

you. The vows of God are upon you; break them not, and go not about after vows to make inquiry.

(4.) Improve your baptism to the strengthening of your faith and confidence in Jesus Christ, especially in downcastings under a sense of guilt; for it is a sign and seal of remission, adoption, &c. and so may answer the question to an exercised soul, How can I be put among the children?

(5.) Improve it to the vigorous exercise of, and growth in holiness, since thereby ye are engaged to newness of life, as ye are raised from the dead, Rom. vi. 4. Were ye dedicated unto God, does not that say ye should be holy in heart, lip, and life? As God is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of life and conversation; remembering that without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

(6.) *Lastly*, Improve it to the increase of brotherly love, even love to all the saints, who are all baptised into one body, 1 Cor. xii. 13. It is as unnatural for saints not to love one another, or to quarrel with one another, as it is for the members of the natural body to be at war with each other. Then love one another, as Christ hath loved you.*

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OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1 COR. xi. 23, 24, 25.—*I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner, also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*

THESE words afford us the answer to that question, 'What is the sacrament of the Lord's supper?' and declare to us the nature of that holy ordinance which we are now in expectation of, and now falls to be explained? For which we shall consider,

- I. The author of it.
- II. The signifying things in it.
- III. The signifying actions.
- IV. The uses and ends of it.

* See more of this subject in the author's sermons on church-communion, first printed in 1737.

All these particulars are contained in the text and deserve a special consideration.

1. The author of this ordinance is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. It is not founded on man's authority, but on his own authority, who is the only King and Head of his church, ver. 23. *I have received of the Lord Jesus, &c.* which points out a twofold excellency in it. (1.) A character of divine authority upon it. The elements and actions, though they be mean in themselves, yet have a majesty in them to a spiritual eye, as bearing Christ's stamp on them, and being heaven's broad seal to the covenant. (2.) A holiness in it; it is a holy ordinance, as appointed by the holy Jesus. The elements, though in themselves common things, are relatively holy, as appointed to represent, seal, and apply Christ and his benefits.

Here I shall shew,

1. When Christ instituted this sacrament.
2. For what time it is to continue.
3. What the words of institution contain.

First, When did Christ institute this sacrament? *The same night in which he was betrayed,* ver. 23. Yet this does not bind us to that time rather than to another, because that was an accidental circumstance, arising from something peculiar to the first institution and administration. For it could not be sooner, in regard it behoved to be after the passover, which was to be killed in the evening, Exod. xii. 6. and eaten that night, ver. 8. which was to be abrogated by this new institution. It could not be later, because quickly after he fell into his enemies' hands. The time of its institution teaches us four things.

1. The most tender care and concern our Lord had and has for his people's welfare and comfort, providing for these just while he was to launch forth into the sea of wrath. Admirable love and tenderness indeed!

2. That it is Christ's dying love-token to his friends, and therefore to be highly prized, and duly improved.

3. That it is of special use to fit the Lord's people for a time of trouble and trial. Now, the disciples were to meet with a storm which they had never seen the like of; and he reserves therefore the best wine till now.

4. That it is of special use to fit his people for grappling with death; the which we may learn from his example.

Secondly, For what time is this sacrament to continue? I answer, Till he come again, and so it is to last to the end of the world. While he is absent, we must make use of it, as a memorial, ver. 25, 26.

Thirdly, What do the words of institution contain? They con-

tain Christ's blessing; which comprehends two things. (1.) A command for the use of this sacrament. (2.) A promise of spiritual benefit by it to the worthy receivers, viz. that they shall partake of Christ's body and blood in the right use of it, ver. 24, 25. *Take, eat: This is my body.—This cup is the new Testament in my blood.*

II. I proceed to consider the signifying things, or outward elements. These are bread and wine. The bread, ordinary bread, without any determination of what grain it is made, nor whether leavened or unleavened. Our Lord took such bread as came to hand, and so may we without scruple, though decency is to be observed. The wine, as to the colour of it, is also indifferent; and whether a little mixed with water, or unmixed is so too. Necessity and decency must regulate these things, the church being no otherwise tied by divine institution.

