

JOHN VI. 54, 55.

Whoſo eateth my Fleſh, and drinketh my Blood, hath eternal Life, and I will raiſe him up at the Laſt Day : For my Fleſh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed.

THESE Words are altogether Metaphorical and Figurative : And to open them, I ſhall enquire,

First, What is meant by the Fleſh and Blood of Chriſt.

Secondly, What is meant by a Chriſtian's Eating and Drinking this Fleſh and this Blood : For neither of theſe Expreſſions muſt be taken according to its proper and literal Signification.

As to the *First* ; By *the Fleſh and Blood of Chriſt*, we muſt not only underſtand his Natural Body, conſiſting of true Fleſh and Blood ; but the Phraſe includes whole Chriſt as the Mediator of Believers, eſpecially in the Courſe of his Humiliation, to

to which he was subject by reason of that *Flesh and Blood* of ours which he took unto him, that *so he might in all Things be like unto us, Sin only excepted.* So that Christ, as our Surety and Mediator, is this *Flesh and Blood* which he here speaks of.

And that it is to be taken in this Latitude, will appear from explaining the *Second Phrase, What it is to eat this Flesh, and drink this Blood.* And here,

1st. It is impiously gross to conceive, as the Papists do, that the Words are to be expounded of a carnally real Eating the Natural Body, and a proper real Drinking the Blood of Christ, in their Eucharist; which, besides all the gross Contradictions, and huge Impossibilities that they are forced to swallow down with it, is a Creed fitter for Canibals, than for Christians.

2^{dly}. Therefore there is a real *Eating of the Flesh of Christ,* and a real *Drinking of his Blood,* by Faith. And of this, we must understand this Place. Thus our Saviour expounds himself, *Ver. 35. of this Chapter, I am the Bread of Life : He that cometh to me, shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst.* As Hunger is satisfied by Eating, and Thirst allayed by Drinking ; so here it is Coming unto Christ, this Bread of Life, that satisfies a Christian's Hunger ; and Believing on Christ,

Christ, *the Fountain of living Waters*, that allays his Thirst. This Eating therefore the Flesh of Christ, and Drinking his Blood, being by Christ himself made one and the same with our Coming unto him, and that being one and the same with our Believing on him, it can be nothing else but an Act of Faith terminated upon Christ.

This Body and Blood of Christ which we must thus eat and drink, *i. e.* which we must believe in, is not to be confined only to the true Natural Body of Christ; but to be extended to whatsoever he did and suffered in his Body, as our Mediator for our Redemption and Salvation. So then his being made a Curse for us, his being made under the Law, in the Form of a Servant, subjected to Humane Infirmities, and exposed to Humane Miseries; his Conflicting and Wraſtling with the Wrath of God, his Stripes and Scourgings, his Mockings and Revilings; the Obedience of his Life, and his Obedience unto Death, even the shameful and accursed Death of the Cross; his Bearing our Sins on his Body on the Tree, and his Eluctating the whole Load of Wrath that the Justice and Power of God could lay upon him, declared to the World by his triumphant Resurrection: Briefly, Whatsoever in Christ tended

tended to the Satisfaction of Divine Justice, and the Salvation of our Souls, that is, this Flesh and Blood of Christ which a Believer's Faith should feed upon.

It followeth ; *He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood ; i. e.* he that believeth on me as Mediator, hath eternal Life. Now this may be understood,

First, That Grace being an incorruptible immortal Seed, he that hath this Life of Grace, hath in this Sense an eternal Life, a Life that shall never fade, nor die.

Secondly, If this eternal Life be taken for the Life of Glory, as indeed it seems most congruous, then a Believer is said to have this Life, both because he hath the Seeds and Principles, the Dawn and Beginning of it here, and because God hath assured to him the Possession of it hereafter, by his immutable Word of Promise ; which is as good Security as actual Possession, and gives him a Right and Title to that blessed and glorious Inheritance ; and certainly, what we have a Right unto, we may well call ours. Hence we may observe it, *Mark* 16. 16. It is said, *He that believeth, shall be saved* ; there is Assurance of Salvation for the future. *But*, *John* 3. 18. *he that believeth not, is condemned already*. Unbelievers are no more actually condemned,

demned, than Believers are actually saved ; but only what God threatens or promi-
seth, it is all one whether he saith it is
done, or it shall be done. For Damna-
tion is as certain to the one, and Salva-
tion to the other, as if they were already
in their final State.

It followeth, *And I will raise him up at
the last Day.* Now here the whole Cry
of the Schoolmen, taking Advantage from
some Expressions that drop'd unwarily
from some of the Fathers, do from this
Place assert, that there is left a Seminal Vir-
tue from the Partaking of the Eucharist,
or Lord's Supper, (for concerning that
only most of them interpret these Words
of our Saviour) which hath a Power to
quicken, and raise the dead Body at the
last Day. But this is so wild and absurd
a Conceit, as needs no Confuting ; espe-
cially since the Words are not to be un-
derstood primarily and principally of the
Sacrament, but of Faith in the Merits of
Christ, wrought out for us in his Body,
and by the Shedding of his Blood : There-
fore, *I will raise him up at the last Day,* only
declares to us Christ's Promise and Engage-
ment, that he will be the Author, and ef-
ficient Cause of our Resurrection. And
though all Men shall rise again, as well
Unbelievers as Believers ; yet Christ rai-
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seth them in a different Manner. Those who are Unbelievers, he raiseth by his Power, as he is the Lord of all Things, both in Heaven and Earth ; and as their Judge, he sends for these Malefactors out of the Prisons of their Graves, to appear before his Tribunal. But he raiseth Believers as their Head, and as they are Parts of his mystical Body, unto a glorious and blessed Immortality. So that tho' Christ's miraculous Resurrection was within three Days after his Death, yet his mystical Resurrection shall not be till the End of the World : For when all the Saints of all Ages of the World shall together rise out of their Graves, then riseth Christ's mystical Body.

It followeth, *Verse 55. For my Flesh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed.* What is meant by *the Flesh and Blood* of Christ, you have already heard : And here by *Meat and Drink*, is meant whatsoever the Faith of a Christian pitcheth upon in the Sufferings of Christ, which he underwent by reason of his *Flesh and Blood* ; whatsoever in Christ may feed and nourish his Soul, that is here called *Meat and Drink*.

But why is this Particle [*indeed*] added ? *My Flesh is Meat indeed, &c.* I answer ; We must not be so gross as the
Transub-

Transubstantiatists are, to conceive that *indeed* is the same with *carnally*, and *properly*. *My Flesh is Meat indeed*; that is, say they, it is properly Meat, and so to be eaten, even in a corporal Manner in the Sacrament: For the Text only calls it, *Βρῶτες ἀληθῶς*, and *πίστες ἀληθῶς*, not *ἐσθιέμεν* or *πινόμεν*. It is Meat and Drink indeed; but it is not Meat and Drink essentially or properly. This [*indeed*] must be taken spiritually. It is Meat indeed, and Drink indeed, but still spiritual; neither the less truly so, for being spiritually so, for all tropical and transerent Speeches, tho' they take away from the Propriety, yet they do not take from the Truth and Reality of the Expression.

Therefore, not to insist longer on the Exposition, take a full View of the Sense of the Words in this short Paraphrase, wherein I will lay aside all that was figurative in them. "Whosoever believeth
 "on me as Mediator, God-Man, bearing
 "the whole Weight of God's Displeasure,
 "and the whole Burden of the Sins of
 "the World in my Body, pouring out my
 "Blood for their Remission, and by my
 "Death satisfying the Justice of God, he
 "hath an eternal Life of Grace, and the
 "Seed-plot of an eternal Life of Glory,
 "Faith giving the Believer a present Pro-
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“ spect of it, and by the gracious Promise
 “ of God, a firm Right and Title to it :
 “ And such an one being mystically united
 “ unto me, and incorporated in me,
 “ I will certainly raise again, at the last
 “ Day, to eternal Bliss and Joy : For the
 “ Sufferings which I underwent, by reason
 “ of that Flesh and Blood which I
 “ took upon me, are the Food and Nourishment
 “ of the Soul, inasmuch as they
 “ are the right Objects for a saving and
 “ justifying Faith to pitch upon, and to
 “ terminate in.” This I take to be the
 genuine Meaning of these Metaphorical
 Expressions : The Sum of all which, you
 may take contracted into this one Proposition ;
 That Christ, represented in his meritorious
 Obedience and Sufferings, is the right and
 proper Object of a saving and justifying Faith.

