

**TRUE CHRISTIANITY ;**  
**OR,**  
**CHRIST'S ABSOLUTE DOMINION,**  
**AND**  
**MAN'S NECESSARY SELF-RESIGNATION**  
**AND SUBJECTION.**  
*IN TWO ASSIZE SERMONS,*  
**PREACHED BEFORE THE HONOURABLE JUDGE OF**  
**ASSIZE, AT WORCESTER, AUG. 2, 1654.**

---

“ For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living.”—Rom. xiv. 9.



TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE SERJEANT GLYN,  
NOW JUDGE OF ASSIZE IN THIS CIRCUIT.

---

MY LORD,

COULD my excuse have satisfied you, this sermon had been confined to the auditory it was prepared for. I cannot expect that it should find that candour and favour with every reader, as it did with the hearers. When it must speak to all, the guilty will hear, and then it will gall. Innocency is patient in hearing a reproof, and charitable in the interpretation, but guilt will smart and quarrel, and usually make a fault in him that findeth one in them. Yet I confess this is but a poor justification of his silence that hath a call to speak. Both my calling and this sermon would condemn me, if, on such grounds, I should draw back, but my backwardness was caused by the reason which I then tendered your Lordship as my excuse, viz., because here is nothing but what is common, and that it is in as common and homely a dress. And I hope we need not fear that our labours are dead, unless the press shall give them life. We bring not sermons to church, as we do a corpse for a burial. If there be life in them, and life in the hearers, the connaturality will cause such an amicable closure, that through the reception, retention, and operation of the soul, they will be the immortal seed of a life everlasting. But yet seeing the press hath a louder voice than mine, and the matter in hand is of such exceeding necessity, I shall not refuse, upon such an invitation, to be a remembrancer to the world of a doctrine and duty of such high concernment, though they have heard it ever so oft before. Seeing, therefore, I must present that now to your eyes, which I lately presented to your ears, I shall take the boldness to add one word of application in this epistle, which I thought not seasonable to mention in the first delivery, and that shall be to your Lordship, and all

others in your present case, that are elected members of this expected Parliament. Be sure to remember the interest of your Sovereign, the great Lord-protector of heaven and earth. And as ever you will make him a comfortable account of your power, abilities, and opportunities of serving him, see that you prefer his interest before your own, or any man's on earth. If you go not thither as sent by Him, with a firm resolution to serve him first, you were better sit at home. Forget not that he hath laid claim to you, and to all that you have, and all that you can do. I am bold with all possible earnestness to entreat you, yea, as Christ's minister to require you, in his name, to study and remember his business and interest, and see that it have the chief place in all your consultations. Watch against the encroachments of your own carnal interests, consult not with flesh and blood, nor give it the hearing when it shall offer you its advice. How subtilly will it insinuate! How importunately will it urge you! How certainly will it mar all, if you do not constantly and resolvedly watch! O how hard, but how happy is it to conquer this carnal self! Remember still that you are not your own; that you have an unseen master that must be pleased, whoever be displeased, and an unseen kingdom to be obtained, and an invisible soul that must be saved, though all the world be lost. Fix your eyes still on him that made and redeemed you, and upon the ultimate end of your christian race, and do nothing wilfully unworthy such a master, and such an end. Often renew your self-resignation, and devote yourself to him; sit close at his work, and be sure that it be his, both in the matter, and in your intent. If conscience should at any time ask 'Whose work are you now doing?' Or a man should pluck you by the sleeve, and say, 'Sir, whose cause are you now pleading?' See that you have the answer of a Christian at hand; delay not God's work till you have done your own, or any one's else. You will best secure the commonwealth, and your own interest, by looking first to his. By neglecting this, and being carnally wise, we have wheeled about so long in the wilderness, and lost those advantages against the powers of darkness, which we know not whether we shall ever recover again. It is the great astonishment of sober men, and not the least reproach that ever was cast on our holy profession, to think with what a zeal for the work of Christ men seemed to be animated in the beginning of our disagreements, and how deeply they did engage themselves to him in solemn vows,

protestations, and covenants, and what advantages carnal self hath since got, and turned the stream another way! So that the same men have since been the instruments of our calamity, in breaking in pieces and dishonouring the churches of Christ, yea, and gone so near to the taking down, as much as in them lay, the whole ministry that stand approved in the land. O do not, by trifling, give advantage to the tempter to destroy your work and you together! Take warning by the sad experiences of what is past, bestir you speedily and vigorously for Christ, as knowing your opposition, and the shortness of your time. 'Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.' If you ask me wherein this interest of Christ doth consist, I shall tell you, but in a few unquestionable particulars. 1. In the main, that truth, godliness, and honesty be countenanced and encouraged, and their contraries by all fit means suppressed. 2. In order to this, that unworthy men be removed from magistracy and ministry, and the places supplied with the fittest that can be had. 3. That a competent maintenance may be procured where it is wanting, especially for cities and great towns, where more teachers are so necessary in some proportion to the number of souls, and on which the country doth so much depend. Shall an age of such high pretences to reformation and zeal for the churches, alienate so much, and then leave them destitute, and say, it cannot be had? 4. That right means be used, with speed and diligence, for the healing of our divisions, and the uniting of all the true churches of Christ at last, in these nations; and O that your endeavours might be extended much further! To which end I shall mention but these two means of most evident necessity. 1. That there be one Scripture creed, or confession of faith, agreed on by a general assembly of able ministers, duly and freely chosen hereunto, which shall contain nothing but matter of evident necessity and verity. This will serve, 1. For a test to the churches to discern the sound professors from the unsound, (as to their doctrine,) and to know them with whom they may close as brethren, and whom they must reject. 2. For a test to the magistrate of the orthodox to be encouraged, and of the intolerably heterodox, which it seems is intended in the 37th article of the late formed government, where all that will have liberty must profess faith in God by Jesus Christ, which, in a christian sense, must comprehend every true fundamental article of our faith, and, no doubt, it is not the bare speaking

of those words in an unchristian sense that is intended ; as if a ranter should say, that himself is God, and his mate is Jesus Christ.

2. That there be a public establishment of the necessary liberty of the churches, to meet their officers and delegates on all just occasions, in assemblies smaller or greater, (even national, when it is necessary,) seeing, without associations and communion in assemblies, the unity and concord of the churches is not like to be maintained. I exclude not the magistrates' interest, or oversight, to see that they do not transgress their bounds. As you love Christ, and his church, and gospel, and men's souls, neglect not these unquestionable points of his interest, and make them your first and chiefest business, and let none be preferred before him until you know them to be of more authority over you, and better friends to you, than Christ is. Should there be any among you that cherish a secret root of infidelity, after such pretences to the purest Christianity, and are zealous of Christ lest he should over-top them, and do set up an interest inconsistent with his sovereignty, and thereupon grow jealous of the liberties and power of his ministers, and of the unity and strength of his church, and think it their best policy to keep under his ministers, by hindering them from the exercise of their office, and to foment divisions, and hinder our union, that they may have parties ready to serve their ends ; I would not be in the case of such men, when God ariseth to judge them, for all the crowns and kingdoms on earth ! If they stumble on this stone, it will break them in pieces, but if it fall upon them, it will grind them to powder. They may seem to prevail against him awhile, when their supposed success is but a prosperous self-destroying, but mark the end, when his wrath is kindled, yea, but a little, and when these, his enemies that would not he should reign over them, are brought forth and destroyed before him, then they will be convinced of the folly of their rebellion. In the mean time, let wisdom be justified of her children.

My lord, I had not troubled you with so many words, had I not judged it probable that many more whom they concern may peruse them.

I remain,

Your Lordship's servant in the work of Christ,  
RICHARD BAXTER.

August 5, 1654.

A SERMON  
ON THE  
ABSOLUTE DOMINION OF GOD-REDEEMER;  
AND  
THE NECESSITY OF BEING DEVOTED AND LIVING  
TO HIM.

---

1 CORINTHIANS vi. 19, 20.

*And ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

FUNDAMENTALS in religion are the life of the superstructure. Like the vitals and naturals in the body, which are first necessary for themselves and you also, for the quickening and nourishing of the rest; there being no life or growth of the inferior parts, but what they do receive from the powers of these: it is but a dead discourse, which is not animated by these greater truths, whatever the bulk of its materials may consist of. The frequent repetition, therefore, of these is as excusable as frequent preaching: and they that nauseate it as loathsome hattery, do love novelty better than verity, and playing with words to please the fancy, rather than closing with Christ to save the soul. And as it is the chief part of the cure, in most external maladies, to corroborate the vital and natural powers, which then will do the work themselves, so it is the most effectual course for the cure of particular miscarriages in men's lives, to further the main work of grace upon their hearts. Could we make men better Christians, it would do much to make them better magistrates, counsellors, jurors, witnesses, subjects, neighbours, &c. And this must be done by the deeper impress of those vital truths and the good in them exhibited, which are adequate objects of our vital graces. Could we help you to wind up the spring of

