

The Aggravations of Sin

A Sermon by Richard Baxter

Honourable, Worshipful, and all well beloved, it is a weighty employment that occasioneth your meeting here today. The estates and lives of men are in your hands. But it is another kind of Judgement which you are all hasting towards: when Judges and Justices, the Accusers and Accused must all appear upon equal terms, for the final decision of a far greater Cause. The case that is then & there to be determined, is not whether you shall have Lands or no Lands, Life or no Life; (in our natural sense;) but whether you shall have Heaven or Hell, Salvation or Damnation, an endless life of Glory with God, and the Redeemer, and the Angles of Heaven, or an endless life of Torment with devils and ungodly men. As sure as you now sit on those seats, you shall shortly all appear before the Judge of all the world, and there receive an irreversible sentence to an unchangeable state of Happiness or Misery. This is the great business that should presently call up your most serious thoughts, and set all the powers of your souls on work for the most effectual preparation: that if you are men, you may quit your selves like men, for the preventing of that dreadful doom which unprepared souls must there expect. The greatest of your secular affairs are but dreams and toys to this: Were you at every Assize to determine causes of no lower value then the Crowns and Kingdoms of the Monarchs of the earth, it were but as children's games to this. If any man of you believe not this, he is worse than the Devil that tempteth him to unbelief: and let him know that unbelief is no prevention, nor will put off the day, or hinder his appearance; but ascertain his condemnation at that appearance. And if you all *do* believe this you will sure be content that I speak to you of it as one that also do believe it. Faith is the evidence of things not seen: by it we may foresee the Judgement set, the world appearing, and your selves there waiting for your final doom. And because we clearly find beforehand, who then shall die and who shall live, I shall desire of you that you would presently improve the discovery. Some think we cannot know in this life what will become of us in the next: But God hath not bid us try in vain, nor in vain delivered us so many signs, by which it may be known, nor is the difference between the saved and the damned so small as to be undiscerned. Our own reason may tell us that the righteous God would not send some to Glory with Angels, and others to endless misery with Devils, and make such a difference

between men hereafter, if there were not a considerable difference here. He that knows the Law and the fact, may know before your Assizes what will become of every prisoner, if the proceedings be all just; as in our case they will certainly be. Christ will Judge according to his Laws: Know therefore whom the Law condemneth or justifieth, and you may know whom Christ will condemn or justify. And seeing all this is so, doth it not concern us all to make a speedy trial of ourselves in preparation to this final trial? I shall for your own sakes therefore take the boldness, as the Officer of Christ, to summon you to appear before your selves, and keep an Assize this day in your own souls, and answer at the Barr of Conscience to what shall be charged upon you. Fear not the trial; for it is not conclusive, final, nor a peremptory irreversible sentence that must now pass: Yet slight it not; for it is a necessary preparative to that which is final and irreversible. Consequentially it may prove a justifying Accusation, an Absolving Condemnation, and if you proceed to Execution, a saving quickening death, which I am now persuading you to undergo. The whole world is divided into two sorts of men: One that Love God above all and live to him, and the other that Love the flesh and world above all and live to them: One that lay up a treasure in earth, and have their heart there: The other that lay up a treasure in heaven, and have their heart there: One that seek first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness; another that seek first the things of this life. One that mind and savour the things of the flesh and of man: the other that mind and savour most the things of the Spirit and of God. One that account all things dung and dross that they may win Christ: another that make light of Christ in comparisons of their business, and riches, and pleasures in the world. One that lives by sight and sense upon present things: Another that lives by faith upon things invisible. One that has their conversation in Heaven, and live as strangers upon earth: Another that mind earthly things, and are strangers to heaven. One that have in resolution forsaken as for Christ and the hopes of a treasure in heaven: Another that resolve to keep somewhat here, though they venture and forsake the heavenly reward; and will go away sorrowful that they cannot have both. One that being born of the flesh is but flesh: The other that being born of the Spirit is Spirit. One that live as without God in the world: The other that live as without the seducing world in God, and in and by the subservient world to God. One that have Ordinances and Means of Grace as if they had none: The other that have houses, lands, wives, as if they had none. One that believe as if they believed not, and love God as if they loved him not, and pray as if they prayed not, as if the fruit of these were but a shadow: The other that weep as if they wept not (for worldly

things) and rejoice as if they rejoiced not. One that has Christ as not possessing him, and use him and his name, as but abusing them: The other that buy as if they possessed not, and use the world as not abusing it. One that draw near to God with their lips, when their hearts are far from him: The other that corporally converse with the world, when their hearts are far from it. One that serve God who is a Spirit with Carnal service, and not in Spirit and Truth: The other that use the world itself spiritually, and not in a carnal worldly manner: In a word: One sort are children of this world; and the other are the children of the world to come, and heirs of the heavenly Kingdom. One sort have their Portion in this life: And the other have God for their Portion. One sort have their Good things in this life time, and their Reward here: The other have their Evil things in this life, and live in Hope of the Everlasting Reward.

I suppose you know that all this is from the word of God, and therefore I need not cite the Texts which do contain it! But lest any doubt, I will lay them all together, that you may peruse them at leisure, *Matth.* 22. 37. & 10. 37. & 6. 19, 20, 21. & 6. 33. *John* 6. 27. *Isa.* 55. 1, 2, 3. *Rom.* 8. 5, 6, 7, 13. *Phil.* 3. 9, 10, 11. *Mat.* 22. 5. *2 Cor.* 4. 18. *Heb.* 11. 1. throughout. *Phil.* 3. 19, 20, 21. *Psalms* 119 19. *Heb.* 11. 13. *Luke* 14. 33. & 18. 22. *John* 3. 6. *Ephes.* 2. 12. 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *Psalms* 16. 8. *Ezek.* 33. 31, 32. 1 *Cor.* 7. 29, 30, 31. *John* 2. 23, 24. *Psalms* 78. 35, 36, 37. *John* 15. 2. & 1. 9, 10, 11. *Mat.* 15. 8. *Psalms* 73. 23, 24, 25. 1 *Thes.* 5. 17, 18. *Phil.* 3. 21 *Matth.* 15. 9. *John* 4. 22, 23. 1 *Gor.* 10. 31. *Luke* 10. 8. & 20. 34. *Rom.* 8. 16, 17. *Psalms* 17. 14. & 16. 5. & 73. 26. *Luke* 16. 25. *Mat.* 6. 5. & 5. 12. *Luke* 18. 22. In these Texts is plainly contained all that I have here said to you.

