

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

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

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

Let a man, ἑαυτὸν, ἐξέτασεν. An Hebraism for *every man*.* The apostle speaks it, saith Grotius, in regard of the disorders which were in the Corinthian church, in matter of discipline. Do not believe, because no censures are passed upon you, and the foundations of government are razed up in your church, that therefore you shall escape punishment for the contempt of those mysteries. No, God requires a worthy receiving, and will punish an unworthy one. So that it is an universal duty upon every Christian that desires to approach the Lord's table, to set upon a serious examination of his heart and life, which the excellency of the mystery in its own nature requires; an excellent ordinance requires a peculiar preparation: every man, not every man in the world, but every man in the church; not every heathen, but every man that pretends a right to the supper.

Examine himself, δοκιμαζέτω. Some understand the word of an artificial examination, as goldsmiths try metals by the touchstone, to discern between

* Estius.

what is true gold and silver, and what is counterfeit; but it is rather to be understood of a judicial trial, a trial of matter of fact, a trial of state, a trial of graces.

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

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

By this are excluded from this ordinance,

1. All persons incapable of performing this antecedent duty. Either in regard of natural inability, as children, infants, who though anciently in the time of Austin, were admitted to this ordinance, yet against the rule of the apostle, because by reason of the imperfection of their age, they were not capable of performing this necessary duty which was to precede. As children are not the subjects recipient of the supper, because they are not risen to a suitable degree of understanding, so neither are madmen, because they have lost that understanding they had, and the great mysteries of religion must not be exposed to contempt. And in regard of a negligent inability, as ignorant persons who neglect the means of knowledge, or improve them not to furnish themselves with a sufficient stock of knowledge to this end, so a man grown in age may be a child in understanding, and upon the same account is as incapable as a child of this ordinance; men, therefore, are unfit to come without a distinct knowledge of the doctrine of the gospel.

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

This command of self-examination evidenceth to us,

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

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

So let a man eat of this bread, and drink of this cup. So, not otherwise; it is a hedge planted against every intrusion. So, not without examination, and a fitness upon it. It is not an ordinance appointed for every man; there is a manifest distinction between persons capable of the word, and capable of the supper. Preaching is to be to every creature, every rational creature, Mark xvi. 15, 16. Unbelievers are capable of the word, believers only of the supper. The one is to bring men into the family, the other to nourish them after their entrance. If any man find himself in a state of

death, let him repent, believe, resolve a new and serious life, and so let him come, not else; for without those he can receive no fruit of spiritual grace in this ordinance.

So let him eat, so let him drink. The apostle* here obviates an error crept into the Romish church, the taking away the cup, a custom unknown in the purest and primitive times of Christianity. 'Let him eat and *drink*,' saith the apostle; 'Let him eat, but *not drink*,' saith the church of Rome. How soundly doth the Romish church accord with the primitive church! 'Drink ye all of this,' saith Christ, Matt. xxvi. 27; 'Let the people not touch the cup,' saith Rome. How valid with them is the authority of that Christ they profess to be the Son of God, and the supreme head of the church! The apostle, saith Estius, commands that none should partake without examination, but doth not command that every one should drink. I answer, either it is a command or a permission; it seems to be a command. As the apostle commands the self-trial, so he commands the end of that trial, which is drinking the cup as well as eating the bread. If he commands the trial, he commands much more the participation, because in enjoining the means, he enjoins the end. We are bound to the use of means only in order to the end of those means. If the apostle commands the eating the bread, he commands also the partaking of the cup, the word *so*, &c., being grammatically to be applied to both. It would be ridiculous to think that the apostle's language was in this strain: Let a man examine himself, and if he finds himself fit for this mystery, let him choose whether he will either eat or drink; he may do one or both if he will, or he may let it alone if he will. Who would dare to put such a sense upon the apostle's words? If *let* be a word of command in the former sentence, it is no less in the latter. If therefore, he commands examination as a means, he commands communion as the end; and communion much more, since the end is nobler than the means, and the means desirable for the sake of the end. But if it be a permission of the apostle, (for that it must be at least in the judgment of any man), that every one finding himself fit upon a trial, may drink of the cup as well as eat of the bread; what power on earth should deny that, which the inspired apostle and great doctor of the Gentiles permits? What pope or councils have authority to deprive any Christian of that which the founder of the Gentile church hath upon record allowed unto them? What reason can be alleged that it is not as proper for the church now, as it was for the church of the Corinthians? It was of use many centuries after the apostles' times, and is practised in all churches but that of Rome, wherein the denial of the cup was introduced about two hundred sixty odd years ago. What a blessing do we enjoy, to be freed from the antichristian yoke, and enjoy those privileges which the wickedness of men would deprive us of!

Bread and Cup. The doctrine of transubstantiation was not then known in the church.* The apostle calls it bread and cup three several times, vers. 26-28. Our reason, our sense, our sight, our taste, informs us it is bread and wine. The papists tell us, against reason and sense, that it is not bread, though it have the colour and taste of bread, but it is really the flesh and blood of Christ; it is changed and transmuted into his body and blood. It is indeed a sign of the body of Christ, a memorial of his broken, crucified body, and of his blood shed. The water in baptism represents the blood of Christ for the washing the soul, as the wine doth his blood for the nourishment and comforting the soul. Can any man say against his sense that it is not truly water? The church is called 'the body of Christ,' Eph.

* Daillé, *Melange des Sermons*, Sermon. xviii. p. 287, &c.

† Daillé, *Melange des Sermons*, Sermon. xxviii. p. 283, &c.

i. 22, 23. But have not those men and women that make up the church, distinct persons from the person of Christ, distinct substances from the body of Christ? Are they upon their union to Christ as his members changed into the nature of Christ, and corporally his members, as his hands, and feet, and fingers were his upon the earth, and are his now in heaven? Why should the apostle call it so often bread, if it were not bread, if the nature and substance of it were changed into another substance? The Scripture gives both the names of bread and wine, and the body and blood of Christ, to the elements. They cannot be both properly; it cannot be bread properly, and the body of Christ properly; one therefore must be figuratively understood. Our sense tells us, and the apostle informs us, that it is bread; therefore it is called the body of Christ by a figure, since it hath nothing of the qualities of the flesh, but the essential qualities of bread. Besides, had it been properly the body of Christ, the apostle had discoursed far below his intention, which was to correct the irreverence of the Corinthians in this ordinance, and to recommend to them the sober and venerable use of it. He had neglected the main argument to enforce his main design, had it been properly the body of Christ, which would have made their irreverence more unreasonable, and of the highest guilt imaginable. He had been imprudent to have neglected acquainting them that this was the substance of the body of Christ, his very flesh and blood, and had been unfaithful in his trust, and silent in the most considerable argument. This had been more for his present purpose; but there is not a syllable of any such thing.* The apostle might have argued in a higher manner from that, to convince them of the sinfulness of unworthy receiving; but he makes a manifest distinction between the bread and the cup, and between the body and blood of Christ: 'He that eats this bread and drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.' The bread and wine may be received unworthily, but the body and blood of Christ cannot be received unworthily. That implies a contradiction; for Christ assures us that 'every one that eats his flesh, and drinks his blood, hath eternal life,' John vi. 54. The papists say,† that because he that receives unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of Christ, therefore the body and blood of Christ is really in the sacrament. Saul's persecuting the disciples of Christ was, in the account of Christ, a persecuting of himself, Acts ix. 4. Was the body of Christ, glorified in heaven, really present in the bodies of his disciples persecuted by Saul? And when the apostle speaks (Heb. x. 29) of 'treading under foot the Son of God,' who is so foolish as to imagine that the Son of God was really in his person and body under the feet of those apostates, as the body of an enemy they had thrown down might be under their feet? The bread is called the body of Christ representatively and sacramentally. And it is an ingenious observation of a learned man,‡ that the word, 'This is my body,' refers to the supper in distinction from the passover, which Christ put an honourable end unto: Matt. xxvi. 26, 'As they were eating' (*i. e.*, as they were eating the paschal lamb), 'Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take eat, this is my body.' The paschal lamb was Christ's body in a figure, Exod. xii. 46. Speaking of the paschal lamb, 'Neither shall you break a bone thereof,' which is applied to Christ, who had not a bone of his body broken upon the cross, which John takes notice of as a 'fulfilling of the scripture,' John xix. 36. 'These

* Slichting in 1 Cor. xi. 27.

† Dailé, *Melange des Sermons*, Sermon xxviii. p. 297.

‡ Lightfoot, *Gleanings out of Exod.* sect. xviii.

things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken ;' which can refer to no other but the command about the paschal lamb in that place of Exodus. To this it is that the word *σῶμα* doth refer in the speech of our Saviour: '*This is my body.*' The passover had been a sacramental type of the body of Christ to the Jews. He was the Lamb of God, and he is 'our passover sacrificed for us.' But now Christ takes bread, and tells them, *This is my body* under the gospel. The paschal lamb shall no more be a representation of my body, as it hath been hitherto, but this shall be the sign of it. The bread upon this account is no more really the body of Christ than the paschal lamb was the body of Christ for so many ages, wherein it had represented it, which none of the Romanists will acknowledge to be transubstantiated into the body of Christ. They differed not in their representation, but only in the circumstance of time; one representing Christ to be slain, the other representing him crucified and slain already.

