



Monergism

DISCOURSES ON

# The Lord's Supper

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# **Discourses on the Lord's Supper**

**by Stephen Charnock**

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## **A DISCOURSE OF THE END OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.—1 COR. 11:26.

THE Corinthians were a church planted by Paul, watered by a long preaching among them; but notwithstanding all his pains, he receives news of some corruptions crept in and overspreading that church. Some that minded the welfare of the Corinthian church, had

stirred it up to write to Paul for the decision of several cases, which were controverted among them. In this chapter the fifth case comes to be handled, about the ordering their public assemblies.

(1.) Concerning the carriage of men and women in the church. (2.) The celebration of the Lord's Supper. (3.) The use and exercise of spiritual gifts, chap. 12. In ver. 17, the apostle makes a transition from the first to the second, and taxeth them with their divisions, which were the ground of their other miscarriages.

Observe, Divisions in a church are usually attended with sad consequences. They despoil the church of its beauty and ornaments, and many times are an occasion of sullyng the beauty of divine institutions; they here hindered a communion one with another. All communion is founded upon union. Divisions shook that, and brought in gross miscarriages about the Lord's Supper; a disorderly meeting, one taking before another, and making the Lord's Supper a scrambling feast; discovering more passion one against another than a mindfulness of the sufferings of Christ; and their unworthy receivings provoked God to send among them deadly diseases, ver. 30. For the reformation of those abuses, the apostle reduceth them to the consideration of the first institution.

Observe, In all reformations, we are not so much to mind what this or that custom of the church is, when there is a clear word to walk by. Christ overthrowes polygamy by reducing the number of persons married to the first institution: Mat. 19:4, 9, 'God created male and female.' This miscarriage was chiefly in their ἀγάπαι, or banquets which they had before the supper, which were set up in imitation of Christ, who kept his last supper with his disciples, at the end whereof he instituted this sacrament. Now, in the eating of this, the rich brought their dainties, and ate to gluttony and excess, before the poor were met together, and left the scraps for the meaner sort, and thereby did shame them, ver. 22; i.e. did upbraid them with their poverty. Whence observe,

1. The community of goods, or a voluntary levelling, was not a standing institution in Paul's time; among the Corinthians you find it not in use. There were rich, and there were poor; distinctions among men; men were proprietors of their own goods.

2. How soon will corruptions creep into the best church! This mighty corruption, an epicurean carriage, crept into this knowing and well-gifted church betimes, while the great apostle was living, who had the conduct of them, and of all the churches of the Gentiles. The devil will sow his tares where God sows his wheat. As he opposed Christ at the very entrance into his office, to make his mediation insignificant, so he will endeavour to corrupt a church at the first entrance of the gospel, to make it altogether fruitless.

3. Human ceremonies are not to be urged, especially when they by abuse degenerate into superstition, carnality, and profaneness.\* The apostle, when he explains what he had 'received from the Lord,' and 'delivered to' the Corinthians, makes no mention of a divine institution of those ἀγάπαι, love-feasts, which they used in those days, in imitation of the supper which preceded the first institution of this ordinance. He speaks nothing in the defence of this custom, nor urgeth it upon them, but only presseth the institution. Divine institutions, because of God's sanction, are not to be laid aside, though abuses creep in. What is man's must be discarded, what is God's must be preserved. Tares ought to be separated from the wheat. This human ceremony might claim precedence of all others that wanted the stamp of divine authority, and that by reason of its seniority, more ancient than all those of a later date in the church; yet it being but human in its original, is laid aside, and not practised (that I know of) in any church in the world. Paul proves here the divine institution, not any superaddition by the prudence of man.

The Apostle,

1. Shews the end of the institution of this ordinance. In the repetition of the words of institution, ver. 23–25, 'This do in remembrance of

me.'

2. He shews the duty of communicants, in the text, 'Ye shew the Lord's death till he come.' This is rendered as a reason why Christ commanded them to eat and drink in remembrance of him, because in that action he would have them shew his death, and celebrate his praise for his sufferings in our stead.

Ὅσάκις, as often. The Lord's supper ought to be often administered. The frequency is implied, though how often is not declared. Christ's death is to be every day fixed in our thoughts; and to help our weakness, there should be a frequent representation of it to our sense, i.e. in such a way as Christ hath instituted, not as man may prescribe.

Ye. It is the duty of every particular person who communicates in this ordinance to shew Christ's death.

As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup. 'Eat,' not 'see.' This ordinance is not celebrated for the eye only, or for the ear; there must be union, there must be communicating.

Bread, cup. There is no transmutation, no transubstantiation; bread still, cup still; the subject for the adjunct, cup for the wine contained in it. It is the same bread and cup after the consecration in regard of their nature, not of their use, dignity, and efficacy. Bread, cup; the one eaten, the other drunk. Both must be communicated; bread and cup are not to be separated; Christians have a right to both. Papists have deprived the people of the cup, by the juggle of a concomitancy; because by partaking of the bread, which is the body of Christ, they partake of the blood too which is in it. Christ plainly obviates this error at the time of the institution, when he adds, in giving the cup, emphatically, Mat. 26:27, 'drink ye all of it;' and Mark, chap. 14:23, expressly adds, 'They all drank of it,' which is in neither place expressed of the bread. As if our Saviour, foreseeing this error introduced into the world, as he did, would, by a particular note all,

leave the authors of it without excuse. The most lively representation of his death, the comfort and end of it would be lost, which is signified by his blood.

Καταγγέλλετε, shew. Some take it in the indicative mood, as our translators, ye shew. It notes to us that by this ceremony the death of Christ is represented. Some take it in the imperative mood, and then the words are to be read thus, 'Shew you the death of Christ;' intimating that it is an indispensable duty, that as often as we eat this bread, and drink of this cup, we should have our thoughts and hearts full of the sufferings of Christ, meditations of him, and thanksgivings for him. It is not only a bare declaration of Christ's death, but of the benefits of it.

Till he come. It is a perpetual ordinance in the church. 'Till he come;' till he shew himself in his perfect majesty, that we may enjoy perfect glory with him. Till he come to judgment, when he 'shall come in that manner as he was taken up into heaven,' Acts 1:11. When remembrance of his death shall be swallowed up in the vision of his person, and fruition of the highest fruits of his sufferings, when remembrance shall be removed by sense. In the meantime, it is a standing monument and memorial of the sufferings of our Saviour.

And by the way, we may observe, that the church shall continue to the end of the world, because these mysteries are to be kept up till Christ put a period to this form of the creation. And the church only is the seat and subject of these institutions; they were appointed for the church, not for the world, i.e. the unbelieving world.

In the verse observe:

1. The action, eating, drinking.
2. The object, bread, this bread, this cup.
3. The end of the action, expressed by a command, shewing the Lord's death.

4. The frequency of it implied.
5. The durableness of it, till he come.

Doctrine.

1. The Lord's Supper is chiefly instituted for the remembering and shewing forth the death of Christ.
2. The Lord's Supper ought frequently to be celebrated.
3. The Lord's Supper is a lasting and continuing institution, not to be put down at the pleasure of any men.

For the first;

Doctrine. The Lord's Supper is chiefly instituted for the remembering and shewing forth the death of Christ.

It is not a bare historical remembrance of the death of Christ; for then.

1. Every profane man who assents to the history of Christ's death, and believes the acting of this tragedy on the cross, and hath a notional belief of the ends of it, might be partaker of this ordinance. But the apostle puts a bar to that: ver. 28, 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread;' so, not otherwise. There would be no need of self-examination if it were only an historical remembrance.
2. A man could not then receive more unworthily, or incur a greater damnation in this than in other acts. But here the apostle fixeth a particular guilt of the body and blood of Christ when received unworthily, vers. 27, 29.

As Christ's death was not a bare dying, but a death with high and glorious ends, so our remembrance of it is not to be a bare historical,



but a practical remembrance and declaration. As Christ's remembrance of the promises of his Father was not only an assent to the truth of them, but a recumbency on him for the performance, so our remembrance of the death of Christ ought to be. It is not a speculative remembrance only, as when a man sees a picture of a prince, but such a remembrance as a man hath when he sees the picture of a dear friend absent from him at that time; he remembers not only his person, but the mutual love between them, the actions his friend hath done for him, which stirs up a sense of gratitude at that time. In the handling this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. This is the end of the institution.

II. What it is in the death of Christ that is here remembered and shewn forth.

III. How we should shew forth this death.

I. The remembrance and declaration of the death of Christ is chiefly intended hereby. The Scripture declares this in the time of institution, the night wherein he was betrayed. The words of institution, 'This is my body, which is broken for you,' ver. 24; 'This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you,' Luke 22:20;\* and the command, 'Do this in remembrance of me,' evidenceth that all the preceding actions of breaking, taking, eating, are commemorative signs of Christ, to excite and confirm our faith in the apprehension of him and his merits.

For the explication consider,

1. God was always careful of appointing and preserving memorials of his favour. The pot of manna and Aaron's budding rod were to be preserved in the ark as standing memorials of God's kindness; stones were appointed to be set up for a memorial of the division of the waters of Jordan to give the Israelites passage to the conquest of Canaan, Josh. 4:5; the passover was instituted as a memorial of the Israelites' affliction,<sup>†</sup> and God's gracious protection of them from the

plagues of Egypt, their security from the destroying angel, who was commissioned to take away the lives of the Egyptians' firstborn, and indeed of all the wonders performed by God in their behalf in that memorable deliverance, as appears by the command for the celebration of it, Exod. 13:8, 9. At this passover it is supposed by some that they sang the song of Moses, Exod. 15, for the deliverance at the Red Sea, and after David's time the 78 Psalm, composed by Asaph, treating of the whole deliverance from Egypt and conduct to Canaan, and their own unworthy carriage towards God. And is there not much more reason for a standing memorial of that mercy of which all those were but the types? It hath been the custom of all nations to have an anniversary commemoration of those heroes who have been the instruments of some public happiness to them, and of all societies to commemorate their benefactors. And is there any reason to deny that to the great benefactor of mankind, the Redeemer of the world, Emmanuel, God with us? Shall poor temporary deliverances among the heathen be remembered (deliverance of the capitol by geese, as it was among the Romans), and shall not the great work of redemption, the contrivance of God, the business of heaven, the admiration of angels, the conquest of devils, and the delight of God, have special commemorations?

2. These memorials are necessary,

(1.) Because of the nature of our affections, which rather follow the orders of our sense than the commands of our souls, and are more excited by sensible than invisible objects. Therefore the Jews had Christ in the swaddling-bands of types as well as in the womb of a promise, something manifested to the eye as well as sounded in the ear. Most things we cannot understand but under sensible representations; we understand not God's power, goodness, justice, but by the objects we see those attributes conversant about. Hence are those frequent metaphorical resemblances of spiritual things in the Scripture; and our Saviour sets himself forth to us under the notions of bread, wine, bridegroom. Where there is also such a distance between our heads and our hearts that we can roll the most

saving truths in the one without transmitting any part of them to the other, there is need of something to quicken our affections: seasonable memorials renew seasonable thoughts and affections.

(2.) In regard of the inconstancy of our affections. We admire anything at the first notice and arrival, we adore it at the first sight, which by continuance grows more familiar. What our affections rouse themselves up to receive at the first approach, they afterwards, being glutted with the presence of, begin to flag, like the strings of an instrument, that sound well at the first tuning, but quickly slack and need a watchful ear and careful hand to wind them up. We want, therefore, those memorials to keep up our hearts in a warm and glowing temper. In things that concern God's glory and our own salvation, we are all like table-books, quickly worn out; every intruding thought, like a sponge, dasheth out what was written. When we see things acted before our eyes, then we remember what was acted upon the cross. When Christ was risen from the dead, then the disciples 'remembered the word Christ had spoken to them,' John 2:22. We are naturally dull, and want actual excitements to awaken our sleepiness, and balance our unsteadiness.

(3.) In regard to the natural ingratitude and enmity we have to a crucified Christ, and the weakness of faith. What the world did, that doth every man's heart naturally, account the cross foolishness. It is a matter of difficulty to raze out our jealousies of God, and bring God and the heart together. The trembling believer is apt to look upon God as an enemy rather than a Father, and thinks Christ too glorious to entertain such a wretch. We need these memorials of the bounty of God and kindness of a Redeemer, to stifle our suspicions of him. Who can cherish unworthy reflections on God, when he hath represented to his eyes the strokes God inflicted on the Redeemer? Who can resolve not to love Christ, who sees him bleeding, breaking, dying for them? Gal. 3:1. The disciples were afraid to perish, Mat 8:25, 26, when they had Christ in the same vessel with them; they betrayed a weakness of faith when they had Christ present with them, and had frequently beheld his miracles. How is our faith weak

when Christ is absent from us? He hath therefore instituted a symbol of his spiritual presence, about which our minds might exercise themselves, as well as the eyes of men did behold his body; that we might urge our hearts to believe his kindness, and settle it upon our affections, and chide ourselves for our unbelief at the sight of bleeding love.

## II. What it is in the death of Christ that is here set forth.

1. The painfulness of his death. It is the picture of him as he hung upon the cross, a man of sorrows, broken and bruised by his Father in the day of his great wrath and great love, when his body was torn, his soul in a dreadful agony, his side pierced, his blood shed. The substance of these, by the breaking of bread and pouring out of wine, is represented; the burden of God's wrath lying upon him, and his groanings under it, are here shadowed. A picture represents the lineaments, looks, and sorrows expressed in the face, which help the fancy, and guide it into more lively apprehensions. The mind of man can conceive more than the eye of man can see. This doth not of itself express the sorrows, cries, groans, agonies, strugglings of Christ; but nothing can be more auxiliary to our souls in the understanding, remembering, fancying of them, whereby the affections may be blown up, and impressions of a crucified Christ made upon our souls. Christ left behind him no other picture of himself but this. Here a wounded, broken, bleeding Christ is presented. Here we may see the sufferings of his body, his pains upon the cross; and here fancy may work about the unconceivable troubles of his soul, his heaviness to death, how his soul was made an offering for sin, Isa. 53:10, the wrath of God, the cup of bitterness, which if men or angels had but tasted, they would have staggered and fell headlong into hell. Here fancy may represent the piercing his temples by the thorns, and the dints made in his body, which the psalmist compares to furrows, Ps. 129:3.

This was the intent of

(1.) The ancient passover. The lamb was to be killed, the flesh roasted with fire, not boiled, the head, legs, purtenance, Exod. 12:6–9, which was to set forth the unexpressible sufferings of Christ in every part. Isaac on the wood, the sacrifices on the altar, the serpent on the pole, the striking the rock, were types prefiguring this, but differ from this sacrament. They were to prefigure what was promised, this to commemorate what hath been performed. They were not properly memorials of this. They might in some sense be memorials to remember God of the promise, but this is a memorial to mind us of the performance.

(2.) Of the elements of this sacrament. Bread signifies this suffering, as passing through various kinds of alterations (a sort of sufferings) to be made fit for food: reaped when ripe, thrashed when housed, ground to powder and baked to be made fit for bread. The actions testify the painfulness; bread broken discovers a broken Christ; wine poured out discovers a bleeding Christ. The bread testifies the sufferings of his body; the blood, the agonies of his soul, because the spirits whereby the soul acts are in the blood.\*

2. The intention of this death for us. It is in this ordinance represented as a sacrifice-death. He is 'our passover sacrificed for us,' 1 Cor. 5:7, 8. In his institution it was, 'my broken body for you, my shed blood for you,' as an expiatory sacrifice for the satisfaction of justice, appeasing of wrath, and thereupon the remission of sin, and collation of everlasting righteousness. On the cross it was given for us; in the sacrament it is given to us, to mind us what he did for us. It is to shew forth, not only his death, but the intention of his death for us; not for himself, or any sin of his own, for he was 'harmless, undefined,' Heb. 7:26, and a 'lamb without spot,' 1 Peter 1:19. There was no more need of his dying for himself than there is a necessity of our being glorious to make God happy. His sole intention was to be an offering to God for the removing of our guilt, the answering the charge of the law, the silencing the terrors of justice, which we were obnoxious to, had not Christ interposed himself as a sacrifice for us that both justice and mercy might be our friends.

3. The sufficiency of this death for us. It would never else be remembered. We remember no more than what was done; we remember a whole Christ broken. God by covenant with Christ could challenge no more; and justice, after the striking of that match, could demand no more. Christ paid all that he had to pay; his whole body was broken, his whole soul bruised, his blood shed; he gave up all the treasures he had: and this is represented in the supper. The cup Christ drank was full, and by his death he brought a greater glory to God than ever he had before; whence ariseth a redundancy of merit, an overflowing merit for ten thousand worlds, were they in being and in a sinful state.

4. The acceptableness of this death to God. All that Christ did, he did by order as his Father commanded him. Had not his death been acceptable to his Father, he would not have ordered us to remember it. The great actions God hath done for his people, and by which he hath got most glory, and which have been most delightful to him, he would have commemorated: the passover once a year; but this, as being the memorial of a thing more pleasing to him, often. It was 'a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour,' Eph. 5:2. He would have it remembered in heaven in the person of Christ, and remembered on earth in the symbols of his own appointment. His resurrection God would have remembered by the change of the Sabbath, but his death by a new and peculiar institution. Spices smell sweetest when pounded: his death is the greatest pleasure to God; he would have heaven and earth filled with the savour of it. The acceptation was laid in the cross. In the supper we remember his death to plead the acceptableness of it to God.

5. The present efficacy of this death. It is now of efficacy, and will be to the second coming of Christ. Why else should it be remembered; to what purpose should we commemorate it, if it did not retain an everlasting efficacy; if his blood, like wine, had lost its spirits, and his body, like bread, were putrefied and consumed since the departure of Christ out of the world? Some affirm that that blood of Christ which was shed, was not drank up by the ground, or dried up by the sun, or

steamed into the vapours; but was gathered up again by the power of God, and put into his veins.\* 'His body saw no corruption,' Acts 2:31; therefore no part of his body, not his blood, which was sacred, the blood of God, therefore not to be lost. As the soul and body of Christ, though separated, were united still to the person of the Son of God, his body being the body of the Son of God, his soul being the soul of the Son of God; so also his blood, though separated from the body when shed, and had not its natural motion to perform its natural end for the supply of the body, as the soul of Christ did not perform its natural end for the informing of the body when separated from it, yet not a drop of his blood was divided from his person. But howsoever this be, not a drop of that blood is lost as to the virtue and efficacy of it; and therefore when either pardon of sin is sealed, or purifying grace conferred in this ordinance, it is not by the sole remembrance of his death, but by the power of it efficaciously operating for and in the soul. Therefore this blood is opposed to corruptible things, 1 Pet. 1:18, intimating that the blood of Christ, in regard of its power and efficacy, doth not corrupt. As the sun sheds his light every day about the world, yet remains a fresh spring of new light in the air every morning, so this blood shed upon the cross loseth not its virtue, but is as operative as if we had stood under the cross, and had it dropping upon our souls at the instant of his sufferings. He did once 'offer himself a propitiation for sin,' but he remains a propitiation for ever. The sacrifice was but once performed, Heb. 9:28 and 10:14; that shows the reality of it; but it is often commemorated, to shew the perpetual virtue of it. This efficacy is therefore shewn forth in this ordinance.

### III. How we should shew forth and remember this death.

#### 1. Reverentially.

(1.) With a reverence of the holiness of God. God's hatred of sin is as high as his love to Christ; he hates sin as much as he loves his Son. He would never else have dealt so hardly with his Son for sin, whom he loved so dearly. He lamented over the loss of Jerusalem, Jer.

12:7–9; but to manifest his detestation of sin, he spared not his Son; had no relentings when he suffered for us.

(2.) With a reverence of the justice of God. It was more that the Son of God should thus pour out his soul, than if the whole world had been hurled into hell. God struck him till justice had a full revenge, and struck him with that wrath which would have tumbled us into unquenchable flames. Not the pleas of an infinite mercy, a mercy God delights in, could stop the pleas of an inexorable justice. What earthly father but would count the sufferings of his son as the rending of his own bowels, a destroying a model of himself? but to see an infinite gracious God rending the soul of a beloved Son, letting his enemies loose against him, standing by without any manifest relentings, and adding to that torture his own frowns, even that God who cannot see his people afflicted without yearning bowels and a troubled heart, yet to seem unconcerned at the death of his only Son; can we remember this without reverential adorations of the dreadful justice of God?

2. Holily. We must undertake such religious services with suitable dispositions of heart. Let none with irreverent hands touch those tremenda mysteria, which may make the hearts of sinners be broken with terror.

(1.) With mourning hearts for sin. A broken Christ must not be remembered without a broken heart; a bleeding Christ and a hardened spirit, a sighing Christ and a senseless heart, are unsuitable. Our passover must be eaten with bitter herbs, with sorrow for past transgressions; we should endeavour to be as much affected as if we had heard every piercing groan in the garden, and numbered every drop of that bloody sweat which trickled down upon him, and been present when the soldiers did so cruelly handle him and pierce him. The springs of our sorrow should be opened and gush out; for it was our sin he bore, and our debt he paid. The fixing our thoughts intently on the death of Christ would melt the ice in our



souls. We should look upon him till our hearts be set a-mourning, 'as for a firstborn,' Zech. 12:10.

(2.) With deep considerations of the cursed nature and demerit of sin. It must needs be bitter, killing, condemning, cursed sin, which brought Christ to such a bitter death. What a dreadful breach hath it made between God and us, that nothing but the blood of God can cement and solder? How are we able to answer for one sin, when Christ endured so much for the expiation of the least, as well as the greatest? For death was due to the least; had our sins had less guilt, yet since the least had been an offence against an infinite God, Christ could not have had a less suffering than essentially infinite to make an atonement for it. How can we poor potsherd stand under the stroke of an almighty arm, when the human nature of Christ, though united to the deity, furnished with an eternal Spirit, attended with a gracious assistance, and assurance of a glorious success, startled at it, and hung down his head? Our iniquities met upon him, Isa. 53:6, like a mighty torrent that bears down all before it; and who but infiniteness could have stood against such a force? See how sin pressed him down, who upheld the whole fabric of the creation by the word of his power, Heb. 1:3, and could, without any pains, have bore the weight of millions of worlds. Had not sin deserved so great a punishment, Christ should not have suffered it; a God of infinite compassion (and were there magis and minus in that which is infinite, more stirred up towards Christ than towards all creatures) would not have laid so great a load of sufferings upon him had not sin deserved it.

(3.) With strong resolutions against sin. It is a sad thing to be Christians at a supper, heathens in our shops, and devils in our closets. To come with a heart resolved to go on in impenitency, is to be worse than Judas, who was struck with remorse at the beginning of Christ's sufferings, when he saw him condemned. Shall he have relentings for his treachery, when he saw him ready to suffer, and we cherish intentions to sin at the representations of his sufferings already fully executed? We should then be not the receivers, but the

murderers of Christ, tread him under foot, and make the table of the Lord a shambles, and bring the guilt of that blood upon our heads, which, if sprinkled upon our consciences, would purify them from the guilt of all other sins. The Jews took the passover standing, to shew their intentions to leave Egypt; so must we resolve to leave all correspondence with those enemies which have murdered the Redeemer. The passover must be eaten with unleavened bread; no leaven of sin must be mixed with our services, no leaven of hypocrisy with our lives, 1 Cor. 5:7, 8. We must eat his flesh and drink his blood, that we may live to the praise of his grace; shew it forth in the supper, that we may shew it forth in our lives. The thoughts of Christ's death should be an antidote against the poison of sin.

3. Believingly. We should in this act look upon it by faith, as the meritorious cause of our good. If we cannot believe when we see the price laid down for us and the ransom paid, when shall we believe?

(1.) We should profess our adherence to him. The shewing forth his death is solemnly to cleave to him alone for the pardon of our sins, the justification of our persons, and sanctification of our natures. There was to be in the passover a solemn publishing the nature of that deliverance, the great kindness of God in it, and the ends for which he delivered them. The Israelites that descended from Jacob were 'partakers of the altar 'by eating of the sacrifice, 1 Cor. 10:18; i.e. they professed themselves to be of the Jewish religion and worship by eating with them; as they that ate of things sacrificed to idols in the idols' temple did by that action profess themselves the worshippers of that idol, and had fellowship with devils in it.

(2.) Look up to Christ in his death as a conqueror. It is 'the Lord's death;' he was a lord in his death, he was a king upon the cross as well as a priest, as he is a priest in heaven as well as a king; he hath both his priestly garment and royal crown; the cross was his victorious chariot, as well as the instrument of his execution. He then nailed our sins to the cross; he then triumphed over the powers of darkness, sin, Satan, and hell, Col. 2:14, 15. He was a conqueror in

his death, spoiling the devil of his prey, and snatching the captives out of his hands; his death was his victory, his ascension his triumph. Regard it, shew it forth, not simply as a death, but a conquering death.

(3.) Plead this death with God. This is believably to shew it forth. This ordinance upon the earth is a counterpart of what Christ is now pleading and urging to his Father. Our pleas on earth should keep company with Christ's pleas in heaven. It is the best argument to prevail with God, who, though he may deny our prayers, will not deny his Son's blood. It is the best argument, to quicken our prayers. Present God with his covenant sealed: God will not deny his own hand and seal; present him with this performance of Christ's priestly office, which is the only office he hath confirmed by an oath, Ps. 110:5. He is a holy God, and will not deny his own oath. Plead this death, for such pleas honour his wisdom, glorify his love, own his truth; plead it, and all God's attributes will plead it with you. God himself will join issue with you, for God's attributes are the same with himself. This time is the fittest time to prevail with God. When is a child most prevalent in his intercession, but when he is most exact in his obedience? This was the highest testimony of Christ's obedience, Philip. 2:8, and engageth God as a Father to shew the choicest tokens of his love. As Christ was most obedient when he suffered it, we are most obedient when we believe it, approve of it, and plead it. When Christ died, he deposited all his merits in the hands of his Father. Go therefore to God for the legacies Christ left at his death.

(4.) Plead this death against sin and Satan. Shew it against every charge. We are like to meet with many rubs, sharp and weighty accusations, too true for us to repel without the vigorous force of this death. Whatsoever accusation Satan can present against you is answered here. Have we sinned? Christ hath suffered for sin; have we sinned many sins? Christ hath shed much blood, not only a drop; have we sinned great sins? the death of Christ for sin was the death of the Son of God. Can the sins of men be stronger to condemn than

the blood of God is to save? We have deserved hell, but Christ hath suffered it. The wrath of God, which is the spirit and quintessence of hell, lighted upon him. Christ's death will answer all the subtle charges of the devil, appease the terrors of a raging conscience, silence the curses of the law, and quench the flames of hell.

#### 4. Humbly.

(1.) Consider in this representation what we should have suffered. Those strokes laid upon Christ were due to us; on us should those vials of wrath have been poured. We should have been the mark of all the arrows of God's vengeance. The tragedy acted on Christ should have been acted on us. Had that justice which was due to us seized us, we should have been held prisoners for ever. What power could have rescued us from Almightyness? Those terrors were marching against us. Christ then changed states with us, took our sins to answer for them, and gave us his righteousness to meet the justice of God withal. He suffered the pains of hell, the wrath of God, and purchased heaven for us, which he might have kept without emptying himself, and sent us down to hell. The sufferings were endured by him, but the right to them was ours; it was 'for our transgressions he was wounded, for our iniquities he was bruised, for our peace that he was chastised,' Isa. 53:5.

(2.) Consider the deplorable misery wherein we were. How deeply were we sunk into the mire, that nothing could pluck us out but the Son of God! How strongly was the stain of sin impressed in our souls, that nothing could wash it off but the blood of God; how enthralled to the devil, that nothing could give us liberty but the death of Christ; how obnoxious to the wrath of God, that not the entreaties of Christ, but the voice of his blood only, could procure our redemption from the anger of that God, who had infinite compassions as well as infinite justice!

5. Thankfully. Such mercies as the death of Christ require high and raised thanksgivings. It is the greatest disingenuity not to pay

thankfulness for a free mercy. The supper is a feast upon a sacrifice, as feasts followed the Jewish sacrifices. Christ was offered to God as a sacrifice, and returned to us as a banquet. He was ground by the wrath of God to be bread fit for us to feed on.

(1.) Blessing God for his love in offering up his Son to death. In this death God set open the flood-gates of mercy, and showered down the choicest blessings on the heads of believers. What is creating to redeeming love? In creation God gave us a being, in redemption he gives us his Son, not only to live with us, but die for us, and afterwards to live for ever for our happiness.

(2.) Blessing Christ for his love in dying. Had not he drunk this bitter cup, we had not tasted a drop of mercy; we had never triumphed if Christ had not died. What thankfulness is due to him because he died for us? How much greater thankfulness is due, since he bore our sins, which is more than death? Who can express that dreadful conflict, when he did sweat clots of blood? He bore the torments of hell in pondere, if not in specie; the tantundem, if not the idem. The remembrance of it being commanded by him, witnesseth the solemn pleasure he took in suffering death for us; unwelcome and forced things would not be delightfully remembered by him, or ordered to be remembered by us, as a mark of favour.

(3.) The costliness of this redemption by the death of Christ should excite us to shew it forth with thankfulness. Our redemption this way cost God more than thousands of millions of worlds would have cost him. There was no need of shedding any blood to make them; but the best that ever was or can be was shed to restore us: a word would create them, blood must redeem us. It hath cost God more than all the angels in heaven ever cost him; and should it not be remembered with thankfulness?

(4.) The gain we have by it should excite us to it. Death was bitter to him, but comfortable to us. His punishment was our discharge; and he died for us that we might live with him. What gain we have by his

resurrection and ascension is originally from his death. It is 'by the blood of the Lamb' that the devil is 'overcome,' Rev. 12:11. By his blood are the promises sealed; by his blood all the treasures of grace, mercy, peace, happiness, riches of glory are gathered together for us.

Use 1. If the Supper be a shewing the death of Christ, it is then no sacrifice, but the commemoration of a sacrifice. Sacrifices imply some kind of expiation and atonement; this is a natural notion. The heathens thought by them to appease the anger of their gods. But the Supper is not intended as an expiation of sin, or a satisfaction to God, but a representing that oblation which Christ made of himself by death, which was propitiatory, and therefore is rather a feast upon a sacrifice, than a sacrifice. In a sacrifice, something is offered to God; in a sacrament, something is exhibited to us.

2. How should the death of Christ run much in our thoughts, and our affections be raised! Such affections we should endeavour to have, as we believe those good disciples that stood by him, and saw him hanging and bleeding on the cross, had. And our affections should be of another nature; for it is a question whether they understood the ends of his death, because none of them expected his resurrection. If we can see Christ pierced and not mourn, we may well question whether we have a spirit of grace in us, for such a frame is a proper fruit of this spirit, Zech. 12:10. We should travel to the Mount of Olives, where Christ prayed and wept; enter into the garden, the place of his agony. See how humbly he went, bearing the cross; take notice of the pains he endured, the mocks and scoffs flung at him; conceive, if we can, the dolorous cries of Christ, when he had lost the sense and sweetness of his Father's love; and from thence let our affections get warmth. How should we set Christ before our eyes, and have the freshest remembrance of his dying love!

Doct. 2. The Lord's Supper is to be frequently celebrated and participated of. As often, implying, it ought often to be done.

For explication.

1. How often is not determined. There is no fixed time for the administration of this prescribed by any precept, no day commanded for it; but the celebration of it on the Lord's day was the primitive practice. No day fitter, in regard of its separation to God, in regard of public meeting, in regard of remembrance, both of the death of Christ and his resurrection; the battle and the victory, his death in the supper, his resurrection in the day. Nor how often on that day is it determined by any precept, whether weekly or monthly. The performance is commanded by Christ: 'Do this in remembrance of me,' is urged by the apostle in this chapter, but how often is not prescribed. God was more punctual in the Jewish sacraments: circumcision was fixed the eighth day, the passover annually in March.

2. Nor can there be a constant time fixed for every particular person; because there are varieties in the cases of good men, who may, by some emergency, find themselves hindered one time, and not another. Sometimes men's various callings administer to one more distractions than the calling of another, that they cannot rightly dispose themselves, nor spend so much time as is necessary to a due preparation; and there is more fruit by one sacrament, when men come with a suitable frame, than by a hundred slightly approached to. Though the passover was annually fixed, and under a severe penalty to be celebrated, yet there was a dispensation allowed to those that were under ceremonial uncleanness, or engaged in business on a journey, Numb. 9:13; but those were diversions brought upon them by the providence of God, not contrived by themselves, which rendered them excusable. If any man had left his journey to that time, which he might have performed at another, and had delayed it on purpose that he might avoid the attendance on that ordinance, I question whether he had been within the compass of God's indulgence. Yet in those cases, though they were dispensed with at the first celebration of it on the fourteenth day of the first month, they were ordered to keep it the fourteenth day of the next month, and not to stay till the next annual revolution, Numb. 9:10, 11. Yet we find the passover omitted all the time they were in the

wilderness, as well as circumcision; and some observe that there was but one passover kept all the time of Joshua. And so great were the corruptions in the Jewish church, that when Josiah came to the crown in the eighth year of his age, and began in the eighth year of his reign to 'set his heart towards God' (2 Chron. 34:3), yet it was ten years before he could prepare them to keep the passover, which was kept in the eighteenth year of his reign, 2 Chron. 35:19. It was commendable in him to restore it, sinful in the people to neglect it, since it was settled by a plain and standing command.