faith, and so move the first wheel of christian love, we should find it the readiest and surest means to move the inferior wheels of duty. The flaws and irregular motions without, do show that something is amiss within, which, if we could rectify, we might the easier mend the rest. I shall suppose, therefore, that I need no more apology for choosing such a subject at such a season as this, than for bringing bread to a feast. And if I medicate the brain and heart, for the curing of senseless paralytic members, or the inordinate convulsive motions of any hearers, I have the warrant of the apostle's example in my text. Among other great enormities in the church of Corinth, he had these three to reprehend and heal: first, their sidings and divisions occasioned by some factious, self-seeking teachers. Secondly, their personal contentions by law-suits, and that before unbelieving judges. Thirdly, the foul sin of fornication, which some among them had fallen into. The great cure which he useth to all these, and more especially to the last, is the urging of these great foundation truths, whereof one is in the words before my text, viz., the right of the Holy Ghost; the other in the words of my text, which contains, first, a denial of any right of propriety in themselves. Secondly, an asserting of Christ's propriety in them. Thirdly, the proof of this from his purchase, which is his title. Fourthly, their duty concluded from the former premises, which is to glorify God, and that with the whole man, with the spirit, because God is a Spirit, and loathes hypocrisy; with the body, which is particularly mentioned, because it seems they were encouraged to fornication by such conceits, that it was but an act of the flesh, and not of the mind, and therefore, as they thought, the smaller sin. The apostle's words, from last to first, according to the order of intention, do express, first, man's duty to glorify God with soul and body, and not to serve our lusts. Secondly, the great fundamental obligation to this duty, God's dominion or propriety. Thirdly, the foundation of that dominion, Christ's purchase. According to the order of execution, from first to last, these three great fundamentals of our religion lie thus: First, Christ's purchase. Secondly, God's propriety thence arising. Thirdly, man's duty—wholly to glorify God, arising from both. The argument lies thus: they that are not their own, but wholly God's, should wholly glorify God, and not serve their lusts; but you are not your own, but wholly God's: therefore you should wholly glorify God, and not serve your lusts. The major is clear by the



common light of nature. Every one should have the use of their own. The minor is proved thus : they that are bought with a price, are not their own, but his that bought them ; but you are bought with a price : therefore, &c. For the meaning of the terms briefly ; *λαύωv, vestri*, as the vulgar ; *vestri juris*, as Beza, and others, is most fitly expressed by our English, your own : “ ye are bought : ” a “ *synecdoche generis*, ” saith Piscator, for “ ye are redeemed with a price. ” There is no buying without a price. This, therefore, is an emphatical *pleonasmus*, as Beza, Piscator, and others ; as to see with the eyes, to hear with the ears. Or else, “ a price, ” is put for “ a great price, ” as Calvin, Peter Martyr, and Piscator, rather think : and therefore the vulgate adds the epithet *magno*, and the Arabic *pretioso*, as Beza notes, as agreeing to that of 1 Peter i. 18. I see not but we may suppose the apostle to respect both the purchase and the greatness of the price, as Grotius and some others do. “ Glorify God, ” that is, by using your bodies and souls wholly for him, and abstaining from those lusts which do dishonour him. The vulgate adds *et portate, q. d.* bear God about in your hearts, and let his Spirit dwell with you instead of lust. But this addition is contrary to all our Greek copies. Grotius thinks that some copies had *ἀπαρὸν θεῶν*, and thence some unskilful scribe did put *ἀπα τε* : however, it seems that reading was very ancient, when not only Austin, but Cyprian and Tertullian followed it, as Beza noteth. The last words, “ And in your spirit, which are God’s, ” are out of all the old Latin translations, and therefore it is like out of the Greek, which they used : but they are in all the present Greek copies, except our manuscript, as also in the Syriac and Arabic version.

The rest of the explication shall follow the doctrines, which are these.

Doct. 2. Because we are so bought we are not our own, but his that bought us.

Doct. 3. Because we are not our own, but wholly God’s, therefore we must not serve our lusts, but glorify him in the body and spirit. In these three conclusions is the substance of the text ; which I shall first explain, and then make application of them in that order as the apostle here doth.

The points that need explication are these.

First. In what sense are we said to be bought with a price ? Who bought us ? And of whom ? And from what ? And with what price ?

Secondly. How we are God's own upon the title of this purchase.

Thirdly. How we are not our own.

Fourthly. What it is to glorify God in body and in spirit on this account.

Fifthly. Who they be that, on this ground, are or may be urged to this duty.

1. For the first of these, whether buying here be taken properly or metaphorically I will not now inquire.

First. Mankind by sin became guilty of death, liable to God's wrath, and a slave to Satan, and his own lusts. The sentence in part was past, and execution begun: the rest would have followed, if not prevented. This is the bondage from which we were redeemed.

Secondly. He that redeemed us is the Son of God—himself God and man, and the Father by the Son. "He purchased us with his own blood." (Acts xx. 28.)

Thirdly. The price was the whole humiliation of Christ; in the first act whereof, his incarnation, the Godhead was alone, which, by humbling itself, did suffer reputatively, which could not really. In the rest, the whole person was the sufferer, but still the human nature really, and the divine but reputatively. And why we may not add, as part of the price, the merit of that obedience, wherein his suffering did not consist, I yet see not. But from whom were we redeemed?

Answer. From Satan, by rescue against his will; from God's wrath or vindictive justice, by his own procurement and consent. He substituted for us such a sacrifice, by which he could as fully attain the ends of his righteous government, in the demonstration of his justice and hatred of sin, as if the sinner had suffered himself: and in this sound sense it is far from being an absurdity, as the socinian dreameth, for God to satisfy his own justice, or to buy us of himself, or redeem us from himself.

2. Next let us consider how we are God's, upon the title of this purchase. By "God," here is meant both the Son, who being God, hath procured a right in us by his redemption, and also the Father, who sent his Son, and redeemed us by him, and to whom it was that the Son redeemed us. "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." (Rev. v. 9.) In one word, it is God as Redeemer, the manhood also of the second person included, that hath purchased this right. Here you must observe that God, as Creator, had a plenary right of propriety and

government, on which he founded the law of works that then was. This right he hath not lost. Our fall did lose our right in him, but could not destroy his right in us. Because it destroyed our right, therefore the promissory part of that law was immediately thereupon dissolved, or ceased through our incapacity, and therefore divines say that, as a covenant, it ceased; but because it destroyed not God's right, therefore the preceptive and penal parts of that law do still remain. But how remain? In their being; but not alone, or without remedy: for the Son of God became a sacrifice in our stead; not that we might absolutely, immediately, or, *ipso facto*, be fully delivered, or that any man should, *ab ipsa hostia*, from the very sacrifice as made, have a right to the great benefits of personal, plenary reconciliation, and remission, and everlasting life; but that the necessity of perishing through the dissatisfaction of justice for the alone offences against the law of works being removed from mankind, they might all be delivered up to him as proprietary and rector, that he might rule them as his redeemed ones, and make for them such new laws of grace, for the conveyances of his benefits, as might demonstrate the wisdom and mercy of our Redeemer, and be most suitable to his ends. The word is now morally dead in sin, though naturally alive. Christ hath redeemed them, but will cure them by the actual conveyance of the benefits of redemption, or not at all. He hath undertaken to this end himself to be their physician, to cure all that will come to him and take him so to be, and trust him, and obey him in the application of his medicines. He hath erected an hospital, his church, to this end, and commanded all to come into this ark. Those that are far distant he first commandeth to come nearer, and those that are near he inviteth to come in. Too many do refuse, and perish in their refusal. He will not suffer all to do so, but mercifully boweth the wills of his elect, and, by an insuperable powerful drawing, compels them to come in. You may see, then, that here is a *novum jus, et dominii, et imperii*, a new right of propriety and rule, founded on the new bottom of redemption: but that this doth not destroy the old, which was founded on creation; but it is in the very nature and use of it an emendative addition. Redemption is to mend the creature, not of any defect that was left in the creation, but from the ruin which came by our defacing transgression. The law of grace upon this redemption is superadded to the law of nature given on the creation: not to amend any imperfections

in that law, but to save the sinner from its insufferable penalty by dissolving its obligation of him thereto: and thus, in its nature and use, it is a remedying law. And so you may see that Christ is now the owner, and, by right, the governor of the whole world, on the title of redemption, as God before was, and still is, on the title of creation.

3. By this you may also perceive in what sense we are not our own. In the strictest sense, there is no proprietary, or absolute Lord, in the world, but God. No man can say this is fully and strictly mine. God gives us, indeed, whatever we enjoy; but his giving is not as man's. We part with our propriety in that which we give, but God gives nothing so. His giving to us makes it not the less his own. As a man giveth his goods to his neighbour to dispose of for his use, or instruments to his servant to do his work with, so God giveth his benefits to us: or, at the utmost, as you give clothes to your child, which are more yours still than his, and you may take them away at your pleasure. I confess, when God hath told us that he will not take them away, he is, as it were, obliged, in fidelity, to continue them, but yet doth not, hereby, let go his propriety: and so Christ bids us call no man on earth Father, that is, our absolute lord or ruler, because we have but one such master, who is in heaven. (Matt. xxiii. 7—10.) So that you see by this what propriety is left us, and what right we have to ourselves and our possessions. Even such, as a steward in his master's goods, or a servant in his tools, or a child in his coat, which is a propriety, improper subordinate, and *secundum quid*, and will secure us against the usurpation of another. One servant may not take his fellow's instrument from him, nor one child his brother's coat from him, without the parent's or master's consent. They have them for their use, though not the full propriety. It may be called a propriety, in respect to our fellow servant, though it be not properly so as we stand in respect to God. We have right enough to confute the leveller, but not to exempt either us or ours from the claim and use of our absolute Lord.

