Ettrick, August 15, 1722.

[Fast before the Sacrament.]

THE EVIL OF CHRIST'S FRIENDS LIFTING UP THEIR HEEL AGAINST HIM.

SERMON XIX.

Psalm xli. 9.

Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.

We are met this day, to cry for bread to our bodies, which the Lord is threatening to take from us; and to prepare ourselves for eating the bread for our souls, of which the Lord is giving us the comfortable prospect. In both cases it is fit for our humiliation, that we reflect on the use which we have formerly made of both, and we will find the text heaven's just complaint against us.

The Psalmist having complained of his enemies, that they longed for his death, contrived and spread lying stories about him, rejoiced in his affliction; doth in the text show the coperstone laid on the maltreatment with which he met in the world, by his particular friends turning abusive to him, Yea, mine own familiar friend, &c.

1. Here is the character of the person of whom he chiefly complains. It is twofold, First he was his confident, one with whom he had a particular intimacy, and in whom he trusted. The man of my peace, that is, one with whom he had no variance nor dissension: in whom he confided, that whosoever should be against him, that person would not, in whom he trusted as a special friend. It was thou, says he, Psal. lv. 13, 14. “A man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.”

He was secondly, his dependant, who did eat of my bread. He set him at his table, he gave him a livelihood, maintained him and so obliged him to his interest in duty and gratitude.

2. The treatment with which he had met from that person. He hath lifted up his heel against me. It is a metaphor from a horse kicking against the man that lays meat before him. He broke all the ties of generosity and gratitude, and treated him insolently. A case not rare in times of trial, but very uneasy to them that meet with it. “Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble, is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.
It is evident this was a typical event. And in the type it respects David and Ahithophel, or some other of David's unfaithful friends; in the Antitype it respects the Lord Jesus Christ and Judas. "I speak not of you all, said Jesus to his disciples, I know whom I have chosen; but, that the scripture may be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me." Here the first clause is left out, as not competent in the case of our Lord, who could not be deceived by any. However Judas was one of Christ's disciples, was trusted as steward of his family, and did eat his bread. I shall consider it, as it relates to the Lord Jesus Christ, typified by David.

_Doctrine_. It is a very grievous thing, that they who eat of the Lord's bread, should lift up the heel against him. There are two sorts of bread which are the Lord's bread.

1. Common bread, which they eat at their own table, for the nourishment of their bodies. Under this is comprehended all the necessaries and conveniences of this life; which in scripture are all represented by bread, because it is the most necessary, and most ordinary support of life.

This bread is the Lord's. He spreads the table for all the children of men, and all eat his bread; the rich and the poor are all maintained at his table of common providence. He is the proprietor and provisor of all the comforts of this life to men. He sits at the table head, and carves every one's portion, to some more and some less, according to his mere good pleasure. _Thou Lord openest thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing._ And at his beck, men must rise from the table, and the table is drawn, or more liberally, or sparingly covered. So common bread is his bread and all eat of it.

2. Sacred and sacramental bread, which men eat at the Lord's table for the nourishment of their souls. This is his bread in a peculiar manner. _This, said he, is my body, which is broken for you._ This table is covered only in the visible church, and the bread upon it is prepared only for his real friends. "Eat, O friends, says he, drink, yea, drink abundantly O beloved." And so it is a very singular privilege to eat of it, and by eating of it, men profess themselves in a most solemn manner to be his friends. And this table is not owing as the other to common providence, but to a special providence and the sufferings of Christ.

Now according to the occasion of our present purpose, two things are to be handled,

1. That it is a very grievous thing, that they who eat of the Lord's common bread should lift up their heel against him.
II. It is a very grievous thing that they who eat of the Lord's sacramental bread, should lift up their heel against him. Let us then,

I. Show that it is a very grievous thing that they who eat of the Lord's common bread should lift up their heel against him.

Here let us first show how such lift up their heel against him.

Secondly, Whence it is that they who eat this bread lift up their heel against him; and thirdly, the evil of this practice.

I. How do such lift up their heel against him?

1. When they do not serve him by whom they are maintained. "Because thou servest not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things." If we live by him, we should surely live for him. That men should have their bread daily at God's table, and yet not regard him, his will, laws, ways, work and interest in the world; is such a piece of contempt of God, as one can hardly, being in his right senses, be guilty of against a fellow-creature. "Now, because we have maintenance from the king's palace, and it was not meet for us to see the king's dishonour, therefore have we sent and certified to the king." Ahi-thopkel, one may suppose had given over eating at David's table, when thus he lifted up his heel against him. Yet such is the monstrous ingratitude and perverseness of men, that the more plentifully God lays to their hands, they in effect look on themselves as the less concerned to serve him. "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord."