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

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

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

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

In the verses we see,

1. The antecedent duty, examination.

2. The subsequent duty, participation.

1. The antecedent duty, which is laid down,

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

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

(3.) The object of it, *Himself.*

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

* Daillé, *Melange des Sermons*, Sermon xxviii.

† Amyraut in loc.

2. The subsequent duty described in its two parts.

(1.) Eating the bread.

(2.) Drinking the cup.

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

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

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

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

Doctrine:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(1.) Faith is a necessary qualification, but unrenewed men have not faith. *Take, eat*, implies something spiritually to be done. There must be the hand of faith to receive and apply Christ, the mouth of faith to take in Christ. Natural men want both a spiritual hand and a spiritual mouth. An unbeliever receives the elements, not the life and spirit, of a sacrament. Faith is as much a condition requisite to a spiritual partaking of the sacrament, as to everlasting salvation. No salvation without believing, no taste of Christ without believing. Without faith, a man receives no more the body of Christ, than a chicken that should come into a room after, and pick up some fallen crumbs of bread from the ground, receives the body of Christ. The main qualification which makes sacramental bread spiritual food is wanting. We can no more turn the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ without faith, than a chemist can transmute one metal into another without the operation of fire. Christ dwells in the heart by faith only, Eph. iii. 17. The paschal lamb was not to be eaten till the posts of the house were sprinkled with the blood of it, Exod. xii. 7. The soul must be sprinkled with the blood of Christ by faith before it is fit to partake of this ordinance. As God doth not promise salvation absolutely to man, but upon condition of faith, so the sacrament doth not seal absolutely remission of sins to man, but upon the condition of believing. If there be no sealing therefore of the counterpart to God by performing the condition upon which God doth found his grants, there is no right to the seal. The promise is made to the penitent and believing sinner. What interest can he think to have in the seal, who hath not yet embraced the promise? It seals in particular to a person what the word proposeth in general upon such a condition. Pardon of sin is sealed to faith; there must be a performance of the condition on our part, before there can be any ratification by the seal to us. God seals no more than he promises, nor in any other manner than he promises. He promises only to faith, and therefore only seals to faith. Covenant graces therefore must be possessed and acted before covenant blessings can be ratified to us. As in covenants between man and man, the seal annexed to the writing seals no more than what is contained in the writing, and upon the acceptance and performance of such conditions, which

* Bolton of the Sacrament, pp. 87, 88.

are mentioned in the deed. Where there is not therefore an acceptance and performance of the conditions between the parties, the seal is no more than a blank, as to any real advantage. The sacrament is a seal *in actu primo*, in its own nature, but not *in actu secundo* to a wicked man; a faithless impenitent man hath not the beneficial fruit of it. It doth seal an unbeliever his damnation; for 'he that believes not shall be damned,' is part of the gospel, as well as 'he that believes shall be saved,' Mark xvi. 16. The question is not, whether the condition of faith may not be infused at the time of partaking by the extraordinary grace of God. The supper seems not to be a renewing, converting ordinance. That there must be faith, if there be any true fruit of it, is out of question, and that no unrenewed man hath, nor can have, any hopes he should be there inspired with so noble and necessary a grace; and therefore in that state he is not a capable subject of this ordinance. For such therefore to approach the Lord's table, is a mocking of God, to come to God to seal the remission of sin, when they have no mind to come up to the conditions wherewith that pardon is proposed; as it is for a man to come to a prince for pardon, who hath not yet laid down his arms against him. God in his seal testifies his approbation of the promises upon the conditions expressed; man in receiving testifies his approbation of the condition. He that hath no principle of approbation in him, mocks God in his approach. Faith is a necessary moral qualification to the receiving of the sacrament.

(2.) An unrenewed man is not in covenant, and therefore no capable subject. This follows upon the former. If he hath not faith, the condition of the covenant, he is not in covenant with God; and what right hath such an one to the seals? All men by nature are 'strangers to the covenant of promise, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,' Eph. ii. 12. What have they to do with the privilege of the free denizens of Israel? They that are not included in the deed have nothing to do with the seals of the conveyance; it is but fruitless wax to them, not a confirming seal. The covenant runs thus, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,' Cant. ii. 16; it is mutual between the parties. By covenanting with God, we become the Lord's: Ezek. xvi. 8, 'I entered into covenant with thee, saith the Lord, and thou becamest mine.' There is an appropriation of Christ to us, and a consecration of ourselves to Christ. What hath he to do with the ordinance, that wants the essentials of the covenant, who hath no valuation of Christ, no breathings after him, nor makes any dedication of himself to Christ? Those that never gave up themselves to God, receive no seal, but mere bread, mere wine. Unregenerate men are under a covenant of works. The covenant of works was made with the whole nature of man in Adam; the curse of the covenant seized upon all, Gal. iii. 10; the duties of that covenant are incumbent upon them who are under the curse of it; the violation of that covenant freed not man from his obligation to duty, though it brought upon him a new obligation to punishment. It is a privilege only of believers to be freed from the covenant of works; for they are 'not under the law, but under grace,' Rom. vi. 14. And 'there is no condemnation' only 'to them that are in Christ,' Rom. viii. 1. But where men do not believe, God deals with them upon the terms of the first covenant; he expects a full righteousness from them in their own persons, as being without Christ, and having not accepted of his blood upon his own terms, to take away the guilt of their sins. It is true, unregenerate men are under the offers of the covenant of grace, but not within actual acceptation of the covenant of grace. They enjoy some benefits of the covenant made with Christ; for they enjoy their lives, have worldly comforts, the fruits of God's

patience, all which are upon the account of the Mediator; and they have been entered in by baptism; yet since they practically disown the terms of that covenant, they put themselves back under a covenant of works, to stand upon their own bottom; and therefore refusing a consent to that covenant, the benefits of the covenant belong not to them. For if a seal (as some affirm) be of the same nature with an oath, whereby God confirms his promise, yet it is so only to the heirs of promise, not to those that are rejecters of the covenant and promise.

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

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

(5.) This ordinance is to be received by true Christians only. But renewed men only are such. Christianity is an inward powerful work, not a paint, an image. The *form* of godliness doth not constitute a man a Christian, but the *power* of it, 2 Tim. iii. 5. All natural men are 'without God in the world;' they are *ἀθεοί*, Eph. ii. 12, atheists, and may as well be called *ἄχριστοί*, not Christians, being 'without Christ.' There is not only required an assent of the understanding to make a man a Christian *in foro Dei*, but a consent of the will; there must be the accepting as well as the assenting part. It is not a bare knowledge, or the profession of religion, demonstrates a man a regenerate man, either in the presence of God, or to himself, though to others in the judgment of charity it doth. It is a work of the will that is required; he is no Christian who barely knows Christ to be king, priest,

and prophet, and cordially accepts him in none of those offices. Now this ordinance being the proper badge and privilege of Christians, none ought to partake of it but Christians. These evidences belong to the proper tenant, not to the counterfeit; to those that are his real friends, not to his lip friends and heart enemies. Freemen only have a right to the privileges of the city, and true Christians to the privileges of the church.

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

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

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

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

(3.) A perfect assurance is not required. It is said, 'Let a man examine himself' as to the frame and temper of his heart; not let him be assured of his being in Christ and of an happy state, but let him take a survey of his heart, and see that his frames are suitable, and so let him come. The supper supposeth men not to have a full assurance; it is a seal, and seals are for confirmation, where there may be matter of doubt. It is a question, whether a perfect assurance be in the world. As grace is not perfect, but hath its ebbs and floods, so hath assurance. As faith is mixed with unbelief, so is assurance with doubtings. As the soul saith, 'Lord, I believe; help my unbelief,' so it hath often said, Lord, I hope; help my doubts. The needle stands right to the North Pole, but not without its tremblings. In the greatest doubtings, we should have recourse to those sparklings and sprightly leaps of our souls, when we found the first touches upon our hearts, and stay ourselves upon those presents we had in the day of our espousals.

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

By this ignorance we are not to understand,

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

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

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

Christ's being in the world, and in several ages of the world, where the means have been less, would be more acceptable than a greater knowledge now, disproportioned to the means of knowing.

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

(5.) A knowledge of the nature and ends of the ordinance. The Lord's body cannot otherwise be discerned, ver. 29. The mysteries of the ordinance would be as Arabic letters to him that understands not the meaning of them. The master of the family was to teach the use and ends of the pass-over to the receiver, and all that were present were to understand the ground of the first institution, and the nature of the ordinance. The supper being a contract between God and man, a man must understand the nature and terms of that covenant, and also the nature and end of the seal ; he cannot else be a worthy contractor with God. The body of the Lord cannot be discerned without an understanding of the nature of the ordinance, and the nature of the ordinance cannot be understood without a knowledge of those principles of religion upon which it is built.

Ignorant persons are not fit to come.

