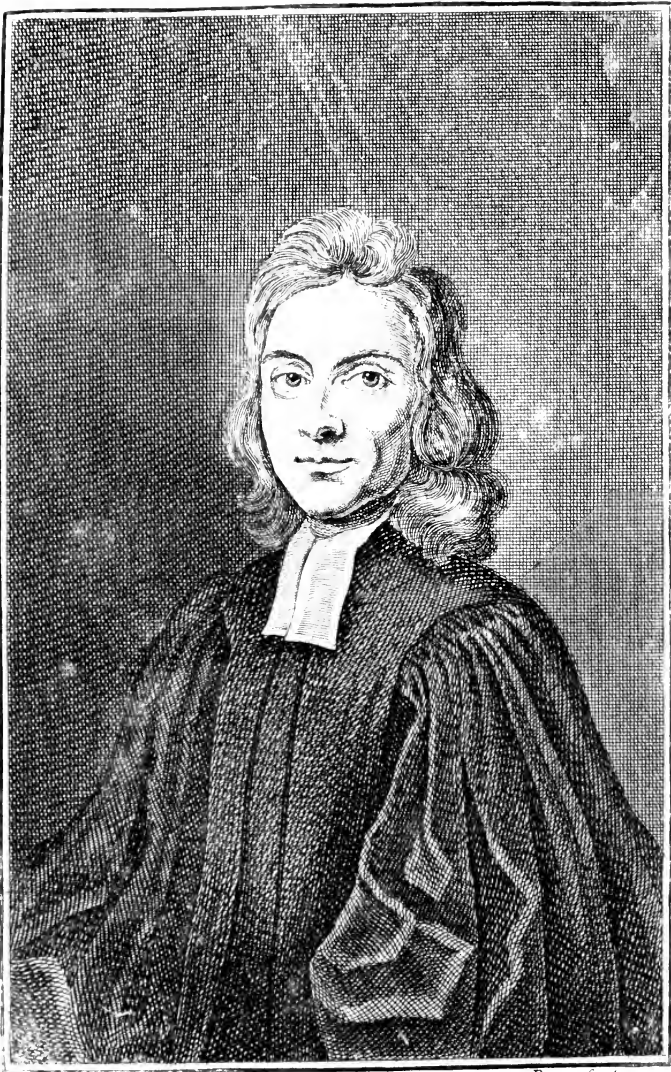


PRESENTED TO THE LIBRARY
OF
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
BY
Mrs. Alexander Proudfit.

500
1736







Farr Sculp.

JOHN KETTLEWELL. B.D.

A N
HELP and EXHORTATION
T O
Worthy Communicating.
O R, A
T R E A T I S E

Describing the
MEANING, Worthy RECEPTION,
DUTY, and BENEFITS
O F T H E
H O L Y S A C R A M E N T,

A N D
Answering the *Doubts of Conscience*, and *other Reasons*,
which most generally detain Men from it.

Together with Suitable
D E V O T I O N S

A D D E D.

By *JOHN KETTLEWELL*, B. D.
Vicar of *Cole's-Hill*, in *Warwickshire*.

The T E N T H E D I T I O N, Corrected.

L O N D O N:

Printed for D. MIDWINTER, A. BETTESWORTH, E. CURLL,
R. GOSLING, R. ROBINSON, W. INNYS, C. RIVINGTON,
J. BATLEY, J. and P. KNAPTON, T. LONGMAN, S. BIRT,
D. BROWNE, B. MOTTE, and T. ASTLEY. 1737.

[Price Four Shillings.]

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
SIMON Lord *DIGBY*,
BARON *DIGBY*,
OF
GEASHILL.

MY LORD,

THE HOLY EUCHARIST is
a Rite of the greatest Honour
and Endearment that ever *God*
vouchsafed to *Men*, and the
most sublime and blissful Instance of our
Communion with him. For therein he calls
us to his own *Table*, not to attend as *Ser-*
vants, but to feast with him as his *Friends*:

iv *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

He treats us with the most magnificent Fare, presenting That to us for our Food, which one would think were not to be *Eaten*, but *Adored*, even the most sacred *Body* and *Blood* of his own *Son*, in which he conveys to us all the Benefits of our Redemption. And being thus apt to excite in us the highest Devotion, and to enrich us with the greatest Fullness of Grace and Blessing, one would expect it should be had in Reverence, and most thankfully received by every Christian.

But yet in *our Days*, what Part of *Religion* doth so generally suffer, or is so universally neglected among Men? For the greatest Numbers have either little or no *Reverence* at all for it, or too much, which makes them afraid of it. They neglect it thro' Carelessness and causeless Scruples, or profane it by unworthy and disrespectful Usage: So that among all the Professors of Christianity, few pay that Honour to their Lord, or secure that Benefit to themselves by receiving, which he intended All should do.

This, MY LORD, is the Grief and Complaint of All who have any just Honour for their dearest Saviour, and this venerable Ordinance, or any generous Compassion

sion for the Souls of others. And that, by the Grace of God, I may help something to redress it, I have endeavoured to describe a *Worthy Communicating*, and to set out both the Duty and Advantages of it in this Treatise, that thereby I may recommend it to the Choice of all who are wise, and to the Consciencies of all who are religious. In the Management whereof I have shunned all fruitless Disputes and nice Speculations, seeking only to get it Authority among the *Loose*, and Reverence with the *Careless*, and to reconcile it to the *Scrupulous*, and to make the Duty as clear, easy, and useful as I can to All. Particularly, I have designed all along to make it not only an honourable Remembrance of our dear Lord, but a most solemn and strict Engagement to a good Life in All that use it; for then I am sure they will be infinitely happy in it.

And this Discourse, MY NOBLE LORD, I here humbly offer to Your LORDSHIP, desiring it may stand as a public Testimony of the great Honour and Affection which I have for those Excellencies that shine so clear in You. God has endowed Your great Mind with a strong Love and steady Choice of Virtue; and, what I have beheld with Pleasure, with a generous, and, as there is
Place

Place for it, an active Compassion for those that want it. You have the true Wisdom, upon deliberate and well-studied Reasons, to be religious; and the Courage, in this audacious Age, when Irreligion is set up for the only creditable Dress, to own it, and study to be thought so. For it is Your LORDSHIP's Honour to think that nothing can make You greater, than to be an humble Worshipper, and a faithful Servant of Your holy Saviour. This noble Piety and Zeal for Goodness, will endear You, MY LORD, to Almighty God, and to all good Men. And if, by these Papers, I may in any wise contribute to them, I shall think myself happy, in having served to set on the virtuous Growth of one, whom, I hope, God has set out, in a Time which so infinitely needs it, for an Illustrious Example, that may give both Ornament and Support to Religion.

But beside this, MY LORD, I have another End in this Dedication; and that is, That these Sheets may remain a lasting Monument of my Gratitude, for the endearing Favours which I have received from Your Noble Hand. They were composed for the Benefit of a Place where I am now fixed, and whereto I was de-
signed

signed by Your Generosity and Nobleness, when I thought of nothing less. For so truly public was Your LORDSHIP'S Spirit in the filling of that Church, that You pitched upon a Person whose Face You had never known, and who never knew of it, only because You believed that he would make it his Care to promote Religion, and to benefit those Souls which were to be committed to him. And this, MY LORD, I humbly beg Your LORDSHIP'S Leave to mention, not for Your own, but for the Public's Sake. For in this degenerate Age, when either filthy Lucre, or at least some other mean and sordid End, have made a Merchandize, and bred Corruption even in the most *sacred Trusts*, I think the World has Need of such Examples.