3. It was anciently often participated of. Some\* think every day, from that of Acts 2:46, 'They continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house,' in analogy to the daily sacrifice in the temple. Others understand it of their frugal and charitable entertainments of one another. That it was every Lord's day, is out of question by the ancient writings declaring the custom of the church. And Acts 2:42, the breaking bread, which is understood by most of the sacramental bread, is joined with doctrine. They would lay in a viaticum and provision in those hard and stormy times, when they expected to be snatched away by the fury of persecutors before the next day of public meeting. And this was their custom, to join this to other acts of worship on the Lord's day: Acts 20:7, 'And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread.' And this was afterwards kept up in the church in the time of Justin Martyr, and by some in the time of Austin, long after the other, which practice was perhaps grounded on Ezek. 43:27: 'And it shall be upon the eighth day, and so forward, the priest shall make your burnt-offerings upon the altar, and your peace-offerings, and I will accept you, saith the Lord;' a prophecy of gospel times, and the cessation of the ceremonial law of daily sacrifices; by burnt-offerings being meant the Lord's Supper, the remembrance of the great burnt-offering whereby our peace was made; and by peace-offering, prayer and thanksgiving, which are called sacrifices in Scripture, Heb. 13:15; and on the Lord's day, being the eighth day, following upon the seventh, the Jewish Sabbath. It is likely it is not absolutely necessary that it should be administered



every Lord's day, when the word is preached. The passover, the Jewish sacrament, was but annual, though Moses, the law of Moses, was read every Sabbath in the synagoge. The celebration came to be more seldom, because the frequency of it begat a coldness in the affections of the people, and the commonness occasioned too much contempt of it. The esteem and reverence of this ordinance was dashed upon this rock. The duty is extraordinary; they are tremenda mysteria. Great preparations are necessary to great duties; affections must be much exercised, which are wound up to a higher pitch by the novelty and rarity, and flag by the commonness of an excellent thing. The commonness of fasts in our days, and even at this time, hath driven true humiliation almost out of doors.

4. Yet to be frequent in it is agreeable to the nature of the ordinance, and necessary for the wants of a Christian. By too much fasting we often lose our stomachs. The passover indeed was annual, God fixed it to that time; but they had their daily sacrifices in the temple, which were types of Christ, and remembrancers to them of what was in time to be exhibited. We have none but this settled by Christ as an ordinance of commemoration of what hath been exhibited; therefore we ought not, for the time, to conform ourselves only to an annual custom. It is not to be neglected out of a wilful contempt, or a pretence of humility. Disobedience is not a part of humility, but the fruit of pride against God; and though a sense of unworthiness may be so great as to hinder a free and cheerful approach, and deter for a time, yet there ought to be endeavours to get rid of those clouds. We must not rest in lazy and idle complaints. That is no true sense of our own unworthiness which hinders us from a necessary duty.

Frequent it should be. The too much deferring doth more hurt than the frequent communicating. The oftener we carefully and believingly communicate, the more disposed we shall be for it.\* Abstinence from it can never be good, but ex accidenti, either for defect of a due disposedness, or to excite a greater reverence; but to communicate believingly is good, per se, in itself. Now that which is good in itself is to be preferred before that which is good

accidentally. If we abstain from it for reverence, we may the rather come for reverence; for if it be worthily received, it increaseth our reverence of God, and affection to him. That is the best reverence of God which owns his authority.

It ought not to be neglected, upon these reasons:

1. Because of the author. It is a feast of God's providing, to which he invites us; to neglect it is a contempt of God's rich provision and gracious condescensions. The great God appointed not any trifling ordinance; his wisdom appoints none but what his power can make worthy instruments; his goodness will appoint none but what his love will make highly beneficial: the contempt of it is a slighting both of his wisdom and grace. It is a command immediately from Christ, and therefore the command of God, who hath approved of him and everything he did, and set his seal to this commandment of our Saviour's, and all the rest. Had it not been agreeable to his Father's will, he had not been advanced to his royal dignity to sit upon his throne. It is Christ's command, whom we are bound to obey, by virtue of our allegiance to him, by virtue of the salvation we hope for by him, by virtue of the affectionate obligations we have received from him. It is his command, whom we must own as our Lord, if we expect him as our Saviour: Luke 22:19, 'This do in remembrance of me.' It is not left at liberty, do if you will, but this do. He is our Lord, and he is our Saviour; not only our Saviour, but our dying Saviour. If his death be to be valued as the ground of our happiness, his legacies are to be esteemed as a part of our privilege. He that was going to lay down his life for us, would not appoint what was unnecessary for our present state; yea, were it of no use to us, it is enough that it hath his sanction, whose sole authority deserves to be remembered by us. It was the breaking a positive command, in the eating the forbidden fruit, lost Adam paradise. If God pitcheth upon any means, though never so weak in themselves, they shall be effectual, and means seeming more powerful in themselves shall effect nothing. If the blast of rams' horns be ordained for the overthrow of the walls of Jericho, Josh. 6:5, they shall do that which he hath appointed. If they

be thought contemptible after God's order, all the battering engines in the world shall prove ineffectual to gain the victory. If Jordan be appointed for the healing Naaman's leprosy, 2 Kings 5:10, the waters of Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, shall never be medicinal. When God appointed lamps for the defeat of the Midianites, Judges 7:20, had Gideon slighted them as too weak, and assaulted them with his numerous host, he had received a rout instead of a victory. When God orders any instrument of conveyance, all other means will be successful; and not only so, but God will be offended, because his institution is contemned; and what can then reasonably be expected from a slighted God?

2. The time when Christ instituted it shews it not worthy of our neglect. It was a little before his death: 1 Cor. 11:23, 'The same night in which he was betrayed he took bread.' Good men (much less would a good and bountiful Saviour) do not use to employ themselves in trivial concerns, when they are near expiring. That which was instituted, when wrath began visibly to march against him, Judas upon the point of betraying him, and is to continue till his second coming, is not without a desirable fruit. Had it been a needless ceremony, he would not have breathed out a word for its institution; had it been an institution of a light concern, some other time would have been chosen by him for the settlement of it. We may gather the necessity, as well as the value of it, from the time of its institution, which shews that there is something worthy in it of our esteem, and undeserving our neglect. The last words, actions, legacies of dying friends, are never thought matters wholly to be neglected. Joseph's brethren questioned not their pardon from Joseph for the injury they had done him, when they used so powerful an argument as the command of their dying father: Gen. 50:16, 17, 'Thy father did command before he died;' and shall we undervalue, by a wilful neglect, the commands of a dying Saviour, settled by him just before he went to remove the wrath of God from us upon himself?

3. The ends of it declare the unworthiness of neglecting it.

(1.) The remembrance of Christ. This was the end, and twice repeated, 1 Cor. 11:24, 25. In the giving the bread, ver. 24; in the cup, ver. 25. We are naturally unmindful of God, ungrateful to Christ; we need something to renew our remembrance of him. He hath left us this dark glass, wherein we may see his face till he return with a full glory; and is it an affection to him never to look upon his picture, the medal of himself, wherein he hath engraven the tracks of his dying love; all that he did, all that he purchased, all his fulness, all his treasures, wherein we may behold him as a Redeemer, pouring out his blood for us, as a sanctifier pouring his blood into us, as a benefactor opening his enriching treasures to us, as a supplier providing for all our wants? How can we say we love him, if we do not mind him? What value have we for him, if he be not in our thoughts? Well, but we may remember Christ otherways without this ceremony. We may, but do we? Do you frequently ponder upon him; are your thoughts of him edged with choice and ravishing affections to him; doth not the body of death hinder you from thinking of the Lord of life? But suppose you are not one minute forgetful of his love, doth it consist with your professed affection to him to choose your own ways of remembering him, and neglect his? Suppose we had a friend who had redeemed us from the galleys, restored us from servitude, redeemed our lives, instated us in a large inheritance, and was to take a long journey, promising to return again, leaving with us his picture, which he would have us look upon at some special seasons, and express in that method a particular mindfulness of him. Though we could not without an excusable ingratitude forget him had we not that picture, yet it were but an unworthy return to deny the observance of so small an order to a friend to whom we owe ourselves. This is all the picture Christ hath left of himself; he never appointed any images or crucifixes, never imprinted the features of his face upon Veronica's napkin. Is it not ingratitude to neglect the remembrance of him in his own method, when he might have put hard conditions upon us; and when it is not a mere sight of him, but a spiritual feast with him, wherein we may suck his very blood into the veins of our souls, as well as the wine into those of our bodies? The primitive Christians used commemorations of the martyrs,

whose blood they counted the seed of the church; and shall the stated commemorations of that blood be neglected, which is the foundation, the price, and the purifying fountain of the church?

(2.) It is a seal of the covenant. This is the common nature of a sacrament, to be a seal of the righteousness or justification with God by faith in Christ, Rom. 4:14.\* As a seal affixed to a writing conveys to a man the lands and goods named in the writing. It is not only a sign which represents, but a seal which confirms, the benefit; not a bare picture, but a seal whereby pardon and the whole design of salvation is passed over to us: Luke 22:28, 'This cup is the new Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.' It is a confirmation of the rich charter of God. There is a conveyance, take, eat; take, drink; take Christ with all his treasures, with all his graces. This is a pledge of the promise, a pawn given you for the glory to be bestowed upon you. He seals it to the eye by the elements, and to a believing heart by the Spirit. It seals not the truth of the death of Christ, or the truth of your faith. It supposeth faith in the communicant, and supposeth the death of Christ in the institution; but it seals the right of faith, and the interest of faith. It is a seal of the righteousness of faith, of the interest of faith in that righteousness it lays hold on, as the seal of a deed seals the right and interest of the person in that land conveyed to him by the deed. What there is in Christ, is sealed to us in the sacrament for our comfort; the privileges he hath purchased, and the graces he is endowed with; and when you have this seal you have arguments for prayer, and power to enforce them. Lord, here is thy bow in the cloud, a sign that thou wilt not drown the world; here is thy seal in the sacrament, a sign that thou wilt not charge my sin upon me, which hath been charged upon my Saviour. It was told me that it was a body broken for me, blood shed for me. I have taken it upon this account, I have taken this seal, I have covenanted to obey thee, I am willing and desirous, and I will be industrious to do it; be a God keeping covenant with me and truth for ever. The honour of God lies at pawn in his seal, whereby strong consolation cannot be denied to those that lay hold upon Christ in it. As the passover was a pledge as well as a memorial, a pledge of a spiritual as well as memorial of a

temporal deliverance, so is the supper a pledge of what is to come, as well as a memorial of what is past; a pledge of all the fruits of the death of Christ yet behind. Should this then, that is so desirable and confirming a seal, be neglected, which we may believingly plead as God's act and deed, when it is not a bare stamp of a seal, which signifies nothing but the image upon the seal; a seal to a deed which gives the assurance of the advantages in the deed, and an interest in the contents of the deed, and what is conveyed by it.

(3.) It is a renewing our covenant with him. It is a federal rite wherein God exhibits, on his part, Christ and his benefits to us, and we profess our subjection and obedience to him, laying more solemn vows upon ourselves; whence they were called sacraments, the word signifying a military oath, whereby soldiers oblige themselves to be true to their general and the cause they fought for. And Pliny saith,\* he learned it of some Christians, that at their meeting they did *sacramento se obstringere, ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, &c.* Covenants are always mutual, something to be done by us as well as for us. God seals the benefits of the covenant on his part, and we seal to the duties of the covenant on ours. It strengthens us in the assurance of the benefits promised, and engageth us to a performance of the duties required. The exhibiting the signs is the seal on God's part; our receiving the signs is the seal on our part. By taking them we acknowledge that we stand to the conditions, and restipulate with God again that we will be his; and upon this striking hands with God, we claim a right, and lay hold upon his seals and plead them. You avouch God to be your God, Deut. 26:16–18, obliging yourselves to a greater distance from sin, and detestation of it; divorce from it to a more quickened obedience, vigorous faith, holy life, and exacter service; fetching strength from the death of Christ in the supper to this end. Is not this desirable, to be in covenant with God, to have God in covenant with us, to have it more assured on both parts, which is the felicity and security of a creature?

(4.) It is a communion with God. As the partaking of things sacrificed to idols was a fellowship with devils, 1 Cor. 10:20, so the partaking of that which was sacrificed to God, is a fellowship with God. There is in this action more communion with God (though not the sole act of communion, as some say) than in any other religious act. Prayer is an act of homage; praise an act of gratitude. We have not so near a communion with a person, either by petitioning for something we want, or returning him thanks for a favour received, as we have by sitting with him at his table, partaking of the same bread and the same cup. In all nations the nearest fellowship consists in acts of this nature. The eating of the supper, as the eating of sacrifices, is a federal rite between God and the believer, signifying that there is a covenant of friendship between him and them. It is the Lord's table, and what feasted and cheered the heart of God in heaven, viz., the body and blood of Christ, God gives us to feast our souls on earth, so that we do in a manner eat and drink with him in this love banquet. Take, eat, manifests a communion; Christ is really presented to us, and faith really takes him, closes with him, lodgeth him in the soul, makes him an indweller; and the soul hath a spiritual communion with him in his life and death, as if we did really eat his flesh and drink his blood presented to us in the elements. Eating signifies taking in Christ as our own, his righteousness, and whatsoever is his in communion with him. Is this a privilege to be neglected? To sit at God's table, partake of his dainties, that which he doth most highly value, and deserves the value of the creature infinitely above the sitting at the table of the greatest monarch on earth; that which was the sweet savour to God upon the cross, is offered to us as a feast upon the table; and we eat that body and drink that blood which atoned God, and thereby have a communion with him in his pleasure and delight.

4. The benefits of this ordinance require frequency. As everything hath its use in creation, so likewise in redemption; God made nothing in vain in the one, and appoints nothing in vain in the other.

These benefits are many.

(1.) Weakening of sin; not physically but morally. The lively representation and consideration of the death of Christ, with all its circumstances, is a strong incentive and assistance to the mortifying sin in us; and there is no branch of the body of death, but some consideration or other fetched from the death of Christ, hath a virtue to destroy. How can any be proud when he sees Christ lay down his life in the form of a mean man; how can he be covetous, when he sees Christ turning his back upon the profits of the world? Christ upon the cross, viewed by a sparkling eye of faith, would work the same effect in our souls, which the looking upon the serpent in the wilderness wrought in the Israelites' poisoned bodies, expelling the venom from the vitals and out-works of the members, and abating the fury of a corrupt paroxysm. Now as feathered arrows will fly further, and pierce deeper, than when they are carried by their own weight only,\* so such considerations, when helped by sensible representations, do more excite the faculty to a vigorous operation by a more sensible affecting the mind. The word declares the evil of sin, and the sacrament shews it in the person of our Saviour; sin is known by the word to be deadly, and it is seen to be so in the supper. Then is the soul most affected against sin, when God's indignation against it is manifested, when it beholds Christ made a curse, and bearing all that the law denounceth against sin, and sees the desert of sin and the terrors of wrath. Never doth sin look so ghastly, and repentance so sorrowfully, as when Christ and the soul meet together in this ordinance. The looking upon Christ opens the spring of sorrow, Zech. 12:10. In this we take a crucified Christ that we may have crucified sins. The very approach to this ordinance, kindles resolutions against corruption, and smothers the flames of sin in the soul. Who that understands the nature of sin, and the evil consequents of it, would be without such a benefit? Are there no invading temptations to be rooted, no indwelling sins to be expelled, no distractions to be settled; is there not still a root of bitterness always sprouting, an inward serpent always brooding, an Egyptian furnace in our hearts, sending out its sparks; must not the root be more withered, the poison cast out, the indwelling sin tamed, the furnace quenched? Do we not then need all the assistances to faith in



the mortifying death of Christ? As Christ upon the cross expiated sin, so Christ in the supper mortifies sin by his Spirit, and purgeth those iniquities which are as a veil between the face of God and the joy of our souls. Faith acts more lively against its enemy, when it considers that the blood was shed for the soul, as to justify, so to sanctify. As there must be a removal of those humours which lurk in the body, whereby the vital principle is stifled, and growth rebated, so there must be a removal of those spiritual diseases which hinder the raising our heads higher towards heaven.

(2.) Nourishment of the soul. In regard of the insensible decay of the spirits of the body, there is need of a continual supply to recruit them, and keep them up in their due vigour; our souls stand in no less need of being succoured by a feast of fat things full of marrow. The flesh hath its provisions, and grace must have hers. In the nourishment of the body, the meat, by the vital heat in the stomach, is turned into the substance of the body; so by a believing participation of Christ in the sacrament, we are turned into the image of Christ, and nourished up by it to eternal life. His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed, John 6:65; he is given to us as nourishment: 'Take, eat, This is my body,' as nourishment to be incorporated with us; the bread is the sign of his body, and his body is the bread of the soul; the element conveys vigour to the body, and the thing signified strength to the soul, and recruits it with new spirits. What bread and wine do physically convey to the body, which is strength, comfort, nourishment, that doth the body and blood of Christ by faith convey to the soul, quickening, comforting, strengthening, cherishing grace. As the new creature is brought into being only by the power of Christ, so it is maintained by the blood of Christ only, and Christ hath provided this to be both our meat and our medicine, our food and our antidote, to revive our soul, and cure and prevent our diseases, to repair the decays which the remainders of sin and evil humours cause in our souls. It is not a naked remembrance; that would be in breaking the bread, and pouring out the wine, by which actions are signified the death of Christ; but nutrition is intended, therefore the bread is eaten, the wine drunk;

our bodies need daily bread; the maintaining the life cannot consist with a total abstinence from food. Who but a madman would be so cruel to himself as to deny his faint body its ordinary relief, and its stated meals? Are any of our souls so fat and flourishing as to need no more spiritual food; are we grown up to the degree and state of angels who never eat nor drink? If we would not condemn the food of our bodies, which common providence prepares for us, have we any more reason to condemn the food of our souls, which rich grace provides for us? As we cannot expect healthful nourishment from corn, but as dressed according to various methods, so we cannot expect nourishment from Christ but in the way of his own appointments.

(3.) Increase and exercise of grace. Christ is the storehouse and fountain of all the treasures of life and peace, but his ordinances are the channel. Though Christ hath treasures to enrich us, yet he will choose the way of conveyance himself. By virtue of that principle whereby bodies live, they grow up to that stature which is convenient for them, and their growth is promoted by those means which maintain life in them. It is eaten, it is drunk, to promote our growth as well as maintain our lives. Grace is increased by Christ; he is the finisher as well as the author, Heb. 12:2; and therefore the increaser of it, laying by degrees one stone upon another, till he completes it by the top stone; dressing the plant to a greater flourishing. This ordinance, therefore, is of frequent use for the building up and bringing forth more lively and juicy fruits. The elements, bread and wine, are not only nourishing, but strengthening, and so is the thing signified by them. Some speak of a garden of balsam trees in Egypt which bring forth no fruits unless they be watered with a neighbouring fountain, wherein the blessed virgin was reported often to have washed our Saviour. It is true of grace, the balsam-tree in the soul, which will not thrive unless watered by the blood of Christ. Faith is increased thereby; as the oftener the word is heard, so the oftener sacraments are used, the more doth faith thrive. The same arguments which first persuaded us to assent to the truth of a thing, the more they are impressed upon us, the more sensible they are

made to us, the more they do continue and increase that persuasion; and according to the thriving of faith is the vigour of all other graces. Where should we find this vigour for our graces, but in the body and blood of him who is the fountain of all grace to us? This was instituted, indeed, while our Saviour was mortal, but it conveys a spiritual immortality to our souls, because it receives its strength and efficacy from his resurrection. It is here the smoking flax may rise into a flame, and the bruised reed find its support and repair; and the spirit may be renewed even in the infirmities of the flesh. If we come with weak grace and strong breathings, we may return with strong grace and full satisfaction. Do not little sparks need frequent and gentle blasts to blow them up? Proficiency is our duty; we must press forward towards the mark, we must run our race; it is our duty, then, to take our viaticum, or provision, to enable us thereto. Why do we come to the word but to have grace either wrought or increased? Why should any believer, then, neglect the other means of God's appointment? Sacraments are the marts wherein we trade for an increase of our stock, as well as the word. Since, therefore, we are subject to decays, and liable to changes and wants in our spiritual condition, we stand in need of a rooting and establishing ordinance. If we would maintain the fire, it must not be by removing the fuel. If our stomachs be lost, it is a sign our growth is stopped. Is our faith so strong that it needs no further confirmation; our grace mounted to that height that it needs no further steps; our desires so sharp as that they cannot receive any keener edge? It is an ordinance wherein grace is much exercised, and more unitedly about its object, Christ; and were there no other advantage than this, to have an opportunity to strike up all our graces together, our clasping faith and our melting repentance, our flaming love and our nimble desires, it were enough to make the ordinance itself desirable to a Christian, since there is an unspeakable comfort in the very sound of him. But so excellent an ordinance cannot be without a more excellent benefit.

(4.) Sense and assurance of love often comes in by it. Wine is comforting. In no ordinance is Christ so particularly applied, 'Take, eat, this is my body.' It concerns Christ to make them welcome to his

table that come with hearts thirsting for him. Christ was known by the breaking of bread, when the disciples knew him not before in his opening the Scripture, Luke 24:30, 31. Gladness attended the keeping of the passover, 2 Chron. 30:21, 26. Great joy, then, in Jerusalem, not in the neglect of it. The primitive Christians continued in their 'gladness of heart' by 'breaking bread from house to house,' Acts 2:46. Much more surely by breaking bread with Christ in the supper. It is the most probable time of the Spirit's performing the great office, which is to bring things to remembrance, when we are engaged in an ordinance, whose chief design is to bring Christ in his expiatory death to remembrance; when the office of the Spirit, and the end of the institution meet together, it is the most likely time for the Spirit to exercise his office and join in with the end of the sacrament, to shew the high and heavenly things of our Saviour. There is a sweetness in a promise, but more in a promise drawn into covenant with all its ramifications. God's seal, as well as his oath, is for confirmation; his word is sufficient, but lest that should be staggered at, he hath added his oath; if that should leave any doubts, he hath fixed his seal, all which are the highway to a comfortable assurance. The sin within us, and the devil without us, are always raising vapours, which gather into clouds, filling us with doubts, and hindering the sense of God's comfortable face, staggering our hopes, and making us question that love which is grounded upon so many promises. God hath in this given us a pledge of his love, and a ground of assurance, when we have Christ printed clearer in his sufferings and his love, visibly represented as made a curse in our stead, a sacrifice bearing his sins in our body, and expiating them by his blood, and this Christ taken into our souls, and pleaded to God as our security. Thus hath Christ given his body for us, and left his body with us as a pawn, a pledge for all we want, for all the good we can hope for. Sense of his love must be great, when the soul considers that his blood satisfied God, and may well satisfy it. When we eat and drink believingly, our souls delight themselves in fatness. And as the heart of God was satisfied with him upon the cross, so the heart of a Christian is often replenished by him at a sacrament. What the gospel presents in words, the sacrament doth in signs; what the word

presents to the ear, the supper doth to the eye, to the taste, that we may have comfort come in at all our senses. How often have drooping spirits met with comfort in the very action; and met with hidden manna in sacramental bread, like a glorious Christ in a human body, and have had a full sense of a Saviour's love accompanying the visible representation of it? How often have his people heard him in it speak peace, peace; speak peace to them, and breathe peace in them, and kiss them with the kisses of his mouth? How often have their consciences been pacified, and their creeping joy found an elevation? There have been mutual glances; Christ hath struck a beam upon the soul, imprinted a clearer stamp of love, and the soul hath clasped its arms about a Saviour. And is such an ordinance fit to be neglected?

(5.) Union with Christ is promoted. As the bread and wine, being turned into our nature, become one with us, so the body and blood of Christ, being by faith turned into our substance, make us one with Christ. As the bread and wine are physically united to us, so we are spiritually united to Christ, Christ incorporating himself with us in a sacrament. He was our surety upon the cross, he is our advocate in heaven; and incorporated with us in the supper in a spiritual, not a transubstantiate manner: 'I in them,' John 17:23, 26. Can we too often clasp about him; can the union be often renewed, and become too close and strait?

Use 1. How much is the neglect, if not contempt, of this institution to be bewailed! How sad a thing is it, that many for many years have turned their backs upon breasts full of milk! How hath it been regarded as if it were an abrogated law, a seal out of date, torn off from the covenant, as though the institutions of Christ were miserable comforters, and it were a despicable privilege to receive entertainment at God's table.

(1.) It concerns such to inquire, whether the reasons of their neglect be valid against a positive command. Since it is a command, Do this —not only to remember Christ, but to remember Christ in this

method, Do this in remembrance of me—it is worthy their consideration, whether the ground of their neglect be such as will bear a divine scrutiny, and sustain the force of God's inquisition. They must be evasions past understanding that can hold water against a divine order. Though it may not always be frequented, yet it is not always to be omitted. No excuse was valid against the passover, but uncleanness or a journey, and that not for an annual but a month's omission, Num. 9:13. But what light excuses have we to keep us off from a feast with God for many years, which we would not admit of to hinder us from a feast with man?

(2.) Was it appointed to be neglected? did Christ take such care to institute it, and we take care to avoid it? did he give such a positive order for no other end but that we should never regard it? can we say we value his word, when we slight his seal? is your faith so strong in his word, that it needs no strength from the seal? was not the faith of the apostles as strong at that time of institution as any man's, or at least in some few days after? Yet it was not left ad libitum: you may do this, but do it. Christ is a better judge of the weakness of our hearts, our proneness to forgetfulness, the difficulty to preserve faith as well as obtain it. And he instituted it as an act of kindness as well as authority, that it might be observed, not neglected by us. Were there no end of it, but only an act of his will, acceptance is a civility we owe our Saviour. If he had said, I pray you, do this, could you have refused to him that died for you; could you refuse it to him that endured the wrath of God for you? What had become of you if he had not died; all the angels could not have removed that load of wrath that lay upon you? If it be a command to do it, to neglect it is a sin; for what is sin but a breach of God's command? It is a direct command, not drawn by consequence, as plain a command as any in the decalogue, 'Do it in remembrance of me;' not, may do it, do it if you will, or, do it when you will.

(3.) How can such free themselves from unworthy reflections upon Christ? It is either an act of wisdom or folly in him. If of wisdom, why are we so foolish as not to observe it; if of folly, why do we at all

believe in him whom we count a foolish Saviour? It was either an act of love in him or disdain. If of love, why are we so ungrateful as not to regard it? if of disdain, why should we depend upon a person whom we virtually charge with leaving a mocking ordinance to us just before his going out of the world? We must either quite discard our faith, or discard our neglect. There is no doubt but it was both an act of wisdom and love in Christ; the wisdom that conducted the course of his life was not absent from him when he was so near his death, nor had his love which animated him to death the next day, forsaken him the night before; had he left his love, he might have prevented his death. To neglect it, then, is to vilify Christ's institution, to disparage his skill and care of his church, as though there were no need of any representations of him, or as if something might have been ordered better. It is to charge Christ with a trifling institution, it is to charge him with the greatest folly, that when he was to encounter with wrath and death, he could not find something else to busy himself about; that he could not pitch upon a better thing to recommend to you, as a token of his care, and a support for your souls. If we will thus undertake to prescribe Christ what he should do, this is to be, not his servants to be guided by him, but his lords to rule him, and give him his instructions, as though he were our, not his Father's, ambassador. How can we hope for the benefits he hath purchased, while we cast such reflections upon him, as if he were busy about just nothing?

(4.) Is it neglected because the elements are so mean, and the thing so easy in itself? Had any Israelite neglected to turn his eye upon the brazen serpent, the poison in his blood had digged his grave. What might they not have objected against it; what good can a look upon a brazen figure do my wounds? I want a plaster for my sore, more than a cast of my eye. Brass will naturally inflame my distemper, not assuage it. Can the picture of a serpent cure the biting of a real one, and at such a distance? This and more might have been objected against that, than against this; but such logic would have destroyed the dispute. Or is it easy, and therefore fit to be neglected? It was our Saviour's mercy to make it so easy, who might have imposed harder

conditions on us; and shall we slight his tenderness, who was loath to burden us, and careful to relieve us? What would have been said, had it been as painful as the circumcising the flesh, or as distasteful as the bitter herbs of the passover? It is true, it is common bread, it is common wine in itself; but it is consecrated bread, and consecrated wine in its use. It hath the stamp of Christ upon it, as the wax taken out of the shop hath the seal of the conveyer, which the purchaser would not part with for all the wax left behind in the hands of the seller.

(5.) Or do we think Christ is come again, that we neglect it? The command was dated from the night before his death, and is to be in force till he return again. Was it his resurrection that is meant by his coming? Would Christ at such a time appoint an ordinance, that was to last but three days, and never like to be put in practice after his institution? Or was it till he came in Spirit? He was come in Spirit at Pentecost, before the apostle in the text urged the institution; therefore come again cannot be meant of that. The ordinance then had ceased before Paul writ to the Corinthians; and he would never have restored an abrogated institution, who was so vehement an opposer of an abrogated ceremonial law. Or till he come in Spirit into the soul? Was Christ in Spirit in none of the Corinthians, who were a church of great graces and great gifts, as well as great corruptions? Paul rectifies their corrupt mixtures, but exempts not any from a due observance.

(6.) Why doth any one neglecter of it, who hath faith, observe any other command or institution? Those that make not conscience of all known duties, make conscience of none. He that offends in one point, breaks the whole law; he that contemns one point of the gospel, violates the authority of the whole. I do not see how any part of the Christian religion would be dear to any who have so slight a regard to that which may claim an equality with any ordinance, and a precedency in our esteem in some respects, in regard of the positive command of our Saviour, the time when he appointed it, and the length of its duration, 'Till I come.' I doubt the apostasies of many,



and the unfruitfulness in the lives of professors, may be charged upon either the neglect of this, or an unworthy carriage in it. He hath little desire to gain Christ, or preserve Christ, that will have him in his own way, and not in Christ's way. What we desire, we should take a course to enjoy in the method of that person who only can fulfil our desires.

(7.) Or is it unfitness that is the cause of neglect? Hath any man heard of repentance, and faith, and holiness, and yet hath nothing of them? What a miserable case is this! If you are not fit for this ordinance, you are not fit for heaven. What will you do when you come to die? He that is not fit for the supper, is not fit for heaven, for the marriage day of the lamb. Is not the unfitness from sloth, laziness, and unwillingness to take pains with the heart? If any man can say he hath used all his industry, by prayer and repentance, to fit himself for heaven and for the ordinance, and done what he can, God requires no more than men are able to do. If unfitness to come be dangerous, is not a total omission as dangerous? Will you plead your unfitness to God at the last day, as an excuse for disobedience? What an excuse will this be, Lord, I would have been often at the supper, but I was unfit, I gave way to a constant course of temptation, I never had an eagerness of desire for it, I was torn with various distractions, I let sin reign in me, the care of a farm or a trade diverted my thoughts from it; what self-condemning excuses are those? You know how firm they were to stave off the anger of the king from those that made them in the Gospel to excuse their not coming to his wedding, Mat. 22. Or is it a perfect fitness that is not to be found within the circumference of the earth? you will make God a hard master under the gospel, to receive none but those that have a perfect fitness for him. If any would he perfectly fit, the course is not to reject the means for it. Diseases can never be cured with a slighting, but by using the remedy.

(8.) Consider what you lose, and what danger you incur. Whatsoever benefits are stored up in a sacrament we lose by neglects; whatsoever obedience is in observing it, we lose the reward of; we lose the fruit of

his love in it, and we deny the obligation of his authority, and the honour of obedience to it. God will not calmly and coldly suffer neglects. To detract from any ordinance of Christ, is in part to diminish the Scripture, to deny part of his will and testament. Why was the neglect of the Jewish sacraments so severely punished, that the persons were cut off, not by a civil punishment, but by the hand of God, as the Jews interpret it? Is not the grace offended in ours as good as was in theirs? Ours may claim the precedency of them in benefits, and therefore should in estimation. It is much, that when Christ hath graciously condescended to us, we should not thankfully ascend to our own privilege. Well, then, why shall not the inconceivable love of a Saviour move you to the obedience of a command so easy, so beneficial, so alluring? You are bound to profess Christ, to remember him in your lives, who remembered you at his death. Do you think yourselves his members within the great charter of salvation which he hath purchased and sealed? How can any be members of his corporation, and disobey his orders? Are you not entered by baptism; have you not vowed and promised your allegiance; and is the neglect of a known and positive command the way to perform it? Consider it is a law made by the purchaser of our salvation.