(1.) They are incapable of performing the duties requisite. The antecedent duty of self-examination enjoined by the apostle as essentially necessary, ' So let him eat,' not otherwise. Those therefore that are unskilful in this work, by reason of their ignorance of the universal depravation of nature, the obnoxiousness of all men to the curse of the law, and the impossibility of avoiding the terrors of it without an interest in that mediator, in and by the way of his own appointment, are incapable of performing this duty, and so unfit subjects for this ordinance. They cannot repent, for they have no spiritual eye to discover their own filthiness. The prodigal never ' came to himself ' till his understanding was enlightened, Luke xv. 17. By

the same ground that infants and children are excluded (who were anciently admitted to this ordinance), because of their defect of reason, not being able to perform this duty, ignorant persons are to be excluded. In them there is a natural, in ignorant persons a moral, inability, and under means of grace a sinful indisposition. There is as much reason for children in age to partake of this ordinance as for children in understanding. Both have a want of knowledge in those things which are of a concern to a right participation of this ordinance; nor can they perform the concomitant duties. Those who understand not the nature and ends of the death of Christ, cannot commemorate it in a right manner. All our service of God ought to be a reasonable service; not only as having the highest reason for a motive to urge it, but in regard of the *modus*, the manner of doing it. It must be done with an exercise of reason. We must serve God as Christians; but in our service we must not put off the nature of man. The right manner of partaking of this supper consists in repentance of sin, and faith in Christ; what repentance can there be for sin, when the evil of sin and the deplorable consequents of it are not known? What faith can there be in one ignorant of the cause and ends of the death of Christ? They cannot come with desires suitable, that know nothing of their own wants. They who know not themselves empty, cannot desire spiritual fulness; who know not themselves sick, cannot desire spiritual cordials; who know not themselves under the curse of the law, cannot desire a satisfying Christ; they have no sense of that for which his body was bruised, wounded, and crucified. Nor can they perform the subsequent duties, which are a walking in holiness; there is no foundation in blindness for any regular walk.

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

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

(4.) Ignorant persons are always under the command of some secret lust. Ignorance itself is a great sin. The not knowing what we may easily know, since it is revealed, is so far from excusing that it rather aggravates; be-

* Ignorantis non est consensus.

cause it is not a defect in the faculty itself (as in the case of madmen), but a defect in the improvement of the faculty, and such a defect as is voluntary, which man hath a power to remove. It stifles the notion of God rather than is dispelled by it: John i. 5, 'The darkness comprehendeth it not,' *i. e.* the light. Besides the evil of its own nature, it is the ground of all wickedness. If they are only 'filled with goodness' that are filled with knowledge, Rom. xv. 14, they must be filled with evil that are filled with ignorance. Where the mind is dark, the motion must needs be irregular. The ignorance contracted by the fall hath been the root of all the corrupt inclinations and mis-carriages in Adam's posterity. Ignorance first brought lust into fashion, and keeps up the mode: 1 Peter i. 14, 'Not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in your ignorance.' A fashion, course, and form of sin renders men unfit guests for the Lord's table.

And this leads to the third proposition.

3. Proposition. Men guilty of a course of sin, though secret and unknown to others, are unfit for this ordinance. This injunction, 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him come,' bars out such. By examination is not to be meant a bare act of examination, but that which ought to be consequent upon it; not let a man examine himself, and in whatsoever posture he finds his soul let him come; no, let him examine himself to find out the nest of vipers in his soul which hiss against Christ, and cast them out. Let him perform the acts consonant to that state wherein, upon inquiry, he finds himself. What man would be so wretched as to make this conclusion: I am a swine, a beast, I live in such and such sins unrepented of, yet I have performed my duty, I have examined myself, which is all the apostle requires of me, and I rest in this act; nothing more is enjoined me. Is there no end of this act? All things are commanded, not for themselves, but for some end. The apostle enjoins it not to make the sacrament a license for sin, or to encourage the wearing of Christ's livery to keep men's lusts warm. Every secret gross sinner stands anathematised both by law and gospel; the law curseth him because of his sin, and the gospel condemns him because of his unbelief. What excludes a man from admission when it is known to others, excommunicates him in his own conscience when it is only known to himself. All things in the ordinance bespeak purity; the place was fitted for the first institution, the soul must be fitted for the participation; the place was trimmed for Christ's entertainment, the heart must be trimmed for his reception. The grave of Christ was free from corruption; no putrefied body was ever lodged there; the soul must be free from any affection to filth. Though Christ had not a hole where to lay his head, he will not have a sty or a swine-trough wherein to lay his body. His humanity is advanced above the highest heavens, and the signs of it are not to be received by an earthly and polluted soul. Such ought not to approach, though they seem to have a repentance, till it appears that their repentance is serious and thorough. Those that have been stained with some secret gross crime ought not to approach upon a sudden and late begun contrition.* To mourn one day and come to this ordinance the next, argues but little care to dispose themselves for so great an institution. A soul glutted with sin, though beginning to vomit it up, cannot so suddenly gain a spiritual taste for the body of Christ. How many have had sudden qualms, and discharged themselves of some sins the better to swallow more! Imaginations of repentance are not always realities. He that offends another, and saith he is sorry for it, and a short time after offends again, affords no reason to believe that he is a penitent in earnest.

* Cajetan. Sum., p. 59.

Quest. What sins debar a man from this ordinance ?

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

(2.) But a course in wilful and frequent breaches of a known command debars a man. That which is against the principal intent of the command, and the main office it requires of us, such as omissions of known duties. When family duties are omitted, and the house, which should be as a little church, is rather a synagogue of Satan ; when there is a total or frequent omission of secret prayer, which disowns that worship of God which is due to him by the light of nature, and is the note of a wicked man. ' Will he always call upon God ? ' Job xxvii. 10. Those that forget Christ all the week are not likely to be devout in the remembrance of him upon a Sabbath. And such sins of commission as are enumerated, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, ' fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners,' are a bar if not repented of, 2 Cor. xii. 21. The heart that is an habitation of any of those kinds of devils is not a member of Christ, and can bring nothing but a mystery of iniquity to fit it to partake of the mysteries of Christ. This is a blaspheming Christ in the heart, while he is received with the hands ; like the reviling thief that hung beside him on the cross, not like a loving or beloved disciple that looks upon him by faith while he is bleeding to death. These have no right till their guilt be unbound by repentance and faith.

Such ought not to meddle with this ordinance.

[1.] Moral uncleanness is a greater bar than ceremonial. If a man were defiled with a dead carcase, he was to forbear eating the passover, Num. ix. 6. If any man, unclean by the touch of a dead body, came into the tabernacle, he defiled it, and was threatened with a cutting off from Israel, Num. xix. 13. How much more ought they to abstain from the table of the Lord, that are not only defiled, but dead, who bear a dead putrefied soul in a living body ? 1 Tim. v. 6, ' She that lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.' If ceremonial uncleanness, without any mixture of a moral, were hateful to God, much more hateful to him is moral uncleanness. The worship of God is more precious than to be sacrilegiously invaded by impenitent

sinners; every work of the hands, and that which is offered is unclean, as well as when offered by one that had touched the dead, Hag. ii. 13, 14. Lepers who had a natural disease were not to come into the congregation, that they might not defile the place wherein the Lord dwelt, Lev. xiii. 46, Num. v. 2, much less ought they to approach this ordinance, where the Lord is solemnly present as master of the feast, who have running sores, and stink above ground in the nostrils of God. If for those outward uncleannesses men were to abstain from those institutions which the apostle calls 'worldly rudiments' and 'carnal ordinances,' they are too foul guests for so rich a feast, who can bring nothing else but the loathsome exhalations of hell to spiritual ordinances. The livery of the devil becomes not the table of the Lord.

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

[3.] Such cannot in that state perform the duties requisite in this ordinance. Faith is a necessary qualification; but a denial of subjection to Christ is an evidence of a gross infidelity. Practices are the clearest indexes of faith or unbelief; evil works deny God in his promises and precepts. If any man tells you he believes that to be fire which is before him, and that it will burn, and yet wilfully runs into it, you must either conclude he hath no assent to what he doth affirm, or else that he is mad, and hath a mind to destroy himself. And those that believe neither the promise nor command of the word, will not be induced to believe it because of the seal, when they give no credit to the writing. Repentance is necessary to this ordinance, but this and a course of sin are utterly inconsistent: repentance is a 'breaking off iniquity by righteousness,' Dan. iv. 27, and a secret sinner breaketh off righteousness by iniquity. An unwearied practice manifests a fixed resolution, but repentance is a change of the purpose of the heart, not to

commit the same iniquity again, nor any other : Job xxxiv. 32, 'If I have done iniquity, I will do no more.' A purpose of sin cannot consist with repentance, nor is a flashy purpose of repenting a true remorse. A bird may soar high towards heaven, and presently descend as low as earth ; as Saul resolved not to persecute David, but was quickly bent upon his old game. He cannot have a sense of sin, which is a necessary qualification to a worthy receiving : he understands not, believes not the vast breach sin hath made between God and the world, who every day is resolved to make it wider. He is not in the least truly affected with the greatness of that God against whom he sins, with the kindness of that Christ whom he freshly murders, the curse of the law which he hath incurred, nor the wrath of God which he hath provoked. Where any one sin is loved, that soul hath not a sense of the justice of God against it, or the unexpressible sufferings of Christ for it ; and can such a man have a fundamental right, who hath not a grain of the fundamental graces, or celebrate in a right manner the memorial of Christ, who walks every day as if the devil were his redeemer ?