I have nothing more to add, but to beg of Almighty GOD, That he, who brings about the noblest Ends by the weakest and most unlikely Instruments, would make this Book effectual to his own Honour and Service; and also bless Your LORDSHIP with a Continuance and Increase of all virtuous Excellencies, Honour and Happiness in this World, till at last he shall take You to shine in his own immortal Glory in the World to come.

This

viii *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

This is the most hearty Prayer of him,
who very much for Your Favours, but
more for the true Devotion and Affection
which You bear to the GOD and SA-
VIOUR he serves, is, in all Sincerity,

My Honoured Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most Affectionate,

Obliged Chaplain,

and Humble Servant,

From Your Lordship's
House near *Cole's-Hill*,
June 27, 1683.

John Kettlewell.



A N

H E L P

A N D

E X H O R T A T I O N

T O

Worthy Communicating.

The I N T R O D U C T I O N.

IN this Matter of the Holy Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*, there are two great Faults which are every where incurr'd, and which all who Love their Saviour, or their own Souls, ought most carefully to avoid; and they are, a *Refusal* or *Neglect*, and an *unworthy Usage* or *Prophanation* of it; both which are most offensive to Almighty God, and to our dear Lord. For our blessed Saviour has appointed it, and expressly commanded us to come to it, and shew'd us, by manifest Tokens, that he lays a particular Weight upon the same, so that we are greatly undutiful and disobedient if we keep back from it: And he has appointed it for

B

sacred

2 *The INTRODUCTION.*

facred Ends and solemn Purposes, which call for a very reverent and devout Carriage; so that we prophane it, if we come carelessly, and behave ourselves unworthily when we approach thereto. It is a most *necessary* Part of our Religion, and therefore not to be passed over, and let alone through Negligence; and a most *aweful* one, and therefore not to be perform'd with Disrespect, and irreverent Carriage. So that we must be careful, both to partake of this Holy Feast when we are called to it, and to come to it worthily when we do. And this St. Paul prescribes concerning it, *1 Cor. xi. Let a Man examine himself, says he, and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup. v. 28. Let a Man examine himself, i. e. let him approve himself, as the * Word, which here is rendered, examine, signifies, v. 19, † and Chap. xvi. v. 3. ‡ Let him so long try his Fitness for it, till he sees Cause to like and approve himself, and to think he is worthy of the same; for he would not call unworthy Receivers to the Sacrament, but drive them from it, as he doth by telling them the extream Danger which they incur thereby, v. 27, 29. But when once he is so approved, and fit to come to it, then says he, let him not forbear the Feast, but hasten to partake; Let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.*

Thus are both a *careless Forbearance*, and an *indecent unworthy Usage* of this Holy Feast, great Indignities to our Blessed Lord, and criminal Violations of it. It suffers on either Hand, so that to secure it in its just Esteem and due Observance, both are carefully to be removed. And to do what Right I can to this Holy Ordinance, and what Service I am able to all such as shall seek Help from this Treatise,

* Δοκιμαζέτω.

† Οἱ δοκιμοί, *that they are approved may be made manifest.*

‡ Οὓς ἐὰν δοκιμάσητε, *Whomsoever you shall approve.*

The INTRODUCTION. 3

I shall endeavour, what in me lies, to cure and prevent both, in that which follows.

Now to do this with the greater Clearness, in discoursing upon this Subject I shall do these five Things :

1st, I shall shew, *What is the Meaning of eating Bread, and drinking Wine, in the Blessed Sacrament.*

2dly, *Wherein the Worthiness of doing this lies.*

3dly, *How much it is every good Christian's Duty to frequent it.*

4thly, *What great Inducements we have thereto, and how great the Benefits are which come by it, which should make us press to it of ourselves, tho' we were not commanded so to do.*

5thly, *I shall consider those Excuses, and take off those Pleas, which are most usually made by any Persons against coming to the same.*

And when all this is done, I think I shall have said enough both to invite, and press Men to this Feast, and also to a worthy Partaking thereof, that so they may come to it when they are invited, and be welcome and worthy Guests when they do.

P A R T I.

The Meaning of Feasting in the Holy Sacrament.

C H A P. I.

Of the Meaning of our Eating and Drinking in the Holy Sacrament.

The C O N T E N T S.

Three Ends of Feasting in the Lord's Supper. The First End is in Remembrance and Commemoration of our Saviour Christ, and of his Dying for us. To remember him is not barely to call to Mind that once there was such a Person, but to think of his particular Quality and Relation to us, which are worth remembring, as of his being our most faithful Teacher, our most gracious Governor, our most intire Friend, and noble Benefactor. These Things usually commemorated by Festivals. The Second End is in Confirmation of the New Covenant, which he purchased for us by his Death. An Account of the New Covenant. Christ's Death purchased the same : It is ratified in the Holy Sacrament, which is shewn from the same Thing, being done in Baptism, Circumcision, and the Passover which answered thereto : More particularly, 1. From the Words of Institution, wherein the Cup is call'd the New Covenant, and we are bid to drink of it, which was a Covenant-Rite ; and the Bread is called

called Christ's Body, to the same Intent the Paschal Lamb was, which was a federal Conveyance of it.
 2. *From its being a Feast or Sacrifice, for Sacrifice is one Way of Covenanting with God, and by Feasting on it we partake thereof.* 3. *From its conveying the particular Blessings of the New Covenant, which are not to be had otherwise, than by federal Promises, or Performances. The Third End, is in Ratification of a League of Love and Friendship with those Brethren that Communicate with us therein, and with all others. This Chapter sum'd up.*

FIRST, I shall shew what is the Meaning of eating Bread, and drinking Wine in the Blessed Sacrament, and what we are to understand by those Actions, and think of them, when we do them.

When we come to eat Bread and drink Wine in the Holy Sacrament, we must not come only for a Bodily Refreshment, or for Eating and Drinking's Sake, as we do to our common Food: For this is to Eat, as St. Paul says, *not discerning the Lord's Body*, but as if it were bare ordinary Meat, 1 Cor. xi. 29. But we must Eat and Drink with special Ends, and particular Intentions, which may render our Eating and Drinking not an ordinary Repast, but a religious Feasting upon the Body and Blood of our Lord. And these Ends are three:

1st, In Remembrance, and Commemoration of our Saviour Christ, and of his dying for us.

2dly, In Confirmation of the New Covenant, which he purchased for us by his Death.

3dly, In Ratification of a League of Love and Friendship, with those Brethren, who Communicate with us therein, and with all others.

First, We must eat Bread and drink Wine in *Remembrance and Commemoration of our Saviour Christ, and of his Dying for us*. By these Actions, we must be put in Remembrance, and call to Mind ourselves, and commemorate or tell it to others, what a good Friend and Saviour Jesus Christ has been to us, and how at last he died, and gave his own Heart's Blood for our Sakes. And this our blessed Lord expressly ordered, at the Time of Institution; *This do*, says he, both of the *eating Bread, and drinking Wine, in Remembrance of me*, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25.

To *Remember* one, is not barely to *call to Mind*, that once there was *such a Person*; but also to think of their particular *Quality and Relation*, what they are to us, or what they have left with us, or what they have done for us which is worth remembering. If we bid a *Servant* remember us, we intend that he should be mindful of the *Commands* which we have left with him; if a *Friend*, that he should bear in Mind the great *Love and Faithfulness* which we have always expressed towards him; if one whom we have *highly obliged*, that he should *gratefully* acknowledge, and think of the *Kindnesses* which we have done him; or if *one*, lastly, *whose Favour we desire*, and of whom we have requested any Thing, that he would be mindful of the *good Turn* which he *promises* to do for us, or which we *ask* of him. In desiring any of these or any others, to remember us, we mean not barely that they should call to Mind how once there were such Persons as we in Being; but over and above that, that they be particularly mindful of the Relation wherein we stand towards them, and think of what we have done for them, what we deserve, or what we desire or expect from them.