Well then, Beloved Hearers, seeing you that sit here present are all of one of these two sorts, let conscience speak, which is it that you are of? These are the two sorts that shall stand on the right and left hand of Christ in Judgement: They that gave Christ his own with advantage, and lived to him, and studiously devoted their Riches and other Talents to his use, as men that unfeignedly made God their End, these are they that are set on the right hand, and adjudged as Blessed to the Kingdom which they so esteemed. And those that hid their talents, by keeping or expending them to their private use, denying them to Christ, and living to themselves, these are they that are set on the left hand, and adjudged to the everlasting fire, with the Devils whom they served. It is a desperate mistake of self-deceiving men, to think that a state of Holiness consisteth only in external worship, or that a state of wickedness consisteth only in some gross sins. I tell you from the word of God, the

difference is greater, and lyeth deeper then so. If you would know whether you are Christians indeed and shall be saved, the first and great question is, What is your End? What take you for your portion? And what is it that hath the prevalent stream of your desires and endeavours? As it is not every step that we set out of the way to heaven, that will prove us ungodly, so is it not any Religiousness whatsoever that standeth in a subservience to the world, that will prove you godly. Would you know then what you are? And whether you are in the way to Heaven or Hell? And what God will judge of you, if you so continue? Why then deal faithfully with your selves, and answer this question without deceit! What is it that hath your Hearts? your very Hearts? What is it that is the matter of your dearest Love? And what the matter of your chiefest care? What is it that is the very bent and scope of your life? Is it for this world or the world to come? What do you daily labour and live for? Is it for God? or your carnal selves? What interest is it that is predominant in you? Know but that and know all.

And now I shall apply myself to those of you that are guilty in whose souls the worldly Interest is predominant, and in whom the world is not crucified by the Cross of Christ, but rather Christ again Crucified by the world. I have no mind to dishonour you or exasperate you: but if faithfulness to Christ and you will do both, there's no remedy. I do here prefer an Indictment against you in the Court of your Consciences, and before this Congregation: the Articles I shall distinctly read: And first, I require you, study not a defence: excuse not, extenuate not your crimes: but confess your sin freely, and condemn your selves impartially, and return to God, and forsake them speedily, or you shall do worse: Self-condemnation may be saving and preventive, and the Death of sin thereupon, may be the life of your souls: But if this be neglected, and you hold on a while till the great Assize, you shall have another kind of charge then this, even such an one as shall appals that face that now can merrily smile at the accusation; and such an one as shall bring down the stoutest of your spirits, and make the hardest heart to feel, and the stubbornness of you all to stoop and tremble. O how easy is it to hear your sin and danger from such a worm as I? or to hear your state discovered, and your selves condemned by a Minister of Christ in a Pulpit? But how dreadful will it be to hear all this from the Lord of Glory? And that when the case is past remedy, which now might have been remedied if you would, and if your obstinate hearts had not resisted.

The General charge that I put in against you, is, That you are Carnal flesh-pleasers, and have loved and lived to the world which you should have Crucified, and have not lived as Devoted unto God, nor hath he been your End, or his Interest predominant in your hearts and lives.

I speak only to the guilty: and for Evidence of the fact, I need none but your Consciences, seeing it is only to your Consciences that I accuse you, which are acquainted, or should be, with the whole. But lest Conscience itself should be bribed and corrupted, I shall, besides all that is before said, produce a little Evidence more.

1. If indeed the world be crucified to you, what meaneth your eager pursuit after it? Are not your thoughts contriving for it, and your wit and interest all improved for it? Are not those taken for your chief friends, that further your advancement or worldly Ends? And those for your chief enemies that hinder it most? Is it not in your mind in the night when you awake, and in the day when you are alone? Do you not rise earlier for your worldly business, then for prayer or any holy exercise? Ask your family whether you do not often call them up to work then to pray? And whether you drive them not on harder to your own service then to Gods? and whether you examine them not strictly about your business, then about the matters that their salvation doth depend upon? And whether you be not more deeply offended with them for crossing your commodity, then for sinning against God? Ask your neighbours whether you talk not with them many hours of worldly vanities, for one hours serious discourse about the life to come? What a stir do poor men make to be rich, or to live in some content to the flesh, and what a stir do rich men make to be richer, or to keep that they have; and yet have they the face to pretend that they are crucified to the world?

2. If you are dead to the world, how comes it to pass that it hath so powerful an influence upon your judgements? And that you change your minds as your carnal Interest doth change? And can set your sails to any wind that is like to drive you to the harbour (as you call it, but indeed upon the sands) of your worldly ends. What would you not give in troublesome times to know certainly which will be the prevalent side? That you might resolve what side to take your selves; and perhaps what Religion to be of, or to seem so to be? Among all the Books that are written, if there were but one that taught the art of growing rich, or a Directory for obtaining dignities and honours in the world, how eagerly would you buy it, and how diligently would you read it? More diligently then you read the Bible or any Book of that nature. If preachers did teach you the way of prosperity and

