

ons to the Pastors of the Church containing the works of their office (as to *Timothy, Titus, &c.*) But we no where find that this is made any part of their work, to make new Teaching signs and Ceremonies, and impose them on the Church, nor have they any directions for such a work : which surely they much needed, if it had been their work indeed.

§. 24. *Reas. 22.* When we once begin to let in humane Mystical Rites, we shall never know where to stop, or make an end. On the same ground that one Age inventeth three or four, the next think they may add as many, and so it will grow to be a point of devotion, to add a new Ceremony (as at *Rome* it hath done) till we have more then we well know what to do with.

§. 25. *Reas. 23.* And the miserable plight that the Christian world hath lain in many ages by Ceremonies, may warn us to be wise. *Augustine* complaineth that in his time the Church was burdned with them, and made like the Jewish Synagogue. The most of the Churches in *Asia* and *Africa* are drowned too deeply in Ceremonious formality, turning Religion into ignorant shews. The Church of *Rome* is worse then they; having made God a worship of histrionical actions, and shews and signs and Ceremonies: so that millions of the poor blind people worship they know not *whom* nor *how*. And if we abate only of the number, and keep up some of the same kind, (even Symbolicall Rites of mans institution, to teach us, and excite our devotion) we shall harden them in their way, and be disabled from confuting them. For a Papist will challenge you to prove just how many such signs are lawfull: And why he may not use threescore as well as you use three, when he saith he is edified by his number, as you say you are with yours?

§. 26. *Reas. 24.* It is not inconsiderable that God hath purposely established a spiritual kind of worship in the Gospel, telling us that God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and in truth: Such worshippers doth God require and accept: Bodily exercise profitech little. The kingdom of God is not in meats or in drinks, but in Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost: Neither Circumcision availeth any thing in Christ Jesus, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, and faith that worketh by Love. God would never have so much

called men off from Ceremoniousness to spirituality, if he had delighted in Ceremony.

§. 27. *Reas.* 25. The Worship of God without his blessing is to little purpose. No man can have encouragement to use any thing as a Means to teach him and help his devotion, which he hath no ground to believe that God will bless. But there is no ground (that I know of) to believe that God will bless these Instituted Teaching *signs* of mans inventions to the Edifying of our souls. For God hath no where bid us devise or use such signs. 2. Nor no where promised us a blessing on them (that ever I could find) And therefore we have no encouragement to use them. If we will make them, and impose them our selves, we must undertake to bless them our selves.

§. 28. *Reas.* 26. As vain thoughts and words are forbidden us in Scripture, so no doubt but *vain actions* are forbidden: but especially in the worship of God: and yet more especially when they are Imposed on the Church by Laws with penalties. But these Mystical Rites of humane institution are vain. You call them your selves but [*Things indifferent:*] And they are vain as to the use for which they are pretended, that is, to *Teach and Edifie, &c.* having no promise of a blessing, and being needless imitations of the Sacraments of Christ. Vanity therefore is not to be imposed on the Church. My last Reason will fullier shew them to be vain.

§. 29. *Reas.* 27. We are sure the way in which *Peter*, and *Paul*, and the Churches of their times did worship God, was allowable and safe: and that Princes and Prelates are wise and righteous overmuch, if they will not only be more wise and righteous then the Apostles in the matters of Gods worship, but also deny their subjects liberty to worship God, and go to heaven in the same way as the Apostles did. If *Peter* and *Paul* went to heaven without the use of Images, Surplice, the Cross in Baptism, kneeling in receiving the Lords Supper, and many such Ceremonies, why should not we have leave to live in the Communion of the Church without them? would you have denied the Apostles their liberty herein? Or will you be partial? Must they have one way, and we another? They command us to imitate them: give us leave then to imitate them, at least in all things that your selves confess to be lawfull for us.