And

And this our Blessed Lord intends, when in this Holy Feast he desires, and commands us to remember him. He would have us think of him in all those Capacities, and reflect upon him under all those Relations, wherein he so infinitely deserves to be remembered by us : Such as are that of a *faithful Teacher*, a *gracious Governor*, an *intire Friend*, and *noble Benefactor*, doing the highest Kindnesses, and working the greatest Deliverances for us, and for all Mankind.

1st, He would have us remember him, as our *faithful Teacher*, who has made known to us the whole Counsel of God concerning us, and to call to Mind those excellent Things which he has revealed to us. As namely, That for the Sake of his Death, and through the Merits of his Blood, all Mankind, who were utter Enemies before, shall be put into a Way of Reconciliation with God, and have the Benefit of a New Covenant, which proffers Pardon, to all who truly repent of their Sins ; and spiritual Help and inward Grace, to all who are careful to endeavour therewith ; and the Blessings of Heaven, and endless Happiness to all that are entirely obedient ; promising, that at our Death, our Souls shall go into Paradise, and that at the General Judgment, our Bodies, which till then were held in their Graves, shall be raised up again to eternal Life.

2^{dly}, He would have us remember him, as our *gracious Governor*, whom God has anointed to give Laws to us ; and to recollect, and bear in Mind those Commands, which, as our Sovereign Lord and Master, he has laid upon us. As namely, That we love God, and trust in his Goodness, and submit to his Providence, and worship him with Prayers and Praises, but above all, with an Holy and a God-like Life ; that we be humble and heavenly-

mind, chaste, temperate, and contented; that we be dutiful to our Governors, respectful to our Superiors, courteous to our Equals, condescending to our Inferiors, grateful to our Friends, loving and obliging to our Enemies, and just, charitable, and peaceable towards all Persons, of whatsoever Nations, Sects, or Parties, even to all Mankind.

3dly, He would have us remember him, as our *most entire Friend*, and noble *Benefactor*, who let us so deep into his Heart, and heaped his Favours on us at so prodigious a Rate, as never was, nor ever will be equal'd. For he loved us, without any Thing of our own Deserts; and in Spite of our highest Provocations; and without expecting any other Recompence, besides the Pleasure of being kind to us; and to such a Degree, as made him to forego the greatest Pleasures which he might have held without all Interruption in heavenly Places, and to become a Man of Sorrows, and to lead a persecuted, difficult, and necessitous Life; and at last to die, a most exquisitely painful, and ignominious Death for our sakes, which ransom'd us from the greatest Curse, and procured us the most valuable Blessings that our Nature can admit of. And this Benefit of his Death, being not only in itself the costliest, but the very Price and Purchase of all the rest, he would have remembered above all others in this Feast; and accordingly he has suited the Food therein, to be broken Bread, and Wine poured out, which do most lively represent it. *As often as you eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, saith the Apostle, you exhibit to all who look on and observe what you do, or shew forth the Lord's Death till he come,* 1 Cor. xi. 26.

These are the Things, which our Saviour Christ calls us seriously to remember and consider of in our own Minds, and which the Actions themselves commemorate and shew forth to others, when we eat Bread and drink Wine in this Holy Sacrament. When we partake of this Feast, which he has appointed us, he would have us remember him, and think with ourselves how *faithful a Teacher* he was to us, and what good Lessons and Declarations he has left with us; how *gracious a Lord* and Master he proved, and what Commandments he has laid upon us; and lastly, how *kind a Friend*, and *noble Benefactor* he shewed himself, and what astonishing Kindnesses he has done for us in all the Labours of his Life, but especially, and above all, in his suffering a bloody Death for our Sakes, which purchased for us the Forgiveness of our Sins, the Grace and Spirit of God, and eternal Happiness. All this *faithful Teacher*, and *gracious Governor*, and *entire Friend*, and *noble Benefactor*, the blessed Jesus is, and has approved himself to us, in the highest Measures, and to all imaginable Degrees; and since he is so, he would have us to bear it in Mind, and oftentimes to think of it. And that we may be sure to do so, he has instituted this Feast on purpose for it, and told us, that our Work is to call him to Mind, and remember him whensoever we come to it.

And this Way of having these Things remembred, by appointing Feasts for the Commemoration of them, has been very usual in the World. Thus the *Dis-

* Πολλῶν γὰρ εἰσι φιλοσόφων ἐν ᾧσιν σιμώοδοι, ἧς μὲν Διο-
γυσιῶν, ἧς δὲ Ἀντισπασίωων λεγομένων, ἧς δὲ Παναττίαςων.
Athen. Deipn. l. 5. c. 1.

*Diogenistæ, Antipatristæ, Panætiasæ appellati sunt, qui statim
anni Die Diogenis, Antipatri, & Panæti nobilium Philosophorum
memoriam celebrarent.* H. Casaub. *ad loc. Animadv.* c. 1.

ciples, in the several Sects of Philosophers at *Athens*, were wont to have a set Feast and Collation, in Remembrance of their Founders. And it has been the Way of all the World, to remember their Benefactors, and commemorate some great Blessings, by Festivals. Thus at this Day we commemorate the Deliverance from the *Powder Treason*, and the *King's Happy Restoration*, by a yearly Festival upon that Occasion. And the whole *Christian Church* has perpetuated the Memory of *Christ's Nativity*, *Resurrection*, and the *Descent of the Holy Ghost*, by the yearly Feasts of *Christmas*, *Easter*, and *Pentecost*. And God himself in the Old Testament call'd Men to a Remembrance of the *Creation of the World*, by the Feast of the *Seventh Day Sabbath*; and all the *Jews*, to the Commemoration of his sparing all their *First-Born*, when the destroying Angel slew all the First-Born of *Egypt*, by the yearly Festival of the *Passover* appointed for that very Purpose, *Exod. xii. 14.*

This then is the first End of our eating Bread and drinking Wine at the Lord's Table, it is in *Remembrance of our Saviour Christ*, and of *what he has done for us*. So that when we partake in this Feast of his Appointment, we must seriously reflect on him who has appointed it, and bethink ourselves, that he is our faithful Teacher, calling to Mind his Revelations; our sovereign Lord and Master, remembering his Commandments; our entire Friend, Saviour, and Benefactor, who has done strange Things for us; but above all, who has laid down his own Life to purchase for us the Pardon of our Sins, and spiritual Grace, and eternal Happiness, upon our true Repentance, Obedience, and virtuous Endeavours. With these Thoughts he would have us to entertain our *Minds*, at the same Time that we feast our Bodies with

with the Creatures of Bread and Wine, which he has spared for us; and if we would answer his End in it, and be welcome Guests at this Feast, when he calls us to it, we must be sure so to do.