And in handling of it. I shall not speak
 of our acting Faith on Christ in general ;
 but, according to my present Design, shall
 confine my self to the acting Faith upon
 him, as exhibited in his Body and Blood
 in that great Gospel-Ordinance of his Supper ;
 which is in a very special Manner,
 Meat indeed, and Drink indeed, the Food
 and Nourishment of a believing Soul.

And

And here we must premise, that all the Use and Benefit of a Sacrament, is comprehended in these two Things :

First, In its being a Representation as a Sign.

Secondly, In its being an Obligation as a Seal.

Now it is only Faith, as fixed on Christ the Mediator, that makes this Ordinance beneficial to us, either as to its Signifying; or as to its Sealing Office. To dream of any Spiritual Advantage that accrues to the Soul meerly from the *Opus operatum*, the Work done, though Faith signifies nothing, though Faith seals nothing, is so far from Truth, though eagerly defended by the *Romanists*, that the Apostle plainly tells us, *such do but eat and drink Damnation to themselves, who discern not the Lord's Body.*

First, It is Faith, as representing the Sufferings of Christ, that gives this Sacrament its signifying Use and Office. One grand End why Christ instituted this Ordinance was, that it might be *Signum Rememorativum*, a Remembrancing Sign, *Luke 22. 19. This do in Remembrance of me. So, 1 Cor. 11. 26. For as often as ye eat this Bread,*

Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's Death till he come. But without Faith, the Administration of the Sacrament is no better than a dumb Shew, without any Signification at all. It is Faith that in this Ordinance acts over the whole Tragedy of Christ's Sufferings, and carries the Soul through them all in as lively Representations, as if Christ were but now undergoing them. We are, I know, ready to wish that we had lived in the Time of Christ's Abode here on Earth, that we had been conversant with him as his Disciples were, to have seen both his miraculous Actions, and his no less miraculous Passion. Why truly, the Disciples Sight of these Things hath no Advantage at all above our Faith. If we can but exercise Faith in this great Ordinance, these Things will be really present to us. There we shall see Christ crucified before our Eyes; yea, and crucified as truly and really to our Faith, as ever he was to the Sense of others. Our Faith can carry us into the Garden, and make us watch with him in his Agony, and observe every Drop of Blood that the Sense of his Father's Wrath strain'd thorough him. Faith can carry us to the Judgment-hall, to hear his whole Tryal and Arraignment. Faith can lead us through the whole Multitude and

Crowd of People to his Cross; and in this Ordinance we may see his Body broken, his Blood poured out, and hear him crying, *It is finish'd*, the Work of Redemption is compleated, and see him at last give up the Ghost. And all this the Faith of a Christian doth as lively represent, as if it were but now doing, and thereby it makes the Sacrament a Sign, and gives it its Significancy.

Well then, briefly to enforce this; Whenever we come to partake of this great and solemn Ordinance, let us be sure to set Faith on work to represent unto us the whole Sufferings of Jesus Christ. A strong Faith can recall Things that are long pass'd, and make them exist again; so that Time devours nothing but to an ignorant Person, or an Unbeliever. And truly, unless Faith do thus recall the Sufferings of Christ, not to our Memories only, but to our Hearts and Affections, they will all appear to us but as a Story of somewhat done long ago, and as an outworn antiquitated Thing. Consider, were there a Sight to be represented, at which Heaven and Earth, and Hell it self, should stand amazed; wherein God himself should suffer not only in the Form of a Servant, but under the Form of a Malefactor; and the everlasting Happiness of

all Mankind, from the Creation of the World, to the final Dissolution of it, should be transacted ; in which we might see the Venom and poisonous Malignity of the Sins of the whole World wrung out into one bitter Cup, and this Cup put into the Hands of the Son of God, to drink off the very Dregs of it ; in which we might see the Gates of Hell broken to Pieces, Devils conquer'd, and all the Powers of their dark Kingdom triumph'd over : I say, were there such a Sight as this, so dreadful, and yet so glorious to be represented to us, would we not all desire to be Spectators of it ? Why, all this is frequently represented to us in the Sacrament. There we may see the Son of God slain, the Blood of God poured out : We may see him that takes away our Transgressions, numbred himself among Transgressors ; we may see him hanging upon the Soreness of his Hands and Feet, all our Iniquities meeting upon him, and the Eternity of Divine Vengeance and Punishments contracted in their full Extremity into a short Space. We may see the Wrath of God pacified, the Justice of God satisfied, Mankind redeemed, Hell subdued, and Devils cast into everlasting Chains. All this is clearly to be seen in this Ordinance, if we bring but Faith to discern

discern it; without which, indeed, all this will be no more to us than a magnificent and exquisite Scene is to a blind Man. Indeed, the Apostle speaks of some who did, in an ill Sense, *crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh*, Heb. 6. 6. But certainly, in a good Sense, the Faith of every Believer ought to crucify to himself the Son of God afresh; and so lively to represent to himself the whole Course of his Sufferings, that the Spectators themselves could not have been better informed of them, nor more affected with them by their Senses, than he by his Faith.

But that in this we may not be deceived by the Workings of a quick and lively Fancy, and mistake them for the Workings of a quick and lively Faith, let us observe, that when Faith gives the Soul a View of the Sufferings of Christ, it will stir up due and proportionable Affections.

First, It will excite an holy and ingenuous Mourning: Can you see the Body of Christ broken, and his Blood poured out, and not have your Hearts broken and bleeding within you? All Nature it self felt violent Convulsions when the God of Nature suffered: Heaven put on its Blacks in that miraculous Eclipse, the Bowels of the Earth were rent with an Earth-

Earthquake, the silent Chambers of the Grave disturbed, and forced to resign their Inhabitants, as if the whole Frame of the World suffer'd with the Maker of it. And shall not we be affected, whose Sins caused this sad Tragedy, and whose Interest was so deeply concerned in it? We our selves had a Share in Crucifying *the Lord of Glory*: And what St. Peter said to the Jews, *Acts 2. 23. You have taken, and by wicked Hands crucified and slain him*; may be truly said of us, we have crucified and slain the Lord of Life and Glory. And should not this prick us to the very Hearts, as it did them? What, that we should nail him to his Cross, and throw that Load of Sin and Sorrow upon him which made him cry out, *My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken me?* How should this cause us to melt in an holy and kind Mourning, and to fulfil the Prediction of the Prophet? *Zech. 12. 10. They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one that mourneth for his only Son; and shall be in Bitterness, as one that is in Bitterness for his First-born.* And where can we look upon a broken and a pierced Saviour more lively, than in that holy Sacrament which he hath instituted to be a Remembrance of his Death and Sufferings.

Secondly,

Secondly, If Faith, and not Memory, not Fancy only, represents to you the Sufferings of Christ in this Ordinance, it will stir up in you, as an holy Mourning and Sorrow for your Sins, so an holy Anger and Indignation against them. Look upon your Saviour with Sorrow, and upon your Sins with Hatred, as those that were his bloody Murderers, and squeezed so much Gall and Wormwood into the bitter Cup of his Passion. And shall I find Pleasure in that in which Christ found so much Anguish and Horror ! Shall I entertain, and lodge in my Bosom, the bloody Murderers of my God and Saviour ? Shall I delight and sport my self with those Sins which caused unknown Dolours to him, and must be, if not expiated by his Blood, eternally repaid and reveng'd in mine own ?

Thirdly, Faith representing the Sufferings of Christ in this Sacrament, will stir up an holy Fear, and reverential Awe of God. When Faith shews us, that the united Force of all that Wrath, which yet would have been unsufferable though parcell'd out among us to whom it was due, met all at once upon him who was not only innocent, but the Son of God himself, it will make the believing Soul fear and tremble under the Apprehensions of this

this strict and severe Justice of God. How can he but think with himself, Alas! what a just God have I to deal with? A God, who, rather than Sin shall go unpunish'd, will so dreadfully punish the very Imputation of it, even in his own Son. And what if Christ had not stood in my stead, and undergone my Punishment for me? Should not all his Wrath have fallen upon me? Should not I have been swallowed up in eternal Torments, and have lain under the vindictive Justice of God for ever? How can the Soul but be surprized with Fear and Trembling at such Reflexions as these, which Faith ought to suggest to them at their Attendance upon this holy Ordinance.

