

SERMONS
ON
IMPORTANT SUBJECTS,

BY THE LATE REVEREND AND PIOUS

SAMUEL DAVIES, A.M.,

Sometime President of the College in New-Jersey.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

THE FIFTH EDITION.

TO WHICH ARE NOW ADDED,

THREE OCCASIONAL SERMONS,

NOT INCLUDED IN THE FORMER EDITIONS;

MEMOIRS AND CHARACTER OF THE AUTHOR;

AND

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SERMON XXXI.

DEDICATION TO GOD ARGUED FROM REDEEMING MERCY.

1 COR. VI. 19, 20.—*What! know ye not that 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.*

MY first and last business with you today, is to assert a claim which perhaps you have but little thought of, or acknowledged. In the name of God I enter a claim to you, to the whole of you, soul and body, and whatever you possess; to every one of you, high and low, old and young, freemen as well as slaves; I enter a claim to you all as God's right, and not your own: and I would endeavour to bring you voluntarily to acknowledge his right, and by your own free act to surrender and devote yourselves to him, whose you are, and whom therefore you are bound to serve.

It is high time for me to assert, and for you to acknowledge, God's right to you; for have not many of you behaved as if you thought you were your own, and had no master or proprietor? Have you not practically said, with those insolent sinners the psalmist mentions, *Our lips are our own, who is Lord over us?* Ps. xii. 4; for have you not refused to employ your tongues for the honour of God, and spoke what you pleased, without any control from his law? Have you not said by your practice, what Pharaoh was bold and plain enough to speak out in words, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?* Exod. v. 2. Have you not aimed at pleasing yourselves, as if you were not bound to please the supreme Lord of heaven and earth, whose authority confines the stubborn powers of hell in chains of everlasting darkness, and sets all the armies of heaven in motion to execute his sovereign orders? Have you not followed your own inclinations, as if you were at liberty to do what you pleased? Or if you have in some instances restrained yourselves, have not the restraints proceeded, not from a regard to his authority, but from a regard to your own pleasure or interest! Have you not used your bodies, your souls, your estates, and all your possessions, as if they were your own absolutely and independently, and there were no God on high, who has an original and superior claim to you, and all that you are and have! Do not your own consciences convict you of these things? Is it not then high time for you to be made sensible whose right you are? that you are not your own, but God's.

This reason would render this subject very seasonable at any time. But there is another reason which peculiarly determines me to make choice of it today; and that is, the greatest business of this day is to surrender and de-

vote ourselves to God as his servants for ever. In so solemn a posture as at the Lord's table, in so affecting an act as the commemoration of that death to which we owe all our hopes of life and happiness, and with such solemn emblems as those of bread and wine in our hands, which represent the broken body and flowing blood of Jesus, we are to yield ourselves to God, and seal our indenture to be his. This is the solemn business we are now entering upon. And that we may perform it the more heartily, it is fit we should be sensible that we are doing no more than what we are obliged to do; no more than what God has a right to require us to do, seeing we are not our own, but his.

The apostle speaks of it with an air of surprise and horror, that any under the profession of Christianity should be so stupid as not to know and acknowledge that they are not their own, but God's. *What!* says he, *know ye not—that ye are not your own?* As if he had said, Can you be ignorant in so plain a point as this? Or can you be so hardy, as knowing the truth, to practise contrary to knowing it? Knowing you are not your own, dare you act as if you were your own? Acknowledging that you are God's, dare you withhold from him his property? Will a man rob God? Shall not his professed servants serve him? Since your bodies and your souls are his, dare you use them as if they were absolutely your own, and refuse to glorify him with them?

The same claim, my brethren, is valid with regard to you, which the apostle here asserts with regard to the Corinthians. You are no more your own than they were; you are as much God's property as they were.