§. 30. *Reas.* 28. Hath not God purposely already in the Scripture determined the Controversie, supposing your Ceremonies (which is their best) to be indifferent. He hath interposed also for the decision of such doubts. He hath commanded, *Rom.* 14. 1, 3. that we [Receive him that is weak in the faith, but not to doubtful disputations] (much less to imprisonment or banishment) [Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth, for God hath received him] Nay we must not so much as offend or grieve our brother, by indifferent things, *Verse* 13. 15. 21. to the end. And so *Chap.* 15. 1. We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves.] So that the case is decided by the Spirit of God expressly, that he would have weak Christians have liberty in such things as these; and would not have Christians so much as censure or despise one another upon such accounts. And therefore Prelates may not silence Ministers, nor excommunicate Christians on this account; nor Magistrates punish them, especially to the injury of the Church.

§. 31. *Object.* But this is spoken only to private Christians, and not to Magistrates or Prelates. *Ans.* 1. If there had been any Prelate then at Rome, we might have judged it spoken to them with the people. And no doubt but it was spoken to such Pastors as they then had. For it was written to all the Church, of whom the Pastors were a part. And if the Pastors must bear with dissenters in things indifferent, then most certainly the Magistrates must do so. 2. If Magistrates are Christians, then this command extendeth also unto them. God hath sufficiently told us here that he would have us bear with one another in things of such indifferency as these. If God tell private men this truth, that he would have men born within such cases, it concerns the Magistrate to take notice of it. Either the error is tolerable, or intolerable. If intolerable, private men must not bear with it. If tolerable, Magistrates and Pastors must bear with it. It is as much the duty of Private Christians to reprove an erroneous person, and avoid him, if intolerable and impenitent, as it is the duty of a Magistrate to punish him by the sword, or the Pastor by Church-censures. If therefore it be the duty of Private men to tolerate such as these in question,
by

by a forbearance of their rebukes and Censures; then is it the duty of Magistrates to tolerate them, by a forbearance of penalties; and of Pastors to tolerate them by a forbearance of excommunication. Who can believe that God would leave so full a determination for tolerating such persons, and yet desire that Prelates should excommunicate them, or Princes imprison, banish or destroy them. Some English Expositors therefore do but unreasonably abuse this text, when they tell us that Magistrates and Prelates may thus punish these men, whom the rest of the Church is so straitly commanded to bear with and not offend.

§. 32. So Col. 2. 16. to the end [*Let no man judge you in Meat or Drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new Moon, or of the Sabbaths, &c.*] ver. 20. [*Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world are ye subject to Ordinances? (Touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using,) after the commandments and doctrines of men: which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will, worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.*] Here also God sheweth that it is his will that such Matters should not be made Laws to the Church, nor be imposed on his servants; but their freedom should be preserved. Many other texts express the same, which I need not cite, the case being so plain.

§. 33. *Reas.* 29. Moreover, we think every Christian should be sensible, how insufficient we are to perform the great and many duties that God hath imposed upon us already. And therefore they should have little mind to be making more work to the Churches and themselves, till they can better discharge that which is already imposed on them by God. Have not your selves and your flocks enough to do to observe all the precepts of the Decalogue, and understand all the doctrines of the Gospel, and believe and obey the Gospel of Christ, but you must be making your selves and others more work? Have you not sin enough already in breaking the Laws already made, but you must make more Laws and duties, that so you may make more sin? If you say, that your precepts are not guilty of this charge, you speak against reason: The more duty, the more neglect we shall be guilty of. See how the Lord *Falkland* urgeth this Objection on the Papists. And it is considerable

siderable, that by this means you make your selves unexcusable for all your neglects, and omissions toward God. Cannot you live up to the height of Evangelical Sanctity? Why then do you make your selves more work? Sure if you can do more, it may be expected that you first do this that was enjoined you. If you will needs be Righteous (materially) overmuch, you are unexcusable for your unrighteousness.

§. 34. *Reas.* 30. Lastly, consider also, that all your Mystical Teaching Signs, are needless things, and come too late, because the work is done that they pretend to: God hath already given you so perfect a directory for his worship, that there is nothing more that you can reasonably desire. Let us peruse the particulars.