4. What it is to glorify God in body and spirit? I answer, in a word, it is when, upon true believing apprehensions of his right to us, and of our great obligations to him as our Redeemer, we heartily and unfeignedly devote ourselves to him, and live as a people so devoted; so bending the chief of our care and study how to please him in exact obedience, that the

glory of his mercy and holiness, and of his wise and righteous laws, may be seen in our conversations; and that the holy conformity of our lives to these laws may show that there is like conformity in our minds, and that they are written in our hearts; when the excellency of the christian religion is so apparent in the excellency of our lives, causing us to do that which no others can imitate, that the lustre of our good works may shine before men, and cause them to glorify our Father in heaven. To conclude; when we still respect God as our only absolute sovereign, and Christ as our Redeemer, and his Spirit as our sanctifier, and his law as our rule; that the doing of his will, and the denying of our own, is the daily work of our lives, and the promoting of his blessed ends is our end: this is the glorifying of God who hath redeemed us.

5. The last question is, Who they be that are and may be urged to glorify God, on this ground, that he hath bought them? Doubtless only those whom he hath bought; but who are those? It discourageth me to tell you, because among the godly it is a controversy; but if they will controvert points of such great moment, they cannot disoblige or excuse us from preaching them. Among the variety of men's opinions it is safe to speak in the language of the Holy Ghost, and accordingly to believe, that, "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men, to justification of life;" (Rom. v. 18;) and, "That he gave himself a ransom for all, and is the only mediator between God and man." (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.) "That he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii. 2.) "That God is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe." (1 Tim. iv. 10.) "That he is the Saviour of the world." (John iv 42; 1 John iv. 14, 15.) "That he tasteth death for every man," (Heb. ii. 9,) with many the like. It is sad to consider how men's unskillfulness to reconcile God's general grace with his special, and to assign to each its proper part, hath made the pelagians, and their successors, to deny the special grace; and too many of late no less dangerously to deny the general grace; and what contentions these two erroneous parties have maintained, and still maintain, in the church, and how few observe or follow that true and sober mean which Austin, the Maul of the pelagians, and his scholars, Prosper and Fulgentius, walked in! If when our dark confused heads are unable to assign each

truth its place, and rightly to order each wheel and pin in the admirable fabric of God's revelations, we shall, therefore, fall a wrangling against them, and reject them, we may then be drawn to blaspheme the Trinity, to reject Christ's human nature or his divine; and what truth shall we not be in danger to lose? To think this general grace to be inconsistent with the special, is no wiser than to think the foundation inconsistent with the fabric that is built thereupon; and that the builders themselves should have such thoughts is a matter of compassionate consideration to the friends of the church. Doubtless Christ died not for all alike, nor with equal intentions of saving them; and yet he hath borne the sins of all men on the cross, and was a sacrifice, propitiation, and ransom for all. Even they that bring in damnable heresies, deny the Lord that bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. (2 Peter ii. 1.) "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John iii. 17—19.) I doubt not but my text doth warrant me to tell you all that you are not your own, but are bought with a price, and, therefore, must glorify him that bought you; and I am very confident, that if any one at judgment will be the advocate of an unbeliever, and say, he deserves not a sorer punishment for sinning against the Lord that bought him, his plea will not be taken; or if any such would comfort the consciences in hell, or go about to cure them of so much of their torment, by telling them that they never sinned against one that redeemed them, nor ever rejected the blood of Christ shed for them, and, therefore, need not accuse themselves of any such sin, those poor sinners would not be able to believe them. If it be only the elect with whom we must thus argue, 'You are not your own, you are bought with a price, therefore glorify God,' then can we truly plead thus with none till we know them to be elect, which will not be in this world. I do not think Paul knew them all to be elect that he wrote to, I mean, absolutely chosen to salvation; nor do I think he would so peremptorily affirm them to be bought with a price, who were fornicators, defrauders, contentious, drunk at the Lord's supper, &c., and from hence have argued against their

sins, if he had taken this for a privilege proper to the elect. I had rather say to scandalous sinners, 'You are bought with a price, therefore, glorify God,' than, 'You are absolutely elect to salvation, therefore, glorify God.' And I believe, that as it is the sin of apostates to "Crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh," (Heb. vi. 5, 6,) so is it their misery, that "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries, because they have trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing." (Heb. x. 26—29.) Lastly, I judge it also a good argument to draw us from offending others, and occasioning their sin, that "Through us our weak brother shall perish for whom Christ died." (1 Cor. viii. 11.) So much for explication.

I would next proceed to the confirmation of the doctrines here contained, but that they are so clear in the text, and in many others, that I think it next to needless, and we have now no time for needless work, and, therefore, shall only cite these two or three texts, which confirm almost all that I have said together. (Rom. xiv. 9.) "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.) "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." (Matt. xxviii. 18—20.) "All power is given me in heaven, and in earth. Go ye, therefore, disciple all nations, baptizing them, &c., teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (1 Peter i. 17, 18.) "If ye call on the Father who without respect of persons judgeth every man according to his works; pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot." These texts speak to the same purpose with that which I have in hand.

*Use.* In applying these very useful truths, would time permit, I should begin at the intellect, with a confutation of divers contrary errors, and a collection of many observable conseqencies. It would go better with all the commonwealths and princes on earth, if they well considered that the absolute propriety and sove-

reignty of God-redeemer is the basis of all lawful societies and governments; and that no man hath any absolute propriety, but only the use of the talents that God doth entrust him with; that the sovereignty of the creature is but analogical, *secundum quid*; improper and subordinate to God, the proper sovereign; that it belongs to him to appoint his inferior officers; that there is no power but from God; and that he giveth none against himself; that a theocracy is the government that must be desired and submitted to, whether the subordinate part be monarchical, aristocratical, or democratical; and the rejecting of this was the Israelites' sin in choosing them a king; that it is still possible and necessary to live under this theocracy, though the administration be not by such extraordinary means as among the Israelites; that all human laws are but by-laws subordinate to God's. How far his laws must take place in all governments. How far those laws of men are *ipso facto* null, that are unquestionably destructive of the laws of God: how far they that are not their own, may give authority to others: and what aspect these principles have upon liberty in that latitude as it is taken by some: and upon the authority of the multitude, especially in church-government. Should I stand on these and other the like consequents, which these fundamentals in hand might lead us to discuss, I should prevent that more seasonable application which I intend, and perhaps be thought, in some of them, to meddle beyond my bounds, I will only say, that God is the first and the last in our ethics and politics, as well as in our physics; that as there is no creature which he made not, so it is no good right of property or government which he some way gives not; that all commonwealths not built on this foundation, are as castles in the air, or as children's tottering structures, which in the very framing are prepared for their ruin, and strictly are no commonwealths at all; and those governors that rule not more for God, than for themselves, shall be dealt with as traitors to the universal sovereign. Thus far, at least, must our politics be divine, unless we will be mere confederate rebels.

But it is yet a closer application which I intend. Though we are not our own, yet every man's welfare should be so dear to himself, that methinks every man of you should presently inquire how far you are concerned in the business which we have in hand. I will tell you how far. The case here described is all our own. We are bought with a price, and, therefore, not our own, and, therefore, must live to him that bought us. We



must do it, or else we violate our allegiance, and are traitors to our Redeemer. We must do it, or else we shall perish as despisers of his blood. It is no matter of indifferency, nor a duty which may be dispensed with. That God is our owner by creation and redemption, and who doth hitherto keep our souls in these bodies, by whose mere will and power you are all here alive before him this day, will shortly call you before his bar, where these matters will be more seriously and searchingly inquired after. The great question of the day will then be this, Whether you have been heartily devoted to your Redeemer, and lived to him; or to your carnal selves. Upon the resolution of this question your everlasting salvation or damnation will depend. What think you then? Should not this question be now put home by every rational hearer to his own heart? But I suppose some will say, there is no man that wholly lives to God, for all are sinners; how then can our salvation depend so much on this? I answer in a word: Though no man pay God all that he oweth him, yet no man shall be saved that giveth him not the pre-eminence: he will own none as true subjects that do not cordially own him in his sovereignty. Be it known to you all, there shall not a man of you enter into his kingdom, nor ever see his face in peace, that giveth him not the chiefest room in your hearts, and maketh not his work your chiefest business. He will be no underling, or servant, to your flesh. He will be served with the best, if he cannot have all. And in this sense is it that I say the question will be put, in that great day by the Judge of all, whether God or our carnal selves were preferred? And whether we lived to him that bought us, or to our flesh? Beloved hearers, I will ask you whether you, indeed, believe that there will be such a day. I will take it for granted, while you call yourselves Christians, much less will I question whether you would then be saved or condemned. Nature will not suffer you to be willing of such a misery, though corruption make you too willing of the cause. But the common stupidity of the world doth persuade me to ask you this, whether you think it meet that men who must be so solemnly examined upon this point, and whose life or death depends on the decision, should not examine themselves on it beforehand, and well consider what answer they must then make? And whether any pains can be too great in so needful a work? And whether he that miscarrieth to save a labour, do not madly betray his soul unto perdition? As if such rational diligence were worse than hell, or

his present carnal ease were more desirable than his salvation ? Let us then rouse up ourselves, brethren, in the fear of God, and make this a day of judgment to ourselves. Let us know whether we are children of life or death. O, how can a man that is well in his wits enjoy with any comfort the things of this world, before he know, at least in probability, what he shall enjoy in the next ! How can men go cheerfully up and down about the business of this life, before they have faithfully laboured to make sure that it shall go well with them in the life to come ! That we may now know this without deceit, let us all, as in the presence of the living God, lay bare our hearts, examine them, and judge them, by this portion of his word, according to the evidence.