And his property in you depends upon such firm foundations as cannot be shaken without the loss of your being, and your relapse into nothing. If you made yourselves, you may call yourselves your own. But you know the curious frames of your bodies were not formed by your own hands, nor was it your feeble breath that inspired them with those immortal sparks of reason, your souls. A greater absurdity cannot be mentioned, than that a creature should be its own creator; for then it must act before it had a being. You owe your being to a divine Original, the Fountain of all existence. It was Jehovah, the uncreated, all creating Jehovah, who so wonderfully and fearfully formed your bodies, and who is likewise the Father of your spirits. And what right can be more valid than that founded upon creation? It is a right founded upon your very being, and which nothing but the entire loss of being can destroy. He that makes servants out of nothing, has he not a right to their service? Did he form your souls and bodies, and may he not require you to glorify him with them? Can you call them your own, or dare to dispose of them as you please, without any regard to God, when you would have had neither soul nor body, nor been any thing at all, if it had not been for him? You think you have such a right to a thousand things as

entitles you to the use of them; but show me one thing, if you can, to which you have such a right as God has to you, to your whole souls and bodies, to you, who have no master upon earth, and who are your own property in exclusion to all the claims of your fellow-creatures. Did you produce out of nothing any of those things you call yours? No, you only bought them with money, or you formed them into what they are, out of materials already created to your hand. But it is Jehovah's right alone that is founded upon creation. And will you not acknowledge this right? Will not your hearts declare, even now, 'My Maker, God, this soul and this body are thine; and to thee I cheerfully surrender them? The work of thine own hands shall be thine by my free and full consent; and I renounce all claim to myself that is not dependent upon and subordinate to thee.'

Again the providence of God towards you has made you his absolute property; and on this footing he claims your service. You could no more support yourselves in being, than you could give being to yourselves at first. Who but he has preserved you alive for so many months and years; preserved you so frail and precarious, surrounded with so many dangers, and exposed to so many wants? Whose earth have you trod upon? Whose air have you breathed in? Whose creatures have you fed upon? *The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof*, Ps. xxiv. 1; and consequently all the supports and enjoyments, all the necessities and comforts of life are his. Show me the mercy, if you can, which you created. Mention the moment, if you can, in which you supported your own life, independently of the Almighty. Show me that property of yours, if you can, which is so dependent upon you as you are upon him. This moment, if he should withdraw his supporting hand, you would instantaneously become as entirely nothing as you were ten thousand years ago. If he should now strip you of all that is his, and only leave you what is originally your own, he would leave you nothing at all. The earth, and all its productions, the air, the light, and your very being would be entirely vanished, and your place would be no more known in the creation. O! that you knew, O! that you felt, O! that you practically acknowledged, how entirely dependent you are upon God! And dare you call yourselves your own, when you cannot support yourselves in being or in happiness one moment? O! renounce so haughty a claim, and this day give up yourselves to God as his. A son honoureth his father: and since God is your Father, where is his honour? The dull ox knows his owner, and the stupid ass knows his master's crib: and will not you know and acknowledge your divine Benefactor and Preserver? He has nourished and brought you up as his children, and dare you rebel against him?

Thus you see the divine right to you may be made good upon the footing of creation and providence. But this is not the foundation of right which the apostle here has in view, or which I would chiefly insist upon. The

ground of claim that he has here in view, is that of redemption by Jesus Christ; *ye are not your own*, says he, *for ye are bought with a price*. This is a ground of claim still more endearing. You are God's, not only because he made you, because he preserved you, but because he hath bought you; bought you, saith St. Peter, "*not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*" 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. What an expensive purchase is this! a purchase by blood! not by the blood of bulls and of goats, not by the blood of man, but by the blood of Jesus, which St. Paul does not scruple to call the blood of God himself; "the church of God, *says he*, which he has purchased with his own blood." Acts xx. 28. This was the immense ransom; this is what the apostle calls a price, by way of eminence, in my text; *ye are bought with a price*; a price so vast and distinguishable, that it may easily be known without being particularly described. Every Christian must know it, if he is but told that it is the price with which he was bought.

The words *buying, purchase, ransom, redemption*, and the like, occur so often in the account of our salvation by Christ, that they deserve a particular explication.

They are sometimes taken in a proper sense, and sometimes in an improper, in the sacred scriptures. I shall particularly consider the word *redeem*, which most frequently occurs, as a specimen of the rest.