advancement, and could tell you how to be all great and honourable in this world, O how early would you come to the Congregation? How attentively would you hear? How retentively would you remember? And how faithfully would you practise? Then how beautiful would▪ the feet be of them that bring you the tidings of such good things? What honourable persons should Ministers be? and how well worthy of your Tithes and more? Then you would not swell against their Doctrine or Application? nor cavil at them instead of understanding them, nor scorn them as men of a useless office, nor take them for your enemies, nor refuse to come to them and ask their advice. Wretched Hypocrites! It is our office to help them to the Everlasting Kingdom; and the more diligent we are in this, the more they hate us: if we send for them to Instruct them personally, or catechize them, or help them in the matters of salvation, they scorn to come, and ask us, By what Authority we send for them? But if we could teach them all to be Princes, or Lords, or Gentlemen, yea or but to get a few shillings more then they have, none would draw back? None of them would ask us, By what Authority do you send for us? Had we but money enough to feed them all, O what good men we should be! And how many friends should we have? And how easily might we persuade them! If one man had all the money in the Land, and could secure it, and the disposal of it from violence, what might not that man do? And who is it that would not be on his side, except those few that have crucified the world? The multitude would even follow the man that hath money, as an horse will follow him that hath his provender: and yet they will hypocritically pretend to be Crucified to the world. But if indeed they are so, how comes it to pass that Conscience is so often stretched and wracked to make it own a gainful cause! And that many that have seemed godly can break over all bounds, of Law and Charity, Friendship and Religion, to attain the dignities or riches which they so desire? And will tread down the nearest friend, and Christ himself as much as in them lyeth, if he stand in the way of their affected exaltation. Yea soul and all shall be ventured in this game: Rise they must, and rise they will, if they can procure it. Whatever become of Heaven they must have Earth. Seeing it is their God, their End, *perfas aut nefas* it must be had. As the Common-wealths man saith, *Salus populi supre/ma Lex esto*; and the Christian saith, *The pleasing of God is the supreme Law*: so the worldlings maxim is, that the *Interest of the flesh is the supreme Law*. And are these men Crucified to the world?

3. If the world were a Crucified thing in your eyes, you would not so much overvalue the Rich, and vilify or neglect the Poor as you do. A humble Godly man that walks the streets in a thread bare coat, may pass by you without the least respect: but if a shining gallant were in the place, how observantly do you behave your selves? If a poor man, though never so wise or pious, have any business with you, how cold is his entertainment? How strange is your deportment towards him? And how slightly do you shake him off? But if they be rich and honourable in the world, you are their servants, and no respect is too much for them, nor no entertainment too good. Wisdom and Piety clothed in rags may pass by you unobserved: when a silken sot is bowed to like an Idol. As reverently as you now speak of *Peter*, and *Paul*, and Christ himself, now you hear them magnified, and see not their outward appearances as they did that conversed with them on earth; I make no doubt but if you had lived in those days, and seen them of so low a presence, and walk up and down in so mean a garb, attended or regarded by few but the poor, you would have set as light by them as others, and looked at them as poor contemptible fellows; if not as the filth and the off-scouring of all things; and if you had not laid hands on them as too saucy reproves of you, at least you would have given them one of *Iulian's* jeers, or *Hobbs* his scorn. It was this worldly Spirit that caused the Jews to be such obstinate unbelievers, and to persecute Christ and his servants: Men reverence not the face of the poor. And this is it that continueth them in their unbelief to this very day. We have many of their own writings and disputations against Christ published by themselves; and we find this the very sum of all their reasoning, [*Shew us a Messiah that fetcheth us from captivity, that gathereth the whole Nation of the Jews to Judaea, and restoreth them to their ancient possessions and dignities, with much more, and makes the Nations stoop to them and serve them, and sets up again the Temple and the Law, and we will believe in him as the true Messiah; but in no other will we believe:*] For though they cannot deny but the prophesied time of the Messiahs coming is past, yet taking it for granted that this only is his true description, they say they must look more at the description then the time: and to salve the Prophecies, they do believe that the Messiah did come about Christ's incarnation, but is somewhere with *Henoch* and *Elias*, and will appear when the Jews do mend their lives and are worthy of him. Thus a worldly carnal mind that blindly admireth worldly things, and favoureth not the things of the Spirit, nor discerneth the excellency of the Heavenly riches, doth make them to be open Infidels, and make the Turks adore their Mahomet, and makes the nominal bastard Christian to set so

light by the true Riches of the Gospel, and only to honour the name of Christ: for they cannot receive the things of God, because they are Spiritually discerned, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. Were not you worldlings, you would discern more matter for your admiration, reverence and love in the poorest heavenly minded man, then in the greatest Prince on earth that is ungodly. But you have the Faith of Jesus Christ the Lord of Glory with respect of persons. For if there come into your Assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; you have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say to him, sit thou here in a good place: and say to the poor, stand thou there; despising the poor, and committing sin by respect of persons, as if you believed not that God had chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him, *Jam.* 2. 1. to the 10.

Obj. But must we not honour the gifts of God? Riches are his gifts.

Ans. Yes, according to their nature and use: Riches are a gift which he giveth even to his enemies and to those that must perish for ever; and few that have them come to heaven. But Holiness is a gift which he giveth to none but his beloved, and is the beginning of eternal life. Which then should be most honoured?

Obj. But would you draw men to despise Dignities and Authority?

Ans. Authority is one thing, and worldly Riches is another. We reverence Authority more then you do. We look on it as a beam from God, as participating of somewhat that is Divine; I look on a Magistrate as Gods officer, and one that deriveth his Authority from him; and I no more acknowledge any Power which is not efficiently from God as the supreme Rector of the universe, then I acknowledge any natural Being which is not efficiently from God as the author of nature and the first Being. I look at a Magistrate as ultimately for God, as a man authorized to do his work, and none but what is ultimately his. So that as his office is so humane as to be also participative Divine, and he is so an humane creature, as to be by participation Divine, so the Reverence and Obedience which I owe to a Magistrate, is by participation Divine: And therefore though I judge not peremptorily that those Ancients were in the right that made the fifth Commandment to be the last of the first Table, yet I doubt not but our Moderns are less likely to be in the right, that confine it only to the second Table. And as I think it standeth so between the two as in several respects to belong to each, so I rather think that it more principally belongeth to the first. You see then the

difference between a true Christians honouring of Magistrates and yours: You honour them but for your worldly Ends; and because they are able to do you good or hurt. But we honour them as Gods officers, speaking and acting for him and from him by his Commission, and we obey their Power, as participatively Divine: but as they can do *us* good or hurt we less regard them: And this honour and obedience we owe them, not for their wealth, but their Authority: and if the meanest man have this Authority, he shall be honoured and obeyed by us, as well as the richest.