And as we must eat Bread, and drink Wine at the Lord's Table, in Remembrance of our Saviour Christ, and of his dying for us; so must we,

2dly, *In Confirmation of the New Covenant, which he hath purchased and procured for us by his Death.*

This Covenant is a mutual *Contract and Engagement between God and us*, and consists of several Articles agreed to on God's Side, and several on ours. As for God's Part, to all true Believers, *i. e.* to all who believe the Holy Scriptures, and particularly that Part of them, these his gracious Promises, without a Belief whereof, they will have no Lift or Encouragement to set out about the Performance of the Conditions required on their Parts; to all true Believers, I say, he promises *three Things, viz. the Forgiveness of Sins, the Assistance of his Spirit, and eternal Happiness.* Answerably on their Parts, they promise *three more*, which three indeed are sum'd up in one, *i. e.* the last of them: And those are, to *Repent of their Sins, to Endeavour with his Grace, and to Obey all his Commandments.*

He Promises to *forgive them all their Sins.* For this is one Article of the New Covenant, as the Apostle relates it, *Heb. viii. This is the Covenant which I will make with them in those Days, I will be merciful to their Unrighteousness, and their Sins and Iniquities will I remember no more, v. 10, 12.* But then at the same Time he expects, and accordingly they promise, that they will *repent of them, and forsake them.* For he orders *Repentance and Remission of Sins* to be preach'd both together, *Luke xxvi. That Repentance and Remission of Sins, should be preached*

preached in his Name to all Nations, v. 47, and tells us expressly, that except we repent, we shall all perish, Luke xiii. 3.

He promises them the *Assistance of his Spirit, to enable them that they may do his Will, and become obedient.* For this also is reckoned as another Article of the *Covenant made with Abraham, that he would grant unto us the Power to serve him in Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of our Lives, Luke i. 72, 73, 74, 75 ;* and the great Promise of the Gospel is, that *God will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, Luke xi. 13.* But then he expects, and accordingly they promise, that they will use and improve his Grace, whensoever it is intrusted with them, and endeavour after all Virtues as they stand in need of them, *God works in us both to will and to do, says St. Paul, when we join with him, and work out our own Salvation, Phil. ii. 12, 13 ;* and 'tis only *to him that hath, saith our Saviour, i. e. to him which hath improved the Talents which were bestowed upon him, as those good Servants had done, who had gain'd the one * five, the other † two Talents with them, that more shall be given, and he shall have abundance ; but from him that hath not, i. e. hath not improved what he had received, as the wicked Servant had not done, who went and ‖ bid it, shall be taken away even that which he hath, Matth. xxv. 29.* And that this is God's ordinary Rule where he intrusts any Thing, he expressly declares again upon another Occasion, *Luke xix. 26.*

He promises them, lastly, *eternal Life and Happiness.* This, says St. John, is the Promise which he hath promised us, even eternal Life, 1 John ii. 25. But then he expects, and at the same Time we

* v. 20.

† v. 22.

‖ v. 25.

promise,

promise, that we will obey all his Laws, and do every Thing which he requires of us. For *Christ is become the Author of eternal Salvation*, says the Apostle, *to those only that obey him*, Heb. v. 9; and *bleſſed are they that do his Commandments*, ſays St. John, *for they only have Right to the Tree of Life*, Rev. xxii. 14.

So that the *New Covenant*, is a *mutual Contract and Engagement between God and Man*, wherein he promiſes to *all, who truly believe*, and accordingly they accept it, that he will *forgive them all their Sins when they ſincerely repent of them*, and *help them to any Graces when they carefully concur with him*, and *endeavour after them*, and *give them eternal Life after they have intirely obeyed him*. He promiſes Pardon, inward Grace, and everlaſting Happineſs; but then they, having Faith or Belief already, without an actual Exerciſe whereof, they would not ſeek after this Covenant, nor, if they did, could be admitted to it, make Promiſes to him again of Repentance, virtuous Endeavours, and an entire Obedience, which muſt confer a Claim, and give them Right thereto.

This is the New Covenant, and this Chriſt's bloody Death has purchaſed and procured for us. God would not diſpenſe with the *firſt* Covenant, without a Ransom which might remove all Hindrances, by ſecuring the Honour of his Holineſs, and utterly diſcouraging all future Offences, and ſatiſfying all the Ends of Juſtice; and becauſe that could not otherwiſe be ſo well effected, as he thought fit it ſhould, Chriſt himſelf became an *expiatory Sacrifice*, and, by dying for it, obtained the *Second*. And for this Cauſe, it is called the New Covenant in his Blood, *i. e.* that Covenant which was confirmed and purchaſed by it. *This,*
ſays

says he, *is the New Testament*, or rather, the *New * Covenant in my Blood*, 1 Cor. xi. 25.

Now this Covenant, which is the Purchase of Christ's Death, and which is the Sum and Substance of all that he has got for us, we all entred into at first when we were *baptized*. For *Baptism* is our *Sealing of this Covenant*, and *stipulating* or engaging to make good these Terms to Almighty God; *Baptism*, says St. † *Peter*, is the *Answer*, or || *Stipulation of a good Conscience towards God*; i. e. it is the *fæderal Promise*, or *undertaking* thereof, which every Person makes when he is baptized. And this is plain, from that *Form of the baptismal Vow*, which the *primitive* Christians used, and which we use now at present, wherein, if they are *grown* Persons, they *themselves*, or if *Children*, their *God-fathers* and *God-mothers*, in their Names, do expressly covenant and engage for that *Faith*, *Repentance* or *Renouncing* of all Sins, and *Obedience* to God's Laws, which are required by it.

And as we *first entered* into this *Covenant*, when we were *baptized*; so are we called to *renew* and *confirm* the same, every Time we are invited to *sup* with our Blessed Lord, in this Holy *Sacrament*. When he summons us to eat Bread, and drink Wine in Remembrance of his Death at this Feast; he calls us withal to confirm the New Covenant, which his Death has procured, and which was the Price and Purchase of it. He invites us to receive Engagements from God of his promised Mercies, and to give him Engagements of our Duty and Service; to be assured by him, that, if we do *believe* the Holy Scriptures, he will *forgive* us all our Sins upon our *Repentance*, and give his *Grace* and

* *Καὴν διαθήκη.* † 1 Pet. iii. 21. || *Ἐπερώτημα.*

Spirit to our *Endeavours*, and make us *eternally Happy* upon our *Obedience*; and to assure him, that we do so *believe*, and are resolv'd so to *repent*, *endeavour*, and *obey*, that so by Virtue of his gracious Promise, we may have Right thereto. He intends our eating and drinking at his Table, as a *fœderal Rite*, and for a Renewal and Ratification of this League of Love and Friendship: So that at the same Time, when we eat and drink in Remembrance of Christ's Death which procured the Covenant, we must solemnly give our own Consent to it, and expressly ratify and confirm it too.

This may fairly be presumed to be one End of the Holy Communion, because it is the End of *Baptism*, which *St. Peter* calls a * *Stipulation*, and which, as we have seen, is our Entrance into the *Gospel-Covenant* and *Religion*. And since it is so evidently the Use of that, in great likelihood it is of this too; for both the Sacraments were still held of like *Use*, *Nature*, and *Signification*.

Nay, this was the End, not only of the *Christian*, but also of the *Jewish Sacraments*, which shews that it was not peculiar to any one, but runs through all Sacraments.

For as for *Circumcision*, it was a fœderal Rite or Sign. It bound the *Jews* (as before it had done the *Patriarchs*) to God, and God to them, in the *Covenant* which *Moses* gave them, by a mutual Obligation. For therein they promised to perform, all that the *Law enjoined*—— *He that is circumcised*, says *St. Paul*, *is a Debtor to keep the whole Law*, Gal. v. 3. And thereby they were assured of the *Righteousness* and *Benefits* which God had promised—— *Abraham received Circumcision, as a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith*, says the same Apostle, *i. e.* as a

* 1 Pet. iii. 22.