To redeem in a lax improper sense, signifies in general to deliver from oppression and misery, in whatever way the deliverance is effected, and not necessarily implying that it is effected by a proper payment of a price. So you very often read of the Israelites being redeemed from slavery in Egypt; and on this account God assumed the title of their Redeemer. In this lax sense of the word we have been redeemed by Jesus Christ: redeemed, that is, delivered from slavery to sin and Satan. Our freedom from sin is called redemption by Christ, in the sacred language. So in Tit. ii. 14, the apostle says, "*Our Saviour Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*" It is by Christ's freely giving himself a sacrifice for us, that the influences of the Holy Spirit are procured to mortify our corrupt dispositions, and subdue the power of sin, and thus to free us from our sordid slavery to his usurped jurisdiction. Sin has still retained its power over fallen angels: through the space of at least near six thousand years, notwithstanding all the punishment they have already suffered for it, and notwithstanding all that they have seen of the wonders of divine Providence, and the amiable and tremendous displays of the divine perfections, they sin on, still impenitent and unreformed, and will do so for ever. But many a sinner of the race of man has been recovered to a state of holiness and happiness, and been freed from the tyrannical dominion of sin. And the reason is, Je-

sus did not give himself for the fallen angels, but for the fallen sons of Adam; for these, but not for the former, he purchased sanctifying grace; and this makes the difference. While the former are hardened more and more in wickedness in the furnace of hell, the fallen offspring of Adam are purified by his Spirit, and made a peculiar people, distinguishable from all others by their purity and zeal for good works, and peculiarly his above all others. St. Peter also uses the word *redeem*, in the same sense, to signify deliverance from sin. *Ye know, says he, that ye were redeemed from your vain conversation by the precious blood of Christ.* 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. This is a very glorious redemption indeed, much more illustrious than the deliverance of the Israelites from the Babylonish captivity and Egyptian bondage; which is so often called redemption.

Again, Jesus Christ has redeemed, that is, delivered his people from the guilt of sin; and consequently from the wrath of God, and the punishments of hell. *“He obtained eternal redemption for his people.”* Heb. ix. 12. *“Jesus delivered us from the wrath to come.”* 1 Thess. i. 10. All the saints that are now in heaven, and all that shall be added to their happy number in all the future ages of the world, are indebted to him for their great, their everlasting deliverance. To Jesus they owe it, that they have the actual enjoyment of complete happiness, and the sure prospect of its everlasting continuance, instead of feeling the vengeance of eternal fire. To Jesus they owe it, that they rejoice forever in the smiles of divine love, instead of sinking under the frowns of divine indignation. To Jesus they owe it, that they enjoy the pleasures of an applauding conscience, instead of agonizing under the pangs of guilt, and the horrors of everlasting despair. To Jesus they owe it, that their voice is employed in songs of praise and triumph, instead of infernal groans and howlings. To Jesus they are indebted for all this; and they are very sensible of their obligations; and their everlasting anthems acknowledge it. St. John once heard them, and I hope we shall hear them ere long, singing with a loud voice, *“Thou art worthy; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”* Rev. v. 9. *“These are they which were redeemed from the earth, and from among men, as first-fruits unto God and the Lamb.”* Rev. xiv. 3, 4.

Thus you see that taking the word Redemption in a lax improper sense, as signifying deliverance, though without a price, that we may be said to be bought or redeemed by Jesus Christ. But if we take the word in a strict and proper sense, it signifies a particular kind of deliverance; namely, by the payment of a price. And it is in this way that Jesus redeemed his people. *He gave himself, says St. Paul, a ransom for all.* 1 Tim. ii. 6. And himself has told us, *the Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many.* Matt. xx. 28. Now a ransom is a price paid to redeem a thing that was forfeited, or a

person that was held in captivity and slavery. So to redeem an estate, is to pay a price equivalent to it, and so to recover it. To redeem a prisoner or a captive, is to lay down a price as an equivalent for his liberty. In this sense, Christ bought his people with a price, or redeemed them with his blood as the ransom. This will lead us to conceive of his work in our salvation in various views.