1. What want you in order to the Teaching of our understandings? Hath not God in his word and his works, and his Sacraments, provided sufficient means for our instruction, unless you add your Mystical signs? Will your Ceremonies come after and teach us better then all these Means of God will do? We see by the Disciples of Ceremonies, what a Master they have.
2. What want you for the exciting of dull affections, that God hath not provided you already? Have you Ceremonies that can give life, and are more powerfull remedies against Corruptions, and more effectuall means of Grace then all the institutions of God? Or hath God left any imperfection in his institutions for your Ceremonies to supply? Would you have plain Teaching in season and out of season? This God hath appointed already: and settled the Ministry to that end. Would you have men taught by a Form of words? Why you have a copious Form: The whole Scripture is a form of words, for mens instruction. And yet we deny not but out of this Form you may gather more contracted forms for the instruction of your flocks. Catechizing and publick and private teaching are Gods own Ordinances. Would you have a Directory for Prayer, Confession and Thanksgiving? Scripture is a Directory; and out of it we shall be glad of any direction that you will gather for us. Would you have forms of Words for Prayer and Praise? Scripture hath given you many: the Lords Prayer, the Psalms, and many more. And if you think you can do better, you have liberty to do it your selves. And is not that enough? God hath left it indifferent to us, whether we use a stinted form or not. If

you be not wiser then God, do you leave it indifferent also. Would you have a stated day for Gospel-worship in Commemoration of the work of our Redemption? Christ and his Apostles have taught you to observe one, even the Lords day to these Ends. Would you have exciting mystical instituted signs? Christ hath appointed you Baptism and the Lords Supper, which signify the very substance of the Gospel: Can your signs do more? Or is a greater number more desirable? Why may not a few of Christs institution, full and clear, that have a promise of his blessing, serve turn without the additions of mens froathy wits? Use the Lords Supper often, and with more preparation, and you will need no Sacramental Rites of your own. If Christs signs will not do it, in vain do you hope for it from the devises of men. Gods Ordinances have no blemishes and wants that need your patches. Do that which Scripture hath cut out for you, and I warrant you, you'll find no want of such additions. The making of the Law and Rule of Worship is Gods work, the obeying it is yours. Its a course most perverse when you fall and deal falsly in your own work, to fall upon Gods work, and take on you to mend that. Do your own well, in obeying, and judge not the Law, and trouble not the Church with your additions.

§. 35. Yet still remember, that we allow both Magistrates and Pastors to see to the execution of Gods laws, and to determine of Circumstances in order thereto that are necessary *in genere*. But it is only 1. Such Mystical signs as *in genere* are not commanded us, and left to mans determination, that I speak of. 2. And also the needless determination of circumstances, and making Laws for such things as should be left to the prudence of every Pastor, to be varied as occasion requireth.

CHAP. XV.

Reasons for Obedience in Lawfull things.

§. 1.



EST men that are apt to run from one extream into another, should make an ill use of that which I have before written, I shall here annex some Reasons to perswade men to just obedience, and preserve them from any sinfull nonconformity to the commands of their Governours, and the evill effects that are like to follow thereupon.

§. 2. But first I will lay together some Propositions for decision of the Controversie; How far we are bound to obey mens precepts about Religion? Especially in case we doubt of the lawfulness of obeying them? and so cannot obey them in faith?

§. 3. Briefly: 1. We must obey both Magistrates and Pastors in all things lawfull which belong to their offices to command. 2. It belongs not to their office to make God a new worship; But to command the Mode and Circumstances of worship belongeth to their office: for guiding them wherein God hath given them generall rules. 3. We must not take the Lawfull commands of our Governours to be unlawfull. 4. If we do through weakness or perverseness rake Lawfull things to be unlawfull, that will not excuse us in our disobedience. Our error is our sin, and one

