

A
S E R M O N
OF THE
ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGNTY OF CHRIST;
AND THE
NECESSITY OF MAN'S SUBJECTION, DEPENDENCE,
AND CHIEFEST LOVE TO HIM.

Preached before the Judges of Assize, at Worcester.

“ But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.”—LUKE xix. 27.

CHRISTIAN READER,

WHEN I had resolved, at the desire of the Honourable Judge of Assize, to publish the foregoing sermon, I remembered that, about six years before, I had preached another on the like occasion, on a subject so like, and to so like a purpose, that I conceived it not unfit to be annexed to the former. I have endeavoured to show you, in both these sermons, that Christ may be preached without Antinomianism; that terror may be preached without unwarrantable preaching the law; that the gospel is not a mere promise, and that the law is not so terrible as it is to the rebellious: as also what that superstructure is, which is built on the foundation of general redemption rightly understood; and how ill we can preach Christ's dominion in his universal propriety and sovereignty, or yet persuade men to sanctification and subjection, without this foundation. I have laboured to fit all, or almost all, for matter and manner, to the capacity of the vulgar. And though, for the matter, it is as necessary to the greatest, yet it is for the vulgar, principally, that I publish it; and had rather it might be numbered with those books which are carried up and down the country from door to door in pedlars' packs, than with those that lie on booksellers' stalls, or are set up in the libraries of learned divines. And to the same use would I design the most of my published labours, should God afford me time and ability, and contentious brethren give me leave.

RICHARD BAXTER.

August 7, 1654.

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ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGNTY OF CHRIST.

PSALM ii. 10, 11, 12.

Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings ; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling, &c.

To waste this precious hour in an invective against injustice and its associates, is none of my purpose ; they are sins so directly against the principles in nature, so well known, I believe, to you all, and so commonly preached against upon these occasions, that upon the penalty of forfeiting the credit of my discretion, I am bound to make choice of a more necessary subject. What? Have we need to spend our time and studies to persuade Christians from bribery, perjury, and oppression ; and from licking up the vomit which pagans have cast out? And that in an age of blood and desolation, when God is taking the proudest oppressors by the throats, and raising monuments of justice upon the ruins of the unjust. And I would fain believe that no corrupt lawyers do attend your judicatures, and that Jezebel's witnesses dwell not in our country, nor yet a jury that fear not an oath ; I have therefore chosen another subject, which, being of the greatest moment, can never be unseasonable ; even to proclaim him who is constituted the King and Judge of all, to acquaint you with his pleasure, and to demand your subjection.

The chief scope of the Psalm is, to foretel the extent and prevalency of the kingdom of Christ, admonishing his enemies to submit to his government, deriding the vanity of their opposing projects and fury, and forewarning them of their ruin if they come not in.

The verses which I have read are the application of the foregoing prediction, by a serious admonition to the proudest offenders: they contain, 1. The persons admonished, "kings and judges." 2. Their duty: 1. In general to God, "serve him;" with the adjuncts annexed: 1. Rejoicing. 2. Fear and trembling. 2. More especially their duty to the Son, "kiss him." 3. The motives to this duty. 1. Principally and directly expressed, "lest he be angry," which anger is set forth by the effect, "and ye perish;" which perishing is aggravated, 1. From the suddenness and unexpectedness, "in the way." 2. From the dreadfulness, "kindled." 1. It is fire, and will kindle and burn. 2. A little of it will produce this sad effect. 3. It will be wo to those that do not escape it; which wo is set forth by the contrary happiness of those that by submission do escape. 2. The motives subservient and implied are in the monitory words, "be wise, be learned," *q. d.* else you will show and prove yourselves men of ignorance and madness, unlearned and unwise.

Some questions here we should answer for explication of the terms: as,

1. Whether the Lord in verse 11, and the Son in verse 12, be both meant of Christ the Second Person?

2. Whether the anger here mentioned be the anger of the Father or the Son, "lest he be angry?" I might spend much time here to little purpose, in showing you the different judgment of divines of these, when in the issue there is no great difference, which ever way we take them.

3. What is meant by "kissing the Son?" I answer, according to its threefold object, it hath a threefold duty contained in it.

1. We kiss the feet in token of subjection; so must we kiss the Son.

2. We kiss the hand in token of dependance; so must we kiss the hand of Christ; that is, resign ourselves to him, and expect all our happiness and receivings from him.

3. We kiss the mouth in token of love and friendship; and so also must we kiss the Son.

4. What is meant by "perishing in the way?" I answer, (omitting the variety of interpretations,) it is their sudden unexpected perishing in the heat of their rage, and in pursuit of their designs against the kingdom of Christ.

I know no other terms of any great difficulty here.

Many observations might be hence raised : as,

1. Serving the Lord is the great work and business that the world hath to do.

2. This service should be accompanied with rejoicing.

3. So should it also with fear and trembling.

4. There is no such opposition between spiritual joy and fear, but that they may and must consist together.

5. Scripture useth familiar expressions concerning man's communion with Christ, such as this, "kiss the Son."

6. There is anger in God, or that which we cannot conceive better of than under the notion of anger.

7. There is a way to kindle this anger; it is man that kindleth it.

8. The way to kindle it chiefly is not kissing the Son.

9. The kindling of it will be the perishing of the sinner.

10. The enemies of Christ shall perish suddenly and unexpectedly.

11. A little of God's anger will utterly undo them.

12. They are blessed men that escape it, and miserable that must feel it.

13. It is therefore notorious folly to neglect Christ, and stand out.

14. Kings, judges, and rulers of the earth, are the first men that Christ summons in, and the chief in the calamity if they stand out.

But I will draw the scope of the text, into this one doctrine; in the handling whereof I shall spend the time allotted me.

Doct. No power or privilege can save that man from the fearful, sudden, consuming wrath of God, that doth not unfeignedly love, depend upon, and subject himself unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

If they be the greatest kings and judges, yet if they do not kiss the mouth, the hand, the feet of Christ, his wrath will be kindled, and they will perish in the way of their rebellion and neglect.

In handling this point I shall observe this order.

1. I will show you what this love, dependence, and subjection are.

2. What wrath it is that will thus kindle and consume them.

3. Why this kissing the Son is the only way to escape it.

4. Why no power or privilege else can procure their escape,

5. The application.

For the first I shall only give you a naked description, wishing that I had time for a fuller explication.

1. Subjection to Christ is, the acknowledging of his absolute sovereignty, both as he is God, Creator, and as Redeemer over all the world, and particularly ourselves; and a hearty consent to this his sovereignty; especially that he be our Lord, and his laws our rule, and a delivering up ourselves to him to be governed accordingly.

2. This dependence on Christ is, when acknowledging the sufficiency of his satisfaction, and his power and willingness to save all that receive him, manifested in his free universal offer in the gospel, we do heartily accept him for our only Saviour, and accordingly, renouncing all other, do wait upon him believingly for the benefits of his sufferings and office, and the performance of his faithful covenant to us, in restoring us to all the blessings which we lost, and advancing us to a far greater everlasting glory.

3. This affection to Christ is, when in the knowledge and sense of his love to us, both common and especial, and of his own excellency, and the blessedness of enjoying him, and the Father and Life by him, our hearts do choose him, and the Father by him as the only happiness, and accordingly love him above all things in the world.

As this threefold description containeth the sum of the gospel, so hath it nothing but what is of necessity to sound Christianity. If any one of these three be not found in thy heart, either have I little skill in divinity, or thou hast no true Christianity, nor canst be saved in that condition.

Object. But do not the Scriptures make believing the condition of the covenant? But here is a great deal more than believing.

Ans. Sometimes faith is taken in a narrower sense, and then it is not made the sole condition of the new covenant; but repentance, and forgiving others, are joined with it as conditions of our forgiveness; and obedience and perseverance, as conditions of our continued justification and salvation. But when faith is made the sole condition of the covenant, then it comprehendeth essentially, (not only supposeth as precedent or concomitant,) if not all three, yet at least the two first of the afore described qualifications; viz., dependence and subjection, which, if it were well understood, would much free the common

sort of Christians from their soul-destroying mistakes, and the body of divinity from a multitude of common errors, and our religion from much of that reproach of solifidianism which is cast upon it by the papists.