7. Whoever he be that takes not himself for his own, but lives to his Redeemer, he is one that hath found himself really undone, and hath unfeignedly confessed the forfeiture of his salvation, and finding that redemption hath been made by Christ, and that there is hope and life to be had in him, and none but him, as he gladly receives the tidings, so he cheerfully acknowledgeth the right of his Redeemer, and in a sober, deliberate, and voluntary covenant, renounceth the world, the flesh, and the devil, and resigneth up himself to Christ as his due. He saith, ‘ Lord, I have too long served thine enemies and mine own ; by cleaving to myself, and forsaking God, I have lost both myself and God, wilt thou be my Saviour, and the physician of my soul, and wash me with thy blood, and repair the ruins of my soul by thy Spirit, and I am willing to be thine ; I yield up myself to the conduct of thy grace, to be saved in thy way, and fitted for thy service, and live to God, from whom I have revolted.’ This is the case of all that are sincere.

By many Scriptures, we might quickly confirm this, if it were liable to question. “ If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple : and whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” (Luke xiv. 26, 27.) So verse 33 : “ Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” Which is expounded, Matt. x. 37 : “ He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.” “ If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it : and whosoever will lose his

life for my sake, shall find it." (Matt. xvi. 24;) "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." (Psalm lxxiii. 25—27.) "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance," &c. (Psalm xvi. 5.) Moses refused honour, and chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect to the recompense of the reward." (Heb. xi. 24—26.) I forbear citing more, the case being so evident, that God is set highest in the heart of every sound believer, they being in covenant resigned to him as his own. On the contrary, most of the unsanctified are Christians but in name, because they were educated to this profession, and it is the common religion of the country where they live, and they hear none make question of it, or if they do, it is to their own disgrace, the name of Christ having got this advantage, to be every where among us well spoken of, even by those that shall perish for neglecting him and his laws. These men have resigned their names to Christ, but reserved their hearts to flesh-pleasing vanities. Or if under conviction and terror of conscience, they do make any resignation of their souls to Christ, it comes short of the true resignation of the sanctified in these particulars.

1. It is a firm and rooted belief of the gospel, which is the cause of sincere resignation to Christ. They are so fully persuaded of the truth of those things which Christ hath done, and promised to do hereafter, that they will venture all that they have in this world, and their souls, and their everlasting state upon it. Whereas the belief of self-deceivers is only superficial, staggering, not rooted, and will not carry them to such adventures. (Matt. xiii. 21—23.)

2. Sincere self-resignation is accompanied with such a love to him that we are devoted to, which overtoppeth (as to the rational part) all other love. The soul hath a prevailing complacency in God, and closeth with him as its chiefest good. (Psalm lxxiii. 25, and lxiii. 3.) But the unsanctified have no such complacency in him; they would fain please him by their flatteries, lest he should do them any hurt, but might they enjoy but the pleasures of this world, they could be well content to live without him.

3. Sincere self-resignation is a departing from our carnal selves, and all creatures as they stand in competition with Christ

for our hearts, and so it containeth a crucifying of the flesh, and mortification of all its lusts. (Gal. v. 24 ; Rom. viii. 1—14.) There is a hearty renouncing of former contradictory interest and delights, that Christ may be set highest, and chiefly delighted in. But self-deceivers are never truly mortified when they seem to devote themselves most seriously to Christ ; there is a contrary prevailing interest in their minds, their fleshly felicity is nearer to their hearts, and this world is never unfeignedly renounced.

4. Sincere self-resignation is resolved upon deliberation, and not a rash, inconsiderate promise, which is afterwards reversed. The illuminated see that perfection in God, that vanity in the creature, that desirable sufficiency in Christ, and emptiness in themselves, that they firmly resolve to cast themselves on him, and be his alone, and though they cannot please him as they would, they will die before they will change their Master ; but with self-deceivers it is not thus.

5. Sincere resignation is absolute and unreserved : such do not capitulate and condition with Christ, ‘ I will be thine so far, and no further, so thou wilt but save my estate, or credit, or life.’ But self-deceivers have ever such reserves in their hearts, though they do not express them, nor, perhaps, themselves discern them. They have secret limitations, expressions, and conditions ; they have ever a salve for their worldly safety or felicity, and will rather venture upon a threatened misery which they see not, though everlastingly, than upon a certain temporary misery which they see. These deep reserves are the soul of hypocrisy.

6. Sincere self-resignation is fixed and habituate ; it is not forced by a moving sermon, or a dangerous sickness, and then forgotten and laid aside, but it is become a fixed habit in the soul. It is otherwise with self-deceivers ; though they will oblige themselves to Christ with vows, in a time of fear and danger, yet so loose is the knot, that when the danger seems over, their bonds fall off. It is one thing to be affrighted, and another to have the heart quite changed and renewed. It is one thing to hire ourselves with a master in our necessities, and yet serve ourselves, or run away, and another thing to nail our ears to his door, and say, ‘ I love thee, and therefore will not depart.’

So much for the first mark of one that lives not as his own, but as God’s, to wit, sincere self-resignation. The second is this.

2. As the heart is thus devoted to God, so also is the life, where men do truly take themselves for his. And that will appear in these three particulars.

1. The principal study and care of such men is how to please God, and promote his interest, and do his work. This is it that they most seriously mind and contrive. Their own felicity they seek in this way. (1 Cor. vii. 32, 30; Rom. vi. 11, 13, 16; Col. i. 10, and iii. 1—3; Phil. i. 20, 21, 24.) It is not so with the unsanctified, they drive on another design. Their own work is principally minded, and their carnal interest preferred to Christ's. They live to the flesh, and make provision for it, to satisfy its desires. (Rom. xiii. 14.)

2. It is the chiefest delight of a man devoted to God to see Christ's interest prosper and prevail. It doth him more good to see the church flourish, the gospel succeed, the souls of men brought in to God, and all things fitted to his blessed pleasure; than it would do him to prosper himself in the world; to do good to men's bodies, much more to their souls, is more pleasing to him than to be honourable or rich. To give is sweeter to him than to receive. His own matters he respects as lower things, that come not so near his heart as God's. But with the unsanctified it is not so, their prosperity and honours are most of their delight, and the absence of them their greatest trouble.

3. With a man that is truly devoted to God, the interest of Christ doth bear down all contradicting interest in the ordinary course of his life. As his own unrighteous righteousness, so his own renounced carnal interest is loss and dung to him in comparison of Christ's. (Phil. iii. 8, 9.) He cannot take himself to be a loser by that which is gain to the souls of men, and tendeth to promote the interest of his Lord. He serveth God with the first and best, and lets his own work stand by till Christ's be done, or rather ówneeth none but Christ's, his own dishonour being lighter to him than Christ's, and a ruined estate less grievous than a ruined church; therefore doth he first seek God's kingdom and its righteousness, (Matt. vi. 33,) and chooseth rather to neglect his flesh, his gain, his friends, his life, than the cause and work of Christ. It is far otherwise with the unsanctified, they will contentedly give Christ the most glorious titles, and full-mouthed commendations, (Luke vi. 46,) but they have one that is nearer their hearts than he, their carnal self must sway the sceptre. God shall have

all that the flesh can spare ; if he will be content to be served with its leavings, they will serve him, if not, they must be excused, they can allow him no more. The trying time is the parting time, when God or the world must needs be neglected. In such a strait, the righteous are still righteous. (Rev. xxii. 11.) But the unsteadfast in the covenant do manifest their unsteadfastness, and though they will not part with Christ professedly, nor without some witty distinctions and evasions, nor without great sorrow, and pretence of continued fidelity, yet part they will, and shift for themselves, and hold that they have as long as they can. (Luke xviii. 23.) In a word, the sanctified are heartily devoted to God, and live to him, and were they incapable of serving or enjoying him, their lives would afford them little content, whatever else they did possess. But the unsanctified are more strongly addicted to their flesh, and live to their carnal selves, and might they securely enjoy the pleasures of this world, they could easily spare the fruition of God, and could be as willing to be dispensed with for his spiritual service, as to perform it. And thus I have given you the true description of those that live to their Redeemer, as being not their own, and those that live to themselves, as if they were not his that bought them.

Having thus told you what the word saith, it followeth that we next inquire what your hearts say : you hear what you must be, will you now consider what you are ? Are all the people that hear me this day devoted in heart and life to their Redeemer ? Do you all live as Christ's, and not your own ? if so, I must needs say it is an extraordinary assembly, and such as I had never the happiness to know. O that it were so indeed ! that we might rejoice together, and magnify our Deliverer, instead of reprehending you, or lamenting your unhappiness. But, alas ! we are not such strangers in the world, as to be guilty of such a groundless judgment. Let us inquire more particularly into the case.