Use 2. Is of exhortation to observe it, and that frequently. Though a dying Saviour is remembered, yet a living Saviour is sought for in it; and shall not we be as ready to seek a living Christ in the sacrament, as the women were to seek a dead Christ in the sepulchre? Mat. 28:1. The neglect of it doth speak some light thoughts of it. Is it because of the meanness of the elements? We may as well despise a great Redeemer, because clothed with the infirmities of a mortal body, as despise the spiritual representations of him, because clothed with the meanness of earthly elements. God doth always delight to convey great things through mean mediums. Gideon shall route a Midianitish army with potsherds, with earthen pitchers; and the jaw-bone of an ass shall be more successful in the hand of Samson, than a massy sword in the hand of Goliath. By the weakness of the cross God redeems the world; by the foolishness of preaching he converts a

world, and conveys through earthen vessels a treasure wherewith to enrich his people, and a strength that makes confusion in the kingdom of darkness; and by these elements, mean in appearance, he doth nourish the believer, still making those ordinances the pipes of his invisible grace. Or is it for want of a disposition? If there be no faith at all, the cause is sad; if there be no fitness for heaven, there is no present fitness to converse with Christ in his supper. Or is it but a weak faith? The more need then of a strengthening ordinance. Would we have a more elevated frame of heart? The way to ascend to the top of a pinnacle is not to run from the steps which lead to it. Who is sufficient for these things? But the more spiritually sensible we are of our own insufficiency, the more confidence we may have in the sufficiency of a Saviour; the more sensible we are of our disease, the more confident of the skill and affection of our physician, and the more we should apply ourselves to his prescriptions.

Let us consider some questions.

(1.) Will any believer be guilty of disobedience to the author of his faith? Do this, is a word of command, Luke 22:19. Not left ad libitum, it is not, you may if you will, as was said before; but do it in remembrance of me. Do it, if you will remember me; I will account you no rememberers of me, unless you do it. The command was given to the apostles, but to deliver it to the church: 1 Cor. 11:23, 'For I have received of the Lord that which also I have delivered unto you.' We must obey the commands given to the apostles, so far as they are practicable by us, as well as think to share in the comforts of the prayer Christ put up for us and his apostles, John 17:20. The influence of what was spoken in their presence extended to all believers, and the observance of what was instituted in their presence is to be regarded by all believers. God would not only have the Israelites cleanse themselves, but be circumcised and eat the passover, when they were upon the borders of Canaan, before he would bless them with the victory, Joshua 5:2, 10. God would have them renew covenant with him, in the way of his own appointment, before they should have possession of Canaan. Suppose there were

no benefit to be expected, 'though every institution of Christ is a mark of his love, as well as a fruit of his authority,' yet doth not the greatness of Christ's love deserve our tenderness of his authority in his commands? If they had nothing of privilege but all of duty, love to Christ would make us often remember him, and obedience would make our love choose the way of his own ordering, and not ways at our own pleasure. Deus voluit is a sufficient motive, and we cannot free ourselves from the censure of disobedience, if we observe not his commands in the same manner that he enjoins them, in their circumstances as well as their substance.

(2.) Is Christ so mean a friend as not to be remembered? The memory of a good friend should be very precious. Is there any friend we have in the world can outstrip him in affection, and deserve a greater share in our first-born thoughts? What was ever more advantageous to us than the death of Christ, by whom we have our life; than the agonies of Christ, to which we owe our freedom from the wrath to come? Do we not remember our own benefit in remembering our gracious benefactor, who bore our sorrows that we might enter into his joy? groaned under the curses due to us, that we might triumph in his Father's love and in his own glory; who emptied himself to fill us, and received the wrathful strokes to free us; who took our sins upon himself, and cast upon us the robe of his righteousness; bore the load of our transgressions to enrich us with the treasures of his merits; endured our death to procure our life, and hung upon our cross to advance us to sit upon his throne. Is it not a great unkindness to be unwilling frequently to remember so cordial and choice a friend? Besides, is it not fit to remember him frequently, who remembers believers perpetually? He regarded such in his last prayer, he remembers such in heaven to plead for them, he remembers them under their bespotting corruptions. Shall not believers remember him, who hath laid in his blood a perfect foundation for their perfect happiness? He remembers them that were enemies, and have too much enmity still; and shall not they remember him who is a clear and perfect friend? He bears their names upon his breast, as Aaron did the ten tribes on the ephod,

Exod. 28:12, and remembers even those who have crucified him; and shall not they remember Christ who were never wronged by him? Should we not rejoice to see the rainbow in the clouds, which is a sign of God's securing covenant against a destroying deluge? And shall we neglect the signs of God's securing covenant against an overflowing wrath?

(3.) Why should we not often be in those ways where we may meet with our best friend? Certainly he is as graciously present in this as in any other ordinance. He is present with us in observing every thing which he hath commanded, Mat. 28:20; and shall this be without a more special presence, when it was instituted for a more special remembrance of him? He is present symbolically, as a man by his picture; he is present spiritually, the soul sees him by faith, as Abraham saw his day at a distance, and that with joy; he is present by his efficacy, as the sun is present in the earth, though many hundred miles distant in its body. 'This is my body,' 'this is my blood;' as sure as this is bread and this is wine, so surely by faith are you partakers of my body and blood in this ordinance. Can this be said of any other ordinance? Where is Christ so particularly present, so closely applied as in this?

(4.) Have you no graces that need strengthening? Have we not need of all the means to strengthen that faith, which we shall have all the need of in the hour of death, to keep our souls from fainting under the stroke? Is it not a desirable thing to have the benefits of Christ often applied to us, and our faith confirmed? Is all our leanness removed, that we need no more marrow and fatness? Are we so provided for heaven, that we need no more viaticum in our journey thither? Who would come but seldom to his stated meals? He that would fast one day would scarce fast two, but by force. We are yet in a journey, and we need strength to go forward; we are beset with diseases, and we need medicines to cure us; we are often faint, and we need cordials to revive us. Are our souls so fully established, our affections so ready at our call, as not to need sensible objects sometimes to raise them? A vigorous fancy, helped by the sight of a

picture, mounts to a greater activity; so doth a spiritual faith. Can you, then, too often embrace the cross, drink down the blood of Christ, and put your hands into his wounds? Is your faith so hearty, that it needs no cordials; your love so hot, that it needs no breath for an higher flame; your hopes so certain, that they do not sometimes reel; and your obedience so quick, that it needs no spur; and your standing so secure, that it needs no further settlement? It is certain, that as we would have faith, we must attend upon converting ordinances, so if we would have strength of faith, we must frequent strengthening institutions. How would this Sun, shining upon our souls in his own orb, enrich us with his heat and light, suffer nothing to stand before it, and put out all those lesser fires, those foolish desires which aspire to other things, and weaken the soul? After the Israelites were circumcised, and had eaten the passover, then did Christ, as captain of the Lord's host, appear to Joshua to encourage his heart, and strengthen his hands against those enemies in Canaan, by which our spiritual enemies are represented, Joshua 5:7, 10, 14. It is by a frequent exercise of faith, according to the methods of Christ, that believers would be as lions (as Chrysostom saith) breathing fire terrible to the devils themselves. Have you not found your own experience, or at least the experience of others, bear witness to this? How often hath the empty soul been filled, the palsy hand cured, the thirsty heart satisfied, the feeble knees strengthened, a creeping love changed its pace, and a cloudy soul been brightened? The more believing at a sacrament, the more vigorous is the faith afterwards. As in eating corporal food, by the assimilation of meat to our substance by the chemistry of nature, and converting it into blood and spirits, the body is strengthened; so by the feeding upon Christ by faith, the soul is strengthened, and Christ becomes more and more mystically incorporate in the believer, 'Christ in them the hope of glory,' John 17:23; I in them, and thou in me.'

(5.) Why will any true believer gratify Satan? The motions to hinder those that are gracious, must either be from God or Satan; from God they cannot be, who is no enemy to the ordinance he hath appointed for them. It cannot be thought that God should decry his own

institution, or call back his own invitation, or discourage a believer from the remembrance of his Son in that ordinance, which hath been enjoined for that end. The Spirit in his motions acts according to the word, not contrary to it. They must then be from the devil, who is an enemy not to be listened to. He endeavours to hinder the believer from the most spiritual duties, whereby he may gain the greatest profit. He kindles our corruptions, shoots in his temptations, fills us with scruples, exhorts us to omit, defer anything to stave us off from that which is the strengthening of our souls, and a weakening of his kingdom. Swallow not therefore this poison; spit it out, lest you please the devil, and displease the Redeemer. How will the devil triumph if he can keep you in a constant omission of a known duty! If the frequent attendance be a means to strengthen grace, the neglects are a means to weaken; and the devil rejoices in the decays of grace, next to preventing any grace at all. He feeds himself with hopes that at last he may make such utterly insensible.

(6.) Why should any believer deny to pay Christ the debt of thankfulness for his great love, in that way which he hath appointed? It is a thanksgiving, a thankful remembrance, therefore anciently called the eucharist. It is appointed as a feast to rejoice before God for the benefits we profess to enjoy by the death of Christ; as the eating of the sacrifice offered to an idol was a profession that all that they had came from the kindness and powerful influence of that idol. Shall not our souls be filled with hosannas for the greatest mercy that can be bestowed upon us, viz. a redemption from guilt, death, hell, and the wrath of God? Shall we refuse a thankful acceptance of that honour to sit at his table, and to sup with our prince? Would not that person be accounted ungrateful, that should delight in the picking of straws when his king calls him to his presence?

To conclude. Let the benefits of this ordinance persuade every believer to a frequency in it. They must needs be great and desirable upon a worthy and believing partaking, because the sin and danger are dreadful in an unworthy approach. If indeed we have no enemies to conquer, no weakness to strengthen, no sin to trouble us, no

temptations to surround us, no damps to smother our assurance, no ebbs in our graces, no totterings in our faith, no coolings in our love, no emptiness to be filled, no doubts to be resolved; if we are in heaven, and are as angels in assumed bodies, then we are lifted above the end and intendment of it; but this is no man's case in the world. It is a command, to neglect it therefore is to despise his authority; it is for our good, to neglect it therefore is to contemn his mercy; his institutions are attended with promises, to neglect them is to deny his truth.

We have handled two doctrines from the words. There is one more yet behind, concerning the duration of this ordinance; from the last clause, 'You shew the Lord's death till he come.'

There is especially a twofold coming of Christ mentioned in Scripture.

1. His coming in the flesh; 2, his coming to judgment. Both mentioned Heb. 9:28, 'Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and he shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation.' The one was to bear our sins, the other to glorify our souls; the one to expiate our guilt, the other to present us to God without any filth; the one to begin salvation, the other to perfect it; the one to seal the promises, the other to perform them; the one to put an end to the remembrance of sin, by substituting himself as a sacrifice in the room of the legal ones, whereby there was a remembrance of sin every year, the other to put an end to the fruit of sin, afflictions and sufferings of his people.

It is not his coming in the Spirit which is here meant; this had not consisted with the interest of Christ, the wisdom of Christ, or the end of the sacrament.

(1.) Not with the interest of Christ. Christ came in Spirit after his ascension, at the time of the liberal effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles, Acts 2, which was his coming to them as he had



promised: John 14:18, 'I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you.' Would he so solemnly assemble the apostles at such a time, when that wrath, which he saw marching out against him, called for the employment of all his thoughts, and his greatest care in the management of that work? When it was come to that issue, would he neglect his present interest and business to settle an ordinance so short-lived as the space of fifty days, when most of that time he intended to comfort them by his personal presence after his resurrection? It had not consisted with his interest at that time to employ himself about that which should so suddenly expire.

(2.) Nor with the wisdom of Christ. To institute that so solemnly for his remembrance, that should be of so little use. It was to remember him in his absence all the time he should be in his Father's kingdom. A greater absence than that of twelve days must be meant; for he was absent from them only during the time of his lying in the grave, and the time between his ascension and the descent of the Spirit, if by coming here be meant his coming in the effusion of the Spirit: Acts 1:3, 'He was seen of them forty days, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God' (it is likely he was with one or other of them every day in that space), which, it is probable, were not to be put in execution till the coming of the Spirit, which they were to wait for at Jerusalem, which was to endue them with power from on high, Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8. And though after the descent of the Spirit, they 'continued in breaking of bread,' yet not before, but only 'in prayer and supplication' (Acts 1:14) for the power of the Holy Ghost, which was to commission them. And would Christ take such care to have a church before the fall of the Jewish church, and enable his apostles by his Spirit in so miraculous a manner to settle his commands among those that should believe in him; and this, which is one of the greatest and most in favour to the church, so lately instituted, and for the commemoration of the fundamental benefit, to expire just after the promulgation of it? That did not cease at the coming of Christ in the Spirit, which we have no evidence that it was put in practice from the time of the first institution till the coming of

the Spirit. did it consist with the wisdom of our Lord to give a command which was never to be practised?

(3.) Nor with the end of the supper. It was to be done in remembrance. How could they in so short a time forget him, in whose hands and sides they had seen the marks of the nails and spear? How could they forget him whose death they had seen, and whom they had enjoyed again by a miraculous resurrection? Besides, the Spirit was come, and so this ordinance ceased before Paul writ to the Corinthians, and he who had been so vehement an opposer of an abrogated ceremonial law, would never have restored an abrogated institution.

Nor is this coming again to be understood of the Spirit's coming to a particular person. Then,

(1.) As soon as ever men come to be fit for this ordinance, they must waive it. If the coming of Christ here spoken of be his coming in Spirit to a soul, as soon as ever he is come in Spirit they ought not to observe it, because they would break the command which is limited to such a time, the time of his coming. The Spirit comes in the work of regeneration, in the work of faith. To what purpose did Christ institute this, if the only subjects capable of it were ipso facto deprived of it, when they were first in a capacity for it? None receives good from this ordinance but those that have faith. Indeed, men in a crowd may press upon Christ and touch him, yet only that person that touches his garments and takes the elements by faith, receives virtue from him. What a madness it is to feed a dead man; and if he should be restored to life to deprive him of the means and nourishment to preserve that life.

(2.) It would then be instituted only for the refuse of the world, for such as had no mind to remember him, nor could remember him with any affection to him or comfort to themselves, since they were alienated from him by their unbelief. We cannot suppose that Christ, that night wherein he was betrayed, should take care only of his

enemies. He prayed for his disciples, not for the world; he gives the supper to them, and in them, as the foundation of the church, to all that were to believe on him, not to the world. It is the second coming of Christ to judgment that is here meant, when he comes in perfect majesty to bestow a perfect glory; when he shall come 'in that manner as he was taken up into heaven,' Acts 1:11; when the remembrance of his death shall be swallowed up in the vision of his person, and fruition of the ripe and complete fruit of his sufferings. In the mean time it is a standing memorial of the sufferings of our Saviour.

The doctrine then is:

Doct. The Lord's Supper is a lasting and continuing institution, not to be put down at the pleasure of any men. It will not be repealed till Christ come. Another gospel is not to be expected, Gal. 1:6, 7, &c.; and therefore while the gospel endures, the appendixes, the institutions annexed to it, will endure. The times of the gospel are called often in Scripture 'the last days;' no other dispensation is to supersede it, and the ordinances in it are immoveable things, not to be shaken till Christ comes. He is not yet come, the institutions therefore he transmitted to us by the apostles are still of use. Nothing can put a period to them, but the coming of Christ, which no man can say is yet accomplished. The ordinances of Christ are like the pillar of fire and the cloud which guided the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness, and did not withdraw from them till they entered into Canaan. When the church shall be perfected, when Christ shall appear to put the crown upon the head of the glorified church, and bring it into the promised inheritance, the clouds of ordinances will vanish; there will be no more need of them, the ends of them will be completed; there will be no weak grace to need strengthening, nor any indwelling sin to need mortification. In the reformation of the church, prophesied of in Rev. 21:3, 'The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them.' The ordinances are not to be abolished; while God hath a tabernacle among men, he will have a worship, an instituted worship to help us

in our natural worship. The tie of homage the creature owes to God cannot be unloosed. If a worship, then some modes and rites of worship. The tabernacle was the place of worship. This cannot be meant of a state of glory in heaven, because, ver. 1, it is a 'new Jerusalem which comes down from heaven,' a state distinguished from the state of glory in heaven. In the time of the reformation of the church, which is there promised, the Lamb is said to be the light of the church: Rev. 21:23, 'The Lamb is the light thereof.' Christ is always called a lamb in allusion to the paschal lamb, and in that title, his death as a sacrifice is always included. If the lamb, as a sacrifice, be the light of the city in that glorious state which the church doth expect in the full and thorough reformation, the memorials of him as a lamb, and so the memorials of his death, will be preserved till earth give place to heaven. And whereas it is said, ver. 22, 'There shall be no temple,' i.e. no human and legal ceremonies, but pure ordinances. And 'the city had no need of the sun and of the moon to shine in it.' Men shall not serve God according to the equinoxes and the course of the moon, as the Jews had their passover about the vernal equinox in March, and the observations of the new moon to shew to them the times of worship.\* There shall be no earthly constitutions, inventions of man, anything that smells of the legal ceremonies, but God shall be glorious in his own institutions, and the Lamb shall be the λύχνος, the candle of it. The simple institutions of Christ shall be the light of the church. All those ordinances which signify to us the love of the Lamb, the death of the Lamb, the benefits by that death, shall be kept up in purity and vigour. In the reformation of the church the ordinances shall no more cease than they did in the second temple, which was a reformed church after their captivity in Babylon, and so reformed that they never ran again to idolatry. But the ordinances of God continued in the temple till the coming of the Messiah to tabernacle among men; so in the reformation from the idolatries and corruptions of antichrist, which will be, as it were, the erection of a second temple, the ordinances shall continue till the coming of Christ to judgment. Christ intimates the continuation of this ordinance in the church till the consummation of all things, and the investing his people with the glory he had promised them, in his words after the

institution of it: Mat. 26:29, 'I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, till I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom,' which he speaks to shew the nearness of his death, and to comfort them under the apprehensions of it, assuring them they should be with him in his Father's kingdom, partakers of his glory. It also implies that no other institution was to intervene between that time and their being with him in his Father's kingdom. The communication of himself should then be in a new manner. But till that time they must not expect any converse with him but in those ways he had settled. The nearer Christ's coming is, the more will his ordinances be in practice. When the Israelites were upon entering into Canaan, circumcision and the passover were celebrated, which had been omitted all the time of their wilderness condition.

1. All the ordinances of Christ are to continue in his church, then certainly this. The institutions of Christ in the gospel are said to be immoveable, such as cannot be shaken: Heb. 12:26, 27, 'He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but the heavens. And this word, yet once more, signifies the removing of things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.' 'Yet once more,' Hag. 2:6; for it is taken out of that place, the apostle following the Septuagint translation. Once more, supposeth that that time being past, there should be no more change of laws in the church. The old institutions under the law are called τὰ σαλευόμενα, things that are shaken or fluctuating, uncertain. The evangelical institutions are opposed to those, as things that cannot be shaken, τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα. Once more, clearly intimates that the ordinances introduced by the Messiah should be unalterable, as long as the scene of the world, heaven and earth, endures. He would change but one time, not many. The new laws of the gospel will not be changed by God's authority, but be left in the same state wherein they were established by the Messiah, and not be subject to change, as the legal administration was. The order appointed by Moses was to be shaken, and give place to a better administration; but the order settled by the Son of God is to stand as firm as a mountain of brass, as the

foundations of the earth, or the arch of heaven. If not shaken by God, no reason they should be shaken by man. The faith is said to be 'once delivered to the saints,' Jude 3. Once, i.e. unalterably the doctrine of faith is delivered; as God is said 'Once to swear by his holiness,' Ps. 89:36; once for all, never to be altered. The doctrine of faith, and institutions of the gospel, are monuments of God's grace, not to be demolished or defaced till God puts a period to the world, and wraps up the persons of all his elect in the bosom of Christ. It is his injunction to his apostles, when he commissioned them to teach men to observe all things that he had commanded them; and he promiseth his presence with them in so doing to the end of the world: Mat. 28:20, 'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' The things Christ hath commanded, are then to be observed till the end of the world, for he promises his presence with them to the end of the world in the teaching of those things. The things therefore that Christ hath commanded must be taught. If they be not, no men can have any comfortable hopes of the presence of Christ with them. If Christ will have a ministry to the end of the world, he will have a church to the end of the world; if a church, which is the seat of ordinances, then ordinances to the end of the world; if ministers, who are the 'stewards of the mysteries of God,' then mysteries there are to be dispensed to the end of the world. Observe the universality of the subject twice repeated, all things, and whatsoever I have commanded you. Everything that Christ hath commanded must be taught; everything therefore that Christ hath commanded must endure. Observe also, that the extent of the duration is repeated twice too, always, even to the end of the world; it includes also the extent of the duration of the things commanded, because his presence is promised to them in the teaching of whatsoever he commanded. The ordinances therefore of Christ are to be perpetually observed. And they are those evangelical dispensations which are here commanded to be taught and observed, because they are those which Christ, as mediator, hath appointed, 'which I have commanded,' I that have power given me in heaven and earth, for that is the ground of this command: Mat. 28:18, 'All

power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore and teach all nations.' And lest any should take upon them to determine the time of their continuance, because the first word, always, is πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας, he explains what he meant by it, and adds, 'even to the end of the world.' So that it is not meant to the end of the Jewish state, but the end of the frame of heaven and earth. The presence of Christ in the way of his ordinances is here promised. Christ will be present with them after the end of the world, but in another manner of presence than now; a special presence here in the weakness of ordinances, a glorious presence hereafter in the fulness of vision. Observe also, if ministers cannot promise themselves the presence of Christ, but in teaching all things whatsoever Christ hath commanded, other men cannot promise themselves the presence of Christ with them, but in observing all things whatsoever Christ hath commanded; and this institution is one of those all things. And since the apostles did not live to the end of the world, this promise looks further than the persons of the apostles; it looks to the church which they should settle in such order as he had appointed, founded upon such doctrine, and observing such institutions, according to his command; he would be with that church that should observe their doctrine, and preserve it successively to the end of the world. As in his prayer, John 17:20, he did not only pray for the apostles then with him, so he doth not promise this only to the apostles then with him, but to the church. All the institutions settled in the Jewish church are often said to be ordinances for ever, i.e. during that dispensation, till God should give them their passport and send them away. But the gospel ordinances are to be in force till the conclusion of all things in the world.

2. Sacraments were thought by God needful for men in all their several states in the world. Sacraments were judged necessary by God in innocent nature. The tree of life had a sacramental signification of life upon Adam's obedience. Much more in lapsed nature have we need of those sensible things for the support of our faith in the promises of God. After the fall there were various institutions brought in by degrees. Adam, and Abel, and Noah, had

their sacrifices as significant of the Messiah promised to them, and expected by them. Abraham had an addition of circumcision. The passover and other rites were added under Moses. The Messiah takes away them and introduceth others which are to continue, since they are the last days wherein God hath spoken to us by his Son, Heb. 1:1, and are not to be thrust out by any other dispensation. Not but these sacraments under the gospel are changeable in their own nature, if it seem agreeable to the good pleasure of God. For there is a difference between natural laws and positive laws;\* natural laws do not proceed merely from the will of the lawgiver, positive do. Those things which are evil in their own nature, are not evil because they are prohibited by the will of God, but because they are contrary to a rational creature as rational; so that God cannot dispense with them, for then he would dispense with evil as evil, and so would deny his own righteousness, if he should allow that which is unjust in its own nature. But for positive laws, which are not innate in nature or grace, but proceed from the will and authority of God solely, they may be changed by the will of the lawgiver. So the ceremonial law was changed, because it was neither good nor evil in itself, but had its authority solely from the will of God. But the moral law cannot be changed, because the duties it enjoins are naturally good in themselves, and the things it prohibits are evil in themselves; and this God cannot dispense with, for then he should call good evil, and evil good. But God hath declared he will never change these. The end of all ordinances was to bring the worshippers to real holiness, which is the perfection of the soul; in innocency, to preserve men in it; in lapsed nature, to discover the necessity of it, and the way to it; and therefore they must be observed under every dispensation, for that end for which they were instituted. Now if these rudiments, proportioned to the Jewish infancy, were not to be violated by them under the severe penalty of the soul's being cut off from among the people (which the Jews understand of a cutting off by the hand of God), sure the more noble institutions of the gospel, settled by the Redeemer, being clearer representations of the love he hath shewn to us, and the benefits we may expect from him, stand more stable, and are big with greater motives to persuade men to the use of them,



than those under the law, which were grievous in regard of their multitude and chargeableness, and obscure in regard of the distance of the thing signified by them. They may seem to have had more reason to despise the institutions in those several ages, than we to slight the evangelical ordinances, since they are dignified by the more excellent dispensation they are annexed unto. And God always had some conduit-pipes, through which to pour out the blessings of his grace upon the souls of his creatures.

3. All laws once settled are of force till they be repealed by that authority which did enact them. Christ, as Lord of the church, hath power to appoint institutions, and none but he hath power to remove them, and even he hath not power to remove them by any act but by that of his coming. Christ hath settled this till he comes; since his word is past, nothing but his coming can repeal it. His command is therefore in force, and ought to be observed, and it is in force till he comes; so that if an angel from heaven should bring us word of a repeal, we ought not to believe him, because Christ is not come, to which period of time it is to endure. Had it not been a high presumption for any to abolish the ceremonial law among the Jews, till the promised seed was come, which was the period of its duration? Gal. 3:19. And is it not as high a presumption to look upon gospel institutions as null, before the time appointed for the coming of Christ, to put an end to this scene of things, be fulfilled? But doth not every man who looks upon this, or any other ordinance, as out of date, assume the power of abrogating, as much as in him lies, the laws of Christ. It is the obedience we owe our Lord not to entrench upon his prerogative in the abrogation of his laws, any more than to usurp the authority of enacting any. It is enough it is his law, and while it is so we ought to observe it, till he gives us a dismiss by giving that a repeal. All ordinances have their sanction and establishment from Christ's authority. The first patriarchs, Adam and Noah, lived without circumcision, Abraham without the laws of Moses. But had God commanded the one to be circumcised, as he commanded Abraham and his posterity, and enjoined the other to observe the legal institutions, was his authority to be slighted? Had

they not been as much bound to use them as the Israelites were? God never gave power to any man to change his ordinances, or to dispense with them. The passover continued till God superseded it by another institution; circumcision till God changed it into a more easy. The supper on earth must hold, by Christ's authority, till it be changed into the marriage supper of the Lamb, and never-fading delights in heaven; it must hold till earth be left for heaven, elements for substance and the person they represent. Who can upon a better account challenge an exemption from the observance of positive institutions than our Saviour, who had no need of them? Yet how observant was he of them, because they were established by divine authority. So that he calls his submitting to be baptized of John a 'fulfilling of righteousness,' Mat. 3:15. If therefore we do acknowledge that Christ is come, and that he will come again, and believingly look for this coming of Christ, we ought to acknowledge it by such testimonies as he hath appointed.

4. The covenant is perpetual, and therefore the seals are perpetual.\* The covenant, indeed, God made with Abraham and the Israelites, was the same covenant, and perpetual in regard of the substance of it; for God promised to be their God, and that they should be his people, and to give them eternal life, whereof Canaan was a type. But because the Mediator, in whom this covenant had its confirmation, was not yet exhibited, therefore it was not yet perpetual in regard of the accessories, and those institutions which were appointed for the confirmation of their faith in it; as the priesthood, sacrifices, and sacraments, which could not remain, but must be abolished at the coming of the Mediator, the band of the covenant. The rites belonging to that were but 'shadows of things to come;' and when Christ, whom they shadowed, came, the shadows must necessarily pass away, and some others be instituted in the room of them. When the Aaronical priesthood fell, their sacraments fell with it; and the priesthood being changed, the law is changed also. But Christ, being 'a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec,' 'hath an unchangeable priesthood,' Heb. 7:24. And therefore the seal and laws belonging to that priesthood are unchangeable, and will continue to

the end of the world. In the supper, God doth witness that he doth give us the flesh of Christ, and blood of Christ, and unite us to him, and incorporate us with him: and on our parts, by the receiving them, we witness our embracing God's favour, and return to him, and faith in him, and obedience to his law. Since there is no more exhibition of him to be expected in order to eternal life, but God hath summed up all his will in Christ, settled him an everlasting priest, these seals will endure as long as there is any exercise of that office of priest, which will be till his second coming; wherein all his elect shall be perfected, and no more need of sacrifice or intercession. If it were a type of something to come, when the substance is come the shadow should be done away; but it is a memorial of what is past, and no other administration is to succeed in the room of Christ, and therefore it is to be continued till his coming, and resigning all to his Father.

5. The state wherein we are requires the continuance of it, and of other ordinances.

(1.) In regard of our constant decays. Our bodies would moulder to dust were they not daily nourished; and is there not as much need of nourishment for our souls? Our souls need such institutions, as well as our bodies need food. A man may expect as well to grow without food, or that his vine should bring forth fruit without sun, and rain, and dressing, as that while he is in the world he should thrive in grace, that doth not take in the fructifying showers of Christ. Our sin is struggling, and needs something to conquer it; our faith is staggering, and needs something to confirm it; the sin that clogs us must be removed; the grace that burns dim must be brightened. We need pardon, here we may behold it sealed; we need straiter union to Christ, here it is promoted. The conjunction between Christ and a believing soul is as close as between us and the bread we eat, the wine we drink. There is need, while we are in the wilderness of this world, to be fed with manna; when Canaan is possessed, this will cease. We have a journey to go, a battle to fight. Is it not necessary we should, with Jonathan, take some honey by the way to recruit our

spirits? God always conveyed his grace by some pipes, and these he hath appointed in the times of the gospel.

(2.) In respect of our weakness. Some intercourse there must be between God and us, if we be happy. Immediately we cannot have it; such communications are reserved for heaven: these are shadows fitted to the weaknesses and dimness of our sense. We could not look steadily upon Christ's glorified body; but we may behold him in a sacrament as in a glass without twinkling. The object is not primarily and immediately presented to our eye; but by the mediation of a glass, we have some broken beams, some glances of his presence. And in those shadows we may see Christ crucified before our eyes, embrace him in our arms, and carry him in our hearts. Our state must be changed from earth to heaven before sacraments can well be abolished. If the sacraments be necessary as seals to confirm the truth of the covenant to us, as pledges of Christ's love and his conducting presence, and as instruments to convey strength, vigour, and all the blessings of the covenant to the heart, they are therefore needful till the doubting and staggerings of the soul be removed by full vision, and till we are got to the top of the mount of blessing.

Use 1. Christ will always have a church in the world. A church is the seat of ordinances. Privileges conferred by charter suppose a corporation. If Christ hath left a standing legacy, there shall be some persons in the world to whom it shall be paid. It is his royal prerogative to appoint them. He will not be a titular king, without a kingdom, without subjects. Christ will maintain his interest. And since he hath established his ordinances till he come, he will have a generation to serve him in the observance of them till he come. The church and ordinances cannot constantly be separated, though for a time they may, as the Israelites had not circumcision in the wilderness, and the passover also was omitted, but renewed by them before their entrance into Canaan. Yet it will not follow from hence that ordinances must always continue with us. They may be taken from a particular church, though not from the catholic church. God may have a church in the world, when he hath it not in this or that

particular nation. Our day may be turned into a black night. Our manna may not always fall. God sometimes takes away his ordinances from a people to pull down the house, and 'pluck a people up by the roots,' 2 Chron. 7:20. Sometimes he takes away his influences from them. Urim and Thummim may continue, but he will not answer Saul by them; the house may stand, but darkness may fill it when the glory of God departs: though there be a temple and sacrifices, yet but husks of ordinances only.

2. It is in no man's power to add to, or detract from, Christ's institutions. Not a pin in the temple he will have altered till he gives order. God is a jealous God, and careful of his sovereignty. It is not for any inferior person to alter the stamp and impression the prince commands. None can coin ordinances but Christ, and till he call them in, they ought to be current among us.

3. See Christ's love and bounty. Christ would not leave his people without a durable legacy. As Christ prayed for all that were to believe, so he provides for them. The apostles were not only to have the benefit, but all. He spreads a standing table for his people before he enters into his purchased glory, provides to feed them till he comes to take them home to himself. He entrusted it not to others, leaves it not to the apostles to appoint what they pleased; but writes the bill of fare himself, and directs what dishes we were to feed on till his return.

