

THE
DOCTRINE
OF THE
EUCCHARIST,
CONSIDERED

As a distinguishing ritual in the social
worship of christians.

WITH

Some account of the erroneous and superstitious notions, which have obtained concerning it.

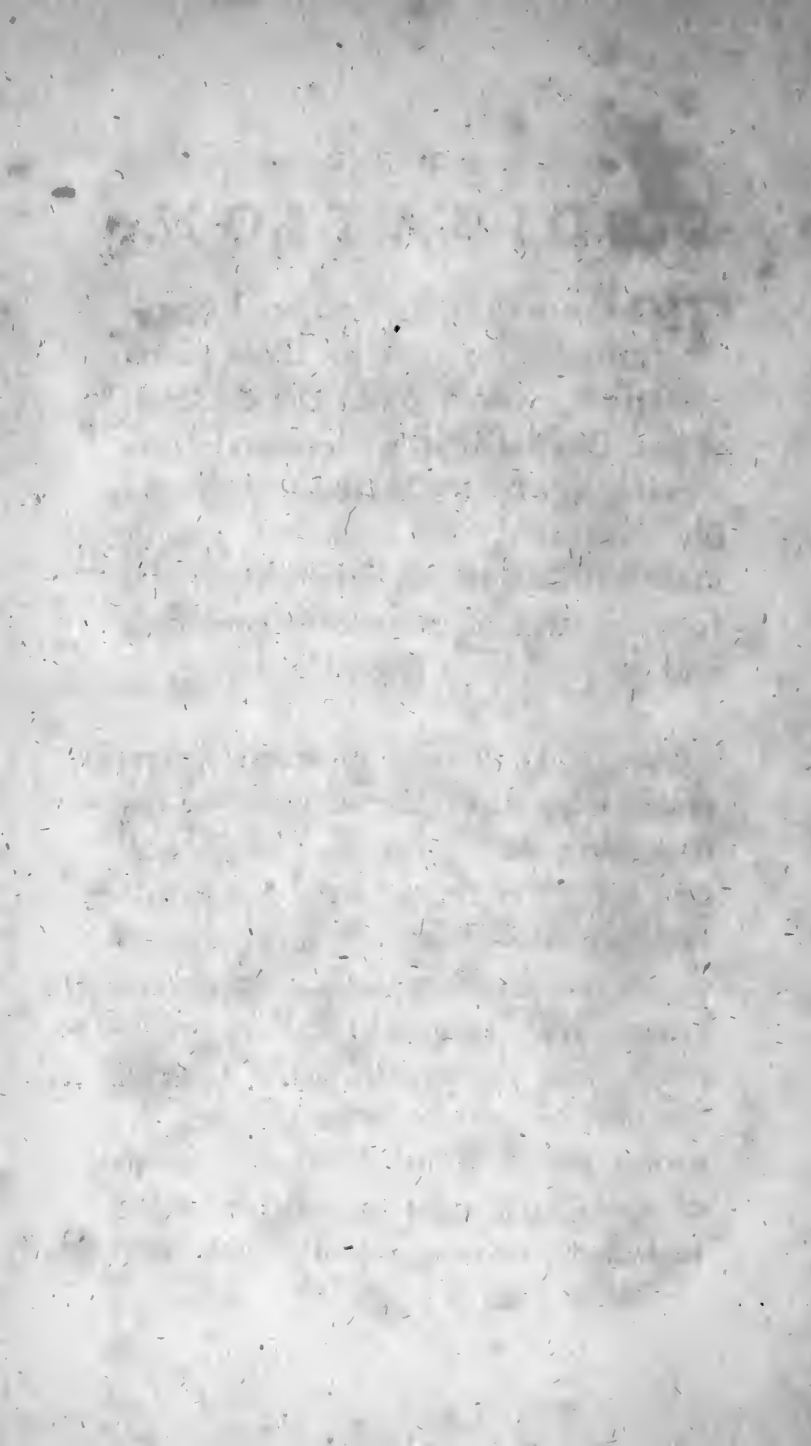
By CALEB FLEMING.

And upon the first day of the week, the disciples came together to BREAK BREAD. St. LUKE.

This is not to eat the LORD'S SUPPER. St. PAUL.

L O N D O N:

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D E D I C A T I O N.

TO the serious and rational communicant; and to those pious professors, who see not the doctrine of the Eucharist in a clear and convincing light; are these sheets humbly dedicated: in hopes of giving some fresh aid to the devotions of the former; and of removing prejudice and prepossession from the latter.

As to those *sons of levity or impiety*, who dare ridicule a divine institution; the sneer and laugh will be excited in them, by the very advertisement. Others of more decent character, but who disbelieve a revelation, will be apt to call it *priestcraft*, and an ancient artful church method of deluding the people. Among the devotional, those crowds of *enthusiasts*, who can be persuaded to follow TEACHERS, that are vain
-enough.

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enough to pretend to new revelations, to visions, and even to miraculous operations; these will be very unlikely to make any use of this performance. And when we add the yet more numerous *sons of superstition*, it may be asked, what possible motive could induce to this publication concerning the Eucharist? The answer is, “an apparently
“ great indifference shewn the ri-
“ tual, among professors of a more
“ rational spirit and generous com-
“ plexion.”—

If with these open, ingenuous, liberal minds, this attempt should have any good impression; the end will be attained, which is the principal aim,

Of their devoted,
humble servant,

Hoxton Square.

C. F.

A plan of the work.

The introduction; which states the evidence of the *New Testament* canon.

Sec. I. The divine original of the Eucharist.

II. The social nature of the ritual, with the sensible symbols requisite to the celebration.

III. The spiritual nature of the Eucharist.

IV. The persons who are properly qualified for the celebration.

V. The obligation to celebrate the Eucharist, perpetual.

VI. The erroneous and superstitious opinions which have obtained concerning the Eucharist.

VII. Observations made on the doctrine.



T H E

INTRODUCTION;

Which states the evidence of the
New Testament canon.

LITTLE advantage could be proposed from explaining the doctrine of the Eucharist, if the authenticity and authority of the *New Testament* writings should be held doubtful: The *evidence* of their certainly being a *divine canon* of faith and manners, to all who will give them a religious attention, may be thus collected.—

“ The *fact* of there having been a man, who
“ appeared in *Judea* between seventeen and

B

“ eighteen

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“ eighteen hundred years ago, named JESUS
“ CHRIST, *a prophet mighty in deed and*
“ *word before God, and all the people!* is as
“ incontestable, as that there ever was such
“ a man as *Homer, Socrates, Plato, Virgil,*
“ *Julius Cæsar, or even Mahomet;* not one
“ of all which have equal evidence of hav-
“ ing existed with any remarkable or distin-
“ guished character.”

That the personal ministrations of Jesus were confined to *Judea*, the land of his nativity, and to a people to whom he had been described in prophecy, as a *saviour and redeemer*; but whose instructions and ministrations were to become *a light to enlighten the Gentile or Pagan world, as well as be the glory of his people Israel.*—That accordingly, he did ordain a number of disciples, who constantly attended his ministry, to be the publishers of his doctrine throughout the world, after he had risen from the dead, and was ascended into heaven, in the sight of those chosen witnesses.—A farther demonstration of his being exalted to the right hand
of

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of power, was given by *extraordinary gifts*, which were conferred on them, in accomplishment of a promise which he had made them before his death; and of which miraculous heavenly vouchsafement, great numbers of Jews were witnesses, which came from very distant countries.

The notoriety of this fact became universal, by the apostles (when so qualified) going into all parts of the world to publish the gospel; of whose labours, oppositions, difficulties and successes, a natural and genuine account is given in an history of their acts, and in epistles written by their own hands, and sent to the churches which they at first planted. In which writings there are no marks of artifice, fraud, or policy; none of sinister aim, or of sordid intention: but all the evidences of an heavenly disposition and a divine spirit, in each and every of their doctrinal instructions, altogether suitable to the dignified character and divine appointments of their master.

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The *New Testament* scriptures have no resemblance, no similitude of the writings of uninspired men: and they also are harmonious in their spiritual, heavenly, and moral representations.

The age of apostles was properly denominated, the *manifestation* or *dispensation of the spirit*: they themselves being to the world the living oracles of God, as Jesus Christ their master had been, during his ministration, to the people of *Judæa*. And because they were able ministers of the *New Testament*, the ministration of the spirit by them, must have far exceeded in glory all former dispensations.