1. Are those so sincerely devoted to Christ ? And do they so deny themselves, whose daily thoughts, and care, and labour, is, how they may live in more reputation and content, and may be better provided for the satisfying of their flesh ? If they be low and poor, and their condition is displeasing to them, their greatest care is to repair it to their minds ; if they be higher, and more wealthy, their business is to keep it, or increase it, that hunt after honour, and thirst after a thriving and more

plenteous state ; that can stretch their consciences to the size of all times, and humour those that they think may advance them, and be most humble servants to those above them, and contemptuously neglect whosoever is below them ; that will put their hands to the feet of those that they hope to rise by, and put their feet on the necks of their subdued adversaries, and trample upon all that stand in their way ; that applaud not men for their honesty, but their worldly honours ; and will magnify that man while he is capable of advancing them, whom they would have scorned, if Providence had laid him in the dust : that are friends to all that befriend their interests and designs, and enemies to the most upright that cross them in their course : that love not men so much because they love God, as because they love them. Are these devoted to God, or to themselves ? Is it for God, or themselves, that men so industriously scramble for honours, and places of government, or of gain ? Will they use their offices or honours for God, that hunt after them as a prey, as if they had not burden enough already, nor talents enough to answer for neglecting ? Are those men devoted to God, that can tread down his most unquestionable interest on earth, when it seems to be inconsistent with their own ? Let the gospel go down, let the church be broken in pieces, let sound doctrine be despised, the ministers be hindered, or tried with vexations, let the souls of people sink or swim, rather than they should be hindered in the way of ambition ! I shall leave it to the trial of another day, whether all the public actions of this age, with their effects, have been for God or for self. This doth not belong to my examination, but to his that will thoroughly perform it 'ere long, and search these matters to the quick, and open them to the world. There were never higher pretences for God in an age, than have been in this ; had there been but answerable intentions and performances, his affairs and our own had been in much better case than they are ; but enough of this. Should we descend to men's particular families and conversations, we should find the matter little better with the most. Are they all for God that follow the world so eagerly, that they cannot spare him a serious thought ? An hour's time for his worship in their families, or in secret ? That will see that their own work be done ; but for the souls of those that are committed to their charge they regard them not ? Let them be ever so ignorant they will not instruct them, nor cause them to read the word, or learn a catechism ; nor will spend the Lord's peculiar day in such exercises ; and it is

much if they hinder not those that would. Is it for God that men give up their hearts to this world, so that they cannot have once a day or week, to think soberly what they must do in the next. Or how they may be ready for their great approaching change. Is it for God that men despise his ministers, reject his word, abhor reformation, scorn a church government, and deride the persons that are addicted to his fear, and the families that call upon his name? These men will shortly understand a little better than now they will do, whether, indeed, they live to God or to themselves.

2. If you are devoted to God, what do you for him? Is it his business that you mind? How much of your time do you spend for him? How much of your speech is for him? How much of your estates yearly is serviceable to his interest? Let conscience speak, whether he have your studies and affections; let your families be witnesses whether he have your speeches and best endeavours; let the church witness what you have done for it; and the poor witness what you have done for them; and the souls of ignorant and ungodly men, what you have done for them. Show by the work you have done who you have lived to, God or your carnal selves. If, indeed, you have lived to God, something will be seen that you have done for him; nay, it is not a something that will serve the turn, it must be the best. Remember that it is by your works that you shall be judged, and not by your pretences, professions, or compliments; your Judge already knows your case, he needs no witnesses, he will not be mocked with saying you are for him; show it, or saying it will not serve.

It methinks now the consciences of some of you should prevent me, and preach over the sharper part of the sermon to yourselves, and say, 'I am the man that have lived to myself,' and so consider of the consequence of such a life; but I will leave this to your meditation, when you go home, and next proceed to the exhortative part of application.

Men, brethren, and fathers, the business that I come hither upon is to proclaim God's right to you, and all that is yours, even his new right of redemption, supposing that of creation; and to let you know, that you are all bought with a price, and therefore are not your own, but his that bought you, and must accordingly be dedicated and live to him. Honourable and Worshipful, and all men, of what degree soever, I do here, on the behalf and in the name of Christ, lay claim to you all, to your souls and bodies, to all your faculties, abilities, and interests, on



the title of redemption; all is God's. Do you acknowledge his title, and consent unto his claim? What say you? Are you his; or, are you not? Dare you deny it? If any man dare be so bold, I am here ready to make good the claim of Christ. If you dare not deny it, we must take it as confessed. Bear witness all, that God laid claim to you and yours, and no man durst deny his title. I do next, therefore, require you, and command you, in his name, give him his own; render to God the things that are God's. Will you this day renounce your carnal selves, and freely confess you are not your own; and cheerfully and unreservedly resign yourselves to God, and say, as Jos. xxiv. 15, "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord?" Do not ask what God will do with you; or how he will use you, or dispose of you. Trust him for that, and obey his will. Fear not evil from the chiefest good, unless it be in neglecting or resisting him. Be sure of it, God will use you better than Satan would, or than this world would, or better than you have used, or would use, yourselves. He will not employ you in dishonourable drudgeries, and then dash you in pieces. He will not seduce you with swinish sensualities, and keep you in play with childish vanities, till you drop into damnation before you are aware: nor will he lull you asleep in presumptuous security, till you unexpectedly awake in unquenchable fire. You need not fear such dealing as this from him: "His commandments are not grievous." (1 John v. 3.). "His yoke is easy, his burden is light, and tendeth to the perfect rest of the soul." (Matt. xi. 28—30.) What say you? Will you hereafter be his; unfeignedly his? Resolvedly, unreservedly, and constantly his? Or will you not take heed, "that you refuse not him that speaketh." (Heb. xii. 25.) Reject not, neglect not, this offer, lest you never have another on the like terms again: he is willing to pardon all that is past, and put up with all the wrongs that you have done him, so you will but repent of them; and now at last be heartily and entirely his; not only in tongue, but in deed and life. Well, I have proclaimed God's right to you; I have offered you his gracious acceptance; if yet you demur, or sleepily neglect it, or obstinately resist him, take that you get by it; remember you perish not without warning. The confession of Christ's right, which this day you have been forced to, shall remain as on record, to the confusion of your faces; and you shall then be forced to remember, though you had rather forget it, what now you are forced to confess, though you had rather you could deny it. But I am loth to leave you to

this prognostic, or to part on terms so sad to your souls, and sad to me ; I will add, therefore, some reasons to persuade you to submit : and though it be not in my power to follow them so to your hearts as to make them effectual, yet I shall do my part in propounding them, and leave them to God to set them home, beseeching him that maketh, new maketh, openeth, and softeneth hearts at his pleasure, to do these blessed works on yours, and to persuade you within, while I am persuading you without, that I may not lose my labour and my hopes, nor your souls, nor God his due.

1. Consider the fulness of God's right to you ; no creature is capable of the like. He made you of nothing, and, therefore, you have nothing which is not his. He redeemed you when you were fallen to worse than nothing. Had not Christ ransomed you by being a sacrifice for your sin, you had been hopelessly left to everlasting perdition ; give him, therefore, his own which he hath so dearly bought. (1 Peter i. 18.)

2. Consider that you have no right of propriety to yourselves ; if you have, how came you by it ? Did you make yourselves ? Did you redeem yourselves ? Do you maintain and preserve yourselves ? If you are your own, tell God you will not be beholden to him for his preservation ; why cannot you preserve yourselves in health if you are your own ? Why cannot you recover yourselves from sickness ? Is it yourselves that gives power to your food to nourish you ? to the earth to bear you, and furnish you with necessaries ? to the air to cool and recreate your spirits ? If you are your own, save yourselves from sickness and death ; keep back your age ; deliver your souls from the wrath of God ; answer his pure justice for your own sins ; never plead the blood of a Redeemer, if you are your own. If you can do these things I will yield that you are your own. But no man can ransom his soul from death, it cost a dearer price than so. (Act xx. 28.) You are not debtors, therefore, to the flesh, to live after it, (Rom. viii. 12,) but to him that died, to subdue the flesh. (Rom. vi. 11.)

3. None else can claim any title to you, further than under God upon his gift. Men did not create you or redeem you, "Be not, therefore, the servants of men," (1 Cor. vii. 23,) unless it be under Christ, and for him. Certainly Satan did not create you, or redeem you ; what right then hath he to you, that he should be served ?

4. Seeing then that you are God's, and his alone, is it not the most heinous thievery to rob him of his right ? If they must

be hanged that rob men of so small a thing as earthly necessities, wherein they have but an improper derived propriety, what torments do those deserve that rob God of so precious a creature, that cost him so dear, and might be so useful, and wherein he hath so full and unquestionable propriety; the greatest, the richest, and wisest men that are trusted with most, are the greatest robbers on earth, if they live not to God, and shall have the greatest punishment.

5. Is it not incomparably more honourable to be God's, than to be your own; and to live to him than to yourselves? The object and end doth nobilitate the act, and thereby the agent. It is more honourable to serve a prince than a ploughman. That man that least seeks his own honour or carnal interest, but most freely denieth it, and most entirely seeks the honour of God, is the most highly honoured with God and good men, when self-seekers defraud themselves of their hopes. Most men think vilely, or at least suspiciously, of that man that seeks for honour to himself; they think if the matter were combustible he need not to blow the fire so hard; if he were worthy of honour, his worth would attract it by a sweet, magnetic power; so much industry they think is the most probable mark of indignity, and of some consciousness of it in the seeker's breast. If he attain some of his ends, men are ready to look on his honour but as alms, which he was fain to beg for before he got it. And could he make shift to ascend the throne, so much in the eyes of the wisest men would be detracted from his honour, as they did believe himself to have a hand in contriving it, *quod sequitur fugio*, &c. They honour him more that refuseth a crown when it is offered, than him that ambitiously aspireth after it, or rapaciously apprehendeth it. If they see a man much desire their applause, they think he needeth it rather than deserveth it. Solomon saith, "To search their own glory is not glory." (Prov. xxv. 27.)

6. You can never have a better master than God, nor yet a sweeter employment than his service. There is nothing in him that may be the least discouragement to you, nor in his works that should be distasteful. The reason why the world thinks otherwise, is because of the distempered averseness of their souls. A sick stomach is no fit judge of the pleasantness of meats. To live to God is to live to the truest and highest delights. His kingdom is not in meats and drinks, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. His servants, indeed, are often troubled; but ask them the reason, and they

will quickly tell you that it is not for being his servants, or for serving him too much ; but for fear lest they are not his servants, or for serving him no better. It is not in his ways, or at least not for them, that they meet with their perplexities, but in stepping out of them, and wandering in their own. Many, besides the servants of God, do seek felicity and satisfaction to their minds, and some discover where it lieth ; but only they attain it, and enjoy it.

