

A SERMON ON THE ENDS OF THE SACRAMENT.

And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in king's houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.—MAT. xi. 7-9.

THE context standeth thus—

1. A message is sent from John in prison to Christ. He sendeth two of his disciples to inquire if he were the Messiah, not for his own satisfaction, but theirs. They were offended in Christ out of respect to their master.

2. Christ's answer to this message. He referreth them to his works. What do you see and hear? Which teacheth us that our works should praise us in the gates, not our own lips. When the question is put, Are you the sons of God, yea or nay? what are your works? works exceeding the power of nature? John x. 38, 'If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though you believe not me, believe the works.' You should allow the full place of an evidence to them.

3. As they departed, Christ commendeth John, not before his disciples, lest he might confirm their error, or by flattery seek to ingratiate with them, or to teach us this moral instruction, that none is to be praised before his face: 'When John's disciples were departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see?'

In commending John, he first beginneth with the people, inquiring after the reason of their great resort to him before he was in prison. Three times he propoundeth the question. Surely when such multitudes came from all coasts and quarters, you saw some reason for it. What was your aim? Was it by chance, or to behold some worldly greatness, or to hear the word of God from some great prophet? Was it a childish errand, a carnal design, or a religious reason that moved you to hear a prophet of the Lord? You that run after him, had high thoughts of him, you did not go out to see a reed. Plenty grew in the wilderness, that was not your errand; you did not look upon John as such. A reed is a fit emblem of an inconstant person; it bendeth now

this way, anon that way. John was no such reed; he changed not his testimony for frowns or flatteries: 'What went ye out for to see?' Gallantry is not to be seen in the desert, but in a king's court. What was it that moved you? Why doth Christ put the question thrice? Partly to show that the reasons that move us to a duty should be well examined. Partly to shame them that they had no more obtained the right end. Surely ye went to see a prophet, You will not own that all this resort was to a seducer or impostor; you went to see a prophet, one that was commissioned, and had a warrant from God to reveal his will. Why do ye desert him now in prison? Why do ye not believe his testimony concerning me? 'What went ye out for to see?'

The observation which I shall raise from these words shall be this—That when we are going to an ordinance, we should consider our aim, and what we are going about.

In hearing, 'What went ye out for to' hear? Picked words, apt cadences of speech, or out of a desire after 'the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby?' 1 Peter ii. 2. Is that your aim? So in the sacraments, What do you go to see? Do you go to taste wine and bread? That you may do at home in greater plenty, and with less trouble. Or is it to put yourselves into the garb of worship that is in fashion? Translate the scene, and you will be Turk or pagan upon the same account. What do you go out to see? Is it to meet with Christ in his ordinances? Thus in every action should we reflect upon the principles and ends, the reasons that move us to any duty. Is it only to see the faces of one another, or to meet with Christ?

1. As men, thus should we do. The prophet biddeth them, 'Show yourselves men,' Isa. xlvi. 8. The privilege of a man is to use recollection, to fix his scope; to know the end distinguisheth a man from a beast. Beasts are overruled by providence; they act for an end, but they know it not. To go on in a track and course of duties without considering the end and reason of them, is to be 'like horse and mule, which have no understanding,' Ps. xxxii. 9; to act like beasts rather than men. A man's eye is upon the end before his hand be in the work. What am I now doing, and why? And the more weighty any action is, the more recollection should we use in that kind. What is my aim? In ordinary works we do not always think of the end, actually, solemnly, but in great businesses we do; it is suitable to the principles of reason, much more in duties of religion.