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

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

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

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

I will grant first,

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

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

(3.) I do not deny but that it is possible, that a man that hath some dispositions and previous preparations to grace, may have the first renewing

* Trap on Cant. vii. 7.

grace bestowed upon him at the supper.* For an unregenerate man may by a serious precedent examination rake into his own heart and life, search into his state how matters stand between God and his own soul, whereupon follow some convictions, contrition, and disaffection to his darling lust, and some resolutions against it; and God may come in with converting grace at the sacrament, and make an utter divorce between the soul and the sin, and the new name may be given together with the manna, and grace infused at that instant. Where there are such dispositions to the receiving a new form, why may it not be introduced at that time as well as another? Yet if any such effect be, I should rather ascribe it to the word attending the signs, than to the signs themselves, or the act of receiving; the beginning of grace being the proper end of the word, and not of the supper.

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

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

(1.) If baptism be not a converting ordinance, much less is this of the supper. That supposeth faith in the adult person, and the profession of faith in the parent for the child. The Jews did not admit a proselyte to circumcision before he was instructed in the law; then upon his own profession he was admitted to the seal, and his children upon the profession of the parent; and the apostle admitted no adult persons to baptism but upon their profession of Christianity. Circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, Rom. iv. 11; it was a 'seal of the righteousness of faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised.' The circumcision at the first institution supposed faith in the party. Baptism hath the same relation, much more the supper; a seal supposeth something to be sealed. If it be appointed

* This is Suarez his opinion.

for ratifying the covenant and promises of it to the receiving soul, it supposeth that condition in the receiver which the covenant requires, otherwise it seals nothing. Anciently they did admit the baptized person immediately to the supper, though they kept them long in instruction before they administered the former.

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

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

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

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

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

* Suarez somewhat enlarged.

But some will conclude the approach of secret sinners from Judas his partaking of this ordinance ; but that is a question. Some think Judas did receive, others conclude he did not, and that he went out before the supper. Zanchy thinks it thwarts the story of St John's Gospel ; Beza gathers that he was not there from John xiii. 30, 'He then having received the sop, went immediately out,' εὐθὺς ἔξῃλθεν, which was at the end of the second supper, after which Christ instituted the sacred supper. The sop was properly a part of the rite belonging to the paschal lamb, dipped in the sauce of bitter herbs, which the master of the family reached to every guest, Exod. xii. But the sacramental bread was broken, not dipped in any liquor. Gomarus* hath this argument: Christ (Luke xxii. 19, 20) tells them his body was given for them, and his blood shed for them, without making any exception of Judas, which it is likely he would if he had been present, as he did in his prayer afterwards, John xvii. Judas had no interest in the body and blood of Christ for remission of sin ; his sins could not be remitted, neither could he have any profit by the body and blood of Christ, for Christ calls him, John xvii. 12, 'the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.' And consider, Judas was in hell before Christ suffered death, for he hanged himself as soon as ever he heard Christ was condemned, and Christ's blood could not be shed for him any more than for any other in hell. It is not likely that Christ, who never admitted Judas to the choicest familiarities, should admit him to this standing token of his love. When he whipped buyers and sellers out of the temple, he would scarce suffer a devil to be partaker of his body and blood. If he would not pray for Judas, it is not likely he would give the symbols of his body and blood to Judas. As to that, Luke xxii. 21, 'The hand of him that betrays me is with me on the table ;' being put after the relation of the supper, it is no argument for Judas his receiving it ; for the evangelists do not observe always in their relations the order of things as they were done. Mark (chap. xiv. 23, 24) relates the passage of the supper as if the words of institution were delivered after they had drunk the wine and ate the bread without knowing to what end, and the institution had been after their participation of it. According to the other evangelists, this speech concerning Judas was before the institution, Mat. xxvi. 21, &c. ; Mark. xiv. 19, &c. But suppose Judas did partake of the supper, what encouragement is it to a secret sinner at any time to venture upon it, when he may fear Judas his reward, and a greater power of the devil and his lusts over him.

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

Doct. 2. It is every man's duty solemnly and seriously to examine himself about his interest in Christ, his habitual grace, his actual right and fitness for the Lord's Supper before his approach to it. It is not the first time of our partaking, but every time, 'so let him come.' Now, the second and third time as well as before; great preparations are necessary for great duties. The particle *so* bars men from coming without this previous work. Let him come in such a manner; if he neglects this self-examination, let him not venture upon this great mystery. Thus, Ps. xxvi. 6, 'I will wash my hands in innocency, so will I compass thy altar, O Lord,' alluding to the ancient custom of testifying the purity of their souls by the cleansing their hands, or to the washings used before sacrifices; or if we take Ambrose his gloss, I will with a purity of heart embrace the Messiah, signified both by the altar and sacrifice. 'So will I compass thy altar;' without such an inward purification, I dare not presume upon an approach unto it. There ought to be an inspection into ourselves, that there may be nothing disagreeable to the Master of the feast, or unworthy of his honour. If a care of our garb and carriage be necessary in our approach to the table of an earthly prince, much more when we come to the table of the Lord, where the mighty Sovereign of heaven invites us to feed upon those dainties which are the delight of his heart and the nourishment of our souls, the joy of heaven, and ought to be the pleasure of earth. Christ prepared himself for his sufferings; he examined his own strength before he engaged, had the assurances, security, and accepting testimony of his Father before he entered upon them, so that he had nothing to do but to suffer when he came to it; and we should have nothing to do but to feast with God when we approach to him to commemorate those sufferings. Adam's body was prepared by God before the inbreathing of a living soul, and our souls must be prepared before the entrance of a quickening Saviour. If we take physic, we prepare our bodies, that the medicine may have the freer and surer operation; when we sit down at our ordinary meals, we would have prepared stomachs. Shall we prepare vessels for our own service, and bring unprepared hearts to the table of the Lord? Would not we have meat but in a clean dish, and shall we lay the eternal food, the flesh and blood of Christ, in miry souls? Every ordinance hath a preparative; meditation is to usher in prayer, prayer is to sanctify the word, the word and prayer to sanctify other ordinances. This institution hath examination for its harbinger to prepare the way of its access to us, and our access to it.

1. This self-examination or preparation is necessary. God required it in all duties. Purification went before sacrificing. The preparation and examination of themselves as to ceremonial uncleanness was strict before the passover, which was inferior to this ordinance, as the legal state was to the evangelical. The mercy to be now remembered is greater, the duties of preparation and devotion ought not to be less. The death of Christ was then represented to be suffered in time, it is now represented both as suffered and accepted. The clog of legal administrations is knocked off by the gospel, but not the holiness, which is both the beauty of the soul and an ornament of divine institutions. The meanest vessel belonging to the sanctuary, the shovels, basins, flesh-hooks, and fire-pans, were not to be used without preparation by a holy oil, Exod. xl. 9-11. Much more ought we to be sanctified for the participation of the symbols of that body which was crucified for us on earth, and glorified for us in heaven. The circumstances at the institution require it; the room wherein it was instituted was prepared, Mark xiv. 15. Christ washed his disciples' feet before the institution, John xiii. 5. We must imitate him, and wash our souls before the

participation. The Spirit's sanctification gives a right to the benefits purchased by the blood of Christ. The heart, which is a vessel to receive the body of Christ, ought to be prepared, as well as the room wherein he first appointed and celebrated the symbols of it, or the grave, wherein his body was to be awhile enshrined. His body in the sacrament must be wrapped in a clean soul, as well as his body by Joseph in clean linen. Our Saviour entered not upon his offices without preparation by prayer and fasting, Mat. iv. 12, Mat. xxvi. 36, to set us a pattern of the like practice before any great undertaking. If men were to sanctify themselves before they came to the sacrifice,—1 Sam. xvi. 5, 'Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice,'—and eat of the part appointed for the feast, there is as much reason for preparation for the commemoration of the greatest sacrifice that ever was, the substance of all those that were offered before it. This cannot be without a previous examination of the quality and measures of the habitual grace in us, and what filth remains to be purged out.

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

(2.) It is necessary for the exciting of grace. That the soul may be excited before; that there may not be an ebb in our affections when there is a flood of our Saviour's blood; that our stomachs may not fail us in the presence of a full banquet; that we may not have little thoughts in the presence of great and adorable objects. The paschal lamb was not to be eaten boiled, but roasted, Exod. xii. 8, 9. The Jews say they were not to baste it with water, but with wine or oil, both inflaming, to shew indeed the mighty agonies and scorching sufferings of Christ; perhaps, also, to mind us of the warm and glowing frame our hearts were to be in at the eating of our passover sacrificed for us, that we may have fervent affections, without any chillness to damp our heat. To think or speak of the work of redemption without a suitable devotion is unworthy of any that bears a Christian badge, much more to have slight and creeping affections, when the great mysteries of it, with all the parts, are presented before our eyes. An actual exercise of grace is necessary to the concocting this spiritual food,

as an actual excitation by nature of that vitriol humour, or natural heat, or whatsoever other cause of concoction it is for the preparing our bodily food to be nourishing to the members. To give meat to one in a swoon is all one as to put meat into the mouth of a dead man; the vitals in one are extinct, in the other oppressed and languishing, and unable to perform their office. This excitation and exercise cannot conveniently be without an antecedent preparation and examination. In the case of the body, it is the work of nature; in the case of the soul, it is the act of the mind and will quickened by grace. The excitation of grace in the soul is not as natural as that of the concoctive faculty in the body, which is done without any act of our mind, as our breathing is. This will revive graces, which seem to lie buried under ashes, into a flame, and rouse up holy principles that lay dormant in a bed of laziness.