Fourthly, If Faith represent the Sufferings of Christ to us, it will mightily inkindle and inflame our Love unto him. How can the believing Soul, when he is receiving the Bread and Wine, think that now he is taking that Christ whose Love was so great as to undergo no less than infinite Wrath to satisfy the offended Justice of God, and not dissolve into proportionable Love towards Christ again? To think that Christ should lay by his Robes of Glory, wrap his Deity in Dust and Ashes, hide and eclipse himself in our Flesh, and all this Abasement only to put him-

himself into a farther Capacity of suffering for us ; that he should be *crucified* for those who crucified him ; that he should *dye* for love of those who kill'd him, and *suffer* for those whom he still suffers from, if we have any the least Spark of Gratitude and Ingenuity, it must needs constrain us not only to admire the infinite Riches of the Love of Christ towards us, but to return reciprocal Love unto him.

These four Affections, Faith will excite in us when we partake of this Ordinance, as it is a Sign, and a Representation to us of the Sufferings of Christ. For without these, merely to recal to our Minds those great Transactions may be but the Act of Memory, or the Representation of Fancy, no Work of Faith.

And thus I have endeavoured to shew you, what is the Object which our Faith ought to apprehend and pitch upon in this Holy Institution. For as Faith is in every Ordinance the great Purveyor and Steward of the Soul that lays in Provision for the Soul to feed upon, so especially in this. 'Tis Faith alone that can find out any Thing in material Elements that may be suited and accommodated to an immaterial Soul. For there is a kind of holy Chymistry in this Grace that can
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extract Spirit out of visible and sensible Objects. What is there in *the Bread*, and in *the Wine*, that can nourish the Soul? The Body is indeed upheld by such earthly Supports, but these are too gross Feeding for our Spiritual Part. It is indeed said, that *Man did eat Angels Food*, Psal. 78. 25. to set forth the Excellency and Delicacy of that Provision of *Manna*, that God made for his unthankful People in the Wilderness: Yea, but a true Believer hath better and choicer Food set before him on the Lord's Table, than the Food of Angels themselves. To a carnal Eye they appear but mere contemptible Bread and Wine; but yet our Entertainment there, is more refined, more spiritual. The *Bread* and *Wine* are but the Dishes in which this Feast is serv'd up, not the Feast it self. Faith feeds the Soul, not in the vulgar common way, but nourishes it in a mystical Manner. It eats, not *the Bread*, but the breaking of it; it drinks, not *the Wine*, but the pouring of it forth. The Elements may seem lean, poor, and beggarly in themselves; but when a transubstantiating Faith shall turn the *Bread* into *the Body of Christ*, and the *Wine* into *his Blood*, it will make a Believing Soul cry out with the Jews in this Chapter, *Lord, evermore give us this Bread;*

Bread ; and with the Woman of *Samarita*, Chap. 4. *Sir, give me of this Water.* 'Tis a Christian's Faith that makes it Bread incarnate. And as Christ, by a Miracle of Power, turned *Water* into *Wine*, so here the Faith of the Receiver turns *Wine* into *Blood*. And thus by eating *the Flesh*, and drinking *the Blood of Christ*, they are incorporated into him, and made one with him, Members of his mystical Body, and shall be certainly raised by him to an incorruptible and glorious Life.

We have thus considered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as it is a Sign ; I shall now proceed to consider it as a Seal. And under this Respect also, it is only Faith in the Sufferings of Christ that can make it any Way useful and beneficial unto us : For as the Sacrament represents nothing, so it seals nothing without Faith. Now here I shall briefly enquire into these four Things :

First, Why the Sacrament is called a Seal.

Secondly, What it seals unto, or to what it is affix'd.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Whose Seal it is, whether God's, or ours.

Fourthly, That Faith alone in the Sufferings of Christ Jesus, makes its Sealing Office beneficial and advantageous to us.

First, Why the Sacrament is called a Seal. A Seal, you know, is added for the Confirmation and ratifying of any Compact, Bargain or Covenant between Party and Party. The Sacrament therefore is called a Seal, because it is annex'd to that Bargain and Covenant that God hath made with Man. For herein God is pleased to be so gracious to our Infirmary, that he hath not only pass'd his Word, but hath also confirmed his Covenant by Seals; that by two immutable Things, wherein it was not possible for God to lie, we might have abundant Consolation. And therefore the Circumcision of *Abraham*, which was then the Sacrament of Initiation, to which, in the Christian Church, Baptism succeeded, this Circumcision is called, *Rom. 4. 11. A Seal of the Righteousness of Faith*. And the Cup in this Ordinance of the Lord's Supper is said by the Apostle, *1 Cor. 11: 25. to be the New Testament in the Blood of Christ*. Now what else can be understood by

by that *Synechdoche*, that *the Cup is the New Testament*, but only that it is a Seal set to the *New Testament*, the Last Will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that Covenant which he hath ratified with us in his Blood. Thus therefore it is called a Seal, because it is a Confirmation of the Covenant made between God and Man, even as a Seal is a Confirmation of any Agreement made between Man and Man.

Secondly, Therefore let us enquire what the Sacrament seals unto. The Sacrament's Sealing being nothing else but the Confirmation of the Truth of that to which it is set, we may conceive that the Sacrament seals to, *i. e.* it attests and confirms two Things, *viz.* Our Faith, and God's Covenant.

It seals to our Faith two Ways :

First, Directly and formally, in that we do by receiving this holy Ordinance attest unto God the Truth of our Faith, that we do indeed believe on Christ Jesus exhibited in it. And therefore, as the Sacrament represents unto us the Death of Christ, and what he suffered for our Redemption and Salvation, as it is a Sign ; so, as it is a Seal, it doth witness and attest, that we do indeed lay hold on his Death, and apply those sufferings by Faith unto our own Souls.

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Whensoever a true Believer comes to partake of this Ordinance, and sees the *Bread* broken, and the *Wine* poured forth, signifying unto him the breaking of Christ's Body, and the shedding of his Blood, he ought then to lift up his Heart to God, and in the silent Devotions of his Soul to say, *Lord, I believe on thy Son thus broken, and on his Blood thus poured out for me; and to attest and witness that I do indeed believe, behold, I now receive this thy holy Sacrament, and by it do set Seal to the Truth of my Faith, accepting of my blessed Saviour, and sincerely devoting my self unto him.*

Secondly, It seals to our Faith consecutively, by way of Effect and Causality, as the receiving of it doth mightily confirm and strengthen our Faith. For there is no Ordinance of God whatsoever that is more accommodated to the Increase of Faith than this; in that it doth as it were set the Death of Christ before our Eyes. For though Faith be evacuated where there is clear and perfect Vision, yet where the Representation is such as doth not fully discover the Object, but only hint it unto us, as it is here in the Sacrament, Faith takes a mighty Advantage from the Type and Resemblance that Sense perceives, to look
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into these more Spiritual Objects represented by these material Signs, which to the Eye of Sense are altogether invisible. And indeed, when we consider that God hath not only engaged his Word, that *whosoever believeth shall be saved*, but hath also instituted this Ordinance as a Witness between him and us, that he will certainly perform this gracious Promise, if we perform the Condition; we may well have strong Faith, and strong Consolation from that Faith, since he hath been pleased to assure our Salvation to us, both by his Word, and by this Pledge of Truth, and Fidelity of his Word. And in this Sense, our Faith may be said to be sealed by the Sacrament, because it is thereby greatly confirmed and strengthened.

But then, as the Sacrament seals to our Faith; so,

Secondly, It seals also to God's Covenant with us. The brief Tenor of this Covenant you have expressly contained in those few Words, *Mark 16. 16. He that believeth, shall be saved.* And to this Covenant the Sacrament is affixed as a Seal. And in it there be Two Things that admit of Sealing:

First, The Tenour of the Covenant it self.

Secondly, Our Propriety and Interest in the Mercy promised.

The Tenour of the Covenant consists in this, *If I believe, I shall be saved*. Our Interest and Propriety in the Covenant consists in this, *But I do believe*, and therefore *I shall be saved*. Now each of these may be sealed unto the Soul : And accordingly there is a twofold Sealing ;

First, An External Sealing by the Sacrament.

Secondly, An Internal Sealing by the Spirit.

Of these, the External Sealing only respects the Sacrament. For in this Ordinance God seals unto me, that *if I believe on the Lord Jesus, I shall be saved* ; and gives me a visible Pledge of this Promise, That as sure as I eat of the Sacramental Bread, and drink of the Wine, so surely upon my Faith, *I shall inherit eternal Life*. And this indeed is the most proper Sealing Use the Sacrament hath.