2. As christians, much more should we thus do. Why? Partly because there is an end appointed. Every duty is appointed for an end, not only a general end for the glory of God, but some especial use. It is not a task, but means appointed in order to the obtaining some end. If duties had been a mere task, then we should look no farther than the work wrought. But now we are to use them as means for the end to which God hath sanctified them. God out of sovereignty might have appointed them as a task, as an acknowledgment of his own dominion; but he hath affixed some end and spiritual profit to be obtained by them; and therefore called means of grace. Partly also because of God's observation. He looketh not to the action, but the aim: Prov. x. 2, 'All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits' in the balance of the sanctuary. The plea from

the act is not allowed, Luke xiii. 26. The action must not only be good, but performed to a good end. Partly because the end is the discriminating circumstance in all actions: Hosea i. 4, 'The Lord said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.' There was God's command; but Jehu's aim was at his own greatness. He did it not with that mind God required. A man may do good, but not well. And to come to duties: 'Hearing the word.' This may be but a customary devotion: Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 'They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love; but their heart goeth after their covetousness;' so the seals. Many that tear the bond yet prize the seal out of a superstitious conceit. Good things done to an ill end are not acceptable. So in prayer and all other duties, we are chiefly to regard the aim and end; for these duties may be performed out of self-interest, or to feed fancy, or to satisfy curiosity: Ezek. xxxiii. 32, 'Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.'

3. This will further appear from the profit of thus considering what we are about. In approaching to the table of the Lord there is a treble benefit.

[1.] It maketh us come the more worthily. The work cannot be well done unless the end be regarded. 'Hear, for it is for thy life'—*finis est mensura mediorum*. They that come for a worthy end will come in a worthy manner. When we go about it hand over head, we are slight and careless. A right pure intention in the supper begets reverence, awakens desires after the blessings offered. It is for Christ, therefore with reverence, therefore with affection, hungering and thirsting after him. What am I now a-doing? When the Israelites came to hear God, they washed their garments: Exod. xix. 12. When we come to taste God, to feed on Christ, we had need to prepare our appetites, seeing such great things are made over to us.

[2.] As it maketh us to do it seriously, so with cheerfulness; the end sweeteneth the means. Physic is troublesome, but it is for health. To sequester ourselves, and to examine conscience, all soul-work is difficult; the soul is loath to discover its own nakedness, as a man in debt is loath to cast up his accounts. Every duty is tedious to the flesh, but God hath annexed some spiritual profit. What will it be in the issue? It is a relief to the soul. As a worldly man worketh hard, fareth hard, but it is for gain: Isa. lv. 2, 'Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.' The Spirit of God would have them to consider with themselves.

[3.] It helpeth us to judge of the success. You thrive in an ordinance when you have the ends for which God appointed it. Every duty hath its special end, as every tree its special fruit. Would a man gather grapes off thorns or figs off thistles? There are experiences as a well by the way. Now, when you have fixed your aim, you will sensibly

discern whether you have thrived. We see what to look after. Have I met with Christ according to that way of manifestation which is proper to this duty? In the word we come to him as our teacher; in prayer, as our advocate; in the supper, as the master of the feast, to satisfy us with his loves.

Let us apply this to the Lord's supper. Look to the right ends of all duties. Thus we should do in the supper; partly because we are apt to rest in the work wrought, and partly because the work wrought is nothing without a due aim. Signs are either natural, as smoke of fire, or by institution. The sacraments are signs by institution. Now in every instituted sign, unless we look to the author and the end, we do nothing; for every instituted means, as it hath authority from the author, so it hath a tendency and respect to the end, without which it loseth its nature, and is but a common action. If bread and wine were natural signs of Christ, I could not use bread and wine but I must think of Christ. Now I use these as instituted signs; therefore, unless I look to the end, the action is a nullity. I look to the author as able to perform what is signified by it, and as obliged to give it; and the end, to help our infirmities, and as a seal and pledge to assure us, and to revive affections towards Christ and all his benefits. Partly because in the Lord's supper God hath joined so many good ends, that when one ceaseth to move us and affect us, the other may take place which is more suitable to our condition. Now I shall show you what are the ends of the Lord's supper. I have often spoken of them severally; I shall now speak of them conjunctly.