But because *this light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ, was a treasure deposited in earthen vessels*; apostles, like other men, being subject to mortality; it became absolutely needful that a *written record* should be made of the life and teachings of Jesus, the canon of faith and practice to all succeeding ages of christians; since the
gifts

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gifts of the spirit must cease, when ever that testimony was finished which they were designed to give to the mission of apostles.

That the *New Testament* written canon must have been compleated during the age of apostles, is also evident; because none but they were capable infallible judges, which could authenticate the record. Hence it was, that St. PAUL, who had not been a disciple and personal attendant on Jesus, or a witness of his resurrection and ascension, was favoured with *visions* and *revelations*, and conversed with the exalted Jesus; and likewise received from him *gifts of the spirit* equal to those of the other apostles; which rendered him capable of revising and establishing the credit of St. *Mark's* gospel.

Here an observation, made by our ecclesiastical historian, will be pertinent. “ A
“ short canon of scripture is most eligible.
“ Religion is the concern of all men. A
“ few short histories and epistles are better
“ fitted for general use, than numerous and
“ prolix

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“ prolix writings. Besides, if any writings
“ are to be received as the rule of faith and
“ manners, it is of the utmost importance
“ that they be justly entitled to that distinc-
“ tion; otherwise men may be led into er-
“ rors of very bad consequence. If any
“ books pretend to deliver the doctrine of
“ infallible and divinely inspired teachers,
“ such as Jesus Christ and his apostles are
“ esteemed by christians, great care should
“ be taken to be well satisfied that their ac-
“ counts are authentic, and that they are the
“ genuine writings of the men, whose names
“ they bear*.” *N. B.* The public is greatly
indebted to the labours of this author, for
laying before the eye of his reader a series of
testimony to the canon of the *New Testament*,
which reaches down even to the twelfth
century, in that work of his, entitled, *The
Credibility of the Gospel History.*

We are now able to give a very satisfac-
tory solution to that sceptical question, *viz.*
“ How can we, at this distance of time and

* See Dr. LARDNER's supplement, vol. I. ch. ii. p. 27.

“ place,

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“ place, be assured what is, and what is not
“ divine canon, when there are no *auto-*
“ *graphs*, either of epistles by apostles, or of
“ gospels by their authors?”

Assured we are, that those writings which we have, cannot materially differ from their originals; because of the jealous eye christians could not but have upon one another, on account of different opinion and mode of profession. The several languages into which they were translated, (the gospel doctrine having been previously propagated by apostles, in different nations) would render it impracticable or impossible for men to have made any alteration, of importance, in the divine canon. We therefore have all the moral certainty that can possibly attend the conveyance of an heavenly instruction. Nay, besides this, the complexion of these writings will suit no other age of the world, so well as they do that in which they are said to have been written.*

* See Dr. LARDNER's *first part of the credibility*, &c. where the facts occasionally mentioned by evangelists are confirmed by ancient cotemporary authors.

Moreover,

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Moreover, as to the intrinsic or internal evidence, we, at this day are as capable of examining, judging and determining, as men ever were in any one age of the christian profession: of the moral, spiritual and heavenly nature, and tendency of the canon, every man is able to make an infallible judgment, by conforming his temper and life to its guidance and direction.—

They do therefore manifestly mistake in judging of this canon, who will have the *New Testament* writings to be no other than a *secondary rule*, and the spirit, or light within them to be the *primary* one; whereas the reason, or spirit of a man, is more properly and truly the judge of the one written canon, or rule, than the primary rule itself. But the mistake seems to be owing to a wrong interpretation of the apostle, as if in an opposition of the *letter* to the *spirit*, he could be understood of the letter of the written gospel, opposed to the manifestation of the spirit; which is not to illustrate, but to confound his meaning. The *letter* which he opposes to the *spirit*,
could

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could be no other than the Mosaic system; which, he largely shews, had nothing in it that would compare with the spiritual manifestation of truth and grace, made by the gospel. *Moreover*, those very people, who would have the written gospel to be no better than a *secondary* rule, and who give preference to the light within, or to the teachings of the spirit, do professedly borrow all their notions of the spirit from the written word*; which reflects upon them an apparent absurdity.—They seem not to have attended to the difference of circumstance in which christians were, when under the dispensation of the spirit, before the written canon had existence, and whilst the spirit was the primary and only rule; and the condition of christians, when the dispensation of the spirit had wholly ceased with the finished ages of the apostles, and when the written gospel was

* We shall be willing to admit it, as a positive certain maxim, that whatsoever any do, pretending to the spirit, which is contrary to the scriptures, be accounted and reckoned a delusion of the devil. *Barclay's apology*, p. 86.

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become the only divine rule to the whole church of Christ.

Others, with design to invalidate the *rule*; have said; “ that Jesus never gave any express orders that men should write an history of his life.”

This is readily acknowledged: nor was there the least occasion for his giving such direction. He well knew that those his disciples, whom he had ordained to publish his gospel to the world, should receive *the promise of the father*, and have extraordinary divine illuminations. He also knew that the design of his doctrine and mission, was to be of universal and perpetual use and benefit to mankind; and that therefore they could not fail of making a written-record, ere the dispensation of the spirit should finish. He infallibly knew that such a divine testimony; which had been given of him, must be transmitted to the last age of mankind.

The

The objection seems also to be unnatural and capricious ; for men are not wont to inquire of *biographers* (who have, with great attention and labour, composed and published the lives of great men) whether their *heroes* had desired it at their hands? what will fully justify the historian, and also entitle him to the thanks of the public, is, if his subject was every way worthy a record ; if it promised universal pleasure and profit, in the perusal ; for then, verily we ascribe great merit, and do such *biographers* deserved honour. On this principle it is, we reverence the names of the sacred writers, who composed the canon of the *New Testament*.

But the objection entirely vanishes, when we read what the beloved disciple says in his own defence, as an historian,—“ and many
 “ other signs truly did Jesus in the presence
 “ of his disciples, which are not written in
 “ this book. But these *are written*, that ye
 “ might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the
 “ son of the living God, and that believing

“ ye might have life through his name.”—
 And *again*, “this is the disciple which testi-
 “ fieth of these things, and *wrote these things*;
 “ and we know that his testimony is true.
 “ And there are also many other things
 “ which Jesus did, the which, if they should
 “ *be written*, every one, I suppose, that even
 “ the world itself would not contain or re-
 “ ceive the books that should be written.”
 That is, they would be much too bulky
 and voluminous for common use; and would
 not so officiously answer the end of a divine
 canon. *Compare John xx. 30, 31. ch. xxi,*
24, 25. But who can once call in question
 the propriety of such a record, that consi-
 ders the nature and tendency of it?

S E C T I O N I.

The divine original of the Eucharist.

WHEN we write or speak concerning a religious observance, or a divine institution, we ought to be well satisfied of its heavenly *original*. And when it concerns christian practice, it must have place in that canon esteemed sacred by the common consent of christians, which canon is called, the *New Testament writings*; containing the only genuine life of Christ, his heavenly and divine teachings, as recorded by apostles and evangelists.

St. *Matthew, Mark, Luke and Paul*, have each of them assured us, that the *Eucharist*
was

2 *Of the doctrine of the Eucharist.*

was instituted by Jesus Christ himself, the very evening before his sufferings, *Matth.* xxvi. 26.—*Mark* xiv. 22.—*Luke* xxii. 19. *1 Cor.* ii. 23.—And we may reasonably account for the silence of St. *John*, who only wrote a supplemental gospel*. Yet, even this evangelist has given us those discourses of our Lord's, delivered immediately before his sufferings, which enable us to enter more fully into the meaning or spirit of the memorial institution. And besides those discourses, it should seem that he foresaw the superstitious and extravagant notions which men would entertain of the Eucharist; and therefore was led to insert another discourse, which our Lord delivered concerning his *doctrine*, being, that his flesh which men should eat, and that his blood which men should drink, the internal principle of immortality. St. *John's* silence about the Eucharist is thus well accounted for; and we have reason to conclude, he saw that the celebration of it did, in his day, universally obtain

* Consult Dr. LARDNER's supplement, vol. I. ch. ix. sec. xi:
among

among christians. The *authority* on which the ritual supports, is thus indisputable.

