so our Lord, that we have grace to acknowledge him, and he hath grace, and love, and mercy to protect and acknowledge us both in life and death.

It is no prejudice to a Christian's estate that he is another's. It is the happiness of the weak to be under a stronger; of those that be deficient, to be under fulness. Now there is all-sufficiency in Christ. Therefore to be under him is our happiness.

Give me leave to illustrate this. Everything is beautiful in its own place. Things that are highest, it is fit they should be highest; things that are lowest, it is fit they should be lowest. If the head were not in its own place, there would be deformity in the body. And so it is fit Christ should be our Lord, being God-man and the glory of our nature. And it is our happiness, our beauty and comeliness, our safety and perfection, to be under Christ, and to be only under him. He is only\* larger than the soul; he is of equal continuance with the soul; he is only suitable to the soul, being a Spirit, he only is eternal; and therefore being every way so abundantly satisfactory to the soul, it is the happiness of the soul to have him for its Lord, especially considering what a Lord he is—a Lord independent; Lord of lords, that hath all other lords at command; a bountiful and gracious Lord.

And we are not only the Lord's while we live, but when we come to die. Therefore we should be willing to die when our time cometh, yea, to die any kind of death, because he is Lord of 'quick and dead.' We should be like David and Moses, who were very fruitful towards their ends. And as we are not ashamed to live to so good a Lord, so we should not be afraid to die to him, as one said of himself (*h*).

This word *Lord* implieth, *there be some duties owing by us*. We are the Lord's in our souls, in our bodies, in our conditions; and therefore we should wholly give up ourselves to him, and entertain no thoughts to dishonour him; give way to no risings, no desires which become not the subjects and servants of the Lord; believe nothing that we take up of ourselves, keep the chastity of our faith and understanding, not to believe lies and untruths; but submit our very understandings and faith to God. We must not be servants of men, in our judgments or souls, no *mancipium alienæ libidinis*, as the philosopher saith (*i*). But consider what Christ hath revealed, and let us submit to that.

And therefore it is a grand error in the Church of Rome, who would have people to believe as the church believeth, which is, *πρῶτον ψεῦδος*, *primum mendacium*, the first lie, that leadeth them into all those errors; to believe Christ and Scripture no further than the church discovers them. And so they overturn all. For they believe God because men say so. It is a dangerous error that runneth into practice. If the church say treason must be done, we must be traitors. It is no matter what the Scripture saith. The pope he is the head of the church, and he can dispense with what he pleaseth. But 'my sheep,' saith Christ, 'hear my voice,' John x. 4. And it is our duty to hear what the Lord of our faith saith, which

\* That is, 'he only is.'—G.

is only Christ. If he be our Lord, then let our wills be brought into subjection to his will ; nothing is more out of order than this will of ours. If that were once subject to Christ, all controversy between God and us were taken away. All the strife is, whether we shall have our wills or he his will. The spouse hath no will of her own, but it is resigned to her husband. So must we submit our wills to Christ's desire.

And then again, *we ought not in anything to regard the humours of men.* Christ is Lord of our affections. We must hate what he will have us hate, and love what he loveth ; our whole souls must be conformable to Christ.

*And our bodies are wholly his too,* and therefore we must be content that our bodies should be used as they used his body. He gave his body for us ; he took our nature ; and in that nature went about doing good, suffering hardship. He was hungry and thirsty ; he was crucified in our nature, suffered in our nature ; and so should we be content our natures should be used as he would have them, to take much pains in doing good ; to suffer hunger, thirst, restraint, yea, death itself for Christ, because we are Christ's ! It is no more than he did for us. He being our Lord, was abased for us in his blessed body and flesh ; and therefore shall not we suffer for him ?

So our conditions are his. Suffer him therefore to cut us out a portion, to allot us any condition.

The word implieth more particularly an *application to ourselves.* 'We are the Lord's, and the Lord is ours.'