Seal or Confirmation of the Promises which were made to it, *Rom. iv. 11.* And because it was thus a Sign to both Parties, and a Rite used at their engaging in it, *Circumcision* is call'd *the Covenant*, i. e. the solemn Ceremony and undertaking thereof, *Gen. xvii. 10. Acts vii. 8.*

And then as for the *Passover*, it was also a *covenanting Ceremony* and *fæderal Rite*, as may sufficiently appear from its being a *Feast or Sacrifice*, which is the most solemn Way of *Covenanting* with God. And this Use of the *Passover*, is of the greater Weight to conclude the same of the *Lord's Supper*, because among us this answers to it, and comes instead thereof. It answers to it, I say; for our *bleeding Lord* was the great Thing, which their *sacrificed Lamb* was set to signify, whence he is called *the * Lamb without Blemish and without Spot, the † Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World, and the ‖ Lamb of God that takes away the Sins of Mankind*; and our *Feasting* upon his *Body and Blood*, is the same with their *Feasting upon the Body of the Paschal Lamb*, as *St. Paul* plainly intimates, when he says *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep our Eucharistical Feast upon him in our Passover*, answerable to what they did upon the Lamb in theirs, *1 Cor. v. 7, 8.* And at the Institution of the Holy Sacrament, our Saviour intimated that the *Passover* was abolish'd, and that this was henceforward to succeed and come instead of it. For immediately before he appointed his *own Supper*, he tells them that *he would not any more eat of the Lamb, or drink of the Wine in the Passover*; i. e. he would abolish this, so as we should no more eat or drink of it; and substitute that in its Place, *Luke xxii. 16, 18.*

* *1 Pet. i. 19.*† *Rev. xiii. 8.*‖ *Job. i. 29.*

And now, since 'tis the general Nature of Sacraments, both among Jews and Christians, to be covenanting Rites; since Baptism plainly is, which goes hand in hand with it; and since the Passover was, which preceded and answered to it, this being substituted in Place, and put instead thereof: In all likelihood, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a federal Feast, and a covenanting Rite too.

But to prove this yet more particularly. That this Holy Sacrament is intended for a federal Rite, and for our Renewal and Ratification of the New Covenant, will appear,

1st, From the Words of Institution, wherein the Cup is call'd the New Covenant, and we are bid to drink of it, which is a federal Rite.

In the Words of Institution, the Cup, is call'd the New Covenant: This Cup, says our Saviour, is the New Testament, or * Covenant in my Blood, 1 Cor. xi. 25.

And we are all bid to drink thereof, which is a federal Rite, and was then a known Ceremony of confirming any Covenant. Drink ye all of it, says he to his Disciples, Matth. xxvi. 27.

This drinking of it, as it is an Application of it to ourselves, and taking it into our own Bodies, is a plain Sign of our engaging in the same; for thereby we shew, that we close with it, and embrace it. But this is still further evident, because anciently among the Jews; and other Eastern Nations, eating and drinking were federal Rites, whereby they were wont mutually to seal Leagues of Friendship; and confirm Covenants with each other. For they used to bind their Compacts by a friendly Treat, and to consummate them in an hospitable Entertainment. Thus we read in the Story of

18 *The Meaning of Feasting* Part I.

Laban and Jacob ; for when *Laban* demands, *Come thou, let us make a Covenant, I and thou*, Gen. xxxi. 44. *Jacob's* Consent to it is expressed by this, — *he said unto his Brethren, gather Stones ; and they took Stones, and made an Heap, and did eat there upon the Heap* ; by that Note of Friendship answering the Demand, and confirming the Covenant which was proposed, v. 46. And so *Joshua's* covenanting, or making *Peace* with the *Gibeonites* when they came to sue for it, is called his *taking of their Victuals*, Josh. ix. — the Men took of their Victuals, and asked not Counsel of the Lord, and *Joshua* made *Peace* with them, and made a *League* with them to let them live, Josh. ix. 14, 15. And *Obadiab* mentions being in Covenant with any one, and eating Bread with him, as Words which signify the same Thing, and one whereof is an Explication of the other. *The Men of thy Confederacy have brought thee even to the Border*, says he, i. e. have almost quite bereft thee of thy own Country ; *the Men that are at Peace with thee, have deceived thee ; they that eat thy Bread, have laid a Wound under thee* ; in which Description of the *Enemies* of *Edom*, tho' there be Variety in the Expressions, yet it is one and the same Thing which is meant by them, *Obad.* v. 7. And the same might appear from other Instances, both in the *Holy Scriptures*, and in *Prophane Authors*.

Since in the Words of Institution then our Saviour tells his Disciples, that the *Cup* is the *New Covenant*, and bids them drink of it, which was well known among them to be a *fæderal Right* ; he plainly shew'd his Meaning to be, that they should ratify and confirm the *New Covenant* thereby.

2dly, This appears from its being a *Feast upon Sacrifice*, which is a *fæderal Feast* ; for *Sacrifice* is one Way of Covenant with God ; and by Feasting
on

on the Sacrifice, we join therein, and partake of it.

The *Lord's Supper*, I say, is a Feast upon *Sacrifice*. It was the Way both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*, when they brought an Offering to God, that they who offered it, should come and feast on some Part of their Offering. Thus it was in the *Worship* of the *Golden Calf*, and the *Sacrifice* which *Aaron* made to it, *Exod. xxxii. He built an Altar before it, and offered Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings, and the People sat down to eat and to drink, i. e. upon Part of what they had offered, v. 5, 6.* And thus it was in the *Sacrifice* which *Samuel* blessed, *1 Sam. ix. The People will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the Sacrifice, and afterwards they eat that he bidden, v. 13.* And to this Usage several Places of the Scripture allude, as namely *Psal. cvi. 28.—They joined themselves unto Baal-Peor, and eat the Sacrifices of the Dead.* And *Exod. xxxiv. 15.—Lest thou do Sacrifice unto their Gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his Sacrifice; and several others.* And as it was thus in the religious Feasts both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, so is it also in the *Lord's Supper*. Our Saviour gave his Body and Blood as a *Sacrifice* for our Sins, *Putting away Sin*, as the Apostle says, *by the Sacrifice of himself, Heb. ix. 26.* And having thus made the Oblation, according to what was in Use both in the *Jewish* and *Gentile* Sacrifices, he institutes this Treat of Bread and Wine, as a Feast upon it. This I suppose is aim'd at, when *St. Paul* brings in an Altar, speaking of the *Christian Feast*, which sufficiently intimates its Relation to a *Sacrifice*, as a Treat upon it: *We have an Altar*, says he, *whereof they have no Right to eat that serve the Tabernacle, i. e. wherein the strict Judaizers may not partake; for Judaism excludes Men from the Communion especially,*

and indeed from all Parts of Christian Worship, *Ileb. xiii. 10.* And this he also shews concerning the same, when he compares it with the *Jewish* and *Gentile Feasts on Sacrifices*, making them answerable and parallel thereto, *1 Cor. x. 16, 18, 20, 21.* And this he directly affirms of it, when he says *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the Eucharistical Feast, i. e.* upon this sacrificed Christ, *1 Cor. v. 7, 8.*

And *Feasts upon Sacrifice* are *foederal Feasts, i. e.* Feasts which ratify and confirm Covenants; for *Sacrifice* is one Way of covenanting with God, and Feasting upon the Sacrifice is the Way of participating or sharing in it.