But, on the contrary, he hath an ill master that is ruled by himself. A master that is blind, and proud, and passionate, that will lead you unto precipices, and thence deject you ; that will most effectually ruin you when he thinks he is doing you the greatest good ; whose work is bad, and his wages no better ; that feedeth his servants in plenty but as swine, and in the day of famine denieth them the husks. Whatever you may now imagine while you are distracted with sensuality, I dare say, if ever God bring you to yourselves, you will consider that it is better to be in your Father's house, where the poorest servant hath bread enough, than to be fed with dreams and pictures, and to perish with hunger. Reject not God till you have found a better master.

7. If you will needs be your own, and seek yourselves, you disengage God from dealing with you as his in a gracious sense. If you will not trust him, nor venture yourselves upon his promise and conduct, but will shift for yourselves, then look to yourselves as well as you can ; save yourselves in danger, cure your own diseases, quiet your own consciences, grapple with death in your own strength, plead your own cause in judgment, and save yourselves from hell if you can ; and when you have done, go and boast of your own sufficiency and achievements, and tell men how little you were beholden to Christ. Wo to you, if, upon these provocations, God should give you over to provide for yourselves, and leave you without any other salvation than your own power is able to effect. Mark the connexion of this sin and punishment in Deut. xxxii. 18—20. Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee. And when the Lord saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters : and he said, "I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be." As if he should say, I will see how well they can save themselves, and make them know by experience their own insufficiency.

8. Those men that seek themselves, and live to themselves, and not to God, are unfaithful and treacherous both to God and man. As they neglect God in prosperity, so they do but flatter him in adversity. (Psalm lxxviii. 34—37.) And he that will be false to God, whose interest in him is so absolute, is unlikely to be true to men, whose interest in him is infinitely less: he that can shake off the great obligations of creation, redemption, preservation, and provision, which God layeth on him, is unlikely to be held by such slender obligations as he receives from men. I will never trust that man far, if I know him, that is false to his Redeemer. He that will sell his God, his Saviour, his soul, and heaven for a little sensuality, vain glory, or worldly wealth, I shall not wonder if he sell his best friend for a groat. Self-seeking men will take you for their friend no longer than you serve their turns; but if once you need them, or stand in their way, you shall find what they esteemed you for. He that is in haste to be rich, and thereupon respecteth persons for a piece of bread, that man will transgress, saith Solomon. (Prov. xxviii. 20, 21.)

9. Sanctification consisteth in your hearty resignation and living to God; and therefore you are unsanctified if you are destitute of this. "Without holiness none shall see God." (Heb. xii. 14.) And what is holiness, but our sincere dedication and devotedness to God? Being no longer common and unclean, but separated in resolution, affection, and conversation, from the world and our carnal selves to him. It is the office of the Holy Ghost to work you to this; and if you resist and refuse it, you do not soundly believe in the Holy Ghost, but instead of believing in him you fight against him.

10. You are verbally devoted to Christ in solemn covenant, entered into in baptism, and frequently renewed in the Lord's supper, and at other seasons. Did you not there solemnly, by your parents, resign yourself to Christ as his? And renounce the flesh, the world, and the devil, and promise to fight under Christ's banner against them to your lives' end? O happy person that performeth this covenant, and everlastingly miserable are they that do not. *Fides non recepta, sed custodita vivificat*, saith Cyprian. It is not covenant-making, without covenant-keeping, that is like to save you. Do you stand to the covenant that you made by your parents? Or do you disclaim it? If you disclaim it, you renounce your part in Christ, and his benefits in that covenant made over to you. If you stand to it, you must perform your promise, and live to God, to whom you were

resigned. To take God's oath of allegiance so solemnly, and afterward to turn to his enemies which we renounced, is a rebellion that shall not be always unrevenged.

11. God's absolute dominion and sovereignty over us is the very foundation of all religion, even of that little which is found left among infidels and pagans, much more evidently of the saving religion of Christians. He that dare say he believeth not this, will never, sure, have the face to call himself a Christian. Is it not a matter of most sad consideration, that ever so many millions should think to be saved by a doctrine which they believe not, or by a religion that never went deeper than the brain, and is openly contradicted by the tenour of their lives? Is a true religion enough to save you, if you be not true to that religion? How do men make shift to quiet their consciences in such gross hypocrisy? Is there a man to be found in this congregation that will not confess that he is rightfully his Redeemer's? But hath he indeed their hearts, their time, their strength, and their interest? Follow some of them from morning to night, and you shall not hear one serious word for Christ, nor see any serious endeavours for his interest: and yet men will profess that they are his. How sad a case is it, that men's own confessions should condemn them, and that which they called their religion should judge them to that everlasting misery which they thought it would have saved them from! And how glorious would the christian religion appear if men were true to it; if Christ's doctrine had its full impression on their hearts, and were expressed in their lives. Is he not an excellent person that denieth himself, and doth all for God: that goeth on no business but God's: that searcheth out God's interest in every part of his calling and employment; and intendeth that, "whether he eat or drink, or whatever he doth, doth all to the glory of God;" (1 Cor. x. 31;) that can say, as Paul, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;" (Gal. ii. 20;) and "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ: yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ;" (Phil. iii. 7, 8;) and "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil. i. 21.) Perhaps you think that the degree of these examples is inimitable by us: but I am sure all that will be saved must imitate them in the truth.

12. Self-seeking is self-losing, and delivering up yourself, and all you have to God, is the only way to save yourselves, and to secure all. The more you are his, the more you are your own indeed; and the more you deliver to him, and expend for him, the greater is your gain. These paradoxes are familiar, tried truths to the true believer: these are his daily food and exercise which seem to others such scorpions as they dare not touch, or such stones as they are not able to digest. He knoweth that self-humbling is the true self-exalting, and self-exalting is the infallible way to be brought low. (Luke xiv. 11, and xviii. 14; Matt. xxiii. 12.) He believeth that there is a losing of life which saves it, and a saving of it which certainly loseth it. (Matt. x. 39, and xvi. 25.) O that I could reach the hearts of self-seekers, that spend their care and time for their bodies, and live not unto God! That I were but able to make them see the issue of their course, and what it would profit them to "win all the world, and lose their own souls." O all you busy men of this world, hearken to the proclamation of him that bought you; "Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters! Buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently to me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you." (Isaiah lv. 1—3.) O, sirs, what a deal of care and labour do you lose! How much more gainfully might your lives be improved? Godliness with contentment "is the great gain." (1 Tim. vi. 9.) That which you now think you make your own, will shortly prove to be least your own; and that is most lost which you so carefully labour for. You that are now so idly busy in gathering together the treasure of an ant-hillock, and building children's tottering piles, do you forget that the foot of death is coming to spurn it all abroad, and tread down you and it together? You spend the day of life and visitation in painting your phantasies with the images of felicity, and in dressing yourselves, and feathering your nest with that which you impiously steal from God; and do you forget that the night of blackness is at hand, when God will undress you of your temporary contents, and deplume you of all your borrowed bravery. How easily, how speedily, how certainly will he do it. Read over your case in Luke xii. 16—22. How can you

make shift to read such texts, and not perceive that they speak to you? When you are pulling down and building up, and contriving what to do with your fruits, and saying to yourselves, 'I have so much now as may serve me so many years, I will take mine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' Remember, then, the conclusion: but God said unto him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?" So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God. 'Are these things yours or mine? (saith God.) Whose are they? If they are yours, keep them now if you can: either stay with them, or take them with you.' But God will make you know that they are his, and disrobe such men as thieves, who are adorned with that which is none of their own. 'This honour, (saith God,) is mine; thou hast stolen it from me: this wealth is mine; this life, and all is mine;' only thyself he will not own. They shall require thy soul that have conquered and ruled it. Though it was his by the right of creation and redemption, yet seeing it was not his by a free dedication, he will not own it as to everlasting salvation, but say, "Depart from me, I know you not, ye workers of iniquity." (Matt. vii. 23.) O with what hearts then will self-seeking gentlemen part with their honours and estates, and the earthly minded with their beloved possessions! When he that resigned all to God, and devoted himself and all to his service, shall find his consumed estate to be increased, his neglected honour abundantly repaired, and in this life he shall receive an hundred fold, and in the world to come eternal life. (Matt. x. 30; John iv. 56; 1 Tim. vi. 12, 19.)