4. This ordinance must not be contemned. The passover was to be observed, much more the supper settled by Christ. It is to continue till his second coming. Is Christ yet come? Doth not the creation yet groan under vanity, doth not the heaven and the earth look with their old aspect? Have they yet put on new apparel? Doth not the sun run its ancient course? Are there yet the nearest signs of his second coming? Then no signs of the cessation of his institutions. All commands must be kept till the appearing of Jesus Christ, 1 Tim. 6:14. Certainly then this that is so nobly circumstantiated, let not any man think himself above it upon a conceit of a greater measure of the

Spirit. It is an impiety to pretend the Spirit of Christ can overthrow the institutions of Christ, which are to have the same duration in the world with the influence of the Spirit; to pretend that Spirit, whose office it is to bring the things of Christ to remembrance, to overthrow a grand memorial of him, contrary to the design of his mission; this is to set Christ and his Spirit at variance. To 'despise prophesyings' is to 'quench the Spirit,' 1 Thess. 5:19, 20. Will not the despising a great ordinance of Christ be attended with the same dreadful effect? The Spirit doth not do all things in as without means, but directs us how to use the means, as he did Solomon to build the house.\* He that contemns it, after so positive a command of remembering him this way till he comes, regards little Christ's authority, and presumes himself wiser than Christ; as if he could have given him directions how to have settled his church in a better method. Is it not a great ingratitude to God to despise what he commands as a privilege? Were not the apostles men of an extraordinary measure of the Spirit, because of their extraordinary employments? and did they not exercise themselves in the institutions of Christ? How have many proceeded from the slighting of Christ's institutions to the denying the authority of his word; a slighting Christ himself crucified at Jerusalem, to set up an imaginary Christ within them!

5. It is a standing ordinance till he come, no longer. The happiness of believers is great in attendance on the institutions of Christ, but greater afterwards. It is then there will be a full sight of that which is now in dark resemblances. It is then believers shall see the original copy of this picture. It is but till he come; he will not always have his people subject to ordinances, or show himself in a glass, but face to face. Then must this deputed light give place to a greater; then must these shadows fly away when the sun appears. It is a privilege to sit with him at his table here, but a greater to drink of the fruit of the vine new with him in the kingdom of his Father.

## A DISCOURSE OF THE SUBJECTS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.—1 COR. 11:28, 29.

HAVING discoursed of ver. 26, I now proceed to those which I have read. The substance of ver. 27, will come in in handling ver. 29, where the apostle mentions the greatness of the punishment of unworthy receiving; as vers. 26, 27, he had spoken of the greatness of the sin. Something we insisted on the last day, in the discovery of the sinfulness of unbelief, and more will upon the same subject be coincident with what might be spoken in this case. The apostle here exhorts the Corinthians to a worthy participation of that great ordinance of the Lord's Sapper, and (1) lays down the rule of self-examination, before their approach, that they might not contract so great a guilt as that of the body and blood of Christ. But if he would not be guilty of the body and blood of Christ, 'let him examine himself.' (2.) The manner of participation: 'So let him eat, and so let him drink.' (3.) He backs and enforceth it with a reason: 'For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks his own damnation.' A great danger is incurred by the neglect of this manner of proceeding.

Let a man, ἄνθρωπος, ἑαυτὸν. An Hebraism for every man.\* The apostle speaks it, saith Grotius, in regard of the disorders which were in the Corinthian church, in matter of discipline. Do not believe, because no censures are passed upon you, and the foundations of government are razed up in your church, that therefore you shall escape punishment for the contempt of those mysteries. No, God requires a worthy receiving, and will punish an unworthy one. So that it is an universal duty upon every Christian that desires to approach the Lord's table, to set upon a serious examination of his

heart and life, which the excellency of the mystery in its own nature requires; an excellent ordinance requires a peculiar preparation: every man, not every man in the world, but every man in the church; not every heathen, but every man that pretends a right to the supper.

Examine himself, δοκιμαζέτω. Some understand the word of an artificial examination, as goldsmiths try metals by the touchstone, to discern between what is true gold and silver, and what is counterfeit; but it is rather to be understood of a judicial trial, a trial of matter of fact, a trial of state, a trial of graces.

1. A trial of grace, whether it be inherent or no. It is a shewing the death of Christ; there must be therefore a search whether those graces which suit the death of Christ, and answer to the ends of it, be in the subject, as repentance, faith, love to God and to our neighbour; whether there be, not a legal, but evangelical worthiness, and a suitableness between the master of the feast and the guest; whether the heart and life agree with the precepts of Christ; what stamp of the Spirit upon the soul and conversation.

2. A trial of the state wherein those graces are. Since the supper is not worthily received, but by an exercise of repentance, faith, and love, it is necessary to inquire into the state of those graces, and their vigour or languor in the soul, that they may be excited to manifest themselves in a suitable carriage to the master of the feast, and the grandeur of the ordinance we are to attend upon.

By this are excluded from this ordinance,

1. All persons incapable of performing this antecedent duty. Either in regard of natural inability, as children, infants, who though anciently in the time of Austin, were admitted to this ordinance, yet against the rule of the apostle, because by reason of the imperfection of their age, they were not capable of performing this necessary duty which was to precede. As children are not the subjects recipient of the supper, because they are not risen to a suitable degree of



understanding, so neither are madmen, because they have lost that understanding they had, and the great mysteries of religion must not be exposed to contempt. And in regard of a negligent inability, as ignorant persons who neglect the means of knowledge, or improve them not to furnish themselves with a sufficient stock of knowledge to this end, so a man grown in age may be a child in understanding, and upon the same account is as incapable as a child of this ordinance; men, therefore, are unfit to come without a distinct knowledge of the doctrine of the gospel.

2. All persons who cannot find upon examination anything of a divine stamp upon them in the lowest degree. Such are all unrenewed men, who have not one bruise in their souls, not one breath of smoke and gracious desire towards Christ in their hearts, and consequently all scandalous persons in life, who are as incapable, by their spiritual madness and contracted vicious habits, as men that are mad naturally, by a distemper of their brain. This trial is for the finding fit qualifications for this ordinance, τὶ δοκιμῶν, something sound and worthy, which such persons cannot upon examination find.

This command of self-examination evidenceth to us,

1. That a Christian may come to the knowledge of his state in grace; otherwise it would be wholly fruitless to examine ourselves. If we may know by the want of saving conditions that we are in a state of nature; we may know by the presence of them, that we are in a state of grace.

2. No necessity of auricular confession; to tell all the secrets of the life to a priest.

So let a man eat of this bread, and drink of this cup. So, not otherwise; it is a hedge planted against every intrusion. So, not without examination, and a fitness upon it. It is not an ordinance appointed for every man; there is a manifest distinction between

persons capable of the word, and capable of the supper. Preaching is to be to every creature, every rational creature, Mark 16:15, 16. Unbelievers are capable of the word, believers only of the supper. The one is to bring men into the family, the other to nourish them after their entrance. If any man find himself in a state of death, let him repent, believe, resolve a new and serious life, and so let him come, not else; for without those he can receive no fruit of spiritual grace in this ordinance.

So let him eat, so let him drink. The apostle\* here obviates an error crept into the Romish church, the taking away the cup, a custom unknown in the purest and primitive times of Christianity. 'Let him eat and drink,' saith the apostle; 'Let him eat, but not drink,' saith the church of Rome. How soundly doth the Romish church accord with the primitive church! 'Drink ye all of this,' saith Christ, Matt. 26:27; 'Let the people not touch the cup,' saith Rome. How valid with them is the authority of that Christ they profess to be the Son of God, and the supreme head of the church! The apostle, saith Estius, commands that none should partake without examination, but doth not command that every one should drink. I answer, either it is a command or a permission; it seems to be a command. As the apostle commands the self-trial, so he commands the end of that trial, which is drinking the cup as well as eating the bread. If he commands the trial, he commands much more the participation, because in enjoining the means, he enjoins the end. We are bound to the use of means only in order to the end of those means. If the apostle commands the eating the bread, he commands also the partaking of the cup, the word so, &c., being grammatically to be applied to both. It would be ridiculous to think that the apostle's language was in this strain: Let a man examine himself, and if he finds himself fit for this mystery, let him choose whether he will either eat or drink; he may do one or both if he will, or he may let it alone if he will. Who would dare to put such a sense upon the apostle's words? If let be a word of command in the former sentence, it is no less in the latter. If therefore, he commands examination as a means, he commands communion as the end; and communion much more, since the end is

nobler than the means, and the means desirable for the sake of the end. But if it be a permission of the apostle, (for that it must be at least in the judgment of any man), that every one finding himself fit upon a trial, may drink of the cup as well as eat of the bread; what power on earth should deny that, which the inspired apostle and great doctor of the Gentiles permits? What pope or councils have authority to deprive any Christian of that which the founder of the Gentile church hath upon record allowed unto them? What reason can be alleged that it is not as proper for the church now, as it was for the church of the Corinthians? It was of use many centuries after the apostles' times, and is practised in all churches but that of Rome, wherein the denial of the cup was introduced about two hundred sixty odd years ago. What a blessing do we enjoy, to be freed from the antichristian yoke, and enjoy those privileges which the wickedness of men would deprive us of!

Bread and Cup. The doctrine of transubstantiation was not then known in the church. † The apostle calls it bread and cup three several times, vers. 26–28. Our reason, our sense, our sight, our taste, informs us it is bread and wine. The papists tell us, against reason and sense, that it is not bread, though it have the colour and taste of bread, but it is really the flesh and blood of Christ; it is changed and transmuted into his body and blood. It is indeed a sign of the body of Christ, a memorial of his broken, crucified body, and of his blood shed. The water in baptism represents the blood of Christ for the washing the soul, as the wine doth his blood for the nourishment and comforting the soul. Can any man say against his sense that it is not truly water? The church is called 'the body of Christ,' Eph. 1:22, 23. But have not those men and women that make up the church, distinct persons from the person of Christ, distinct substances from the body of Christ? Are they upon their union to Christ as his members changed into the nature of Christ, and corporally his members, as his hands, and feet, and fingers were his upon the earth, and are his now in heaven? Why should the apostle call it so often bread, if it were not bread, if the nature and substance of it were changed into another substance? The Scripture gives both

the names of bread and wine, and the body and blood of Christ, to the elements. They cannot be both properly; it cannot be bread properly, and the body of Christ properly; one therefore must be figuratively understood. Our sense tells us, and the apostle informs us, that it is bread; therefore it is called the body of Christ by a figure, since it hath nothing of the qualities of the flesh, but the essential qualities of bread. Besides, had it been properly the body of Christ, the apostle had discoursed far below his intention, which was to correct the irreverence of the Corinthians in this ordinance, and to recommend to them the sober and venerable use of it. He had neglected the main argument to enforce his main design, had it been properly the body of Christ, which would have made their irreverence more unreasonable, and of the highest guilt imaginable. He had been imprudent to have neglected acquainting them that this was the substance of the body of Christ, his very flesh and blood, and had been unfaithful in his trust, and silent in the most considerable argument. This had been more for his present purpose; but there is not a syllable of any such thing.\* The apostle might have argued in a higher manner from that, to convince them of the sinfulness of unworthy receiving; but he makes a manifest distinction between the bread and the cup, and between the body and blood of Christ: 'He that eats this bread and drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.' The bread and wine may be received unworthily, but the body and blood of Christ cannot be received unworthily. That implies a contradiction; for Christ assures us that 'every one that eats his flesh, and drinks his blood, hath eternal life,' John 6:54. The papists say, † that because he that receives unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of Christ, therefore the body and blood of Christ is really in the sacrament. Saul's persecuting the disciples of Christ was, in the account of Christ, a persecuting of himself, Acts 9:4. Was the body of Christ, glorified in heaven, really present in the bodies of his disciples persecuted by Saul? And when the apostle speaks (Heb. 10:29) of 'treading under foot the Son of God,' who is so foolish as to imagine that the Son of God was really in his person and body under the feet of those apostates, as the body of an enemy they had thrown down

might be under their feet? The bread is called the body of Christ representatively and sacramentally. And it is an ingenious observation of a learned man, † that the word, 'This is my body,' refers to the supper in distinction from the passover, which Christ put an honourable end unto: Matt. 26:26, 'As they were eating' (i.e., as they were eating the paschal lamb), 'Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take eat, this is my body.' The paschal lamb was Christ's body in a figure, Exod. 12:46. Speaking of the paschal lamb, 'Neither shall you break a bone thereof,' which is applied to Christ, who had not a bone of his body broken upon the cross, which John takes notice of as a 'fulfilling of the scripture,' John 19:36. 'These things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken;' which can refer to no other but the command about the paschal lamb in that place of Exodus. To this it is that the word τοῦτο doth refer in the speech of our Saviour: 'This is my body.' The passover had been a sacramental type of the body of Christ to the Jews. He was the Lamb of God, and he is 'our passover sacrificed for us.' But now Christ takes bread, and tells them, This is my body under the gospel. The paschal lamb shall no more be a representation of my body, as it hath been hitherto, but this shall be the sign of it. The bread upon this account is no more really the body of Christ than the paschal lamb was the body of Christ for so many ages, wherein it had represented it, which none of the Romanists will acknowledge to be transubstantiated into the body of Christ. They differed not in their representation, but only in the circumstance of time; one representing Christ to be slain, the other representing him crucified and slain already.

In ver. 29 the apostle describes the punishment, as he had (ver. 27) described the sin: 'For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.'

He that eats and drinks unworthily. (1.) In an unworthy state. (2.) In an unworthy frame, not actually discerning the Lord's body.

Eateth and drinketh damnation to himself. Κρῖμα signifies sometimes judgment, Gal. 5:10, 1 Pet. 4:17. Unworthy receiving is such an act as deserves damnation, and if not repented of, will bring damnation. The state may be changed, and so damnation avoided; but believers themselves, for their unworthy frames, shall not avoid the stroke of God, which the next verse manifests, ver. 30: 'For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.'

Not discerning the Lord's body. Not discerning the end, subject, and mystery of this sacrament; putting no difference between that and common bread. There is putting a difference between things, in regard of opinion and judgment.\* As God is said to put no difference between the Jews and Gentiles, in regard of purification by faith, Acts 15:9: 'And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith;' so men put no difference between the body of Christ and the body of a mere man, between bread as representing the body of Christ, and bread, the ordinary staff of life, when they make no solemn preparation for it than they do for an ordinary repast. When a man doth not regard the person and merit of Christ according to the true value of him, and comes to the Lord's table as to common bread,† and considers not to what end the elements are destined, nor the greatness and glory of that body which they represent, he violates in those signs the honour due to the majesty of Christ. If a man did rightly understand the dignity of the body of Christ, and how much it suffered for our sins, and that we should die to sin, he would certainly prepare himself by a strict survey of his own heart, that he might not come unworthily to so great a mystery.

In the verses we see,

1. The antecedent duty, examination.

2. The subsequent duty, participation.

1. The antecedent duty, which is laid down,

- (1.) In the extent of the subject, A man, i.e., every man.

(2.) The nature of the duty, Examine.

(3.) The object of it, Himself.

(4.) The necessity of it, So let him come, not else.

2. The subsequent duty described in its two parts.

(1.) Eating the bread.

(2.) Drinking the cup.

3. The enforcement to this duty, ver. 29.

(1.) The danger of unworthiness, Eats and drinks damnation.

(2.) The nature of unworthiness, Not discerning the Lord's body.

(3.) To which we may add, The sinfulness of unworthiness: ver. 27, He that eats and drinks unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. To which the particle but (ver. 28) refers, as the means to avoid that sinfulness: 'But let a man examine himself.'

Doctrine:

1. All men outwardly professing Christianity are not in a capacity to come to the great ordinance of the supper. The apostle writes not to the heathen, but the Christian Corinthians.

2. It is every man's duty solemnly to examine himself about his interest in Christ, and his right to this ordinance, before he come.

3. Without due examination, and by unworthy receiving, a man commits a great sin, and incurs a great danger.

1. For the first. All men outwardly professing Christianity are not in capacity to come to the great ordinance of the supper. If all men were capable, pre-examination were not then necessary. But because this

duty is enjoined as a precedent, therefore those that cannot examine themselves, and those that find no good issue of that examination, ought not to come; for the word 'so' excludes all such. Christ preached to a multitude, he excluded none from hearing, no not the worst of the Pharisees. But this ordinance he administered in a select company; he preached openly, he celebrated this privately in an upper room, whence the custom of celebrating in the chancel or upper part of the church, not in the body of it, took its rise. The word is more extensive, this more contracted. There were multitudes in the Jewish church owned him as the Messiah; but not all were admitted by him at this his first institution, but the apostles, and perhaps some few other disciples. For though he said to 'sit down with the twelve,' Mat. 26:20, yet (ver 26) he is said to 'give it his disciples.' If there were only apostles there, it signifies that he gave it to them, not as apostles, but as disciples, to shew thereby that all those that give up themselves sincerely to his instruction are capable of this ordinance in all ages of the church, and that it is not common to all that only make a mere profession of him. Anciently the catechumens, or persons entering their names to Christ to be instructed, stood a long time upon their probation before they were admitted into the more secret mysteries of the Christian religion, whether with good reason, I will not here determine; superstition lies principally in excess.

In prosecution of this doctrine, we shall lay down some propositions.

1. Only regenerate men are fit to come to the Lord's Supper. No man in a natural state but must needs eat and drink unworthily, for he retains his enmity and hostile disposition against God and Christ. Sanctified persons only are the proper guests. This was prefigured by the ceremony of washing the disciples' feet, which Christ used before the supper, John 13:8, 10. Without sanctification we have no part in Christ, and therefore no right to his supper. An unregenerate man cannot perform the duties necessary, drag out his sins, arraign them before God, mourn for his abominations, with a hearty contrition. By examination in the text, we must not understand a bare examination,



but that which ought to be the consequent upon it, a judging ourselves, and performing those acts consonant to the state we judge ourselves in. For so the apostle means, as appears by ver. 31, following the text, 'For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.' To what purpose is this commanded examination necessary, but for any man to see whether he hath those dispositions which are essential requisites to this ordinance?\* The children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, and of Barzillai, were not to eat of the most holy things, because they were not in the register of the genealogies, Ezra 2:61–63. If our names be not written in heaven, and are not to be found in the genealogies of the new born, we are not fit to eat of this holy feast. Those that were uncircumcised in heart as well as in flesh, were not to enter into God's sanctuary, Ezek. 44:9. Though an unrenewed man may be a great moralist, and his moral virtues may look like some pieces of a wedding garment, yet they are not the wedding garment till they be wrought into a right fashion by faith. It is a feast, and therefore only for God's friends. It is bread belonging to children; unrenewed men are not yet in a state of sonship. Circumcision was to precede the passover, Exod. 12:44; baptism to precede the supper. But this is but a symbol of an inward grace, without which no right to participation. The Israelites were baptized in the Red Sea, before they fed on spiritual manna, 1 Cor. 10:2, 3.

(1.) Faith is a necessary qualification, but unrenewed men have not faith. Take, eat, implies something spiritually to be done. There must be the hand of faith to receive and apply Christ, the mouth of faith to take in Christ. Natural men want both a spiritual hand and a spiritual mouth. An unbeliever receives the elements, not the life and spirit, of a sacrament. Faith is as much a condition requisite to a spiritual partaking of the sacrament, as to everlasting salvation. No salvation without believing, no taste of Christ without believing. Without faith, a man receives no more the body of Christ, than a chicken that should come into a room after, and pick up some fallen crumbs of bread from the ground, receives the body of Christ. The main qualification which makes sacramental bread spiritual food is wanting. We can no more turn the bread and wine into the body and

blood of Christ without faith, than a chemist can transmute one metal into another without the operation of fire. Christ dwells in the heart by faith only, Eph. 3:17. The paschal lamb was not to be eaten till the posts of the house were sprinkled with the blood of it, Exod. 12:7. The soul must be sprinkled with the blood of Christ by faith before it is fit to partake of this ordinance. As God doth not promise salvation absolutely to man, but upon condition of faith, so the sacrament doth not seal absolutely remission of sins to man, but upon the condition of believing. If there be no sealing therefore of the counterpart to God by performing the condition upon which God doth found his grants, there is no right to the seal. The promise is made to the penitent and believing sinner. What interest can he think to have in the seal, who hath not yet embraced the promise? It seals in particular to a person what the word proposeth in general upon such a condition. Pardon of sin is sealed to faith; there must be a performance of the condition on our part, before there can be any ratification by the seal to us. God seals no more than he promises, nor in any other manner than he promises. He promises only to faith, and therefore only seals to faith. Covenant graces therefore must be possessed and acted before covenant blessings can be ratified to us. As in covenants between man and man, the seal annexed to the writing seals no more than what is contained in the writing, and upon the acceptance and performance of such conditions, which are mentioned in the deed. Where there is not therefore an acceptance and performance of the conditions between the parties, the seal is no more than a blank, as to any real advantage. The sacrament is a seal in actu primo, in its own nature, but not in actu secundo to a wicked man; a faithless impenitent man hath not the beneficial fruit of it. It doth seal an unbeliever his damnation; for 'he that believes not shall be damned,' is part of the gospel, as well as 'he that believes shall be saved,' Mark 16:16. The question is not, whether the condition of faith may not be infused at the time of partaking by the extraordinary grace of God. The supper seems not to be a renewing, converting ordinance. That there must be faith, if there be any true fruit of it, is out of question, and that no unrenewed man hath, nor can have, any hopes he should be there inspired with

so noble and necessary a grace; and therefore in that state he is not a capable subject of this ordinance. For such therefore to approach the Lord's table, is a mocking of God, to come to God to seal the remission of sin, when they have no mind to come up to the conditions wherewith that pardon is proposed; as it is for a man to come to a prince for pardon, who hath not yet laid down his arms against him. God in his seal testifies his approbation of the promises upon the conditions expressed; man in receiving testifies his approbation of the condition. He that hath no principle of approbation in him, mocks God in his approach. Faith is a necessary moral qualification to the receiving of the sacrament.

(2.) An unrenewed man is not in covenant, and therefore no capable subject. This follows upon the former. If he hath not faith, the condition of the covenant, he is not in covenant with God; and what right hath such an one to the seals? All men by nature are 'strangers to the covenant of promise, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,' Eph. 2:12. What have they to do with the privilege of the free denizens of Israel? They that are not included in the deed have nothing to do with the seals of the conveyance; it is but fruitless wax to them, not a confirming seal. The covenant runs thus, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,' Cant. 2:16; it is mutual between the parties. By covenanting with God, we' become the Lord's: Ezek. 16:8, 'I entered into covenant with thee, saith the Lord, and thou becamest mine.' There is an appropriation of Christ to us, and a consecration of ourselves to Christ. What hath he to do with the ordinance, that wants the essentials of the covenant, who hath no valuation of Christ, no breathings after him, nor makes any dedication of himself to Christ? Those that never gave up themselves to God, receive no seal, but mere bread, mere wine. Unregenerate men are under a covenant of works. The covenant of works was made with the whole nature of man in Adam; the curse of the covenant seized upon all, Gal. 3:10; the duties of that covenant are incumbent upon them who are under the curse of it; the violation of that covenant freed not man from his obligation to duty, though it brought upon him a new obligation to punishment. It is a privilege only of believers to be freed from the

covenant of works; for they are 'not under the law, but under grace,' Rom. 6:14. And 'there is no condemnation' only 'to them that are in Christ,' Rom. 8:1. But where men do not believe, God deals with them upon the terms of the first covenant; he expects a full righteousness from them in their own persons, as being without Christ, and having not accepted of his blood upon his own terms, to take away the guilt of their sins. It is true, unregenerate men are under the offers of the covenant of grace, but not within actual acceptance of the covenant of grace. They enjoy some benefits of the covenant made with Christ; for they enjoy their lives, have worldly comforts, the fruits of God's patience, all which are upon the account of the Mediator; and they have been entered in by baptism; yet since they practically disown the terms of that covenant, they put themselves back under a covenant of works, to stand upon their own bottom; and therefore refusing a consent to that covenant, the benefits of the covenant belong not to them. For if a seal (as some affirm) be of the same nature with an oath, whereby God confirms his promise, yet it is so only to the heirs of promise, not to those that are rejecters of the covenant and promise.

(3.) This sacrament is a sacrament of nourishment. Unrenewed men therefore are not fit for it. They are dead, Eph. 2:1; and what hath a dead man to do with a feast? Men must be alive before they be nourished. It is eat, drink. The principal intent is not to eat corporeally, but spiritually; words not to be spoken to a dead man. Meat and drink may be put into a dead man's mouth, but he can swallow down neither one nor another in a vital way, nor concoct either of them. He that wants the life of grace can make no use of the nourishment of grace; so that the sacrament is at best but a vain thing to such. But besides, the very end of the sacrament is perverted, when the richest viands are taken by a man spiritually dead; as the end of bread, which is to nourish the body, is perverted, and the creature abused by being used contrary to the end of it, when it is put into the mouth of a dead man, to whom it can be no advantage. The body of Christ conveys strength and growth to his

own members only; to living members, not to dead. Dead branches receive no sap from the vine.

(4.) This sacrament is an ordinance of inward communion with Christ. But unrenewed men can have no inward communion with him. They cannot have that joy which ought to be in a converse with Christ, because they cannot taste any of those spiritual dainties which are in this feast. They may eat the sacramental bread, but regenerate men only have a new relish, spiritually, to taste the body and blood of Christ; they only relish the milk of the word, and the sweetness of a sacrament. What communion can Belial have with Christ, or darkness with light? Christ will have no converse with his enemies, till they are prepared for his reception by the stamp of his Spirit. Christ must be let into the heart before he sups with it: Rev. 3:20, 'If any man open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him.' The door must be opened by conversion, before Christ will feast with the soul in a spiritual communion. Those that are not graciously fit for a spiritual communion with him in heaven, are not fit for a spiritual communion with him in the earth: 'Unless we be born again, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God,' John 3:5, and therefore have no right to those privileges which are the foretastes of glory. Bosom-communion belongs only to bosom friends; others are but intruders, and will receive no countenance from Christ.

(5.) This ordinance is to be received by true Christians only. But renewed men only are such. Christianity is an inward powerful work, not a paint, an image. The form of godliness doth not constitute a man a Christian, but the power of it, 2 Tim. 3:5. All natural men are 'without God in the world;' they are ἄθεοι, Eph. 2:12, atheists, and may as well be called ἄχριστοι, not Christians, being 'without Christ.' There is not only required an assent of the understanding to make a man a Christian in foro Dei, but a consent of the will; there must be the accepting as well as the assenting part. It is not a bare knowledge, or the profession of religion, demonstrates a man a regenerate man, either in the presence of God, or to himself, though to others in the judgment of charity it doth. It is a work of the will that is required; he

is no Christian who barely knows Christ to be king, priest, and prophet, and cordially accepts him in none of those offices. Now this ordinance being the proper badge and privilege of Christians, none ought to partake of it but Christians. These evidences belong to the proper tenant, not to the counterfeit; to those that are his real friends, not to his lip friends and heart enemies. Freemen only have a right to the privileges of the city, and true Christians to the privileges of the church.

Obj. But it may be said, By this, none but those that have assurance of their being in a state of grace ought to come to this institution; and certainly there is many a true Christian wants this comfort; and the supper is a privilege due to grace, not to assurance; to Christians as Christians, not to Christians as comfortable Christians.

Ans. I answer, Caution is to be used in this, lest some doubting Christian should be left in a maze. Many humble souls are most backward; the presumptuous spur on apace; the baser metals are most volatile.

(1.) Penitent persons mourning for sin, though wanting assurance, are regenerate, and have a right. Contrite hearts are the most acceptable sacrifices to God, next to the bruised body of our Saviour, Ps. 51:17. Those that have bruised hearts, and cannot call to mind their former sins, but the pulse of their indignation beats quick against them, to such Christ appears first. He shewed himself to Mary Magdalene before he appeared to any of the apostles after his resurrection, yea, before he appeared to his own mother, Mark 16:9; and possibly some of her former sorrow began to spring afresh, and her speech seems to discover some sorrow and astonishment in her, and a great affection to Christ, John 20:11, 13, 15. Such bleeding, contrite souls doth Christ love; and such as he loves shall be as John, lying in his bosom, and leaning upon him at a sacrament. Where there is a true repentance, a detestation of all sin, a resolution to avoid sin for the future, and a lying at the feet of Christ, there is true

grace, though it may not be always visible to the soul. These are the sour herbs we are to eat the passover withal.

(2.) Regenerate persons cannot always say positively that they have grace, yet find so much ground as that they cannot absolutely deny it, unless in some sharp fit of desertion. It is not easily discerned sometimes, because of the weakness of it. Faith, like a grain of mustard seed, may lie sometimes in a heap of rubbish; clouds of sin, withdrawings of the Spirit, and injudiciousness of conscience, may obscure the work upon the heart at some seasons; yet a strong will, and an earnest breathing to please Christ, whispers something in the soul to cherish it. A strong and prevailing will is the proper evidence of conversion, and in Scripture it is expressed by will: Rev. 22:17, 'Let him that is athirst come, and he that will, let him come.' The acts of the will and the thirst of the soul are easily discernible, enough to keep the heart from a denial of the work of grace, though not enough to clear it up against all oppositions. The work of grace may be clouded; the sun does not always send forth its beams. The thorn in Paul's flesh seems to be a present cloud upon his spirit, hindering him from a sight of his own evidences, since it is put in opposition to the revelations he had in his rapture into the third heavens, 2 Cor. 12. Mary knew her own affection to Christ, and her sorrow for her sin, and could not deny those affections so palpable in herself and visible to others; but had not assurance of her state till Christ spake that comfortable word to her, Luke 7:38, 48, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' Every man that is regenerate may be able, upon a perusal of his own heart, to say, I am sincere in this or that; my ends are right, and the bent of my heart stands towards God. In grace there is some light discovering of it, though not perfectly, yet so as the soul can say, I am no hypocrite.

(3.) A perfect assurance is not required. It is said, 'Let a man examine himself' as to the frame and temper of his heart; not let him be assured of his being in Christ and of an happy state, but let him take a survey of his heart, and see that his frames are suitable, and so let him come. The supper supposeth men not to have a full assurance; it

is a seal, and seals are for confirmation, where there may be matter of doubt. It is a question, whether a perfect assurance be in the world. As grace is not perfect, but hath its ebbs and floods, so hath assurance. As faith is mixed with unbelief, so is assurance with doubtings. As the soul saith, 'Lord, I believe; help my unbelief,' so it hath often said, Lord, I hope; help my doubts. The needle stands right to the North Pole, but not without its tremblings. In the greatest doubtings, we should have recourse to those sparklings and sprightly leaps of our souls, when we found the first touches upon our hearts, and stay ourselves upon those presents we had in the day of our espousals.

2. Ignorant persons are not in a capacity for the supper. The subjects capable of it are men and women professing Christianity, and understanding the grounds of that which they profess. Light in the mind, and the true knowledge of God, was part of the image of God, and our original righteousness in the creation, as well as rectitude in the will, and the right standing of it towards God, Col. 3:10. Ignorance being a privation of that ornament of the soul, a fruit of our apostasy, the root of all our dishonouring of God, cannot render us fit guests for his table, or procure a welcome from him. Blind offerings can be no more acceptable to God under the gospel than they were under the law. He is a great king, Mal. 1:14. Those that approach to him are bound to know what belongs to the honour of his name.

By this ignorance we are not to understand,

(1.) An ignorance of the abstruse controversies in religion, which are often too knotty for the sharpest and most industrious understanding to unloose. A man may be unable to understand thorny and intricate disputes, yet with a sanctified knowledge of the fundamentals of religion, be in a nearer capacity for the benefits of this ordinance, than those that by their subtle wits can divide a hair.



(2.) Nor a scholastical knowledge of fundamentals, so as to be able to give an exact definition of those things which are necessary to be known. It is sufficient if he knows them as a Christian, though not as a scholar. A house may be strong, and keep out wind and weather for the security of the inhabitant, though it be not so neatly built and skilfully garnished. A man may know the fundamental articles, yet not know all the consequences rationally deducible from those articles.

(3.) Nor a perfect knowledge of all the ends of the death and resurrection of Christ. To know that Christ died, what he was, and for what he died, is necessary, but a perfect knowledge none have. As graces have their spots, so our knowledge hath its mixtures of darkness. The wisdom which the wise angels are daily learning, cannot be grasped by the largest and most elevated understanding upon the earth. The disciples in the time of Christ's being in the flesh, had but little knowledge of his death and resurrection, Luke 9:44, 45, John 20:9. Peter understood him to be the Son of God, but was ignorant of God's design to redeem the world by his blood, Mat. 16:16, 22:23. They afterwards knew something of it, and had an habit and disposition to believe whatsoever Christ should reveal to them. Yet that knowledge which was sufficient for the apostles, till a fuller manifestation by the Spirit, is no plea for our ignorance in the same thing, since the pouring forth of the Spirit, the taking off Moses his veil, and penning the truths of the gospel with a sunbeam. A little knowledge at the time of Christ's being in the world, and in several ages of the world, where the means have been less, would be more acceptable than a greater knowledge now, disproportioned to the means of knowing.