Sacrifice, I say, is one Way of covenanting with God. When God would enter into Articles, and bind himself in Covenant with Men, he chose to do it in shedding the Blood of some Sacrifice that typified the Blood of Christ his Son, which is the only Thing that moves him to deal with us in any Concern that either implies or tends to Friendship and Reconciliation. Thus he did with *Abraham*, when he promised him the Land of *Canaan*, if he would continue * *perfect*, and walk before him; he ordered him to make a *Sacrifice*, that therein he might covenant and engage it to him. *Take an Heifer, says he, and a She-Goat, and a Ram, &c. And Abraham took them, and divided them in the midst, and when the Sun went down, behold a smoaking Furnace, and a burning Lamp that passed between those Pieces*, wherein, it is like, God consumed and feasted on *Abraham's Sacrifice*; and in that same Day the Lord made a Covenant with *Abraham*, saying, *Unto thy Seed have I given this Land, &c. Gen. xv. 8, 9, 10, 17, 18.* And thus he did with

* *Gen. xvii. 1, 2.*

the *Jewish Nation*, when he ratified the *Mosaic Covenant* with them; chusing the *Blood of Burnt-Offerings*, that therein he might seal it to them. For when *Moses* told the *People* all the *Words* of the *Lord*, and they answered with one *Voice*, saying, *We will do them*; he built an *Altar* of twelve *Pillars*, according to the twelve *Tribes*, and offered *Burnt-Offerings* and *Peace-Offerings*, and then recited the *Book* of the *Covenant* in their *Ears*, that they might give their *Assent* to it in the *Solemnity* of this *Sacrifice*; the *Blood* whereof is therefore called the *Blood of the Covenant*, because the *Covenant* was thus solemnly entered, and established thereby, *Exod.* xxiv. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. And thus he did in other *Compacts*, but particularly in all those wherein he promised *Pardon* of *Sin*; for without shedding of *Blood*, i. e. of some *Sacrifice*, says the *Apostle*, there is no *Remission*, *Heb.* ix. 22. Thus did *God*, in all *Contracts* of *Pardon* and *Reconciliation*, require the *Blood* of some *Sacrifice*, that therein he might ratify and confirm the same. And this was the great *Use*, whereto all *Sacrifices* of *Expiation*, (such as our *Saviour Christ's* is in most signal *Manner*, whereon we *Feast* in the *Lord's Supper*) served among the *Jews*; they were solemn *Compacts* and *Stipulations*, wherein he promised *Pardon*, and they *Amendment*, after any *Offences*. He engaged to accept the *Life* of the sacrificed *Beast* in lieu of theirs, and to exempt them, because it had suffered; and they engaged to amend the *Fault* which they sought thereby to have atoned, and never more to repeat it. This it is plain they did, from that *Form* of *penitential Confession* in use among them, when they brought an *expiatory Sacrifice* to the *Lord*: * O *Lord*! I have sinned, and dealt wickedly,

* Obsecro Domine, peccavi, deliqui, rebellavi, hoc aut illud feci, nunc autem penitentiam ago, sitque hac hostia expiatio mea. *Vi. Episcop. Instit.* l. 3. c. 3. ad *Prep.* 35. & *Outr. de Sacr.* c. 15.

*and rebelled against thee in doing this or that ; now I am sorry for it, and ashamed of it, and will never return to it any more ; and therefore beg that this Sacrifice may atone for it. And if they had not thus repented of it, the * Sacrifice would have been of no avail to the Forgiveness thereof. For, to what Purpose is the Multitude of your Sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord, so long as you shew no Repentance with them ? But wash you, make you clean, cease to do evil, learn to do well : Come now, and let us reason together ; tho' your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow, Isa. i. 11, 16, 17, 18. The Sacrifices of God, says the Psalmist, are a broken Spirit, i. e. they must be offered and presented with it ; a broken and a contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not despise, Ps. li. 17.*

Thus were Sacrifices a mutual Stipulation and Engagement, consisting of a Promise of Pardon on God's Part, and of a Promise of Repentance and Amendment on Man's ; so that they were in the Nature of a virtual Contract and Covenant, between them. And this God plainly intimates concerning them, when he tells of his Saints making a Covenant with him by Sacrifice.—Gather my Saints, saith he, who have made a Covenant with me by Sacrifice, Ps. l. 5. and calls Salt, wherewith every Oblation of Meat-Offering was to be seasoned, the Salt of the Covenant ; because it was to season all those Sacrifices wherein the Covenant was confirmed, Levit. ii. 13.

And as Sacrifice is one Way of Covenanting with God, so is Feasting upon the Sacrifice, the Way of sharing and partaking in it. He who joined in the Feast, was looked upon by God himself to join also in the Offering, to promise all the Duty which it engaged, and to partake in all the Blessings which it

* *Isaiah lvi. 3.*

procured for them. *They which eat of the Sacrifice, says St. Paul, are Partakers of the Altar, 1 Cor. x. 18.* And therefore he forbids them to join in the *Gentile Feasts*, where they *sacrificed to Devils*, because that were to *partake and have Fellowship with Devils, v. 20, 21.*

And thus, from this also, viz. the *Lord's Supper being a Feast on Sacrifice*, it appears to be a *federal Rite*, because *Sacrifice is the great Way of Covenanting with God*, and by *Feasting on the Sacrifice*, we join in the same, and partake of it. In eating Bread and drinking Wine at the *Lord's Table*, agreeable to what the *Jews and Gentiles* did at their religious Feasts, we feed on the *Sacrifice of Christ*; and that Sacrifice confirmed the *New Covenant* with Almighty God, that being as he says, sealed * in his Blood, so that by our Feasting on it we are made to share therein, and give our full Consent thereto.

3dly, That our Eating and Drinking at the *Lord's Table* is a *Covenant-Rite*, appears from all the particular Blessings of the *Covenant* being conveyed by it, which are not to be had otherwise than by *federal Promises and Performances*.

The particular Blessings promised in the *Covenant*, I say, are all conveyed by it. Our Saviour tells us of the *Bread* which we eat, and of the *Wine* which we drink, that they are his *Body and Blood*:—*This is my Body*, says he, and *this is my Blood of the New Testament*, Matth. xxvi. 26, 28. By which, altho' we are not to understand that they are so in their *Natures*, yet the least we can understand is, that they are so in their *Effects*, i. e. that they convey to us all those Blessings, which the Piercing of his Body, and the Shedding of his Blood, procured for us. Those Blessings are con-

* 1 Cor. xi. 25.

tained in the New Covenant ; and, as I said, are chiefly these *three*, viz. the *Forgiveness of our Sins*, the *Assistance of God's Holy Spirit*, to aid and strengthen us, and *eternal Life and Happiness* ; and all these the eating of Bread and drinking Wine in the Holy Sacrament, are designed to convey to us.

They convey to us the *Forgiveness of our Sins*, and assure us, when we perform them as we ought, that God is in Favour and at Peace with us. Of this we have sufficient Assurance, because we *Feast upon a Sacrifice*, which is God's Meat, and are entertained at his own Table, as *his Guests* whom he has invited ; and the least which that can mean is, that he admits us into a State of Love and Friendliness, since we do not invite those whom we will not be Friends withal to our own Tables. When any one calls another to a friendly Treat, it is a plain Sign, that he either *would be*, or *is*, or at least *makes a shew of being* reconciled. It is a most natural Sign, and *now* every where *is*, and *always was* a Note of Friendship and Endearment ; and as such the Scriptures are wont to speak of it. When those whom he *had shut out*, should knock at the Door to be let in, and claim Acquaintance ; our Saviour tells us, that they will say to him, *We have eaten and drunk in thy Presence*, Luke xiii. 25, 26. And when he shews his *Apostles* how high Favour, and what great Interest they shall have with him, he tells them, that they shall *eat and drink at his Table in his Kingdom*, Luke xxii. 29, 30. And when he declares how kind he will be to those *that bear his Voice*, and *open unto him*, he says, he *will come in and sup with them, and they with him*, Rev. iii. 20. So that when God entertains us at his own Table, and invites us to feast with him, as he doth in the *Holy Communion* ; we may be sure, if we
come

come worthily, as we ought, that he is in Friendship with us, and ready to forgive us all our Sins. And this our Saviour plainly intimates, when he tells us at the giving of the blessed *Cup*, that it is * *his Blood shed for the Remission of Sins*; and when he bids us † *drink of it*, that so we may have it in ourselves, and be assured that we have received the Atonement. And this we must observe, is a Privilege, which God never vouchsafed to the *Jews*, no not to the *Priests* themselves; for in all their *Sacrifices*, he would never give them the *Blood of Expiation*, to assure them of their Sins being atoned by it, (nay, nor the *Flesh* neither in the *great Sacrifice of Expiation*, which was burnt || *without the Camp*) but ordered it always to be poured out upon the *Altar*, or the *Ground*, *Exod. xxix. 12. Lev. iv. 25, 30, 34.* And to this, it is like *St. Paul* may have Respect, when he tells the *Hebrews*, that we have an *Altar*, whereof they have no Right to eat, who serve the *Tabernacle*, *Heb. xiii. 10, 11.*