13. Lastly: consider, when judgment comes, inquiry will be made whether you have lived as your own, or as his that bought you. Then he will require his own with improvement. (Luke xix. 25.) The great business of that day will be, not so much to search after particular sins, or duties, which were contrary to the scope of heart and life; but to know whether you lived to God, or to your flesh. Whether your time, and care, and wealth, were expended for Christ in his members and interest, or for your carnal selves. (Matt. xxv.) Inasmuch as you did it not to these, you did it not to him. You that Christ hath given authority to shall then be accountable whether you improved it to his advantage. You that he hath given honour to must then give account whether you improved it to his honour. In the fear of God, Sirs, cast up your accounts in time, and bethink



you what answer will then stand good : it will be a doleful hearing to a guilty soul, when Christ shall say, ' I gave thee thirty or forty years' time : thy flesh had so much in eating and drinking, and sleeping, and labouring, in idleness, and vain talking, and recreations, and other vanities : but where was my part ? How much was laid out for the promotion of my glory ? I lent you so much of the wealth of the world ; so much was spent on your backs, and so much on your bellies, so much on costly toys or superfluities, so much in revengeful suits and contentions, and so much was left behind for your posterity ; but where was my part ? How much was laid out to further the gospel, and to relieve the souls or the bodies of your brethren ? I gave thee a family, and committed them to thy care to govern them for me, and fit them for my service ; but how didst thou perform it ? O, brethren, bethink you in time what answer to make to such interrogatories ; your Judge hath told you that your doom must then pass according as you have improved your talents for him ; and that he that hideth his talent, though he give God his own, " shall be cast into utter darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xxv. 30.) How easily will Christ then evince his right in you, and convince you that it was your duty to have lived unto him ? Do you think, Sirs, that you shall then have the face to say, ' I thought, Lord, that I had been made and redeemed for myself ? I thought I had nothing to do on earth, but live in as much plenty as I could, and pleasure to my flesh, and serve thee on the by, that thou mightest continue my prosperity, and save me when I could keep the world no longer. I knew not that I was thine, and should have lived to thy glory.' If any of you plead thus, what store of arguments hath Christ to silence you ! He will then convince you that his title to you was not questionable. He will prove that thou wast his by thy very being, and fetch unanswerable arguments from every part and faculty : he will prove it from his incarnation, his life of humiliation, his bloody sweat, his crown of thorns, his cross, his grave. He that had wounds to show after his resurrection, for the convincing of a doubting disciple, will have such scars to show then as shall suffice to convince a self-excusing rebel. All these shall witness that he was thy rightful Lord. He will prove it also from the discoveries of his word, from the warnings of his ministers, from the mercies which thou receivedst from him, that thou wast not ignorant of his right, and of thy duty ; or at least not ignorant for want of means. He will prove it from

thy baptismal covenant and renewed engagements. The congregation can witness that you did promise to be his, and seal to it by the reception of both his sacraments. And as he will easily prove his right, so will he as easily prove that you denied it to him. He will prove it from your works, from the course of your life, from the stream of your thoughts, from your love, your desires, and the rest of the affections of your disclosed hearts.

O, brethren, what a day will that be, when Christ shall come in person, with thousands of his angels, to sit in judgment on the rebellious world, and claim his due, which is now denied him! When plaintiff and defendant, witnesses and jurors, counsellors and justices, judges, and all the princes on earth, shall stand equal before the impartial Judge, expecting to be sentenced to their unchangeable state! Then, if a man should ask you, 'What think you now, Sir, of living to God? Is it better to be devoted to him, or to the flesh? Which now do you take for the better master? What would you do now if it were all to do again? What would you then say to such a question? How would you answer it? Would you make as light of it as now you do?' O, Sirs, you may hear these things now from your poor fellow-creature, as proud-hearted gallants, or as self-conceited deriders, or as besotted worldlings, or senseless blocks, or secret infidels, that as those, Deut. xxix. 19, do bless themselves in their hearts, and say, 'We shall have peace, though we walk in the imagination of our hearts.' But then you will hear them as trembling prisoners. Read the 20th verse at leisure. Such a sight will work when words will not, especially words not believed, nor considered of. When you shall see the God that you disowned, the Redeemer whom you neglected, the glory which you forfeited, by preferring the pleasures of the flesh before it, the saints triumphing whom you refused to imitate, and a doleful eternity of misery to be remedilessly endured, then saints will seem wiser men in your eyes, and how gladly would you then be such? But O, too late! What a thing is it, that men who say they believe such a judgment, and everlasting life and death, as all Christians profess to do, can yet read, and hear, and talk of such things as insensibly as if they were dreams or fables! I know it is the nature of sin to deceive, and of a sinful heart to be too willing of such deceiving, and it is the business of Satan by deceiving to destroy, and with the most specious baits to angle for souls;

and therefore I must expect that those of you that are taken and are the nearest to the pit, should be least fearful of the danger, and most confident to escape, though you are conscious that you live not to God, but to yourselves. But for my part, I have read and considered what God saith in his word, and I have found such evidence of its certain truth, that I heartily wish that I might rather live on a dunghill, and be the scorn of the world, and spend my few days in beggary and calamity, than that I should stand before the Lord, my Judge, in the case of that man, whatever he be, that is not in heart and life devoted unto God, but liveth to his flesh. For I know that if we live after the flesh, we shall die. (Rom. viii. 13.) I had rather lie here in Lazarus's poverty, and want the compassion and relief of man, than to be clothed with the best, and fare deliciously, and hereafter be denied a drop of water to cool the flames of the wrath of God.

I confess this is likely to seem but harsh and ungrateful preaching to many of you. Some pleasant jingles, or witty sayings, or shreds of reading, and pretty cadency of neat expressions, were likelier to be accepted, and procure applause with them who had rather have their ears and fantasy tickled than rubbed so roughly, and be roused from their ease and pleasing dreams. But shall I preach for myself, while I pretend to be preaching you from yourselves to God? Shall I seek myself, while I am preaching of the everlasting misery of self-seekers? God forbid. Sirs, I know the terrors of the Lord, (2 Cor. v. 11,) I believe, and therefore speak. Were I a Christian no deeper than the throat, I would fish for myself, and study more to please you than to save you. I love not to make a needless stir in men's consciences, nor to trouble their peace by a doctrine which I do not believe myself. But I believe that our Judge is even at the door, and that we shall shortly see him coming in his glory, and the host of heaven attending him with acclamations. In the mean time, your particular doom draws on; the fashion of all these things passeth away, as those seats will anon be empty when you are departed, so it is but a moment till all your habitations shall change their possessors, and the places of your abode, and too great delight, shall know you no more. I must needs speak to you as to transient, itinerant mortals, who must, ere long, be carried on men's shoulders to the dust, and there be left by those that must shortly follow you; then farewell honours and fleshly

delights; farewell all the accommodations and contents of this world. O that you had sooner bid them farewell! Had you lived to Christ as you did to them, he would not so have turned you off, nor have left your dislodged souls to utter desolation.

In a word, as sure as the word of God is true, if you own him not now as your Lord and Sovereign, he will not own you then as his chosen to salvation. And if now you live not to him, you shall not then live with him. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap everlasting life." (Gal. v. 7, 8.) "Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he should tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you." (Psalm l. 22.)

Beloved hearers, believe as you pretend to believe, and then live as you do believe. If you believe that you are not your own, but his that made you, and bought you with a price, and that he will thus try you for your lives and everlasting comforts on this question, whether you have lived to him, or to yourselves? Then live as men that do indeed believe it. Let your religion be visible, as well as audible, and let those that see your lives, and observe the scope of your endeavours, see that you believe it. But if you believe not these things, but are infidels in your hearts, and think you shall feel neither pain nor pleasure when this life is ended, but that man dieth as the beast, then I cannot wonder if you live as you believe. He that thinks he shall die like a dog, is like enough to live like a dog, even in his filthiness, and in snarling for the bones of worldly vanities, which the children do contemn.

Having spoken thus much by way of exhortation, I shall add few words for your more particular direction, that you may see to what my exhortation doth tend, and it may not be lost.

1. Be sure that you look to the uprightness of your heart, in this great business of devoting yourselves to God; especially see,

1. That you discern, and soundly believe that excellency in God which is not in the creature, and that perfect felicity in his love, and in the promised glory, which will easily pay for all your losses.

2. And that upon a deliberate comparing him with the pleasures of this world, you do resolutely renounce them, and dedicate yourselves to him.

3. And especially that you search carefully lest any reserve should lurk in your hearts, and you should not deliver up yourselves to him absolutely, for life and death, for better and worse, but should still retain some hopes of an earthly felicity, and not take the unseen felicity for your portion. "It is the lot of the wicked to have their portion in this life." (Psalm xvii. 14.) And let me here warn you of one delusion, by which many thousands have perished, and cheated themselves out of their everlasting hopes. They think that it is only some grosser disgraceful sins, as swearing, drunkenness, whoredom, injustice, &c., that will prove men's perdition, and because they are not guilty of these, they are secure, when, as it is the predominance of the interest of the flesh against the interest of God in their hearts and lives, that is the certain evidence of a state of damnation, which way soever it be that this is expressed. Many a civil gentleman hath his heart more addicted to his worldly interest, and less to God, than some whoremongers and drunkards. If you live with good reputation for civility, yea, for extraordinary ingenuity, yea, for religious zeal, and no disgraceful vice is perceived in your lives, yet if your hearts be on these things which you possess, and you love your present enjoyments better than God, and the glory that he hath promised, your case is as dangerous as the publicans and harlots. You may spend your days in better reputation, but you will end them in as certain desolation as they. The question is only whether God have your hearts and lives, and not whether you denied them to him with a plausible civility. Nay, it is merely for their carnal selves to preserve their reputation, that some men do forbear those grosser crimes, when yet God hath as little of them as of the more visible profane. "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him." (1 John, ii. 15.)

2. If you are wholly God's, live wholly to him, at least do not stint him, and grudge him your service. It is grown the common conceit of the world, that a life of absolute dedication to God is more ado than needs. 'What needs all this ado,' say they? 'Cannot you be saved with less ado than this?' I will now demand of these men but an answer to these few sober questions.

1. Do you fear giving more to God than his due? Is not all his own? And how can you give him more than all?

2, He is not so backward in giving to you, that owes you

nothing, but gives you plenty, variety, and continuance of all the good you enjoy, and do you think you well requite him !

3. Christ said not of his life and precious blood, it is too much, and will you say of your poor unprofitable service it is too much ?

4. Who will you give that to which you spare from God ? That time, and study, and love, and labour ? To any that hath more right to it, or better deserves it, or will better reward you than he will do ?

5. Are you afraid of being losers by him ? Have you cause for such fears ? Is he unfaithful, or unable to perform his promises ? Will you repent when you come to heaven that you did too much to get it ? Will not that blessedness pay you to the full ?