2. When their lusts are fed and fattened by God's good benefits bestowed on them, so that instead of being led to repentance thereby, they are led farther away from God. "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked; thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness, then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation." Again, says God, "I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought. According to their pasture so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me." It is evident that this has been the use of the prosperity and plenty there has been for some years. Men's lust of pride, and covetousness, have been made to grow. Hence so much oppression, racking one another's rents, and taking tacks over other men's heads: the more they had, the more they would have. The lust of luxury and wantonness, appearing in so much whoredom and uncleanness, Ezek. xvi. 49, 50.

3. When the good things which the Lord lays to people's hands are wasted on their lusts, to satisfy their cravings. "Ye ask, and
receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." Thus the Lord is dishonoured, by the abusing of his good creatures to gluttony, drunkenness, prodigality, vanity, pride, and ambition; all which is to treat God after the manner adulteresses do their husbands, bestowing his tokens on lovers. This was Israel's sin. "For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal."

Lastly, When in any manner of way they live to the dishonour of God, their great benefactor, Rom. ii. 3,—6. Every wrong which men do to the glory of God, is a kicking against him that feeds them, for we have no bread, no necessaries or conveniences of life but those for which we are indebted to God.

II. We are to shew whence it is that they who eat this bread lift up their heel against him.

1. The fountain and spring head of it is the corruption of man's nature, which tends to make an ill use of every thing. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. As a vitiated stomach corrupts all the meat put into it; and as food given to a man in some cases strengthens his disease; so where the corruption of nature is not broken in the power of it, the more plentifully men are fed at the table of providence, they will readily be the worse. Lest I be full, says Agur, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Hence prosperity is the ruin of many, and is but like a sword in a mad man's hand.

2. The nearest cause of it is our forgetting our dependence on God for these things. Men consider not that it is God's bread that they eat, but are apt to think it is their own, as owing to their own industry. Therefore men sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense to their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous. "For she, says God, did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil." They consider not that they are accountable to God as stewards of what they have, and that the more they have laid to their hands the more is required of them, and their accounts will be the greater; but they look on themselves as lords of it. Wherefore say my people, we are lords; we will come no more unto thee. Let us consider,

III. The evil of this practice.

1. In itself, it is monstrous ingratitude. They are in it more brutish than the ox or ass. "Hear, O heavens; and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his masters crib; but Israel doth not know, my
people doth not consider.” God feeds them and they dishonour him; he loads them with benefits, and they load him with indignities; God sustains them, and they rise up against him. It is doing evil for good which is devilish. Such conduct is weak and foolish in a high degree. “Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish and unwise?” Why do men rise up against their benefactor, before they be able to support themselves without him? Every moment our bread, our life, our all is at his mercy. What madness is it then to forget our duty!

2. This conduct in its effects is very dismal. It provokes God to take away his bread from men, and leave them to pine away in want. “Therefore, says God, will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof.” Again, he says, “I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places, yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.” This is the cause of the threatening season. This is it that gives ground to fear, misery, and want, to be coming upon us: And the Lord can soon turn his hand upon the best of us. This conduct brings other miseries along with want and scarcity. Want alone is great misery, but it is to be feared that Scotland’s sins will heat the furnace seven times, and war and pestilence may come along with famine, if mercy prevent not. And this conduct will also aggravate men’s condemnation in another world.

Use 1. Let us be humbled this day, under the abused goodness of God; reflect with shame and blushing on our not serving the Lord according to his bounty to us; on the feeding and fattening our corrupt lusts with his benefits. Bewail the corruption of our nature, and forgetting our dependence on God; call ourselves beasts and fools for treating our God at this rate; and tremble before him for fear of righteous judgments.

2. Let us reform and amend our ways, and resolve through his grace, to use more conscientiously the good things of this life, put into our hands; strive to honour him, who has fed us all our life long; and use all his benefits whatsoever, for his service and glory in the world; that according as he does more for us than for others, we may do more for him; and be faithful stewards of what God has given, laying it out for the service of God, and the relief of the poor and needy.

We now proceed to the other view of the subject, namely,

II. To shew that it is a very precious thing, that they who eat of the Lord’s sacramental bread should lift up their heel against him.

The professed friends of Christ do this various ways.
1. By untenderness in their walk. Hence the necessary caution, 
walk circumspectly not as fools but as wise. O the untenderness of 
professors at this day, in their words and actions by reason of 
which religion is evil spoken of! What shreds of the language of 
Ashdod, is to be found with those, from whom one would expect 
the language of Canaan; in their minced oaths, flying out in passion, 
with swearing and cursing. How often are the hands like Esau's, 
where the voice is Jacob's? That simplicity and uprightness in 
dealings with men, that might be expected, is often found wanting. 
How many can now freely fall in with those practices, that at one 
time for a world they dared not to have ventured upon. While they 
have been at the communion table and seen how dear their redemption 
from sin was to Christ; they have thought to stand aloof from 
their sins altogether; but alas! they have forgotten him and them- 
selves too.