But the Internal Sealing of the Spirit in our own Consciences, respects our peculiar Right and Interest in this Covenant. For though the Sacrament seals to me, that *if I believe, I shall be saved* ; yet it doth not properly seal and attest to me, that *I do believe*, and therefore *shall be saved*. But this is the Work of the Holy Ghost,

Ghost, the Spirit of Adoption, which seals us up unto the Day of Redemption, and works in the Hearts of many Believers a full Assurance, that Grace is already wrought in them, and that Glory shall hereafter be bestowed upon them.

And thus you see what it is, that the Sacrament seals to : Principally and primarily, it seals to the Truth of the conditional Covenant, as a Pledge of God's Veracity : But secondarily, it seals also to our Faith, as it is a Means instituted by God for the strengthening and increasing of it.

Thirdly, By what hath been spoken, we may easily give a Resolution to the *Third Question*, whose Seal it is, whether God's or ours : For it is both. It is God's Seal only,

First, In respect of its Institution. For he hath appointed this Holy Ordinance as a Seal between him and us. And indeed, this is so essential to the Nature and Being of a Sacrament, that nothing can be such, but what hath the Stamp of Divine Institution to warrant it.

Secondly, It is God's Seal, as it is affixed to his Part of the Covenant. For in this Sacrament he seals to us, that if we believe, we shall certainly be saved. But then,

Thirdly, It is our Seal, as we do by receiving of it testify and declare the Truth and Reality of our Faith, and that we do *believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is exhibited unto us in this Sacrament.

Fourthly, These Things therefore being thus clear, I shall come to the *Fourth* General Head propounded, which indeed I principally intended, *viz.* That it is Faith alone, in the Death and Sufferings of Jesus Christ, that makes the Seal of the Sacrament useful and beneficial to our Souls.

First, It is true indeed, that whether we believe or no, this Ordinance will still seal the Truth and Stability of God's Covenant; that *if we believe, we shall be saved*: Yet if we do not believe, of what Use or Benefit will this be to us? Yea, it will rather be a fearful Aggravation of our just Condemnation, in that God hath not only given his Word for our Salvation, but hath so far condescended as to set his Seal to it in this holy Ordinance; and yet neither Salvation promised, nor this Promise sealed, can work upon us to act that Faith upon which Heaven and Happiness is assured.

Secondly, The Sacrament, without Faith in the Partakers, will be still a Seal; yea, but it will only seal them up to the Day

of

of Destruction. For as to a believing Soul it seals his Salvation, so to an unbelieving Partaker it only seals his eternal Damnation. This great Ordinance is never empty nor insignificant: It hath its Signifying, it hath its Sealing Office to the unbelieving Receiver, as well as to the Believing. So that I may say, to all those who join themselves in this Communion, what Christ said to the Jews, *What come you hither for to see, or what come you hither to receive? A little Bread and Wine? Nay, I say unto you, more than Bread and Wine; for this is He of whom it is prophesied, That if ye eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood, ye shall have eternal Life.* If ye be Believers, here ye may see, as in a Type, the whole Load of that Wrath, which Christ underwent for your Sins. If any of you be Unbelievers, here you may see, as in a Type, the whole Load of that Wrath, which you in your own Persons, must eternally undergo for your own Sins. If you are Believers, here you may receive a firm Pledge and Security for your Salvation. If Unbelievers, here you will receive your Damnation too surely confirmed to your Souls under the Hand and Seal of God himself. 'Twill be in vain to think to plead with God at the Last Day, like those who pleaded in

vain: *Luke 13. 26. Lord, Lord, open unto us, for we have eaten and drank in thy Presence.* True; but did not God even then seal unto you, that unless you would believe, and bring forth the Fruits of a true Faith in an Holy Life, you should as certainly *perish*, as you did then eat and drink? You had his Seal indeed; but it was only set to ratify your Condemnation, as long as you should continue in your Impenitence and Infidelity. Had you performed the Condition of the Covenant, this Seal had been set to the Promise, and confirmed your Pardon and Justification; but for want of it, you will at last with Horror see it affixed to the Writ and Warrant for your Execution. Now how sad and deplorable a Thing is this, that when this Holy Ordinance is so full of Consolation and ravishing Delights to the worthy Partakers, sealing unto them the Remission of their Sins, and their Acceptation to eternal Life, it should, for want of a true and saving Faith, seal up any Soul under Wrath and Condemnation. This twofold Sealing Office, the Sacrament hath towards all that partake of it; it will seal to them the Certainty of Eternal Life and Salvation, if they believe; or eternal Wrath and Condemnation, if they remain impenitent

tent and unbelieving. Without Faith, the Sacrament can seal nothing to you that is beneficial and profitable. When God holds forth to you in this Ordinance Christ Jesus, and through him Pardon, Peace and Reconciliation, Justification, Adoption, yea, even Heaven it self, and its everlasting Glories; the believing Partaker may boldly and sweetly say, that *all these are his*; for Faith indeed is the Conveyance of these Things to the Soul; and therefore wheresoever it is acted, it must needs make the Sacrament Seal effectually. It is Faith that justifies; and therefore this Sacrament that seals unto you your Justification, if you believe, seals effectually. It is Faith that makes you accepted in the Beloved; for without Faith it is impossible to please God: And therefore this Sacrament which seals your Acceptation upon your Believing, seals effectually. It is Faith that saves you; and therefore this Sacrament that seals unto you your Salvation, if you believe, seals effectually: For it seals to you, that That shall be done, if you believe; which your Believing will certainly do.

But yet all this it doth, by leading the Soul to the Consideration of, and Recumbence upon the Sufferings of Jesus Christ,
by

by which these Benefits are procured. For it would be utterly in vain for Faith to apprehend, or for the Sacraments to seal to us, that which was never purchased for us. And therefore the Apostle calls it, *the Cup of the New Testament in Christ's Blood*, in the fore-cited Place, i. e. it is the Seal of the New Testament or Covenant in the Blood of Christ. This Seal must be dip'd in Blood before it can ratify or confirm any Privilege and Benefit unto us. They are all purchased with Blood; and they all come flowing down to us in a Stream of Blood.

Well then, whensoever you come to this great Seal Office of the Gospel, be sure that you set Faith on Work; else your frequent Communication in this Ordinance, to say nothing worse, will be but the fastening, and annexing of many Seals to a large Grant and Charter, which you have no Title unto. What a sad and wretched Mistake will it be, if after you have had the Covenant so often sealed and confirmed, all those Seals should prove of no more Use nor Value, than if they were set to a Blank: For the Promise is no better than a Blank, if the Condition on your Part be not performed. Will it not be sad and dreadful, when Men at the Last Day, when they

they were arraigned by the Justice of God, shall stand forth and plead, *Lord, here is the Covenant wherein thou hast promis'd me Life and Salvation ; here are so many Seals hanging at it, whereby thou hast confirmed that promise to me ;* and then it shall be said, *True, here is the Covenant, and here are the Seals, but where is the Performance of the Condition ?* What a gross Mistake, what Shame and Confusion of Face will this be, to look no better after the Condition of that Bond, and the Nature of those Seals that were to convey to us no less than an eternal Inheritance!

Well then, when you have the Elements, the *Bread* and the *Wine*, delivered into your Hands, do but seriously think with your selves, now God is delivering a broken a bleeding Saviour unto me, If I will by Faith receive him, he testifies and seals by his *Bread* and *Wine*, that I shall certainly receive Remission of my Sins and everlasting Life through him. Let us therefore say, *Lord Jesus, I now accept of thee upon thine own Terms, or the very Conditions on which thou art pleased to tender thy self unto me : I take a Broken Christ for my intire Saviour, a Christ crown'd with Thorns for my alone King : He shall be my Prophet whom the Blasphemous Jews buffeted and derided with a Prophecy, Who*
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smote

smote thee ? As I reach forth my bodily Hand to receive the *Bread* and the *Wine*, so I reach forth the Spiritual Hand of my Faith to receive that Christ whose *Body* was thus broken, and whose *Blood* was thus poured forth. Now to those only who thus by Faith receive Christ Jesus, who thus *eat* his *Flesh*, and *drink* his *Blood*, this Sacrament doth seal and confirm, that they shall have *Eternal Life* by him, and shall be raised up at the Last Day, to that Glory with which he is invested.