4. If the world be Crucified to you, How comes it to pass that you are so tenderly *sensible* of every loss or dishonour that doth befall you? If you are wronged in your estate, what a matter do you make of it? If a man should deprive you but of a few pounds, you can hardly put it up; but you must go to Law for it, or you must seek revenge? Or if you pass it by, you think you have done some great meritorious act. If one slander you, or dishonour you, how sensible are you of it? How it sticks upon your stomachs, as if you had lost your treasure? Death is not sensible. If you were Dead to the world, and the world to you, these things would all seem smaller in your eyes; and you would have more ado to remember them then now you have to forget them. You could not be so sensible of a loss or an injury, if you were not too much alive to the world. And if you be Poor, what an impatient complaining life do you live? as if you wanted your treasure or your God? And if you grow rich or gain, how glad are you? Were you Dead to the world, and the world to you, you would be more indifferent to these matters, and Poverty and Riches would not seem so much to differ as now they do: but Godliness with contentment, which is Profitable to all things, would seem to you the Great Gain, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. & 6. 6.

Obj. But may not a man go to Law to recover his own, or to right his own Reputation, if he be slandered?

Ans. Distinguish carefully in all your wrongs between Gods Interest in them and your own. Your own you must forgive, but Gods you cannot. If he have intrusted you with talents for his service, and any would fraudulently or violently deprive you of them, you must look after them as your Masters stock: If a wound in your name or state disable you from doing God service, you must use all lawful means to heal it, that you may be in a capacity of serving him again: And if your children or others have remotely a right in what you are defrauded of, you may look after their right. And you must not remit the crime, as oft as you remit the

injury: For that God hath imposed penalty upon, and the Rule is good, that the Punishment of the notoriously vicious is a Due to the Common-wealth, because of the Necessity of it to its good. In a word therefore, if you could do these things, you might your selves resolve when it is lawful to go to Law, or seek your Right, and when not. 1. If you can well distinguish between Gods Interest and your own. 2. And be sure you forgive all your own injuries. 3. And that you watch your hearts narrowly lest they pretend Gods cause, and intend your own. 4. And be able by the consideration of circumstances to discern in probability, whether Gods Interest will be more promoted by going to Law, or passing it by.

But alas, how rare a course is this! Of all the suits that are before you at this Assize, I fear there are few that are commenced unfeigned for the Interest of God! If the Lord himself should ask both Plaintiff and Defendant, Do you follow this suit for *Me*, or for *your selves*? What answer think you they must make, if they speak the truth? But of this anon.

Having thus given in my General charge against the carnal worldling, and *some* Evidence of his guilt; I shall now give you the Quality and Aggravations of your crime, in several Articles, as followeth.

1. You are Guilty of Idolatry, which is high Treason against the God of Heaven. That, which hath your highest estimation, and dearest affection, and chiefest service, is your God. But this the world hath; therefore it is your God. That which hath the most of your Hearts is your God. But it is the world that hath the most of your hearts. You know that the main drift of your life is for the world: And that, which hath the main bent of your life, hath your heart. If Reason be no Evidence, you cannot refuse Scripture, *Col. 3. 5. [Mortify therefore your Members upon earth;]* and one is *[Covetousness, which is Idolatry,] Eph. 5. 5. [For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an Idolater, hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.]* The case is plain in Scripture, and in the effects. The world hath that Love that God should have, that Care, and Trust, and Service which belongs to God; and therefore it is your God. I do therefore here on the behalf of God, invite every worldly carnal sinner of you at the Bar of your own conscience, as a Traitor against the Lord that made you, and against the Son of God that did redeem you! And what greater sin can man be guilty of (besides the Blaspheming of the Holy Ghost.) He that would have another God, would have the Lord to be un-Godded, and to lose his Sovereign Power and Goodness! And is such a man fit to live in his sight? Why wretched

Traitor! If he be not thy God, thou canst not expect to live by him, or be sustained, preserved, and provided for by him: Thou canst not live an hour without him! and yet wilt thou cast him off? Wouldst thou pluck up thy own foundation? And cut off the bough on which thou standest? Wouldst thou fire the house thou dwellest in? And sink the Ship that keepeth thy self and all that thou hast from sinking! Relations are mutual! If he shall be no God to thee, be it known to thee thou shalt be none of his People! If he shall be no Father to thee, thou shalt be none of his child. And, wretched soul, what wilt thou do without him! It is he that keeps thy soul in thy body while thou art serving his enemy. Thou wouldst be in Hell within this hour if his Mercy did not keep thee out. And is this thy requital of him? He hath but one Trinity of enemies, the flesh, the world, and the Devil; and wilt thou turn to these, and forsake him by whom thou livest? Why I tell thee, the Lord must be thy God, or thou must have no God indeed. The world is like the Heathens Idols; that hath eyes but cannot see thy wants; ears, but cannot hear thy cries hands, but cannot help thee in thy distress. All thy Riches, Dignities, and Pleasures, are silly things to make a God of. They may have the room of God in thy heart; and in that sense be thy God: but indeed they are no more God, then a mawkin is a man; nor no more able to help and save thee. Wouldst thou then have a God or no God? If thou wouldst have no God, thou wouldst have no Helper, no Governor, no Preserver nor no Happiness. And dost thou think that thou art sufficient for thy self? What! Canst thou live a day without God? Canst thou save thy self from danger without him? Canst thou relieve or shift for thy self at death without him? Darest thou tell him so to his face? And stand to it? But if thou must have a God, what God wouldst thou have? Wouldst not thou have a God that can preserve, and help, and save thee? The world cannot do it, man! I shall tell thee more of this anon, that the world cannot do it. If thou trust to it, it will deceive thee. But if thou say then, *the Lord shall be thy God*] Away then with all thy Idols. God will have no partner, much less a superior, that is exalted above himself in thy soul. As *Joshua* said to the Israelites, *Josh. 24. 14.* so say I to you, [*Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the world (which hath been your God) and serve ye the Lord: And if it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve: but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.*] And if you say as they, [*God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other Gods.*] I answer you, as he, *Away then with the world and all other Idols; or else, [Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is an holy and a jealous God, and will not forgive such transgressions*