And likewise a *renunciation and severing from all others.* 'We are the Lord's, and none else ;' the Lord's, and none but the Lord's ; if we are anybody's else, it is in the Lord and for the Lord.

Here is likewise *resignation.* 'We are the Lord's,' and therefore we will give up ourselves to him, with a resting in him, and high estimation of him, and glorying in our condition through him.

And then here is an improvement of this implied : We are the Lord's ; therefore we ought to improve it on our part, by serving him ; and on his part by believing that he will have care of us.

We are the Lord's, first, by particular application, which is wrought by degrees.

*First, God by his Spirit revealeth himself to be ours, not fully, but by letting in so much light into the soul as may carry the soul to him,* and make us yield to him, trust in him, and cast ourselves upon him ; and by doing so we grow into further acquaintance with him, and he honours our faith with a further sense and assurance that he is ours, and we are his.

There is a great deal of distance and breadth between the first act of faith, by which we cast ourselves on Christ, and a confident persuasion that Christ is ours and we are his. That is a fruit of faith ; and there needeth a great deal of growth before we come to that.

And therefore if you ask, What doth the soul first to make Christ his own ? It is this, *In the use of means,* wherewith God pleaseth to be effectual, *a light is by the Spirit let into the soul, whereby the heart is persuaded that he hath a good meaning towards it,* that he is a gracious Lord, and will forgive the sins of all that rely upon him. And with the acknowledging of these truths, together with the offer of mercy in Christ, there is so much sweetness let into the soul as carrieth the soul back again to Christ to rest upon him. For unless Christ begin in some degree to make love to the soul, and giveth a taste of his sweetness, we cannot rely upon him nor love him, not only because we are creatures, and he is first and must begin to us, but because it is the nature of a guilty soul, when it is under terror

and awakened, to forecast such doubts, that till Christ letteth in some glimpse of his love, the soul dare not look Christ in the face.

Now in the unfolding of these divine truths of the gospel, some intimations are given 'that Christ is mine, and I am Christ's,' which afterward becometh the claim of an experienced Christian. This therefore directeth what course they shall take to get Christ that want him. They must attend upon the blessed means of salvation, and then consider how far forth they may lay claim to Christ.

For, first, all that live in the church are Christ's in some degree. God hath prevented\* men with his love in admitting them to the visible church, and there is an obligation on them to think well of Christ for that, because he had care of them before they had care of themselves, by vouchsafing them the seal of baptism, and making them members of the visible church.

Secondly, Unless they labour, being come to years of discretion, to feel a further assurance that Christ is theirs, they disannul and deny their baptism; and therefore it is good for such souls as are touched with sight of sin to gather upon Christ, and to wind about all helps they can to work on Christ, as the vine gathereth on the tree it windeth about. I am born in the church, I have been baptized, lived in times of the gospel, have opportunities to hear the blessed truths, and therefore I will have good conceits of Christ that he meaneth well to my soul.

Indeed, a company of wretches that rest in their baptism, being profane swearers, vile persons, abusers of their calling or anything, can say, Are not we baptized? and do not we come to church? But they forget that this is an obligation on them to be good, and no excuse for them to be evil. It tieth thee to renounce that thou livest in, else thou deniest thy baptism.

We must know, beloved, that Christ loved us, not as we love a goodly pillar or other curious piece of art that cannot love us again, but the intercourse between God and man is mutual. If he say he is ours, we say again, I am thine, Lord, and give myself to thee; and the claim is mutual. He claimeth us for his, and we claim him for ours; for he deals with reasonable creatures, that can enter into covenant with him as friends. We must therefore give up all to God. If God be God, let us own him. And as we cannot serve Christ and sin, we cannot serve Christ and antichrist; we cannot comply with Christ and his enemies. Those that have the mark of the beast absolutely cannot be Christ's, nor have communion with him, but are enemies to Christ, though under pretence of religion. But where a man is truly Christ's, he is none but Christ's; Satan is content with any part, but Christ must have the whole heart.