And now, my Brethren, I am sent to you by my Lord and Master Jesus Christ, who is both *the Lord of the Feast*, and *the Feast it self*, to invite you to come, and to tell you that all Things are ready. Behold, he himself expects you ; and after such Cost that he hath been at in furnishing a Table for you, when he hath provided his own *Flesh* for your *Meat*, and his own *Blood* for your *Drink*, after so many kind and endearing Invitations that he hath made you, he cannot but take it as an high Contempt of his Love, and an Injury done to the Friendship he offers, if you should yet delay, or refuse his Entertainment. Yet, I fear, it will befall this, as it did the *Wedding Supper*, that too many will make light of it, and
either

either by slight Excuses, or downright Denials, leave this Table unfurnish'd of Guests, which is so abundantly furnish'd with Provision. Must I be sent back with a Refusal? Or shall I have that joyful Answer from you all, that you will come? I hope I shall not return ashamed; that you will not turn your Backs upon your Saviour, who hath given himself for you, and now offers himself unto you, and that you will not damp the Devotion of those who present themselves to this Holy Institution by the sad and discouraging Consideration of the Paucity of their Number.

Suffer me a little to expostulate with you; and I beseech of you only these Two Things:

The One is, to lay aside all Prejudice, and to consider Things nakedly and impartially; weighing them only according to the clear Evidence of Truth, and not by the deceitful Ballance either of preconceived Opinions, or former Practices.

The Other is, that in a Matter which you your selves must needs acknowledge to be doubtful and disputable, you would think it possible you might be mistaken. Let not contrary Customs, nor the deep Impressions of any other Perswasion, bribe your

your Judgments to give Vote against the manifest Dictates of Truth and Reason. For otherwise, if we come to the Disquisition of any Opinion with Prepossession and a stiff Adherence to formerly received Principles; though the Proofs be clear, and the Arguments irrefragable, yet the Affections will blindly mutiny and murmur against the Convictions of Reason, and think that still there might be somewhat more said in their own Defence, though they know not what. Therefore, I beseech you, let not your Affections lead your Judgment, but your Judgment them. Take the Byass out of your Minds. Consider Things indifferently, as if you had never heard of them before; and be altogether unconcerned which Side hath the Truth, but only concern'd to follow the Truth when it appears so to you: This is but an equal Request, not only in this, but in all other Debates concerning the Truth of Doctrine. For where the Mind is forestalled with an overweaning Conceit, that the Notions we have already taken up are infallibly true and certain, and that whatsoever can be said against them is but Sophistry and Delusion; this will render us wholly incapable of being convinced of our Mistakes, and reduced from our ~~Errors~~
Prejudice

Prejudice is the Jaundice of the Soul, and colours every Thing by its own Distemper. Or as a Man that looks thro' a Painted Glass, sees every Object of the same Colour that the Glass is; so when our Understanding is once deeply tinged with former Notions, all that we look upon will receive a Colour from them; nor can we ever hope to see Things as they are, until our Judgment be cleansed from whatsoever our Affection to such a Way, or our Admiration of such Persons, or any other Perverter of Reason, have painted and died them with.

Well then, let me argue the Case with you, and I shall do it plainly and freely, and I hope without any Bitterness, or giving Offence to any who will not be offended with Reason that contradicts them. May not most of the Scruples, that have hitherto kept you off from Communion with us in this Gospel-Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, be reduced to these Four Heads?

1st. Some scruple their own Fitness and Preparedness.

2^{dly}. Others the Gesture of Kneeling in Receiving.

3^{dly}. Others, our promiscuous Assemblies, and the Admission of those to the Sacra-

Sacrament who are ignorant, or scandalous, or both.

4thly. Others are afraid of giving Offence unto, or grieving their weak Brethren, who are not satisfied in the Lawfulness of communicating with us upon the Accounts before-mentioned.

I think I have faithfully collected the Sum of all that any have to object, under these Four Heads. And if there be any Thing which is not reducible to one of these, I should gladly learn it, and endeavour to give full Satisfaction. Now whether any of these be such Excuses, as may sufficiently justify your rejecting the Invitation I have made you to this Gospel and Spiritual Feast, I shall leave to your own Consciences to judge, after we have particularly examined them.

1st. To the *First*, who desireth to be held excused, not because he judgeth the Administration of the Sacrament in the Way wherein it is now dispens'd, unlawful, but only because he looks upon himself as unprepared, and therefore is afraid to come. I answer,

First, Hast thou not had Time and Opportunities enough to prepare thy self? How often hast thou been warned and admonish'd to fit, and to put on thy Wedding

Duty : For this indeed is nothing else, but that thou dar'st not but sin, because thou hast sinned.

But may some say, The Apostle terrifies me in this Matter of the Sacrament, by pronouncing that dreadful Sentence; *1 Cor. 11. 29. He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself :* And therefore, because I have sinned in neglecting due Preparation, I dare no more approach unto those holy Mysteries, than I dare eat burning Coals, or swallow whole Draughts of Fire and Brimstone.

'Tis true, the Apostle hath pronounced that terrible Doom upon unworthy Receiving : But is it not as true, that he that prays unworthily, prays Damnation to himself, and he that hears unworthily, hears Damnation to himself ? If thou art not worthy to receive the Sacrament, thou art not worthy neither to pray, saith *St. Chrysost. ad Pop. Ant. Hom. 61.* Now wilt thou, or dar'st thou, omit the Duties of Praying, or Hearing, upon a Pretence that thou art not sufficiently prepared to perform them ? Certainly, if to receive unworthily, be Damnation ; then not to receive at all, because thou art unworthy, is double Damnation, being double Guilt, unless thou canst sin thy self out
of

of Debt to God's Commands, and make that to be no Duty upon thy Offence, which was thy Duty before it.

And then as for Preparation, though it be very fit and requisite, that before so solemn an Ordinance as this is, we should allot some Time for a more serious Scrutiny and Search of our own Hearts, and the Stirring up of the Graces of God within us ; yet, I must profess, that I look upon that Man who hath endeavoured to serve God conscientiously in the ordinary Duties of every Day, to be sufficiently prepared for this holy and blessed Ordinance, if he be suddenly called to partake of it ; and called to it he is, whensoever he hath an Opportunity of receiving. And that a pious and inoffensive Christian Life, was look'd upon as the best Preparation to this holy Ordinance, as this Ordinance it self was look'd upon to be the greatest Obligation to such a Life, appears by the Histories of the Primitive Times ; wherein we have Account given us, that the Christians did every Day, and at the farthest every Lord's Day, communicate in the Lord's Supper : Yea, in St. Cyprian's Time, 250 Years after Christ, he tells us, *Eucharistiam quotidie ad cibum salutis accipimus*, in Orat.

Dom. num. 48. So that certainly there could be no considerable Space of Time set apart for a particular Preparation, but an holy blameless Life was thought sufficient to qualify them for worthy Receivers; neither do we find that they put such a Mock-Honour upon the holy Sacrament as to advance it so high, that they durst not come near it, and to neglect it out of pure Respect.

And this is all that I shall leave to the Consideration of those who absent themselves, because they are not duly prepared: It is their great Sin, that they are not prepared; but this Sin cannot excuse them from their Duty. That to avoid one Sin, they become guilty of two; to avoid Receiving unworthily, they receive not at all, but most unworthily forbear; and because they sin in not Preparing, they resolve likewise to sin in not Receiving. Which is just as good an Excuse, as if a Servant should therefore refuse to do any Thing the whole Day, because he rose not so early in the Morning as he should have done. But,

Secondly, Others scruple the very Lawfulness of Receiving the Sacrament in our Way of Administring it, and say, They are not satisfied as to the Gesture of Kneeling;

ing; for so, and not otherwise, hath Authority commanded us to communicate.

Two Things they object against it :

The One, That it symbolizeth too much with the Idolatry of the Church of Rome.

The Other, That not Kneeling, but Sitting, is a Table-Posture, and that which Christ used when he celebrated his last Supper with his Apostles, whose Example we ought to imitate.

First, It is objected, That it symbolizeth and agreeth too much with the Idolatry of the *Romish* Church : For they, according to their absurd and impious Doctrine of Transubstantiation, falsely believing the corporal Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, that the Bread is truly and properly his Body, and the Wine his Blood, do consonantly enough to that Error, fall down and worship him whom they believe to be there bodily present. If therefore we disavow and abhor that Doctrine, why should we imitate that Practice?

To this I answer ; 1st. It is well known that the Pope himself, the Head and Prince of that Anti-christian Synagogue, receives the Sacrament sitting, and not kneeling, thinking it be-like the Privilege and Prerogative of his Supereminent Dignity, to be more rude and unmannerly, and, as it were, an equal Fellow with our Saviour, than is allowed unto others, Yet we object it not to our Dissenting Brethren, that they imitate this Man of Sin, who exalts himself above all that is called God, for they disavow it. Let them afford us the same Charity, and be more sober and modest than to object to us, that we imitate his Vassals ; for this we equally disavow, and renounce.