The ends of supper are—I. To be a badge of profession, and to put a visible difference between us and infidels and idolaters, or the worshippers of false gods. The church is said to be 'terrible as an army with banners,' Cant. vi. 4, for order, comeliness, and strength. The banners of Christ, under which the army of the church marcheth, are the sacraments. The Jews were distinguished from all other nations by circumcision and the passover, so a christian is by baptism and the Lord's supper. As for this last, see 1 Cor. x. 21, 'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and the table of devils.' So that every time we come to the Lord's table, we profess ourselves to be a peculiar people unto him, or a part of that distinct society who are to hold out his honour to the world, and so difference ourselves from Turks, Jews, and infidels, and in effect to withdraw from all false religions in the world. As Christ will not be confounded with idols and devils, so neither will he have his people confounded with idolaters and the children of the devil; they are visibly distinguished by these rites, as a people set apart to worship and serve the true God, and promote his honour and glory in the world; as Balaam prophesied of the church, Num. xxiii. 9, 'They shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.' They shall have their religion and laws apart from other nations; be a distinct community to the world, as Goshen to Egypt; as those in the ark to those that perished in the waters; as Gideon's fleece to all the rest of the ground; as the house of Rahab to the rest of Jericho; they are in a society who own God, and God will own them. Well, then, this end of the sacrament

must not be neglected, for hereby we profess to own the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, and to abhor idols, and all false religions in the world. But you will say, Do not the rabble of nominal christians the same? What great matter is it? I answer—

[1.] This is not all which Christ intended by this mysterious ordinance, but yet this must not be neglected. Visible godliness is not enough, but visible godliness must not be omitted. Rom. x. 8, 9, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, and believe with thy heart, the Lord Jesus, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.' The one is necessary to our own safety, the other to the glory of God. Therefore christianity is sometimes described by the inward part, which is faith in Christ; sometimes by the outward part, which is confession. Therefore Christ is called, 'The high priest of our profession,' Heb. iii. 1. It is a thing not to be smothered in the heart, but outwardly owned and acknowledged. Now confession is more made by sacraments than any other thing. This is proper to the society of christians. We may preach to heathens, but this is our military oath to bind us to stand to our profession.

[2.] Profession rightly understood is a great matter, for two reasons—

(1.) Cases may happen when our profession is like to cost us dear, as in the primitive times, when owning of Christ exposed them to great danger; the bleak winds that blow in our backs blew in their faces, and it was as dangerous then to be a christian as now to be no christian, or a professed Turk and infidel; yea, more, because christianity maketh us more mild to enemies and opposers than a false religion; which usually maketh men bloody, and inspireth them with destructive furies against the welfare of others; and men need to be obliged to profession then, because of the trouble to the flesh which accompanied it. The ancient libertines, when their profession was costly, thought it enough to be christians in heart, though they outwardly complied with idolaters and false worshippers. The apostle urgeth promises of communion with God: 'I will dwell with them, and walk with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people,' 2 Cor. vi. 16, and concludeth, 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of both flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God;' and Phil. ii. 10, 'Every knee shall bow to Christ, and every mouth confess him.' To prostitute my body and keep my mind, it is as if a wife that yieldeth her body to another man should say, I keep my heart loyal to my husband. Now, when we have to do with pseudo-christians, *ad aras Jovis aut Veneris adorare et sub antichristo fidem occultare idem est.*—Zwinglius: Rev. xiv. 13, 'Blessed are the dead which die in (or for) the Lord from henceforth,' ἀπάρτι. We must separate from them, only we must distinguish of corruptions; if not such as are an apparent revolt from the institutions of Christ, if imperfect, inexpedient, as far as we are convinced of the evil, we must separate from the evil.

(2.) Because we are bound to a profession, not in word only, but in deed; to a suitable walking or to glorify Christ. He is not a professor