(4.) There must be an understanding and believing in some measure the fundamentals of religion. We must have some understanding of the nature and attributes of God, especially those that are more bright in the sufferings of Christ, and they are to be particularly respected in all our acts of worship: as the holiness and justice of God, the power and faithfulness of God, the omniscience and

omnipresence of God, the sovereignty and goodness of God. We must know the fall of Adam, the fruits of it upon his posterity, the exactness and spirituality of the law; there can be no motion to God without a sense of our misery. We must know Christ in his nature, God-man; in his design, redemption; in his commission, sent; in the manner of effecting it, by the shedding his blood, resurrection from the dead; the manner of applying it, by his intercession in heaven, and his Spirit on earth; in his offices, as king, priest, and prophet; the efficacy, value, and merit of his sufferings, the purifying virtue of his blood, the necessity of salvation by him, that there is no justification but by his righteousness, no sanctification but by his Spirit, and that one is as necessary as the other; the one for our acceptance with God, the other for our communion with God: the necessity and nature of faith for the enjoyments of the benefits purchased. There must be some knowledge in all those things, else we know not to whom, or how, or for what to apply ourselves in this great mystery of Christianity, which exhibits and represents to us on God's part the whole scheme of redemption, and requires on our parts the exercise of faith about its proper and particular object. There must be some knowledge of those things; the quantity cannot be determined; the quality is, that it be a sensible knowledge; not such a knowledge as a parrot hath, that may be taught to rehearse the creed, without reason or sense to understand or believe a word he speaks. A modest and a sensible ignorance, provided it be not total, is more tolerable than a puffed and insensible knowledge.

(5.) A knowledge of the nature and ends of the ordinance. The Lord's body cannot otherwise be discerned, ver. 29. The mysteries of the ordinance would be as Arabic letters to him that understands not the meaning of them. The master of the family was to teach the use and ends of the passover to the receiver, and all that were present were to understand the ground of the first institution, and the nature of the ordinance. The supper being a contract between God and man, a man must understand the nature and terms of that covenant, and also the nature and end of the seal; he cannot else be a worthy contractor with God. The body of the Lord cannot be discerned

without an understanding of the nature of the ordinance, and the nature of the ordinance cannot be understood without a knowledge of those principles of religion upon which it is built.

Ignorant persons are not fit to come.

(1.) They are incapable of performing the duties requisite. The antecedent duty of self-examination enjoined by the apostle as essentially necessary, 'So let him eat,' not otherwise. Those therefore that are unskilful in this work, by reason of their ignorance of the universal depravation of nature, the obnoxiousness of all men to the curse of the law, and the impossibility of avoiding the terrors of it without an interest in that mediator, in and by the way of his own appointment, are incapable of performing this duty, and so unfit subjects for this ordinance. They cannot repent, for they have no spiritual eye to discover their own filthiness. The prodigal never 'came to himself' till his understanding was enlightened, Luke 15:17. By the same ground that infants and children are excluded (who were anciently admitted to this ordinance), because of their defect of reason, not being able to perform this duty, ignorant persons are to be excluded. In them there is a natural, in ignorant persons a moral, inability, and under means of grace a sinful indisposition. There is as much reason for children in age to partake of this ordinance as for children in understanding. Both have a want of knowledge in those things which are of a concern to a right participation of this ordinance; nor can they perform the concomitant duties. Those who understand not the nature and ends of the death of Christ, cannot commemorate it in a right manner. All our service of God ought to be a reasonable service; not only as having the highest reason for a motive to urge it, but in regard of the modus, the manner of doing it. It must be done with an exercise of reason. We must serve God as Christians; but in our service we must not put off the nature of man. The right manner of partaking of this supper consists in repentance of sin, and faith in Christ; what repentance can there be for sin, when the evil of sin and the deplorable consequents of it are not known? What faith can there be in one ignorant of the cause and ends of the

death of Christ? They cannot come with desires suitable, that know nothing of their own wants. They who know not themselves empty, cannot desire spiritual fulness; who know not themselves sick, cannot desire spiritual cordials; who know not themselves under the curse of the law, cannot desire a satisfying Christ; they have no sense of that for which his body was bruised, wounded, and crucified. Nor can they perform the subsequent duties, which are a walking in holiness; there is no foundation in blindness for any regular walk.

(2.) All ignorant persons are unbelievers. None formerly entered into covenant by a solemn profession\* but those that had knowledge: Nehem. 10:28, 29, 'Every one having knowledge and having understanding entered into an oath to walk in God's law.' How can any believe the glorious things of the gospel, which they know not, nor desire to know, but stop their ears, blind their eyes like bats and owls, love the darkness of the night better than a clear sunshiny day? If we know not the firmness of the ground, we will never set our foot upon it. A man in ignorance is in the 'chains of darkness.' 'Darkness' and the 'power of the devil' are the same thing, Acts 26:18. He that hath ignorance in his head and heart is alienated from God. An alienation from God is a friendship with the devil. Is it fit for the voluntary captives of Christ's greatest enemy to come rattling with their chains of darkness, and under the conduct and power of the devil, to a feast appointed for the friends of God?

(3.) Such know not how to value this ordinance aright. It is not fit a jewel should be bestowed on him who understands not the value of it, and would part with it for a song to the next cheat he meets. An ignorant person would part with any spiritual excellency upon the next temptation of the devil. As want of strength makes the body, so want of knowledge makes the minds of children capable of being moulded into any form. An eye unpurged from the films upon it can never discover the beauties of divine mysteries, or entertain them with any spiritual delight. He that understands not his original corruption knows not how to prize a medicine. You may sooner make one born blind admire the sun, which he never saw, than make a

blind soul have an estimation of Christ, to whom he hath a natural enmity.

(4.) Ignorant persons are always under the command of some secret lust. Ignorance itself is a great sin. The not knowing what we may easily know, since it is revealed, is so far from excusing that it rather aggravates; because it is not a defect in the faculty itself (as in the case of madmen), but a defect in the improvement of the faculty, and such a defect as is voluntary, which man hath a power to remove. It stifles the notion of God rather than is dispelled by it: John 1:5, 'The darkness comprehendeth it not,' i.e. the light. Besides the evil of its own nature, it is the ground of all wickedness. If they are only 'filled with goodness' that are filled with knowledge, Rom. 15:14, they must be filled with evil that are filled with ignorance. Where the mind is dark, the motion must needs be irregular. The ignorance contracted by the fall hath been the root of all the corrupt inclinations and miscarriages in Adam's posterity. Ignorance first brought lust into fashion, and keeps up the mode: 1 Peter 1:14, 'Not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in your ignorance.' A fashion, course, and form of sin renders men unfit guests for the Lord's table.

And this leads to the third proposition.

3. Proposition. Men guilty of a course of sin, though secret and unknown to others, are unfit for this ordinance. This injunction, 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him come,' bars out such. By examination is not to be meant a bare act of examination, but that which ought to be consequent upon it; not let a man examine himself, and in whatsoever posture he finds his soul let him come; no, let him examine himself to find out the nest of vipers in his soul which hiss against Christ, and cast them out Let him perform the acts consonant to that state wherein, upon inquiry, he finds himself. What man would be so wretched as to make this conclusion: I am a swine, a beast, I live in such and such sins unrepented of, yet I have performed my duty, I have examined myself, which is all the apostle

requires of me, and I rest in this act; nothing more is enjoined me. Is there no end of this act? All things are commanded, not for themselves, but for some end. The apostle enjoins it not to make the sacrament a license for sin, or to encourage the wearing of Christ's livery to keep men's lusts warm. Every secret gross sinner stands anathematised both by law and gospel; the law curseth him because of his sin, and the gospel condemns him because of his unbelief. What excludes a man from admission when it is known to others, excommunicates him in his own conscience when it is only known to himself. All things in the ordinance bespeak purity; the place was fitted for the first institution, the soul must be fitted for the participation; the place was trimmed for Christ's entertainment, the heart must be trimmed for his reception. The grave of Christ was free from corruption; no putrefied body was ever lodged there; the soul must be free from any affection to filth. Though Christ had not a hole where to lay his head, he will not have a sty or a swine-trough wherein to lay his body. His humanity is advanced above the highest heavens, and the signs of it are not to be received by an earthly and polluted soul. Such ought not to approach, though they seem to have a repentance, till it appears that their repentance is serious and thorough. Those that have been stained with some secret gross crime ought not to approach upon a sudden and late begun contrition.\* To mourn one day and come to this ordinance the next, argues but little care to dispose themselves for so great an institution. A soul glutted with sin, though beginning to vomit it up, cannot so suddenly gain a spiritual taste for the body of Christ. How many have had sudden qualms, and discharged themselves of some sins the better to swallow more! Imaginations of repentance are not always realities. He that offends another, and saith he is sorry for it, and a short time after offends again, affords no reason to believe that he is a penitent in earnest.

Quest. What sins debar a man from this ordinance?

(1.) Not such which are infirmities incident to human nature. Every sin doth not impede the operation of faith about the proper object.

Every breach of the command is not a hindrance. Sins of daily infirmities are breaches of the command, otherwise they are not sins. There is no perfection of virtue, while remission of sins is to be daily petitioned for; the state of perfection is reserved for a state of glory. There is a blackness mixed with the church's comeliness, Cant. 1:5, a blackness of sin as well as of affliction. The wheat ceaseth not to be wheat, though tares are mixed with it. In the best mines there are earth and dross as well as gold; precious stones have their flaws, which cannot be removed without the destruction of the substance, nor infirmities abolished without the destruction of the body. The disciples were not without corruptions at the institution; ambition bubbled up in them, Luke 22:24, and fear quickly made them forsake their Master; but they were not naturalised or rooted in this evil, neither did the devil enter into them as he did into Judas. As the Father of mercies doth not discovenant us for every infirmity, so neither should we exclude ourselves from partaking of the seal: 1 John 2:1, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.' The office of advocacy erected in heaven supposeth sin after regeneration, and during our continuance in the world. But there is a great difference between the indwelling of sin and the rule of sin. To sin is to decline from that rectitude in an act which the agent ought to observe. In this respect we sin, according to the tenor of the law, in everything we do, though not according to the tenor of the gospel.

(2.) But a course in wilful and frequent breaches of a known command debars a man. That which is against the principal intent of the command, and the main office it requires of us, such as omissions of known duties. When family duties are omitted, and the house, which should be as a little church, is rather a synagogue of Satan; when there is a total or frequent omission of secret prayer, which disowns that worship of God which is due to him by the light of nature, and is the note of a wicked man. 'Will he always call upon God?' Job 27:10. Those that forget Christ all the week are not likely to be devout in the remembrance of him upon a Sabbath. And such sins of commission as are enumerated, 1 Cor. 6:9, 10, 'fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers,

extortioners,' are a bar if not repented of, 2 Cor. 12:21. The heart that is an habitation of any of those kinds of devils is not a member of Christ, and can bring nothing but a mystery of iniquity to fit it to partake of the mysteries of Christ. This is a blaspheming Christ in the heart, while he is received with the hands; like the reviling thief that hung beside him on the cross, not like a loving or beloved disciple that looks upon him by faith while he is bleeding to death. These have no right till their guilt be unbound by repentance and faith.

Such ought not to meddle with this ordinance.

[1.] Moral uncleanness is a greater bar than ceremonial. If a man were defiled with a dead carcase, he was to forbear eating the passover, Num. 9:6. If any man, unclean by the touch of a dead body, came into the tabernacle, he defiled it, and was threatened with a cutting off from Israel, Num. 19:13. How much more ought they to abstain from the table of the Lord, that are not only defiled, but dead, who bear a dead putrefied soul in a living body? 1 Tim. 5:6, 'She that lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.' If ceremonial uncleanness, without any mixture of a moral, were hateful to God, much more hateful to him is moral uncleanness. The worship of God is more precious than to be sacrilegiously invaded by impenitent sinners; every work of the hands, and that which is offered is unclean, as well as when offered by one that had touched the dead, Hag. 2:13, 14. Lepers who had a natural disease were not to come into the congregation, that they might not defile the place wherein the Lord dwelt, Lev. 13:46, Num. 5:2, much less ought they to approach this ordinance, where the Lord is solemnly present as master of the feast, who have running sores, and stink above ground in the nostrils of God. If for those outward uncleannesses men were to abstain from those institutions which the apostle calls 'worldly rudiments' and 'carnal ordinances,' they are too foul guests for so rich a feast, who can bring nothing else but the loathsome exhalations of hell to spiritual ordinances. The livery of the devil becomes not the table of the Lord.



[2.] All the right which they may claim by baptism is forfeited in foro Dei. It is a repentance, profession of faith, resolution to walk accordingly, and the answer of a good conscience towards God, which are the foundations of any man's right to the supper; but secret impieties are a disowning repentance, violating good resolutions, denying the faith which hath been before professed. Where the terms of the covenant are not observed, there is a forfeiture of any right to the benefits and seals of it. All rebellion is of right followed with an attainder and deprivation of birthright. A continual breach of covenant by commission of known sin attains the soul in the court of heaven, and the charter is not to be enjoyed but by the parties that fulfil the conditions required. He that 'hates instruction' hath no part in 'the covenant, Ps. 50:16, 17. What claim can he be supposed to have, that declares to God by his practice that he will not be ruled by his law, or own him as his chiefest good? A rebel separated from Christ in affection and will hath nothing to do with an ordinance of peace. He that takes no care of the honour of God who created him, nor of his own soul, which is to run parallel with the endless line of eternity, is a much worse infidel than he that neglects provision for his own family; yet of such an one the apostle pronounceth that he hath 'denied the faith,' 1 Tim. 5:8. Dogs they are in the account of God, more deservedly than the believing Canaanite was in the account of Christ. And wicked men are called so in Scripture, Rev. 22:15, 2 Peter 2:22. What right have dogs to the children's bread, to the legacy of choicest love? Can such be supposed to be included in his will? If they have any right, it is to the table of devils, not to that of the Lord. And it may well be wondered how any men can come securely to a communion with Christ, who bring such evil dispositions and full-blown sins unrepented of, which they know will for ever deprive them of any communion with God in heaven, unless they think that great sins should merit glory!

[3.] Such cannot in that state perform the duties requisite in this ordinance. Faith is a necessary qualification; but a denial of subjection to Christ is an evidence of a gross infidelity. Practices are the clearest indexes of faith or unbelief; evil works deny God in his

promises and precepts. If any man tells you he believes that to be fire which is before him, and that it will burn, and yet wilfully runs into it, you must either conclude he hath no assent to what he doth affirm, or else that he is mad, and hath a mind to destroy himself. And those that believe neither the promise nor command of the word, will not be induced to believe it because of the seal, when they give no credit to the writing. Repentance is necessary to this ordinance, but this and a course of sin are utterly inconsistent: repentance is a 'breaking off iniquity by righteousness,' Dan. 4:27, and a secret sinner breaketh off righteousness by iniquity. An unwearied practice manifests a fixed resolution, but repentance is a change of the purpose of the heart, not to commit the same iniquity again, nor any other: Job 34:32, 'If I have done iniquity, I will do no more.' A purpose of sin cannot consist with repentance, nor is a flashy purpose of repenting a true remorse. A bird may soar high towards heaven, and presently descend as low as earth; as Saul resolved not to persecute David, but was quickly bent upon his old game. He cannot have a sense of sin, which is a necessary qualification to a worthy receiving: he understands not, believes not the vast breach sin hath made between God and the world, who every day is resolved to make it wider. He is not in the least truly affected with the greatness of that God against whom he sins, with the kindness of that Christ whom he freshly murders, the curse of the law which he hath incurred, nor the wrath of God which he hath provoked. Where any one sin is loved, that soul hath not a sense of the justice of God against it, or the unexpressible sufferings of Christ for it; and can such a man have a fundamental right, who hath not a grain of the fundamental graces, or celebrate in a right manner the memorial of Christ, who walks every day as if the devil were his redeemer?

[4.] Such contemptuously undervalue the blood of Christ, and therefore are unfit for this heavenly ordinance. It is no better than a mocking of God to come to his table with a professed enmity in the heart against him; a Judas's Hail, Master, while he is playing the traitor; the soldiers' Hail, King of the Jews, to Christ, while they

design to crucify him. This is to be his executioner, not his guest. To hold in the heart any one sin, which is the enemy of Christ, while we partake of the supper, is no other than to design the murder of him; as he that invites a prince to his house, wherein he lodges a desperate enemy to the prince he invites, may well be supposed to have a design against his life. We may as well profess our love openly to the nails that pierced him, and the spear that ran into his side, and adore them in our thoughts for such an action, as bring a love and zeal for those sins which were more bitter to him than the nails in his hands, or the reproaches of the rabble. A remorselessness in sin is a killing the Son of God afresh. What is it to be guilty of the blood of a man, such a man's blood as Job would not set with the dogs of his flock, or the blood of a Lazarus, who would be happier by a mortal stroke than a painful and beggarly life? What is it then to have the guilt of the blood of the glorified Son of God, the blood of him that came to be our Saviour; and thereby to do more than approve of the cursed action of the Jews? Is it not as great an affront, as if one fallen into a jakes should, in that filthy condition, intrude himself into a prince's company, sit down at his table, and dip his bemired hands in the same dish? He that knows himself to be a secret enemy to God, undervalues Christ by an approach to this ordinance, as if the body and blood of the Redeemer were food fit for a viper, or a swine good enough to wear his badge. Such is every man that hath a rooted affection to any one sin under a profession of Christ; he puts a disgrace upon him, while he prefers his sin before him.

[5.] Such cannot receive any good from this ordinance. He can design no good to himself with a resolution to continue in his sin. What can his end be, but to see Christ bowing under sin, that himself may live more contentedly in it? To attend upon any means of grace, that sin may abound, and be more at ease, is equivalent to continue in sin, that grace may abound, which the apostle mentions with God forbid, Rom. 6:1, 2. Whosoever lies impenitent in any gross sin is dead, and can receive no more nourishment from any spiritual ordinance, than a dead man can by meat put into his mouth. His sin petitions against him, as Esther against Haman at the banquet of wine,\* and his

death, as his sin, is more increased. He makes his sin more bulky by the addition of that of unworthy receiving, and hastens his death by a fresh provocation. It is as impossible such a man can obtain any beneficial end of the institution, as it was for a Jew to be purified, who held in his hand an unclean thing which defiled him, while he dipped himself in the purifying water; and he gets just as much good by the supper, as Judas by the sop, a part of the paschal sacrament, Job 13:17; to have not only one devil enter into him, but seven more, and return more proud, covetous, unclean, unbelieving, impenitent than before, with his sins more strengthened, as a believer's graces are, and more contented to lie in the mire, and increase sins to lay upon the cross of Christ. Judas did no more than this. I suppose he came only with a resolution to maintain that peculiar beloved sin of his, his covetousness, not dreaming of the consequent of it, the death of his Master, nor with, any intent to procure it; for he was sorry when he heard Christ was condemned, and therefore in all likelihood aimed, not at the loss of his Master's life, but the filling his own purse; yet the devil took possession of him. A resolution to continue in any sin after the fit of devotion is over, settles Satan's throne faster in the heart. A wicked man's sacrifice is always 'an abomination to the Lord, much more when it is offered with a wicked mind,' Prov. 21:27. And what more wicked mind can there be than to resolve to preserve the enemy of a bleeding Christ found, while he is exhibited as broken and bleeding for it?

[6.] Such as lie in the mire of any secret sin are not fit for this ordinance, because it is not a converting ordinance, neither in the intention of God nor the ordination of Christ in the first institution. None but visible professors were counted capable of it in the primitive times; they first continued 'in the apostles' doctrine,' and then 'in breaking bread,' Acts 2:42.

I will grant first,

(1.) That it may be the instrument of a second or partial conversion. There is a conversion from a natural state to a state of grace, which is

the renewing of the mind; this is ordinarily wrought by the word, as the cord whereby God draws men; and a gradual conversion after some fall, as Peter was converted by a look of Christ: Luke 22:32, 'When thou art converted.' This latter may be caused by this ordinance, and that grace which hath been suppressed by sin receive the virtue of a resurrection by the sacrament The representation of a broken Christ reminds a man of his sin committed against so dear and loving a Saviour. The remembrance of Christ in that ordinance, being the great wheel to set all the other wheels in motion, causes an actual conversion by exciting the grace which was habitually there before; and this may be called a conversion, as conversion is an exerting those principles of grace infused by the Spirit, and habitually resident in the heart, though under some languor by the prevalency of some sin.

(2.) I do not question God's absolute power. Not what God may do, but what he hath revealed to be his ordinary instrument, whereby he will work this or that effect. Who can limit the Holy One of Israel? His ways are unsearchable, and his paths past finding out. He hath an almighty power to create millions of worlds, it doth not follow therefore that he will do it. God by his absolute power may infuse the first grace into the heart at this ordinance; but God hath not discovered any such intention, or declared in his word, or in the nature of the institution, that this is the end of it.

(3.) I do not deny but that it is possible, that a man that hath some dispositions and previous preparations to grace, may have the first renewing grace bestowed upon him at the sapper.\* For an unregenerate man may by a serious precedent examination rake into his own heart and life, search into his state how matters stand between God and his own soul, whereupon follow some convictions, contrition, and disaffection to his darling lust, and some resolutions against it; and God may come in with converting grace at the sacrament, and make an utter divorce between the soul and the sin, and the new name may be given together with the manna, and grace infused at that instant. Where there are such dispositions to the

receiving a new form, why may it not be introduced at that time as well as another? Yet if any such effect be, I should rather ascribe it to the word attending the signs, than to the signs themselves, or the act of receiving; the beginning of grace being the proper end of the word, and not of the supper.

(4.) I will not deny but that it is possible that a man, seeing the passion of Christ represented in the supper, may have such an impression made upon his heart, and his affections united to Christ. The exhortations may be instrumental to the converting a spectator of the action and a hearer of the word. The sight of miracles hath been instrumental to the conversion of some (though I do not remember any particular instance of any man's conversion by the sight of a miracle without the word preached before, and then miracles added for confirmation of the word). The sight of things makes a deep impression upon us. The whole creation is a book of God's printing, and presents us with instructions worthy our notice, and generative of reflections in us. God doth teach by the eye as well as by the ear, and sacraments are called *verbum visibile*. This may be; but there is no example of any such conversion in Scripture, nor doth the end, manner, and nature of the institution credit the opinion of its being a converting ordinance, nor hath Christ discovered his will that it should be so. If any man hath been converted by it, I should rather attribute that effect to the word, the proper instrument of it. We say *sol et homo generant hominem*, yet we do not call the sun but the man the father of the child. Suppose a man had been converted by the supper by the good pleasure of God, must men unfit for it plead a right to it? Because one walking in the way hath found a treasure, must every one expect the like hap by walking in the same path? I have heard of some, and knew one, who dated his first spiritual awakening from a dream, but would not he dream that should look upon that as an institution of God to that purpose? Because one hath been cured of an ague by running into water as cold as ice, must therefore all under the same distemper follow the same course, where they may as well expect their death as their cure? No man can reasonably expect his conversion by coming

in such a posture, whereby, contracting more than an ordinary guilt of the body and blood of Christ, he incurs a greater damnation.

But it is not likely to be a converting ordinance, because,

(1.) If baptism be not a converting ordinance, much less is this of the supper. That supposeth faith in the adult person, and the profession of faith in the parent for the child. The Jews did not admit a proselyte to circumcision before he was instructed in the law; then upon his own profession he was admitted to the seal, and his children upon the profession of the parent; and the apostle admitted no adult persons to baptism but upon their profession of Christianity. Circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, Rom. 4:11; it was a 'seal of the righteousness of faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised.' The circumcision at the first institution supposed faith in the party. Baptism hath the same relation, much more the supper; a seal supposeth something to be sealed. If it be appointed for ratifying the covenant and promises of it to the receiving soul, it supposeth that condition in the receiver which the covenant requires, otherwise it seals nothing. Anciently they did admit the baptized person immediately to the supper, though they kept them long in instruction before they administered the former.

(2.) This sacrament is appointed for nourishment, and that supposeth life. A sacrament doth not suppose the effect which it was instituted to produce, but this sacrament supposeth grace in a participant.\* And indeed, bread and wine are not ordered to enliven a dead man, but to nourish and maintain life in a living man. The bellows kindle not the wood, but suppose fire kindled before. This sacrament is instituted as a part of refreshment, with meat and drink; and though Christ, who is exhibited in this sacrament, can raise a dead man, yet he is offered in this ordinance for producing such effects which are agreeable to the nature of it. He is offered as spiritual food, and spiritual food supposeth a new birth.

(3.) Pre-examination implies it to be no converting ordinance. If it were so, what need this bar, 'So let him come,' and not otherwise? What need such a strict examination, whether they did repent or whether they were regenerate? He must examine himself whether he be a sincere professor of Christianity, whether he have true repentance and faith, whether Christ be in him. That which is pre-required to the Lord's supper it was not properly instituted to effect.

(4.) The nature of excommunication speaks as much. Had it been a converting ordinance, should not the incestuous person rather have been kept in the Corinthian church for his amendment and reformation than thrown out? 1 Cor. 5:13, 'Put away from among you,' &c. It being intended as a medicine to reduce him to repentance and humiliation, did not deprive him of that which was the chief remedy to bring him to repentance. Though it be a cutting off from communion with the church and church privileges, yet not from hearing the word, which is not properly a church privilege, but the privilege of all where the gospel comes. An excommunicate person is to be held in the same rank as a heathen or publican, Mat 18:17. Who would deny Turks and Pagans access to hearing the word if they would come, or not rather invite them to it and gladly receive them? Converting ordinances may be dispensed to known impenitent sinners. Christ preached the word to the pharisees, his stout-hearted enemies, who, he knew, conspired against his life. But he instituted and administered the supper only among his disciples.

(5.) The word was appointed to work faith. Rom. 10:17, 'Faith comes by hearing'; but where is it said, Faith comes by receiving the sacrament? There is plain proof for the one, none for the other. Paul was sent by preaching to open men's eyes, Acts 26:18. We find many converted by the word, none by the sacraments: the jailor by the word, Lydia by the word, the eunuch by the word, three thousand by the word. Faith is necessary to a right hearing the word: not absolutely, for men hear that they may believe; but the word doth not profit us unless mixed with faith, i.e. unless that which they hear be believed and assented to by them. If either this or baptism had been



converting ordinances, Paul's commission would have run that way; but he was sent 'not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.'

Since then it is no converting ordinance, those that are unconverted, who never yet repented of and forsook their secret sins, are not fit guests for Christ.

But some will conclude the approach of secret sinners from Judas his partaking of this ordinance; but that is a question. Some think Judas did receive, others conclude he did not, and that he went out before the supper. Zanchy thinks it thwarts the story of St John's Gospel; Beza gathers that he was not there from John 13:30, 'He then having received the sop, went immediately out,' εὐθέως ἐξῆλθεν, which was at the end of the second supper, after which Christ instituted the sacred supper. The sop was properly a part of the rite belonging to the paschal lamb, dipped in the sauce of bitter herbs, which the master of the family reached to every guest, Exod. 12. But the sacramental bread was broken, not dipped in any liquor. Gomarus\* hath this argument: Christ (Luke 22:19, 20) tells them his body was given for them, and his blood shed for them, without making any exception of Judas, which it is likely he would if he had been present, as he did in his prayer afterwards, John 17. Judas had no interest in the body and blood of Christ for remission of sin; his sins could not be remitted, neither could he have any profit by the body and blood of Christ, for Christ calls him, John 17:12, 'the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.' And consider, Judas was in hell before Christ suffered death, for he hanged himself as soon as ever he heard Christ was condemned, and Christ's blood could not be shed for him any more than for any other in hell. It is not likely that Christ, who never admitted Judas to the choicest familiarities, should admit him to this standing token of his love. When he whipped buyers and sellers out of the temple, he would scarce suffer a devil to be partaker of his body and blood. If he would not pray for Judas, it is not likely he would give the symbols of his body and blood to Judas. As to that, Luke 22:21, 'The hand of him that betrays me is with me on the table;' being put after the relation of the supper,

it is no argument for Judas his receiving it; for the evangelists do not observe always in their relations the order of things as they were done. Mark (chap. 14:23, 24) relates the passage of the supper as if the words of institution were delivered after they had drunk the wine and ate the bread without knowing to what end, and the institution had been after their participation of it. According to the other evangelists, this speech concerning Judas was before the institution, Mat. 26:21, &c.; Mark. 14:19, &c. But suppose Judas did partake of the supper, what encouragement is it to a secret sinner at any time to venture upon it, when he may fear Judas his reward, and a greater power of the devil and his lusts over him.

Use. Let us look well to ourselves. Privileges must not be rested in securely without inspection into ourselves and examination of our ways; we may be odious in God's eye, though fair in men's. The profession of faith may be without the grace of faith; there may be knowledge without an internal and secret practice; much light in rotten wood; there may be a counterfeit integrity, a moral integrity without an evangelical; a repentance to be repented of, and a faith not sincere. Some shall come at the last day and tell Christ they have ate and drank in his presence, eaten his body and drank his blood in the sacrament, and be answered with a dreadful, I know not whence you are, Luke 13:26, 27. God will shut heaven's gates against many whom the gates of the visible church cannot be locked against. Something else is required to give a title in the judgment of God than what gives a title in the judgment of man. Ananias and Sapphira we may rank among the first of seeming converts, but made the examples of God's judgment for their sin.

Doct. 2. It is every man's duty solemnly and seriously to examine himself about his interest in Christ, his habitual grace, his actual right and fitness for the Lord's Supper before his approach to it. It is not the first time of our partaking, but every time, 'so let him come.' Now, the second and third time as well as before; great preparations are necessary for great duties. The particle so bars men from coming without this previous work. Let him come in such a manner; if he

neglects this self-examination, let him not venture upon this great mystery. Thus, Ps. 26:6, 'I will wash my hands in innocency, so will I compass thy altar, O Lord,' alluding to the ancient custom of testifying the purity of their souls by the cleansing their hands, or to the washings used before sacrifices; or if we take Ambrose his gloss, I will with a purity of heart embrace the Messiah, signified both by the altar and sacrifice. 'So will I compass thy altar;' without such an inward purification, I dare not presume upon an approach unto it. There ought to be an inspection into ourselves, that there may be nothing disagreeable to the Master of the feast, or unworthy of his honour. If a care of our garb and carriage be necessary in our approach to the table of an earthly prince, much more when we come to the table of the Lord, where the mighty Sovereign of heaven invites us to feed upon those dainties which are the delight of his heart and the nourishment of our souls, the joy of heaven, and ought to be the pleasure of earth. Christ prepared himself for his sufferings; he examined his own strength before he engaged, had the assurances, security, and accepting testimony of his Father before he entered upon them, so that he had nothing to do but to suffer when he came to it; and we should have nothing to do but to feast with God when we approach to him to commemorate those sufferings. Adam's body was prepared by God before the inbreathing of a living soul, and our souls must be prepared before the entrance of a quickening Saviour. If we take physic, we prepare our bodies, that the medicine may have the freer and surer operation; when we sit down at our ordinary meals, we would have prepared stomachs. Shall we prepare vessels for our own service, and bring unprepared hearts to the table of the Lord? Would not we have meat but in a clean dish, and shall we lay the eternal food, the flesh and blood of Christ, in miry souls? Every ordinance hath a preparative; meditation is to usher in prayer, prayer is to sanctify the word, the word and prayer to sanctify other ordinances. This institution hath examination for its harbinger to prepare the way of its access to us, and our access to it.

