

of as good in us, is from God alone. Let us then henceforth dedicate to his honour and glory our whole being, with all its faculties and powers; with all our thoughts, words; and actions; so that, *whether we eat or drink, or whatever else we do, we do all to the glory of God. Render to God the things that are God's.*

Besides, if all things that are belong to God by the title of creation; or because he made them what they are; surely that must belong to him in a more particular sense, which is the master-piece of all his works; which also he has made for himself alone. Now the rational creatures, and man in particular, whom he has created to his own image and likeness are the most excellent of all his works; and these he has made only for himself. Immortal therefore has he created them for himself, who is immortal; that they might never perish, like the other creatures, which he has made only for our temporal use; but that they might endure for ever, and be his own for an endless eternity. We therefore belong to God in a more particular manner; we are his property in a stricter sense, than all his other creatures, which he has made not for his own, but for our sake, and that they might be subservient to us for a time. But his rational creatures, both men and angels, he has created only for himself. Therefore to him do they belong more than all his other creatures. They are the *vessels of honour*, with which he intends to adorn his heavenly household; unless polluted with sin, unless withdrawn from his service, and prostituted to that of his enemy; of *vessels of honour they become vessels of ignominy and wrath*. (Rom. ix. 21 22.) and thus deserve to be cast away for ever, and crushed by the hand that had made and fashioned them for so noble an end. God has entrusted each of us with at least his own vessel, to keep it holy and undefiled; and to use it only in the service of him, who made it ultimately for himself. How great then must their crime be, and how dreadful the punishment, who rob God of the most valuable part of his property, with the keeping of which they are only entrusted; and even employ it in the service of his enemy! The thief and robber are justly condemned to death, for only taking from their fellow-creatures some part of the perishable goods of this world, which God has only lent to them for a while. What then must the sinner deserve, who robs God of his own eternal property: which he prized so much as to become man, and to lay down his very life, in order to redeem it when lost! Think then, Christians, on the enormity of such a crime; and never more venture to expose yourselves to its consequences. Remember, with the apostle, *that you are not your own*, nor at your own disposal. Each is but his own keeper; and we must answer to God for the manner in which we have attended to our charge. *Render to God the things that are God's.*

27. We belong to God by the title of our redemption. For though we belonged originally to God by our creation; yet, by the sin of our first parents, we fell under the dominion of his adversary the devil. For, after creating us, God, not desiring of us a forced; but a free and voluntary obedi-

ence; left us at liberty to choose the master whom we preferred to serve; and by an act of our free-will we chose to serve and obey Satan rather than God. Consequently we freely subjected ourselves to the dominion of Satan. Unhappy man! what a wretched choice didst thou make! Thou preferredst the slavery of Satan to the dignity of sons and heirs of God: all that is evil to all that is good; and eternal misery to never ending felicity. Nevertheless the choice is made, and thou hast nothing to blame but thine own rashness and folly in making it. For while thy God left thee free to choose, he sufficiently warned thee of the unhappy consequences of choosing amiss. Death, he foretold thee, would be the consequence of thy disobedience. Death in the full extent of the meaning: Death temporal, by which the body, though created incorruptible; should be subject to corruption, and should return to its original dust: Death spiritual, still more dreadful; by which the soul should be deprived of her spiritual life, the grace of God: and what is the completion of all misery, death eternal. To be ever dying, yet never dead; always in a mortal agony, and expiring in the midst of the most excruciating torments, yet always surviving in order but to die: condemned to lead an ever dying life, or to die an everlasting death. Such, Christians, is that three-fold death, to which man was subjected in consequence of his disobedience to God. Yet, although God, might in justice have left him to his wretched fate, as he had done the rebel angels; still moved by his singular love for him, he finds out in his own infinite wisdom a way to save him, and to recover back again his property from Satan, under whose dominion it had fallen. Man must therefore be redeemed; that is, bought back again. A ransom then must be paid for him; and this ransom God himself consents to pay, as none but he could furnish it. But, O what a ransom, Christians! and how infinitely exceeding the value of the creature to be redeemed! The ransom which he consents to pay down for us is nothing less than the incarnation, sufferings, and death of his only Son: a ransom not only adequate to our worth, but infinitely surpassing the aggregate value of all possible creatures. The least sufferings of a God made man, would have been more than a sufficient ransom for the whole world. But our Saviour did not content himself with making, what his love to us made him deem but a slight atonement for our sins. He chose to become for us, in the fullest sense of the word, a *man of sorrow*. He began and ended his life in this world in the midst of poverty, humiliation, and persecution, and finally signed the letter of our ransom with the last drop of his sacred blood, shed upon the ignominious tree of the cross. Now then again do we belong to God. Dear has he bought us, and infinitely infinite is the price he has paid for our ransom. But remember, Christians, that the more he has done to make us his own, the greater the guilt, and more severe the punishment shall be of those, who still prefer giving themselves to Satan, to Caesar, or the world, rather than to God. *Render to God the things that are God's.*

30. We belong to God on account of the supreme dominion he has over all his creatures, and of the necessary dependence which all his creatures have on him. Indeed the sovereignty of God over all the creatures, and their total dependence on him, are as essentially necessary as every existence. For, as St. Bernard says, if but one creature could withdraw itself from the dominion which God has over it, and thus become independent of him; God would then cease to be God; and that creature would assume his place. For nothing can be above all dominion, and absolutely independent, but God. Now the sinner, who refuses to acknowledge the sovereign dominion, which God has over him, and, as if independent, consults only his own will in all his actions, according to the same Father, destroys and annihilates, as much as in him lies, the very being of a God. And here, my dear Christians, is the very chiefest cause why God so essentially hates sin, because it is an act performed not only without his permission, but directly contrary to his command. An act, consequently, by which the sinner arrogates to himself an independence, which cannot exist so long as God exists; an act, therefore, which strikes at the very essence of the Deity.

And here let us reflect a little on the unaccountable presumption and madness of the sinner, who seeks to withdraw himself from the dominion of God, refuses to yield him up his inalienable property, and even bestows it rather on his adversary who will act as if he were his own master, or, like a stubborn and disobedient servant, consult only his own will, and not that of him, whom he is bound to serve: Who, in a word, dares to struggle for absolute independence with the Omnipotent. Think what an insult is hereby offered to the Divine Majesty by such a worm, and what a chastisement such daring insolence deserves: That such an atom should dare to lift up its head, and challenge an independence which belongs only to God: should bid defiance to the Great, Almighty, and Eternal Being; before whom all things is but like a grain of sand, or the drop of a bucket, as the prophet Isaias expresses it; that this scarcely perceptible point in the creation, should seek to put itself on a level with him, should even prefer itself before him, is a presumption and an audacity altogether unparalleled and inconceivable. Yet such is the audacity and presumption of the sinner; who does not refer himself and all his actions to God; who does not make his own will stoop to that of the Deity; or in a word, who refuses to render to God the things that are God's.

Besides, what can equal the sinner's madness in thus venturing to provoke the wrath of that great God, on whom he so totally and necessarily depends, for all the good he can hope or the evil he can fear! Who holds in his hand the slender thread of his life, which should he break when provoked, the sinner is undone for ever. O, it is truly wonderful how God can bear so patiently; as he does, with the repeated insults the wicked are daily offering him? That he can behold this earth so polluted with every species of vice, so deluged