2. I must be as brief in opening the second thing, viz. What wrath it is that will thus kindle and consume them. What wrath is in God we need not here trouble ourselves to inquire, but only what is intimated in the threats or curses of the covenants. As there are two covenants, so each hath his proper penalty for its violation.

1. Then till men do come in and submit to Christ they lie under the wrath of God for all their sins, as they are against the covenant of works, or they are liable to the curse of that covenant: Christ's death hath taken away the curse of that covenant; not absolutely from any man, but conditionally, which becomes absolute when the condition is performed. The elect themselves are not by nature under the covenant of grace, but remain under the curse of the first covenant till they come in to Christ.

2. Whosoever rejecteth or neglecteth his grace, and so finally breaketh the new covenant, must also bear the curse or penalty thereof, besides all the former, which is a far greater curse, even as the blessings of this covenant are far greater than those of the first. It was a heavy punishment to be cast out of Paradise, and from the presence and favour of God, and to be cursed by him, and subjected to eternal death, and all creatures below cursed for our sakes, to bear all those curses and plagues threatened in Deut. xxvii. and xxviii., and to have the wrath of God smoke against us, &c., as Deut. xxix. 20. "But of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy that doth tread under foot the blood of this covenant, and do despite to the Spirit of Grace?" (Heb. x. 28, 29.) It is true, that for all other sins the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience, (or unpersuadeableness,) that is, on them that will not be persuaded to obey the Lord Christ. (Eph. v. 6.) But it is on no other with us, for this is the condemnation, "that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light." (John i. 19.)

3. Why is this kissing the Son, that is, loving, depending on, and submitting to him, the only way to escape these curses?

Ans. 1. The most proper and primary reason which can be

given, is, the will of the Great Lawgiver, who, having absolute sovereignty over us, might dispose of us as he please, and make us such laws and conditions as seem best to his wisdom, upon which our justification and salvation should depend: he hath resolved that this shall be the only condition and way; and that, as no man shall be justified by a mere Christ, or his death abstracted from faith, (that is of age and use of reason,) so this faith shall be the condition upon which they shall be justified: or, as a Christ neglected shall save no man, so the accepting or receiving of him shall justify and save them, as the condition of the covenant performed, under which notion it is that faith justifieth.

2. Yet other improper or subordinate reasons (which receive their life from the former, and without it would be no reasons,) may be given: as, 1. from the equity; and, 2. from the suitability and conveniency.

1. It is but equal that he who hath bought us, and that so dearly, and from a state so deplorable and desperate as we were in, should be acknowledged and accepted for our Saviour and our Lord, and that we who are not our own, "but are bought with a price, should glorify him with our bodies and souls, which are his," (1 Cor. vi. 20, and vii. 23,) especially when, for that end he both died and rose again, that he might rule, or be Lord over, both quick and dead. (Rom. iv. 9.) If one of you should buy a man from the galleys or gallows, with the price of your whole estate, or the life of your only Son, would you not expect that he should be at your disposal? That he should love you, depend on you, and be subject to you.

2. And as salvation by free grace through Christ is a way most suitable to God's honour, and to our own necessitous and low condition, so, in subordination thereto, the way of believing is most rationally conducible to the same ends. As we could not have had a fitter way to the Father than by Christ, so neither could there be a more fit way to Christ, or means to partake of him, than by faith: for though I cannot call it the instrumental cause of our justification, either active or passive, yet is this faith, or acceptation of Christ for our Saviour and King, which is here called "kissing the Son," the fairest condition that we could reasonably expect, and the most apparently tending to the honour of our Redeemer; applying and appropriating to ourselves the person, righteousness, and benefits procured and offered, but not the least of the honour of the work. All we do

is but to accept what Christ hath procured, and that must be by the special assistance of his Spirit too.

4. The fourth thing I promised, is to show you why no other privilege or power in the world can save him that doth not kiss the Son. It may here suffice that I have showed you God's determination to the contrary. But further consider, (if any should hope to escape by their dignities, titles, friends, strength, or any other endowments or virtuous qualifications,) 1. What is their task. 2. What is their power to perform it.

1. They must resist the irresistible will of God. They must do that which heaven or earth, men or devils, were never able yet to do. They have resisted his laws and his love, but they could never resist his purpose or his power. The power that undertaketh to save an enemy, or neglecter of Christ, must first overcome the power of the Almighty, and conquer him that doth command the world. And who hath the strength that is sufficient for this? Sinner, before thou venture thy soul upon such a mad conceit, or think to be saved whether God will or not, try first thy skill and strength in some inferior attempt; bid the sun or moon stand still in the firmament, invert the several seasons of the year, bid the snow and frost to come in summer, and the flowers and fruits to spring in winter; command the streams to turn their course, or the tide its times, or the winds their motion. If these will obey thee, and thy word can prevail with them against the law of their Creator, then mayest thou proceed with the greater confidence and courage, and have some hope to save the neglecters of Christ. Or try first whether thou canst save thy present life against the course of nature and will of God: call back thine age and years that are past; command thy pains and sickness to be gone; chide back this bold approaching death? Will they not obey thee? Canst thou do none of these? How then canst thou expect the saving of thy soul against the determinate will and way of God? Where dwelleth that man, or what was his name, that did neglect Christ, and yet escape damnation? Who hath hardened himself against him and hath prospered? (Job ix. 4.) And dost thou think, then, to be first? Thou mayest, perhaps, knock boldly at the gate of heaven, and plead thy greatness, thy virtues, thy alms deeds, and formal devotion, but thou shalt receive a more woful answer than thou dost expect. Jesus we know, and obediential faith in him we know, but who are ye?

2. He that will save the soul, that loveth not, dependeth not

on, and subjecteth not himself to Christ, must first make false the word of God, and make the true and faithful God a liar? This is another part of his task: "God hath given it under his hand for truth, That "he that believeth not is condemned already; (John iii. 18;) That "he shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;" (John iii. 36;) that they who are invited to Christ, and make light of it, or make excuses, "shall never taste of his supper;" (Luke xiv. 24; Matt. xxii. 5, 8;) That "it shall be easier for Sodom in the day of judgment, than for that city which refuseth the offers of the gospel;" (Matt. x. 15;) that whosoever would not have Christ to reign over them "shall be brought forth at last and destroyed before him as his enemies;" (Luke xix. 27;) that "they shall all be damned that believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. ii. 12, &c.) And hath the Almighty said that thus it shall be? Who, then, is he that dare say it shall not be? Is this the concluded decree of heaven? What power or policy is able to reverse it? Hath God said it, and will he not do it?

Thus you see his task that will undertake to save one neglecter of Christ.

2. Let us now consider what power that is which must perform it. If it be done it must be either, 1. By wisdom; or, 2. By strength; whereas, the chiefest of men, even the kings and judges of the earth, are both ignorant and impotent.

1. Ignorant. Though judges are learned in the repute of the world, alas! poor crawling, breathing dust! do you know the secrets of your Maker's counsel? And are you able to overreach them, and frustrate his designs? Doth this book know what is written in it? Can the seat you sit on over-top your counsels? More likely than for you to overtop the Lord. Silly worms! you know not what God is, nor know you any one of his revealed thoughts, no more than that pillar doth know your thoughts. You know not what you are yourselves, nor see any further than the superficies of your skin. What is thy soul; and whence didst thou receive it? Dost thou know its form; or didst thou feel it enter? Which part didst thou feel it first possess? Thou canst call it a spirit, but knowest thou what a spirit is; or rather only what it is not? Thou knowest not that whereby thou knowest: and how was thy body formed in the womb? What was it an hundred years ago? What is that vital heat and moisture? What causeth that order and diversity of its parts? When will the most expert

anatomists and physicians be agreed? Why, there are mysteries in the smallest worm, which thou canst not reach; nor couldst thou resolve the doubts arising about an ant or atom, much less about the sun, or fire, or air, or wind, &c. : and canst thou not know thyself, nor the smallest part of thyself, nor the smallest creature; and yet canst thou over-reach the everlasting counsels.