whose life is not a hymn to God. Actions are the best image of our thoughts. A man may destroy his profession by his conversation: Titus i. 16, 'They profess they know God, but in their works they deny him.' Experience teacheth us that a man may profess a religion which he doth abhor; though they know God, they do not love him, and live to him, and they are not really and seriously what they nominally profess to be. An unclean person is a votary to Priapus; a drunkard to Bacchus; not a disciple of Christ. An earthly sensual worldling doth in his life say that the alcoran is better than the gospel; a merciless man is worse than an infidel, and hath denied the faith, 1 Tim. v. 8. Interpretative circumcision is turned into uncircumcision, Rom. ii. 25; and Jer. ix. 25, 26, 'I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised, &c. For all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart.' Uncircumcised in heart have a pagan heart. Certainly a man that is obliged to the profession is obliged to the duties which the profession calleth for. What! profess yourselves to be christians, and live loosely? This is to be called christians *in opprobrium Christi*, to the reproach of Christ. A christian and a worldling! a christian and a sensualist! it is as great a contradiction as to say a christian and an infidel. Profession includeth holy practice as well as verbal acknowledgment. There is a practical blasphemy: Rev. ii. 9, 'I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not.' You blaspheme when you worship, and you make Christ a patron of your sin: Ps. l. 16, 17, 'But to the wicked, God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?' Every sacrament is an aggravation of your unfaithfulness, and so doth not profit, but hurt you. Baptism, though not renounced, is forgotten, when we live as if we were in league with the devil, the world, and the flesh: 2 Peter i. 9, 'Hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.' Better that scalding lead and oil had been poured upon them than the water of baptism. So for the Lord's supper: 1 Cor. xi. 27, 'Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord;' and Heb. x. 29, 'Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing?' Well, then, they are as bad as infidels, yea, worse than infidels, 1 Tim. v. viii. To be brought up in princes courts, and yet to be of clownish behaviour, aggravates the crime.

If you ask what duties doth this profession bind you to, I answer—Consider what are the excellences of the christian profession? Sure principles of trust, or commerce between us and God, for mercies [of daily providence, pardon, and life; excellent rewards, and holy precepts of purity and charity. Now, if we transgress any of these, we dishonour our profession.

As to the first, distrust of providence, it is said, Mat. vi. 32, 'Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, &c. (for after these things do the gentiles seek); for your heavenly Father knoweth that you have

need of all these things.' Then, for the other part, commerce with God and rest for the soul; as to fears of vengeance and desires of happiness, we are commanded, Jer. vi. 16, to 'stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.'

As to the second, for excellent rewards, 1 Cor. ii. 12, the apostle saith, 'Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.'

As to the third, for holy precepts—purity and charity. As to purity: 1 Peter iv. 3, 'For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.' So for charity: 1 Tim. v. 8, 'If any man provide not for his own, especially they of his own house, he hath denied the faith;' that is, done an act incompatible with the christian religion.

2. The next end is, it is a seal of the covenant. Circumcision was so: Gen. xvii. 11, 'My covenant shall be in your flesh.' And the apostle explaineth it: Rom. iv. 11, 'He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith.' Now what is true of one sacrament is true of all, for they agree in their general nature; and therefore it is said, Luke xxii. 20, 'This cup is the new testament in my blood.' A charter that hath divers seals hath not this for one part, that for another, but all for the whole.

Well, then, the new testament is confirmed by them. Now the covenant bindeth mutually. God bindeth himself to give grace to us, and we bind ourselves to live unto God: Exod. xxiv. 6-8, 'And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in a basin, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said, will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.'

Well, then, sacraments on God's part are signs and seals of the promise of grace; on our part, an obligation to obedience. God bindeth himself to be our God, and we bind ourselves to be his people. God to be our God, that is to be a benefactor becoming an infinite and eternal power; that is, the meaning of 'I will be your God,' Mat. xxii. 32, and Heb. xi. 16; that is, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, will employ all his wisdom, power, and goodness to keep us from all evil, and bestow on us all good: Gen. xv. 1, 'Fear not, Abraham; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward;' and Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' Here a shield, hereafter a reward; both in part here, both fully hereafter, when the sun is in his meridian. Again, on the other side, we bind ourselves to be his people; that is, as to entrance and progress. As to entrance: Acts xx. 21, 'Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' So it is an obligation to repentance and faith; this is making the covenant. As to progress, continuance, and keeping covenant; so

we bind ourselves to new obedience: Heb. v. 9, 'He is become the author of eternal salvation, unto all them that obey him.'