2^{dly}. I answer ; That a Gesture abused to Idolatry, becomes not therefore idolatrous. Otherwise, because the Heathens used Kneeling and Prostration to their false Gods, it would now be unlawful for Christians to use them to the true : And why do they not object to us, That the Papists do idolatrously kneel to their Images, and when they pray to their Saints, and that therefore we must not kneel when we worship God, but that we may be at a perfect Distance both from *Rome* and Reason, must sit, as too many
of

of them most irreverently do in their choicest Devotions?

3dly. I answer; That the End for which all outward Postures of the Body are used, determines them, and makes them either morally good, or evil: For Kneeling being of it self an indifferent Action, it is only the End which we propound to our selves in it, which can render it good or bad. Now lest any should be either so weak, or so ill-natured as to surmise that this Custom is retained as a Relick of Idolatry, and that it will prove an Advantage for it to creep in again amongst us, see what the Church hath most expressly declared in that excellent Caution annexed at the End of the Order for the Communion: “ Lest (say they) “ that Kneeling should by any Persons “ be misconstrued and depraved; It is “ declared, that thereby no Adoration is “ intended, or ought to be done either “ to the Sacramental Bread and Wine “ there bodily received, or to any Corporal Presence of Christ’s natural Flesh “ and Blood: For the Sacramental Bread “ and Wine remain still in their very “ natural Substances, and therefore may “ not be adored; for that were Idolatry, “ to be abhorred by all faithful Christi-

“ans.: And the natural Body and Blood
 “of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven,
 “and not here: It being against the
 “Truth of Christ’s Natural Body, to be
 “at one Time in more Places than one.”

A Declaration, let me speak it without
 Offence, that will be of more Validity to
 keep out that prodigious and stupid Error
 of Popery, than all the discontented Cla-
 mours of those who cry, *It is coming in:*
 And if ever God so far abandon us to
 suffer that pestilent Doctrine again to pre-
 vail over us, it must first be by pulling
 down the Orders and Discipline of the
 Church, which some, with equal Zeal and
 Ignorance, are very busy to do, and there-
 by prove the most industrious Factors for
 the promoting of that Cause which they
 pretend most of all to detest. And if ever
 the Discontents and Divisions of Pro-
 testants proceed to effect what the misled
 Passions, and furious Begottry of so many
 of them design, then, and not till then,
 shall the Anti-christian Faction obtain its
 Ends, and enter upon that Harvest which
 our Rents, Schisms and Separations, have
 ripened for them. I speak the Words of
 Truth and Soberness; you that are wise;
 judge ye what I say. But then,

Secondly,

Secondly, Others object against Kneeling, That it is not a Table-Gesture ; it was not used by our Lord, nor his Disciples, when he instituted this most holy Ordinance : And why should not we be allowed to imitate Christ, and them? And to receive the Sacrament in the same Posture wherein he administred it, that is, Sitting, or some other Gesture correspondent to it, since his Pattern, where we have no express Command, is the best Rule and Guide of our Actions?

Now to this I answer : *1st*. It must be proved, that Christ used that Gesture, intending to make it exemplary to us, and obliging us to the Imitation of it : If this cannot be, then he used it as a Thing wholly indifferent : And all know that those Actions of Christ, which were merely indifferent, lay no Obligation upon our Practice to do the like. If all the Circumstances that Christ observed in the Administration of his Supper, must likewise be necessarily observed to us, then must we celebrate it in the Evening, after Supper, in an upper Room, and that leaning upon Beds, with many other Particulars, which long Use and Custom hath made obsolete, if not to us absurd and ridiculous.

culous. But these being all indifferent Things, they lay no Obligation upon us to imitate them.

2dly. We do not condemn Sitting in those Churches whose Laws have not prescribed against it. The Customs of Churches are in this Particular divers, and let each retain their own, as long as there is nothing in it substantially, and materially amiss. Some reformed Churches receive Sitting, others Standing, or Walking. Now, were I cast among those Churches, I would never refuse their Communion because they did not kneel; neither would I kneel my self, to avoid giving of Offence by introducing a Practice, which though as lawful as theirs, and perhaps more commendable, yet would be a Stranger to their Custom. Would any of you, were you in the Reformed Churches of *France*, forsake their Communion rather than receive any other Way than Sitting? I suppose you would conform to their Gesture of Standing, or Walking: And why not then to ours, of Kneeling, unless it be that nothing so much displeaseth, as what we find at Home? For the Surmise of Idolatry in it, I have before proved it vain. This I am sure is the Direction which St. *Ambrose* gaveto St. *Augustin's* Mother *Monica*, when she

he was to travel to other Churches that observed different Customs from that of *Milain* : *If thou wilt not (saith he) either give Offence, or take Offence, conform thy self to all the lawful Customs of the Church whither thou comest.*

3dly. I think I may somewhat forcibly retort the Argument : Our Saviour, say they, used Sitting, therefore we ought not to kneel. Yea, let it not seem strange to you if I argue thus ; Our Saviour used Sitting, therefore we may kneel. This Consequence, which may possibly seem somewhat uncouth at first, I make good thus : In the Institution of the Passover, God commanded that it should be eaten in a Standing Posture, with their Shoes on their Feet, and their Staves in their Hands : But yet Time and Custom had at length worn out this Observation : And therefore when the Use of the Nation had brought it to Discumbency, or Leaning on Beds after the *Roman* Manner, though at first there were an expresse Command for another Gesture ; yet our Saviour so far accommodates himself to the received Custom, as to use it with them. Now could there be as much produced to prove the Necessity of Sitting at the Sacrament, as there might have been to prove the Necessity of Standing at the Passover ; I
doubt

doubt whether those who plead so much for it, would not mainly triumph in such an Argument, and account it altogether unanswerable: And yet we see the Custom of the *Jewish* Church prevails with our Saviour to do that which seems literally to contradict a Command of God; and rather than he would go contrary to the Observances that were then in Use among them, he chuseth to omit that which was required in the Primitive Institution: How much more then ought we, who have nothing at all left to determine the Gesture, conform our selves to the Usage of the Church in which we live, and whose Members we are; for this is to conform our selves, not indeed to the very Gesture, but what is much more considerable, to the Will and Intention of Christ.

But then again, *4thly*, Whereas it is objected, That Kneeling is a very improper Posture at a Table, I think, if I should pass it over with this short answer, That the Peace and Unity of the Church, is more to be regarded than what some Men account proper or improper, and that it is not the Accurateness of every petty Circumstance and Punctilio that ought to be laid in the Ballance against so weighty and fundamental a Duty as our Participa-
tion

tion of this Ordinance; and that it is no Extenuation of our Sin to turn our Backs upon these holy Myſteries, becauſe every Thing is not ordered as we fancy, and deem moſt convenient: If, I ſay, I ſhould give no other Answer but this, yet, I ſuppoſe, this would be enough to ſatisfy all grave and conſiderate Perſons. But, yet to vindicate this Cuſtom from the Imputation of Impropriety, let us add farther;

First, That that can be no unſitting Geſture, which is moſt ſignificant of our Humility and Proſtration of Soul. Should we grovel in the very Duſt before our dear Redeemer, to teſtify our Abhorrence of our ſelves, and our moſt bitter Repentance for thoſe Sins which ſhed that moſt precious Blood, and brake and pierced that bleſſed Body which our Lord Chriſt comes there, to offer us as a Pledge of our Pardon and Salvation, would any be ſo proudly cenſorious as to call this an improper Action? Or is it improper for guilty Malefactorſ, Rebels caſt and condemned by Law, to receive their Pardon upon their Knees? Doth not God ſeal to every penitent and believing Sinner, the Pardon of his Sins, and his Acceptation into Grace and Favour, in this holy Sacrament? And can any Geſture be ſo humble and reverent, as to be judged improper for the Receiving

ceiving of so great and so ineffable a Mercy as that?

Secondly, Consider that the very Sacramental Action it self is accompanied with Prayer : There is both Thanksgiving, and Petition in it, and both those are Parts of Prayer. And what Gesture more proper for Prayer, than Kneeling? The Sacrament it self is a Sacrifice of Praise, and therefore constantly called by the Ancients *Eucharistia*, or *Thanksgiving*. And the Administration of it is attended with Prayer; “ The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ
“ which was given for thee, preserve thy
“ Body and Soul; and the Blood of our
“ Lord Jesus Christ which was shed for
“ thee, preserve thy Body and Soul unto
“ everlasting Life. ” Now he must have the Knees of an Elephant, and the Heart of an Oak, who will not bow himself, and with all humble Adoration and Worship, cry *Amen* to so pathetical a Prayer made by the Minister to God on his Behalf.