2. By returning to their openly profane courses. There are many 
in this our day of defection and apostasy, who cast off the mask of 
religion which they once wore, and pull off the vizar which they 
sometimes put on at communions, 2 Pet. ii. 20,—22 Beginning in 
the Spirit they end in the flesh, and bring up an ill report on our 
Lord's service, while they break his bands and cast his cords from 
them. They eat his bread and then turn their backs on him, and 
lift up the heel against him.

3. By carnality and worldliness in the ordinary frame of their 
hearts. Like Martha they are careful and troubled about many 
things, but forget the one thing needful. Lawful enjoyments, and 
necessary business, often blunt the edge of their affections towards 
God. Those who are sought for the kingdom, are often found hid 
among the stuff, and instead of coming away with Christ from Le- 
banon, are lying among the lions' dens.

4. By formality and listlessness in the duties of religion. "Be 
watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to 
die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God." How 
many of us have been thus pining away since the last communion. 
The Lord has got many a dead carcase of duties from us since that 
time, as our secret retirements and seats in the church, may witness 
against us. And is not this contempt enough to give other things 
the cream of our affections, and such dull and dead service to the 
living God.

5. By secret dalliance with some bosom idol, and tampering with 
some idol of jealousy, to the slighting of Christ. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." When engaging 
with Christ, we engaged against all sin; but have we not after vows
made enquiry? Have we not hankered after some of our former idols, till we have greedily embraced them again, and laid them in our bosom, though once devoted to a curse. Like the fly going about the candle, till its wings being burnt, it falls down.

6. By slighting opportunities of communions with God. A very little thing will make many make to themselves silent Sabbaths. Public ordinances are not prized as means of communion with God. Some are rarely to be found at secret duties, and many grudging the time for the morning sacrifice in their families, lest it hinder their work. Few that having their time in their own hand, will seek God occasionally, but limit themselves to the morning and evening though other opportunities occur.

7. By the heart losing the esteem that it once had of Christ. O how precious has Christ been to some, who now see little about him, for which he is to be desired. If we carry fair outwardly with men, they cannot see our hearts, losing the love of them, but our God looks to the heart, and marks its backslidings, saying, "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown."

8. By losing the delight they once had in communion with God, and wearying of converse with him in duties. "But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou has been weary of me, O Israel." This too much appears in the heartless service which he gets from us. "Ye said also, behold, what a weariness is it? And ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts." Where are they that count the Sabbath a delight, and long for the return of it? Nay, does not the false carnal heart misgive at the very news of the approach of a communion.

Lastly, By the habitual neglect of the most important duties of practical godliness, as, the life of faith, Gal. ii. 20. The way of improving Christ for sanctification, is an absolute mystery to many professors. The promises stand in the Bible, but are useless to them in the several steps of life; their comforts come from another quarter.

Another neglected duty is the habitual acknowledging of God in all our ways. The command is, "In all thy ways acknowledge him; and he shall direct thy paths." Little care to discern sin and duty in particular cases. Seldom sent to our knees to beg light of the Lord for our direction in particular cases.

Self examination is also neglected. Alas! for the habitual neglect of this duty. Many never look near it, but at a communion time. And it is to be feared many make but slight work of it then, and perhaps neglect it altogether. Surely our hearts are not so worthy to be trusted, but that there is much need to be often calling them to an account.
Mourning for our own sins, and the sins of the land. "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law." Alas! for the hardness of heart, and the private spirit with which we are plagued. O what wonder that there is such small measure of comforts at our communions, when mourning for our sins beforehand is so little in use. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." These thirty years and more there was not so great cause for mourning for the sins of the land, yet I doubt if in all that time, there was so little mourning for them.

Lastly, Commending Christ and religion to others, who are strangers to him, and labouring to propagate religion. "I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations, therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever." Many are at pains to corrupt others this day, and so are agents for Satan; but alas! few are agents for Christ. Amen.

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*Ettrick, May 28, 1721.*

[The Sabbath before the Communion.]

**PRESENT ROOM FOR SINNERS IN CHRIST'S HOUSE.**

**SERMON XX.**

**LUKE xiv. 22.**

*And yet there is room.*

In the first part of this verse, the servant reports that he had obeyed his master's second order, and that many had complied with the invitation. But though these had come in, he adds, *and yet there is room.* In Christ's house, there is much empty room for more guests. This is a comfortable word for those who have not yet complied with the invitations of the gospel; the doors are not yet shut, and such sinners may yet have access to Christ.

Our Lord hath often covered a table for us in the gospel, and no doubt some have answered the gospel call, and by faith sit down at the gospel feast. But while some have risen up at God's call, have not many sat still? While some have gone to the marriage, have not many staid in the tents of sin; when some have been pursuing the interest of their souls, others have been minding nothing, but the world and their lusts. We come yet to you, O slighters of