1. This self-examination or preparation is necessary. God required it in all duties. Purification went before sacrificing. The preparation

and examination of themselves as to ceremonial uncleanness was strict before the passover, which was inferior to this ordinance, as the legal state was to the evangelical. The mercy to be now remembered is greater, the duties of preparation and devotion ought not to be less. The death of Christ was then represented to be suffered in time, it is now represented both as suffered and accepted. The clog of legal administrations is knocked off by the gospel, but not the holiness, which is both the beauty of the soul and an ornament of divine institutions. The meanest vessel belonging to the sanctuary, the shovels, basins, flesh-hooks, and fire-pans, were not to be used without preparation by a holy oil, Exod. 40:9–11. Much more ought we to be sanctified for the participation of the symbols of that body which was crucified for us on earth, and glorified for us in heaven. The circumstances at the institution require it; the room wherein it was instituted was prepared, Mark 14:15. Christ washed his disciples' feet before the institution, John 13:5. We must imitate him, and wash our souls before the participation. The Spirit's sanctification gives a right to the benefits purchased by the blood of Christ. The heart, which is a vessel to receive the body of Christ, ought to be prepared, as well as the room wherein he first appointed and celebrated the symbols of it, or the grave, wherein his body was to be awhile enshrined. His body in the sacrament must be wrapped in a clean soul, as well as his body by Joseph in clean linen. Our Saviour entered not upon his offices without preparation by prayer and fasting, Mat. 4:12, Mat. 26:36, to set us a pattern of the like practice before any great undertaking. If men were to sanctify themselves before they came to the sacrifice,—1 Sam. 16:5, 'Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice,'—and eat of the part appointed for the feast, there is as much reason for preparation for the commemoration of the greatest sacrifice that ever was, the substance of all those that were offered before it. This cannot be without a previous examination of the quality and measures of the habitual grace in us, and what filth remains to be purged out.

(1.) It is necessary to clear up a right. There is an outward acceptance of Christ and his laws without a true and inward change

of heart. All the Corinthians were called saints by the apostle: 1 Cor. 1:2, 'called to be saints;' saints by an outward calling, not all so by an inward regeneration. There are blazing comets which may appear bigger and greater than a fixed star. A gilded metal and true gold are outwardly like one another, yet differ in their species. There is a sanctification which is common to apostates from the faith, Heb. 10:29. The Scripture mentions a 'dead faith,' James 2:26, which is no more a faith than a carcase is a man. There is a 'repentance unto life,' Acts 11:18, which supposeth a dead repentance, like the humiliation of Ahab, dropping tears without a mollifying of his natural hardness; or Judas his sorrow, raised by the fire of his conscience, not by the look of his Master. There is a 'lively hope,' 1 Peter 1:3, which supposeth a dumpish and heavy-headed hope. There are 'lively stones,' 1 Peter 3:5, which implies that there are some unhewn and rough stones, not fitted and prepared for the temple. There is a repentance towards God, and a sorrow which works death, differenced not in their outward acts, their shape and resemblance being alike, but in their inward aims. The building upon the rock and the sandy foundation might be of the same outward beauty, form, height; the foundations were different; the one firm, the other fading. Satan's children may appear angels of light as well as their father. There is a faith common with devils, there is a faith proper to Christians, *solis et semper*, always in the habit, though not always in the act.

(2.) It is necessary for the exciting of grace. That the soul may be excited before; that there may not be an ebb in our affections when there is a flood of our Saviour's blood; that our stomachs may not fail us in the presence of a full banquet; that we may not have little thoughts in the presence of great and adorable objects. The paschal lamb was not to be eaten boiled, but roasted, Exod. 12:8, 9. The Jews say they were not to baste it with water, but with wine or oil, both inflaming, to shew indeed the mighty agonies and scorching sufferings of Christ; perhaps, also, to mind us of the warm and glowing frame our hearts were to be in at the eating of our passover sacrificed for us, that we may have fervent affections, without any

chillness to damp our heat. To think or speak of the work of redemption without a suitable devotion is unworthy of any that bears a Christian badge, much more to have slight and creeping affections, when the great mysteries of it, with all the parts, are presented before our eyes. An actual exercise of grace is necessary to the concocting this spiritual food, as an actual excitation by nature of that vitriol humour, or natural heat, or whatsoever other cause of concoction it is for the preparing our bodily food to be nourishing to the members. To give meat to one in a swoon is all one as to put meat into the month of a dead man; the vitals in one are extinct, in the other oppressed and languishing, and unable to perform their office. This excitation and exercise cannot conveniently be without an antecedent preparation and examination. In the case of the body, it is the work of nature; in the case of the soul, it is the act of the mind and will quickened by grace. The excitation of grace in the soul is not as natural as that of the concoctive faculty in the body, which is done without any act of our mind, as our breathing is. This will revive graces, which seem to lie buried under ashes, into a flame, and rouse up holy principles that lay dormant in a bed of laziness.

(3.) It is necessary to prevent sin. The apostle's direction to them to examine themselves, implies the want of it to be the cause of those miscarriages among them, which he taxeth in the preceding verses. After he had shewn them the danger, ver. 27, the guilt of the body and blood of Christ, he adds, 'But let a man examine himself.' To prevent the sin of unworthy receiving, and the danger accruing, let a man examine himself. As if he should have said, had this duty been practised, Christ would have had more guests and fewer executioners of him at his table. If this were always practised, none would dare (as too many in the world do) to approach the Lord's table only with a design to wipe off their old scores; and, upon a presumption that their consciences are cleared of their former debts, begin the same sins afresh with more ease. As those in the poet,\* who besprinkled themselves with the water sacred to Mercury, and begged of him that they might more securely cheat and cozen hereafter. This is to offer a sacrifice with a wicked mind, Prov. 21:27; to bring devils to God's

table to grow up into a legion afterwards; to make buds of sin to be full blown, which a serious and careful examination would prevent. Melting affections and an hungry sense are the fruits of this work, and antidotes against encroaching temptations.

2. As it is necessary, so it is universal. 'Let a man examine himself.' Not some men, but every man. The most substantial Christian, as well as the weakest, or one that lies drowned still in the deluge of the fall. All the Corinthians were not spots in the feast, certainly some were free from the common taint. If there be a Judas in Christ's family, the rest of the apostles were holy; there is also an Elijah, and seven thousand more that have not bowed their knees to Baal, in the time of Israel's apostasy. Yet the apostle excludes none from this duty. 'Let a man examine himself,' i.e. every man. Gracious men are best fitted for this work of self-examination. They should not only consider whether they have the habits of grace, but whether the prints of the Spirit be as plain as when they were first stamped; whether their grace be in such a plight and posture fit to meet the Lord Jesus in his great institution. A nobleman, when he comes to his prince's table, doth not only reflect upon his quality, kindred, and relation, but whether he hath a garb suitable to the presence of his sovereign. A believer in habit may want the act of faith; and partaking of the supper in such a posture, receive a frown instead of a smile, and bear away a mark of Christ's anger instead of a badge of his favour. Some of the good Corinthians, because of their carelessness in this, fell under God's stroke, had weaknesses and sicknesses sent among them, and some seized upon by death, which is called a chastisement, a temporal judgment, distinct from the condemnation of the carnal world, ver. 30, 32, 'For this cause many are weak and sickly among yon, and many sleep. When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.' God intending by this means to reduce them to their duty, and a reverence conformable to his institution, he chastised them with the goodness of a father, that he might not condemn them with the rigours of a judge. Uzziah, a good king, as well as Uzzah, a good man, may be too bold with holy things, and

may suffer a temporal punishment, while freed from an eternal judgment. Every man is his own governor, and ought to ride circuit in his soul to make inquisition, and set up a tribunal in his own bosom, and cite himself before it. We must not only examine whether we have a wedding-garment, but also whether it be well kept and brushed; whether no moths be got into it, no new spots dashed upon it. A rich robe may be sometimes so besmeared and daubed with mire, that none of the gold-lace upon it may be visible, till cleansed. Graces are to be purified, as well as sins purged out; grace, as well as metal, for want of rubbing and exercise, will gather rust. The act of grace is as necessary to a partaking the fruit of this ordinance, as the habit of grace is to a right to glory. There being, therefore, to be a special exercise of faith, repentance, affection to Christ, these graces are to be awakened and quickened by a self-reflection. But of this I have spoke before.

I shall only mention two things.

1. Let a man examine himself, as to his sentiments concerning the nature of the institution. The apostle intimates it in the motive he urgeth to press this examination: ver. 29, 'For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.' Where he chargeth the not discerning the Lord's body, upon the neglect of this.\* We must consider what an holy and glorious use those elements are destined to, and the glorious body of our Lord, which they represent, that we may not violate in the signs the honour due to his majesty. To discern the Lord's body, is to consider it as the body of the Son of God,† of God blessed for ever, the sovereign Lord of the whole world, the body of the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world, a miracle of goodness, the pavilion of the Sun of righteousness, the pledge of believers entering into heaven, a body purer than the heavens in holiness, and higher than the heavens in glory. Consider the design of this body: It was to be a sacrifice for the world, an expiation of sin, the ligature of the church to God; it hath been loaded with our crimes, and borne the punishment of our sins upon the cross; it hath undergone the



chastisement of our peace; it hath been the purchase of our peace, the price of our liberty, the cause of our life; it bowed down upon the cross to purchase our happiness, and mounted up to heaven to insure it to us, and possess it for us. The death of this body was of universal influence to expiate our sins, the resurrection of this body was for the justification of our persons; it sunk into the grave laden with our guilt, it rose out of the grave and ascended to heaven to be invested with an inconceivable immortality for our consolation. Angels cannot behold it without admiring our happiness, God cannot behold it without wiping out the sins of a believer, upon the account of the sufferings it underwent; he cannot cast his eye upon it without remembering what, and for what it suffered. It is this body crucified, but now glorified, this Christ dying, but now living for ever, which the elements represent to us, and that as a sacrifice, not as suffering an ordinary death. We must therefore discern the gift God presents us with, as greater than if he gave us the whole world, since the Creator, who infinitely surpasseth the creature, gives us his Son, and himself in his Son. How can we have full and clear sentiments of this, without rousing up our minds, fixing our considerations upon it, and reflecting upon ourselves, whether we understand the nature of those mysteries, the design of the death of his body, and the glorious end of its resurrection? We cannot, without it, have a faith, love, and devotion answerable to the greatness of the things which our Saviour hath done and suffered in this body for us.

2. Let a man examine himself what soil he hath contracted since the last time he was with God; whether the interest of God hath prevailed in our hearts above the interest of the flesh, or whether some secret lust hath not spread its wing and increased its empire, which may have strength to waylay the benefits we expect, and be as a wall of separation between the supplies of God and the wants of our hearts. We must enquire what violations there have been of the covenant we made before, and bewail them: he is not fit to renew a covenant with God who is careless of the former breaches of it. Dost will be contracted in a house if it be not daily swept: our houses are swept and cleansed more solemnly before the coming of invited

guests. Do we invite Christ into our souls, and shall we not examine every corner, and search out the dirt and cobwebs which may be offensive to him? The Spirit of Christ is a dove, and doves love clean places. The Jews, before the passover, searched every hole and chink with a candle for any leaven that might lie hid, and threw it away as a thing to be abominated. Have we not much reason to inquire what old leaven hath swelled up our souls, find it out, and manifest our hatred of it? whether we have not stored up some new nails, new spears, new gall which may afflict our Saviour, and be as bitter to him as the crucifixion; whether anything hath crept in to impair our affections to God. The nature of the ordinance requires this inquisition. Filth is not fit for a feast. We look what dirt there is upon our hands before we take what is necessary for our ordinary repast. A Belial in the heart, and Christ at a banquet, have no alliance. A carelessness whether we are defiled or no is inconsistent with this feast; and if any trash be got into our stomachs, it may hinder our spiritual appetite, and a hearty feeding upon Christ. Let that be the matter then of a good man's inquiry, whether he hath kept to God as his sovereign, to Christ as his Saviour, and to the Holy Ghost as his comforter; whether grace hath attained more strength and sin more weakness; whether the soul be more straitly or loosely within the bonds of the covenant. And indeed true grace is like the angel of God's presence, which conducted the Israelites to Canaan; it will not countenance any intruding lust, or pardon any iniquity, though it will beg God's pardon for it. These two inquiries are necessary to every man that hath habitual grace and fitness for this ordinance.

But,

3. We should enquire whether we have habitual grace or no; whether there be those uniting glowing graces,\* faith and love. He that comes to the supper without faith, saith good Mr Tindall, is like a man that thinks to quench his thirst by sucking the ale-bowl. It is but a piece of bread we receive without faith, the symbol of the body of Christ without the soul and Spirit of Christ; and so we have no more advantage by the ordinance than the Jews which crucified Christ

would have had, if they had eaten of his flesh and drunk of the blood which then issued from his body, or than the beasts had which drank of the rock (which typified Christ) as well as the congregation, Num. 20:11 Cor. 10:4, which had no more benefit by it than if they had drank of any ordinary water. There must be an inward grace as well as an outward ordinance to have a spiritual benefit. Plagues come out of the temple, Rev. 4:7, great judgments from ordinances carelessly and sinfully used. The word is the savour of death unto some, as well as the savour of life to others. Habitual grace there must be; a perfection of grace is not required; if so, then none but the innocent angels and glorified saints were fit guests. The perfectest soul indeed is not too good a vessel to receive the Lord of life; but God requires only of us a disposition of heart suitable to the design of the ordinance: a deep sense of our misery, a lively sorrow for our crimes, a hearty embracing his Son, a strong resolution to be at enmity with sin, and at peace with God. It must be a diligent trial, as we would try metals by the fire. We may easily be deceived, and think that to be the echo of the Spirit, which is but the hissing of the serpent,\* and the whispers of Satan.

The great grace which you should search for is faith.

We shall lay down some signs of it:

1. Negatively.

2. Positively.

1. Negatively.

(1.) Faith is not a general acceptance of Christ or profession of him. Many men's faith is built only upon human tradition, education, or the laws of a nation. Men's living in a Christian commonwealth, and owning the Christian religion upon a secular account, is no evidence of faith, because what is entertained upon the score of interest, will, upon the change of interest, be as soon cashiered as it was embraced. The ten tribes in Solomon's time professed the legal and temple

worship; but after Jeroboam had set up the calves at Dan and Bethel, they were as superstitious in the observing of them, which is evident by the complaints of the prophets, especially of Hosea, throughout his whole Prophecy. They were not forced to it so much by Jeroboam as willingly revolted from God: Hosea 5:11, 'They willingly walked after the commandment,' i.e. after the commandment to worship the calves. So easily are the vulgar induced to step into the religion of authority, and make anything a God that their ruler would have so, though it be a calf. Faith is an act of the freest choice, not a disposition which is derived by inheritance and succession from generation to generation, as it is with people who will be of the same ways of their fathers; but it is a free election of Christ upon a sight of his excellency.

(2.) Nor is it a dogmatical faith, whereby we believe the truth of the Scriptures, and the divine authority of them. Indeed, there must be a knowledge of Christ, what he hath done and what he hath suffered, else there is no taking of him as God presents him. True faith is never without this knowledge, though this knowledge and assent seems to be often without true faith. There may be a faith to believe that Christ is the Son of God, without a faith to embrace him; there may be an ointment poured upon the head, which doth not, as Aaron's, run down to the skirts of the garment, to the heart and affections. Many may assent to the truth of a proposition that Christ is excellent and lovely, who never bring their will to consent to espouse him; and by a bare knowledge there is not an union to Christ, any more than by a sight and knowledge of a star there is an union with that star. Some scriptures seem to place faith in assent in the judgment of some: 1 John 4:2, 'Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God;' 1 Cor. 12:3, 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.' The apostle John in that gives only the note of a true teacher as to matter of doctrine, viz. if he asserts that Christ is come in the flesh, is the true Messiah, the Son of God, and righteous. And the other place speaks of the gifts of the Spirit, not of the inward grace: the assenting to Christ that he is Lord is a gift of the Spirit by a common illumination. And indeed in that age, an

assent to a new, vilified, and persecuted doctrine, was a greater testimony of faith than the highest external professions can be in the age wherein we live. An assent is the first step, but if it be not an approving, efficacious assent that overpowers the will, it is no more than a condemned devil may have. 'Putting on Christ,' Rom. 13:14; 'leaning upon God,' Isa. 50:10; believing in Christ implies more than a naked assent, which is expressed well enough by a believing God or believing Christ.

(3.) Nor is it a temporary joy in the doctrine of the gospel that is true faith. This is higher than the former, the other being a glow-worm light in the understanding, and this a flashy heat in the affections, and a joy in the matter revealed, Mat. 13:20. The seed that was received into stony places was 'received with joy,' which may be occasioned by the novelty of a thing, the suitableness of it to some interest or carnal affection upon some present necessity. Such have often been seen to revolt again. It is as a man's taking a servant whom he puts off again, or as the sending for a physician in a present fit, and rejoicing at his coming, and putting him off after some ease when the distemper is removed.

(4.) Nor is it a presumptuous persuasion of a secure and happy state. Many men's faith is a mere presumption. They take it for granted that they have faith, feed themselves with an empty conceit, without making an exact scrutiny, and bringing it to the touchstone of the word to try whether it be faith of the right kind. If faith were a persuasion of a man's salvation, then all that have not this persuasion are not believers; and then many a gracious pilgrim in this world, who have lived many years without it, or with a few glimmerings of hope, would be excluded from that rank wherein he stands in the account of God. If it were only a persuasion, none of the 'children of the kingdom' (as Christ calls them, Mat. 8:12, those that live within the pale of the church) can be cast into utter darkness. For the command of believing would be no more than the commanding a man to be persuaded that his sins are pardoned, which would be the easiest thing in the world to a carnal heart. And God would

command an untruth contrary to his word, if he commanded us to believe that our sins are pardoned, before we have those qualifications which are by the word requisite to the passing a pardon to us. Faith is not an assurance, much less a common persuasion. Faith is our victory, assurance the triumph; faith is an act of the whole soul, assurance of the mind only; faith consists in a direct act, assurance in a reflex act. Faith is not a proud persuasion, for then one in arms against his Creator might be saved in that state, with his presumptuous confidence, as well as that soul that lies clasping the promises and embracing the precepts.

But, 2. Positively, true faith may be evidenced,

(1.) In regard of the object.

[1.] It is a taking Christ. The act of faith on Christ is as a marriage act. Marriage is an act between person and person: 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,' Cant. 1:16. The union between the soul and Christ is a spiritual union of persons, as in marriage, to which it is compared, Hos. 3:3. The benefits by Christ are consequent upon it, as the estate follows marriage. The person of Christ is the object of faith; the promise is the encouragement to faith.

[2.] Taking Christ as Christ, as appointed and anointed by God, as coming out from God: John 16:2, 'Ye believe that I came out from God. Faith stands by the cross of Christ, beholds him bruised by the Father for sin, and ventures upon Christ, because the Father hath set him out as a propitiation. If Christ be made sin for us, we must receive Christ as one that takes our sins upon him from the date of the covenant between God and him concerning redemption: as the saints of old looked upon him as taking sin upon him, and then slain, which was set forth in their sacrifices, laying their sins upon the head of the beast before it was slain, and in the scape-goat, whereon their transgressions were put before he was sent into the wilderness, Lev. 16:21. This is one of the principal things faith doth eye; for what warrant, what comfort, what encouragement to accept of Christ,

were it not for this, that the offended God hath appointed him the Redeemer, and his death the way of restoration?

[3.] Taking Christ entirely, and that upon his own terms; to cleave to the cross and bear his yoke, as a prince and as a saviour; taking him as God hath exalted him, Acts 5:31. Where Christ saves as a priest, he rules as a lord, and directs as a prophet. We are exposed to wrath by the guilt of sin, Christ is a priest to expiate it; we are captives to the power of sin, Christ is a king to subdue it; we are ignorant both of our misery and remedy, Christ is a prophet to dispel the fogs of our ignorance. If we will be under the power of sin, we must be under the guilt of sin; if we will keep our sins, Christ will keep his blood, and be no Saviour to them that will be servants to their lusts. In the work of faith, the soul feels the guilt of sin to burden it, and accepts Christ to satisfy for it. It sees the filth of sin that grieves it, and accepts Christ to purge it. It is sensible of armies of sin which overrun it, and fresh recruits from indwelling corruption, and accepts Christ to conquer them; and such a faith gives glory to God, for by receiving Christ to satisfy for the guilt, it owns the justice of God which hath been provoked; by complying with the directions of Christ for walking in the ways of God, it honours the holiness of God, which it had before vilified; by bringing all the corruptions to be subdued by the royal authority of Christ, it acknowledges the power and sovereignty of God, against which it had before rebelled. It accepts Christ upon his own terms.

First. To serve him. Faith eyes Christ as dying, and eyes the end of Christ's dying. What was Christ's end in dying must be our end in receiving him. The great end was to 'redeem a people to himself,' i.e. to his service, a people 'zealous of good works,' Titus 2:14; not only to do good works, but perform them with a zeal for the Redeemer. Faith hath always a holy ingenuity. To pay a service to him that hath paid the ransom, and lay out its strength for him from whom it hath received the mercy; to own no other Lord but him from whom it hath received the soul, the life, and all that it hath and hopes for. Faith takes Christ for a Lord, not to change him or barter him away for any

other master; to perform the duties required, as well as to enjoy the dignities offered.

Secondly. To be saved by him. Many men would take Christ as a Saviour, but not upon his own terms; they would join something else with him; they would have Christ and salvation, but in their own way, that some glory may be ascribed to their endeavours, to the works of the law done by them: but faith is a willingness to be saved in Christ's way, merely by his grace. Faith is the band of marriage on our parts, marriage is but to one; since nothing is so excellent as Christ, he will have no rival. The bed of Christ must be kept undefined. True faith, which works by love, is so ingenuous that it will never rob Christ of the honour he paid so dear for, and thereby own him but as an half and imperfect Saviour. It will not stand before God by any other claim than that of Christ.

[4.] Taking Christ's righteousness is the formal act of it. Faith puts a value upon the righteousness of Christ, and after a deep sense of sin, sings in a triumphant manner: Isa. 45:24, 'In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' This righteousness is entertained by true faith, because by it the God whom the soul entirely loves is exalted in all his attributes. Saying 'faith works by love' to God, Gal. 5:6; and therefore, as it is deeply sensible of sin, because it offends God, so it cheerfully accepts the righteousness of Christ, because it is acceptable and delightful to God. Love to God bubbles up in every act of faith: for since faith brings us to God, it brings us to affect that God; and it is as impossible faith can act without love, as that a man can work without hands. The apostle, Philip. 3:9, desires to be 'found in that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,' values the righteousness of Christ, because it was the righteousness of God by faith; so that this righteousness of Christ is entertained by a true believer, because it is a righteousness which doth infinitely please God. As in the pleadings of this righteousness for itself, it useth the pleasure of God as an argument, so in the acceptance of it, it eyes it as a motive. And were there anything in the world that a believing soul could think it should



honour God more, or please God better in, than in relying on Christ, it would do that. All true grace levels the intentions to the glory and delight of God.

(2.) Consider it in regard of the adjuncts of it.

[1.] It is a mourning and penitent faith. The strongest faith is so. The stronger the faith, the deeper the sense of sin. Paul cries sorrowfully out, 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' after he had closed with Christ by faith. It is the work of faith to keep alive upon the heart the sense of the guilt, filth, and evil of sin, to make the soul have vile thoughts of itself, and high thoughts of its deliverer. When the law of faith is in the heart, the heart of stone is turned into a heart of flesh, and the lion-like disposition becomes lamb-like, and as a child before God. The horror of conscience is removed by the sunshine of faith; but the sense of the guilt and filth of sin is increased by the light of it. Abraham had the strongest faith and the deepest humility. How self-abasingly doth he plead with God for Sodom's safety, and receive the promise from God with his mouth in the dust: Gen. 17:3, 'And Abraham fell on his face, and God talked with him.' And is it not impossible for any believing soul to reflect upon the agonies, wounds, and dying groans of Christ, and his own vileness and sin for which Christ did undergo them, and not be filled with a godly sorrow and self-aborrency? A proud faith is as great a contradiction as an humble devil.

[2.] It is joined with a high esteem and valuation of Christ. The soul prefers him in the mind and judgment above anything that can pretend a claim to its affection; it sets such a rate upon him, that all the treasures of heaven and earth cannot work it out of that esteem: 1 Pet. 2:7, 'To you which believe, he is precious;' but how precious, the tongue of an apostle, no, not of an angel, can express. So precious he is, that the promises of angels, the threatenings of devils, the allurements of the world, the pleasures of sin, yea, and the hopes of enjoying ten thousand worlds, shall never persuade him to part with Christ. Alas! there is no loss dejects him so much as his absence, no

purchase delights him so much as his presence. The weakest faith can appeal to Christ, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee,' would love thee, grieve that I can love thee no more. Faith and love are the two uniting graces, and therefore cannot be separated. To an unbeliever he is without beauty and comeliness, nothing desirable in him; to others he is a pearl of great price, the head of the corner. Faith only sees the worth of Christ. It is joined also with high admirations of God for Christ, astonishments at the riches of grace and treasures of love. It works by love; it makes use of this affection to carry out all its services to God with thankfulness. The love of God is as a law within the heart of faith, which makes it return to God, as well as receive from him; and it can receive nothing without glorifying the donor.

[3.] It is accompanied with holiness; it is therefore called a holy faith, Jude 20. It must have holiness as a concomitant, though not holiness as an ingredient in the justifying act. Faith engrafts the soul into Christ, the root of holiness, and it draws from him sap for holiness. Our implanting into Christ, is rather to make us fruitful, than to make us joyful. Actions follow life, and actions of the same kind with that life which the creature hath; as vegetative life produceth vegetative actions, sensitive life sensitive actions, a rational life rational actions, so a spiritual, believing life, spiritual and believing actions. Faith is not a name, a picture, but a real principle; it is a working grace, and therefore obedience is called 'the obedience of faith,' Heb. 11:8. Faith doth not only change a man's state, but alters his nature; hence we are said to be purified by faith, Acts 26:18. As it goes forth to Christ, it is justifying; as it bathes itself in the blood of Christ, it is sanctifying. Education may wash the feet, but faith only washeth the heart. As we were in Adam, members of that corrupt root, we do partake of his guilt and of his filth. Being united to Christ, the second Adam, we partake of his righteousness and his fulness. It is a counterfeit faith which pretends to partake of the righteousness of Christ without a communication of the fulness of his grace. True faith employs the power of Christ in the subduing of sin. It is a fruit of the Spirit, and the Spirit doth not produce one fruit without the rest. It is the root grace, the root is dead if it have no

branches, no fruit. Faith is seated in the heart, and spreads itself to the whole man and all the actions, as lines from the centre. It begins in the understanding, but hath its perfection in the will, descends to the affections; sends, like the soul, its influences out through the whole man. Though it be weak, it will have its motion. If it cannot go to heaven, it will cry to heaven. The remark Christ makes of Paul, an infant believer, is, 'Behold, he prays,' Acts 9:11; as if he did not pray before in the time of his infidelity. His prayer now was of another colour and temper from his self-righteous, formal, cold praying before.

[4.] It is attended with growth. It is still climbing, and cannot get high enough till it end in vision. True faith is always joined with prayer against unbelief. It increaseth in its acts, and, in the frequency and vigour of them. It first sucks the breast, and afterwards can chew the manna; it is looking much and often upon Christ. It is at first accompanied with tremblings; 'it may be God may hear me' and supply me; afterwards it comes more boldly, and loves to look Christ in the face. And there is a growth in all graces proportionable; for where there is life, all the members grow, the head doth not grow in knowledge, and the heart decay in love.\*

(3.) Consider it in the manner how it is wrought. The word works faith and preserves faith, and faith improves the word. It is not a gourd which grows up in a night; there is much tugging to persuade the soul to venture upon Christ. Great power would not create a world in a moment, but took time; great power doth not produce faith in an instant; there are preparations and conflicts before the hand of faith lays hold on a Saviour. And it may be said, as Isaac to his son, If this be venison, how earnest thou by it so quickly? If this be faith, how earnest thou by it so suddenly, without much travail and labour? The word is the seed, the Spirit the sun that quickens it. By the word, the Spirit discovers the vileness of a man's nature, the sinfulness of sin, the fulness of Christ, and the freeness of his righteousness. By the word, the Spirit opens our eyes to see our nakedness and misery; the word proclaims the articles of peace,

silenceth our reasonings, answers our objections, stops the mouth of a cavilling sinner, justifies the terms upon which Christ doth offer himself. It is not a birth of nature, but by the operation of the Holy Spirit. That Spirit that conceived Christ in the womb of the virgin, doth produce faith in the womb of the soul; so that faith and Christ are produced by the same Spirit, by the same power, by the Spirit that conceived him, by the power that raised him from the dead.

As there is a necessity of faith in the habit, so there is a necessity of the acting of faith in this ordinance. God will have our recovery in a way contrary to that of our fault; the fall was by believing the devil rather than God; and God will have our recovery by believing God rather than the devil. By the ordination of God, there is as great a necessity of faith to partake of Christ at a sacrament, as there is of Christ to make a sacrament beneficial to us.

[1.] Faith is of absolute necessity to regeneration, and only regenerate ones have a right to this ordinance. Faith is a radical vital grace; as blood in the veins is to the body, so is faith to the soul. No regeneration without the Spirit, and faith is the first grace the Spirit infuseth; no regeneration without the blood of Christ, and faith is the hyssop which sprinkles that blood upon our souls. Faith engrafts us into Christ, whereas before we grew upon a dead stock; it is from Christ, who is life, that life is derived to us, and that by faith: Gal. 2:20 'I live by the faith of the Son of God.' We have no right to the ordinance till we have faith; this only makes us members of God's family. Till we are his children, we have nothing to do with his table; they are as carcasses that want faith, and what should carcasses do with meat?

[2.] In all worship faith is to be acted, much more in this. As in worldly actions we stir up the faculties of our souls, and the members of our bodies, so in acts of worship we must stir up the graces of the Spirit. Faith must mix itself with every duty: 'Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin,' Rom. 14:23. It comes from corrupt nature, or refined nature, not from renewed and changed nature; so, instead of a

welcome, we can expect to be entertained only with cloudy looks. To come to this ordinance without faith, is to draw water without a bucket, to work without tools, and to go to market without money. There is need of faith to give us admission into God's presence, Heb. 10:22. There is need of faith to give us acceptance.

[3.] Faith is the condition of the covenant of grace, the seal on our part, as the sacrament is on God's part. No other grace hath God culled out to make the condition of the new covenant, and indeed no other grace hath such a congruity and suitableness to that end as this. When two parties are fallen out, there can be no firm peace without mutual consent. God gives his consent by offering his Son and sacraments as a seal; we give our consent by faith only, whereby we own, approve of, and lay hold on the mercy set before us. There is no benefit by anything in the world, but by accepting and receiving. The altar is a sanctuary, but men must lay hold on the horns of it. There are cities of refuge for some sort of malefactors, but they must run to them. God sets forth Christ as a propitiation, as t treasure of mercy; there can then be no renewing the covenant, unless as God on the one hand reacheth out his mercy, so we on the other hand put forth our hearts to receive it.

[4.] Christ in this ordinance is represented as the object of faith. The serpent, as lifted up, was the object of the Israelites' sight, and upon that they were to expect healing from it; so Christ as dying is the primary and immediate object of faith. And being here represented as dying, it is not a naked representation, but that we may exercise faith upon him under that notion. It is not Christ as glorious, but as crucified, is the object of faith; for as glorious, he is rather the object of love: but the formalis ratio of justification is Christ, as taking upon him the form of a servant, and becoming obedient to death upon the cross. In this sacrament Christ is represented as offering himself to God, and God offering that Christ to us; Christ's payment in performing the righteousness whereby we are justified, and God's accepting and imputing it to us. Christ's dying was intended by God as the object of faith when he set him out upon the cross, Rom. 3:25.

And now he sets him out in the sacrament, there is the same reason for faith; and he is here represented more familiar to our faith than the person of the Father, than the person of the Son of God in heaven, that we may have more distinct thoughts and apprehensions of him in all the business he did transact between the Father and us, which are the fuel to our faith. As he was set out in sacrifices under the Old Testament, that those that then lived might exercise their faith in the promised Messiah, so in the sacraments of the New Testament, that we may exercise our faith in the exhibited Messiah.

The second grace to examine ourselves about, and to exercise at this ordinance, is sorrow for sin.

This is necessary to the supper. The way to an heavenly repast, as well as the way to heavenly mansions, is 'through the valley of Baca.'

1. It is necessary to that which is required to the supper. It is necessary to every duty; all approaches to God without it are but impudent rushings into his presence; repentance is sanguis animæ, the blood of the soul. As no sacrifice was pleasing under the law without blood, so no service under the gospel is pleasing without this. Nay, it is the soul of all the rest; hence a broken heart is said to be above all sacrifices: Ps. 51:16, 17, 'Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it, thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.' God had appointed no sacrifice for presumptuous sins, but brokenness and contrition was of force. We perform duties most lively, when a sense of sin is kept alive upon our hearts. The viler thoughts we have of ourselves, the higher thoughts we have of God. There is nothing so much honours God in duties as an humble address. But in this it is very necessary that we may with a broken frame suit God's apprehensions of sin in the punishment of his Son, and Christ's apprehensions of it when he breathed out his dying groans. To be hard and insensible, then, is a sad sign of a distempered heart. The blood of our souls ought in a way of gratitude to be bestowed upon him, who hath bestowed upon us the blood of his body. As Mary washed the feet of Christ as a preparation to his

death, we ought to do the like in a preparation to the shewing forth his death.