6. What if you had no wages but your work ? Is it not better to live to God than to man ? Is not purity better than impurity ? If feasting be grievous, it is because you are sick. If the mire be your pleasure, it is because you are swine, and not because the condition is desirable.

7. Will it comfort you more in the reckoning and review to have laid out yourselves for God, or for the world ? Will you then wish that you had done less for heaven, or for earth ? Sirs, these questions are easily answered if you are but willing to consider them.

8. Doth it beseem those to be afraid of giving God too much, that are such bankrupts as we are, and are sure that we shall not give him the twentieth part of his due, if we do the best we can, and when the best, that are scorned by the world for their forwardness, do abhor themselves for their backwardness ! Yea, could we do all, we are but unprofitable servants, and should do but our duty. (Luke xvii. 10.) Alas ! how little cause have we to fear lest we should give God too much of our hearts, or of our lives !

3. If you are not your own, remember that nothing else is your own. What can be more your own than yourselves ?

1. Your parts and abilities of mind or body are not your own ; use them, therefore, for him that owneth them.

2. Your authority and dignities are not your own ; see, therefore, that you make the best of them for him that lent them you.

3. Your children themselves are not your own ; design them for the utmost of his service that trusts you with them, educate them in that way as they may be most serviceable to God. It is the great wickedness of too many of our gentry, that they

prepare their posterity only to live plenteously, and in credit in the world, but not to be serviceable to God or the commonwealth. Design them, all that are capable, to magistracy or ministry, or some useful way of life. And whatever be their employment, endeavour to possess them with the fear of the Lord, that they may devote themselves to him. Think not the preaching of the gospel a work too low for the sons of the noblest person in the land. It would be an excellent furtherance to the work of the gospel if noblemen and gentlemen would addict those sons to the ministry that are fit for it, and can be spared from the magistracy. They might have more respect from their people, and easier rule them, and might better win them with bounty than poor men can do. They need not to contend with them for tithes or maintenance.

4. If you are not your own, your whole families are not your own. Use them, therefore, as families that are dedicated to God.

5. If you are not your own, then your wealth is not your own. Honour God, therefore, with your substance, and with the first fruits of your increase. (Prov. iii. 9.) Do you ask how? Are there no poor people that want the preaching of the gospel for want of means, or other furtherance? Are there no godly scholars that want means to maintain them at the universities, to fit them for this work? Are there no poor neighbours about you that are ignorant, that if you buy them bibles and catechisms, and hire them to learn them, might come to knowledge and to life? Are there no poor children that you might put apprentices to godly masters, where soul and body might both have helps? The poor you have always with you. It is not for want of objects for your charity; if you hide your talents, or consume them on yourselves, the time is coming when it would do you more good to have laid them out to your Master's use, than in pampering your flesh.

Some grudge that God should have the tenths, that is, that they should be consecrated to the maintenance of his service. But little do these consider that all is his, and must all be accounted for. Some question whether now there be such a sin as sacrilege in being, but little do they consider that every sin is a kind of sacrilege. When you dedicated yourself to God, you dedicated all you had, and it was God's before; do not take it from him again. Remember the halving of Ananias, and give God all.

**Obj.** But must we not provide for our families ?

**Ans.** Yea, because God requires it, and in so doing, you render it to him. That is given to him which is expended in obedience to him, so be it you still prefer his most eminent interest.

Lastly, if you are not your own, then must not your works be principally for yourselves, but for him that owneth you. As the scope of your lives must be to the honour of your Lord, so be sure that you hourly renew these intentions. When you set your foot out of your doors, ask whether your business you go upon be for God. When you go to your rest, examine yourselves what you have done that day for God, especially let no opportunity overslip you wherein you may do him extraordinary service. You must so perform the very labours of your callings, that they may be ultimately for God; so love your dearest friends and enjoyments, that it be God that is principally loved in them.

More particularly as to the business of the day, what need I say more than in a word to apply this general doctrine to your special works ?

1. If the honourable judges and the justices will remember that they are God's, and not their own, what a rule and stay will it be to them for their work ? What an answer will it afford them against all solicitations from carnal self, or importunate friends ? viz., I am not mine own, nor come I hither to do mine own work, I cannot therefore dispose of myself or it, but must do as he that owns me doth command me. How would this also incite them to promote Christ's interest with their utmost power, and faithfully to own the causes which he owneth !

2. If all counsellors, and solicitors of causes, did truly take themselves for God's, and not their own, they durst not plead for, nor defend a cause they knew which God disowneth. They would remember that what they do against the innocent, or speak against a righteous cause, is done and said against their Lord, from whom they may expect, ere long, to hear, ' In as much as you said or did this against the least of these, you said or did it against me.' God is the great patron of innocency, and the pleader of every righteous cause, and he that will be so bold as to plead against him, had need of a large fee to save him harmless. Say not it is your calling which you must live by, unless you that once listed yourselves in your



baptism under Christ, will now take pay, and make it your profession to fight against him. The emptier your purses are of gain so gotten, the richer you are, or at least the fuller they are, you are so much the poorer. As we that are ministers do find by experience, that it was not without provocation from us that God of late hath let loose so many hands, and pens, and tongues against us, though our calling is more evidently owned by God than any one in the world besides, so I doubt not but you may find, upon due examination, that the late contempt which hath been cast upon your profession, is a reproof of your guilt from God who did permit it. Had lawyers and divines less lived to themselves, and more to God, we might have escaped, if not the scourge of reproachful tongues, yet at least the lashes of conscience. To deal freely with you, gentlemen, it is a matter that they who are strangers to your profession can scarce put any fair construction upon, that the worst cause, for a little money, should find an advocate among you. This driveth the standers by upon this harsh dilemma, to think that either your understandings or your consciences are very bad. If, indeed, you so little know a good cause from a bad, then it must needs tempt men to think you very unskilful in your profession. The seldom and smaller differences of divines, in a more sublime and mysterious profession, is yet a discovery so far of their ignorance, and is imputed to their disgrace. But when almost every cause, even the worst that comes to the bar, shall have some of you for it, and some against it, and in the most palpable cases you are some on one side, and some on the other, the strange difference of your judgments doth seem to betray their weakness. But if you know the causes to be bad which you defend, and to be good which you oppose, it more evidently betrays a deplorable conscience. I speak not of your innocent or excusable mistakes in cases of great difficulty; nor yet of excusing a cause bad in the main from unjust aggravations: but when money will hire you to plead for injustice against your own knowledge, and to use your wits to defraud the righteous, and spoil his cause, or vex him with delays, for the advantage of your own unrighteous client, I would not have your conscience for all your gains, nor your account to make for all the world: it is sad, that any known unrighteous cause should have a professed Christian, in the face of a christian judicature, to defend it, and Satan should plead by the tongues of men so deeply engaged to Christ: but it is

incomparably more sad, that almost every unjust cause should find a patron; and no contentious, malicious person should be more ready to do wrong, than some lawyers to defend him, or a (dear-bought) fee! Did you honestly obey God, and speak not a word against your judgment, but leave every unjust man to defend his own cause, what peace would it bring to your consciences; what honour to your now reproached profession; what relief to the oppressed; and what an excellent cure to the troublesome contentions of proud or malicious men.

3. To your juries and witnesses I shall say but this, you also are not your own; and he that owneth you hath told you, "That he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." It is much into your hands that the law hath committed the cause of the just; should you betray it by perjury and false witnesses, while there is a conscience in your guilty breast, and a God in heaven, you shall not want a witness of your sin, or a revenger of the oppressed, if the blood of Christ on your sound repentance do not rescue you.

4. If plaintiff and defendant did well consider that they are not their own, they would not be too prone to quarrels, but would lose their right, when God, the chief proprietor, did require it. Why do you not rather take wrong, and suffer yourselves to be defrauded, than do wrong and defraud, and that your brethren? (1 Cor. vi. 7—9.)

To conclude: I earnestly entreat you all, that have heard me this day, that when you go home, you will betake yourselves to a sober consideration of the claim that God hath laid to you, and the right he hath in you, and all that you have: and resolve, without any further delay, to give him his own; and give it not to his enemies, and yours. When you see the judgment set, and the prisoners waiting to receive their sentence, remember with what inconceivable glory and terror your Judge will shortly come to demand his due; and what an inquiry must be made into the tenour of your lives. As you see the eclipsed sun withdraw its light,\* so remember how before this dreadful final judgment, the sun and moon, and the whole frame of nature, shall be dissolved! And how God will withdraw the light of his countenance from those that have neglected him in the day of their visitation. As ever you would be his, then see that you be his now; own him as your absolute Lord, if you expect he

\* This sermon was preached at the time of the eclipse.

should own you then as his people. *Wo* to you that ever you were born! if you put God then to distraint you for his due, and to take that up in your punishment, which you denied to give him in voluntary obedience. You would all be his in the time of your extremity; then you cry to him as your God for deliverance. Hear him now, if you would then be heard: live to him now, and live with him for ever. A popish priest can persuade multitudes of men and women to renounce the very possession of worldly goods, and the exercise of their outward callings in a mistaken devotedness to God. May not I, then, hope to prevail with you to devote yourselves, with the fruit of your callings and possessions, to his unquestionable service? Will the Lord of mercy but fasten these persuasions upon your hearts, and cause them to prevail, what a happy day will this prove to us! God will have his own, the church will have your utmost help, the souls of those about you will have the fruit of your diligence and good examples, the commonwealth will have the fruit of your fidelity, the poor will have the benefit of your charity, I shall have the desired end of my labour, and yourselves will have the great and everlasting gain.