Here Let us consider,

1. What is signified by the bread and wine.

2. The resemblance betwixt the signs and the things signified.

First, What is signified by the bread and wine? The body and blood of Christ, ver. 24, 25. even a whole Christ, with all his benefits, forasmuch as the divine nature after the incarnation was never separated from the human, though the soul was separated from the body, and his precious blood from his flesh.

Secondly, The resemblance betwixt the signs and the things signified.

1. Consider the bread and wine separately.

1st, There is a resemblance betwixt the bread and Christ's body.

(1.) Bread is for nourishing natural life: so is Christ's body for nourishment to the soul, John vi. 56. 'For (says he), my flesh is meat indeed.' There the hungry may feed, and be nourished and strengthened, to grow up unto eternal life.

(2.) Bread must be prepared ere it can be bread, or fit nourishment for us, the grain ground and baked with the fire. So Christ was grinded betwixt the upper millstone of the Father's wrath, and the nether millstone of the malice of men and devils, and cast into the fiery furnace of justice, that he might be bread to our souls, Psal. xxii. 14.

(3.) Bread is a common and cheap provision; it is for the poor as well as the rich. Christ's salvation is the common salvation, Jude, 3; free to all who will receive the same, Rev. xxii. 17.

(4.) Of all provision it is the most necessary. Nothing is so necessary for us as Christ; without him we die, we perish, we all perish, John vi. 53. 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.'

(5.) *Lastly*, It is a sort of food which healthy people will never loath. So is Christ ever sweet to the soul that feeds on him, though distempered souls loath the bread of life.

2dly, There is a resemblance betwixt wine and Christ's blood.

(1.) The wine is squeezed out of the grapes forcibly by the wine-press. Thus was Christ's blood squeezed out of his body, by the wine-press of the Father's wrath, that it might be drink to our souls.

(2.) Wine has a medicinal virtue, Luke x. 34. Christ's blood is the great medicine for the wounds of the soul. There are no wounds so deep, or so hopeless, but an application of Christ's blood will cleanse them, and heal them too.

(3.) Wine is refreshing and strengthening to the body, 1 Tim. v. 23. A draught of this spiritual drink, exhibited to us in the sacrament, and to be received by faith, would make the soul pressed with guilt, and a sense of wrath, to stir as a giant refreshed with wine, John vi. 55. 'My blood is drink indeed.'

(4.) *Lastly*, It is of a cheering virtue, Prov. xxxi. 6. The blood of Christ is that whereof those who are of sorrowful spirits, by reason of guilt, may drink by faith, and forget their sorrow, 1 Pet. i. 8.

2. Consider the bread and wine conjunctly, set before us in the sacrament. There is a threefold resemblance.

1st, There is both meat and drink, bread and wine, in the sacrament. In Jesus Christ we have a full feast for our souls, John vi. 55. 'My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.' There is a fulness in him for all our wants, a fulness of merit and of Spirit.

2. The bread and wine are separate in the sacrament. So was Christ's blood separated from his body on the cross for us. Many vents were made in that blessed body by the nails and spear, through which that blood might gush out, for the redemption of an elect world.

3. The bread must be eaten, and the wine drunk, or they will not nourish. So Christ's body and blood must be by faith eaten and drunk, or it will not profit us to our salvation. It is union with him by faith that makes us partakers of his benefits.

III. Let us consider the signifying actions in this sacrament.

First, There are some signifying actions of the administrator about these elements, according to Christ's institution, which, being sacramental, are also significant.

1. Taking the bread, and the cup into which the wine has been poured out, taking them into his hand, ver. 23, 24, 25. Nothing is

more distinctly mentioned than this, Matth. xxvi. 26, 27. 'Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.' Whence it is evident, that it is taken to be consecrated. And this represents the Father's choosing and designing the Son to be Mediator, Psal. lxxxix. 19. 'I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.' So in this action we may see, (1.) Man perishing for want of spiritual food, Adam and all his posterity starving in their souls, and so their case crying for bread. (2.) God in his eternal love destinating bread for a starving world. (3.) The Son of God, as the party on whom the lot fell, to be bread for them. Behold the bread the Father took, Isaiah xlii. 1. 'Behold my servant whom I uphold.' He was God's choice, and shall he not be ours?