and sins; but if ye forsake the Lord and serve the world, he will turn against you and consume you,] Vers. 19, 20. God will not stoop to be an underling in your hearts. He should have all, and will at *last* have *all* or none: But in the meantime, he will have the *Best* or none. I do witness here to every soul of you in his name, that if he have not the Sovereignty, and be not nearer and dearer to your hearts, then all the honours, and riches, and pleasures of the world, he is not, he will not be, he cannot be your God. And if he be not thy God, thou wilt be Godless, as thou art ungodly; thou wilt be without his help, as he was without thy heart.

Well, this is the first Article of my charge against every one of you that hath not Crucified the world, you are Idolaters and Traitors against the God of Heaven: And he that would have no God, deserves to be no man, and worse; and shall either by Repentance wish with groans that he had never been a worldling and a neglecter of God, or else in Hell with groans shall wish that he had never been a man. As the first Commandment is the fundamental Law, and informeth all the obligations of the particular precepts following; so Idolatry which is against that Commandment is the fundamental crime, and is the life of all the rest. He that would overthrow the God-head, would overthrow all the world.

2. The next Article of my charge is this. You are guilty of most perfidious Covenant-breaking with God. Did you not in your Baptism, solemnly by your parents, renounce the world, the flesh and the Devil, and promise to fight against them to the end of your life under the Banner of Christ? And have you performed that vow? No: you have turned treacherously to the enemy that you renounced, and fought for the world and the flesh, against the Word and the Spirit of Christ. And if you renounce your Baptismal Covenant, you renounce in effect the benefits of that Covenant. And if God deal with you as with Perfidious Covenant-breakers, thank your selves.

3. Moreover you are guilty of debasing your human nature, and so of wronging God that made it, and is the owner of it. God made you not as brutes that are capable of no higher things than to eat, and drink, and play, and die, and there's an end of them: But he made you capable of an Everlasting life of Glory with himself. And as he suiteth all his works to their uses and ends, so did he suit the nature of man to his immortal state. As we were made by God, we were sited and disposed to everlasting things. And you have turned your hearts to the vanities of this world; and set your mind on them as your happiness, as if you

had no greater things to mind. Objects do either ennoble or debase the faculties according as they are. That is the vilest creature which is made for the vilest uses and ends, or employs himself in such. And that is the most excellent creature which is exercised about the most excellent Objects. God made you for no less then his everlasting praises, before his face, among his Angels; and you have so far debased your own nature, as to root like swine in earth and dung, and to live like bruits, that have not an immortal state to mind. How will you answer this dishonour done to the workmanship of God? That you should blot out his image, and employ your souls against his Laws, and live as moles and worms in the earth. He put you on earth but as travellers towards Heaven: and you have taken up your home in the way, and forgotten your End and Resting place.

4. The next part of your Guilt is that you have perverted the use of all the creatures, and turned the Works and Mercies of God against himself. He gave them all to you, to lead you to himself, and to furnish you for his service. He made this world to be a Glass in which you might see the Maker, and a Book in which you might read his Name and will. And will you overlook him, and forget the end and use of all? What shame and pity is it that men should live in the world, and not know the use of it! That they should see such a beauteous frame and not understand its principal signification! That they should daily converse with so many creatures, which all proclaim the name of God, and with one accord declare his praise, and yet that this language should be so little understood? Like an illiterate man in a Library, that seeth many thousand Books, and knows not a word that is in any of them. Or like an ignorant man in an Apothecaries shop, that seeth the drugs, but knoweth not what they are good for, nor how to use any of them, if he had the greatest need. The poorest cottage and smallest pittance of these earthly things might be a greater Blessing to you, if you could understand their use and meaning, then all the world would be to him that understands it not. Your possessions in themselves, if you have not God in them, are but the very corpse or carcase of a blessing! The Life of them is wanting! And without the Life, they will but trouble you: For you have the burden without the use. Your horse will carry you, while he hath life and health; but take away his life once, and you must carry him if you will have him any further. Verily it is no wiser a trick to make a stir in the world, and seek the profits and pleasures of it, without God, or any otherwise then as they are animated by God, then it is to ride a dead horse, where you may spur long enough before you are one mile further on

your way. While your friend is living you may delightfully converse with him: but when he is dead you will have little pleasure in his company: the corpse of the most learned man will actively teach you no more than a block. Were it the wife of your bosom who through prudence and beauty were never so lovely to you, when her carcase is left without a soul you will hasten to bury it out of your sight, and would be loath so much as to keep it in your house, much less in your bed and bosom as heretofore. He that knoweth not that God is the Life and Soul of all our Blessings, doth neither know what God is, nor what a Blessing is. They are but the empty casks and shells, and not the Blessings themselves without him. You have the Burden, and not the Benefit: You must carry them, but they can do nothing to the supporting of you. It's the absence of God that denominateth them *Vanity* and *Vexation*: and it is he only that can make them strengthening and consolatory. That must have some life in it that must be *pabulum vitae*, and must sustain our lives. Souls cannot feed upon mere terrene corporeal things, any more than the body upon mere spirituals. As we have both a soul and a body to be sustained, so have we a sustenance suitable to them both; even the creature animated by God, or God in and by the creature.