God's children have something in them that usurpeth, some corruption in them which is not absolutely removed, but it is but a rebel, and they have an enemy's mind to it; all that is contrary to Christ is renounced; whereas in them that be carnal sin is as a lord, but in God's children it is as a thief. He is there, yet they own him not, but get strength against him. He ruleth not there but as a tyrant. There is a renunciation of lordship and dominion of sin. Though they have inclinations to this and that sin, yet they have no liking to that liking, no inclinations as spiritual to that inclination as carnal, but make it an object of mortification. They renounce all other lords; when all other men, that have not the Spirit of Christ, are under the dominion of some reigning lusts.

And as it implieth a possession, so likewise an estimation; as God esteemeth us, so we esteem him above all. And therefore God calleth his

\* That is, 'gone before' = 'anticipated.'—G.



church his portion, his jewel ; and we call Christ our portion, our treasure, our pearl, our all. St Paul counts 'all dung and dross in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ,' Phil. iii. 8. And all that belongeth to Christ he esteemeth. And therefore the church glorieth that God is their God, and makes claim to him as St Paul, 'I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20. And as Thomas, 'My Lord, and my God,' John xx. 28. This is the best evidence of a true Christian, whose estate is no way known better than by his estimation. 'Whom have I in heaven but thee, or in earth in comparison of thee?' saith David, Ps. lxxiii. 25.

It implieth likewise *a duty of resignation to Christ in life and death*, because we are not our own, and therefore are in all things to be at his disposing, to be led what way he pleaseth, and to pursue his directions, though to the crossing of our corrupt nature, to be content to go to heaven as he will lead us, by fair ways or foul ways, by fair death or bloody death, 'if by any means we may attain to the resurrection of the dead,' as St Paul saith it, Philip. iii. 11.

Besides this, we must have a care to implead this and to improve it, as the apostle doth here, 'Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.' He will have care of us, and therefore we ought to serve him.

It is a special after-part to be able to make it good to God in all troubles and conditions whatsoever: 'I am thine, Lord, save me ; I am thine, Lord, teach me ; I am thine, Lord, protect me.'

Avouch and make it good against the temptations of Satan, urging thee to distrust, I am not mine own, I am God's and Christ's ; and therefore if thou hast anything to say to me, go to him that hath paid my debt. Thus plead the goodness and graciousness of God.

Plead it against temptation to sin. I am not mine own, 'I am bought with a price,' 1 Cor. vi. 28. My body is not for uncleanness, but for the Lord.

Plead it against our own consciences in times of desertion ; search narrowly what we have of Christ's in us, and do not evil against ourselves too much in times of temptation. If we have but desires of the soul to God, lose not anything that is good ; if I renounce my interest in Christ, I am where the devil would have me ; then he can do anything with us. And therefore plead it against our own distasteful\* hearts in times of darkness. I give myself to him, and my desires are to him ; my faith is little, but yet something ; my love is little, but yet I love the Lord. 'I believe, help my unbelief,' Mark ix. 24. We must take notice of anything Christ hath wrought in our spirits, that we may implead our interest on all occasions ; for if we yield to despairing hearts in times of temptations, we are gone. Therefore say with Job, 'If thou kill me, I will trust thee,' Job xiii. 15. Lie at Christ's feet ; if thou wilt damn me, so it is, I will lie here, and wait here. For if I have not present audience, I shall have it. God waiteth to do them good that wait for him. He will try our spirits, whether we will take a seeming repulse ; therefore we must, as the woman of Samaria,† grow on Christ, and catch at his words, Mat. xv. ; and as the servants of Benhadad, who retorted on Ahab presently, 'Thy servant Benhadad,' 1 Kings xx. 33.

And as we must implead our interest, so we must improve it in the whole course of our life, and in all conditions whatsoever. If we have any loss or crosses, yet the soul can say, Christ is mine, and I am Christ's. Though a man taking a journey lose things of less value, yet if he hath a pearl left him, he is content, for he hath that that will make him a man.