2. Consecrating of the elements, ver. 24, 25. The consecrating of the bread and wine apart is reckoned to be an accidental circumstance in the first administration, agreeable to the custom of the country where it was done, not obliging us, whose custom it is to bless all together, more than unleavened bread, &c. Nor does there appear any mystery further in the former than the latter.

Here consider,

(1.) How the elements are consecrated. By the word of institution, thanksgiving and prayer, they are consecrated, or set apart from common use, ver. 23, 24, 25. Our Lord Christ had power of himself to institute the ordinance, and did so, and blessed it, and solemnly gave thanks over it. The institution stands in the word, which therefore we read on that occasion, and, according to his example, pray over it with thanksgiving. The Popish consecration, by muttering over these words, *This is my body*, hit not the mark; for these words, *This is my body*, were uttered by our Lord after the consecration.

(2.) What is the effect of the consecration on the elements? Not a real change of them into the body and blood of Christ. This destroys the nature of a sacrament, leaving no sensible sign. It is contrary to the institution, where Christ's body was sitting at the table, and reached the disciples bread and wine. It is contrary to the doctrine of Christ's suffering once, his ascension, sitting at God's right hand, and coming again not till the last day. And so it is contrary to sense and reason.

Christ said indeed, *This is my body*, i. e. signifies my body, as the lamb is called the Lord's passover, Exod. xii. 11. It is by these words the Papists will have the bread changed into the real natural

body of Christ. But these words suppose it to be Christ's body before, since a thing cannot be truly said to be what it is not. So it is no otherwise Christ's body, but sacramentally.

The true effect is a relative change on the elements, so that they are no more to be looked upon as common bread and wine, but the sacred symbols of Christ's body and blood. So they are changed in respect of their use, being set apart for this holy use.

(3.) The signification of this sacramental action. It represents the Father's setting apart and consecrating his own Son to, and investing him in, the Mediatorial office. So Christ is said to be sealed, John vi. 27; sanctified and sent, chap. x. 36; and anointed to his office, Isa. lxi. 1. So in this a believer may see these three things. (1.) The Father calling Christ to the Mediatorial office, Heb. v. 4, 5; to do and to die for the perishing elect. (2.) The Son's accepting of the call, though he knew how hard the work was, Psal. xl. 7. (3.) Christ completely furnished for all the ends of his mediation, actually entered on the office. The Father blessed him, and sent him on the work, and he goes about it, Isa. lxi. 1.

3. Breaking of the bread, ver. 24. This is an essential rite of this sacrament, it being sometimes called by this very name, Acts xx. 7. It signifies the breaking of Christ's body for us, and consequently the shedding of the blood. In the sacrament there is not a word of pouring out the wine, though no doubt it was done: for the shedding of Christ's blood is sufficiently represented by breaking of his body. His body was broken to the shedding of his blood in his circumcision, in his soul-sufferings to the sweating of blood, in the plucking off his hair, Isa. l. 6. in his scourging, John xix. 1. crowning with thorns, and being smitten on the so crowned head, and in his crucifixion. And these his sufferings point to all the rest.

4. Giving of the bread, and then the wine, to the communicants, ver. 24, 25. This signifies Christ's giving himself, with all his benefits, to the worthy receiver, which is really done in the right use of this sacrament. This is plain from the words, *Take eat, &c.*

Secondly, There are signifying actions of the communicants.

1. Taking of the bread and wine with the hand, *ib.* This signifies their receiving a whole Christ, as offered in the word, and exhibited in the sacrament, closing with him by faith.

Eating and drinking. The Papists destroy this last as to the people, with-holding the cup from them, contrary to Christ's express command, Matth. xxvi. 27. 'Drink ye all of it.' These actions signify their feeding spiritually on Christ's body and blood, and uniting with him by faith.

These solemn sacramental actions not being accompanied with the

things signified, namely, the duties, make them a solemn mocking of God, which makes unworthy communicating so great a sin.