And so much for the Second great Objection about the Gesture, wherein I hope I have sufficiently evinced, that Kneeling in the Act of Receiving, is neither idolatrous, nor improper, nor a Deviation from the Example of our Lord and Saviour.

the Two Sacraments.

111

Thirdly, Another great Stumbling-block which lies in the Way (which yet, I hope, to remove if you your selves do not fasten it by your Prejudices) is that of promiscuous Receiving; and the Admission of those to the Sacrament who are ignorant, or scandalous, or both. To answer this;

1st. Dost thou know any of them to be so? If not; the standing Rule of Charity is, to think no Evil, 1 *Corinth.* 13. 5. & Doctrine much to be press'd upon this wildly censorious Age, wherein every one judgeth himself to be holy and godly, according as he can judge and condemn others to be wicked and ungodly. And let me tell you freely, this Whispering and Backbiting, and Entertaining of blind Rumours and idle Reports, screwing and wresting every Thing to the worst Sense, and speaking Evil of others at Random and Peradventure, is, according to the Observations that I have been able to make, a great and reigning Sin in this Corner of the World: And it is a Sin so contrary to the mild and gentle Spirit of the Gospel, a Sin so truly suspicious of Hypocrisy and Pharisaism, that I profess I think I should as soon think a Man a good-Christian because he is proud,
or

or because he is envious, or malicious, as I should because he is continually accusing, and censuring, and exclaiming against the Faults of other Men; as if it were a certain Mark of his Christianity, to set a Mark of Infamy upon others.

But then suppose thou dost certainly know them guilty, and therefore refusest to communicate with them.

2dly. Let me ask thee, Whether thou hast observed the Rule of Jesus Christ towards thy offending Brother, before thou thus account him an Heathen, and a Publican? The Rule that he hath given us, we find *Matth. 18. ver. 15, 16, 17.* and it is a most observable Place to this Purpose: *If thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy Brother: But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the Mouth of two or three Witnesses, every Word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: But if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee as an Heathen Man and a Publican.* This is a perpetual standing Rule in this Case, from which we ought not to vary: *If thy Brother shall trespass against thee; i. e. not only if he shall wrong thee, but, if he shall wrong either his God, or his Religion,*

gion, by any flagitious Crime that gives Offence and Scandal to thee, and so is a Trespas also against thee : VVhat then ? Must thou presently forsake the Communion of the Church, because of such an one's Offences ? No, saith our Saviour, first of all it is thy Duty to admonish him privately : If thereupon he reform, thou savest thy Brother : If yet he persist, thou must not as yet break off Communion with him, but try another Course. Take with thee grave and faithful VVitnesses, and again admonish and reprove him. Though this Course should not prevail neither, yet still thou must own him as thy Brother, and communicate in all Ordinances with him, till thou hast tried the last Remedy, and that is to tell the Church, *i. e.* the Sanhedrim, who in our Saviour's Time, were both Ecclesiastical and Civil Judges : Inform those of his Miscarriages, who have the Power of the Keys committed unto them. And if he hear not them neither, but still persist obstinately and resolvedly in his Sins, then at last *let him be to thee as an Heathen Man and a Publican* ; that is, after the Church hath excommunicated, and cast him out from the Assembly, and Society of the Faithful (for that is supposed in those

Words, if he hear not the Church, and will not obey their Sentence and Decree.)

But suppose I should tell the Church, and yet the Offender is not cut off by a due Execution of the Sentence of Excommunication, may I not then look upon him as an Heathen, and refuse Communion with him?

By no Means : For our Saviour in this Place bids us to account such a Man as an Heathen and Publican, on Supposition only of Church Censures pass'd upon him. And therefore he presently adds, *Verse 17. Let him be to thee as an Heathen Man and a Publican ; and, Verse 18. Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven, i. e. whose-soever Sins ye shall bind upon his Soul by the dreadful Sentence of Excommunication, they shall be bound upon his Soul by the God of Heaven, and your Deed shall be ratified and confirmed by his Justice.* So then as long as he continues in the Church, so long thou oughtest to account him thy Brother, and to communicate with him in all Ordinances : For though thou oughtest to be his Re-prover, yet thou art not appointed to be his Judge, neither must thou remove thy self, because perhaps thou canst not remove him. What some Mens Opinion

in this Matter may be, I do not know, but I am sure this is the Mind of Jesus Christ, and his express Command. Now thou who refusest to come to the holy Communion, because perhaps there may be some scandalous Sinner there, hast thou discharged thy Duty first towards him? Hast thou rebuked him privately between him and thee? Hast thou upon Contempt of that private Admonition, rebuked him before select Witnesses? Hast thou upon his continued Obstinacy, complained to the Church of the Scandal and Offence he hath given thee? If not, whosoever thou be, I charge it upon thy Soul, and answer it to God his Judge, and thine, how darest thou to separate from the Communion of the Church? How darest thou contradict the express Order and Command of Christ, and think thy self the more holy and more pure for doing so. Is this Conscience? Is this Religion? Is this strict Piety and Godliness? Let me tell thee, it is a Piece of gross Hypocrisy and Pharisaical Pride to separate, because of their Sins, and yet never to reprove them for their Sins. Never think by this Course to escape being a Partaker of their Guilt. If they profane this holy Ordinance, if they eat and drink Damnation to themselves, thou art the Cause

of it, who oughtest after Admonition to have accused them, and art as much polluted by it, as if thou hadst joined with them; yea, and more, since another Man's Sins cannot pollute me, unless I am defective in mine own Duty. Thou communicatest with them in their Guilt and Sin, but only refuseth to communicate with them in the Worship and Service of God.

But possibly you will say, Tell the Church. To what purpose is that? When is it that we see any cut off for notorious and scandalous Crimes? It may be for disobeying the Orders of the Church in Point of Government and Discipline, some few may undergo this heavy Censure; but fewer for transgressing the Laws of God, and the great Precepts of Moral and Christian and Honesty. To this I answer;

First, 'Tis a gross, though common Mistake, to think, that Disobedience against the lawful Commands of Authority, is not as heinous a Sin, as those open Pollutions which abound too much in the World, and appear black and ugly to every Man's Eye and Reason: For sure I am it is as often, and as expressly forbidden as any Sin whatsoever; and the Consequences of it are of more publick

Mischief than those of other Sins which may be more scandalous, but cannot be more damning.

Secondly, .I answer, That never was there, nor indeed can there be, either in our Church, or any other Church, shæpe the Government of it after what Model you please, any Person excommunicated, but only upon the Account of Contempt of its Authority. Let his Crime be what it will in the first Instance, yet it cannot be for that, but only for Disobedience that this dreadful Sentence is denounc'd against any. For if the Offender submit and be penitent, there needs no such Censure, since it is appointed only to bring them to Repentance. If he doth not submit either to the Trial of the Cause, or the Satisfaction imposed: In the first Case there can be no Judgment made concerning the Crime of which he stands accused; in the second, he is excommunicated, not because his Guilt is proved, but because he obstinately refuseth to give due Satisfaction for it: So that in both it is merely Contempt and Disobedience that can involve any Person in this Censure. And this holds certainly and universally of all the Churches of Christ upon Earth, of

whatsoever Denomination or Discipline they be.

But, *Thirdly*, If so few are excommunicated, who are guilty of scandalous and flagitious Offences, I beseech you to consider whether a great Part of this Blame may not be laid upon your selves for not doing your Duties in accusing and convicting them. Have you ever made any publick Complaints against obstinate and incorrigible Sinners that were not heard and accepted? If not; why do you accuse the Church, to which you ought to accuse others? But once for all, let me speak it to you who are of this Parish, that if any of you shall duly accuse any of those too few who communicate with us of a scandalous Crime committed by him, and will undertake to prove and justify his Accusation, I will here undertake not to admit such an one, until he hath given Satisfaction according to the Nature of his Offence.

But howsoever, suppose that all the Officers of the Church were negligent in their Duty, that can be no Excuse for not performing yours. If you do your Duty, you leave it upon their Consciences, and have delivered your own Souls. But in any Case you ought not

to separate from Communion with any Church-Member 'till he ceaseth to be a Church-Member, and is cut off by the Sword of Excommunication. Then, and not 'till then, you may look upon him as an Heathen Man, and a Publican: For wicked Mens communicating pollutes the Ordinance only to themselves, and not to you. If they eat and drink unworthily, they eat and drink *Damnation* to themselves, but not to the worthy Partakers. The Virtue and Efficacy of the Ordinances comes not to you, through those who are Communicants with you, (for then indeed it might receive a Taint from their Pollution) but it comes immediately from the Institution and Benediction of Jesus Christ: So that when you have performed your Duty, you may receive a pure Sacrament in the Assembly, whereof some may be impure and defiled.

