

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. XI. 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. xii. 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. xix. 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 *ἀγάται*, 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 precedency 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

* Slighting. in loc.

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. xxvi. 27, ' drink ye all of it ;' and Mark, chap. xiv. 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 i. 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 xxii. 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. iv. 5; the passover was instituted as a memorial of the Israelites' affliction,† 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' first-born, 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. xiii. 8, 9. At this passover it is supposed by some that they sang the song of Moses, Exod. xv., for the deliverance at the Red Sea, and after David's time the lxxviii. 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),

* Illyric. in 1 Cor. xi. 22.

† Kellie's Threefold Supper, p. 136.

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 ii. 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. iii. 1. The disciples were afraid to perish, Mat viii. 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. liii. 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. cxxix. 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. xii. 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. v. 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, undefiled,' Heb. vii. 26, and a 'lamb without spot,' 1 Peter i. 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

* Goodwin's Peacemaker, pp. 56, 57.

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. v. 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 ii. 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. i. 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. ix. 28 and x. 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.

* Dr Jackson.

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. xii. 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 first-born,' Zech. xii. 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 potsherds 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. liii. 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. i. 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 relents 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. v. 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. ii. 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 believingly 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. cx. 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. ii. 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. liii. 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. xii. 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. xii. 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. ix. 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. ix. 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. xxxiv. 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. xxxv. 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 ii. 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 ii. 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 xx. 7, 'And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came

* Mr Joseph Mede.

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. xliii. 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. xiii. 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 synagogue. 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 :

* Suarez, vol. xv. disp. lxix. sect. iv. p. 889.

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 xxii. 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. vi. 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 v. 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 vii. 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. xi. 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. l. 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. xi. 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. iv. 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 xxii. 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

* Vines on the Lord's Supper, p. 324.

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. xxvi. 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. x. 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

* Plin. lib. x. epist. xcvii.

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. xii. 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

* Amyrald, *Thes. Salmur.*

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 vi. 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. xii. 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 xxiv. 30, 31. Gladness attended the keeping of the passover, 2 Chron. xxx. 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 ii. 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 xvii. 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. ix. 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. xxii. 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 be 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. xxviii. 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 con-

fidence 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 xxii. 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. xi. 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 xvii. 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 v. 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. xxviii. 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. xxviii. 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 v. 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 xvii. 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 condemn 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. ix. 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 ii., which was his coming to them as he had promised: John xiv. 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 i. 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 endure them with power from on high, Luke xxiv. 49, Acts i. 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 i. 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 i. 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. i. 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. xxi. 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. xxi. 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, yer. 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. xxvi. 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 immovable, such as cannot be shaken: Heb. xii. 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. ii. 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

* Grot. in loc.

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. lxxxix. 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. xxviii. 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. xxviii. 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 xvii. 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. i. 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

* Rivet. in Genes. Exercit. xiii. p. 54.

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. iii. 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. iii. 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

* Zanch. in Hos. ii. 9, pp. 44-36.

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. vii. 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. vii. 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. vi. 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. v. 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 us 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.

* Holinsworth of the Spirit, p. 42.