They convey to us also the *Assistance of God's Holy Spirit and Grace*, to aid and strengthen us. This is intimated by our Saviour Christ, when he calls his *Flesh*, which all must eat (*i. e.* not in its *natural Substance*, but in its *Effects*, or those Blessings which were purchased by it) by the Name of *Bread*, which is a Thing that, as the ‡ *Psalmist* says, *strengthens Man's Heart*, and gives Nourishment and Support to us. *I am the living Bread*, says he, *which came down from Heaven: If any Man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever; and the Bread which I will give, is my Flesh, which I will give for the Life of the World*, *Joh. vi. 51.* In the Sacrament, we are called to eat *Christ's Flesh*, and to drink *his Blood*,

* Matth. xxvi. 28. † Verse 27. || Lev. xvi. 27.
 Heb. xiii. 11. ‡ Psal. civ. 15.

(not in their natural Substances, as I have hinted, but in their Effects :) and *he that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, saith he, dwelleth in me, and I in him* ; and when Christ dwells in any Man, his Spirit dwells there too, so that he cannot want Grace sufficient to assist him, *Job. vi. 56.* And *St. Paul*, alluding to the Power of Wine, whose natural Virtue is to inspirit and enliven Men, says, That in the Eucharist *we are all made to drink into one Spirit, i. e.* we are all made to share in the same holy Spirit, which is the same to our Souls that a Draught of Wine is to our Bodies, a Principle of new Life, Strength, and Vigour in us, *1 Cor. xii.*

13.

They convey to us, lastly, a *Right and Title to eternal Life and Happiness.* The blessed Sacrament was thought *anciently* to have a peculiar Efficacy in preparing our Bodies for an immortal State. Thus *Irenæus* says of it : * *As the Bread that springs from the Earth, after it is blessed is not common Bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of an earthly and an heavenly Part, i. e.* the sensible Sign, and the spiritual Thing signified ; *so our Bodies receiving the Communion, are not now corruptible as they were before, but are put in Hopes of a Resurrection.* And *St. Ignatius* calls it † *the Medicine of Immortality, which is an Antidote to preserve Men from Dying, and give them a Life that is everlasting.* And to this, as it is not unlike, the Prayer at the giving of the Bread

* Quemadmodum enim qui est a terra panis percipiens invocationem Dei, jam non Communis panis est, sed Eucharistia, ex duabus rebus constans, terrena & cœlesti : sic & corpora nostra percipientia Eucharistiam, jam non sunt corruptibilia, spem resurrectionis habentia. *Iren. l. 4. adv. Hær. c. 34.*

† Ἐνα ἄρτον κλώντες, ὅς ἐστι φάρμακον ἀθανασίας, ἀντίδοτος τῇ μὴ σποδανεῖν, ἀλλὰ ζῶν ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ διὰ παντός. *Ignat. Ep. ad Ephes.*

and

and Wine refers, that they may *preserve our Souls and Bodies to everlasting Life*, as it was long since in the Form of the *Western Church*, and as it is still in Use amongst us. But whatever becomes of that Conceit, viz. *its preparing our Bodies for it*; it is plain that a *Right to Life and Immortality* is thereby conferred on us. *Whoſo eateth my Fleſh, and drinketh my Blood, ſaith our Saviour, hath eternal Life, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt Day,* Joh. vi. 54. and again, *He that eateth of this Bread ſhall live for ever,* v. 58. And if he had not in expreſs Words declared it, in all Equity and Reaſon this might moſt juſtly have been preſumed: For ſince in this Holy Sacrament God gives us the Body and Blood of his own Son, than which nothing can be dearer to him; we may juſtly argue as St. Paul doth, and ſay, *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up, both for, and to us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all Things?* Rom. viii. 32.

Thus are all the *particular Bleſſings* of the *New Covenant*, which Chriſt's Blood has purchaſed, and which God has promiſed and made over to us therein, conveyed to us in this Holy Sacrament. And ſince they are ſo, it muſt needs be a *fæderal Rite*, and a *ſolemn Ceremony* of our *covenanting* with God; becauſe theſe Bleſſings are not to be had otherwiſe, than by *fæderal Performances and Engagements*. God has ſuſpended all theſe Benefits upon our Performance of certain Conditions; ſo that we cannot have them conveyed to us on his Part, otherwiſe than by undertaking at the ſame Time, for theſe on our own. He will not forgive any Believers their *Sins*, unleſs they repent of them; nor help them to any *Graces*, unleſs they *endeavour* after them; nor reward them at laſt with *eternal Life*, unleſs they have *entirely obeyed* him, as we have already ſeen. And therefore whereſoever *theſe* are beſtowed,

theſe

these are either actually performed, or sincerely promised that they shall be performed too.

So that from this Reason also, it appears, that the *Sacrament* is a *federal Rite*, and a Ratification of the *New Covenant*, and of our *baptismal Engagements*; because all the Blessings of that Covenant are conveyed thereby, which are not to be had otherwise, than by *federal Performances* or *Engagements*.

And thus we see, upon all these Accounts, that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is intended not only for a *Remembrance of the Death of Christ*, but also for a *Renewal and Ratification of the New Covenant* which was purchased by it. For so much the *general Nature of Sacraments*, which are *Covenant Rites*, of *Baptism*, which goes Hand in Hand with it, and of the *Passover* which preceded and answered to it, do fairly intimate; and so much also the *Words of Institution* do declare,* and its being a *Feast on Sacrifice* infers, and its conveying all the Blessings of the Covenant doth prove concerning it.

And this is the *Second End* of our eating Bread, and drinking Wine in the Holy Sacrament; namely, to *renew our baptismal Vow*, and in most solemn Sort to *confirm the New Covenant* with Almighty God. So that when we come to remember our Saviour Christ in this Feast, we must come also to give and receive Engagements with our blessed Lord, promising that we will believe all his Words, and endeavour after all Virtues, and obey all his holy Laws, and repent of all our Sins; and then hoping assuredly, that his Mercy shall forgive us, that his Grace and Spirit shall assist us, and that his Bounty shall reward us with eternal Happiness, when we do.