How great then is your sin, that destroy your blessings by depriving them of their Life? And that in a sort destroy the world to your selves, by separating it from its soul? And so most ominously injure God, and rob your selves of the comfort of all, and turn your blessings into burdens, and your helps into hindrances and snares to your souls. Have you lived so long in the School of the world, yea and of the Church too, where you have not only the Library of Nature, but supernatural Revelations to teach you to understand it, and yet do you not know a word or letter? You do but lose and abuse the creatures of God, if you see him not in them; and if you be not in the use of them led up to himself. *The heavens declare the Glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work: Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge: there is no speech or language where their voice is not heard; their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world, Psal. 19. 1, 2, 3.* and yet poor carnal wretches will not understand them. *All the works of God do praise him; for he is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works, Psal. 145. 10, 17.* And yet the wicked will not understand. O how many talents must the ungodly be accountable for, as having neglected them, and perverted them from the prescribed use! Every creature that you see is a Teacher of Divine things to you; and you shall answer for

your not learning by them Every creature is an Herald sent from heaven to proclaim the will of your Maker, and your Duty: and you gaze upon the Messenger, and note his garb, and hear his voice, and never understand or regard his Message. I would you did but consider what you lose by this your folly! And what life and sweetness there is in creatures, which the heavenly believer draweth forth, and you have no taste of? And till the Spirit of Sanctification has fitted you to such a work, you are never like effectually to taste it. For it is not every flee that can suck honey from the sweetest flower, though the Bee can do it from that which we call a stinking weed. An ignorant Countryman hath a Meadow that aboundeth with variety of herbs; he can make no other use of them then to feed his cattle with them: Or if he walk into his garden, he can only smell the sweetness of a flower: but a skilful Physician that knows their use, can thence fetch a medicine that may be a means to save his life. But the Believing soul can yet go further, and there find that which may further his salvation. If you have a Lease of your Lands, or a pardon for your life, that's written in an excellent character: There's a great deal of difference between another man's delight in viewing the character, and yours in considering of the security you have by it for estate or life. But the difference is much greater in our present case, between those that have only the superficial sweetness and beauty of the creature, to the pleasing of the flesh, and those that have God in it, to the spiritual refreshing of their souls. Believe it Sirs, it is not a small sin to pervert the whole creature (that's within our reach) to a use so contrary to that which it was appointed to, as foolish worldlings do: not only to lose that use and benefit of the creatures which we might have, but to turn all into poison and death to ourselves! Not only to rob God of that Love, and Honour, and Service which they should procure him but also to turn all this upon themselves. I tell you this will prove no venial sin.

5. And your Guilt herein is further aggravated, in that you do hereby as much as in you lyeth frustrate the works of Creation and Redemption. For *God made all things for himself*, and you use nothing for him. The Redeemer hath reprieved and restored the creature, for its primitive use, that God might yet have the Glory of his works: and yet you will not give it him; but when you pretend to know God, you glorify him not as God, but become vain in your imagination, your foolish hearts being darkened, as *Paul* tells them, *Rom. 1. 21*. And what doth that man deserve that would, as to the use, destroy all the world, and frustrate all Gods works both of Creation and Redemption?

6. Herein also you are guilty of *Enmity* against God. For this is the greatest wrong that an enemy can do him, to rob him of the glory of his Goodness and Power, and to presser his creatures, as if they were more amiable then himself. You cannot dethrone him from his glory; but you may possibly deny him the pre-eminence in your hearts. You may deny him the Kingdom within you; but you cannot dispossess him of his Eternal Power or Kingdom without you. The worst enemy that God hath can do him no harm; but this is no thanks to you: he will not be beholden to you for it. You may as truly shew your Enmity by *wronging*, as by *hurting*. And what greater injury can you offer to the Almighty, then to set up the silly creature in his stead, and give it that Love and Service which is his due?

7. Moreover you are guilty of wilful self-murder: you choke yourselves with that which should be your food: you turn your daily blessings to your bane; by dropping your Poison into the cup of Mercies, which bountiful providence putteth into your hands. There is not a surer way in the world to undo you, then by Turning to the creature, and forsaking God. You cry for more of the world, and you are unsatisfied till you have it; and when you have it, you do but destroy your souls with it, by giving it your hearts, which must be given only unto God. What a stir do men make for temptation and destruction? What cost and pains are men at to purchase them an Idol, and to make provision for the flesh to satisfy its desires, when they confess it to be the greatest enemy of their souls? Like a man that would give all that he hath for a coal of fire to put into the thatch; even such is your desires after the world, and the use you make of it.

8. What abundance of precious time and labour do you lose, which might and should be better spent? Doth not this world take up the most of your care, and strength, and time? You are about it early and late! It is first and last, and almost always in your thoughts. It findeth you so much to do, that you have scarce any time so much as to mind the God that made you, or to seek to escape the everlasting misery, which is near at hand. It hath taken up so much of your hearts, that when God should have them in any holy duty, or service for his Church, you are heartless. When you shall see your accounts cast up to your hands (as shortly you shall see it, though you will not now be persuaded to do it your selves) and when you shall there see, how many thoughts the world had in comparison of God; and how many hours were laid out upon the world, when Gods service was cast by for want of time; and how near the creature was to your heart, while God as a stranger stood at the door:

And, in a word, how the world was your daily business, while the matters of God stepped in but now and then upon the by; you will then confess that you laboured in vain, and that your life and labour should have been better employed. Hath God given you but a short uncertain life, and laid your everlasting life upon it; and will you cast all away upon these transitory delights? How short a time has you for so great a work; and shall the world have all? Oh that you did but know to how much greater advantage you might have spent this time and labour in seeking God and an endless Glory! One thing is needful: make sure of that: and waste not the rest of your days in vanity! What wise man would spend so precious a thing as Time is, upon that which he knows will leave him in Repenting that ever it was so spent? The world doth rob poor sinners of their time: but when they see it is gone, and they would fain have a little of that time again to make preparation for their everlasting state, it is not all the world then that can bring them back one hour of it again. Certainly such a loss of time and labour is no small aggravation of a worldling's sin.