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

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

* Ovid Fast. lib. v.

ver. 30, 32, 'For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.' God intending by this means to reduce them to their duty, and a reverence conformable to his institution, he chastised them with the goodness of a father, that he might not condemn them with the rigours of a judge. Uzziah, a good king, as well as Uzzah, a good man, may be too bold with holy things, and may suffer a temporal punishment, while freed from an eternal judgment. Every man is his own governor, and ought to ride circuit in his soul to make inquisition, and set up a tribunal in his own bosom, and cite himself before it. We must not only examine whether we have a wedding-garment, but also whether it be well kept and brushed; whether no moths be got into it, no new spots dashed upon it. A rich robe may be sometimes so besmeared and daubed with mire, that none of the gold-lace upon it may be visible, till cleansed. Graces are to be purified, as well as sins purged out; grace, as well as metal, for want of rubbing and exercise, will gather rust. The act of grace is as necessary to a partaking the fruit of this ordinance, as the habit of grace is to a right to glory. There being, therefore, to be a special exercise of faith, repentance, affection to Christ, these graces are to be awakened and quickened by a self-reflection. But of this I have spoke before.

I shall only mention two things.

1. Let a man examine himself, as to his sentiments concerning the nature of the institution. The apostle intimates it in the motive he urgeth to press this examination: ver. 29, 'For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.' Where he chargeth the not discerning the Lord's body, upon the neglect of this.* We must consider what an holy and glorious use those elements are destined to, and the glorious body of our Lord, which they represent, that we may not violate in the signs the honour due to his majesty. To discern the Lord's body, is to consider it as the body of the Son of God,† of God blessed for ever, the sovereign Lord of the whole world, the body of the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world, a miracle of goodness, the pavilion of the Sun of righteousness, the pledge of believers entering into heaven, a body purer than the heavens in holiness, and higher than the heavens in glory. Consider the design of this body: It was to be a sacrifice for the world, an expiation of sin, the ligature of the church to God; it hath been loaded with our crimes, and borne the punishment of our sins upon the cross; it hath undergone the chastisement of our peace; it hath been the purchase of our peace, the price of our liberty, the cause of our life; it bowed down upon the cross to purchase our happiness, and mounted up to heaven to insure it to us, and possess it for us. The death of this body was of universal influence to expiate our sins, the resurrection of this body was for the justification of our persons; it sunk into the grave loaden with our guilt, it rose out of the grave and ascended to heaven to be invested with an inconceivable immortality for our consolation. Angels cannot behold it without admiring our happiness, God cannot behold it without wiping out the sins of a believer, upon the account of the sufferings it underwent; he cannot cast his eye upon it without remembering what, and for what it suffered. It is this body crucified, but now glorified, this Christ dying, but now living for ever, which the elements represent to us, and that as a sacrifice, not as suffering an ordinary death. We must therefore discern the gift God presents us with, as greater than if

* Amyraut Paraphr.

† Dailé Melange des Sermons, Serm. xxviii. pp. 300-302, somewhat changed, but imitated.

he gave us the whole world, since the Creator, who infinitely surpasseth the creature, gives us his Son, and himself in his Son. How can we have full and clear sentiments of this, without rousing up our minds, fixing our considerations upon it, and reflecting upon ourselves, whether we understand the nature of those mysteries, the design of the death of his body, and the glorious end of its resurrection? We cannot, without it, have a faith, love, and devotion answerable to the greatness of the things which our Saviour hath done and suffered in this body for us.

2. Let a man examine himself what soil he hath contracted since the last time he was with God; whether the interest of God hath prevailed in our hearts above the interest of the flesh, or whether some secret lust hath not spread its wing and increased its empire, which may have strength to waylay the benefits we expect, and be as a wall of separation between the supplies of God and the wants of our hearts. We must enquire what violations there have been of the covenant we made before, and bewail them: he is not fit to renew a covenant with God who is careless of the former breaches of it. Dust will be contracted in a house if it be not daily swept: our houses are swept and cleansed more solemnly before the coming of invited guests. Do we invite Christ into our souls, and shall we not examine every corner, and search out the dirt and cobwebs which may be offensive to him? The Spirit of Christ is a dove, and doves love clean places. The Jews, before the passover, searched every hole and chink with a candle for any leaven that might lie hid, and threw it away as a thing to be abominated. Have we not much reason to inquire what old leaven hath swelled up our souls, find it out, and manifest our hatred of it? whether we have not stored up some new nails, new spears, new gall which may afflict our Saviour, and be as bitter to him as the crucifixion; whether anything hath crept in to impair our affections to God. The nature of the ordinance requires this inquisition. Filth is not fit for a feast. We look what dirt there is upon our hands before we take what is necessary for our ordinary repast. A Belial in the heart, and Christ at a banquet, have no alliance. A carelessness whether we are defiled or no is inconsistent with this feast; and if any trash be got into our stomachs, it may hinder our spiritual appetite, and a hearty feeding upon Christ. Let that be the matter then of a good man's inquiry, whether he hath kept to God as his sovereign, to Christ as his Saviour, and to the Holy Ghost as his comforter; whether grace hath attained more strength and sin more weakness; whether the soul be more straitly or loosely within the bonds of the covenant. And indeed true grace is like the angel of God's presence, which conducted the Israelites to Canaan; it will not countenance any intruding lust, or pardon any iniquity, though it will beg God's pardon for it. These two inquiries are necessary to every man that hath habitual grace and fitness for this ordinance.

But,

3. We should enquire whether we have habitual grace or no; whether there be those uniting glowing graces,* faith and love. He that comes to the supper without faith, saith good Mr Tindall, is like a man that thinks to quench his thirst by sucking the ale-bowl. It is but a piece of bread we receive without faith, the symbol of the body of Christ without the soul and Spirit of Christ; and so we have no more advantage by the ordinance than the Jews which crucified Christ would have had, if they had eaten of his flesh and drunk of the blood which then issued from his body, or than the beasts had which drank of the rock (which typified Christ) as well as the congregation, Num. xx. 11 1 Cor. x. 4, which had no more benefit by it than if

* As D. Preston calls them.

they had drunk of any ordinary water. There must be an inward grace as well as an outward ordinance to have a spiritual benefit. Plagues come out of the temple, Rev. xv. 7, great judgments from ordinances carelessly and sinfully used. The word is the savour of death unto some, as well as the savour of life to others. Habitual grace there must be ; a perfection of grace is not required ; if so, then none but the innocent angels and glorified saints were fit guests. The perfectest soul indeed is not too good a vessel to receive the Lord of life ; but God requires only of us a disposition of heart suitable to the design of the ordinance : a deep sense of our misery, a lively sorrow for our crimes, a hearty embracing his Son, a strong resolution to be at enmity with sin, and at peace with God. It must be a diligent trial, as we would try metals by the fire. We may easily be deceived, and think that to be the echo of the Spirit, which is but the hissing of the serpent,* and the whispers of Satan.

The great grace which you should search for is faith.

We shall lay down some signs of it :

1. Negatively.

2. Positively.

1. Negatively.

(1.) Faith is not a general acceptance of Christ or profession of him. Many men's faith is built only upon human tradition, education, or the laws of a nation. Men's living in a Christian commonwealth, and owning the Christian religion upon a secular account, is no evidence of faith, because what is entertained upon the score of interest, will, upon the change of interest, be as soon cashiered as it was embraced. The ten tribes in Solomon's time professed the legal and temple worship ; but after Jeroboam had set up the calves at Dan and Bethel, they were as superstitious in the observing of them, which is evident by the complaints of the prophets, especially of Hosea, throughout his whole Prophecy. They were not forced to it so much by Jeroboam as willingly revolted from God : Hosea v. 11, ' They willingly walked after the commandment,' i.e. after the commandment to worship the calves. So easily are the vulgar induced to step into the religion of authority, and make anything a God that their ruler would have so, though it be a calf. Faith is an act of the freest choice, not a disposition which is derived by inheritance and succession from generation to generation, as it is with people who will be of the same ways of their fathers ; but it is a free election of Christ upon a sight of his excellency.

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

* Culverwell.

doctrine, viz. if he asserts that Christ is come in the flesh, is the true Messiah, the Son of God, and righteous. And the other place speaks of the gifts of the Spirit, not of the inward grace: the assenting to Christ that he is Lord is a gift of the Spirit by a common illumination. And indeed in that age, an assent to a new, vilified, and persecuted doctrine, was a greater testimony of faith than the highest external professions can be in the age wherein we live. An assent is the first step, but if it be not an approving, efficacious assent that overpowers the will, it is no more than a condemned devil may have. 'Putting on Christ,' Rom. xiii. 14; 'leaning upon God,' Isa. i. 10; believing in Christ implies more than a naked assent, which is expressed well enough by a believing God or believing Christ.