2. And is thy might and power any greater than thy policy? Why, what are the kings and rulers of the earth but lumps of clay, that can speak and go; moving shadows, the flowers of a day, a corruptible seed, blown up to that swelled consistence in which it appears, as children blow their bubbles of soap, somewhat invisible condensate; which, that it may become visible, is become more gross, and so more vile, and will shortly be almost all turned into invisible again; and that little dust which corruption leaves by the force of fire, may be dissipated yet more, and then where is this specious part of the man? Surely now that body, which is so much esteemed, is but a loathsome lump of corruptible flesh, covered with a smooth skin, and kept a little while from stinking by the presence of the soul, and must shortly be cast out of sight into a grave, as unfit for the sight or smell of the living, and there be consumed with rottenness and worms. These are the kings and rulers of the earth; this is the power that must conquer heaven, and save them that rebel against Christ the Lord. They that cannot live a month without repairing their consuming bodies by food, one part whereof doth turn to their vital blood and spirits, and the other to loathsome insufferable excrements, so near is the kin between their best and worst, judge all you that have common reason, whether he that cannot keep himself alive an hour, and shortly will not be able to stir a finger, to remove the worms that feed upon his heart, be able to resist the strength of Christ, and save the soul, that God hath said and sworn shall not be saved. Ah! poor souls, that have no better saviours. And well may Christ, his truth, and cause, prevail that have no stronger enemies.

Use 1. You have here a text that will fully inform you how you are like to speed at the bar of Christ; who shall die and who shall live. The great assize is near at hand, the feet of our Judge are even at the door. Go thy way, unbelieving sinner, when thou hast had all the pleasure that sin will afford thee, lie down in the dust and sleep awhile, the rousing voice shall

quickly awake thee, and thine eyes shall see that dreadful day. O blessed day! O doleful day! Blessed to the saints, doleful to the wicked. O the rejoicing! O the lamenting that there will be! The triumphant shoutings of joyful saints; the hideous roaring cries of the ungodly, when each man hath newly received his doom, and there is nothing but eternal glory and eternal fire. Beloved hearers, every man of you shall shortly there appear, and wait as the trembling prisoner at the bar, to hear what doom must pass upon you. Do you not believe this? I hope you do believe it. Why what would you give now to know, for certain, how it shall go with you? Why here is the book by which you must be judged, and here is the sum of it in my text, and the grounds upon which the Judge will then proceed. Will you but go along with me, and answer the questions which hence I shall put to you, and search and judge yourselves by them as you go, you may know what doom you may then expect; only deal faithfully, and search thoroughly, for self-flattery will not prevent your sorrow.

And here you must know that it is the kiss of the heart, and not of the lips, which we must here inquire after. The question will not be at the great day who hath spoken Christ fair; or who hath called themselves by the name of Christians; or who hath said the Creed or the Lord's Prayer oftenest; or cried Lord, Lord; or come to church; or carried a Bible; or who hath held this opinion, or who that. It would make a man's heart ache to think how zealously men will honour the shadow of Christ, and bow at his name, and reverence the image of the cross which he died on, and the names and relics of the saints that died for him, and yet do utterly neglect the Lord himself, and cannot endure to be governed by him, and resist this Spirit, and scorn his strict and holy ways, and despitefully hate them that most love and obey him, and yet believe themselves to be real Christians. For God's sake, Sirs, do not so delude your immortal souls, as to think your baptism, and your outward devotion, and your good meanings, as you call them, and your righteous dealing with men, will serve the turn to prove you Christians. Alas! this is but, with Judas, to kiss the mouth of Christ, and indeed to fetch your death from those blessed lips, from whence the saints do fetch their life. I will show you some surer signs than these.

1. And, first, let me a little inquire into your subjection to Christ. Do you remember the time when you were the servants

of sin, and when Satan led you captive at his will, and the prince of darkness ruled in your souls, and all within you was in a carnal peace? Do you remember when the Spirit in the word came powerfully upon your hearts, and bound Satan and cast him out, and answered all your reasonings, and conquered all your carnal wisdom, and brought you from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God? (Acts xxvi. 18.) Or, at least, are you sure that now you live not under the same lord and laws as the ungodly do? Hath Christ now the only sovereignty in your souls; is his word thy law, which thou dardest not pass? Doth it bind thy thoughts, and rule thy tongue, and command thyself, and all thou hast? Hast thou laid all down at the feet of Christ, and resigned thyself and all to his will, and devoted all to his disposal and service? If custom bid thee curse and swear, and Christ forbid thee, which dost thou obey? If thy appetite bid thee take thy cups, or fare deliciously every day; if thy company bid thee play the good fellow, or scorn the godly; if thy covetousness bid thee love the world, and Christ forbid thee, which dost thou obey? If Christ bid thee be holy, and walk precisely, and be violent for heaven, and strive to enter in, and the world and the flesh be enemies to all this, and cry it down as tedious folly, which dost thou obey? Dost thou daily and spiritually worship him in private, and in thy family, and teach thy children and servants to fear the Lord? I entreat you, Sirs, deal truly in answering these questions: never man was saved by the bare title of a Christian. If you are not subject to Christ, you are not Christians, no more than a picture or a carcass is a man, and your salvation will be such as your Christianity is. Subjection is an essential part of thy faith, and obedience is its fruit. In short, then, dost thou make him thy fear, and tremble at his word? Dare thou run upon fire or water, sword or cannon, rather than wilfully run upon his displeasure? Wouldest thou rather displease thy dearest friend, the greatest prince, or thine own flesh, than wittingly provoke him? When Christ speaks against thy sweetest sin, thy nature, or custom, or credit, or life, against thy rooted opinions, or thy corrupt traditions, art thou willing to submit to all that he revealeth? Dost thou say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth? Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do? I am ready to do thy will, O God."

Beloved hearers, this is the frame of every servant of Christ, and this is the acknowledging and accepting him for your Lord.

I beseech you cozen not your souls with shows and formalities. If ever you be saved without this subjection, it must be without Christ's merits or mercy. It must be in a way that Scripture revealeth not, nay, it must be in despite of God, his truth must be falsified, and his power must be mastered, before the disobedient can be saved from his wrath.

2. Examine, also, your dependence on Christ, whether you kiss his hand as well as his feet. Do you understand that you are all by nature condemned men, and liable to the everlasting wrath of God; that Christ hath interposed and paid this debt, and bought us as his own by the satisfaction of that justice; that all things are now delivered into his hands, (John xiii. 3,) and he is made head over all things to his church. (Eph. i. 21, 22.) Dost thou take him for thy only Saviour, and believe the history of his life and passion, the truth of his divine and human nature, his resurrection, his office, and his approaching judgment? Dost thou see that all thy supposed righteousness is but vanity and sin, and that thyself art unable to make the least satisfaction to the law by thy works or sufferings, and if his blood do not wash thee, and his righteousness justify thee, thou must certainly be damned yet, and perish for ever? Dost thou, therefore, cast thyself into his arms, and venture thy everlasting state upon him, and trust him with thy soul, and fetch all thy help and healing from him? When sin is remembered, and thy conscience troubled, and the forethoughts of judgment do amaze thy soul, dost thou then fetch thy comfort from the views of his blood, and the thoughts of the freeness and fulness of his satisfaction, his love, and gospel offers and promises? Dost thou so build upon his promise of a happiness hereafter, that thou canst let go all thy happiness here, and drink of his cup, and be baptised with his baptism, and lose thy life upon his promise that thou shalt save it? Canst thou part with goods and friends, and all that thou hast, in hope of a promised glory which thou never sawest? If thou canst thus drink with him of the brook in the way, thou shalt also with him lift up the head. (Psalm cx. 7.) Dost thou perceive a Mediator as well as a God in all thy mercies, both special and common, and taste his blood in all that thou receivest, and wait upon his hand for thy future supplies? Why, this is kissing the hand of Christ, and depending upon him. O how contrary is the case of the world, whose confidence is like the Samaritan's worship, they trust God and their wits, and

labours, Christ and their supposed merits; I would I might not say Christ and deceit, and wicked contrivances. O blasphemous! joining of heaven and hell to make up one foundation of their trust!