But here I know, Flesh and Blood will tumultuate, and say, This is the ready Way to run my Head into a Bee-hive. What need I, that may live quietly by my Neighbours, provoke their Enmity and Hatred by turning Informer? For accusing them will prove but a thankless and a troublesome Office. Truly, I know no Necessity for it, besides the strict and ex-

press Command of Jesus Christ. And wilt thou be thought to value the Purity of his Ordinances, who dost not value the Authority of his Commands. Tell it the Church, is his Injunction; and if this be to be an Informer, know that the Name is more honourable than is vulgarly apprehended, and it is far better to be an Informer than a Schismatick.

But the great Place insisted on to invalidate all this that I have said, is 1 Cor. 5. 11. *But now I have written unto you, not to keep Company; if any Man that is called a Brother be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat.* And from this it is argued, that if I may not eat common Bread with them, then much less may I eat sacred Bread with them at the Lord's Table.

I am sorry I have so just Occasion to retort the Argument against their Practice. For certainly if our dissenting Brethren would exclude all Fornicators, and Railers, and Drunkards from their Society, their Sacraments would not be such general Musters as they are, but perhaps be as thin as ours. But to pass that by, I return a double Answer.

First, That we may well conceive the Apostle here giving Direction to the whole Church

Church of the *Corinthians*, what Method they should use towards those who were profligate and notorious Sinners; and he bids them that they should *not company, nor eat with them*, i. e. that they should cast them out of the Church, not cast themselves out. They should excommunicate them from the Body of the Faithful; but not that any of them should separate from the Communion of holy Ordinances before they were excommunicated. This Sense seems very fair and full: For in the foregoing Part of the Chapter, the Apostle had given them in Charge, to cast out *the incestuous Person*, who was a notorious Example of Wickedness, and a great Scandal to their Church. Afterwards he sets down Rules how they should demean themselves towards others who were likewise guilty of known Crimes. And these he distinguisheth into two Sorts; those who visibly belonged to the World, and were profess'd Heathens; and those who belonged to the visible Church, and were wicked Christians. For the former Sort, he tells them, that they might civilly eat with them, *Verse 9, 10. I wrote to you in an Epistle, not to company with Fornicators; yet not altogether with the Fornicators of this World, or with the Covetous, or Ex-*
tortioners,

portioners, or Idolaters ; for then must ye needs go out of the World. That is, I meant not that you wholly abstain from the Converse of Heathens, who are vile and wicked ; for since the greatest Part of the World are Heathens, the Necessity of Humane Life requires that you should have Commerce and Dealing with them. But for the other sort, those who are lewd and wicked Christians, *cast them out ; Company not ; eat not with any Brother that is a Fornicator, or Covetous, or a Drunkard, or the like :* Account them as Heathens, yea, worse than Heathens, in as much as they deny that Faith by their Practice, which they profess with their Mouths. The whole Scope of which seems to be, that the Apostle commands them to deal with such as with *the incestuous Person*, and that the Church ought to cut them off by Excommunication ; but not that any Member of the Church should separate from Communion with them in the publick Ordinances, until that judicial Act were pass'd upon them. But,

Secondly, Most likely it is, that when the Apostle forbids us to eat with such, he means only familiar Domestical Eating, and not Ecclesiastical in the Participation of the *Lord's Supper*, if so be they be not cut off by the Censure of Excommunication.

cation. And that appears, because the Apostle forbids them so to eat with wicked Christians, as they might lawfully eat with wicked and idolatrous Heathens. *I forbid not, saith he, all Converse with Heathens that never made Profession of the Faith and Religion of Jesus Christ : But I forbid you to company with a Brother that walketh disorderly, yea, I would not have you so much as to eat with such an one.* Now if they might eat with professed Heathens, but not with licentious Christians, I suppose it will be evident to every one that hath but Understanding enough to name him a Man, that this Eating here spoken of, was not Eating at the Sacrament, for what had Heathens to do there, but only of private, friendly, and familiar Eating ?

But still it may be, and it is urged, that if we may not eat with them civilly at their own Table, much less then may we eat with them religiously at God's. To this I answer,

First, That we have now the same Liberty allowed for our Converse with wicked Christians, as the Apostle granted for converse with wicked Heathens; or else truly, as he saith, *We must needs go out of the World :* And therefore the Circumstances of Times being so much alter'd, we may lawfully eat and converse with them,

them, since in many Places there are few others to converse with.

Secondly, I answer, it doth not at all follow, that if I may not eat familiarly with a loose Christian, therefore I may not eat sacramentally with him; for the one is of mere Choice, the other is my necessary Duty 'till he be cast out of the Church. * I may chuse my Acquaintance and familiar Friend with whom to converse: And if I chuse those who are wicked and ungodly, I then sin, because I shew I have a Delight in vain Persons. But I cannot chuse Church-Members, nor say I will communicate with this Man, and not with this 'till one of them be cut off from the Body of Christ by Excommunication, unless I intend to make a Rent and a Schism; which certainly they do, who depart from the Communion of the Church upon such a Pretence.

* Calvin. advers. Anabapt. Quod autem vstat cum his cibum sumere qui sunt Vita dissoluta, id ad privatam consuetudinem pertinet, non ad publ. Communionem.

This, I think, may be sufficient in answer to the Third great Objection, That it is unlawful to partake with us of the *Lord's Supper*, because sometimes wicked Men are admitted unto it. For besides, that our Saviour himself admitted *Judas*, whom he calls a Devil; and that the Congregations of the Schism are not so perfectly pure, but that we may, without Breach
of

of Charity, tell them, *All are not Saints whom they admit* : Besides this, if you know any scandalous Persons among us, 'tis your own Fault they are admitted ; and will you leave off that which is your Duty, for not doing your Duty ? If when you have done your Duty, yet they are still retained, the Fault ceaseth to be yours, and lies upon them whose Care it ought to be to exclude such ; nor doth your Communion in that Case pollute the Ordinance to you. We are not to eat with them after they are cut off by the Censures of the Church ; but we may eat with them whilst they continue Members of the Church, although perhaps it may be the Sin of others to retain them.

Fourthly, and Lastly, Some may think it unlawful to communicate with us, because of the Scandal and Offence that thereby will be given to weak Brethren. Though they have no such great Doubts nor Scruples in themselves that should deter them from coming, yet they are afraid of that Woe which Christ hath denounced against those who offend *any of the Little Ones*.

To this I answer only in brief, That if we are once fully satisfied in our Consciences that it is our Duty, we ought not to take any Notice at all of the Censures

sures and Offences of the whole World :
 Yea, tho' the Offence they take should
 not be only an Offence of Contristation,
 and cause Sorrow in them when they see
 us do that which is contrary to their pre-
 sent Judgment : But though it should
 prove an Occasion of Sin unto them, yet
 we ought not to forbear it, nor to sin
 our selves to keep others from sinning.
 For as we must not do Evil out of Hope
 that Good may come thereby, so neither
 must we forbear what is Good out of
 Fear that Evil may ensue thereupon.
 When we approve our selves to God and
 our own Consciences, we ought not to
 value the Censures of others who decry
 our Duties, nor put our selves out of
 the Way of our Obedience, to put others
 out of their groundless Offences. If they
 will be offended at my doing of my
 Duty, let them be offended. And this
 shall be my Comfort, that if I have not
 their good Word, yet I shall have the
 good Word of mine own Conscience, and
 at last the good Word of my God, with
 an *Engè, Well done, good and faithful Ser-*
vant ; and then let all the Men in the
 World think and speak what they will
 of me.

And

And thus I have gone through those four grand Objections that usually keep Men off from participating of the holy Ordinance of the *Lord's Supper*, and hope I have answered them satisfactorily.

Nothing now remains but earnestly to beseech you, for the Lord Christ's sake, who offers that *Flesh* and *Blood* to you which he offered upon the Cross to his Father, that you would no longer content your selves in your Separation, but come unanimously with us to receive that *Blood* by which both you, and we, hope to be saved. And let not some little Circumstances (which yet you see how defensible they are, and how hard to be gain-said by Scripture or Reason) make you fly off from so substantial and necessary a Duty as this is. Certainly it shews, that we have but little Spiritual Hunger and Thirst, if we cannot endure wholesome Food, though it be not in every Particular dress'd as we could fancy.