Now, then, if we come aright, we must come with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith, Heb. x. 22. With an assurance of faith, that God will be as good as his word, pardoning, sanctifying, blessing, and that he will keep us to everlasting glory; and with a true heart bind ourselves to a return to our duty, depending on the Redeemer's sacrifice, and to walk in all new obedience. The oftener we renew this covenant, the more conscience we must have of both parts. In baptism we first bound ourselves to depend upon God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our benefactor, redeemer, and sanctifier; as also 1 Peter iii. 21, to serve, worship, and obey Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our Lord, redeemer, and sanctifier. We often renew this in the Lord's supper. Our faith is the more confirmed, and our obedience more strengthened; as the servant whose ear was bored, Exod. xxi. 6, bound himself to his master. The oftener we devote ourselves to God, the more conscience we should have of our oath. Rouse up yourselves there. Doth God give you bread and wine to be symbols of his wrath and backwardness to do you good; or to be symbols of his grace and readiness to help us, and of his bounty towards us? If he hath forgiven our sins, will he not forgive our infirmities? If he gives the beginnings, will he not give the continuance? If eternal, will he not give temporals? Ps. xxiii. 1, 'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.' So also excite your obedience; I am the Lord's, and shall I live to myself? No; 'His I am, and him will I serve.' Acts xxvii. 23. I am no longer my own, and shall I live as my own? I shall be the most faithless man in the world. Breach of vows in an indifferent thing is a great crime, much more here: Acts v. 4, 'Whilst it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.'

3. It is a pledge of heaven: Mat. xxvi. 29, 'But I say unto you, that I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom;' that is, after a new manner; then we enjoy the effects of it, fulness of joy and eternal delights: Mat. viii. 11, 'Shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven;' sit down at an eternal feast. And Luke xxii. 30, 'That you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.' So John vi. 54, 'Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' The man revived that touched the prophet's bones; to eat Christ's flesh by faith leaveth a quickening power. This is our refreshing in the house of our pilgrimage, as Israel had manna in the wilderness till they came into the land of Canaan; so that if we come rightly to this holy duty, we come not mainly for any temporal good, but either heaven, or temporal things in order to heaven. He that believeth not the promise of eternal life with his whole heart, cometh in vain. Therefore, here we come to grow more heavenly-minded, to set mind and heart a-work, to look more and long more for the heavenly estate, and to quicken our selves to prepare for it, and to seek it in the first place, referring our selves to God for other things: Mat. vi. 33, 'First seek the kingdom

of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' God, who is our father, will give us temporal things so far as is for our good; but chiefly he showeth himself a father in Christ, to make us heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Therefore we must make heaven our great end and scope: 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'While we look not to the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal;' and the great motive which must dwell in our minds, and govern our choices, and direct all our motions and actions. Heart and mind must be in heaven before we be there.

4. It is the sign, means, and pledge of our communion with Christ: 1 Cor. x. 16, 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?' God giveth you this bread and this wine in token of your union with Christ, as these things become one with us, and are turned into our substance. Before conversion, there was a separation between God and us, Isa. lix. 2; but at conversion, and as soon as we do believe, there is a union; we are united to Christ, and by Christ to God; but we solemnly come and take possession of him in the sacrament. This is one of the instruments of application and conveyance. Here is Christ, and all his benefits made made over to you. Christ is the remedy of all evil and the fountain of all good. So we come solemnly to receive him out of God's hands, that our conjunction with him may be more close and sensible; that he may live in us by his Spirit, and we may live in him by faith, as the branches do in the vine, and the vine in the branches, John xv. 1, 2. Our conjunction with him is intrinsical and spiritual, but yet real. By virtue of this union we are made one spirit with the Lord: 1 Cor. vi. 17, 'And one body;' Eph. i. 23, 'Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all things;' and Eph. iii. 6, 'That the gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body.' This conjunction is partly by faith: Gal. ii. 20, 'I live by the faith of the Son of God;' and Eph. iii. 17, 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' God hath put our life into his hands; he is our root: 'And because he liveth, we shall live also.' Faith, or a constant dependence upon Christ, is a means of his dwelling in us by his Spirit. And partly by love; that maketh a conjunction of minds: 1 Sam. xviii. 1, 'And the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul.' Christ loveth us, and we love him. None can unclasp these mutual embraces: Rom. viii. 39, 'Neither height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ.' From this union resulteth a communion of righteousness and sanctification.