3. Examine a little also your love to Christ. Do you thus kiss the son? Do your souls cleave to him, and embrace him with the strongest of your affections? Sirs, though there is nothing that the blind world is more confident in than this, that they love Christ with all their hearts, yet is there nothing wherein they are more false and faulty. I beseech you, therefore, deal truly in answering here. Are your hearts set upon the Lord Jesus? Do you love him above all things in this world? Do you stick at your answer? Do you not know? Sure, then, at best you love him but little, or else you could not choose but know it. Love is a stirring and sensible affection, you know what it is to love a friend. Feel by this pulse whether you live or die. Doth it beat more strongly toward Christ than to any thing else? Never question man the necessity of this; he hath concluded, 'If thou love anything more than him, thou art not worthy of him, nor canst be his disciple.' Are thy thoughts of Christ thy freest and thy sweetest thoughts? Are thy speeches of him thy sweetest speeches? When thou awakest art thou still with him; and is he next thy heart? When thou walkest abroad, dost thou take him in thy thoughts? Canst thou say, and lie not, that thou wast ever deeply in love with him, that thou dost love him but as heartily as thou dost thy friend, and art as loth to displease him, and as glad of his presence, and as much troubled at his strangeness or absence? Hath thy minister, or godly acquaintance ever heard thee bemoaning thy soul for want of Christ, or inquiring what thou shouldest do to attain him? or thy family heard thee commending his excellency, and labouring to kindle their affections towards him? Why love will not be hid, when it hath its desire, it will be rejoicing, and when it wants it, it will be complaining. Or, at least, can thy conscience witness thy longings, thy groans, thy prayers for a Christ? Wilt thou stand to the testimony of these witnesses? Do you love his weak, his poor, despised members? Do you visit them, clothe them, feed them, to your power? Not only in a common natural compassion to them as they are your neighbours, but do you love or relieve a prophet in the name of a prophet, or a disciple in the name of a disciple. (Matt. x. 40, 42.) Shall all these decide the question?

Beloved hearers, I profess to you all, in the name of our Lord, that it is not your bold and confident affirming that you love Christ, which will serve your turn when Christ shall judge; he will search deep, and judge according to the truth in the inward parts. How many thousands will then perish as his utter enemies, that verily thought themselves his friends? How easily now might they find their mistake if they would but be at the pains to examine themselves? O try, try, Sirs, before God try you, judge yourselves before Christ judge you. It would grieve a man's heart that knows what it is to love Christ, to believe, to be subject to him, to see how rare these are in the world, and yet how confident and careless most men are. It may be that you may think much that I so question your love, yet Christ, that knew all things, questioned Peter's love to him, and that three times, till it grieved Peter. I am a stranger to the most of you, and therefore know not your conditions or inclinations. Yet judge me not censorious if I fear the worst, and if I measure you by the rest of the world, and then I may confidently and sadly conclude that Christ hath few loving subjects among you. If we could hear your oaths and vain speeches turned to heavenly, soul-edifying discourse, and your covetousness to conscionableness, and see that the word of Christ were your law, and that you laid out your endeavours for heaven in good earnest, then we should say, 'These people are the loving subjects of Christ.' But when men are enemies to Christ's doctrine, and ways, and worship, and had rather live after the flesh, and the world, and the traditions of their fathers, and are notorious for profaneness, superstition, and enmity to reformation, who can choose but condole your case? And if your obstinacy will not endure us to help you, yet you shall give us leave, whether you will or no, to lament you.

Use 2. But it is time that I turn my speech to exhortation, and O that you would encourage me with your resolutions to obey! My business here to-day is as his herald and ambassador, to proclaim the Lord Jesus your King and Saviour, and to know whether you will heartily acknowledge and take him so to be or not. And to persuade you to take so fair an offer while you may have it, and to kiss the Son lest his wrath be kindled. This is my business here, in which if I had not some hope to speed, the Lord knows I would not have been here to-day. You will say, 'This is a common errand; do you think we never heard of Christ before?' I confess it is common, blessed be God for it, (and long may it so continue and increase,

and let it be as constant and durable to us as the sun in the firmament : and the Lord grant that England's sins or enemies may never bereave them of the blessing of the gospel, and then it will be a happier land than yet ever was any on the face of the earth,) but is it as common to receive Christ in love and obedience? I would it were. I know the name of Christ is common. The swearer doth swear by it, the beggar begs by it, the charmer puts it into his charms, and the jester into his jests, and every papist and ignorant protestant doth mutter it oft times over in his prayers. But who trembleth at it? Or triumpheth in it? Who maketh it his fear and his joy? And give up their souls and lives to be governed by Christ? I do here solemnly proclaim to you that the Lord Jesus will not be put off with your compliments; he cares not for your mere name of Christianity, nor your cap, nor your knee. If thy heart be not set upon him, thou art none of his. His word must be your law, and you must depend on him alone for soul and body, or never look for mercy at his hands. He is the author of eternal salvation to them only that obey him. (Heb. v. 9.)

What say you then, Sirs, in answer to my message? And what course do you resolve upon? Shall Christ be your love, and your Lord, or not? Will you kiss the Son, or will you slight him still? Methinks you should easily be resolved, and say, 'Away with pleasure, and credit, and worldly gain; away with these bewitching delights and companions; Christ hath bought my heart, and he shall have it; he is my Lord, and I will be ruled by him.' Hearers, I hope God hath kept you alive till now to show you mercy, and brought some sinners hither to-day to prevail with their hearts; and my hope is somewhat strengthened by God's disposal of my own spirit; I was strongly tempted to have preached this sermon in the enticing words of human wisdom, tending to a proud ostentation of parts; but Christ hath assisted me to conquer the temptation, and commanded me to preach him in plainness, and evidence of the Spirit. I come not to persuade you to opinions or factions, to be for this side, or for that, but to be with all your hearts for Christ, as ever you look that Christ should be for you: to love him as he that hath bought you from eternal wrath, and died to save you from everlasting burnings; to lay hold on him with most earnest affectionate apprehension, as a man that is ready to drown would do upon a bough, or upon the hand of his friend that would pull him to the shore; to wait for the law of thy direction from him, and do nothing till thou hast asked counsel

at his word, and know his mind, whether thou shouldest do it or no, till thou feel thy conscience bound by his law, that thou canst not stir till he give thee leave ; that the commands of parents and princes may stoop to his, much more the commands of custom and company, of credit or pleasure, of the world or flesh ; these are the things that I exhort you to ; and I must tell you that Christ doth flatly expect them at your hands.

I will here back these exhortations with some persuading considerations. Think of what I say, and weigh it as we go. If I speak not truth and reason, then reject it with disdain, and spare not ; but if it be, and thy conscience tell thee so, take heed then how thou dost neglect or reject it, lest thou be found a fighter against the Spirit, and lest the curse of God do seize upon that heart that would not yield to truth and reason.

And I will draw these considerations only from my text :

1. Thou art else a rebel against thy sovereign Lord. This I gather from the command in my text : and, indeed, the scope of the whole psalm. God hath given thee into the hands of his son, and made him Lord and King of all, and commanded all men to accept him, and submit unto him. Who can show such title to the sovereignty ? such right to rule thee as Christ can do ? He is thy Maker, and so is not Satan ; he dearly bought thee, and so did not the world ; "Thou wast not redeemed with silver, and gold, and corruptible things." (1 Peter i. 18.) I make this challenge here in the behalf of Christ ; let any thing in the world step forth and show a better title to thee, to thy heart, and to thy life, than Christ doth show, and let them take thy heart, and take the rule. But why do I speak thus ? I know thou wilt confess it ; and yet wilt thou not yield him thy chiefest love and obedience : out of thy own mouth then art thou condemned, and thou proclaimest thyself a knowing and wilful rebel.