He is said to *redeem us to God by his blood*. Rev. v. 9. This implies that we were lost to God, because justice required we should be given up to punishment, and God could take no pleasure in us. We were lost to God, just as a criminal delivered up to justice is lost to his family and his country. But Jesus pays the ransom to divine justice with his own blood; that is, he bears the punishment in his own person, which justice demanded of the sinner; and hereupon, the poor, helpless, lost sinner is recovered to God, becomes his property again upon the footing of mercy, and recovers the divine favour which he had lost. The blessed God, as it were, recovers his lost creature, receives him with delight from the arrest of justice safe and unhurt, and rejoices over him as redeemed from eternal death. Now, like the father of the prodigal in the parable, he gives orders for public rejoicings, through all the heavenly court, saying, *"It is meet we should make merry and be glad, for this my son was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found."* Luke xv. 32. And again, *"I will save him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom."* Job xxxiii. 24. Again, Jesus is said to redeem us from the curse of the law: *"God sent forth his Son, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law."* Gal. iv. 4, 5. *"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."* Gal. iii. 13. Here you see what he redeemed us from, namely, the curse of the law, the penalty threatened in the law to disobedience; and also the manner in which he redeemed us, namely, by becoming a curse for us, or suffering the penalty in his own person which was due to us for disobedience. This representation supposes that the law of God has demands upon us, demands of punishment, and that it detains us as prisoners under arrest till these demands are answered by some adequate satisfaction. Now the Lord Jesus entered into our law-place, and by his sufferings made a satisfaction equivalent to the demands of the law: and it is this satisfaction that is called the ransom by which he redeemed us. By his obedience and sufferings all the demands of the law are completely answered, so that now the prisoner is dismissed, the captive set free; set free upon the footing of a ransom, or for and in consideration of full payment made. By this a way is opened for the salvation of sinners upon the plan of the gospel; that is, by the righteousness of Jesus imputed to them upon their believing in him; imputed to such as have no personal merit, but must sink into everlasting condemnation, if dealt with according to the rigor of the law. Thus Jesus is made to

believers righteousness and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30, righteousness to answer the precept of the law, and redemption from its penalty.

In short, our salvation is accomplished so much in the way of redemption, that this word, or one of the same sense, is very often used in the affair. Heaven is called a purchased possession, Eph. i. 14, because, when we had forfeited our right to it, it was purchased for us by the blood of Christ. Believers are called a peculiar, 1 Peter ii. 9, or, as the word is sometimes rendered, a purchased people. The resurrection is called the redemption of our body, Rom. viii. 23; because, after having been made a helpless captive under the power of death, and shut up in the prison of the grave, it is dismissed and set at liberty by Jesus Christ. And our salvation is called eternal redemption, because all the blessings contained therein are redeemed for us after they had been forfeited and lost.

Thus you see the death of Christ may be called the great price with which we are bought, and by which all spiritual and everlasting blessings were bought for us. As for believers, it is beyond all dispute that they have been thus dearly bought; and on this account they are not their own, but God's. They are his on the footing of redemption; and therefore he has the strongest claim to their service. O! shall not those favoured creatures whom he has redeemed from hell, redeemed from sin and Satan, redeemed with the precious blood of his Son, devote themselves to their Deliverer as his servants for ever? Can you bear the thought of withholding his own from him, when he redeemed you when lost, and purchased a right to you by the blood of his Son? one drop of which is of more value than a thousand worlds!

A thousand worlds so bought were bought too dear.

Must not the love of Christ constrain you, as it did St. Paul, to judge thus: That if this illustrious personage *died for you, then you that live should no longer live to yourselves, but to him that died for you and rose again.* 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