\* Qu. 'distrustful'?—G.

† Qu. 'Canaan'?—Ed.

And therefore be not much disconsolate for any crosses. They cannot take away my Christ, my promises, the comforts of the Spirit. I have a Christ, and in him all that shall be for my good.

Improve it in all opposition of flesh and blood, hell and the instruments of hell, Satan and wicked men. They are mine enemies ; but if Christ be my friend, it matters not. Christ can make our enemies our friends.

And all things are ours if we be Christ's. We have a general charter. Things to come are ours, life ours, death ours ; and therefore if we be Christ's, make use of him.

As it is baseness of spirit to rest in anything in the world but Christ, so it is baseness of spirit for us that are Christ's to be dejected for anything in the world. We have the treasure, we have the mine. We have the sun ; what if we lose a beam ? We have a spring ; what if the stream be dried up ? If Christ giveth us himself, it is no matter what we lose. But we are sure of him, 'for in life and death we are the Lord's.'

And therefore let us hence answer all objections. Oh that we should have such grounds of comfort and stability, and yet make no more use of them ! If these things were fresh in our thoughts, nothing would discourage us.

*Quest.* If you ask, How shall we know in particular that it is so indeed that we are Christ's ?

*Ans.* 1. I answer, If we have given ourselves to him by a contract of our own, if we be married to him. You know marriage must have consent of both parties. Those that give not themselves up to Christ to be his, they are not his. They that live under the power of any sin against conscience, as their Lord, that love anything better than Christ, and will not part with it for Christ's sake, Christ is not theirs, for they be engaged another way.

*Ans.* 2. Again, If we live to Christ, we are sure we are his ; if we do not live to Christ we are not his. If Christ be ours, as the life which we live is his, so our course of living will be to him. We shall direct all our courses to him, making him our last end ; and therefore, if we will know whether we be Christ's, what is the scope of our lives ? what is our aim ? If so be that Christ may be glorified by me, I am content to part with anything, with life itself, I may know that I am Christ's. 'He that will not deny all, that hateth not father and mother for my sake, is not worthy of me,' Mat. x. 37. Self-denial, and hatred of all things in comparison of Christ, argueth an interest in him. Therefore it is a great deal of grace, and the soul is much subdued before it can say, 'I am Christ's, and Christ is mine.'

For when sin and other withdrawals from Christ are to be deserted, first, there is much ado in the understanding.

Have I reason to do this ? Well, if my judgment say it is good, yet my will saith it is better to have my will than to yield to God, though I hazard the ruin of myself. Oh this is a fatal, naughty disposition, and a sign of ruin ; yet the reputed happiness of many men consisteth in their chief misery.

Again, Good things first coming to the judgment are there repulsed. But if they come to the will, there they be more opposed. And then the affections make a stir and bustle, love and hatred, and engagements to worldly things, and all to hinder our claim and interest to Christ. But he must be set up in place of self-love, before he can say, 'Christ is mine, and I am Christ's,' and that is an hard matter. Therefore let us consider what our aim and scope is.

In a word, if we be Christ's, undoubtedly we will side with Christ. 'Who is on my side? who?' saith Jehu, 2 Kings ix. 32. In ill and doubtful times Christ's calls are for a party, and calleth out, Where is my party? who standeth for me? who owneth Christ and his truth and doctrine and good ways, honesty, and religion? Who is on my side? saith Christ. Why, I am for the Lord, as in the prophet Isaiah, saith the soul that can own Christ. Ay, Christ will own us, we shall own him; if we be ashamed of him, he will be ashamed of us at the day of judgment.

They that for hope of preferment and to be somebody in the world can cross their own consciences, and Christ in their consciences, by doing that which by his Spirit he telleth them is naught;\* are they Christ's when they set up self as an idol above Christ, and side with the world and the flesh against Christ?