(1.) It is necessary to that state and frame of heart which every person ought to be in. Faith, indeed, is the condition of the new covenant, but repentance is a necessary ingredient; faith and brokenness join hands together in their beings and exercises. The matter of the new creation is a heart of flesh, which cannot be without a tenderness in the concerns of God's honour. The new nature cannot be without new affection, and a change of old sympathies into new antipathies. An insensible soul hath no spiritual life; a living member will feel pain. It is necessary to strong breathings after God; the humblest souls have the quickest flights heavenward. The fowls were created at first out of the water, Gen. 1:20; so are our winged desires from a flood of holy sorrow.

(2.) It is necessary to the ends of this ordinance.

[1.] Exercise and increase of grace. One end is to break the soul and the sin, and therefore there should be a preparation by repentance for such an end. If the soul be well heated before, a look of a dying Christ in the supper will melt it, and set the metal a running. There is in this ordinance the love and justice of God represented, folded in one another's arms; the strength of them single will do much, much more united. If we have not then a disposition to melt, we shall be more hardened, as things are by the sun that have no inclination in their nature to be softened. The end of this ordinance is to wound and slay sin by the power of Christ's death; and sin mourned for lies more naked to the stroke than when it is folded and sheltered in our affections. We come to have clearer and deeper impressions from God; and softened wax receives clearer and deeper stamps than that which is hard. Every grace receives a fresh verdure by a stream of repentance; the fruitfulest meadows have constant streams running through them. God's end is to represent to us the bitterness of sin, as well as his love in Christ; and, indeed, without a sense of the former, we cannot have a right estimate of the latter. What God aimed at in

the death of Christ, he aimed at in the representation of it to us; and a part of our worthy receiving consists in our having suitable affections to Christ; and we cannot be affected with his sufferings unless we understand the gall and wormwood in iniquity. The bitterness of sin makes us taste the sweetness of pardon; mercy would be too cheap if given to an impenitent soul. While the taste of sin, the onions of Egypt, is in the heart, it will not relish the clusters of Canaan. We should have a suitableness to our Master. Christ is here represented as a man of sorrows, as one that with prayers, tears, and strong cries obtained an answer, and with blood obtained redemption; it is not fit we should be strangers to our Master's temper and disposition, and hug the spear in our souls that pierced his heart.

[2.] Comfort is another end, and communications of the love of God; and this is not to be had without repentance. The dejected, humble publican meets with God sooner in the temple than the flourishing Pharisee that rushed in. The sun refresheth the earth when it is softened by rain, but otherwise doth parch and scorch it. God will not smile upon persons hugging their sins at a sacrament. The wine of consolation is reserved by God for drooping spirits. Job must 'abhor himself in dust and ashes' before God will receive him, Job 42:6. Though he is as willing as able to revive the spirit, yet not till it be humble, Isa. 57:15, 17. The fatted calf is not slain, nor to be eaten, till the prodigal be penitent. The lowest apprehensions of a man's self are accompanied with the highest revelations. Moses and Paul were humble: the one a mourner for his own and the sins of the people, the other a great self-accuser, and both had the highest communications. If we would have a plaster, there must be a cutting off the dead flesh. Mary was bathed in tears when she heard that comfortable voice, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,' Luke 7:48. Dark colours are the best ground for gilding. If we therefore have a slight humiliation, only a little pang of sorrow, we may meet with a wound instead of a plaster, and instead of balm be put upon a rack. We must cry peccavi, before God will return an Euge. The soul that is most humble hath the first sight of God at the supper. It will make as prize



comfort. That soul that thinks itself a dog will be sure to value a crumb. Repentance makes us have low thoughts of ourselves and our own deserts, and high admirations of Christ. When such an one meets with spiritual comforts at a supper, what wondering will there be! That I that did not deserve a smile, should have an embrace! I that did not deserve a drop, should lose myself in an ocean! Oh, that I that deserved to be damned with a witness, should meet with a seal of his love! that for the flames of hell, he should give me the clusters of heaven! A deep sense of sin is the most powerful rhetoric to prevail with God. He would deny Abraham nothing, when he prefaced his intercession for Sodom with 'I am dust and ashes,' Gen. 18:27. The comforts of Christ's blood are not dropped into, nor can they enter into, a heart that cannot weep and bleed /or sin.

Since repentance is necessary, let us examine ourselves what of this grace there is in us.

(1.) What is the spring of our sorrow? Whether it be ingenuous, from a sense of what we have received from God, as well as what we have deserved at his hands; whether it is a scorched sorrow from a sense of the fire of justice, or a melting sorrow from the kindly heat of mercy. The father's kind reception made his prodigal son's icy heart thaw the faster: 'I have sinned against heaven and before thee,' Luke 15:18. The prodigal is the emblem of the Gentiles, and their call to God and repentance towards him, which must be, because they have displeased him. Without a true spring, our cries and groans are of as little value as the howling of wild beasts in a toil. It is then right, when it hath such a temper as the prodigal: I have offended a kind and loving Father, wasted his goods, resisted his Spirit, listed myself in the service of the devil; this Father I have contemned, a bountiful hand I have kicked at, a heaven bespangled with stars of mercy I have turned my back upon. We may weep at the story of Christ's passion, when we are not really affected with our sin, the cause of his sufferings, and the displeasure of God. Our sorrow is right, when it is not merely for sin, as it is contrary to our happiness, but as contrary to God's holiness. This is a conformity to Christ, who mourned for

the sins of men, as well as suffered for them; and mourned for them, not because he suffered for them, but because God was injured by them. There was not a grain of malice and ingratitude in sin but he understood; he had also a clear conception of the holiness of that God who was offended and injured by sin; and from those two parts of knowledge, joined with an ardent love to his Father, and charity to man, he could not but have the most enlarged sorrow for sin, and the highest detestation of it, both as it displeased God, and as it ruined the creature.

(2.) What is the subject of the sorrow; is it the sin of nature; do we judge that the greatest sin, and not regard it as the common people do the stars, imagining them no bigger than a candle, when they are of a vast bigness? To bewail outward sins, and not that of our nature, is to have a philosophical frame of spirit, not that of a Christian. Doth the body of death draw from us the loudest groans? Do we lay the axe to the root of sin, or are we mightily busied in lopping off the branches, without a regard of the root? Are inward and spiritual sins the subject of our grief? Can we mourn as deeply for those sins that none but God and our own consciences know, as for those which are visible to the eye of man? Doth our hardness of heart, formality, remainders of hypocrisy and unbelief most afflict us? Is our grief for all sins, and especially for that which hath been the master sin? Do we oppose that which we have the greatest temptations to, as David had to the killing of Saul, which would have helped him to a crown, which therefore he calls his iniquity? Ps. 18:23, 24.\* Would we have the greatest Delilah no more spared than the smallest brat of Babylon? And is the enmity so great that we would destroy the power and strength of sin which lies in that master iniquity? Do we stop our ears against the strongest pleas it makes for itself, and wish as much its death as we do our lives? This is a testimony of repentance. Do we hate every sin because it is a falseness to God? Ps. 119:104.

(3.) What are the adjuncts of the grief? Is it in some measure proportionable to our sin, proportionable not to the law, but to the gospel? The first cannot be attained by us, because the injury done to

God is infinite. What we cannot attain in the act, we should endeavour to attain in affection. Where the sin is great, great must be the sorrow: 1 Sam. 7:6, 'They drew water, and poured it out before the Lord,' which some understand of the tears of the people. To drink in sin like water, and only to drop grief, will not agree. Is our sorrow permanent; is it a true grief, or only a pang; like heat drops or a rolling cloud, that goes away and never returns again? Is our sin, like David's, ever before us? Ps. 51:3. Have not many a slight kind of sorrow, sprung up only by the seriousness and solemnity of the ordinance; a seeming falling out with sin, but a quick reconciliation, and receiving it into a stronger favour than before? Transitory affections are too frequent. We find the Israelites in the temple weeping and lamenting, fasting and praying, because of their idolatries and false dealings with God, and shortly after returning to the commission of the idolatry they had bewailed. True repentance is always accompanied with a detestation and a 'revenge,' 2 Cor. 7:11, which is indignation, as a furnace heated seven times hotter, not a faint and a dying kind of anger. Is the league between sin and the soul broken? As God seals in this supper a covenant of grace, we should be prepared to seal a counterpart of duty. As God is ready to seal a pardon, not to remember our sins to condemn us; we should be ready to sign a bill of divorce to sin, not to remember sin to commit it.

Love to God is another grace we are to examine ourselves about.

There is a necessity of this.

1. Spiritual affections to God are required in all duties, much more in this. The highest representation of a loving Saviour suffering, ought to have a suitable return of affection. Duties are regarded not by the multitude (for hypocrites may be much in doing) but by the affection; sincere persons are only much in loving. All that God requires of us is summed up into this grace, love: Deut. 10:12, 'What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to love him and serve him?' Men may delight to pray from a natural eloquence, which is (if

I may use the expression) but as the trimming of a mangy sacrifice, and delight to hear with such a kind of affection at they would a lovely song; but every duty ought to be kindled and inflamed by the fire of love to God; and a mite of service with this is better than a talent without it. This expels weariness in our duties, and makes God's injunctions our songs, Ps. 119:54.

2. The object proposed in this ordinance requires the strongest actings of affection.

(1.) Christ is here represented as the cause of our happiness, in the foundation of the benefits we enjoy, viz., his humiliation, death, and passion. Here is Christ undertaking our salvation upon the hardest terms; here are the arms of the Son of God open upon the cross, the spear reaching his heart, with his affections streaming out to us in blood, when we were his enemies, and had not a grain of affection to him; and is it not fit we should be prepared to cry out with holy ravishments of affection, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honour and glory'? This affection must needs be due to him who reversed the sentence of our condemnation, made our peace and bore our curse, had his hands nailed, his head pricked, his side pierced, his heart grieved, that by those marks we might be induced to love him. Who can challenge our affections if he cannot, who undertook our recovery when there was but a step between us and eternal death? And how can we act such an affection if we be not possessed with it?

(2.) Christ as appropriated to us in a way of union is here set forth. Union to him, communion with him, both depend upon love in each party. What can express a nearer union of Christ to the soul than to feed upon him, eat his flesh, and drink his blood? Thus to have him incorporated with us, this is as the breaking of a ring, the renewing of a contract between Christ and our souls, a prologue to the great solemnisation of the nuptials to all eternity. Hence the entertainment Christ makes his people is set out under the notion of a wedding supper, Mat. 22:3. And being thus joined unto Christ, we are one

body, yea, one spirit with him, 1 Cor. 6:17. Now as there can be no mystical union with Christ without faith, so there can be no moral union with him without love. With what violence can we run to him, how can we be glued to him (κολλώμενος) without this affection? As Christ in this ordinance makes over himself to the believer to be his in love, so the believer must make over himself to Christ, to be his in all service, affection, and obedience.

(3.) The excellency of God's love in Christ is here represented. Here is God bringing his Son from heaven to earth, from the earth to the cross, from the cross to the grave, making his wrath find a passage to Christ's heart instead of ours, pouring out his blood to keep us from bleeding, and listening to the pleas of this blood in heaven to answer the pleas of sin against us. This being the highest elevation of the love of God, was intended to draw out our love to him. Love therefore must be answered with love, not with enmity or a cold affection, we else run counter to the design of God.

(4.) All the promises are shewn to us in it sealed. All the promises of God bound up in the covenant of grace are here confirmed and ratified. And is not this a time for the love of the soul to work?

3. The graces to be exercised in this ordinance depend much upon love. Love is the spring of the soul which moves every grace, and therefore it is called the 'fulfilling of the law.' Faith hath no operation but 'by love,' Gal. 5:6. Faith and love are united, as well as uniting, graces; faith is the hand, but love is as the spirits which move it. And as faith and love in the habit, so in the operations they are inseparable; we must cleave to Christ, and be cemented to him by faith, but love must strengthen the hand; the more we love, the faster we hold. Faith is not sincere but when it testifies itself by the operations of love. True repentance flows from love. Mary's tears were most free when her love was most hot. The more inflamed our love to God is, the stronger, will be our hatred of sin as that which is contrary to him; the sweeter the remembrance of Christ is to our affections, the more bitter is the remembrance of any offence against

him; and indeed without it, we may see the print of the nails, and put our fingers into his wounds without any remorse. Delight in Christ cannot be without it. Christ cannot be much in our thoughts till he comes to lie nearest our hearts, and will never be our delight till he be our beloved. We cannot have high and raised thoughts of him, which are necessary for a transformation into his glory, without this. Strange imaginations will intrude themselves, and be welcome guests, unless this grace stand at the door to thrust them away. We cannot burn in our converses with God unless this grace set us on fire, nor can we have any heavenliness in this duty; for it is by this affection that we have our conversation in heaven in any service. Nor can we have a strong appetite to Christ in a sacrament without it; the stronger the apprehension of, and affection to, any good, the more importunate will be our longings for it, and the quicker our motions to it, and the less can the soul brook any distance between that good and itself.

4. The nature of the ordinance requires it. It is an heavenly banquet, and requires an heavenly frame. As love is the greatest grace in heaven, so it ought to be highly operative here. It presents us with God's love to us, and therefore calls for a suitable return from us. The heathens observed a suitability in their sacrifices to the idols they worshipped. They would not offer a slow-paced creature to the sun, but an horse, because of the quick motion of that creature. God here wills the greatest good to us, and shall not we will the greatest good to God? An enlarged God should make an enlarged heart. Nothing is more becoming than that love should be recompensed with love.\*

5. No benefit can be by a sacrament without this grace. Communion with God is entailed upon it: John 14:21, 23, 'He that loves me, shall be beloved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him.' Not that our love precedes the love of God in the first efflux of it, but the degrees and acts of our love, kindled at first by the love of God, are rewarded with greater declarations of his love. Where love is acted to God, there both the Father and Son will combine together for such a soul's satisfaction; they will come and dwell there by the

Spirit in a more close, familiar, and strict communion, and more certain possession. Where there are the actings of love, though there should be no sense of any new income, this grace would bring a satisfaction in the very exercise.

Now for the trial of this love.

1. Let us not judge ourselves by a general love. As there is a general love of God to man, a general love of Christ to mankind in dying, and giving a conditional grant of salvation upon faith and repentance, and a particular love to the soul of a believer, so likewise in man there is a general assent, and a particular serious assent to the truth of God, and accordingly a general love upon the apprehensions of what Christ hath done in general. There is a common love to God, which may be so called, because the benefits enjoyed by men are owned as coming from that fountain; a love arising from the apprehensions which men commonly have of the goodness of God in himself, and a common love wrought in them to God, as to other things that are good. Again, men may have a false faith, and a false apprehension of pardon of sin, when indeed no such pardon is granted to them; so they may have proportionally a false love upon such an ungrounded belief.

2. Nor let us judge ourselves to be lovers of God because of our education. Many have no higher reason of their love to Christ, but because their forefathers professed him; and so upon the same score that any heathen loved his idol, an Egyptian his Apis and onions, or a Turk his Mahomet, or a papist his images, do many titular Christians love Christ. As among the papists many cleave to the popish principles, because their fathers did so, so among us, many have no other reason of their adhering to the Christian profession, and seeming affection to Christ, but the tradition handed to them by their parents.

3. Nor let us judge ourselves by any passionate fits of love, which may sometimes stir in our souls. There is a love in the sensitive part

which is the passion of love, a love rather stumbled on than judicially taken up; and those violent kinds of affections, whether of love, joy, or sorrow, are not long-lived. But there is a love in the will, which is a rational love, which consists in a consenting to, and choosing of, Christ, and is always accompanied with a true faith.

But let us examine,

(1.) The motives and object of our affection. Do we love God for himself, or for his benefits? To love Christ for the loaves, is common to the multitude. To love God for his outward mercies, is a natural love; to love him for himself, is a gracious love; to love him for his benefits, is rather to love ourselves, and love our own ends, than to love God. When the inducements to it are human, and not divine, it is a human and not a divine love. Many love Christ's dowry, but not his beauty; his merit, but not his person; as in marriages, many love the portion without affecting the person. True love is between person and person, not between person and estate; that is a true moral love, the other is a true physical love, but is defective in the due grounds and ends of it. Not but there is and may be a love of what God hath and promises, and the benefits he confers; this is a love of the reward. But when we love God merely for this, it is then *amor mercenarius*; when we love God for himself, and the reward in order to him, it is a genuine love; it respects other things for God, and God for himself. True love is grounded upon a sight of God, a serious and deep consideration of him, comparing him with other things, viewing those immeasurable excellencies which are in him, upon which the soul doth judiciously conclude, that there is infinitely more sweetness and amiableness in God and Christ, than in all the pleasures and profits of this world. Thus the spouse compares her beloved with other beloveds, Cant. 5:9, 10. She considers what the world affords, and wherewith it allures; and after a diligent inquisition, the object of her love is Christ's person, the motive of her love is Christ's excellency; and such a love will embrace a crucified as well as a glorified Christ, a condemned as well as an adored Christ. Where God is loved for himself, everything of God is highly valued,



his word, his ways, his ordinances. Christ in his whole latitude is beloved in all his offices. In his death as a sacrifice, in his life as a pattern; the power of his death, as well as the propitiation by it.

(2.) What is the nature of our love?

[1.] In regard of the prevalency of it. Do we love Christ solely, supremely; doth this affection swallow up all other affections; as Moses his rod turned into a serpent, did the rods of the Egyptian magicians? Doth it, like the sun, obscure the light of the lesser stars? As God is the chief good in himself, he must be so in our esteem. A true conjugal affection to Christ excludes all other things from an equal interest in it; an equal affection to Christ and the world are as inconsistent and prodigious as two suns in the world. The heathens knew the necessity of a prevailing love to their idols, to be at an expense for them. If the Israelites begin to be fond, though of a calf, they will deprive themselves of their jewels to serve it. This prevalent love of Christ is so necessary an ingredient, that it was the main lesson he pressed upon his disciples, Mat. 16:24, Luke 14:26. Self must be denied, if we follow Christ; all relations must be hated in comparison of Christ, if we be Christ's disciples. The soul of a man is too narrow and limited to be intensely affected with, and strongly to pursue, at one and the same time, two different objects. The heart must be a throne reserved for Christ, where other things must sit at his feet. For as Christ gives himself wholly to the soul, the soul must bestow itself wholly on Christ; and as Luther, *Mallem ruere cum Christo, quàm regnare cum Cæsare*, I would rather perish with the interest of Christ, than reign in grandeur with Cæsar. A hypocrite wills Christ in subordination to inferior goods. A sincere votary to Christ wills inferior goods in subordination to Christ. Do we thus love Christ in that which crosseth most the carnal inclinations and interest of corrupt nature?

[2.] In regard of the restlessness of it. Can nothing but Christ and the enjoyment of him content us? Are there inquiries after him, industrious pursuits, unutterable groans, that nothing can satisfy us,

no, not all the world, without him? Are we importunate, that he may be as a seal in our hearts, as well as we as a seal in his heart, that there may be clearer engravings, stronger impressions? A true lover rejoiceth that he hath any love to give to God, and grieves that he hath no more to bestow. His life is bound up in Christ, as Jacob's was in Benjamin. An hundred worlds cannot content him without his beloved. He is upon his watch and guard against all temptations which may disturb his affection or enjoyment, and accounts the missing of Christ worse than hell itself; all other things will be abhorred, and accounted as loss and dung, Philip. 3:8.

[3.] What are the effects and concomitants of our love? Are we careful to please him, though with our own shame? Christ's love made him take the form of a servant to please man; the soul's love will make it take up the meanest shape to please the Redeemer. Christ cared not how much he was emptied, so he might discover his love; the soul cares not how much it is humbled, so it may testify its affection. It is like the string of an instrument strained to the same height with another, which will move when the other is touched. A true affectionate soul will be conformed to Christ in its motions: Gal. 1:10, 'If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.' In the state of unregeneracy he pleased men, but now as a servant he would please Christ his Master. Are we in our bent and resolution careful to please God, without regard to the oppositions of the world? as the sun holds on its race, though the clouds gather to hinder the shining of it. Are we desirous of his glory, as well as our own happiness? Would we rather lose what we desire, than defraud God of his right? Our own happiness is but a created good, and therefore ought not to be loved for itself. Nor must we prefer the gift before the glory of the giver; the glory of God is incomparably more amiable than our own happiness can be. If a man doth all for his own happiness more than for God's glory, it is certain he loves that more than God; and if he serves God only for happiness, he sells his service to God, and he serves himself not God, for he intends only to advantage himself, not to glorify God. It was plain that Delilah loved not Samson, when all her projects were to enrich herself, and gratify

the Philistines in betraying him; so if our projects be to satisfy ourselves, we are not lovers of God. Are the duties he enjoins delightful to us? Do the commands which were before burdensome cease to be grievous to us? 1 John 5:3. Are our duties not so much pressed by natural conscience, as sweetened by love? Do we esteem lightly of every service we do? True love never thinks it can do enough. Are we tender of his honour? Do we account the enemies of God our enemies? Ps. 119:21, 22. The Philistines loved their Dagon, when they would not tread upon the threshold where he had received a disgrace, 1 Sam. 5:4, 5. How is it as to constancy? True love will not be quenched by the waters of afflictions: Cant. 8:7, 'Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.' It is a fire that triumphs over the waters of the sharpest dispensations. When storms hang over the head, there is no repentance that ever his love was bestowed upon Christ. In this there is a suitableness between Christ's affection and the soul, in regard of the constancy of it. The creature's love hath its ebbs and floods. It is sometimes circumvented by temptations, in regard of the acts and exercise, though not of the habit, which recovers itself; as Christ's love hath intermissions in regard of the discoveries of it, though not in respect of the reality and truth of it; both are constant.

Another grace to be examined is love of God's people. This is the badge of a disciple: John 13:34, 35, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another, as I have loved you.' This is the livery whereby men are known to belong to Christ, as a prince's servant is known by the badge he bears. It is not, as Erasmus notes, if you use this or that ceremony, have this or that habit; if you see the same meat, have the same title, but if you have the same affection. This Christ left as his last will and testament, as that which lay most peculiarly upon his heart to be observed by them. When Moses was to leave the conduct of the people,\* he gives them a commandment not to depart from the law of God. When John the Baptist quitted his function, he recommended to his disciples the disposing themselves, by the baptism of repentance, to receive the Messiah; and by the observing this and their fasts, they were marked to be John's

disciples. The commandment Christ gives them a little before his departure, is to love one another, as the special character whereby they should be known to be his disciples. Hence it is called his commandment, as peculiarly his as the commandment to believe, for they are both joined together: 1 John 3:23, 'And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment,'—as that which he took a special delight in. As if those two, faith and love, made up the body of the Christian religion. In regard of this commandment the apostle tells the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. 4:9, that they were taught of God; and this Christ presseth again and again; for he repeats it often in that last sermon of his, which he would not have pressed so much, when he had so many things to deliver, if it were not necessary. He calls it a new commandment, not only in regard of the renewal of it; it having been as it were out of date, and wholly lost among the Jewish factions; not only because it is more commanded in the gospel, as sacrifices were under the law more pressed than this; but in regard of the pattern. Before, it was 'Love thy neighbour as thyself,' but they had no such glorious exemplar, before the love of Christ came to be unfolded to the world. Now it is, 'Love one another as I have loved you. So powerful a motive was never affixed to the moral law, which commanded love; former ages never had so fair and so full a copy for it as this. And so punctual were the ancient Christians in this, that Tertullian saith, it was the amazement of the heathens to see them *Animo animaque misceri*, their souls and minds united and mingled with each other; and, indeed, the more believers love God, the more they will love one another; as lines, the nearer they are to the centre, the nearer they are to one another.

1. This is necessary in all duties. Would we pray? Our hands must be 'lifted up without wrath and doubting,' 1 Tim. 2:8. Would we hear the word? If we are 'swift to hear,' we must be 'slow to wrath,' James 1:19. Would we offer a sacrifice at the altar? we must 'first be reconciled to our brother,' Mat. 5:25. Fire from heaven will not else kindle the sacrifice. One of the leading sins to be purged out of the

church of Corinth, in order to a due preparation to this ordinance, was malice, 1 Cor. 5:8.

## 2. But more necessary in this ordinance.

(1.) It represents the union of believers together. The bread being made up of several grains compacted together: 1 Cor. 10:16, 'For we being many are one bread and one body.' As the bread is a mark and means of the communion we have with Christ,\* and as we declare by the participation of the external signs, that we have a communion with the Lord, do we not also make, by the same means, a solemn protestation that we are of the same faith, the same religion, with those that partake of those symbols? And since it is the same bread which represents one Jesus, it also associates as into one body. This bread is appointed to be a band to tie us to Christ, and to tie us in affections to one another. This ordinance was instituted to solder believers together. They have the same nourishment, and therefore should have the same affection. Eodem sanguine glutinati, knit together with the same blood, as Austin saith of himself and his friend. The death of Christ is here represented, which is an engagement to this affection. In this his death is shown, which did meritoriously purchase this unity; in this we partake of Christ, in whom all believers are made one, engrafted in the same stock. It was the end of Christ's death to reduce all to a harmony, to still the war, not only in the members against the mind, but in his people one against another. Since we are to remember the death of Christ, we are to remember his will and pleasure at his death; when we remember our friends, we would at least remember their dying charge, John 15:17. Doth not Christ press this in his farewell discourse, 'These things I command you, that you love one another,' when he was making his will to man, and his will to God? This was part of that will he was to seal with his blood. As Christ upon the cross was the highest eruption of love, so this sacrament is the setting forth the highest pattern of it

(2.) No benefit of the ordinance without this grace. We have no communion with Christ without keeping this commandment: 1 John 3:23, 24, 'This is his commandment, that you love one another;' and 'he that keeps his commandment, dwells in him, and he in him.' Passion is like a leaven that corrupts this ordinance to the soul; as anger hinders the concoction of bodily food in the stomach. When Jerusalem is a quiet habitation, the tabernacle shall not be taken down, and God will be a place of broad rivers and streams to it, Isa. 33:20. The greatest gift next to Christ, was that of the Spirit, which descended when the disciples were ὁμοθυμαδὸν, of one mind, Acts 2:1. This being the design of the gospel, to knit men's hearts together in peace and love, those that have not this love are not cast into a gospel mould, and therefore not fit to receive advantage by a choice evangelical institution.

Let us examine ourselves as to this grace.

And that we may not mistake, every difference in judgment is not a sign of the want of this grace. Paul differed from Peter in opinion about the Jewish ceremonies, without any breach of love, Gal. 2:11. Paul and Barnabas jarred so as to part asunder; yet neither of them can be supposed to be void of this, which their Master had so particularly enjoined them, Acts 15:37–39. It cannot be expected but differences in judgment will be among the most serious Christians, while the blindness of their minds is but imperfectly cured. The strings of an instrument are not all of one size, nor have the same sound, yet agree in a harmony; there may be an harmony in affections, though there may be a difference in opinions.

But this love is true.

(1.) When it is founded upon the grace of a person. That which is most lovely in Christ's eye should be so in ours; the grace and holiness of a person is respected by Christ, not his outward state and condition. It is a loving 'in the truth,' and 'for the truth's sake,' 2 John 1, 2. A love of a disciple 'in the name of a disciple,' Mat. 10:42. As

there is a common affection to God in men, because of his benefits, so there may be also some common affection in an unregenerate man to godliness, which may be the fruit of education, or an enlightened conscience, in some measure convinced that holiness is good. Holiness and grace are so beautiful, that the wickedest man would have the appearance of it, and would be esteemed good. But it must be a choice and prevailing affection, out of love to Christ, whose image he bears, flowing from a love to God, a spirit of regeneration, from the seed of the gospel rooted in the soul: Gal. 5:22, 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness,' and is therefore set upon the meanest Christian, as the meanest box which hath a jewel in it, will be esteemed for the jewel's sake by those that understand it. The Corinthians were defective in this love, in despising the poor in their love-feasts, a miscarriage the apostle blames them for in this, 1 Cor. 11:22.

(2.) It must be a fervent love. 'With a pure heart fervently,' 1 Peter 1:22, not in appearance and faintly. The word the apostle useth, Rom. 12:10, which is translated, 'be kindly affectioned to one another,' φιλόστοργοι, signifies a vehement affection. For as God loves nothing more in this world than his own image, so those that have the divine nature drawn in them are in this part like him; for God never draws any image unlike himself.

(3.) A love manifested most in their persecutions. To be ashamed of believers in their sufferings is, in Christ's interpretation, to be ashamed of Christ himself. At the last day, the trial of men is by their acts towards God's people in time of their persecutions, Mat. 25:41–43, &c., as if the neglect of that which he calls his commandment were the great sin to be answered for then. It is not whether we visited them when in their houses, in state and triumph, or fed them when they had wherewith to do it themselves, but when in a state of want. If a man loves the graces of a believer, he will love him in suffering; for though suffering alters his outward condition, it alters not his inward relation or gracious disposition. Christ upon the cross

was as dear to John, his beloved disciple, who would not leave him then, as when the people would have made him king.

Another grace to be examined and acted is desire, a holy appetite. The Israelites were to eat the Passover in haste, not *lento corde et ore languido*,\* but with a greediness of mind.

1. This is necessary in all duties. In hearing the word, the desire must be as insatiable as the infant's cry for milk, 1 Peter 2:2. Not the outward breast, but the nourishing milk conveyed by it, satisfies the infant. In prayer, there must be unutterable groans, strong sallies, and flights of the soul with a holy impetus: Ps. 63:8, 'My soul follows hard after thee.' It would have an infinite enlargement of heart to God, suitable to God's infinite fulness. This desire is expressed by hunger and thirst. No desire so clamorous as that of a new-born infant for milk, or of an hungry man for meat, who will eat his own flesh, or offer violence to himself, rather than want nourishment. But this should not be so strong as our desires for Christ.

2. But in this ordinary more necessary.

(1.) It is a feast, and appetite is proper to that. Were it but a crumb, yet desire were fit, as long as it is from heaven. If there be life, there will be a nutritive appetite, and desire of those things which are suitable nourishment. Now what but Christ can be suitable nourishment to the new nature wherein this appetite is seated? To come without an appetite upon Christ's solemn invitation, is a wrong to the master of the feast, and the cheer he hath provided; it is a shame to come to such a feast, and leave our stomachs at home. It is not a fulness Christ expects we should bring to him, but an emptiness with an earnest desire: Rev. 22:17, 'Let him that is athirst come;' it is an heavenly feast, there must be a suitable appetite. Evangelical food requires evangelical hunger; marrow and fatness should whet our stomach.



(2.) The greater the longings the greater the satisfaction. In great desires the soul is said to pant as an hart, and in speedy mercies Christ is said to run as a roe. When desire opens the heart widest, then God opens the hand largest to fill it: Ps. 81:10, 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' Mary comes to the sepulchre before the other disciples, and when she misseth her Lord, is more restless, John 20:11. She stays, and weeps, and looks into the sepulchre again, when the other disciples were more remiss and went away, and missed of the sight of Christ, which Mary was blessed with. The wider the heart, the more triumphantly doth the king of glory enter. We have according to our desires, as Joash according to his strokes, 2 Kings 13:18, 19; had he struck six times, he had utterly destroyed his enemies, whereas striking but thrice, he had but a treble victory. He that is so tender of a bruised reed that he will not break it, or a smoking flax that he will not quench it, will not let an hungry soul go empty away. God scarce gives mercies in a sanctified way, but where there hath been a restless importunity before. Benefits would not be prized without this: Prov. 27:7, 'The full soul loathes the honeycomb.' The chapped and parched earth sucks in the rain after a great drought.

(3.) This is the noblest affection we can bestow upon God. God being infinite should be loved, not with a finite, but infinite affection. But nothing but desire can stretch itself to a kind of infinity, and therefore is most fit to be exerted in this heavenly and eminent ordinance.

Let us examine our desires,

[1.] Whether they be vehement. An infinite being should not be faintly and coldly desired. There ought to be a holy distraction in the soul,\* as scorched bowels are full of pain till they get satisfaction. There is no question but an imperfect velleity, a languishing and feeble desire, may be in unregenerate men; they may have more or less some apprehensions of the good, which stir up proportionable desires; but the longings of a gracious soul are strong, spiritual, and

produce mighty inward operations. As there is all sweetness in Christ, so there should be all vehemency in the acts of the soul to him. Is our desire limited to God alone? Do we apprehend him and pant after him as the greatest good, and Christ as the choicest and only Saviour? Is it so earnest, that if all afflictions were removed from us, all outward mercies bestowed upon us, this should not satisfy, but Christ alone and the light of his countenance? This holy longing can no more be stopped by any creature, than the sun can be barred by clouds from running its race. The whole world is but as the drop of a bucket after all the water is poured out. Would a small drop quench the thirst of parched bowels? No more can all the world answer the desire of a gracious soul, any more than a drop can cool the tongue of a damned creature.