Thus, you see, the argument concludes with full force as to believers, who are indisputably purchased by the blood of Christ. But will it conclude also as to those who are now unbelievers! Were they so redeemed, or bought by Jesus Christ, that they are no longer their own but God's, and upon that footing obliged to devote themselves to him! There is hardly any subject in divinity more intricate than the extent of Christ's redemption; and it would by no means suit the present occasion to perplex a practical discourse with this controversy. I shall, therefore, only lay down a few principles which are indisputable, and will fully answer my present design. (1.) As to those who believe that Christ laid down his life as a price for the

redemption of every individual of mankind, the argument concludes with full force; for by their own confession they are bought with a price, and therefore they are not their own, but God's. (2.) You all hope that Jesus Christ died for you: unless you have this hope, you can have no hope at all of being saved according to the gospel; for the gospel allows you no hopes of salvation at all, but upon the supposition of Christ's dying for you. Have you, then, any hope of salvation! Undoubtedly you have; for you do not look upon yourselves as shut up under remediless despair. Well then, just as much hope as you have of salvation, just so much hope you have that Christ died for you; and consequently, upon your own principle, you are so far obliged to act as persons bought with a price, and therefore not your own but God's; that is, as far as you hope for heaven, so far are you obliged to devote yourselves to God as his, and no longer to live to yourselves. And if you deny his claim to you upon the footing of redemption, you renounce all hope, and give yourselves over as lost and hopeless. And what can bind you more strongly than this? Will you rather rush into despair, and fling yourselves headlong into ruin, than acknowledge God's right, and behave as those that are his, and not your own? (3.) I venture to assert that Christ died for every man, in such a sense as to warrant all that hear the gospel to regard the offer of salvation by his death as made to them without distinction; and to oblige all indefinitely to embrace that offer, or to believe in him, and to conduct themselves towards him as one that, by his death, placed them under a dispensation of grace. Therefore, all are obliged to behave themselves towards him as their Redeemer, and to own that he has a right to them upon the footing of redemption. This is sufficient to my present purpose: for if this be the case, then I may enter a claim to you all, in the name of God, as his property: and you cannot refuse to resign yourselves to him, without denying the Lord that bought you. He claims your souls and bodies as his due, and requires you to glorify him with both, upon the footing of redemption.

Here I am naturally led to consider the duty the apostle infers from these premises; and that is, to glorify God. *Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; your souls and your bodies are God's; therefore glorify God with your souls and your bodies, which are his.* This is the connection of the apostle's reasoning;

Here you are ready to inquire, What is it to glorify God with our souls and bodies? I answer in short, The connection intimates that it consists in using our souls and bodies, and all that we are and possess, not as our own, but as his; that is, that we serve him with all the powers of both. We should consider our understandings as his, and therefore employ them to think of him and know him: our wills as his, and therefore choose him: our love, our desire, our joy as his, and therefore love, desire, and rejoice in him above

all; our sorrow, our indignation, and all the various forms of our irascible passions as his, and therefore level them against his enemies, particularly against sin: our consciences as his, and therefore regard them as his deputies; our powers of action as his, and therefore to be governed by his authority. We should consider our whole souls as his, and therefore not willingly harbour any thing in them that may displease him; no chosen darkness, vanity, or error in the mind; no enmity, no coldness, or lukewarmness in the heart. We should love him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength; because our hearts, our souls, our minds, and strength are his; his, and not our own. So also our bodies are his, and therefore all our members should be instruments of righteousness unto holiness. Your eyes are his, therefore let them glorify him by viewing the wonders of his word and works. Your ears are his, therefore let them hear his voice. Your tongues are his, therefore use them as instruments of praise, and of making known his glory. In short, you are all entirely his, therefore be all entirely devoted to him. You are his servants, even when you are serving yourselves; therefore whatsoever ye do, even in your own affairs, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not to men. This is to “glorify God with your souls and bodies which are his.” And this should be your universal practice in all your actions; “Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” 1 Cor. x. 31. “Whether you live, you should live to the Lord: and whether you die, you should die to the Lord: that living and dying you may be the Lord’s.” Rom. xiv. 7, 8.

You have now had a brief view of those grounds upon which Jehovah claims you as his, and of the duty resulting from this claim. And what remains but that I wind up the whole with a serious, plain, warm proposal to your hearts! And that is, whether you will this day practically acknowledge God’s right in you, by devoting yourselves entirely to him? Will you, or will you not? Pause, and think upon the proposal. Perhaps you may be willing to comply without any further excitements. If not, come and let us reason the matter together.