sin will not excuse another sin. Even as on the other side,
 if we judge things unlawfull to be lawfull, that will not
 excuse us for our disobedience to God in obeying men. 5. As
 I have before shewed, many things that are miscommand-
 ed, must be obeyed. 6. As an erroneous judgement will
 not excuse us from Obedience to our Governours, so much
 less will a *doubtfulness* excuse us. 7. As such a doubting,
 erring judgement cannot obey in (plenary) faith, so
 much less can he disobey in faith. For it is a known
 Command of God, that *we obey them that have the Rule*
over us: but they have no word of God against the act
 of obedience now in question. It is their own erring judge-
 ment that intangleth them in a necessity of sinning (till it
 be changed.) 7. In doubtfull cases, it is our duty to
 use Gods means for our information: and one means is to
 consult with our Teachers, and hear their words with
 teachableness and meekness. 8. If upon advising with them
 we remain in doubt about the lawfulness of some Circum-
 stance of order, if it be such as may be dispensed with,
 they should dispense with us: if it may not be dispensed with
 without a greater injury to the Church or cause of God,
 then our dispensation will countervail, then is it our duty
 to obey our Teachers, notwithstanding such doubts:
 For it being their office to Teach us, it must be our duty to
 believe them with a humane faith, in cases where we have
 no Evidences to the contrary: And the Duty of Obeying
 them being certain, and the sinfulness of the thing commanded
 being uncertain and unknown, and only suspected, we must
 go on the surer side. 9. Yet must we in great and doubtfull
 cases, not take up with the suspected judgement of a single
 Pastor, but apply our selves to the unanimous Pastors of
 other Churches. 10. Christians should not be over-busie in
 prying into the work of their Governours, nor too for-
 ward to suspect their determinations: But when they know
 that it is their Rulers work to guide them by determining
 of due Circumstances of worship, they should without cause-
 less scruples readily obey, till they see just reason to stop them
 in their obedience; They must not go out of their own places

to search into the Actions of another mans office, to trouble themselves without any cause.

§. 4. And now I intreat all humble Christians readily to obey both Magistrates and Pastors in all Lawfull things; and to consider, to that end, of these Reasons following. *Reas. 1.* If you will not obey in Lawfull things, you deny authority, or overthrow Government it self, which is a great ordinance of God, established in the fifth commandment with promise: And as that commandment respecting societies and common good, is greater then the following commands, as they respect the private good of our neighbours, or are but particular Means to that Publick good, whose foundation is laid in the fifth commandment, so accordingly the sin against this fifth commandment must be greater then that against the rest.

§. 5. *Reas. 2.* In disobeying the lawfull commands of our superiors, we disobey Christ, who ruleth by them as his officers. Even as the disobeying a Justice of Peace or Judge is a disobeying of the sovereign Power; yea in some cases when their sentence is unjust. Some of the ancient Doctors thought that the fifth commandment was the last of the first Table of the Decalogue; and that the Honouring of Governors is part of our Honour to God, they being mentioned there as his officers, with whom he himself is honoured or dishonoured, obeyed or disobeyed: For it is Gods Authority that the Magistrate, Parent, and Pastor is endued with, and empowered by to rule those that are put under them.

§. 6. *Reas. 3.* What confusion will be brought into the Church if Pastors be not obeyed in things lawfull? For instance: If the Pastors appoint the Congregation to Assemble at one hour, and the people will scruple the time, and say, it is unlawful, and so will choose some of them one time, and some another, what disorder will here be? and worse, if the Pastors appoint a Place of worship, and any of the people scruple obeying them, and will come to another place, what confusion will here be? People are many, and the Pastors are few: and therefore there may be some unity if the people be Ruled by the Pastors; but there can be none, if the Pastors must be ruled by the people, for the people will not agree among themselves: and therefore if we obey one part of them, we must disobey and dis-

please the rest. And their ignorance makes them unfit to rule.

§. 7. *Reas. 4.* Moreover, disobedience in matters of *Circumstance*, will exclude and overthrow the *substance* of the worship it self. God commandeth us to pray: If one part of the Church will not joyn with a stinced form of Prayer, and the other part will not joyn without it, both parties cannot be pleased, and so one part must cast off Prayer it self, or separate from the rest. God commandeth the reading, and preaching, and hearing of the Scripture, and the singing of Psalms: but he hath left it to man to make or choose the best Translation of Scripture, or version of the Psalms. Now if the Pastor appoint one version, and Translation, and the Church joyn in the use of it, if any members will scruple joyning in this Translation or version, they must needs forbear the whole duty of Hearing the Scripture, and singing Psalms in that Congregation. If they pretend a scruple against the appointed time or Place of worship, they will thereby cast off the worship it self. For if they avoid our *Time* or *Place*, they cannot meet with us, nor worship with us.