That it could have no other original than what the above writers report it to have had, is also evident from its very obvious intention; which is, to commemorate the fact of the man Christ Jesus dying as a malefactor, by public consent of his own nation; notwithstanding he had been approved of God among them, by signs, wonders, and divers miracles, which were wrought by him.— That a *thanksgiving* memorial should be appointed, is contrary to all the usages and customs of mankind; who, to express their detestation and abhorrence of the cruel treatment of great and good men, would have instituted some monument of indignation, of shame and sorrow, rather than of congratulation, thankfulness and joy. There is therefore in the very complexion of the ritual, a spirit and intention discoverable, which is the reverse of all civil and political appointments. And, in fact, so stood the celebration of the Eucharist among the first christians;

4 *Of the doctrine of the Eucharist.*

tians ; it was an open devout acknowledgment, that the *stigma* of reproach, which had been fixed on their divine master, by his crucifixion, was esteemed by them, matter of their boasting and glory. They thus recognized his distinguished merit, and superior excellence ! and hereby the reputation and credit of their religion was highly recommended to the world. So far from being ashamed of his cross, they considered it as a vain, fruitless attempt of his ungrateful malicious enemies, to suppress his heavenly doctrine, and to blemish his divine character in the eyes of the nations.

A more direct and full confutation of envy and detraction, surely could not have been given. Divine wisdom thus displays itself in the open face of the institution ; without which, the christian profession would have been exposed to public scorn and universal contempt. For had there been any possible impeachment of crime in his character, or any defect shewn in his divine claims, whom they had crucified as an impostor, the profession.

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feſſion would have been ſtified in its infancy, and all his diſciples covered with ſhame and infamy. But, on the contrary, what could be a more convincing proof of the confidence which they had in him, than their open celebration of his death, by a thankful and joyful memorial ?

On this *ratio* ſtood the divine original of the Eucharift, in the obſervance of firſt chriſtians, when the ſcandal of the croſs was recent and popular ; and unleſs a man is determined to ſhut his eyes againſt evidence, he is conſtrained to own the inſtitution to be reaſonable, and divinely well adapted to thoſe moſt uſeful ends it was deſigned to answer. Not like a merely poſitive and arbitrary appointment ; but, with all other moral and divine inſtruction, it ſpeaks the language of incontestable facts, and ſupports on the manifeſt law of relation, as will be more clearly ſeen by and by.

The ſenſe now given of the *divine original* of the Eucharift, will be abundantly confirmed *by the epiſtles*, and by *St. Luke's hiſtory*

of the acts of the apostles. In the epistles, we frequently find St. Paul speaking of the cross of Christ, as matter and occasion of his greatest glorying. He looked upon it as a divine scheme, “ which had destroyed the
 “ wisdom of the wise; and brought to no-
 “ thing the understanding of the prudent.—
 “ Which was to the *Jews* a stumbling block,
 “ and to the *Greeks* foolishness.” And yet, to the christian, it was no other than the power of God, and the wisdom of God. In what sense the cross of Christ may be understood, the power of God and the wisdom of God, will be of easy conception, when it is considered how Christ becomes a *Saviour* and *Redeemer*, viz. by delivering men from the evil of this present world; and by inspiring them with spiritual and heavenly affections. Which redemption could not have been accomplished by him, had he not actually submitted to the deepest possible abasement, and taken into the compass of his trial the whole energy of temptation: for by this means only could he become the author and finisher of our faith, as he thereby shewed the practicability, as well as possibility of overcoming all the efforts of
 evil.

evil. On the cross he exemplified a contempt of the world, by a superiority of mind to all sensible impressions, however shameful or painful. And in the greatness of his behaviour, throughout the scenery of his humiliation *, he discovered a meetness for that majesty and dominion, to which the one God did exalt him, in reward of his obedience to the death.

The divine original of the Eucharist will be yet further obvious, from the design of that very death, which it commemorates, *viz.* God's *reconciling the world to himself* by that event. For verily, mankind do receive from thence the most important and interesting instruction, in all moral and divine truths; *e. g.* they are shewn how very merciful a being he is, that could pardon the murderers of that his well-beloved son, *who made it his meat to do the will of his father, and to finish his work: who did not dispute the most painful endurance; cordially saying, not my will, but*

* See this illustrated with great address, in Dr. LARDNER's 2d vol. of sermons.

thine be done: and to whom the Deity had given miraculous testimony of his approbation. When therefore we are informed of great numbers of Christ's murderers obtaining pardon, and encouraged to hope for eternal life! the representation is suited to reconcile the mind of a penitent sinner, and restore him to peace. Thus God is said *to be reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing to penitent men their trespasses.*

Another view of the *reconciliation* is, that of mankind being no longer allowed to form a judgment of the approbation or disapprobation of God towards them, because of external circumstance or condition: since the most beloved and honoured of God, *was despised and rejected of men. A man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs.* Hence the most abject condition, and painful endurance of man is altogether consistent with virtuous character, and with his enjoyment of the divine favour. Whilst the most prosperous external circumstance, and elevated rank of civil condition, may be the allotment of the
 most

most unworthy of mortals. Thus the sufferings and death of Jesus have, in them, an apt tendency *to reconcile men to God*, as they correct and cure the prejudices which arise from sensible impressions that are made upon us.

A *third* reconciling view of Christ's death may be taken from its *rewardableness*. Who, *for the joy set before him, did endure the cross and despise the shame*. And, in virtue of his *obedience to the death, he had a name GIVEN him above every name**; even that of the resurrection

* The Rev. Mr. THOMAS EMLYN says, "a gift of no *new* authority seems to be a gift of nothing. Is Christ rewarded with nothing, or with no addition of glory? must he hold that by gift, which he held by a better tenure before?"—See his works, 4th edit. vol. I. p. 247.

And to the same purpose we have the concurring judgment of the Rev. Mr. JAMES PIERCE.—"It has been the common opinion of ancient christians, as well as it is of the generality of the modern writers upon the scriptures, that in many, or at least in some of the appearances of the angels recorded in the *Old Testament*, the *angel*, the son himself was one of the number.—But it may be questioned whether that opinion hath any solid foundation. I know not of
" any

surrection and the life; the Lord of the dead and of the living; and the final judge. It is in him that we have the earnest of the inheritance, to whom God has given the keys of hades and of death. A demonstration of his having such an investiture of sovereignty; is seen in the subsequent miraculous gifts bestowed on apostles, who were to preach or publish his gospel throughout the world.

From the reward of his obedience, the sincere christian is encouraged to look and wait “for his Lord’s coming to receive him
“to himself, to be with him where he is, to
“behold the glory which the father hath

“any place of scripture where it is expressly asserted;
“and the arguments brought to prove it, are so very
“slight, that it seems at best to be a mere conjecture.
“There is, at least nothing in this epistle to favour it,
“but the contrary.” See his note (*d*) on *Heb.* i. 2.
with which may be compared his note (*c*) on ch. iii. 36.

With these testimonies agree the Rev. Mr. MOSES LOWMAN’s three *tracts on the Shechinah and Logos; and the letter writ in the year 1730*, all of which do virtually maintain this conclusion, *viz.* “that the ex-
“altation of Christ must have been in *reward* of his
“obedience to the death; inasmuch as we have no rea-
“son to suppose any manifestation of him antecedent to
“his being born of a woman, and made under the law.”