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

(4.) Nor is it a presumptuous persuasion of a secure and happy state. Many men's faith is a mere presumption. They take it for granted that they have faith, feed themselves with an empty conceit, without making an exact scrutiny, and bringing it to the touchstone of the word to try whether it be faith of the right kind. If faith were a persuasion of a man's salvation, then all that have not this persuasion are not believers; and then many a gracious pilgrim in this world, who have lived many years without it, or with a few glimmerings of hope, would be excluded from that rank wherein he stands in the account of God. If it were only a persuasion, none of the 'children of the kingdom' (as Christ calls them, Mat. viii. 12, those that live within the pale of the church) can be cast into utter darkness. For the command of believing would be no more than the commanding a man to be persuaded that his sins are pardoned, which would be the easiest thing in the world to a carnal heart. And God would command an untruth contrary to his word, if he commanded us to believe that our sins are pardoned, before we have those qualifications which are by the word requisite to the passing a pardon to us. Faith is not an assurance, much less a common persuasion. Faith is our victory, assurance the triumph; faith is an act of the whole soul, assurance of the mind only; faith consists in a direct act, assurance in a reflex act. Faith is not a proud persuasion, for then one in arms against his Creator might be saved in that state, with his presumptuous confidence, as well as that soul that lies clasping the promises and embracing the precepts.

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

(1.) In regard of the object.

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

[2.] Taking Christ as Christ, as appointed and anointed by God, as coming out from God: John xvi. 27, 'Ye believe that I came out from God.

Faith stands by the cross of Christ, beholds him bruised by the Father for sin, and ventures upon Christ, because the Father hath set him out as a propitiation. If Christ be made sin for us, we must receive Christ as one that takes our sins upon him from the date of the covenant between God and him concerning redemption: as the saints of old looked upon him as taking sin upon him, and then slain, which was set forth in their sacrifices, laying their sins upon the head of the beast before it was slain, and in the scape-goat, whereon their transgressions were put before he was sent into the wilderness, Lev. xvi. 21. This is one of the principal things faith doth eye; for what warrant, what comfort, what encouragement to accept of Christ, were it not for this, that the offended God hath appointed him the Redeemer, and his death the way of restoration?

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

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

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

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

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

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

[2.] It is joined with a high esteem and valuation of Christ. The soul prefers him in the mind and judgment above anything that can pretend a claim to its affection; it sets such a rate upon him, that all the treasures of heaven and earth cannot work it out of that esteem: 1 Pet. ii. 7, 'To you which believe, he is precious;' but how precious, the tongue of an apostle, no, not of an angel, can express. So precious he is, that the promises of angels, the threatenings of devils, the allurements of the world, the pleasures of sin, yea, and the hopes of enjoying ten thousand worlds, shall never persuade him to part with Christ. Alas! there is no loss dejects him so much as his absence, no purchase delights him so much as his presence. The weakest faith can appeal to Christ, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee,' would love thee, grieve that I can love thee no more. Faith and love are the two uniting graces, and therefore cannot be separated. To an unbeliever he is without beauty and comeliness, nothing desirable in him; to others he

is a pearl of great price, the head of the corner. Faith only sees the worth of Christ. It is joined also with high admirations of God for Christ, astonishments at the riches of grace and treasures of love. It works by love ; it makes use of this affection to carry out all its services to God with thankfulness. The love of God is as a law within the heart of faith, which makes it return to God, as well as receive from him ; and it can receive nothing without glorifying the donor.

[3.] It is accompanied with holiness ; it is therefore called a holy faith, Jude 20. It must have holiness as a concomitant, though not holiness as an ingredient in the justifying act. Faith engrafts the soul into Christ, the root of holiness, and it draws from him sap for holiness. Our implanting into Christ, is rather to make us fruitful, than to make us joyful. Actions follow life, and actions of the same kind with that life which the creature hath ; as vegetative life produceth vegetative actions, sensitive life sensitive actions, a rational life rational actions, so a spiritual, believing life, spiritual and believing actions. Faith is not a name, a picture, but a real principle ; it is a working grace, and therefore obedience is called 'the obedience of faith,' Heb. xi. 8. Faith doth not only change a man's state, but alters his nature ; hence we are said to be purified by faith, Acts xxvi. 18. As it goes forth to Christ, it is justifying ; as it bathes itself in the blood of Christ, it is sanctifying. Education may wash the feet, but faith only washeth the heart. As we were in Adam, members of that corrupt root, we do partake of his guilt and of his filth. Being united to Christ, the second Adam, we partake of his righteousness and his fulness. It is a counterfeit faith which pretends to partake of the righteousness of Christ without a communication of the fulness of his grace. True faith employs the power of Christ in the subduing of sin. It is a fruit of the Spirit, and the Spirit doth not produce one fruit without the rest. It is the root grace, the root is dead if it have no branches, no fruit. Faith is seated in the heart, and spreads itself to the whole man and all the actions, as lines from the centre. It begins in the understanding, but hath its perfection in the will, descends to the affections ; sends, like the soul, its influences out through the whole man. Though it be weak, it will have its motion. If it cannot go to heaven, it will cry to heaven. The remark Christ makes of Paul, an infant believer, is, 'Behold, he prays,' Acts ix. 11 ; as if he did not pray before in the time of his infidelity. His prayer now was of another colour and temper from his self-righteous, formal, praying before.

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

(3.) Consider it in the manner how it is wrought. The word works faith and preserves faith, and faith improves the word. It is not a gourd which grows up in a night ; there is much tugging to persuade the soul to venture upon Christ. Great power would not create a world in a moment, but took time ; great power doth not produce faith in an instant ; there are preparations and conflicts before the hand of faith lays hold on a Saviour. And it may be said, as Isaac to his son, If this be venison, how camest thou by it

so quickly? If this be faith, how camest thou by it so suddenly, without much travail and labour? The word is the seed, the Spirit the sun that quickens it. By the word, the Spirit discovers the vileness of a man's nature, the sinfulness of sin, the fulness of Christ, and the freeness of his righteousness. By the word, the Spirit opens our eyes to see our nakedness and misery; the word proclaims the articles of peace, silenceth our reasonings, answers our objections, stops the mouth of a cavilling sinner, justifies the terms upon which Christ doth offer himself. It is not a birth of nature, but by the operation of the Holy Spirit. That Spirit that conceived Christ in the womb of the virgin, doth produce faith in the womb of the soul; so that faith and Christ are produced by the same Spirit, by the same power, by the Spirit that conceived him, by the power that raised him from the dead.

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

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

[2.] In all worship faith is to be acted, much more in this. As in worldly actions we stir up the faculties of our souls, and the members of our bodies, so in acts of worship we must stir up the graces of the Spirit. Faith must mix itself with every duty: 'Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin,' Rom. xiv. 23. It comes from corrupt nature, or refined nature, not from renewed and changed nature; so, instead of a welcome, we can expect to be entertained only with cloudy looks. To come to this ordinance without faith, is to draw water without a bucket, to work without tools, and to go to market without money. There is need of faith to give us admission into God's presence, Heb. x. 22. There is need of faith to give us acceptance.

[3.] Faith is the condition of the covenant of grace, the seal on our part, as the sacrament is on God's part. No other grace hath God culled out to make the condition of the new covenant, and indeed no other grace hath such a congruity and suitableness to that end as this. When two parties are fallen out, there can be no firm peace without mutual consent. God gives his consent by offering his Son and sacraments as a seal; we give our consent by faith only, whereby we own, approve of, and lay hold on the mercy set before us. There is no benefit by anything in the world, but by accepting and receiving. The altar is a sanctuary, but men must lay hold on the horns of it. There are cities of refuge for some sort of malefactors, but they must run to them. God sets forth Christ as a propitiation, as a treasure of mercy; there can then be no renewing the covenant, unless as

God on the one hand reacheth out his mercy, so we on the other hand put forth our hearts to receive it.

[4.] Christ in this ordinance is represented as the object of faith. The serpent, as lifted up, was the object of the Israelites' sight, and upon that they were to expect healing from it; so Christ as dying is the primary and immediate object of faith. And being here represented as dying, it is not a naked representation, but that we may exercise faith upon him under that notion. It is not Christ as glorious, but as crucified, is the object of faith; for as glorious, he is rather the object of love: but the *formalis ratio* of justification is Christ, as taking upon him the form of a servant, and becoming obedient to death upon the cross. In this sacrament Christ is represented as offering himself to God, and God offering that Christ to us; Christ's payment in performing the righteousness whereby we are justified, and God's accepting and imputing it to us. Christ's dying was intended by God as the object of faith when he set him out upon the cross, Rom. iii. 25. And now he sets him out in the sacrament, there is the same reason for faith; and he is here represented more familiar to our faith than the person of the Father, than the person of the Son of God in heaven, that we may have more distinct thoughts and apprehensions of him in all the business he did transact between the Father and us, which are the fuel to our faith. As he was set out in sacrifices under the Old Testament, that those that then lived might exercise their faith in the promised Messiah, so in the sacraments of the New Testament, that we may exercise our faith in the exhibited Messiah.

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

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

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

(1.) It is necessary to that state and frame of heart which every person ought to be in. Faith, indeed, is the condition of the new covenant, but repentance is a necessary ingredient; faith and brokenness join hands together in their beings and exercises. The matter of the new creation is a heart of flesh, which cannot be without a tenderness in the concerns of God's honour. The new nature cannot be without new affection, and a

change of old sympathies into new antipathies. An insensible soul hath no spiritual life; a living member will feel pain. It is necessary to strong breathings after God; the humblest souls have the quickest flights heavenward. The fowls were created at first out of the water, Gen. i. 20; so are our winged desires from a flood of holy sorrow.