9. You are also guilty of the high contempt of the Kingdom of Glory, while you prefer these transitory things before it. Your hearts and lives speak that which you are ashamed to speak with your tongues. You are ashamed to say that Earth is better for you than Heaven, or that your sin is better for you than the favour of God: but your lives speak it out. If you think not your present condition better for you than heaven, why do you choose and prefer it? and why do you more carefully and laboriously seek the things of earth, than the Heavenly Glory? If your child would sell his inheritance for a cup of Ale, you would think he set light by it: And if he would part with father and mother for the company of a beggar or a thief, you would say he had no great love to you. And if you will venture your part in heaven for the pleasures of sin, and will part with God for the matters of this world, would you have him think that you set much by his Kingdom or his love? O the unreasonableness of sin! The madness of worldly fleshly men! Is it indeed more desirable to prosper in their shops, their fields, and their pleasures for a few days or years, then everlastingly to live in the presence of the Lord? Shall Christ purchase a Kingdom at the price of his blood, and offer it us freely, and shall we prefer the life of a brute before it? Shall God offer to advance so mean a creature to an heavenly station among his Angels; and shall we choose rather to wallow in the dung of our Transgressions? Take heed, lest as you are guilty of *Esau's* folly, you also meet with *Esau's* misery! And the time should come, that you shall find no place for

Repentance, that is, for Recovery by Repentance, though you seek it with tears. Contempt of kindness is a provoking thing: For it is the height of ingratitude and especially when it is the greatest kindness that is contemned. As it will be the everlasting employment of the Saints, to enjoy that felicity, and to admire and praise that infinite Love which caused them to enjoy it: So will it be the everlasting misery of the damned, to be deprived of that felicity, and to think of their sully in the unthankful contempt of it; and of the excellency of that Kingdom which thus they did contemn. God sets before you Earth and Heaven: If you choose earth, expect no more: And hereafter, Remember, that you had your choice.

10. To make short of the rest of the aggravation of your sin, and sum it up in a word; Your Love of the world is the sum of all iniquity. It virtually or actually containeth in it the breach of every command in the Decalogue. The first Commandment which is the foundation of the Law, and especially of the first Table, is broken by it, while you make it your Idol, and give it the Esteem, and Love, and Service that is due to God. The second, third and fourth Commandments it disposeth you to break. While your hearts and ends are carnal and worldly, the manner of your service will be so, and you will suit your Religion to the will of men, and your carnal Interest, and not to the will and word of God. The name and holy nature of God, is habitually contemned by you, while you more set by your worldly matters than by him: His holy days you ordinarily violate, and his Ordinances you do hypocritically abuse, while your hearts are upon your covetousness or sensual delights; and are far from him while you draw near him with your lips. Worldlings will make you even break the bonds of natural obligations, and be unthankful to your own Parents, disobedient to your superiors, unfaithful to your equals, and unmerciful to your inferiors. There is no trusting a worldling, he will sell his friend for money. He careth not to wrong you in your life, your chastity, estate and name, for his lustful, ambitious, and covetous desires. For he directly breaketh the tenth Commandment, which is the sum of the second Table, requiring us to regard the welfare of our neighbour, and not to maintain a private selfish interest against it. So true is that of *Paul*, 1 Tim. 6. 10. *The love of money is the root of all evil*. As adhering to God, is the sum of all Duty, and Spiritual Goodness; so adhering to the creature, instead of God, is the sum of all wickedness and disobedience.

And seeing all this is so, I require you here in the name of God, to cast out this wickedness, and cherish it no longer: Bring forth that Traitor that hath dethroned God in your hearts and

exalted itself, and let it die the death. It subverteth Common-wealth's, and all societies; it causeth perjury, perfidiousness and sedition; it raiseth wars, and sets the world together by the ears: it overturneth all right order, and strikes at the heart of Morality itself, and would make every man a Wolf or Tiger to his brother: It is a murderer of your own souls and the cause of cruelty both to the souls and bodies of others: It is a liar that promiseth what it cannot perform: It is a cheater that would deceive you of your everlasting happiness; and tice you into Hell, by pretences of furthering your profit and contents: It causeth parents to neglect the souls of their children, and children to wish the death of their parents, or be weary of them, or disregard them: and causeth Law-suits and contentions between brother and brother, and neighbour and neighbour; and fills the heart with rancour and malice; and turneth families and Kingdoms into confusion: it maketh people hate their Teachers; and too many Ministers to neglect their flocks: It adulterously seeketh to vitiate the spouse of Christ, and take up the heart which was reserved for himself: It robbeth him of his honour, of our affections and obedience; and Sacrilegiously defaceth the Temple of the Holy Ghost: It will not allow God one free thought, nor full affection of your heart, nor one hour entirely improved for his honour.

This is the World; and thus is it used by sensual men. Judge now whether it deserves not to die the death; and to be cast out of your souls! And whether we have not reason to say, *crucify it, crucify it?* Ask me no more, *what evil it hath done!* You see it is such an enemy to the God of heaven that if you cherish it and let it live in your hearts; you are not friends to Christ or your salvation. Away with it then without any more ado; and use it as the world did use your Lord: and as it nailed him on the Cross, so go to his Cross, for a nail to fasten it, and for strength to crucify it, that you may be victors and super-victors through him that loved you, and overcame the world for you. Choose not to be slaves, when you may be free-men and triumphers. Take warning by all that have gone before you: serve not a Master that casteth off all his servants in distress; and leaveth them all in fruitless complaints of its unprofitableness! Think not to speed well where never man sped well before you; nor to find content, where none have found it. If all the worlds' followers complain of it at the parting, take warning by them, and foresee the end. Find out one man that ever was made happy by the world, (in a true and durable happiness) before you venture your own hopes and happiness in such hands. Put not your selves and all that you have in such a leaking vessel