2. To deny thy affections and subjection to Christ is the most barbarous unkindness that a sinner can be guilty of. Did he pity thee in thy lost estate, and take thee up when thou layest wounded in the way, and make thee a plaster of the blood of his heart ? And is this thy requital ? Did he come down from heaven to earth, to seek thee when thou wast lost, and take upon him all thy debt, and put himself into the prison of the world and flesh ? Hath he paid for thy folly, and borne that wrath of God which thou must have suffered for ever ? And doth he not now deserve to be entertained with most affectionate respect ? But with a few cold thoughts instead of hearty

love ; and with a few formal words instead of worship ? What hurt had it been to him if thou hadst perished ? What would he have lost by it if thou hadst lain in hell ? Would not justice have been glorified upon a disobedient wretch ? Might not he have said to his Father, ‘ What are these worms and sinners to me ? must I smart for their folly ? must I suffer when they have sinned ? must I debase myself to become man because they would have exalted themselves to become as God ? If they will needs undo themselves what is it to me ? If they will cast themselves into the flames of hell must I go thither to fetch them out ? ’ Thus Christ might have put off the suffering and the shame, and let it fall and lie where it was due ; but he did not ; his compassion would not suffer him to see us suffer ; justice must be satisfied, the threat must be fulfilled ; Christ seeth that we cannot overcome it, but he can ; therefore, he comes down into flesh, he lives on earth, he fasteth, he weepeth, he is weary, he is tempted, he hath not a place to put his head, he is hated, he is spit upon, he is clothed as a fool, and made a scorn, he sweateth blood, he is crucified with thieves, he bears the burden that would have sunk all us to hell ; and must he after all this be neglected and forgotten, and his laws that should rule us be laid aside, and be accounted too strict and precise for us to live by ? O let the heavens blush, and the earth be ashamed, at this barbarous ingratitude ! How can such a people show their faces at his coming, or look him in the face when he shall judge them for this ! Would you use a friend thus ? No, nor an enemy. Methinks you should rather wonder with yourselves that ever Christ should give you leave to love him, and say, will the Lord endure such a wretch to kiss him ? Will he suffer himself to be embraced by those arms, which have been defiled so oft by the embracements of sin ? Will he so highly honour me as to be his subject and his servant, and to be guided by such a blessed and perfect law ? And doth he require no harder conditions than these for my salvation ; take, then, my heart, Lord, it is thine ; and O that it were better worth thy having, or take it and make it better ; the spear hath opened me a passage to thy heart, let the Spirit open thee a passage into mine ; deservedly may those gates be fuel for hell, that would not open to let in the King of Glory.

3. To deny thy affection and subjection to the Son is the greatest folly and madness in the world. Why doth he require this so earnestly at thy hands ? Is it for thy hurt, or for thy

good? Would he make a prey of thee for his own advantage? Is it not any need that he hath of thee or of thy service, or because thou hast need of him for thy direction and salvation? Would he steal away thy heart, as the world doth, to delude it? Would he draw thee as Satan doth, to serve him, that he may torment thee? If so, it were no wonder that thou art so hardly drawn to him; but thou knowest sure that Christ hath none of these ends.

The truth is this: his dying on the cross is but part of the work that is necessary to thy salvation; this was but the paying of the debt; he must give thee moreover a peculiar interest, and make that to be absolutely thine, which was thine but conditionally; he must take off thy rags, and wash thy sores, and qualify thy soul for thy prepared glory, and bring thee out of the prison of sin and death, and present thee to his Father blameless and undefiled, and estate thee in greater dignity than thou fell from: and all this must he do by drawing thee to himself, and laying himself upon thee as the prophet upon the child, and closing thy heart with his heart, and thy will with his will, and thy thoughts and ways with the rule of his word; and is this against thee, or for thee? Is there any hurt to thee in all this? I dare challenge earth and hell, and all the enemies of Christ in both, to show the least hurt that ever he caused to the soul of a believer, or the least wrong to the soul of any.

And must he then have such a stir to do thee good? Must he so beseech thee to be happy, and follow thee with entreaties? And yet art thou like a stock that neither hears nor feels? Nay, dost thou not murmur and strive against him, as if he were about to do thee a mischief, and would rather cut thy throat than cure thee, and were going to destroy thee, and not to save thee? I appeal to any that hath not renounced his reason, whether this be not notorious brutish unreasonableness; and whether thou be not like a beast, that must be cast or held while you dress his sores, than to a man that should help on his own recovery. Foolish sinner! it is thy sin that hurts thee, and not thy Saviour; why dost thou not rather strive against that? It is the devil that would destroy thee, and thou dost not grudge at thy obedience to him. Be judge thyself, whether this be wise or equal dealing.

Sinner, I beseech thee in the behalf of thy poor soul, if thou have such a mind to renounce thy Saviour, do it not till thou hast found a better master: say as Peter, "Whither shall we go

Lord? thou hast the words of eternal life :” and when thou knowest once where to be better, then go thy way ; part with Christ, and spare not.’ If thy merry company, or thy honour, or thy wealth, or all the friends and delights in the world, will do that for thee which Christ hath done, and which at last he will do if thou stick to him, then take them for thy gods, and let Christ go. In the mean time let me prevail with thee, as thou art a man of reason, sell not thy Saviour till thou know for what; sell not thy soul till thou know why; sell not thy hopes of heaven for nothing. God forbid that thy wilful folly should bring thee to hell, and there thou shouldest lie roaring and crying out for ever, ‘This is the reward of my neglecting Christ; he would have led me to glory, and I would not follow him; I sold heaven for a few merry hours, for a little honour, and ease, and delight, to my flesh : here I lie in torment, because I would not be ruled by Christ, but chose my lusts and pleasures before him.’ Sinner, do not think I speak harshly or uncharitably to call this neglect of Christ thy folly; as true as thou livest and hearest me this day, except thy timely submission do prevent it, which God grant it may, thou wilt one of these days befool thyself a thousand times more than I now befool thee, and call thyself mad, and a thousand times mad, when thou thinkest how fair thou wast for heaven, and how ready Christ was to have been thy Saviour and thy Lord, and how light thou madest of his offers; either this will prove true to thy cost, or else am I a false prophet, and a cursed deceiver. Be wise, therefore, be learned, and kiss the Son.

The former considerations were drawn from the aggravations of the sin; the following are drawn from the aggravations of the punishment, and from the words of the text too.

1 God will be angry if you kiss not the Son. His wrath is as fire, and this neglect of Christ is the way to kindle it. If thou art not a believer thou art condemned already; but this will bring upon thee double condemnation. Believe it for a truth, all thy sins, as they are against the covenant of works, even the most heinous of them, are not so provoking and destroying as thy slighting of Christ. Oh! what will the Father say to such an unworthy wretch! ‘Must I send my Son from my bosom to suffer for thee? Must he groan when thou shouldest groan, and bleed when thou shouldest bleed, and die when thou shouldest die? And canst thou not now be persuaded to embrace him, and obey him? Must the world be courted whilst

he stands by? Must he have the naked title of thy Lord and Saviour while thy fleshly pleasures and profits have thy heart? What wrath can be too great, what hell too hot, for such an ungrateful, unworthy wretch! Must I prepare thee a portion of the blood of my Son, and wilt thou not be persuaded now to drink it? Must I be at so much cost to save thee, and wilt thou not obey that thou mayest be saved? Go seize upon him, justice, let my wrath consume thee, let hell devour thee, let thy own conscience for ever torment thee; seeing thou hast chosen death, thou shalt have it, and as thou hast rejected heaven, thou shalt never see it, "but my wrath shall abide upon thee for ever." (John iii. 36.) Wo to thee, sinner, if this be once thy sentence! Thou wert better have all the world angry with thee, and bound in an oath against thee, as the Jews against Paul, than that one drop of his anger should light upon thee; thou wert better have heaven and earth to fall upon thee, than one degree of God's displeasure.