§. 8. *Reas. 5.* And when they are thus carryed to separate from the Congregation, upon such grounds as these, they will be no where fixt, but may be still subdividing, and separating from one another, till they are resolved into individuals, and have left no such thing as a Church among them. For they can have no assurance or probability, that some of themselves will not dissent from the rest in one Circumstance or other, as they did from their Pastors and the Church that they were of before.

§. 9. *Reas. 6.* By this means the wicked that are disobedient to their Teachers, and reject the worship of God it self, will be hardened in their sin, and taught by professors to defend their ungodliness: For the very same course that you take will serve their turns. They need not deny any Duty in the substance, but deny the circumstance, and so put off the substance of the Duty. If a wicked man will not hear the word preached, he may say [I am not against preaching; but I am unsatisfied of the lawfulness of your Time or Place, I am in judgement]

ment against coming to your Steeple house, or against the Lords Day.] And so he shall never hear, though he say he is for hearing. If a wicked man will not be personally instructed, or admonished, or be accountable to the Church or Pastors for any scandals of his life, nor submit to any discipline, he may say [*I am for discipline, I know it is my duty to be instructed: but I am not satisfied that I am bound to come to you when you send for me, or to appear at such a place as you appoint: the word of God nameth no time or place, and you shall not deprive me of my liberty.*] If a wicked man would not hear or read the Scripture, or sing Psalms, he may say that he is for the duty, but he is only against this and that Translation and version: And so while every version is excepted against, the duty is as much evaded as if it were denied it self. By this device it is that the Rebellion of unruly people is defended: They run to the *circumstances* of the duty, and ask, [Where are they bound to come to a Minister? or to be examined by him in order to a baptism or Lords supper? or to speak their consent to be Church members, or to subscribe to a Profession, or to read an English Bible, or to hear in a Steeple-house, with many such like.] Thus also it is that they put off family prayer, and ask, [Where are they bound to pray in their family Morning and Evening?] and so keep no constancy in family prayer at all, under pretence of denying only the circumstances.

§. 10. *Reas.* 7. By this disobedience in things lawfull, the members of the Church will be involved in contentions, and so engaged in bitter uncharitableness, and censures, and persecutions, and reproaches of one another: which scandalous courses will nourish vice, dishonour God, rejoyce the enemies, grieve the Godly that are peaceable and judicious, and wound the consciences of the contenders. We see the beginning of such fires are small, but whither they tend, and what will be the end of them, we see not.

§. 11. *Reas.* 8. By these means also Migistrates will be provoked to take men of tender consciences for factious, unruly, and unreasonable men, and to turn their enemies, and use violence against them, to the great injury of the Church: when they see them so self-conceited, and refusing obedience in lawfull circumstances.

§. 12. *Reas. 9.* By this means also the conversion and establishment of souls will be much hindered, and people possessed with prejudice against the Church and ordinances, when they take us to be but humerous people, and see us in such contentions among our selves. To my knowledge, our late difference about some such lesser things, hath turned off, or hindered abundance of people from liking the holy doctrine and life which we profess.

§. 13. *Reas. 10.* It will seem to the wisest, to favour of no small measure of *Pride*, when people on the account of lawfull circumstances, dare set themselves against their Govenors and Teachers, and quarrel with the ordinances of God, and with the Churches: Humble men would sooner suspect themselves, and quarrel with their own distempers, and submit to those that are wiser then themselves, and that are set over them for their guidance by the Lord. There may more dangerous *Pride* be manifested in these matters, then in Apparel, and such lower trifles.

§. 14. *Reas. 11.* Consider also what yielding in things lawfull the Scripture recommendeth to us? How far yielded *Paul* when he circumcised *Timothy*? *Act. 16. 3.* And when he [took the men, and purified himself with them in the Temple, to signify the accomplishment of the daies of purification, untill that an offering should be offered for every one of them] and this for almost seven dayes, *Acts 21. 26, 27.* with the foregoing verses.