Consider how entirely, and how long you have unjustly detained his own property from God. Have you not lived to yourselves, and not to him? Have you not used the faculties of your souls, and the members of your bodies, your time, your estates, and your all, as if he had no right in them, but they were entirely your own? Has not *self* been the ruling principle in you, as if you had no Master in heaven; or as if no blood had been shed upon mount Calvary to purchase a superior right in you? You have thought your own thoughts, spoke your own words, consulted your own pleasure, and followed your own will; as if you usurped the disposal of yourselves, and did not acknowledge a superior. When were your thoughts, your words, your time, your powers of action devoted to the Lord that bought you? The

patience of God has lent some of you many days and years, but which of them have you used for his glory? And is it not high time for you now to return to your rightful Master, and to *render to God the things that are God's*.

Again, Consider, that while you have thus lived to yourselves, you have most unjustly usurped a right to what was not your own. Did you make yourselves? Did you redeem yourselves? Have you preserved yourselves? Is it you that gave the least virtue to the food to nourish you? Can you enable the earth to support you, or the air to heave your lungs with the breath of life? Can you recover yourselves when sick, or revive yourselves when dying? Can you make yourselves happy in the world of spirits, and provide for yourselves through an immortal duration? If you can do all these things, you may set up for independency with a better grace, and call yourselves your own; and you may boldly lift up your faces to heaven, and tell the Sovereign of the universe, you will not be obliged to him, but he may take away from you all that is his, and leave you to shift for yourselves. But are you not struck with horror at such claims as these? You must then acknowledge you are not your own. And what aggravated sacrilege have you been guilty of, in robbing God of his right! If he that robs you of a little money is punished with death for the crime, what do you deserve who have robbed God of your souls and bodies, and that all your life long? O! will you not this day restore him his own? He will accept it again, when freely restored, though abused, dishonoured, and rendered unfit for service by you.

Farther, If you will not give up yourselves to God, pray what will you do with yourselves? You are not capable of self-subsistence, or independency. A newborn, naked, helpless infant may as well refuse the breast, reject the mother's care, and set up for itself, as you pretend to shift for yourselves independently of the God that made you, and the Saviour that redeemed you. Alas! if you separate yourselves from him, you are like a stream separated from its fountain, that must run dry; a spark separated from the fire, that must expire; a member cut off from the body, that must die and putrefy. If you will not give up yourselves to God, whom will you choose for your patron? Will you yield yourselves to sin and Satan? Alas! that is but to submit to a merciless tyrant, who will employ you in sordid, cruel drudgery, and then reward you with death and destruction. Will you give up yourselves to the world, to riches, honours, and pleasures? Alas! what service can the world do you when it is laid in ashes by the universal flames of the last conflagration? What service can the world do you when your unwilling souls are torn away from it, and must leave all its enjoyments for ever and ever? Will not the God of grace prove a better Master to you? Has he ever forsaken any of his servants in their last extremity? No;

he has promised, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Heb. xiii. 5. And the long train of his servants, through thousands of years, bear a united testimony, that they have always found him faithful to his promise. And why then will you not choose him for your Master? Alas! if you refuse, you become what I may call the lumber and rubbish of the universe; useless to yourselves, and lost to God and your fellow-creatures, a property not worth winning. While you call yourselves your own, you degrade yourselves, and lose all your dignity and importance; you cut yourselves off from all happiness, and can expect no other heaven than what such guilty, helpless creatures as you can create for yourselves. If you will not voluntarily surrender yourselves to God, he will not own you as his, but leave you to yourselves, to shift for yourselves as you can. *He will hide his face from you, according to his threatening, that he may see what will be your end.* Deut. xxxii. 19, 20. And O! what wretched outcasts, what poor, helpless orphans will you then be!

Let me farther try whether you have the least spark of gratitude still remaining in you. Has the love of Jesus no sweetly constraining force upon you? Can you look upon him dying for you on the cross, and yet keep him out of his right? Can you view him paying your ransom with his blood and life, and yet refuse to give him up what he has redeemed at so high a price? Shall poor captives, redeemed from sin and hell with the blood of Jesus, rather continue still in bondage than submit to so good a Master? Are you capable of such base ingratitude? Can you treat your kind Redeemer so unkindly?