[1.] Of righteousness: 2 Cor. v. 21, 'For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' We have the effects of his righteousness, as he suffered the effects of our sin. As we are partakers of Adam's sin by natural generation, so by regeneration we are made partakers of Christ's righteousness: Rom. v. 19, 'As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.'

It is as effectual for pardon and salvation as if believers themselves had performed it.

[2.] God giveth us his Holy Spirit to sanctify us, which is the best and choicest gift which God can give, as it is also the greatest which the saints desire; for what greater gift can there be than to be partakers of a divine nature, to love God, and be like him, and be made fit for him? Now Christ is not only made righteousness, but sanctification to us: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'But of him ye are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' And it is said, this spirit of holiness 'is shed upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Lord,' Titus iii. 6, for the renewing and healing of our natures. In short, the favour of God and image of God are the two great benefits which we have by virtue of our union and communion with Christ.

5. It is a means of our spiritual growth and nourishment. As bread and wine are the principal means of corporal nourishment: Ps. civ. 15, 'Wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth the heart of man;' so is Christ the food and nourishment of the soul: John vi. 56, 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him.' His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. We are planted into Christ by baptism, and we are nourished in the Lord's supper. There must first be life, and then food; and where there is life, food is necessary to preserve it. So in spiritual life, because of frequent decays and constant employment; we need food for the soul as well as for the body. This ordinance supposeth implantation into Christ, that the covenant is made and initiated, that our new birth is passed, that now we come to strengthen it; therefore we are baptized but once, but we communicate often. *Ὅσάκις* implieth *πολλάκις*; 'As often as ye eat this bread,' &c., implieth that we should be frequent; for by the frequent performance of this duty the Holy Ghost doth confirm our faith, excite our love, quicken our hope, and helpeth us more fully and sensibly to be made partakers of the righteousness and spirit of Christ, and rooted in our union with him unto a continual perseverance.

6. A memorial of Christ's death. To both the elements Christ saith, 'Do this in remembrance of me;' and of the whole action, 'Ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come,' 1 Cor. xi. 26. His passion is acted over again in figure and representation: Gal. iii. 1, 'Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you.' So that your duty there is affectionately and with application to consider the occasion, manner, and end of Christ's death, for the strengthening of our faith, and the preservation of our union and communion with Christ. The occasion was our fallen estate, which brought on guilt and misery, without a sense of which there is no prizing of Christ. A speculative knowledge of our sin and misery will beget only an opinionative faith in Christ; for such as is our sense of the misery so will our reflections be on the remedy; but a sensible, awakening knowledge of our great necessity will teach us to value Christ as a Saviour, and come heartily to him. Therefore we must come to this work with a due sense of our misery and spiritual

indigence, feeling the burden of our sin, and hungering and thirsting after righteousness. The cause and reason of his death as a gift, or a propitiatory sacrifice, is God's free love, John iii. 16. Therefore we must come admiring God's grace and goodness to us, applying it with confidence and delight; and out of a sense of this great love, devoting ourselves to his love and service. The manner of it: Phil. ii. 8, 'He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.' So painful, shameful, cursed a death, to put an everlasting brand on sin. And then the end; to propitiate God, offended with our sins: 1 John ii. 2, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not only for ours, but for the sins of the whole world;' and 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' Therefore we must depend upon this propitiatory sacrifice, earnestly desiring to partake of the fruits thereof, namely, remission of sins and reconciliation with God, with the gift of the Spirit and adoption to eternal life.

7. It is a pledge of his coming. When Christ went, he left a promise with us: John xiv. 3, 'And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.' Now he would still keep the promise a-foot, that we might look for him, long for him, and wait for him. Reason saith, He may come; faith saith, He will come; love, When will he come?