2. As this wrath is of fire, so is it a consuming fire, and causeth the sinner utterly to perish. All this is plain in the text; not that the being of the soul will cease, such a perishing the sinner would be glad of; a happy man would he think himself, if he might die as the brutes, and be no more: but such wishes are vain. It is but a glimpse of his own condition, which he shall see in the great combustion of the world; when he seeth the heaven and earth on fire, he seeth but the picture of his approaching wo; but alas! it is he that must feel the devouring fire. The world will be but refined or consumed by its fire; but there must he burn, and burn for ever, and yet he neither consumed or refined. The earth will not feel the flames that burn it, but his soul and body must feel it with a witness; little know his friends that are honourably interring his corpse what his miserable soul is seeing and feeling; here endeth the story of his prosperity and delights, and now begins the tragedy that will never end; oh! how his merry days are vanished as a dream, and his jovial life as a tale that is told; his witty jests, his pleasant sports, his cards and dice, his merry company and wanton dalliance, his cups and queans, yea, his hopes of heaven and confident conceits of escaping this wrath, are all perished with him in the way; as the wax melteth before the fire, as the chaff is scattered before the wind, as the stubble consumeth before the flames, as the flowers do wither before the scorching sun; so are all his sinful pleasures withered, consumed, scattered

and melted. And is not the hearty embracing of Christ, and subjection to him, a cheap prevention of all this? Oh! who among you can dwell with the devouring fire! "Who can dwell with the everlasting burnings!" (Isaiah xxxiii. 14.) This God hath said he will surely do if you are able to gainsay and resist him; try your strength, read his challenge, "Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together." (Isaiah xxvii. 4.)

3. This perishing will be sudden and unexpected, in the way of their sin and resistance of Christ, in the way of their fleshly delights and hopes; "They shall perish in the way." (1 Thes. v. 3; Matt. xxiv. 30.) As fire doth terribly break out in the night when men are sleeping, and consumeth the fruit of their long labours; so will this fire break forth upon their souls, and how near may it be when you little think on it! A hundred to one but some of us present shall within a few months be in another world, and what world it will be you may easily conceive if you do not embrace and obey the Son. How many have been smitten, with Herod, in the midst of their vain glory? How many, like Ahab, have been wounded in fight, and dunged the earth with their flesh and blood, who left the Lord's people to be fed with bread and water of affliction, in confidence of their own return to peace? How many have been swallowed up like Pharaoh and his host, in their rash and malicious pursuit of the godly? Little thinks many an ignorant, careless soul what a change of his condition he shall shortly find; those thousands of souls that are now in misery did as little think of that doleful state while they were merrily pleasing the flesh on earth, and forgetting Christ and their eternal state, as you do now; they could as contemptuously jeer the preacher as you, and verily believed that all this talk was but words, and wind, and empty threats, and ventured their souls as boldly upon their carnal hopes. Little thought Sodom of the devouring fire when they were furiously assaulting the door of their righteous reprov-er! as little do the raging enemies of godliness among us think of the deplorable state which they are hastening to! They will cry out themselves then, 'Little did I think to see this day, or feel these torments!' Why, thou wouldest not think of it, or else thou mightest; God told thee in Scripture, and ministers in their preaching, but thou wouldest not believe till it was too late.

4. A little of God's wrath will bring down all this upon those

that embrace not and obey not the Son. If his wrath be kindled, yea, but a little, &c. As his mercy being the mercy of an infinite God, a little of it will sweeten a world of crosses; so therefore will a little of his wrath consume a world of pleasures; one spark fell among the Bethshemites, and consumed fifty thousand and seventy men, but for looking into the ark, till the people cry out, "Who can stand before this holy Lord God?" (1 Sam. vi, 19, 20.) How then will the neglecters of Christ stand before him? Sirs, methinks we should not hear of this as strangers, or unbelievers! There did but one spark fall upon England, and what a combustion hath it cast this kingdom into. How many houses and towns hath it consumed? How many thousands of people hath it empoverished. How many children hath it left fatherless: and how many thousand bodies hath it bereaved of their souls? And though there are as many hearty prayers and tears poured forth to quench it as most kingdoms on earth have had, yet is the fire kindled afresh, and threateneth a more terrible desolation than before, as if it would turn us all to ashes. One spark fell upon Germany, another upon Ireland, and what it hath done there I need not tell you. If a little of this wrath do but seize upon thy body, what cries, and groans, and lamentations doth it raise. If it be on one member, yea, but a tooth, how dost thou roar with intolerable pain, and wouldest not take the world to live for ever in that condition. If it seize upon the conscience, what torments doth it cause, as if the man were already in hell: he thinketh every thing he seeth is against him; he feareth every bit he eateth should be his bane. If he sleep, he dreams of death and judgment; when he awaketh, his conscience and horror awake with him: he is weary of living, and fearful of dying; even the thoughts of heaven are terrible to him, because he thinks it is not for him. Oh! what a pitiful sight it is to see a man under the wrath of God! And are these little sparks so intolerable hot? What then do you think are the everlasting flames? Beloved hearers, if God had not spoke this I durst not have spoke it: the desire of my soul is, that you may never feel it, or else I should never have chosen so unpleasing a subject, but that I hope the foreknowing may help you to prevent it; but let me tell you from God, that as sure as the heaven is over your head, and the earth under your feet, except the Son of God be nearer thy heart, and dearer to thy heart than friends, or goods, or

pleasures, or life, or any thing in this world, this burning wrath will never be prevented. (Matt. x. 37 ; Luke xiv. 46.)

5. When this wrath of God is thoroughly kindled, the world will discern the blessed from the wretched. "Then blessed are they that trust in him." It is the property of the wicked to be wise too late. Those that now they esteem but precise fellows, will then be acknowledged blessed men. Bear with their scorns, Christians, in the meantime, they will very shortly wish themselves in your stead, and would give all that ever they were masters of, that they had sought and loved Christ as earnestly as you, and had a little of your oil when they find their lamps are out. (Matt. xxv. 8.)

And now, hearers, what is your resolution ? Perhaps you have been enemies to Christ, under the name of Christians ; will you still be so ? Have you not loathed this busy, diligent serving of him ; and hated them that most carefully seek him, more than the vilest drunkard or blasphemer ? Have not his word, and service, and Sabbaths, been a burden to you ? Have not multitudes ventured their lives against his ordinances and government ? Nay, is it not almost the common voice of the nation in effect : ' Give us our sports, and liberty of sinning ; give us our readers, and singing men, and drunken preachers ; give us our holidays and ceremonies, and the customs of our forefathers ; away with these precise fellows, they are an eye-sore to us ; these precise preachers shall not control us, this precise Scripture shall be no law to us : ' and, consequently, this Christ shall not rule over us ?

How long hath England rebelled against his government ? Mr. Udal told them, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, ' that if they would not set up the discipline of Christ in the church, Christ would set it up himself in a way that would make their hearts to ache.' I think their hearts have ached by this time ; and as they judged him to the gallows for his prediction, so hath Christ executed them by thousands for their rebellion against him ; and yet they are as unwilling of his government as ever. The kings of the earth are afraid lest Christ's government should unking them ; the rulers are jealous lest it will depose them from their dignities ; even the reformers that have ventured all to set it up, are jealous lest it will encroach upon their power and privileges ; kings are afraid of it, and think themselves but half kings, where Christ doth set up his word and discipline ; parliaments are afraid of it, lest it should usurp their