✧ Again, He that can say in truth of heart Christ is his, and he is Christ's, he will solace himself, delight himself, and live upon this comfort. It is a rich claim, and there will be spiritual wisdom where there is this interest to implead and improve it. It is not given to lie dormant, but grace is given with it to improve it, and live upon it. All that is Christ's will please him that hath Christ. His truth is sweet to him; the Lord's day, the Lord's work, the Lord's servants, the Lord's ordinances, whatsoever hath the stamp of the Lord, it is sweet to him, because he is the Lord's, and the Lord is his.

This is contrary to the disposition of that generation that can cunningly despise persons and causes, if they see anything in them opposite to their own base courses and lusts.

But above all, where Christ is any man's in truth, the Spirit of Christ is in that man's heart, a witnessing Spirit and a sanctifying Spirit. The Spirit will witness an interest, and fit and sanctify the soul, as a gracious vessel for Christ's service here, and for glory hereafter. And though the Spirit witness not so loud that he is Christ's, yet he may know by the work of the Spirit that Christ is his; for the Spirit frameth him to a connatural disposition to Christ, and all that is Christ's. They love his ways and government. A gracious man would not be under another government than Christ's, if he were to choose. He hath made his choice indeed; but if he were to choose he would have Christ's government, because he findeth a sweetness in it, and a suitableness to the dignity of it. A man never findeth himself more himself than when he is most gracious.

Carnal men, though they submit to outward means, yet they cast away the bond of Christ, they cannot endure the yoke; but they that are Christ's have a connatural disposition to the government of Christ. And they complain to Christ of other lords, 'Other lords rule me,' Isa. xxvi. 13. This lust reigns in me: Lord, subdue it; claim thine own interest; let nothing rule in me but thy Spirit. I am weary of my inclinations to this and that lust. And so there is a conflict ever maintained.

To stir us up, in a word, to labour to be more under the government of Christ, and to get assurance of it, let us consider, if we be not Christ's, whose are we? There is but two kingdoms. If Christ rules us not, the devil and the world must rule us.

And what kind of subjection is it to be subject to our own lusts? to a damned world and to Satan? Is it not to be ruled by our enemies, and base enemies? Our lusts are baser than the devil himself. For the devil is a substance, and ruleth by them. Now who would be willing to serve

\* That is, 'naughty' = wicked.—G.

an enemy? nay, to be a servant of servants, to be under these tyrannical enemies, restless enemies, that do encroach upon us more and more? and all the fruits we have by their service is shame and grief at the best; and shall we serve those that will pay no better wages? Yet this is the condition of all that have not Christ for their Lord. They serve some base lust, and Satan, a tyrannical lord, that instead of better rewards, punisheth them with eternal destruction; so that they serve him with the price of their own souls.

I beseech you, seriously consider of it, and put this *quare* to your souls; I have lived in such and such a sin, but what is the fruit of it? The best is shame. If I am not ashamed here, it will end in eternal shame. So that it is a sweet thing to be under the government of Christ. It is *utile dominium*, a dominion for our good.

And lest we should be discouraged, take heed of all temptations that withdraw us from the love of Christ's government, because our nature is opposite to this yoke. If they seize upon us, we shall be great losers by them in our reputation, and in much of that comfort which otherwise we might have gotten.

Beloved, you should lose nothing by Christ. What we lose for his sake, we shall gain in peace of conscience, in grace, and in this world too, if he seeth it good. No man ever lost by the service of Christ. Let a man lay beginning and end together, and tell me if he hath gotten anything by serving his lusts; for God payeth him home here, in much terror of conscience, and crosses, and losses at the end, besides hell hereafter, though at first he enjoy some seeming comfort.

And therefore lay it as a principle, that God's service is the best and most profitable service.

*Obj.* Ay, but it appeareth to the view of the world that they that stick close to Christ, and will disclaim all for a good conscience, fall into this and that misery.

*Ans.* 1. First, The reason is, *because they be not good enough.* It may be they be negligent in the service of Christ; and therefore God will purge them, and make them better, and will try their graces, that they may know themselves the better.