IV. I proceed to consider the particular uses and ends of this sacrament. Besides the general ends of this sacrament, common to the other also, to wit, (1.) To be a signifying sign, (2.) A sealing sign, (3.) An exhibiting sign, of Christ, and his benefits to believers; the particular ends of it are,

1. To be a memorial of the death of Christ till he come again, ver. 24. And this is to be considered two ways, (1.) As a memorial of it before the world, 1 Cor. xi. 26. as Joshua set up the twelve stones. Hereby we keep up a standard for Christ, and openly avouch his dying, and our faith of it. (2.) As a memorial before our own eyes, to revive, quicken, and preserve the affectionate remembrance of his death in our hearts. This respects Christ's honour and our duty.

2. To be a badge of and confirm our union and communion with Jesus Christ himself, 1 Cor. x. 16. What nearer union do we know on earth, than that betwixt us and our food, which incorporates with our substance? So this sacrament signifies, seals, and confirms our union and communion with Christ, as eating his flesh and drinking his blood. This respects our privilege.

To be a spiritual feast for our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. *Take eat, &c.* For therein believers are made partakers of his body and blood, since they are really exhibited in this ordinance to the faith of the believer. They partake of it not after a corporal and carnal manner, eating and drinking of that blessed body and blood with the mouths of their bodies, but spiritually and most really by faith. This respects our benefit.

4. *Lastly,* To be a public testimony of our communion with all saints, members of the same body, 1 Cor. x. 17. This respects the whole church of Christ, and the duties they owe to one another as members of the same body.

I shall now conclude this subject with an inference or two.

Inf. 1. Hence we may see the unparalleled goodness and bounty of a gracious God to his people, in covering a rich table for them in this wilderness, stored with the best meat and drink for their refreshment and nourishment in their pilgrimage-state, till they arrive at their father's house in the heavenly Canaan. With what an enlarged appetite ought they to come to and partake of this royal feast, designed only for those who are the King's friend's! They should feed upon it in the exercise of faith, love, desire, wonder, and joy. They should welcome every opportunity that presents itself, to feast

with their Redeemer, and give suitable reception to the entertainer, and the entertainment he provides.

2. This holy sacrament is children's bread. For none but gracious souls are capable of managing it to their own advantage. How shall they remember him who never knew him? declare their union with him, who are not divorced from their lusts and idols? eat his flesh and drink his blood, who have no appetite for spiritual meat and drink? honour him whom they are daily dishonouring by their profane lives and conversations? None but those who believe in Christ are fit guests for his table. Let all unbelievers be exhorted to receive and embrace Christ as their Saviour, to be clothed with the wedding-garment of his righteousness, and then they will be fit to sit at the King's table.

3. Prepare for this solemn ordinance, if God shall allow us the opportunity. Delay not a moment to give yourselves to the Lord, by receiving and embracing the Lord Jesus as your Saviour and Redeemer, and vouching him as such in his holy sacrament. Let the mortality* and sickness that so generally prevails, excite you to be more vigorous than ever in preparing for this solemn occasion, as perhaps it may be the last many of us may partake of. O then let us prepare to keep the feast in due manner!

* This discourse was preached in April, 1720, in which season a distemper as mortal as epidemical raged in the parish of Ettrick. All the author's family, himself only excepted, were seized with it: but, through the goodness of God, happily recovered. It is to this distemper that the author here alludes. And as a careful observance of the course of providence in general, with a singular dexterity in connecting particular providences, was one of the most distinguishing traits in this great man's character; so it was his invariable practice, to adapt his public preaching to the course of providence, and to make use of God's dispensations towards his own parish in particular, to back and enforce his exhortations to his flock. Add to this, that it was a practice of his, not unusual, to observe a congregational fast when any thing appeared uncommon in the course of providence, that his parishioners might be led to improve it properly; which, from his diary and the sermons then preached, still preserved, it appears, he did on the occasion alluded to in the inference. This fast was observed on the 27th of April, 1720. And as the sermons then delivered may be useful on like occasions, which are not unfrequent, they shall be inserted at the end of this volume. And the propriety of giving them a place in this work will appear from this consideration, That while the serious reader is employed in perusing a discourse treating of the nature of the Lord's supper, in which there is a lively representation of the death of Christ, our passover sacrificed for us, it will be profitable exercise for him at the same time to be thinking of his own death, and to be so numbering his days, that he may apply his heart unto wisdom.