that never yet brought man safe to shore. Will neither the experience of your own lives, nor the experience of all the world before you, delivered in the history of so many thousand years, be a sufficient warning to you to avoid the snare? What will you take then for a sufficient warning? were not reason captivated, one would think that a walk into the Church-yard might satisfy you. The sight of a grave or of a dead body should kill and disgrace the world in your eyes. Do you see where you must lie, and what that flesh which you so regard must be turned to, and what is the most that can be expected from the world, and in how poor and despicable a case it will then leave you? And yet will you dote upon it, and neglect and lose the life everlasting for it? Will you be wilfully seduced by the vain-glory and ostentation of blinded worldlings, when you are certain before-hand that they will not be long of the mind themselves, that now they are? Name me one man if you can, that rejoiceth in his worldly prosperity now, and speaketh well of it, who rejoiced in it, and spoke well of it two hundred years ago! Its a child indeed that would have an house built by every fine flower that he seeth in his way, and forgetteth his home, his friends and his inheritance! When its two to one but the flower will be withered, before his house be finished, and the pleasure will not answer the trouble and cost. Indeed if the world were a better place, then that which we are going to, I could not then blame any to desire to keep it as long as they can: And yet if it were so, the certainty of our removal should make us less regard it, and look more to the place where we must evermore remain. Much more when our home doth exceed this world in *worth*, as much as in continuance. Its folly enough to set a man's heart upon the fairest Inn that is in his way; but to prefer a swine-sty before a Palace where his Father dwells and his inheritance doth lie, is somewhat worse then mere folly: and its meet that such be used according to their choice. Its meet indeed that we be patient in our Wilderness, and murmured not at God for the sufferings that it casteth us upon. But to love it better then the Promised Land, and to think or speak hardly of our happiness itself, and those that would lead us to it, this is unreasonable. The Israelites were never so foolish as to build Cities in the Wilderness, as desiring to make it their fixed habitations; but contented themselves with moveable tents. What a curse were it if God should put you off with earth, and give you no other treasure and felicity, but what it can afford. You might well then look on your Inheritance as *Hiram* did on his twenty Cities in *Galilee*, 1 *King*. 9. 11, 12. and disliking it, call it the Land of *Cabul*. It is the description of miserable wicked men to have their portion in this life *Psalms* 17. 14. Suppose you had the most that you can expect in the

world; would you be contented with this as your portion? What is that you would have, and which you make such a stir for? Would you have larger possessions, more delightful dwellings, repute with men, the satisfying of your lusts? &c. Dare you take all this for your portion if you had it? Dare you quit your hopes of the life to come for such a portion? You dare not say so, nor do it expressly; though you do it impliedly and in effect. O do not that which is so horrid that your own hearts dare not own without trembling and astonishment!

I pray you tell me; do you think that a sufficient Portion which the Devil himself would give you if he could, or is willing you should have? He is content that you enjoy your lusts and pleasures; he is willing to let you have the honours and fullness of the world, while you are on earth. He knows that he can this way best deal with your consciences, and please you in his service, and quiet you awhile till he hath you where he would have you. He that told Christ of all the Kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, would doubtless have given him them, if it had been in his power, to have obtained his desire. Though you think it too dear to part with your wealth or pleasures for heaven, and to be at the labour of an holy life to obtain it; the Devil would not think it too dear to give you all *England*, nor all the world, if it were in his power, that thereby he might keep you out of Heaven: And he is willing night and day to go about such kind of work, that may but attain his ends in devouring you. If he were able, he would make you all Kings, so that he could but keep you thereby from the Heavenly Kingdom. Alas, he that tempteth you to set light by heaven, and prefer this world before it, doth better known himself to his sorrow, the worth of that everlasting glory which he would deprive you of, and the vanity of that which he thrusteth into your hands. As our Merchants that trade with the silly Indians, when they have persuaded them to take glass, and pieces of broken Iron, and brass, and knives, for Gold or Merchandize of great value, they do but laugh at their folly when they have deceived them, and say, *What silly fools be these to make such an exchange!* For the Merchants know the worth of things, which the Indians do not. And so is it between the Deceiver of souls, and the souls that he deceiveth. When he hath got you to exchange the love of God and the Crown of Glory, for a little earthly dung and lust, he knows that he hath made fools of you, and undone you by it for ever.

Do you not think your selves that it is abominable madness in those Witches that make a Covenant with the Devil, and sell their souls to him for ever; on condition they may have

their wills for a time? I know you will say it is abominable folly. And yet most of the world do in effect the very same. God hath assured them that they must for sake him or the world, and that they must not love the world if they will have his love; nor look for a portion in this life, if they will have any part in the inheritance of the Saints: He offers them their choice; to take the pleasures of Earth or Heaven: And Satan prevaieth with them to make choice of Earth, though they are told by God himself, that they lose their salvation by it.

And here you may see what advantage Satan gets, by playing his game in the dark, and doing his work by other hands, and keeping out of sight himself, and deceiving men by plausible pretences. Should he but appear himself in his own likeness, and offer poor worldlings to make such a match with them, how much would the most of you tremble at it and abhor it? And yet now he doth the same thing in the dark, you greedily embrace it. If you should but see or hear him, desiring you to put your hands to such a Covenant as this is, [*I do consent to part with the love of God, and all my hopes of salvation, so I may have my pleasures, and wealth, and honour till I die.*] Sure, if you be not besides your selves you would not, you durst not put your hands to it. Why then will you now put both hand and heart to it; when he plays his game under board, and implicitly by his temptations doth draw you to the same consent? What do the most of the world, but prefer earth before heaven through the course of their lives? They prefer it in their thoughts, and words, and deeds. It hath their sweetest and freest thoughts and words, and their greatest care, and diligence, and delight. And what then do these men do, but sell their salvation for the vanities of the world? Believe it, Sirs, if you understood the Word of God, and understood Satan's temptations, and understood your own doings, you would see that you do no less then thus make sale of your precious souls. And it is not your false hopes that for all this you shall be saved, when you can keep the world no longer that will undo the bargain. If the Law of the Land do punish Murder and Theft with death, he that entice you to commit the crime, doth tice you to cast away your life; and it will not save you to say, [*I had hoped that I might have plaid the thief or murderer, and yet be saved.*]

O Sirs, if you knew but half as well what you sell and cast away, as the Devil doth that tempts you to it, sure you durst never make such a match, nor pass away such an inheritance, for a little earthly smoke and dust.