authority; lawyers are afraid of it, lest it should take away their gains, and the laws of Christ should over-top the laws of the land; the people are afraid of it, lest it will compel them to subjection to that law and way which their souls abhor: indeed, if ~~ro~~ ^{ro} ~~pn~~ may be their own judges, then Christ hath no enemies in England at all, we are his friends, and all good Christians. It is precisians and rebels that men hate, and not Christ: it is not the government of Christ that we are afraid of, but the domineering of aspiring, ambitious presbyters, (viz., that generation of godly, learned, humble ministers, who have done more than ever did any before them, to make themselves incapable of preferment or domineering,) and when men disobey and disregard our doctrine, it is not Christ, but the preacher, that they despise and disobey. And if the Jews might so have been their own judges, it was not the Son of God whom they crucified, but an enemy to Cæsar, and a blasphemer that works by the devil. It was not Paul, a saint, that they persecuted, but one that they found to be a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition amongst the people. But were there no seditious persons but apostles and Christians; nor no troublers of Israel but Elias; nor no enemies to Cæsar but Christ and his friends? Oh! God will shortly take off the veil of hypocrisy from the actions of the world, and make them confess that it was Christ they resisted, and that it was his holy ways and word that did kindle their fury; else would they as soon have fallen upon the ungodly rabble, as they did upon the most zealous and conscionable Christians: and, however you mangle and deform them with your false accusations and reproach, he will then know and own his people and his cause, and will say to the world, 'In despising them you despised me; and, inasmuch as you did it to one of these little ones, you did it unto me.' As Dr. Stoughton saith, 'If you strike a schismatic, and God find a saint lie a-bleeding, and you to answer it, I would not be in your coat for more than you got by it.' Hath the world ever gained by resisting Christ? Doth it make the crown sit faster on the heads of kings? Or, must they not rather do to Christ as King John to his supposed vicar, resign their crowns to him, and take them from him again as his tributaries, before they can hold them by a certain tenure? Read over but this psalm, and judge: "Herod must kill the child Jesus to secure his crown: the Jews must kill him lest the Romans should come and take away their place and nation. (John xi. 48.) And did this means secure them; or,

did it bring upon them the destruction which they thought to avoid?

Or have the people been greater gainers by this than by their kings? What hath England got by resisting his gospel and government, by hating his servants, and by scorning his holy ways? What have you got by it in this city? What say you? Have you yet done with your enmity and resistance? Have you enough; or would you yet have more? If you have not done with Christ, he hath not done with you; you may try again, and follow on as far as Pharaoh if you will, but if you be not losers in the latter end, I have lost my judgment; and if you return in peace, God hath not spoken by me. (1 Kings xxii. 28.)

Sirs, I am loth to leave you till the bargain be made: What say you? Do you heartily consent that Christ shall be your Sovereign, his word your law, his people your companions, his worship your recreation, his merits your refuge, his glory your end, and himself the desire and delight of your souls? The Lord Jesus Christ now waiteth upon you for your resolution and answer; thou wilt very shortly wait upon him for thy doom: as ever thou wouldest then have him speak life to thy soul, do thou now resolve upon the way of life. Remember thou art almost at death and judgment. What wouldest thou resolve if thou knewest that it were to-morrow? If thou didst but see what others do now suffer for neglecting him, that doth now offer thee his grace, what wouldest thou then resolve to do? Sirs, it stirreth my heart to look upon you, (as Xerxes upon his army,) and to think that it is not an hundred years till every soul of you shall be in heaven or in hell! and it may be, not an hundred hours till some of your souls must take their leave of your bodies; when it comes to that, then you will cry, 'away with the world, away with my pleasures; nothing can comfort me now but Christ;' why, then, will you not be of the same mind now? When the world cries, 'away with this holiness, and praying, and talking of heaven! Give us our sports, and our profits, and the customs of our forefathers,' that is, "away with Christ, and give us Barabbas," then do ye cry, 'away with all these, and give us Christ.'

Oh! if it might stand with the will of God that I might choose what effect this sermon should have upon your hearts; verily, it should be nothing that should hurt you in the least; but this it should be, it should now be to fasten upon your souls,

and pierce into your consciences, as an arrow that is drawn out of the quiver of God ; it should follow thee home to thy house, and bring thee down on thy knees in secret, and make thee there lament thy case, and cry out in the bitterness of thy spirit, ‘ Lord, I am the sinner that have neglected thee ; I have tasted more sweetness in the world than in thy blood, and taken more pleasure in my earthly labours and delights than I have done in praying to thee, or meditating on thee ; I have complimented with thee by a cold profession, but my heart was never set upon thee.’ And here should it make thee lie in tears and prayers, and follow Christ with thy cries and complaints, till he should take thee up from the dust, and assure thee of his pardon, and change thy heart, and close it with his own. If thou wert the dearest friend that I have in the world, this is the success that I would wish this sermon with thy soul, that it might be as a voice still sounding in thine ears, that when thou art next in thy sinful company or delight, thou mightest, as it were, hear this voice in thy conscience, ‘ Is this thine obedience to him that bought thee ? ’ That when thou art next forgetting Christ, and neglecting his worship in secret, or in thy family, or public, thou mightest see this sentence, as it were, written upon thy wall, “ Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and thou perish.” That thou mightest see it, as it were, written upon the tester of thy bed, as often as thou liest down in an unregenerate state ; and that it may keep thine eyes waking, and thy soul disquieted, and give thee no rest, till thou hadst rest in Christ. In a word ; if it were but as much in my hands as it is in yours, what should become of this sermon, I hope it would be the best sermon to thee that ever thou heardest : it should lay thee at the feet of Christ, and leave thee in his arms. Oh ! that I did but know what arguments would persuade you, and what words would work thy heart hereto ! If I were sure it would prevail, I would come down from the pulpit, and go from man to man, upon my knees, with this request and advice in my text : Oh ! “ kiss the Son, lest he be angry ; and you perish.”

But if thy hardened heart make light of all, and thou go on still in thy careless neglect of Christ, and yet wilt not believe but thou art his friend and servant, I do here from the word, and in the name of Christ, pass this sentence upon thy soul : Thou shalt go hence, and perhaps linger out in thy security a few days more, and then be called by death to judgment, where

thou shalt be doomed to this everlasting fiery wrath. Make as light of it as thou wilt, feel it thou shalt, put it off and escape if thou canst; and when thou hast done, go boast that thou hast conquered Christ. In the meantime I require this congregation to bear witness that thou hadst warning.

This to all in general: my text yet directeth me to speak more particularly to the rulers and judges of the earth.

Honourable and reverend judges, worshipful magistrates, if you were all kings and emperors, all is one to Christ, you were but high and mighty dust and ashes; Christ sendeth his summons first to you, he knows the leaders' interest in the vulgar; you are the commanders in the host of God, and must do him more service than the common soldiers: if one of you should neglect him, and stand out against him, he will begin with you in the sight of the rest, and make your greatness a stepping-stone to the honour of his justice, that the lowest may understand what they have to do when they see the greatest cannot save themselves.

Shall I say you are wiser than the people, and therefore that this admonition is needless to you? No, then I should accuse the Spirit in my text: the cedars of the earth have always hardly stooped to Christ, which hath made so many of them rooted up. Your honours are an impediment to that self-abasing which he expecteth: your dignities will more tend to blind you than to illuminate. There are few of any sort, but fewest of the great, and wise, and mighty, that are called: yet a man would think that among those that have held out, in these trying times, there should be no need of these suspicions: but hath there not been always a succession of sinners, even of those that have beheld the ruin of their predecessors? Who would have thought that a generation that had seen the wonders in Egypt, and had passed through the sea, and been maintained in a wilderness with constant miracles, should yet be so vile idolaters, or murmuring unbelievers, that only two of them should enter into rest? The best of saints have need of self-suspicion and vigilancy. My advice to you, therefore, is this, learn wisdom by the examples that your eyes have seen: "Them that honour God, he will honour; and they that despise him, shall be lightly esteemed." (1 Sam. ii. 30.)