“given

“given him.” And an apostle thus reasoneth, *if we are reconciled to God by the death of his son, how much more shall we be saved by his life?*—Another says, *baptism does now save us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven.* The death of Christ verily, has all its efficacy and energy derived from its consequences. Separate from these his death has in it no one useful, or instructive meaning. In the abstract idea of it there could be no reason of thanksgiving or joy. But when we once know that death could not hold him, as a trophy or prisoner; and that it was *impossible for this God's holy one to see corruption*, because he could not die as a criminal; we discern how this circumstance determines him to be the son of God and Saviour of the world. From the rewardableness of his death, we then derive benefits, in size and number, considerable enough to excite and animate all our gratitude and praise; forasmuch as we can also rely on a spiritual and moral union with *him* who is our powerful head. Under whose administration, we are even assured of an happy immortality, *St. Peter* having given us this
very

very engaging representation of those benefits, when he says, *blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens for us.*

Objection. Should it not now be asked, *why has God taken this method of conferring his favours on mankind? Is there not something in it too obscure and mysterious for ordinary conception?*

Ans. So far from it, that of all other known methods of revealing his truth and grace, this seems to be the most familiar and engaging in its instruction; forasmuch as it most naturally suits with the condition of man, both as subjected to death, and also as interested in a resurrection from the dead. Whatever were the informations otherways given about these things, there never had been any instructor, in whom, as a common head, power was invested to preside *as Lord*
over

over both the dead and living. Whereas, in Jesus, the dominion of death is made void; and immortal life is brought to light by his instructions. We are thus, by him, enabled to view death with composure, and the future state with joyful hope. Our ideas have a clearness and precision in them; and we are not left to the random guesses of an unguided imagination, nor to the visions of poets, or dreams of philosophers. The veil, that terrified the mind by its gloom, is quite thrown aside *again*, the making manifest by the death of Christ, and its consequences, is in perfect harmony with nature, and the universal voice of providence. For, should we inquire what are the advantages we receive relative to this system? or what the method of their conveyance? they will be found essential to our present subsistence, and to be conveyed, ordinarily, thro' the hands of our fellow men, *i. e.* some way by their instrumentality. We certainly owe the various and numerous accommodations of life and being, to their ministrations and mediations. This allowed to be the case, no measure could be more worthy of God, than that of ap-

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pointing

pointing *him* to be the captain of our salvation, who partook of flesh and blood; and was in all things made like to his brethren; and who verily was perfected through sufferings. *A man tempted as we are, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, can best sympathize with us, and best succour us under the whole of our trial.*

An objection that could arise to this divine scheme, would equally disrelish any other known medium of manifestation. But, of a truth, it was very unlikely, that PROPHECY should mark out the Messiah from the first age of the world; and yet, that there should not be some great meaning, some universal advantage arise from his mission and appointments, whenever he should make his appearance.—Thus it is presumed, the *divine origin* of the memorial of Christ's death is shewn with evidence.

§. II. *The social nature of the ritual, with the sensible symbols requisite to the celebration.*

That the Eucharist is to be celebrated socially, and with the visible sensible symbols of material bread and material wine, which are for the participation of each and every communicant, might be argued from those accounts the sacred writers have given of the institution. Not any thing less than a violence offered to the text, can give any other sense of the ritual. Our blessed Lord, after the paschal feast, “ took bread, and gave
 “ thanks, he took the cup also and gave
 “ thanks, and bade them all drink of it.—
 “ He said of the bread, take, eat, *this is my*
 “ *body*: to distinguish it from the passover-
 “ lamb, which had a quite different object.
 “ And of the cup, he says, *this is the New*
 “ *Testament in my blood*, which is as widely
 “ different from the intention of the paschal
 “ cup of thanksgiving. So St. Paul says,
 “ the cup of blessing which we bless, is it
 “ not the communion of the blood of
 “ Christ? and the bread which we break,

“ is it not the communion of the body of “ Christ?”—That sort of *blessing* and *praising* God, used over the bread and over the cup, did intend the separating of them from common to a religious use: *i. e.* they are not to be taken to satisfy hunger or thirst; but are to be the symbols of *his* body broken, and *his* blood shed, who instituted the memorial. And they are to be eaten and drank in *society*, to denote the spiritual communion which christians have with one another, and also their union with the one Lord,

But the transaction being social, is also manifest from the practice of the first christians; of whom St. *Luke* says, that *on the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread.* Acts xx. 7. compare *ch. ii. 46.* And with him agrees St. *Paul*, who when he wrote to the Corinthians about the year 56, observes, *when they came together into one place, they could not eat the Lord's supper; for this reason, viz. they divided into separate companies, even in the place of public worship, and every one eat his own supper: one was hun-*
gry,

gry, and another was drunken.—They forgot that their own houses were most proper, in which to eat their common meals, and not the church of God; and that they altogether thus perverted the spiritual nature and intention of the memorial rite: for, *they being many, were one bread and one body; as they were all to partake alike of that one bread.*

We have a pagan testimony much to our purpose, *viz.* that of PLINY, who thus writes of the christians, in his letter to TRAJAN: “the whole of their guilt, is, they
“ meet on a certain stated day, before it is
“ light, and address themselves in the form
“ of a prayer to Christ, as to some God,*
“ binding themselves by a solemn oath, not
“ for the purposes of any wicked design, but
“ never to commit any fraud, theft, or adul-
“ tery, never to falsify their word, nor deny
“ a trust when called upon to deliver it up;

* In the Oxford edit. of 1667, this is the phrase, *carmenq; christo, quasi deo, dicere secum invicem*, which I should render, “each of them sung an hymn to Christ, as to a God.” *q. d.* much resembling the way we have of doing honour to one of our deities.

“ after

“ after which it was their custom to separate, and then re-assemble, to eat in common an harmless meal.”*

An early honourable testimony given by the *Roman* governor of a province to an emperor, who flourished about the year of Christ, one hundred. The harmless meal which he reports the Christians to have eaten in common, was undoubtedly the *Eucharist*. It is mentioned as a part of their social and religious observance, a stated thing among them. And he also observes, the pure unblemished morality of their profession; “ they bind themselves by a solemn oath, not to do any thing that would reproach their holy religion. Herein following that apostolic rule, *walk ye worthy of that vocation wherewith ye are called.*”

Another succeeding testimony I would produce, is, from *Justin Martyr*, in his first apology presented to the emperor and senate of *Rome*, about the year of Christ one hun-

* *PLINY's* letters, book x. letter 97, *MELMOTH's* translation.

dred and forty, giving an account of the christian worship; who expresses himself after this manner. “ And after prayer, there
“ is brought to him who presides over the
“ brethren, bread (or a loaf) and a cup of
“ water and wine, which he takes, and
“ then gives praise and glory to the father of
“ the universe, in the name of the son and
“ of the holy spirit. And after finishing the
“ prayer and thanksgiving, all the people present give their assent, saying, *amen*. Then
“ they who with us are called *deacons*, give
“ the bread, and the wine and water to every
“ one present, and send to such as are absent. This food is called by us the *Eucharist*, of which no one may partake but
“ he who believes the things taught by us,
“ and has been washed in the laver for the
“ remission of sins and regeneration, and to
“ live as Christ hath commanded. For we
“ do not take this as common bread, or
“ common drink. For the apostles in
“ their memoirs, which are called *gospels*,
“ have delivered it to us, that Christ directed
“ it so to be done: and that when he had
“ taken

“ taken bread and given thanks, he said,
 “ *do this in remembrance of me, this is my*
 “ *body.* And in like manner, that having
 “ taken the cup, and given thanks, he said,
 “ *this is my blood, and gave it to them only.*”
 p. 82, 83. edit. *Bened.*

An apology presented to the emperor *Antoninus Pius*, and the senate, is a testimony of great notoriety and high credit, and in full proof of the social nature of the ritual, and of the use of sensible material symbols in the celebration. At the same time, their *sending the elements to such christians who were absent*, must, confessedly be an instance of departure from the letter of the divine canon, and of apostolic practice.

It would not be wide of the point, to mention the farther testimony of *TATIAN*, a disciple of *Justin Martyr*, who represents the Lord's supper and the design of it, as a memorial in this manner; “ and
 “ having taken bread (or a loaf) and then a
 “ cup of wine, and having said that they
 were

“ were his body and bloud, he commanded
“ them to eat and drink; for it was (or they
“ were) a memorial of his future suffering and
“ death.*” This testimony was about the year
one hundred and seventy. And though it does
not explicitly report the practice of christians,
yet it gives us reason to suppose that the insti-
tution was then so understood, and so cele-
brated, *viz.* by a social religious eating of ma-
terial bread, and drinking of material wine in
memory of Christ’s sufferings and death.

We can add, that *Justin Martyr, Ter-
tullian, Cyprian* and *Origen*, have given very
expres accounts of the *Lord’s Supper*; not
only as to the time of receiving, and per-
sons who did receive, but also as to the man-
ner of celebration. † Indeed all good writers
on ecclesiastical antiquities do agree, in re-
presenting the Eucharist, as an essential, di-
stinguishing ritual, celebrated socially among
christians.

* See Dr. LARDNER’S *Credib.* P. II. vol. III. B. I.
ch. xxxvi. p. 148.

† See Lord KING’S enquiry into the constitution,
&c. of primitive church, part II. ch. vi.