§. 15. So *1 Cor. 9. 19, 20.* [For though I be free from all men, yet have I made my self servant unto all, that I might gain the more: And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law, as under the Law, that I might gain them that are under the Law: To them that are without Law, as without Law (being not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without Law. To the weak I became as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might, by all means save some, and this I do for the Gospels sake, &c.] Study this example.

§. 16. Read also *Rom.* 14. and 15. Chapters, how much condescension the Apostle requireth even among equals, about meats and dayes. And *1 Cor.* 8. 13. the Apostle would tie up himself from eating any flesh while the world standeth, rather then make a weak brother to offend. Many other passages of Scripture require a condescension in things of this indifferent nature, and shew that the Kingdom of God doth not consist in them.

§. 17. And *Matthew* 12. 1, 2, to 9. you find that hunger justified the Disciples of Christ for plucking and rubbing the ears of Corn on the Sabbath dayes. And hunger justified *David* and those that were with him, for entring into the house of God, and eating the Shew-bread, which was not lawfull for him to eat, nor for them which were with him, but only for the Priests: And the Priests in the Temple were blameless for prophaning the Sabbath day.] Now if things before accidentally evil, may by this much Necessity become lawfull and a duty, then may the commands of Magistrates or Pastors, and the Unity of the Church, and the avoiding of contention, and offence, and other evils, be also sufficient to warrant us in obeying, even in inconvenient Circumstantials of the worship of God, that otherwise could not be justified.

§. 18. *Reas.* 12. Lastly consider, how much God hath expressed himself in his word to be pleased in the Obedience of believers. Not only in their Obedience to Christ immediately, but also to him in his officers, *1 Sam.* 15. 22. [*Behold, to obey is better then Sacrifice, &c.*] *Col.* 3. 20, 22. [*Children obey your Parents in all things (that is, all lawfull things) for this is well-pleasing to the Lord*] [*Servants Obey in all things your Masters according to the flesh, &c.*] And Obedience to Pastors is as much commanded. *1 Thes.* 5. 12, 13. [*We beseech you brethren to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and esteem them very highly, &c.*] *Heb.* 13. 17. [*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, &c.*] So Verse 7. & 24. *1 Tim.* 5. 17, &c.

§. 19. As the General Commission to a Parent, or Master, or

Magistrate to Govern their inferiour relations, doth authorize them to many particular acts belonging to their office, that were never named in their commission: so your general command to obey them, obligeth you to obey them in the said particulars. And so it is also betwixt the Pastors and the flock, in matters belonging to the Office of a Pastor.

§. 20. If a Child shall ask a Parent, [*Where doth Gods word allow you to command me to Learn this Catechism, or read this Divines writings, or repeat this Sermon, or write it? &c.*] doth not the question deserve to be answered with the rod? The General Commission for parents to Govern their children is sufficient; so if a Schoolmaster command his Schollers to come to such a place to School, and to take their places in such an Order, and to learn such books, and do such exercises, &c. the General Commission that he hath to teach and Govern them, will allow him to do all this. (Though it will not allow him to set his Schollers to any Artifice or Manual Operation alien to his profession.) So if a Minister determine of the variable Circumstances of worship, as what place the people shall come to, and at what time, to be Catechized, examined, instructed, &c. what Translation or Version of Psalms to use, what Utensils to make use of about Gods service, or such like, he is warranted for this by his General Commission. And if he miss it in the manner, by choosing inconvenient circumstances, or by unnecessary determination of points that should rather be left undetermined to liberty, though this be his own sin, it will not excuse the people from obedience; unless the error of his directions be so great as would frustrate the Ordinance it self, or do more harm then our disobedience would do; which in Circumstantialis is rarely found.

§. 21. And thus I have finished this discourse of Ceremonies; a Subject that may seem unreasonable at such a time when we are disburdened of Ceremonies. But the offence and vehement accusations of the Ceremonious, hath made it seem necessary to me, while they accuse Dissenters of schism.

schism and obstinacy, and reproach them as Puritans, and seem ready to act their second part in casting out those that be not of their mind, if it were in their power: when yet they call the Ceremonies but *things indifferent*; and Preachers and Gods Ordinances are not *Indifferent* things to us.