Let me conclude this exhortation with the more forcible, though plain and artless language of another. *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. 23. The great business of that day will not be so much to search after particular sins or duties which were contrary to the scope of heart and life, but whether you lived to God, or to your flesh; and whether your time and care and wealth were expended for Christ in his members and interest, or for your carnal selves? 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 promoting my glory? I lent you much of the wealth of the world: so much was spent in provisions for your backs

and 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 for the furtherance of the gospel, or to relieve the souls or bodies of your brethren? I gave thee a family, and committed them to thy care to govern them for me; but how didst thou perform it? O! brethren, bethink you in time what answer to make to such questions. 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 to him? Do you think, Sirs, that you shall then have the face to say, I thought, Lord, 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 myself, 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 satisfaction 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.

And now, my brethren, may I not presume that I have carried my point, if I had only to do with your reason? Does not your reason plead in favour of resigning yourselves to God this day? Take notice, I again proclaim God's right in you. Can any of you deny this claim? Certainly you dare not. Well then, let heaven and earth bear witness, that you were all claimed this day as God's property upon the footing of redemption; and not one of you dared to deny it. Therefore, *render to God the things that are God's.* May I hope you now feel your hearts beginning to yield? I make the proposal to you all; to you, masters and freemen, as well as to you slaves: shall we all this day, with one consent, devote ourselves to God as his servants? Will you allow me, as it were, to draw up your indenture, and speak for you? I hope I am willing to lead the way, and will you follow me? Methinks I hear you say, 'Yes, we are willing: after many struggles and reluctances, we are at length willing, and can hold out no longer.' But hold! I am afraid some of you know not what you are going about. And if you rashly and inconsiderately engage in the service, you will soon desert it. As soon as the force of persuasion has ceased, and the flow of passion is over, you will retract

all. Therefore I must put you back, till I inform you of some things with relation to this contract, that you may make sure work, an everlasting covenant, never to be forgotten.

Take notice then, 1. Your resignation of yourselves must not be the act of mere nature, without much greater assistance; but you must be urged and sweetly constrained to it by the Holy Spirit making you willing by his power. Whatever professions you may make, whatever external forms of self-dedication you may force yourselves to use, yet your hearts are by no means willing; nay, they are utterly averse to this surrender, till they are changed by divine grace. This, indeed, should not discourage you from making the attempt: for it is while you are making the attempt, you are to hope for the assistance of divine grace. But I mention the necessity of divine power, lest you should mistake the efforts of mere nature under the constraints of persuasion, or in a warm fit of passion, for a hearty, voluntary surrender of yourselves to God. The same thing is to be applied to your future performance of your engagement. As you cannot, of yourselves, rightly devote yourselves to God, neither will you be able, of yourselves, to perform your vow. Therefore, be humble and self-diffident in this transaction. Entertain no sanguine expectations from yourselves, or you will be surely disappointed. Trust in divine strength for all, for that alone is sufficient for you.

2. Your resignation must be unreserved and universal. God claims your all; Jesus bought all; your souls and bodies, and whatever belongs to you, and therefore you must give him all. He will not share his property with sin and Satan. You must make no reserve of this or that favourite lust or interest, but part with all that is inconsistent with your duty to him: and you must give up what is dearest to you to your heavenly Master, to be disposed of as he shall think proper. Here pause, and inquire whether you are willing to be unreserved and universal in your surrender.

3. You must resign yourself to God at all adventures, resolving to be his, whatever your attachment to him may cost you; though it should cost you your reputation among men, a part or even the whole of your estate; nay, though it should cost you your life. Blessed be God, we are now in such happy circumstances, that our duty to him is not likely to do us much injury, even in this world, where persecution and tribulation is the usual lot of his servants. Resignation to him indeed expose you to a senseless laugh or a sneer, to reviling and calumny; but who that has the spirit of a man within him, would be so meanly complaisant as to offend his God, and lose his heaven, in order to shun the ridicule and contempt of fools? Fools they are, if tried by the standard of true wisdom, however wise they may be in other respects. This is but a slight kind of persecution to one that makes a proper estimate of things, which cannot so much as make a finger ache, or