8. It is a band of love: 1 Cor. xii. 13, 'And have been made all to drink into one spirit;' and 1 Cor. x. 17, 'For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.' The world maketh sacraments matters of contention and division; but saints use them otherwise, to enkindle a mutual love to one another, to pardon failings, pity miseries, lay aside grudgings, and be mutually helpful to one another; in short, that we may get more love to God and man.

9. To be an holy banquet or spiritual feast, or the entertainment God hath provided for his family in the house of their pilgrimage. This is evident from the nature of the work and the frequent allusions in scripture to a feast. The sacrament is a feast upon a sacrifice. A man keepeth a feast to show his affection to his guests, and to renew and increase their affection towards him; so God keepeth a feast of loves to beget and renew in us a sense and persuasion of his fatherly love to us in Christ, and to renew our love and cheerful obedience to him. Well, then, let us not sit down to God's feast without an appetite, nor eat and drink without sense, and taste, and joy, and gratitude to our entertainer: Ps. xxii. 26, 'The meek shall eat and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek him; your hearts shall live for ever.' I shall conclude with a few corollaries.

First corollary, If these be the ends of the sacrament, you see what need there is of preparation; that we consider the tenor of our profession, and the nature of God's covenant, the reasons and ends of Christ's death, and the hopes of glory. Alas! without this there will be no prizing of Christ, no desire of righteousness, no hope of salvation, no care to please God. While men are negligent in preparation

and examination of themselves, they provoke God whilst they handle these holy things negligently.

Second corollary, is to show how all these things do promote holiness. As it is a badge of profession ; surely the peculiar people must be an holy nation, 1 Peter ii. 9. As it is a seal of the covenant we are obliged to holiness and new obedience. Therein we devote ourselves to God, to be 'holy as he that hath called us is holy,' 1 Peter i. 16, 17. As it is a pledge of heaven ; it is a sinless state we look for : 1 John iii. 3, 'He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, as Christ is pure.' As it is a means of communion with Christ : 1 John i. 6, 7, 'If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth ; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' The visible fruit of this communion is holiness : 2 Cor. vi. 14, 'For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?' And as it is a means of our spiritual growth. What is growth but growth in holiness? As it is a memorial of Christ's death ; so with the apostle we should be able to say, 'I am crucified with Christ,' Gal. ii. 20 ; and Rom. vi. 6, 'Knowing that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.' What did he die for but to sanctify us ? As it is a pledge of his coming ; can a guilty creature long for Christ's coming ? The voice of sinful nature is, Depart ; but the Spirit in the bride saith, Come. Would prisoners and malefactors long for the assizes ? As it is a bond of love ; true spiritual love is *inter bonos* : 1 John v. 1, 'Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him that is begotten of him.' Our hearts are purified for this love : 1 Peter i. 22, 'Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth.' As it is a feast, if we are not holy, we are unworthy guests, unthankful to God that entertaineth us : Ps. xli. 9, 'Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.' Men do more grievously take injuries from kindred and domestics that eat their bread. You must not eat with God unless you resolve to live in a state of holy friendship with him. From the whole, let us sanctify ourselves in body and soul, and come in a holy manner to this holy table.

Third corollary, is to show the false ends, as resting in the work wrought. Sacraments do no good merely as a work wrought. If severed from the word, they are unprofitable ; as a seal without an indenture and writing : Mat. xxviii. 19, 'Go ye therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ;' and Eph. v. 26, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it, by the washing of water through the word ;' and 1 Peter iii. 21, 'The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us ; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.'

The papists say it is *viaticum morientium*, therefore thrust the sacrament into the mouths of those that die, and, if neglected, they almost despair of the salvation of him that dieth. No ; it is *viaticum*

viventium; it is our journey provision. Death is not a journey, but the end of a journey; it is a passage in a moment, a cessation from our journey in this world, which needeth no *viaticum*. It is a going out of the world, like the putting out of a lamp, in a moment. As a lamp needeth no oil to be extinguished, but to burn, we need this for our journey going through the world, but not at our departure out of the world. In that moment that our body dieth, the soul it is in the hand of God.

END OF VOLUME XV.