FINITUR. July 9. 1658.

Satisfaction to certain CALUMNIATORS.

I Am informed from London, and several parts of the Land, that some of my Books having lately been sold at excessive rates by the Booksellers, it is somewhat commonly reported that it is caused by my excessive gain, which say they, is at least three or four hundred pounds a year. I thank the Lord that doth not only employ me in his service, but also vouchsafe me the honor and benefit of being evil-spoken of for doing him the best service that I can, *Mat. 5. 11, 12. 1 Pet. 4. 13, 14, 15, 16.* Blessed *Augustine* was put to vindicate himself by an oath, from the infamy of a covetous design, which was raised by one godly woman, upon a disorderly action of other men, and to that end he wrote his 225. Epistle. I find no call to use his oath; but yet I judge it my duty to imitate him in patience, and in rescuing the slanderers from their sin, that they abuse not their souls by uncharitable surmises, nor their tongues by false reports. To which end I give them this true information: The two first Books I printed, I left to the Booksellers Will; for all the rest, I agreed with them for the fifteenth Book, to give to some few of my friends, hearing that some others agreed for the tenth. Sometime my fifteenth Book coming not to an hundred, and sometime but to few more, when of Practical Books I needed sometime 800. to give away. Because I was scarce rich enough to buy so many, I agreed with the Bookseller, (my Neighbour,) to allow 18. d. a Ream (which is not a penny a quire,) out of his own gain towards the buying of Bibles, and some of the practical Books which he printed, for the poor: Covenanting with him, that he should sell my Controversial Writings as cheap, and my Practical Writings somewhat cheaper than Books are ordinarily sold. To this hour I never received for my self one penny of money from them for any of my Writings, to the best of my remembrance: but if it fell out that my part came to more than I gave my friends, I exchanged them for other Books: My accounts and memory tell me not of 5. li. that ever was returned for me on these accounts, which was on literary occasions: so that my many hundreds a year is come to never a penny in all, but as abovesaid, in some exchange of Books. And the price I set on my Books which I exchanged for theirs at the dearest rates, is as followeth, [Treat. of Conversion, 2.s. Treat. of Crucifying the World, 2.s. Disput. of Justificat. 2.s. 4.d. The Call to the Unconverted, 8.d. Disput. of Saving Faith, 5.d. Of the Grotian Religion, 6.d. Directions for sound Conversion, 1.s. 8.d. Disput. of Right to Sacraments, Edit. second. 2.s. 4.d.]

These

These are all my bargains and my gains. And I chose the honestest Book-sellers that I could meet with, according to my small measure of wit and acquaintance; who told me, they still made good their Promises. And now censorious Slanderer, tell me, what thou wouldst have had me to have done more? If I had got Food and Rayment out of my own hard labors, had it been unlawful or dishonourable, when Book-sellers get so many hundred pounds by one Book, that never studied nor spent their time and cost for it, as I have done? And yet dost thou reproach me that receive not a groat? But because I will not oblige my self to the same course for the future, and that thou mayst know at what rates I serve thee, let me tell thee, that in these labors early and late my body is wasted; my precious time laid out, and somewhat of my Estate; and somewhat of the labor of my friends. I cannot have twenty quire of my writing well transcribed, under fifty pounds. And who shall pay for this, or maintain me in thy service? I have troubled a Neighbour-Minister in the tedious work of transcribing my Characters (for some books,) for which neither he nor I had ever one penny. These personal matters are unsavory to me, and I take it for a great injury that thou puttest upon me a necessity of mentioning them. But I have yielded this once to thy unrighteous importunity, that thou mayest hereafter learn what to believe and utter, and make more conscience of thy censures and reports. And that thou mayst have the utmost relief that I can procure thee for the time to come, I shall agree with my Booksellers, to sell all that I publish at three farthings a sheet, and to print the price of every book at the bottom of the Title page.

Farewell.

October 17.

1658.

Richard Baxter.