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

[1.] Exercise and increase of grace. One end is to break the soul and the sin, and therefore there should be a preparation by repentance for such an end. If the soul be well heated before, a look of a dying Christ in the supper will melt it, and set the metal a running. There is in this ordinance the love and justice of God represented, folded in one another's arms; the strength of them single will do much, much more united. If we have not then a disposition to melt, we shall be more hardened, as things are by the sun that have no inclination in their nature to be softened. The end of this ordinance is to wound and slay sin by the power of Christ's death; and sin mourned for lies more naked to the stroke than when it is folded and sheltered in our affections. We come to have clearer and deeper impressions from God; and softened wax receives clearer and deeper stamps than that which is hard. Every grace receives a fresh verdure by a stream of repentance; the fruitfulest meadows have constant streams running through them. God's end is to represent to us the bitterness of sin, as well as his love in Christ; and, indeed, without a sense of the former, we cannot have a right estimate of the latter. What God aimed at in the death of Christ, he aimed at in the representation of it to us; and a part of our worthy receiving consists in our having suitable affections to Christ; and we cannot be affected with his sufferings unless we understand the gall and wormwood in iniquity. The bitterness of sin makes us taste the sweetness of pardon; mercy would be too cheap if given to an impenitent soul. While the taste of sin, the onions of Egypt, is in the heart, it will not relish the clusters of Canaan. We should have a suitableness to our Master. Christ is here represented as a man of sorrows, as one that with prayers, tears, and strong cries obtained an answer, and with blood obtained redemption; it is not fit we should be strangers to our Master's temper and disposition, and hug the spear in our souls that pierced his heart.

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

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

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

(1.) What is the spring of our sorrow? Whether it be ingenuous, from a sense of what we have received from God, as well as what we have deserved at his hands; whether it is a scorched sorrow from a sense of the fire of justice, or a melting sorrow from the kindly heat of mercy. The father's kind reception made his prodigal son's icy heart thaw the faster: 'I have sinned against heaven and before thee,' Luke xv. 18. The prodigal is the emblem of the Gentiles, and their call to God and repentance towards him, which must be, because they have displeased him. Without a true spring, our cries and groans are of as little value as the howling of wild beasts in a toil. It is then right, when it hath such a temper as the prodigal: I have offended a kind and loving Father, wasted his goods, resisted his Spirit, listed myself in the service of the devil; this Father I have contemned, a bountiful hand I have kicked at, a heaven bespangled with stars of mercy I have turned my back upon. We may weep at the story of Christ's passion, when we are not really affected with our sin, the cause of his sufferings, and the displeasure of God. Our sorrow is right, when it is not merely for sin, as it is contrary to our happiness, but as contrary to God's holiness. This is a conformity to Christ, who mourned for the sins of men, as well as suffered for them; and mourned for them, not because he suffered for them, but because God was injured by them. There was not a grain of malice and ingratitude in sin but he understood; he had also a clear conception of the holiness of that God who was offended and injured by sin; and from those two parts of knowledge, joined with an ardent love to his Father, and charity to man, he could not but have the most enlarged sorrow for sin, and the highest detestation of it, both as it displeased God, and as it ruined the creature.

(2.) What is the subject of the sorrow; is it the sin of nature; do we judge that the greatest sin, and not regard it as the common people do the stars, imagining them no bigger than a candle, when they are of a vast bigness? To bewail outward sins, and not that of our nature, is to have a philosophical frame of spirit, not that of a Christian. Doth the body of death draw from us the loudest groans? Do we lay the axe to the root of sin, or are we mightily busied in lopping off the branches, without a regard of the root? Are inward and spiritual sins the subject of our grief? Can we mourn as deeply for those sins that none but God and our own consciences know, as for those which are visible to the eye of man? Doth our hardness of heart, formality, remainders of hypocrisy and unbelief most afflict us? Is our grief for all sins, and especially for that which hath been the master sin? Do we oppose that which we have the greatest temptations

to, as David had to the killing of Saul, which would have helped him to a crown, which therefore he calls his iniquity? Ps. xviii. 23, 24.* Would we have the greatest Delilah no more spared than the smallest brat of Babylon? And is the enmity so great that we would destroy the power and strength of sin which lies in that master iniquity? Do we stop our ears against the strongest pleas it makes for itself, and wish as much its death as we do our lives? This is a testimony of repentance. Do we hate every sin because it is a falseness to God? Ps. cxix. 104.

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

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

There is a necessity of this.

1. Spiritual affections to God are required in all duties, much more in this. The highest representation of a loving Saviour suffering, ought to have a suitable return of affection. Duties are regarded not by the multitude (for hypocrites may be much in doing) but by the affection; sincere persons are only much in loving. All that God requires of us is summed up into this grace, love: Deut. x. 12, 'What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to love him and serve him?' Men may delight to pray from a natural eloquence, which is (if I may use the expression) but as the trimming of a mangy sacrifice, and delight to hear with such a kind of affection as they would a lovely song; but every duty ought to be kindled and inflamed by the fire of love to God; and a mite of service with this is better than a talent without it. This expels weariness in our duties, and makes God's injunctions our songs, Ps. cxix. 54.

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

(1.) Christ is here represented as the cause of our happiness, in the foundation of the benefits we enjoy, viz., his humiliation, death, and passion. Here is Christ undertaking our salvation upon the hardest terms; here are the arms of the Son of God open upon the cross, the spear reaching his heart, with his affections streaming out to us in blood, when we were his

* Musc.

enemies, and had not a grain of affection to him ; and is it not fit we should be prepared to cry out with holy ravishments of affection, ' Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honour and glory ' ? This affection must needs be due to him who reversed the sentence of our condemnation, made our peace and bore our curse, had his hands nailed, his head pricked, his side pierced, his heart grieved, that by those marks we might be induced to love him. Who can challenge our affections if he cannot, who undertook our recovery when there was but a step between us and eternal death ? And how can we act such an affection if we be not possessed with it ?

(2.) Christ as appropriated to us in a way of union is here set forth. Union to him, communion with him, both depend upon love in each party. What can express a nearer union of Christ to the soul than to feed upon him, eat his flesh, and drink his blood ? Thus to have him incorporated with us, this is as the breaking of a ring, the renewing of a contract between Christ and our souls, a prologue to the great solemnisation of the nuptials to all eternity. Hence the entertainment Christ makes his people is set out under the notion of a wedding supper, Mat. xxii. 3. And being thus joined unto Christ, we are one body, yea, one spirit with him, 1 Cor. vi. 17. Now as there can be no mystical union with Christ without faith, so there can be no moral union with him without love. With what violence can we run to him, how can we be glued to him (*κολληώμενος*) without this affection ? As Christ in this ordinance makes over himself to the believer to be his in love, so the believer must make over himself to Christ, to be his in all service, affection, and obedience.

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

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

3. The graces to be exercised in this ordinance depend much upon love. Love is the spring of the soul which moves every grace, and therefore it is called the ' fulfilling of the law.' Faith hath no operation but ' by love,' Gal. v. 6. Faith and love are united, as well as uniting, graces ; faith is the hand, but love is as the spirits which move it. And as faith and love in the habit, so in the operations they are inseparable ; we must cleave to Christ, and be cemented to him by faith, but love must strengthen the hand ; the more we love, the faster we hold. Faith is not sincere but when it testifies itself by the operations of love. True repentance flows from love. Mary's tears were most free when her love was most hot. The more inflamed our love to God is, the stronger will be our hatred of sin as that which is contrary to him ; the sweeter the remembrance of Christ is to our affections, the more bitter is the remembrance of any offence against him ; and indeed without it, we may see the print of the nails, and put our fingers into his wounds without any remorse. Delight in Christ cannot be without it. Christ cannot be much in our thoughts till he comes to lie nearest our hearts, and will never be our delight till he be our beloved. We cannot have high and raised thoughts of him, which are necessary for a transformation into his glory, without this. Strange imaginations will intrude them-

selves, and be welcome guests, unless this grace stand at the door to thrust them away. We cannot burn in our converses with God unless this grace set us on fire, nor can we have any heavenliness in this duty ; for it is by this affection that we have our conversation in heaven in any service. Nor can we have a strong appetite to Christ in a sacrament without it ; the stronger the apprehension of, and affection to, any good, the more importunate will be our longings for it, and the quicker our motions to it, and the less can the soul brook any distance between that good and itself.

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

5. No benefit can be by a sacrament without this grace. Communion with God is entailed upon it : John xiv. 21, 23, ' He that loves me, shall be beloved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him.' Not that our love precedes the love of God in the first efflux of it, but the degrees and acts of our love, kindled at first by the love of God, are rewarded with greater declarations of his love. Where love is acted to God, there both the Father and Son will combine together for such a soul's satisfaction ; they will come and dwell there by the Spirit in a more close, familiar, and strict communion, and more certain possession. Where there are the actings of love, though there should be no sense of any new income, this grace would bring a satisfaction in the very exercise.

Now for the trial of this love.

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

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

3. Nor let us judge ourselves by any passionate fits of love, which may

* Nihil decentius quam ut amor amore compensetur.