The social nature of the Eucharist, or the use of sensible symbols in the celebration, might be further argued, from the various alterations made by christians in their observances; such as, “giving it to infants, carrying the Eucharist home with them to their own houses, to receive as they had occasion. The *Eulogiae*, or sending it to different churches, in token of joint-communication;—the changing of the table posture to standing in the third century, which continued to the eleventh, and then to kneeling;” every of these alterations infer an original social institution. See Dr. WHITBY’s *prot. recon.* p. 291, 294.*

* It is here observable, that our modern *sectaries*, who implicitly follow their leaders, are fond of mimicking an early custom which the christians had, “of making entertainments for strangers, or for christian travellers upon the church’s stock.” Which laudable custom Dr. LIGHTFOOT thinks was derived from the Jews, *viz.* the *agapae*, or *feasts of charity*, mentioned *Jude ver. 12*. But what resemblance have the modern *love feasts*?—See LIGHTFOOT’S works, vol. II. p. 775.

§. III. *The spiritual nature of the Eucharist.*

There are some who have understood the death of Christ as a *sacrifice*; and the Eucharist as a *feast* upon that sacrifice: And it must be confessed, that there are a number of texts in the *New Testament* that have spoken of him as a propitiation and sacrifice; nay, once he is said to be *our passover sacrificed for us*, 1 Cor. v. 7. But to understand the sacrificial terms, so applied in a literal sense, would be to strain allusions into original facts; and to throw much confusion on the human mind. Such figurative representation was natural and familiar to the eyes of a Jewish convert, who had strong prejudices in favour of the Mosaic ritual: and yet the *Old Testament doctrine of sacrifice* will be found to speak of it, either as the symbol of *penitence*, or of *gratitude*, in the person who presented the victim. But in the death of Christ, so far from penitence being expressed by them who devoted him, he was considered by them as an execrable criminal! they did not therefore express penitence by his

death, but ignorance, pride, envy and malice.

Gratitude was as remote from them as penitence; they did not thereby acknowledge obligation for benefits received; but, on the contrary, the most flagrant disingenuity, and the vilest ingratitude was shewn to him, by whom God had healed all the maladies of their people, and given deliverance and salvation throughout *Judea*, to their wretched and miserable! In no one literal and true sense could the death of Jesus be understood, as a *sacrifice*; when the spilling of his blood was an act of impiety, the most horrid that ever could be committed by any people or nation.* It could not then be an expedient to propitiate deity; since the insult and outrage was committed against his well-beloved son, who had every possible attestation of divine character and mission.

And yet there seems to have been an ancient use of sacrifice, to which the death of

* See PIERCE's note (d) on *Heb.* v. 5, 6.

Christ may be compared, or to which it may have a very instructive allusion; and that is, the method of *covenanting* in the patriarchal age. For, upon a divine promise being made by the oracle, on the part of God, with some condition to be performed on the part of man; the celestial fire did, in confirmation, consume the sacrifice; and thus became a ratifying seal of the covenant, *Gen. xv. 17.* In such allusive sense; the death of Christ may have the idea of a sacrifice; especially when we consider God's raising him from the dead, and taking him up into heaven, in confirmation of the promise of eternal life, under his administration, and which agrees with the express doctrine of the Eucharist,—*the new testament in my blood.* And with *St. Peter's* report, when he says,—*who raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God.* 1 Pet. i. 21.

As to that declaration, *for even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us,* we may well admit his death to be fitly imaged by an allusion

sion to the blood of the pascal lamb; forasmuch as that blood sprinkled on the doors of the Israelites, was their security from the destroying angel; whose commission was, at one instant of time, in the dead of the night, to cut off the *first-born* of *Egypt*, both of man and beast. As therefore the blood of the pascal lamb, was the symbol of safety to the Israelites, so the blood of Christ is made to us, the symbol of safety from the power of death; for through death he has destroyed him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; or an accusing conscience.* *Heb. ii. 14.* compared with *1 Cor. xv. 56.* *the sting of death is sin.—But the blood of Christ, offered without spot to God, purgeth the conscience from dead works to serve the living God, Heb. ix. 14.* His death demonstrates and convinces of the evil of sin, the malignity of worldliness; and so it purgeth the conscience from whatever would

* Conformable to which sense, *Chrysostom*, *Theodoret*, and *Theophylact* observe, upon *1 Cor. vii. 5.* “That it is not satan tempting, but our lusts.”—See *Dr. WHITBY’S Protestant Reconciler*, p. 124, edit. of 1683.

be destructive and deadly. Thus has Christ, by dying, destroyed him that had the power of death, an evil accusing conscience; and by this effect on the human mind, he has abolished death, or made void its dominion. In this allusive sense, Christ is intelligibly said to be, *our passover sacrificed for us.*

A sense in which he is also said to have been *delivered for our offences, to be made sin for us*; and who, as *concerning sin, ἡμεῖς ἡμαρτίας*, condemned sin in the flesh, i. e. in the world, *Rom. viii. 3.* We learn the deadly evil of sin in the death of Christ; we perceive how vicious passions do blind the eye, and harden the heart, and render men capable of any degree of impiety: and upon this conviction wrought in us, we recover to reason and rectitude, and rise to life and immortality.

The death of Christ is often represented as *propitiatory*. And so truly it is, as it reconciles men to truth and God. Christ died to this end; but not to propitiate deity, or render him more merciful in his nature and disposition

disposition towards man. “ God so loved
 “ the world, as to give his only begotten
 “ son, that whosoever believes in him should
 “ not perish, but have eternal life. And
 “ Christ also gave himself for us, that he
 “ might redeem us from all iniquity, and
 “ purify unto himself a peculiar people, zea-
 “ lous of good works.” There is no man-
 ner of change made in deity by the death
 of Christ; *but it was according to the will
 of God, even our father, that he gave him-
 self for our sins, by delivering us from the evil
 of this present world, Gal. i. 4.* So that,
*delivering himself for our sins, ὑπερ τῶν ἁμαρ-
 τῶν ἡμῶν,* was, delivering himself for our
 conviction of the evil of them, and for our
 deliverance from them. And this was “ ac-
 “ cording to the will of God, and our fa-
 “ ther, *who would have all men be saved,
 “ and come to the knowledge of the truth.*”

The want of seeing the immutable unme-
 rited grace and love of God, as revealed in
 the gospel, or else the strange desire of find-
 ing *mystery* in the death of Christ, has oc-
 casioned great confusion and absurdity in

men's conceptions. And not a few are found resembling the infidel Jews, whose desires and hopes were confined to the present scenes of sensible fruition. They want nothing spiritual, nor to have any concerns in a future state of existence. No wonder these dislike the divinely pure moral of the *New Testament* system; or that they imagine the spirit of the gospel much too refined and heavenly for their taste and relish. But, upon a supposition of our being designed for a future existence, and that a state of recompence must succeed this probation; there is no scheme of instruction could be more accommodated to both the present and future condition of man, than that of the gospel: for every sober, thoughtful mind must acknowledge, that all its doctrines, precepts, principles and promises do support on reason, nature, truth, the law of relation, or the will of God.

This might be confirmed, by observing, that every *salutary* influence or effect, said to result from the death of Christ, is always

G

expressive

expressive of what is spiritual and moral. Among numerous passages, let the following be consulted, *Acts* iii. 20. *Rom.* xiv. 8, 9. *Gal.* i. 4. *Tit.* ii. 11, 12. In no one respect can the death of Christ be the means of salvation to any man, further than it promotes his spirituality, purity, or morality. Thus only can we consider the blood of Christ to be propitiatory, as it reconciles us to God.

In a right celebration of the Eucharist, we express our gratitude and praise to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the manifestation of his truth, and grace made by him: we avow a subjection to the sceptre of this one Lord, by a conformity of temper and life to all his laws, and to the spirit of his example; and we renew and re-invigorate our resolutions to be acquiescent and resigned to every divine allotment: we profess to live in charity with all mankind, and to have a brotherly affection for all christians: and we also declare ourselves the expectants of our Lord's coming to us, *as a Saviour who will change our vile bodies, and fashion them like to his glorified body, by that effectual*

fectual energy, whereby he is even able to subdue all things unto himself. Such is the spiritual and moral nature of the Eucharist, in its original and divine intention.