[2.] Whether they are constant. Doth the fire in the temple never go out? Do settled apprehensions of Christ keep our hearts alive in their motions, or are they only like the fits of a fever, or flashes of lightning, which quickly vanish? Are they as pilgrims lodging only for a night, and in the morning leave no footsteps of themselves, no signs that ever they were there? Or are they kept up in some life and vigour upon the heart? In an equal heat it cannot be expected in this life, but when they flag, are they quickly revived? O let us seek God with our whole heart and with our whole soul.

## **A DISCOURSE OF THE UNWORTHY RECEIVING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**

Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eateth and drinketh

damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.—1 COR.  
11:27, 29.

AFTER the apostle had laid down the platform of the institution, he makes his inferences suited to the case and miscarriage of the Corinthians. Since this ordinance was appointed by Christ as a memorial of him, and in the celebration of it 'we shew the Lord's death;' an unbecoming frame and carriage in so great a mystery, is a reflection upon the authority of it, contrary to the ends of it, and a contracting the guilt of the body and blood of Christ. As if he should have said,\* While you Corinthians come together in a rude manner to this ordinance, as if it were a common and profane feast, the abuse and contempt redounds upon the body and blood of Christ represented by those elements. Calvin thinks the apostle makes a digression from the particular Corinthian case to an universal one, not only comprehending under unworthy receiving the abuses crept into that church, but all other miscarriages which might in the future rise up in that or any other church whatsoever; and indeed it is as a general case to be considered in our days, since the particular case of the Corinthians hath not its parallel.

He considers

1. The sin, (1.) in its nature, eating and drinking unworthily.  
(2.) In its aggravation, a guilt of the body and blood of Christ.
2. The danger, ver. 29, eating and drinking damnation to himself.
3. The cause of all, not discerning the Lord's body.

Whosoever eats and drinks unworthily. Whosoever approacheth without a consideration of the dignity of that which is represented by those elements,† and the ends of their appointment, regarding it as a common thing of no great value, and brings not those dispositions of faith and repentance, doth not reflect upon the elements themselves, but vilifies that which they represent; and offends not so much

against the exterior signs, as violates the reverence due to the body and blood of Christ; and is so far from gathering the blessed fruit of this ordinance, that he returns with the mark of the murderer of Christ upon him; for he contemns the condition of the covenant, and consequently the blood of the covenant. The argument whereby he urgeth it, is the relation it hath to Christ. It is the bread and cup of the Lord. Though it be bread and wine, yet it is a sacred thing; it is the bread and wine of the Lord, instituted by him for his glory and our salvation. He doth not say, Whosoever eats the body of the Lord, or drinks the blood of the Lord unworthily, but this bread, this cup. The apostle was not so witless as to have termed them bread and cup, had the doctrine of transubstantiation been known in his days. His argument had run stronger: it is but bread and wine in appearance, it is changed into the real body and blood of Christ; and therefore your unworthy carriage is immediately and not relatively a violation of his person. But the apostle acknowledgeth it to be bread and wine,\* but to distinguish it from bread of an ordinary use, calls it, 'the bread of the Lord.'

Unworthily. A worthy carriage respects either persons or things; persons, when our demeanour is suitable to the dignity of the person we converse with; or things, when we manage a business we undertake with a decorum and becomingness, according to the nature of it; as we say a man did this or that very handsomely. He that doth not observe a decorum and decency in a converse with a person or management of a business, doth it unworthily, awkwardly, rustically, or slovenly. So the word worthy is used: Luke 3:8, 'Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance,' i.e. suitable to the repentance you profess. And Eph. 4:1, 'Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called,' i.e. let your conversation answer your calling, and be suitable to the dignity of it. It is not any precedent act meritorious of the vocation, but a worthy carriage after it, suitable to the dignity of the calling. The apostle doth not say, Whatsoever unworthy person eats and drinks of this cup, &c., for then he had excluded every man, himself too. For who is worthy enough for these things? as the apostle speaks in another case, 'Who is sufficient for these things?'

The apostle requires not here a meritoriousness. Merit belongs to Christ dying, worthiness to the believer receiving. He speaks not of the worthiness of the person, but a worthiness of the action. A man may want a worthiness of person to be employed in a prince's service, yet not want a worthiness of parts which fit him, being engaged in it, to manage his employ for his own and his prince's honour. Or if a poor man be called to a prince's table,\* he is, because of his poverty and distance, unworthy to sit with him; yet being invited he may come; but if he behaves himself uncivilly and indecently, he makes himself guilty of a contempt of the royal majesty, in whose presence he is. Unworthily here notes the want of an evangelical frame and disposition of heart.

Guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. He offers wrong to Christ. The Jews were guilty of his blood, when they crucified him; apostates are guilty of his blood, when they deny him, Heb. 10:29. An unworthy receiver doth such an injury to Christ, that God will account him in the rank of the Jews that crucified him, and charge him with no less a crime than the guilt of the blood of his Son.

He eats and drinks damnation. Κρῖμα, judgment, which differs from κατὰκριμα. † He eats judgment or punishment, which is double, either eternal or temporary. Final unbelievers eat it to their eternal condemnation; those that have faith, and are negligent in due preparations, eat it to their temporary correction. It is the effect for the cause. An unbeliever doth not properly eat his condemnation; for condemnation is not naturally or sacramentally in the bread and wine, but he eats that which will be the cause of his condemnation,‡ because not considering the glorious use these elements are destined to, he doth not consider how great and glorious a thing the body of the Lord is, which they represent; and so violates, in those signs, the honour due to his majesty. Not but that this is of itself, and in regard of the institution, wholesome and quickening, but by the evil disposition of the receiver, and the abuse of the ordinance, that which was ordained to life brings death; as the foulness of the stomach makes wholesome food turn to venom in the body.

Therefore the apostle adds, 'He eats damnation to himself.' There is no such thing in the institution. The fault is wholly in himself, not in the ordinance. He abuseth that which would be useful to him, if he brought worthy dispositions with him. As our first parents ate their death in eating the forbidden fruit, when the fruit itself was not of a venomous nature, but by transgressing the command of God, they rendered themselves obnoxious to the death God had threatened. So we say of a man, that he hath swallowed his death, when he hath eaten something which makes way for the entrance of death; not only when it is poisonous in its own nature, but when it is unsuitable to the temper and state of the patient. So he that eats unworthily, makes himself obnoxious to the judgment of God, either to be tormented by his scorpions hereafter, or awakened by his scourges here.

Not discerning the Lord's body, Διακρίνων. To discern a thing or person is to separate it from other things or persons,\* and give it its due rank and order, which is either, (1.) in effect, when a man is endowed with qualities which elevate him above others. As the apostle saith, God makes us to differ, Τίς γὰρ σε διακρίνει; 1 Cor. 4:7, i.e. he puts a difference between us and others, giving us graces more advantageous than unto them. (2.) In opinion and esteem, when we value one thing more than another; so, Acts 15:9, God is said to 'put no difference between the Jews and Gentiles,' οὐδεν διέκρινε, i.e. he hath treated them indifferently. So not to discern the Lord's body is not to esteem and honour it as he ought, not to give it its due rank; to entertain it not as a singular and divine, but a common and ordinary thing. When men disesteem Christ, they count his blood as common blood, Heb. 10:20. What is there translated unholy, is in the Greek, κοινὸν; so after the apostle had discoursed of the two elements, as representing the two parts of the sacrifice offered upon the cross, his body broken, his blood poured out for a propitiation for sin, not to discern it, is to have no higher opinion of the body of the Son of God, the wonder of God's wisdom and goodness, than of a common thing, and a matter of no value.

Or not discerning the Lord's body, is when our sense sticks upon the outward elements, and our spirits rise not up to view the merits and propitiation of Christ through the veil of the bread and wine, as if the elements were the things only we were to feast upon. It is a spiritual feast, and therefore we discern not the Lord's body when we have not spiritual meditations of the dignity of Christ, the atonement he made, God's wisdom, justice, and mercy in the design of his death. As Christ doth not put us off with empty signs, so he would not have us rest upon empty signs, but acknowledge his body and blood represented in them, for those ends for which the one was broken, and the other shed. The papists, to prop up their doctrine of transubstantiation, draw an argument for it from this place. The body of Christ is in the sacrament in its proper substance, otherwise a man could not be guilty of his body and blood.† For no man could justly be condemned for not discerning the Lord's body from other meat, if that which he receives were not truly the body of the Lord, but another meat; and the unworthy receiving of the naked sign cannot make a man guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But this is no argument.\* Christ is wronged in that which hath a relation to him, as well as immediately in his own person. The rejecting the apostles, the messengers of Christ, is a rejecting Christ who sent them: Luke 10:16, 'He that despiseth you, despiseth me;' and he that despiseth the commands of God delivered by man, 'despiseth not man, but God,' 1 Thes. 4:8. Was our Saviour therefore substantially present in the persons of the apostles? Were they not separated from his body, when he sent them to other parts, and gave them this as an encouragement? How could he be with them, and absent from them in his body? When he chargeth Saul with persecuting him, because he 'breathed out slaughter against his disciples,' Acts 9:4, was the body of Christ therefore substantially in his disciples? He that hath received the knowledge of the truth, and apostatiseth from it, 'treads under foot the Son of God.' Is the person of Christ under the feet of these contemners! To tumble a king's robe in the dirt, to counterfeit his seal, tread upon his crown, daub his picture, break down his arms in despite, offer violence to his ambassador, is reckoned as a violation of the person and authority of a prince; yet neither the

person nor nature of the person is really present in any of those things. They are indeed the marks of his dignity, and he that violates wilfully any of them is supposed to be willing to do as much against the person of the prince, if it were in his power, as against anything which bears his character. The substance of the body and blood of Christ, is not in the bread and wine of the sacrament; his exalted body is no more to be broken and sliced in pieces; nor doth it consist with his state of glory, to have his substantial body shrouded under such mean elements. But the bread and wine are memorials and pledges of his body and blood, instituted by him as signs to signify him; therefore he that receives them without a due respect to Christ, and handles them unworthily, despising those things which are signified by them, is a contemner of the Son of God, since he hath no value for that which is a mark of his authority and his love.

Doct. Unworthy receivers of the supper contract great guilt, and incur great danger. In the handling which doctrine I shall shew,

I. What unworthy receiving is.

II. The sinfulness of it.

III. The danger of it.

IV. The use.

I. What unworthy receiving is.

1. Something negatively.

(1.) Unworthy receiving is not proper only to a man in a natural state. The apostle chargeth here unworthy receiving, not only upon the professing, but the regenerate Corinthians, upon such as fell under the chastening hand of God for this cause, that they might not be condemned with the world' to an eternal punishment, 1 Cor. 11:32. He sent temporal punishments upon them that they might not undergo an eternal damnation; they were redeemed from eternal



punishment, renewed in their souls, yet some of them were guilty of unworthy receiving. The apostle also puts the unworthiness upon the want of a self-examination, which a good man may, by some supineness and negligence, be deficient in, and, as the sleepy church, Cant. 5:2, may contract some rust in his graces, yea, and fall into some bemiring sin, as a neat man may into a dirty puddle, rendering himself at present unfit for the entertainment of, and converse with some worthy friend. Sins of a higher magnitude, which a good man may fall into, make him at the present unfit for heaven, and therefore for an heavenly ordinance. David was no worthy attender upon the institutions of God while he lay in his impenitency, till his tears had washed away his iniquity. Nor was Peter restored to the sweetness of converse with his Master, till he had wept bitterly; while a great sin remains unpurged, or the soul through negligence untrimmed, it is no fit guest for God.

(2.) Unworthy receiving is not to be measured by our sensible joy or comfort after receiving. Two men that have perfect health have not equal stomachs, nor equal appetites, and consequently not the same joy in their meals, yet both in health. We should more consider how graces are acted, than how comforts are dispensed; the former is our duty, and necessary to a right participation; the latter is an act of sovereignty, and not our duty. God's dispensations are not equal to all; some have only tastes, others full draughts; some may have more joy than strength, others more strength than joy. Mary had a strength of love to Christ, before she had a joy of pardon from him, Luke 7:47. Paul's grace was not weaker fourteen years after his rapture, though we read not of a second discovery of the third heavens to him. God was most pleased with our Saviour upon the cross, acting his faith in, and love and obedience to God, when he denied him sensible comforts from heaven, and was bruising his soul for sin. The life and exercise of grace is the root of joy, though the fruit itself be not always visible; we may seem to have a rebuke from God, when we are in the strongest exercise of grace. The woman of Canaan had no sense of Christ's kindness, while she was acting a faith stronger than others who had met with swifter rewards. Jacob

had the honour to be termed a prince prevailing with God, in that wrestling wherein he received such a touch from God as made him halt all his life after, Gen. 32:25, 28. If our souls can ascend, like Manoah's angel, in the smoke of thanksgiving and elevations of spirit, and be melted and softened by a flame of love, there is a worthy receiving, though there be not a sensible comfort.

But, 2. Positively; that is an unworthy receiving,—

(1.) When evil dispositions and beloved sins are not laid aside and forsaken. As there must be faith respecting the Christian doctrine, so there must be repentance respecting the conversation. He eats unworthily that hath different ends from what Christ had in the institution; and wants the qualifications which Christ requires, who hath neither faith nor repentance, no sense of sin, nor love to Christ, to hold up to God. Common infirmities render us not unworthy, but voluntary defilements: neither the poverty, blindness, or halting of one or other of those invited, Luke 14:21, Mat. 22:10, was charged upon them, but only the filthy rags that one of them came in; such sordidness as he might have mended, not the lameness which he could not cure. Common infirmities are inseparable in this life; but the great breaches and violations of the covenant are to be discharged. Every sin doth make some separation between God and us (as the smallest body hath its shadow); but they are the darling sins that are a thick cloud between him and us. Those then are unquestionably unworthy receivers, that approach with a love to their lusts; as Judas, who came with his covetous disposition and treacherous purposes. Such as lay aside their sins at present in the act, but not in the habit and affection, that shake hands with them for a time, to fondle them afterwards.

(2.) When, though beloved sins are discarded, yet there is not a due preparation suitable to the quality of the institution. The apostle implies it in the precept he enjoins immediately after the declaration of the sin: ver. 28, 'Let a man examine himself.' He that doth not trim up the graces he hath, that doth not search them out, and marshal

them in order to entertain the master of the feast, as well as he who wants those qualifications necessary. An actual as well as an habitual sanctification was required of Jesse's sons before the sacrifice: 1 Sam. 16:5, 'Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.' Christ did sanctify himself before he made himself a sacrifice, John 17:19, so should we before we commemorate it. If the lamps be not trimmed, they will burn but dimly. If that he counts the wedding-garment be not brushed, it will be a slighting the Lord not to appear in our best garb. The Corinthians were chastised, not for want of grace in habit, but for want of grace in act. It is a disrespect to Christ not to put on a wedding-garment which we have in possession, when graces and affections are not set on work which the ordinance requires. A natural man is unworthy for want of possessing those graces; a renewed man unworthy for want of acting them. The party that so offended was not sent out to clothe himself, but punished for his neglect: 'Friend, how camest thou in hither?' Christ's worthy care in the institution must be answered with a worthy carriage in the preparation. He washed his disciples' feet before the institution, John 13. We should prepare our souls before the participation. When a good man's graces lie dead at the ordinances, he receives unworthily. What difference is there between a dead man and one that doth not exercise the acts of life? When Christ reacheth out himself, and our hands are not ready to take, our hearts not ready to embrace, it is an unsuitable carriage. We have no great esteem of the gales that blow, if we will not prepare and hoist our sails to be filled with them, and stand not ready to suck Christ's breast in his ordinance.

(3.) It is an unworthy receiving when we rest only in the ordinance, expecting from the work done, what we should expect only from Christ in it. When we content ourselves with Elijah's mantle, without asking for the God of Elijah. Thus the Jews deluded themselves with their privileges, and displeased God with their neglect of him; like Joab securing himself by laying hold of the horns of the altar without repentance for his murders. This is to derive from the sacrament the cause of our righteousness and justification, and ascribe that to the

naked elements and signs which is only to be expected and desired at the hands of God. This is a wrong to God, when we prefer the shadow before the substance, the shell before the kernel, satisfy our appetite and take no notice of the Master. Doth not he slight both the physician and the physic, that expects a cure from a medicine in his pocket, which he was to take into his body? The like it is to Christ, to think that a corporal feeding, without a spiritual relish, can nourish our souls; a chewing the elements with the teeth, without feeding upon Christ with the heart. This is evident, when we answer not sacramental engagements, as well as when we come without sacramental preparations; in that we slight the end of the ordinance, as in the other we slight the greatness of the institution.

(4.) When there is a garishness and looseness of spirit in the time of our attendance. Not discerning the Lord's body, say some; not minding the Lord's body, but letting the thoughts run at rovers, which should be fixed upon Christ's dying; not making a difference between this holy bread and common refreshments in the behaviour of our souls. Our spirits should be low in regard of contrition, not in regard of a sordid demeanour towards God. To have base ends and starts in his worship;\* to regard our own things in this act, and not the things of God; to have unsettled and roving thoughts, crosses the end of this ordinance. It is unworthy not to remember Christ, not to shew forth his death; how can this be done without minding him? The Master of the feast is not remembered unless we look through the bread and wine to the broken body and the shed blood of Christ. We esteem not him that we do not mind, we value not him that we do not, with the weight of our souls, intently lean upon. Not that any man is free from roving while the flesh cleaves to him. (The involuntary startings of the flesh, the involuntary injections of the devil, do not make us unworthy receivers. God regards the willingness of the spirit to affect us, and the weakness of the flesh to pity us. 'He knows our frame, that we are but dust,' and dust is apt to be removed with a blast of wind.) But when the reins are let loose to the headstrong flesh, when we pull it not in, but follow rather than resist the motions; it is then that we make light of the dignity of this

ordinance, and the great and glorious body of our Lord represented thereby. Neither can we understand every actual consent to such motions at the time of our attendance to be the unworthy receiving, which makes us guilty of the body and blood of Christ, though it be an unworthy carriage, unless we should count all the apostles to be unworthy receivers, who, if not in the time, yet presently after the first partaking of it, contended among themselves about earthly greatness in the kingdom of the Messiah, as it is probable from Luke 22:24. But when it is habitual, voluntary, and without a purpose of soul, and a 'setting the heart to seek the Lord,' 1 Chron. 22:19, such an one is not free from this character of an unworthy receiver.

II. The sinfulness of this. It is a contracting the guilt of the body and blood of the Lord. This unworthy carriage derives its original from that disposition which incited the Jews to a crucifying of him. Though there be not a blow struck at his person, there is the spring of as many blows as ever the Jews gave him. *Diversa peccata, par contumelia.* What hath been said lately about the sinfulness of unbelief might be applied to this case. I shall therefore say the less of it. Though there be a difference in the circumstances of the several sins, there is little or none in the contempt and indignity. He that doth despite to the image or arms of a prince, would do the same to his person, were it as much in his power.

1. It is an implicit approbation of the Jews' act in crucifying Christ. If we are not affected with that state of Christ, we consent to, and approve of, that act of his crucifiers; not positively, but privatively; not having that temper and affection of spirit which such an action doth call for from us. This is one way, among many others, of being accessory to another's sin, by not having a regret at it. He that makes light at the death of an innocent person,\* confesseth him a malefactor, and that he deserves to be slain, since being slain, he deserves so little regard, or at least he makes him a malefactor, and gives just occasion of suspicion that he would have been ready enough to have imbrued his hands in that man's blood. The committing a sin is an approbation of all of the same kind that went

before. Had it not been so, the guilt of the blood of all the prophets could not have fallen upon the heads of that generation which murdered Christ, Luke 11:47. Whosoever hath slight thoughts of the death of Christ, and neglects those duties so great a condescension calls for, partly consents to the savage usage Christ met with from the Jews. They were the authors of the first crime, and an unworthy receiver the abettor.

2. It exceeds the sin of the Jews in some circumstances, as well as that exceeded this in others. That was against his person, this against his propitiation; they did it against one they accounted a blasphemer, we do it against one we account not only innocent, but a Redeemer. The Jews tore his body, and an unworthy receiver, saith Chrysostom, defiles it, by putting the body of Christ into an unclean vessel. The sin is greater, by how much impurity and defilement is more against his nature than death and torment.

3. In regard of the relation the ordinance hath to Christ. There is an analogy between the bread and the wine, and the body and blood of Christ. The nearer relation anything hath to God, the more heinous is the offence. To kill a debauched man unjustly, innocent of any crime to deserve death, is an affronting God in his image, Gen. 9:6. To neglect uncharitably a member of Christ is greater, because it is a despising of Christ in his mystical body, Mat. 25:45. This is greater, because it is an affront to his body and blood in the picture and representation of him. To fling the picture of a prince into the kennel, and stamp upon it with contempt, is treasonable in some places. A man of quality is not injured so much by breaking his earthen vessels, as by defacing and defiling his arms, the marks of his honour. It disparageth the whole covenant of grace in unworthy usage of the seals of it. How base a disposition is it to sit down at the table of a man with an hostile mind against him! to stab the master of the feast at his own table, while he is treating and entertaining us with dainties!

4. It is a great sin, as it is against the greatest testimony of his love. That hand which was afterwards pierced and nailed upon the cross for us, did first break this sacrament to us. He appointed it when he was to go out of the world, when he knew all things were given into his hands, John 13:3; when he knew he was to leave the world, and sit down at the right hand of his Father; he would then do a work worthy of himself, to declare his own liberality to us. It was the first fruit of the power granted to him. It is a violation of that marriage knot whereby Christ would have us be joined to him, and become his spouse. He only was the author of this. His crucifixion could not be without other hands, and the wickedness of many persons in bringing him to his sufferings. But this acknowledgeth him only the author. The motive of his sufferings was the satisfaction of his Father's justice, as well as his love to us; this hath purely his own love for the spring of it. His suffering was a part of his obedience; but the only motive of this institution was his kindness. And the apostle preface this institution (as it may seem) with a manifestation of his love, 'having loved his own, he loved them to the end,' John 13:1, as if he could not leave a higher pledge of his love than this; since he could not leave himself, he would leave his picture.

III. The danger of this sin, he 'eats and drinks damnation to himself.' As the sin is set forth in the greatest blackness, so is the punishment in the greatest dreadfulness. The sin subjects us to the same punishment that was reserved for the crucifiers of Christ. God inflicts upon his own temporal corrections, upon final unbelievers eternal; he useth his rods on some, his axes on others. It is but reason the severity upon the offender should be proportionable to the communications to the worthy receiver. Where his liberality is unworthily used, his severity shall be justly felt.

He eats and drinks damnation to himself. Damnation is not the end of the ordinance, no more than it is the end of the gospel, or of Christ's coming into the world. The supper was appointed for holy and beneficial ends, but the unworthiness of the receiver turns that into a sword which was intended for food. Worms grew from that

manna which was intended for a blessing, when they used it not according to the command of God, Exod. 16:20. Rain is to make the earth fruitful; and where it meets with a good soil, it opens the womb of the earth to bring forth wholesome plants; but where it lights upon a bad soil, it brings forth briars and thorns. It is not the fault of the rain, but the disposition of the ground, which produceth hurtful and venomous plants which are 'nigh unto cursing,' Heb. 6:7. So the ordinance is bread to strengthen, wine to refresh; but where the wickedness of a man is mixed with it, there is poison in it, a piercing hook under a delightful bait. The word is a savour of life and a savour of death, 2 Cor. 2:16; a savour of life when mixed with faith, a savour of death when mixed with unbelief. Where the blood of Christ doth not cure, it inflames a wound; where it doth not save, it condemns; that which is not melted by the sun grows into a greater hardness. Christ, as a sacrifice on the cross, was pleasing to God, as the murdered innocent a burden of guilt on the Jews; so as he is grateful food in the sacrament to a worthy receiver, he is the bane of an unworthy communicant by reason of his unholiness. It was a sad cut to David to be guilty of the blood of Uriah, whose blood, though not shed by his hand, was designed by him to be spilt in the service of his country; yet how was his soul galled for it, and his son afterwards in the head of an army against him for his punishment? What a crime is it to kill a child in the womb, who never yet saw the light? What is it then to murder the Son of God in the signs of his body, the Saviour of the world, the king of glory, whose blood is unconceivably more precious than the blood of all men, the life of all angels; doth not this deserve a severe correction?

#### IV. The use.

1. The manner of duties must be regarded as well as the matter. The matter of this ordinance is participated by both the worthy and the unworthy receiver. The manner makes the difference. The same matter of prayer may be put up by two several persons, the one accepted, the other rejected; one offers it with a wicked, the other with a sincere mind, Prov. 21:27. The eating the passover 'otherwise



than it was written,' was dangerous, and needed Hezekiah's prayer to God for a pardon of them, 2 Chron. 30:18. He that came 'without a wedding garment' could have relished the sweetness of the meat, but, intruding in an unbecoming garb, was turned out as unfit for the king's table. As God hath the love of a friend, so he hath the greatness of a sovereign. He will not be treated with as an ordinary friend, but 'sanctified in all that draw near to him,' Lev. 10:3. His gracious indulgence must not diminish our awful thoughts of his majesty. Though it is a crucified Christ we remember, one clothed with infirmities, yet it is one that hath dropped his mantle, and is exalted at the right of the majesty on high. Since he is God in heaven, we must not be hasty to present ourselves in an unbecoming garb before him: Eccles. 5:2, 'Let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God, for God is in heaven.' Circumstances in worship are more than ciphers; but if they were no more, take away all the ciphers joined with an unit, how is the sum curtailed to nothing?\*

The voluntary omission of a circumstance necessary to an action doth not excuse but aggravate.

2. The holiness of an ordinance will not excuse a miscarriage in it. Some are nourished by this ordinance, others pollute themselves. The fruit is not according to the holiness of the ordinance, but the disposition of the receiver. Before the destruction of the temple, Ezek. 10:2, God saith, 'Fill thy hand with coals, and scatter them over the city.' The fire in the temple, which they thought was to serve for the expiation of their sin, should serve for the destruction of the city. The temple hath thunders and lightnings in it as well as music, Rev. 4:5. The most wholesome food sinks<sup>†</sup> under the power of corrupt humours in the stomach. Nadab and Abihu were the true priests of God; they intended to offer incense to the true God. The incense was according to the mind of God, and the censers were of the consecrated vessels. They erred only in taking strange fire, which God had not commanded, and this cost them their lives, Lev. 10:1, 2. We may have right ordinances, direct our addresses to the true God; but the holiness of those will not excuse the want of heavenly fire, the

grace of the Spirit, and the want of a due value of the mediation of Christ.

3. The sins of those that draw nearest to God are the blackest. Never was anything termed a guilt of the body and blood of Christ but the Jews' wickedness in crucifying, men's apostasy in denying him after knowledge, and the abuse of this ordinance, and that not only in the unregenerate Corinthians, but in the best that were guilty of those miscarriages; he taxeth whosoever eats and drinks unworthily. An universal particle.

4. The ground of our mischief is always in ourselves. It is not from the emptiness of the ordinance, that is a full cistern; nor from the shortness of God's grace, he is an overflowing fountain; but from want of those graces, or of exercising those graces, which are the bucket to draw and the mouth to drink. The plantain is not poisonous in its nature, but the venomous nature of the toad turns it into poison. Misery ariseth not from the insufficiency of the sacrament, but the unworthiness of the receiver. That judgment is conveyed to one, when grace is conveyed to another, is our own fault. The door is open, but unbelief pulls to the door and locks it. The miseries rained down upon us are but the ascended vapours of our own sin. Christ hath an hand to reach the benefit to us upon our worthiness, and a hand to inflict the punishment on us upon our abuse; he makes himself a feast for the believer's faith, but the unbeliever makes himself a feast for the Redeemer's wrath.

5. We see here the base nature of sin. It changeth the brightest ordinances, makes the waters of the sanctuary bitter, turns food into poison, and a cup of salvation into one of damnation. We frustrate God's expectations when he looks for fruit; then it is just he should frustrate ours when we look for food.

6. If an unworthy receiver be guilty of the body and blood of Christ, a worthy receiver hath a special interest in the body and blood of Christ. He hath as much advantage thereby as the other hath guilt.

The apostle speaks this to put a bar to the Corinthians' sin, to make them sensible of their unreasonable miscarriage, not to scare them from the ordinance, but to excite them to come to it in a becoming manner, so as to honour God and benefit themselves; that they might sheathe God's sword, and not draw it against themselves. Though the Red Sea swallowed up the Egyptians that would venture into it, yet it was a wall to preserve and deliver the Israelites from the hands of their enemies. He that receives worthily, eats and drinks salvation to himself, by the rule of contraries. The ordinance comes upon him like rain, fitting him to bring forth herbs meet for the use of him that dressed him; and such a person receives blessing from God, Heb. 6:7. Certainly that Christ, that never turned away a little faith without a blessing when he was upon earth, will much less now disappoint it when it is exercised on him. Since in heaven there is no diminution of his compassion, there can be no increase of his severity to such an one.

7. Should not all of us, that have at any time of our lives been partakers of this ordinance, reflect upon ourselves, yea, the best of us? Can any of us say that we never contracted the guilt of the body and blood of Christ; that we always had some worthy dispositions for him; that our minds were never wavering, our hearts never cold, our affections never languishing, our spirits, that should have been in heaven, never sunk to the earth? Is there not then a partial guilt? Yet God hath admitted us again and again, spread his table, filled his cup, put manna into our mouths, and his cup into our hands. Wonderful patience in God, to bear with a wonderful sin in us! 'Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God,' may be the cry of every one of us, as it was David's, Ps. 51:14. How often have we wounded him that hath delivered us, killed him that hath saved us, abused that blood that was the price of no less than the redemption of our souls and bodies! Who doth not condemn the Jews for crucifying the Lord of life in his infirmities? And ought we not as well to condemn ourselves for crucifying the Lord of life in his glory?

8. How, then, should we take heed, whenever we approach to the Lord's table, of any unworthy demeanour towards him, whereby to contract such guilt and incur such displeasure? How should we endeavour after as clear affections to Christ as he bears to us, with meltings of heart and faintings of soul for him? We receive benefit according to our worthiness. As we prepare our souls for God, so he prepares himself for us: Isa. 64:5, 'Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and works righteousness, that remembers thee in thy ways.' He is a feast of fat things to them that have faith to receive him. If we value not the pledges of his love, we shall bear the marks of his indignation. Adam, the first rebel of mankind, had the sweetness of a promise, and was not given up to that justice of God which he had provoked, and the malice of that devil whose temptation he had swallowed. Nor was Peter, who, in the denial of his loving Master in so base a manner, had gratified the devil, given up to be winnowed by him. But the first that ever offended in an unworthy receiving the Supper (if he did receive it) was, without remedy, given up as a possession to that devil who had animated him to his treacherous design. It is a dreadful eating when attended with such a sin and such a judgment. To receive worthily is to be affected with the sufferings of Christ; the cause of those sufferings, sin; the end of those sufferings, redemption from the guilt and filth of sin; the acceptation of those sufferings by God, the confirmation of the fruits of them; to cast ourselves into the arms of a crucified Saviour, washing our souls in his blood; pleading his merits before God, humbly and believingly applying them to ourselves. Let us, then, raise up our spirits, drink deep of the cup of salvation, drink abundantly of that love which is sweeter than wine. If we come before him in a becoming posture, with our hearts burning, our souls thirsting, our drooping faith may be then revived, our closed eyes opened, dark shades may fly away. The disciples that knew not Christ in the way, neither by the features of his countenance, nor the spirituality of his discourse, yet knew him in the efficacy of a sacrament, if that were the celebration of it, as some think, which is mentioned Luke 24:30, 31. He withheld his grace before, to honour this ordinance with it. Let, then, the bounty of Christ engage us.\* He

hath not given us a hand or an arm, his head or his feet, a few drops of his blood, but his whole body, his whole soul, his graces, his virtues, the fruits of his death, to be participated by us, to be insouled with us. He hath given himself wholly for a sacrifice; he hath given himself wholly in a sacrament; a greater gift could not be given on the cross; a greater gift cannot be given at a table. He is given for our comfort, our refreshment, our physic, our victory. The relation the sacrament hath to the sacrifice, and the benefits conveyed to us, call for a becoming carriage from us. Let us discern the Lord's body, which is the mystery and subject of the sacrament; value it in its due rank as the price of our redemption, the delight of God, the admiration of angels, a body that hath nothing comparable unto it in the whole world.

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Discourses on the Lord's Supper, by Stephen Charnock, D. D.,  
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ePub, .mobi &.pdf Editions April 2022. Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn,

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