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

But let us examine,

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

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

[1.] In regard of the prevalency of it. Do we love Christ solely, supremely ; doth this affection swallow up all other affections ; as Moses his rod turned into a serpent, did the rods of the Egyptian magicians ? Doth it, like the sun, obscure the light of the lesser stars ? As God is the chief good in himself, he must be so in our esteem. A true conjugal affection to Christ excludes all other things from an equal interest in it ; an equal affection to Christ and the world are as inconsistent and prodigious as two suns in the world. The heathens knew the necessity of a prevailing love to their idols, to be at an expense for them. If the Israelites begin to be fond, though of a calf, they will deprive themselves of their jewels to serve it. This prevalent love of Christ is so necessary an ingredient, that it was the main lesson he pressed upon his disciples, Mat. xvi. 24, Luke xiv. 26. Self must be denied, if we follow Christ ; all relations must be hated in comparison of Christ, if we be Christ's disciples. The soul of a man is too narrow and limited to be intensely affected with, and strongly to pursue, at one and the same time, two different objects. The heart must be a throne reserved for

Christ, where other things must sit at his feet. For as Christ gives himself wholly to the soul, the soul must bestow itself wholly on Christ; and as Luther, *Mallet ruere cum Christo, quàm regnare cum Cæsare*, I would rather perish with the interest of Christ, than reign in grandeur with Cæsar. A hypocrite wills Christ in subordination to inferior goods. A sincere votary to Christ wills inferior goods in subordination to Christ. Do we thus love Christ in that which crosseth most the carnal inclinations and interest of corrupt nature?

[2.] In regard of the restlessness of it. Can nothing but Christ and the enjoyment of him content us? Are there inquiries after him, industrious pursuits, unutterable groans, that nothing can satisfy us, no, not all the world, without him? Are we importunate, that he may be as a seal in our hearts, as well as we as a seal in his heart, that there may be clearer engravings, stronger impressions? A true lover rejoiceth that he hath any love to give to God, and grieves that he hath no more to bestow. His life is bound up in Christ, as Jacob's was in Benjamin. An hundred worlds cannot content him without his beloved. He is upon his watch and guard against all temptations which may disturb his affection or enjoyment, and accounts the missing of Christ worse than hell itself; all other things will be abhorred, and accounted as loss and dung, Philip. iii. 8.

[3.] What are the effects and concomitants of our love? Are we careful to please him, though with our own shame? Christ's love made him take the form of a servant to pleasure man; the soul's love will make it take up the meanest shape to please the Redeemer. Christ cared not how much he was emptied, so he might discover his love; the soul cares not how much it is humbled, so it may testify its affection. It is like the string of an instrument strained to the same height with another, which will move when the other is touched. A true affectionate soul will be conformed to Christ in its motions: Gal. i. 10, 'If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.' In the state of unregeneracy he pleased men, but now as a servant he would please Christ his Master. Are we in our bent and resolution careful to please God, without regard to the oppositions of the world? as the sun holds on its race, though the clouds gather to hinder the shining of it. Are we desirous of his glory, as well as our own happiness? Would we rather lose what we desire, than defraud God of his right? Our own happiness is but a created good, and therefore ought not to be loved for itself. Nor must we prefer the gift before the glory of the giver; the glory of God is incomparably more amiable than our own happiness can be. If a man doth all for his own happiness more than for God's glory, it is certain he loves that more than God; and if he serves God only for happiness, he sells his service to God, and he serves himself not God, for he intends only to advantage himself, not to glorify God. It was plain that Delilah loved not Samson, when all her projects were to enrich herself, and gratify the Philistines in betraying him; so if our projects be to satisfy ourselves, we are not lovers of God. Are the duties he enjoins delightful to us? Do the commands which were before burdensome cease to be grievous to us? 1 John v. 3. Are our duties not so much pressed by natural conscience, as sweetened by love? Do we esteem lightly of every service we do? True love never thinks it can do enough. Are we tender of his honour? Do we account the enemies of God our enemies? Ps. cxix. 21, 22. The Philistines loved their Dagon, when they would not tread upon the threshold where he had received a disgrace, 1 Sam. v. 4, 5. How is it as to constancy? True love will not be quenched by the waters of afflictions: Cant. viii. 7, 'Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.' It is a fire that triumphs over

the waters of the sharpest dispensations. When storms hang over the head, there is no repentance that ever his love was bestowed upon Christ. In this there is a suitableness between Christ's affection and the soul, in regard of the constancy of it. The creature's love hath its ebbs and floods. It is sometimes circumvented by temptations, in regard of the acts and exercise, though not of the habit, which recovers itself; as Christ's love hath intermissions in regard of the discoveries of it, though not in respect of the reality and truth of it; both are constant.

Another grace to be examined is love of God's people. This is the badge of a disciple: John xiii. 34, 35, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another, as I have loved you.' This is the livery whereby men are known to belong to Christ, as a prince's servant is known by the badge he bears. It is not, as Erasmus notes, if you use this or that ceremony, have this or that habit; if you use the same meat, have the same title, but if you have the same affection. This Christ left as his last will and testament, as that which lay most peculiarly upon his heart to be observed by them. When Moses was to leave the conduct of the people,* he gives them a commandment not to depart from the law of God. When John the Baptist quitted his function, he recommended to his disciples the disposing themselves, by the baptism of repentance, to receive the Messiah; and by the observing this and their fasts, they were marked to be John's disciples. The commandment Christ gives them a little before his departure, is to love one another, as the special character whereby they should be known to be his disciples. Hence it is called *his* commandment, as peculiarly his as the commandment to believe, for they are both joined together: 1 John iii. 23, 'And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment,'—as that which he took a special delight in. As if those two, faith and love, made up the body of the Christian religion. In regard of this commandment the apostle tells the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. iv. 9, that they were taught of God; and this Christ presseth again and again; for he repeats it often in that last sermon of his, which he would not have pressed so much, when he had so many things to deliver, if it were not necessary. He calls it a *new* commandment, not only in regard of the renewal of it; it having been as it were out of date, and wholly lost among the Jewish factions; not only because it is more commanded in the gospel, as sacrifices were under the law more pressed than this; but in regard of the pattern. Before, it was 'Love thy neighbour as thyself,' but they had no such glorious exemplar, before the love of Christ came to be unfolded to the world. Now it is, 'Love one another as I have loved you. So powerful a motive was never affixed to the moral law, which commanded love; former ages never had so fair and so full a copy for it as this. And so punctual were the ancient Christians in this, that Tertullian saith, it was the amazement of the heathens to see them *Animo animaque misceri*, their souls and minds united and mingled with each other; and, indeed, the more believers love God, the more they will love one another; as lines, the nearer they are to the centre, the nearer they are to one another.

1. This is necessary in all duties. Would we pray? Our hands must be 'lifted up without wrath and doubting,' 1 Tim. ii. 8. Would we hear the word? If we are 'swift to hear,' we must be 'slow to wrath,' James i. 19. Would we offer a sacrifice at the altar? we must 'first be reconciled to our brother,' Mat. v. 25. Fire from heaven will not else kindle the sacrifice. One of the leading sins to be purged out of the church of Corinth, in order to a due preparation to this ordinance, was malice, 1 Cor. v. 8.

* Amyraut, in loc.

2. But more necessary in this ordinance.

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

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

Let us examine ourselves as to this grace.

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

But this love is true.

(1.) When it is founded upon the grace of a person. That which is most

* Amyraut, in loc.

lovely in Christ's eye should be so in ours; the grace and holiness of a person is respected by Christ, not his outward state and condition. It is a loving 'in the truth,' and 'for the truth's sake,' 2 John 1, 2. A love of a disciple 'in the name of a disciple,' Mat. x. 42. As there is a common affection to God in men, because of his benefits, so there may be also some common affection in an unregenerate man to godliness, which may be the fruit of education, or an enlightened conscience, in some measure convinced that holiness is good. Holiness and grace are so beautiful, that the wickedest man would have the appearance of it, and would be esteemed good. But it must be a choice and prevailing affection, out of love to Christ, whose image he bears, flowing from a love to God, a spirit of regeneration, from the seed of the gospel rooted in the soul: Gal. v. 22, 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness,' and is therefore set upon the meanest Christian, as the meanest box which hath a jewel in it, will be esteemed for the jewel's sake by those that understand it. The Corinthians were defective in this love, in despising the poor in their love-feasts, a mis-carriage the apostle blames them for in this, 1 Cor. xi. 22.

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

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

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

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

2. But in this ordinary more necessary.

(1.) It is a feast, and appetite is proper to that. Were it but a crumb,

* Gaudentius.

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

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

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

Let us examine our desires,

[1.] Whether they be vehement. An infinite being should not be faintly and coldly desired. There ought to be a holy distraction in the soul,* as scorched bowels are full of pain till they get satisfaction. There is no question but an imperfect velleity, a languishing and feeble desire, may be in unregenerate men; they may have more or less some apprehensions of the good, which stir up proportionable desires; but the longings of a gracious soul are strong, spiritual, and produce mighty inward operations. As there is all sweetness in Christ, so there should be all vehemency in the acts of the soul to him. Is our desire limited to God alone? Do we apprehend him and pant after him as the greatest good, and Christ as the choicest and only Saviour? Is it so earnest, that if all afflictions were removed from us, all outward mercies bestowed upon us, this should not satisfy, but Christ alone and the light of his countenance? This holy longing can no more be stopped by any creature, than the sun can be barred by clouds from running its race. The whole world is but as the drop of a bucket after all the water is poured out. Would a small drop quench the thirst of parched bowels? No more can all the world answer the desire of a gracious soul, any more than a drop can cool the tongue of a damned creature.

* *Θεία μανία*, as Basil calls it.

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