§. IV. *The persons who are properly qualified for the celebration.*

Every person may be qualified for celebrating the Eucharist, who has the sacred volume of the *New Testament* in his hand, can consult that divine record, and form a judgment of its instruction.—The properly and duly qualified, are such only who do reverence those sacred writings, and religiously attend to them as a divine rule of life, and as the law of the final judgment: conscientiously conforming to all their instruction, and solicitous to improve and establish in those principles of piety and virtue which they inculcate. Moreover, because these scriptures represent it to be the duty of the christian *to examine himself, and so eat of that bread and drink of that cup,* 1 Cor. xi. 28. he will carefully inquire into the nature, design, and end of the Eucharistical celebra-

tion, in order that he may *discern the Lord's body**, i. e. he must distinguish it from all other

* This, at once, cuts off all priestly pretension: and disallows of any authority in churches to make bye laws, or exclusive terms of christian communion. "A christian church has its terms and laws settled by Christ; it is his church, and the table is the *Lord's table*, and the ministers are Christ's ministers: and it is the highest usurpation in us to make inclosures, when he has left it open; and to turn out members, or pastors from their office, if they walk and act according to their christian station: and men need be sure, that the denying their *unscriptural tests* and *Shibboleths* is such a crime as will justify their proceedings." See the Rev. Mr. THOMAS EMLYN'S *tracts*, vol. I. p. 70. 4th edit.

CHILLINGWORTH says, "take away this persecuting, burning, cursing, damning of men for not subscribing to the *words of men*, as the words of God. Require of christians only to believe Christ, and to call no man master, but him only; let those leave claiming infallibility, who have no title to it; and let them who in words disclaim it, disclaim it also in their actions; in a word, take away tyranny, which is the devil's instrument to support errors, superstitions and impieties,—and restore christians to their just and full liberty of *captivating their understanding to scripture only*." See his *Religion of Protestants*, p. 152. 4th edit. 1674. There are, nevertheless, some who are too assuming; for they require

other eating and drinking, which have no other end, than either that of bodily nourishment,

of the proposed communicant, that he draw up, or procure the drawing up his EXPERIENCES; which he is to deliver to persons appointed to be *triers* and *judges* of his meetness; a method that encourages the grimace and hypocrisy of profession: whilst it complements the vanity and pride of such, who must be thus consulted before his admission. But, how contrary is this practice to the apostolical canon? that makes it every man's own province to enter into an examination of himself, and to judge of his own meetness; which, no doubt, is just and reasonable. And assured we are, all other methods are unauthorized, either by our Lord, or by his apostles. We also here plainly discern, that *infants* are absolutely incapable of the celebration; because they are not of ability for forming any judgment of the design of the Eucharist, or of the requisite self-examination.

And as to all grown persons, who are not in earnest in their religious profession, but remain under the tyranny of some lust or passion, they will not be able to *discern the Lord's body*, or to eat and drink worthily; because the due participation does imply integrity of mind, and an unreservedness in devotion. *We cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and at the same time drink the cup of demons*, 1 Cor. x. 21, which is a contradiction men would gladly reconcile, who partake of the Eucharist, whilst allowing themselves in some criminal gratification.

rishment, else the gratification of the palate or taste. Whereas this eating and drinking has a spiritual moral meaning and end; for it is an open social act, which acknowledges the spiritual and heavenly benefits of our living upon *his* instructions, who died without the gates of Jerusalem, a most shameful, ignominious, and painful death.

The literal and gross idea of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, could never have entered the heart of man, had not ignorance, superstition, and a fondness of mystery, suggested the extravagance.—When the divine Jesus used those high figures, *of eating his flesh and drinking his blood*, he knew the people had been accustomed to them; for their *lawgiver* had

gratification. Yet no man can duly partake of the Eucharist, who is the slave of some lust.

But then all his other acts of homage, are likewise so many expressions of hypocrisy. He will certainly be condemned by the judge, “whose conscience is not void of offence, both toward God and toward man.” All such persons, therefore, must be unfit for this holy communion, though of this unfitness, they themselves may be the only competent judges.

informed

informed them, *that man lives not by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God, does man live*, Deut. viii. 3. And besides this, our Lord would not be mistaken by any disciple; for he explains himself in the very same discourse. “It is “the spirit that quickneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: my words they are spirit, “and they are life,” *Job. vi. 63.* Hence, “his TEACHINGS are that living bread which “came down from heaven; of which, if a “man eat, he shall live for ever.” To be able therefore to digest, as well as to taste with pleasure, his instructions, verily is, *to eat his flesh, and drink his blood.* So that all pious persons who discern this doctrine of the Eucharist, are duly qualified for the celebration; they, as the apostle expresseth himself, *can discern his body.* And surely, not any thing is more reasonable, natural, or significant, than this sense of eating the memorial bread, and drinking the memorial cup, as a religious avowal of our devotedness to truth and God, upon the very plan of *his* teachings, whose death we thereby commemorate.

Upon

Upon the whole, it is evident, that an honest mind, persuaded of *Jesus* being the promised Saviour of the world, and that the gospel history does contain the scheme of his heavenly instructions, and who is, at the same time, desirous to approve himself a disciple and servant of this one Lord, has an undoubted right, as he is duly qualified for celebrating the Eucharistical memorials of his sufferings and death.

§. V. *The christian's obligation to celebrate the Eucharist, perpetual.*

The perpetuity of the institution, might be argued from its nature, design, and tendency.—But let us look back, and a little contemplate the propriety and fitness of the celebration, of which notice has been already taken under the first section. From the face of facts, as they are found in the sacred records, such celebration was highly reasonable; inasmuch as by prophecy and promise, *this seed of the woman* was so conspicuously distinguished from all others of mankind; and accordingly, a general expectation of him did

did obtain at the very time of his birth. The Jews were very well assured he must be one of their own nation, of the seed of *Abraham*, and of the family of *David*. Nor were they less confident that when he once came, he would take the sceptre, and assert a civil sovereignty, establishing an universal empire! and that under his rule, they should be indulged in every sensitive and animal gratification. No sooner did they find themselves mistaken in him, whom they would have made their KING, or *captain general*, but they conspired against him as an impostor and blasphemer; and put him to a most ignominious, dolorous, and cruel death.

Thus the facts stand in the sacred record.—And can any human mind think it reasonable, that such an event should be buried in oblivion? that no monument should be erected, that might live throughout the ages of the world, and transmit the astonishing treatment of this divine character to all nations, as well as to all ages? this will be allowed to be reasonable indeed, if all mankind, of every succeeding age, are found in-

terested in his ministrations and appointments, whom the great God has constituted *Lord over the dead and the living*.—But this divine intention is fully accomplished by the Eucharist; at the same time it is extremely difficult to conceive of any other possible method of transmitting the evidence so expressively and universally.

The beneficial ends, attainable from the celebration of the Eucharist, by the first christians, are equally yet attainable; and will remain so, whilst the christian is exposed to danger by the impressions of this material system; whilst any trials of his faith and patience remain; or, so long as a finished example of humility, resignation, and fortitude can avail him of benefit, so long the religious celebration of the Eucharist will be found divinely useful to the christian.

But besides the nature and end of the institution, from whence we might argue its *perpetuity*, we have the testimony of an apostle, who assures us, “ that he received of
“ the

“ the Lord, by revelation, that christians do
“ celebrate the memorials of his death till
“ he come,” 1 Cor. ii. 26. *As often as ye eat
this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew, or
shew ye the Lord’s death till he come.* It would
be groundless to conclude that he meant, *till
the effusion of the spirit*; because this testi-
mony concerning the Eucharist, was given
long after that coming of Christ: and the ex-
hortation would therefore have been imper-
tinent. Altogether as unreasonable it must
be to understand it, *of his coming to the de-
struction of Jerusalem*; because the liturgy
of the christian church at Corinth had no
sort of dependence on the fate of the He-
brew polity, or national system. And one
might add the testimonies already mentioned
of *Pliny, Tatian*, and others, which harmo-
niously shew, that it has been the universal
practice of the christian church to celebrate
the memorials of Christ’s death, by eating
and drinking eucharistically.

Farther, there cannot, we presume, be
one single reason adduced, that would shew

the observance to be of less propriety or use, though the *coming of Christ* should be applied to the end of the lives of any given number of the first christians; forasmuch as Jesus did expressly declare, *that the gates of hades or death should not prevail against his church.* Consequently, what did serve to distinguish the first disciples, by a religious social transaction, in their day, would remain the duty of christians in all after-ages; inasmuch as they have ever had but one and the same invariable and universal rule of faith and worship. If therefore we should apply the coming of Christ to the ultimate completion of the Catholic church, it will signify *the end of the world.* And verily, this evidence of the truth of christianity exhibited by the Eucharist, will not wax old and infirm, nor diminish in its vigour, unless we can suppose that the truth and grace of God may hereafter become of less use and benefit to mankind: the obligation to observe the ritual, must then remain in full force, so long as it can be profitable to the christian to contemplate the clearest manifestation of the propitious nature

nature of God; the freeness of pardoning mercy; and the plenitude of that grace, which has promised eternal life to all who shall be in earnest in the christian profession.

