

The exposition of these words naturally falls into three lines of thought.

We have, I. *A fact*, "ye are not your own."

We have, II. *A reason* for the fact, "ye are bought with a price."

We have, III. *An Inference*, grounded on both *Fact and Reason*, "Therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your Spirit, which are his."

I. The *Fact*, "Ye are not your own." If one were to condense into one brief sentence the calamity which the Fall has inflicted on man, the answer might not unfittedly be this, "Man has become the victim of the delusion that he is his own." "Ye shall be as gods," was the temptation. We are as gods, has been the practical, yet false and fatal conviction ever since. This feeling has been tacitly acted on when not avowed. Take what sin you may choose: whether it be "earthly, sensual, or devilish." Whether it be grosser or more refined; and you will see that it is only the fruit of this radical and stubborn delusion. Whether sin be in man, or in Satan, its essence is the same, and that is selfishness. Sin is a desire to please oneself instead of God; and all the ills of life, so far as they are moral, spring from the fact, that, men seek their own, and not the things of others.

How early this depraved principle is seen at work in the child! Scarcely have the dawning months of infancy passed away, when the child begins to assert in strange excess its individualism. It would fain constitute itself the centre, and all other things, and beings, its servants. It is the king of the house and must be served. Parents, and brothers, and sisters, are made for it, or why do they exist at all? This principle is not a loose accident, but a part of our depraved nature. Not that there is nothing but selfishness within us. There is, unquestionably, something which cannot be truthfully placed under this head.

There are developments of a generous, self-forgetting benevolence. Yet, after every fair deduction has been made, it will still remain true, that selfishness rules the world. It is the animating spirit in commerce, in literature, and in governments

This, is no calumny invented by christians. It is the world's portrait, drawn by itself. The world is, to a great degree, an arena, in which men are scrambling with might and main, to get to the top in wealth, in power, in fame; and they are little scrupulous *how* they rise, if they only *do* rise. "Every man for himself," is the world's motto; and the remorselessness with which it is acted on is, yearly sacrificing thousands whose title to life is as just and valid as ours.

Indeed, the truth that we are not our own, is only a part of a still wider truth, that no thing, and no being is its own. On all things, from the summit of the scale of creatureship down to its base, the great law is written, "ye are not your own." It flashes from the radiant brow of the Archangel,—it streams from the dazzling orb of the Sun,—it glistens in the eye of the dew-drop,—it smiles from the fair bosom of the flower,—it exhales in fragrance from the luscious fruit. The law impressed on the universe by the finger of God is, "Thou art not thine own."

But not only are we not our own in the sense that we are *His*, His for ever, inalienably His, His in perdition, as well as in paradise, but we are not our own in the sense that he made us, not merely for our own profit and service, but for the profit and service of others. God is not the only Being who has claims upon us. We are social creatures, and our fellow-men have a right and title to our sympathy and help. In the strictest and highest sense, we are all members one of another. The very *make* of the soul proves that we were made for commun-