raise the skin into a moment's pain. But times may yet change with us. The day may yet come, when the servants of Christ among us may be called to forsake *father and mother, and wife and children, and lands, and even to lay down their lives, for the sake of Christ*. This would be no unusual event: the servants of the crucified Jesus have been a company of cross-bearers, if I may so call them, from age to age; and their religion has cost them dear in the estimate of the world, though they are always immense gainers by it in the issue. This persecution, even to death, therefore, you may perhaps meet with, and it is proper you should insert this article into the contract, that you will part with life for Christ's sake. Perhaps your indulgent Master may not insist upon it, and yet perhaps he may: it is therefore necessary you should consent to it. And what do you think of it? Does not this article cause some of you to draw back? Let me add,

4. Your dedication of yourselves must be fixed and habitual. It is not a formality to be performed only at a sacramental occasion, not a warm transient purpose under a sermon, or in a transport of passion; but it must be the steady, uniform, persevering disposition of your soul's to be the Lord's at all times, and in all circumstances, in life, in death, and through all eternity.

These, brethren, are the qualifications of an acceptable surrender of yourselves to God; and are you willing to be his upon these terms? Or will you refuse and perish? Deliberate upon the matter, and come to some conclusion. *Choose ye, this day, whom ye will serve*. May I hope you answer me to this purpose: 'We have weighed the case impartially; we see difficulties before us, if we become the Lord's servants; but notwithstanding these difficulties, we are resolved upon it: his we will be who bought us with his blood?' Is this your determinate resolution, my dear brethren? Then make the transaction as solemn and explicit as you can, and follow me. I say, let all, white and black, old and young, follow me, while I speak for you: 'Lord, here is a poor sinner, thy creature, redeemed by the blood of thy Son, that has long been a slave to other masters, and withheld from thee thy just and dear-bought property; here, Lord, I would now, freely and without reserve, devote and surrender myself, my soul and body, and my all to thee, to be universally and for ever thine. And let the omnipotent God, let angels and men be witness to the engagement.'

Do you, my dear brethren, heartily consent to this formula? Then the contract is ready for sealing; therefore let us rise and crowd round the table of our Lord, and there annex our solemn seals, and acknowledge it as our act and deed. O! happy day! if we should be prepared to use this sacred ordinance for this purpose! Come, ye servants of the Lord, take a refreshment to strengthen you for your Master's work. Come, ye redeemed slaves, commemorate the price of your redemption. Come, see how your Master loved you, and how much he suffered for you: and O! let his love constrain

you to live not to yourselves, but to him that died for you, and rose again; rose again to plead your cause, and prepare a place for you in heaven, the region of immortal life and glory!

But if any of you refuse to comply with the proposal, or, which is much the same, are careless and indifferent about giving yourselves up to God, not forming any express determination one way or other, heaven and earth will bear witness against you, that your refusal is not owing to your not knowing God's claim upon you. I have asserted it this day, in the presence of God and his people; and if you still refuse to acknowledge it, I denounce unto you, that you shall surely perish, shall perish by the hand of divine justice, as wilful rebels against the highest authority, and as insolently and ungratefully *denying the Lord that bought them*. Think on your dreadful doom, and let your hearts meditate terror, till you be delivered from it by a voluntary surrender of yourselves to God, through Jesus Christ, your Redeemer. And now what account could such of you as have refused your compliance, give of the transactions of this day, even to one of your fellow-creatures? Suppose one should ask you upon your return home, 'What were you doing today?' You must answer, 'I was engaged in a treaty with the Proprietor of the universe, and the Redeemer that bought me with his blood, about becoming his servant, and acknowledging his right in me.'—'Well, and what was the issue? Certainly you did not dare to refuse. Certainly you are now the willing servant of God.'—'No, I refused, and so the treaty broke up.'—O thou monster! Could you bear the dreadful narrative? Would not every one that heard it gaze and stare at you with horror, and ask in consternation, 'Were you not afraid? Had you no regard for your own welfare! Alas! what will you do with yourself now? What rock or mountain can you find to hide your devoted head? How will you answer for your refusal in the great and terrible day of the Lord?'