§. VI. *The erroneous and superstitious opinions, which have obtained concerning the Eucharist.*

It is apparent, from St. PAUL's epistle to the *Corinthians*, that christians had, in his day, very much perverted the design of the Eucharist. They did not preserve the religion of the ritual; but they eat and drank to excess.—In very early ages of the church, they had likewise covered the ritual with mystery; and accordingly had their “*Missa Fidelium*, or communion service, so called, because none might be present at it but communicants only, as appears from solemn forms of dismissing all others before it began.*” This was a service distinguished from the *Missa Catechumenorum*, which preceded the prayers at the altar.

* BINGHAM's Ch. Antiq. B. XIII. c. i. sec. 3. But

But how high their superstition did run about the Eucharist, may be seen from the custom of giving it to *infants*. “ So, in the
 “ time of *Cyprian*, it was usual for children
 “ and sucking infants to receive the sacra-
 “ ment, unto whom it was necessary parti-
 “ cularly to deliver the elements.—And
 “ when a sucking girl refused to taste the sa-
 “ cramental wine, the deacon violently
 “ forced it down her throat.*” The other
 historian says, “ it was a known practice and
 “ custom in the ancient church, of giving
 “ the Eucharist to *infants*, which continued
 “ in the church for several ages. It is fre-
 “ quently mentioned in *Cyprian*, *Austin*,
 “ *Innocentius* and *Gennadius*, writers from
 “ the third to the fifth century. *Maldonat*
 “ confesses it was in the church for six hun-
 “ dred years.†” And *again*, “ it is beyond
 “ dispute that the church baptized infants,
 “ and gave them the unction of chrism
 “ with imposition of hands for confirma-
 “ tion, so she immediately admitted them

* L. KING'S constitutions, &c. Part II. ch. vi. sec. 6.

† BINGHAM'S Ch. Antiq. B. XII. ch. i. sec. 3.

“ to a participation of the Eucharist, as
“ soon as they were baptized, and ever after
“ without exception.*”

Nay, Dr. WHITBY has observed, that Mr. DALLY, in a large chapter on that subject (referring us to his *De cultibus*) has proved, “ that it was the constant custom of
“ the whole church of God, from the *third*
“ to the *twelfth* century, to minister the Eucharist to baptized infants; which thing
“ they also declared to be *necessary* for the
“ remission of sins, and the salvation of the
“ infant; and also pleaded scripture for the
“ proof of what they said.” See his *prot. recon.* p. 289, 290. An idea of the church, not much to its reputation, and would lead us to conclude, that ignorance and superstition were its chief pillars.

To such an astonishing height of extravagance, *ecclesiastics* were wont to carry their superstitious regards to the Eucharist. They

* BINGHAM's Antiq. B. XV. c. iv. sec. 7.

had first affixed to BAPTISM a regenerating efficacy; and when they had once done this, they could apply to the baptized whatever they fancied did, or might possibly belong to the christian system of ritual.* In this superstitious

* It is of the nature of enthusiasm, to run all its "opinions into extremes:" else one would be astonished at finding any ascribe to baptism, an *instantaneous* regenerating power. For verily, we can be very confident, that the *New Testament* never once inculcates on the mind of the reader such an idea of baptism. On the contrary, it always supposes, that those *adult* persons who desired baptism, were already become believers; and not that baptism had had the converting and regenerating effect. Baptism, verily, did no more to them than it did to their infants, *i. e.* it initiated both the one and the other into a kingdom or constitution of truth and mercy; and entitled them to the immunities and privileges of a divine polity. Yet some who would be called Protestants, have said as extravagant things of *baptism*, as "Pagans in *India* do of the purifying virtue of the river *Ganges*, to which they ascribe a saving influence: for however immoral their lives, if they are but plunged in the river *Ganges*, they shall find their way, without any difficulty, to the regions of light and happiness."—*Writers*, who consult the sense of the church, rather than that of the sacred canon, may be expected to deliver very crude and absurd notions

stitious application of an heavenly divine ritual, we may well conclude, that the church would be disposing apace for a farther degeneracy: and anon we read of oecumenical councils *transubstantiating* the elements of bread and wine, used at the memorial supper, into the real body and blood of Christ. And upon no better foundation than that of Christ's saying, *this is my body*. It is therefore ordained, that men believe the real presence of Christ, when the priest has once consecrated the elements. The communicant is taught to imagine, that when Jesus brake the bread, he brake his own body; and when he bade them *take and eat*, he bade them *take and eat* his own body; that when each of his disciples had eaten an whole body, he arose from table and went out with them, his body being unbroken and uneaten; and in that condition was ap-

notions about *faith, grace, baptism, and regeneration*. But so it has been, we see, in those ages of the church, when not content with baptizing infants, they must apply to them not only the useless, frivolous, paultry rites of *chrism* and *confirmation*, but even the divine rite of the Eucharist.

I prehended,

prehended, after he had agonized in the garden.

Nay, there is an addition made to this extravagance, for what is called the Romish apostolic church has mutilated or maimed the plan of celebration: inasmuch as because Jesus has expressly said of the cup, *drink ye all of it*; the presuming priest only drinks of the cup, and will not suffer the laity a taste with him. So studious has *popery* been, in all possible ways, to prevent the original plain design of this divine institution.

Other churches there are, who reject *transubstantiation*, or deny a change of the elements into the real body and blood of Christ; which yet hold a substantial presence of Christ with the elements.—The opinion of the *Greek* church; the *Lutheran* tenet of consubstantiation, or impanation.

A more modern monstrous perversion of the Eucharist, is that of making a celebration thereof, the communicant's necessary qualification for civil honours and worldly profits.

profits. A ritual, that was designed to set before all christians the exemplary contempt which our blessed Lord had of the world, is thus made the requisite means of gratifying avarice and ambition, in the communicant. —What?—could no greater security be given of loyalty to a prince, or of fidelity to a civil constitution, than to celebrate the memorials of *his* death who refused the civil preferment, and rejected with disdain the secular honour! the absurdity is so glaring, that we cannot forbear making this conclusion, *viz.* that because one sort of nominal christians had been capable of inventing or creating that monster, TRANSUBSTANTIATION! another sort would try if they could not match the invention, with an equally shocking absurdity! but, what child is there who cannot see the unreasonableness of supposing, such a flagrant prostitution of a divine appointment (by the one heavenly Lord) a good security of allegiance to an earthly prince, and of the reverence due to the majesty of a free people?

It deserves seriously to be considered, by all who revere this holy rite, whether such celebration be not to eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord *unworthily? i. e.* even so as to be guilty of *prophaning* the symbols of the body and blood of the Lord. They who partake of the Eucharist without any meaning, or with one quite foreign to the design of the institution, do, in the sense of an apostle, incur *judgment* on themselves, not discerning the Lord's body. On which account, he tells us, many Corinthian christians *were sickly, and many slept*. The hand of God did punish such wanton acts of impiety in the first christians, in order to inspire with caution the after-communicant, and create a becoming veneration of the ritual. It was in demonstration of its divine original, and pointed out the necessity there was of examining and judging of themselves, that they might not be judged and condemned with the world.

Many of the churches abovementioned, have made use of the Eucharist as a *charm*,
expecting

expecting it to operate even in the dying hour; and by a kind of forcery, they thereon give absolution, and declare it a good PASSPORT to heaven. Here will be requisite, a blind implicit faith in the receiver; and no small assurance in the administrator.

QUAKERISM, by avoiding all these extremes, has apparently run into another; and instead of celebrating these memorials of the sufferings and death of Christ, has represented the observance to be only spiritual and internal. BARCLAY asks, “doth not
“ this contending for the use of *water*,
“ *bread and wine*, as necessary parts of gos-
“ pel worship, destroy the nature of it, as if
“ the gospel were a dispensation of *shadows*,
“ and not of the *substance*?”—He again
asks, “what ground from scripture or rea-
“ son can our adversaries bring us to evince,
“ that one *shadow* or *figure* should point to
“ another *shadow* or *figure*, and not to the
“ *substance*?” After this he takes notice
“ of the supper having been given to young
“ boys and little children: and then ob-
“ serves, what little weight should be laid
“ upon

“ upon antiquity.”—See his XIIIth proposition, sections 9th and 10th.