More particularly, let me advise you as your duty to the

Son, 1. That you take your commission and office as from him. I think it a doctrine more common than true, that ministers only are under Christ the Mediator, and magistrates are only under God as Creator. Christ is now Lord of all, and you are his servants, as there is no power but from God, so none from God but by Christ. Look upon yourselves as his vicegerents, therefore do not that which beseemeth not a vicegerent of Christ. Remember that as you see to the execution of the laws of the land, so will Christ see that his laws be obeyed by you, or executed on you. Remember when you sit and judge offenders, that you represent him that will judge you and all the world. And O how lively a resemblance have you to raise your apprehension! Think with yourselves, 'Thus shall men tremble before his bar; thus shall they wait to hear their doom;' and be sure that your judgment be such as may most lively represent the judgment of Christ, that the just may depart from your bar with joy, and the unjust with sadness. Let your justice be most severe where Christ is most severe, and so far as you can exercise your clemency, let it be about those offences which our laws are more rigorous against than the laws of God. Be sure yet that you understand the extent of your commission, that you are not the sole officers of Jesus Christ, you are under him as he is head over all; ministers are under him as he is head to his church. (Eph. i. 22.) Ministers are as truly the magistrates' teachers, as magistrates are their governors, yea, by as high and undoubted authority must they oversee, govern, and command ministerially, as their Lord's ambassadors, both kings and parliaments to do whatsoever is written in this bible, as you may command them to obey the laws of the land; yea, and as strict a bond lieth on you to obey them so far as they speak according to this word, and keep within the bounds of their calling, as doth on them to obey you in yours. (Heb. xiii. 7, 17.) Deal not with them so dissemblingly as to call them your pastors, teachers, overseers, and rulers, (as Scripture bids you,) and yet to learn of them but what you list, or to deny them leave to teach or advise you, further than they receive particular warrant and direction from yourselves. Should our assembly limit all their ministerial advice to the warrant and direction of parliament, and not extend it to the warrant and directions of Christ, would they not become the servants and pleasers of men? If you do not your best to set up all the

government of Christ, even that in and proper to his church, as well as that which is over them, and for them, men may well think it is your own seats, and not Christ's that you would advance. I would all the magistrates in England did well consider that Christ hath been teaching them this seven years, that their own peace or honours shall not be set up before his gospel and government; and that they do but tire themselves in vain in such attempts; then they would learn to read my text with the vulgar, *apprehendite disciplinam*. And if the decisive power of the ministry be doubtful, yet at least they would set up their nunciative in its vigour. Christ will rule England either as subjects or as rebels, and all that kings and states do gain by opposing his rule, will not add one cubit to the stature of their greatness. Yet do I not understand by the government of Christ, a rigid conformity to the model of this or that party, or faction, with a violent extirpation of every dissenter. It is the ignorant part of divines, (alas! such there are,) who, with the simple fellow in Erasmus, do expound Paul's *hæreticum hominem devita*, i. e. *de vita tolle*. It is the essentials, and not the accidentals of discipline that I speak of: and if some disengaged standers-by be not mistaken who have the advantage by standing out of the dust of contention, each party hath some of these essentials, and the worst is nearer the truth than his adversary is aware of: and were not the crowd and noise so great that there is no hope of being heard, one would think it should be possible to reconcile them all. However, shall the work be undone while each party striveth to have the doing of it? I was afraid when I read the beginning and end of this controversy in France. The learned Ramus pleadeth for popular church government in the synods; they rejected it as an unwarrantable novelty; the contention grew sharp, till the Parisian massacre silenced the difference. And must our differences have so sharp a cure? Will nothing unite disjoined Christians but their own blood? God forbid. But in the mean time, while we quarrel, the work standeth still. Some would have all the workers of iniquity now taken out of the kingdom of Christ, forgetting that the angels must take them out at last. (Matt. xiii.) Some ministers think as Myconius did, when he was called to the ministry, by a vision leading him into a corn-field, and bidding him reap, he thought he must put in his sickle at the bottom, till he was told '*domino meo non opus est*

stramine, modo aristæ in horrea colligantur. ‘ My master needeth not straw; gather but the ears, and it shall suffice.’

Once more: I know I speak not to the parliament that should remedy it, but yet that you may be helpful in your places to advance this work of Christ, let me tell you what is the thing in England that cries for reformation next our sins, even the fewness of overseers in great congregations, which maketh the greatest part of pastoral work to lie undone, and none to watch over the people in private, because they are scarce sufficient for the public work. It is pity that Musculus, that may be head of a society of students if he will continue a papist, must weave and dig for his living if he will be a protestant. It is pity that even Luther’s wife and children must wander destitute of maintenance when he is dead, when Æsop, the stage-player, can leave his son one hundred and fifty thousand pounds; and Roscius have thirty pounds a-day for the same trade; and Aristotle be allowed eight hundred talents to further his search into the secrets of nature. But am I pleading that ministers may have more maintenance? No, be it just or unjust, it is none of my errand. But O that the church had more ministers, which, though at the present they cannot have for want of men, yet hereafter they might have if it were not for want of maintenance. Alas! then, what pity is it that every reformation should diminish the churches’ patrimony. If the men have offended, or if the office of bishops or deans be unwarrantable, yet what have the revenues done? Is it not pity that one troop of an hundred men shall have seven commanding officers allowed them, besides others, and ten thousand, or forty thousand, shall have but one or two overseers allowed them for their souls, when the ministerial work is more laborious, and of greater concernment than the work of those commanders? I tell you again, the great thing that cries for reformation in England, next to sin, is the paucity of ministers in great congregations. I tell you this, that you may know which way to improve your several interests for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ in England.

To you, lawyers and jurors, my advice is this, “ Kiss the Son.” Remember the judgment is Christ’s, every cause of truth and innocency doth he own, and will call it his cause. Wo, therefore, to him that shall oppose it! Remember every time you take a fee to plead against a cause that you know to be

just, you take a fee against a cause of Christ. Will you be of counsel against him that is your Counsellor and King? Dare you plead against him that you expect should plead for you? or desire judgment, as the Jews, against your Lord and Judge? Hath he not told you that he will say, "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of these little ones, ye did it unto me?" Remember, therefore, when a fee is offered you against the innocent, that it is a fee against Christ; and Judas's gain will be loss in the end, and will be too hot to hold long; you will be glad to bring it back, and glad if you could be well short of it, and cry, 'I have sinned in betraying the cause of the innocent.' Say not it is our calling that we must live upon. If any man of you dare upon such grounds plead a cause against his conscience, if his conscience do not plead it again more sharply against him, say I am a false prophet. If any, therefore, shall say of you, as the Cardinals of Luther, '*Cur homini os non obstruitis auro, et argento,*' let the same answer serve turn, '*Hem pecuniam, non curat,* &c. If any honourable or worshipful friend must be pleased, inquire first whether he be a better friend than Christ. Tell him the cause is Christ's, and you cannot befriend him, except he procure you a dispensation from him. When Pompey saw his soldiers ready to fly, he lay down in the passage, and told them they should tread upon him then; which stopped their flight. So suppose every time you are drawn in to oppose a just cause, that you saw Christ saying, 'Thou must trample upon me, if thou do this.' As Luther to Melancthon, '*Ne causa fidei sit sine fide,*' so say I to you all, '*Ne causa justitiæ sit sine justitiâ.*' When you begin to be cold in a good cause, suppose you saw Christ showing you his scars, as the soldier did to Cæsar when he desired him to plead his cause, 'See here, I have done more than plead for you.' We have had those that have had a tongue for a fee or a friend, but none for Christ; but God hath now, therefore, shut their mouths, and we may say of them, as Granius by his bad lawyer, when he heard him grown hoarse, 'If they had not lost their voices, we had lost our cause.' To conclude, remember, all of you, that there is an appeal from these earthly judgments; these causes must all be heard again, your witnesses re-examined, your oaths, pleadings, and sentences reviewed, and then, as Lampridius saith of Alexander Severus, that he would vomit choler if he saw a corrupt judge, so will Christ

vomit wrath, and vomit you out in wrath from his presence, if corrupt. Therefore, "kiss the son, lest he be angry, and you perish," &c. I am sensible how I have encroached on your great affairs. Melancthon was wont to tell of a priest that begun his sermon thus, '*Scio quod vos non libenter auditis, et ego non libenter concionor, non diu igitur vos teneam.*' But I may say contrary. I am persuaded that you hear with a good will, and I am certain that I preach willingly, and therefore I was bold to hold you the longer.