2. Secondly, One main end is, indeed, Christ will suffer his to be exercised with this and that affliction, *that he may have glory in his servants*; that the world may see he hath some that are content to lose something for his sake; that will part with anything, and break with any man that they may please the Lord.

3. Thirdly, If we serve Christ, *he will speak to our consciences that it is not in vain to serve him*, howsoever things fall out in the world. I confess there is a mystery in Christ's government, which we must take notice of. We can give no reason why his enemies should so reign, and his church be put under hatches. Only in general we know, that all this, in conclusion, shall serve for the church's good. 'And all shall work for the best to them that love God,' Rom. viii. 28. God is all this while a-working the church's good and the enemies' ruin, though we see not the mystery of Christ's kingdom.

I beseech you, labour to make a good use of this; get under Christ's government, and when flesh and blood shall put up a petition, or suggest anything, give it a *non placet*, deny the petition; say, I am Christ's, and I owe nothing to any but to Christ; therefore not to sin or myself. All my debt is to the Spirit, and to Christ. Therefore I will 'sow to the Spirit,

not to the flesh,' Gal vi. 8. 'I am bought with a price,' 1 Cor. vi. 20; my liberty cost Christ dear, therefore I will die honourably, rather than prostitute myself to any base courses. Thus we should have high thoughts of ourselves. And upon all temptations suggested to us, make use of this consideration, that we are not our own, but Christ's.

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NOTES.

(a) P. 291.—'Men are as their aims are. Noble spirits have noble aims.' Again we are reminded that Sibbes was a contemporary of Shakespeare. This instantly recalls Vincentis's exquisite words:—

. . . . 'Spirits are not finely touch'd  
But to fine issues.'—(*Measure for Measure*, I. 1).

Cf. note b, page 247, and note c, Vol. IV. page 58. With reference to the former, it may here be added that the 'little Latin' of Shakespeare probably sufficed to make him acquainted with Cicero, de Offic. lib. iii. c. 21, where the same sentiment occurs. Perhaps this is Sibbes's reminiscence.

(b) P. 291.—'Benè vixit, qui benè latuit.' A proverbial memorial of the Lord's frequent 'hiding' and retiring of himself. Cf. John viii. 59, from which and parallel passages the Fathers and Puritans are never weary in inculcating the above lesson. This apophthegm was used very touchingly by the saintly Philip Henry under the shadows of his 'Ejection' from Worthenbury. In his straits some of his friends urged him to revive his acquaintance and interest at Court, which it was thought he might easily do. It was even reported that the Duke of York, a playmate of his boyhood, had inquired after him. But he heeded not the rumour, nor could he be induced in any way to ask for royal favours, remarking, 'My friends do not know so well as I the strength of temptation, and my own inability to deal with it. *Qui bene latuit, bene vixit*. Lord, lead me not into temptation. Cf. the well-known 'Life,' and an interesting paper entitled 'The Family of the Henrys,' in *Evangelical Magazine*, April and May 1863.

(c) P. 303.—'Deo servire, est regnare.' This is one of the watchwords of the Schoolmen.

(d) P. 303.—'Quanto subjectior, tanto liberior.' This is only the saying of note c in another form.

(e) P. 304.—'Therefore Lactantius saith well, "Religion is the true wisdom."' Cf. his *De Vera Sapientia*, throughout; and is also found incidentally in his *De Falsa Sapientia*.

(f) P. 305.—'Whatsoever cometh, he is *in utrumque paratus*.' The legend of the Johnstone arms (Scotland). 'Nunquam non paratus' is another form of this saying.

(g) P. 315.—'Not afraid to die to him, as one said of himself.' One of the blessed commonplaces of the Martyrs, e. g., Polycarp, Ignatius.

(h) P. 315.—'We must not be servants of men . . . no *mancipium alienæ libidinis*.' The philosopher is Aristotle. G.