But how very sophistical and delusive this sort of reasoning? it does not, in the least, affect the view we have taken of the doctrine of the Eucharist. Since eating memorial bread, and drinking memorial wine, are, truly and properly, *the monument of a fact*; and not one shadow or figure of another shadow or figure. Even this very *writer*, speaking of the life, death, sufferings and obedience of Christ, says, “ they made a way for our *reconciliation*, and became a sacrifice for the remission of sins that are past.”—See under his VIIth proposition, p. 226. By his own confession therefore, the sufferings and death, and obedience of Christ, which we recognize in the *Eucharist*, are facts, yea, they are with him interesting facts; and therefore cannot but deserve a religious commemoration. Yet it must be confessed, that in very modern times, and in more reformed churches, much *superstition* has prevailed about the Eucharist.

Eucharist. In some, a solemnity is given to it, by the *infrequency* of the celebration. The communion tables are crowded, where it is administered but annually, or at best quarterly; with preparation days, to create the greater reverence. In others, *Christmas Day* and *Good Friday* have an emphasis laid upon them; though the *New Testament* canon never mentions the christians breaking memorial bread, on any other than the *first* day of the week.* And, in truth, such is the superstitious disposition of the professing christian world, that the more any ritual is covered with *mystery*, and made important by bigo-

* Some difficulty seems to arise in the way of the *Sabbatarian*, who will sanctify the *seventh*, and not the *first* day of the week; *i. e.* if the breaking of bread on the first day, mentioned by LUKE, intends the Eucharist, (as we have understood it to be a distinguishing ritual in the christian liturgy) then the practice of the *Sabbatarian* is not so defensible. We also lay stress on the christian's making charitable collections on that day, *I Cor.* xvi. 2. and on *John's* mentioning the *Lord's Day*, *Apoc.* i. 10. And if the pentecost effusion of the spirit was also on that day, it must be held distinguishingly sacred, in the esteem of christians.—See and consult LIGHTFOOT's works, vol. II. p. 642.

try,

try, the more numerous and devout are its observers.

§. VII. *Observations made on the doctrine.*

I. It was certainly known to be an undeniable fact, in the first age of the observance, that the Eucharist was instituted by Jesus Christ himself, just as the gospel history reports; else it could never have become the *distinguishing* ritual of christian social worship. We are assured, it could not be of *later* original, than the *New Testament* report has made of it: for had it not at first been well attested by a sufficient number of credible witnesses, tradition would have been too slender a support for this kind of celebration. Nay, had it not been the distinguishing ritual of the first christians social worship, it could never have obtained such observance; because in the whole sacred history of the ritual, as it lies in the canon, it is so represented. But if there had been any fallacy in this report, made by the apostle *Paul* and the evangelist *Luke*, when writing the history of the first planting of
the

the christian church, the attempt to recommend and enforce such a *singular* observance, must have been treated with deserved ridicule and contempt.

Nor have we the least reason to suppose, that such an institution would have been inserted by three of the four evangelists, or *biographers*, who drew up the life of Christ, had they not seen, that the institution itself was worthy of him; and must be an immortal monument of a fact, which is universally and everlastingly interesting to mankind.

Indeed in the first celebration, as performed by Christ and his apostles, it could not be called the *memorial* of a fact which was yet future; but then that very ritual so instituted, was in all after-times to be celebrated as a monument or memorial of *his* sufferings and death, who could, with his disciples, composedly eat bread and drink wine with *thanksgivings* to God, over those views which he had of his own approaching crucifixion.

Our faith may then be firmly established in the *credibility* of the gospel history; since not only the nature, design, and end of the Eucharist, but the circumstances of its origination, render it utterly improbable, if not absolutely impossible, that it should have owed its existence to any artful contrivance, or political invention. Nay, we might infer its genuinely divine original, from the various amazing superstitions which have obtained, in the celebration of it among christians.

II. The plainness, purity, and moral tendency of the institution, should recommend the Eucharist to the celebration of all sincere believers. The expressive simplicity of it is manifest; being no other than to eat bread and drink wine (those natural supports and cordials of animal human life) in commemoration of *his* sufferings and death, who has shewn us, by his instructions, what are the real and true principles of spiritual and immortal life: since by his crucifixion we we are taught, what must be the deadly tendency

dency of all those propensities and indulgences, which are of a groveling and worldly complexion. We see how *the iniquities of men*, governed by lust, *did meet upon him*. And in what a convincing manner he has exposed to our aversion and abhorrence, all *that is of the world*.

Again, the very celebration has an heavenly and divine tendency; since we openly, solemnly profess, by that transaction, to approve his conduct, to admire and emulate the greatness of his mind, who, when he was led to *Calvary*, moved meekly along, *just as a lamb goes to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her devourers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth*. By this commemoration, we avow a resolution to resemble him in temper and life; keeping ourselves free from all tyrannizing and enslaving passions; such as avarice, pride and sensuality. We gain a farther advantage, by contemplating him, as sustaining the torture with so much dignity, *from the eye he had to the recompence of reward*. With such reference we also become enabled to support under every present painful endurance.

Moreover, because he has assured us, that he went to the heavenly house of his father, with designs of preparing mansions for our everlasting happy enjoyment; nay, even to take us to himself to behold the glory which the father hath given him, in order to our confirmation and establishment in holiness; we, at his table, ruminate on the promise; solace ourselves in the prospect; quicken and invigorate all our preparations for his pleasing and transporting advent.

These are plain, rational, expressive doctrines of the *Eucharist*, which should persuade every sincere christian to a very devout observance.—And surely no one who believes that Christ spake, with an intention to be obeyed by all his followers, when he said, DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME, can have a reasonable objection: because it obliges him to no more duties and services, than he is already willing, nay, desirous to perform.—The sincere christian cannot think that his Lord would have appointed this memorial, had he not seen the reasonableness and usefulness of it: forasmuch as he will
readily

readily allow that his divine master had wisdom given him *equal* to his mission, character, and appointments.

More may be said for the omission of those christians, who have been discouraged from misrepresentation and misapprehension; awed by a wrong education, and deep-rooted prejudices. Yet even those professors should honestly endeavour to remove prejudice, and understand clearly the nature and design of this institution. They should; for there is something very unaccountable in their conduct, who can satisfy themselves in a course of life, of which they hope neither to be afraid or ashamed, when they come into the presence of the judge; who are, nevertheless, either afraid or ashamed of coming to his table. Unaccountable indeed it must be, that a man shall not think himself fitly qualified for commemorating Christ's death, who has no kind of uneasiness about his meetness for the judicial presence of Christ.

Does he say, *truly it is very unfashionable; and he chuseth not to have the sneer and ridicule of his acquaintance and companions!*

Such

Such a one would do well to consider, and ask himself, whether the good opinion of Christ, or of his companions, will promise him the most satisfaction?—There is great and weighty meaning in that declaration of our Lord's.—*Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my father who is in heaven.* May it not be applicable to this, as well as to any other kind of confession? How far it is, every one should judge impartially for himself.

III. Some well-meaning christians are deterred and affrighted from the table of the Lord, principally because St. PAUL speaks of the unworthy communicant's eating and drinking *damnation, or judgment* to himself; when it is evident, that the *Corinthians* did very prophanely pervert the design of the Eucharist. They were intemperate in the festival; they eat and drank to excess; and the rich separated themselves from the poor, allowing them no fellowship with them. Which the apostle reproves, by saying, "my brethren,

“ thren, when ye come together to eat, *i. e.*
“ the Eucharist, tarry one for another. But
“ if any man hunger, let him eat at home;
“ that ye come not together unto *condemna-*
“ *tion.*” — There is therefore no reason of
dread or terrors, to any serious and conscien-
tious christian, in his approach to the table
of the Lord, because of these declarations
about eating and drinking unworthily, thereby
incurring damnation or judgment: But every
man may be assured of escaping such cen-
sure, who eats and drinks in acknowledg-
ment of his devotedness to the one Lord,
whose advent he is daily waiting for.

F I N I S.

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