But

But besides these Ends of its being in *Remembrance of Christ*, and of his dying for us, and in *Confirmation of the New Covenant* which was purchased by his Death ; there is yet another,

3dly, And that is, in *Ratification of a League of Love and Friendship with those Brethren who Communicate with us, and with all others.*

Eating and drinking together at the same Table, and joining in the same Feast, was always a Note of Friendship, and a Profession of Love and Kindness among Men. It is the common Way of the World, to *compose Differences, to keep up Friendliness in Neighbourhoods, and to beget Endearment and mutual Love in all Fraternities.* And the same our Saviour intended it should be amongst us. He invites us all to eat of the same Loaf, and to feast at the same Table, that we may mutually embrace as Friends, and love as Brethren, and be knit together in the same Fellowship and Communion. *We being many, says St. Paul, are one Bread and one Body, for in the Sacrament we are all Partakers of that one Bread,* which is a firm Bond of Union to make us one also, 1 Cor. x. 17. It links us together by the most powerful Arguments, of our being *Servants of the same Lord, and Sharers in the same Privileges, and Members of the same Body,* which are all most strong Motives to Peace and mutual Kindness ; and besides all this, by our own solemn Covenant and Engagement also. For in coming to this Feast, we are not only excited to it by mighty Reasons which suggest it ; but are to Covenant and Promise Love to all our Brethren, and to plight our Troth for the same. And thus the *primitive Christians* understood it, and accordingly made use thereof ; whose Judgment and Practice in this Point were so apparent, that the *Heathens* themselves, who looked any thing into their Religion, took Notice of it. For
Pliny,

Pliny, in his Letter to the Emperor *Trajan*, wherein he gives an Account of the *Christians Meetings*, reports their *Communicating* in the Eucharist, to be a religious *Compact* and *Combination* among themselves, that they will do no hurt to each other, but will love as Brethren, and live as Friends together.

* *They assemble early in the Morning*, says he, *and sing an Hymn to Christ as God; and then bind themselves mutually in their Sacrament, which is a sacred Oath, not to join in committing any Wickedness like a Pack of lewd Conspirators; but religiously to keep off from the same, and to be no Thieves, Adulterers, nor injurious, nor false and perfidious Persons: And having done these Things, and given these Assurances of mutual Honesty and Kindnesses to each other, they depart home, and meet again at a promiscuous and friendly Treat, where they innocently feast together.*

This then is a *third End* of our eating Bread and drinking Wine in the Holy Sacrament, namely, to be a *solemn Profession of our Communion and Fellowship with our Brethren*, and an Engagement of mutual Love and Friendship to those who communicate with us, and to all others. So that when we come therein to remember our Saviour Christ, and to confirm the New Covenant with Almighty God, we must enter into a League of Love with all our Brethren, and promise an inviolable Friendship unto them too.

* *Soliti stato die ante lucem convenire; carmenque Christo, quasi Deo dicere secum invicem: Seque Sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent; quibus peractis morem sibi discedendi fuisse, rursusque coeundi ad capefcendum cibum, promiscuum tamen & innoxium.*
Plin. ep. l. 10. ep. 97.

And thus we see what is the Meaning of eating Bread and drinking Wine in the Holy Communion, and what we must intend and understand by them, that we may, as the Apostle says, * *discern the Lord's Body therein.* When we eat Bread and drink Wine according to Christ's Appointment, we must fix our Thoughts upon him, and *remember what Love and Friendship he bore to us; what Lessons, as our faithful Guide and Instructor, he has taught us; what Commands, as our Lord and Master, he has left with us; and what inexpressible Things, as our most precious Saviour and Benefactor, he has done for us, in being made Man, and leading a mean and necessitous Life, but above all, in dying a most ignominious and painful Death for our Sakes, and that he might purchase for us the Favour of God, the Graces of the Holy Spirit, and Eternal Happiness.* We must *renew that Engagement which we made with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, when we were baptized, and confirm again that New Covenant with Almighty God, which was procured by his precious Blood; professing that we do, and will believe his Word, and repent of all our Transgressions, and endeavour with his Spirit, and obey all, not willfully transgressing any of his holy Commandments; that so we may have Right to that Forgiveness, Grace, and Happiness, which upon these Terms he has purchased for us.* And lastly, We must confirm *a League of Love and Friendship among all our Brethren, professing that we do and will forgive all who have injured us, and be kind to all about us, and never fall into Hatred, or cause Difference with any Persons, but be at Peace, and live in Charity with all the World.* The bodily Eating is but the Out-side, and the least Part in this Feast; but the

* 1 Cor xi, 22.

chief Thing required, is this spiritual Work and Business, which is to accompany it. So that when our Saviour Christ calls us to eat and drink at his own Table, he calls us not barely to feast our Bodies, for that is the least Thing that he intends; but chiefly and principally to employ our Souls, in remembring him, his Laws and Benefits, and among *them*, above all others, that of his dying for us; in confirming the New Covenant with God, and a Covenant of Peace and brotherly Love with his Members throughout all Mankind.

C H A P. II.

Of the Worthiness of Communicating in the Holy Sacrament.

The CONTENTS.

To Communicate Worthily, is to do it with such Tempers and Behaviour as are worthy of it, and becoming the Things which are meant thereby. The First End was to remember Christ, both, 1. As our Lord and Master, which calls for Honour and Reverence in ourselves, and a Care to maintain his Honour among others. For Mindfulness of his Commands, and Resolutions of Obedience. 2. As our most kind Friend and Benefactor, which calls for Love, and an hearty Affection for him. For Joy and Gladness in what we receive from him. For Thankfulness for all his Kindnesses, particularly in Dying for us. And as this Death was a Sacrifice for our Sins, the Remembrance of it calls for a deep Sense of our own Unworthiness.

An utter Abhorrence of our own Sins, which caused his Sufferings. A Resignation of ourselves to his Use, as thereby we are become his own Purchase. The Second End, was to confirm the New Covenant with God, which was purchased by his Blood. This calls for Sincerity and Faithfulness. A Third End was to confirm a League of Love and Friendship with all Christians. This calls for Peace and Charity to all Persons, and particularly for Alms to the Neccessitous. A summary Repetition of these Qualifications. A Belief of these Things, which carries us on to these Tempers and Performances, is the Faith that makes us worthy Communicants.

HAVING shewn hitherto what is the Meaning of eating Bread and drinking Wine in the blessed Sacrament; I proceed now, in the next Place, to shew *wherein the Worthiness of doing this lies.* And this had need be clearly stated, not only because the most considerable Scruple against Communicating lies therein, but also because really it is a Matter of great Account, and there hangs a great Weight upon it. *For he that eats and drinks Unworthily, says the Apostle, commits a damning Sin, which will destroy him, unless he repent of the same; he eats and drinks Damnation to himself, 1 Cor. xi. 29. and is guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, ver. 27.*

Now to *Do this Worthily*, is to *Do it with such Tempers and Dispositions, as become it, and are worthy of it.* For this eating and drinking not being to satisfy Hunger, but for sacred Ends; it is fit we should come to it with a suitable and sacred Carriage, and in that consists the Worthiness of the Usage. Were it only a Feast on *common Food*, we should behave ourselves worthily thereat, by *thank-*

ing God for the same, and being temperate. But being a Feast, wherein Religion is concern'd, and whereat we are to remember the Death of our dearest Lord, and to seal the New Covenant with Almighty God, and a League of Love with all the Christian World; to the doing this worthily, and as it is fit we should, there is more required. For we deal very unworthily in remembring the Death of our dearest Lord, if we are not thankful for it; and in ratifying the New Covenant with God, if we are not sincere therein; and in promising Love to all the Christian World, if amidst these Promises we still bear Enmity and Hatred towards them. These religious Ends, must be answered with a religious Temper, and a devout Carriage; and then they are treated as they ought to be, and as their Worth requires. This is signified by several Copies, which in 1 Cor. xi. 27. read not barely, *Whosoever shall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup* * *OF THE LORD UNWORTHILY*; but *whosoever shall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord, UNWORTHILY OF THE LORD*, i. e. in a Way unworthy of him; which clearly shews that the Unworthiness consists in the Want of those Tempers wherewith it is fit our blessed Lord should be treated, when he is solemnly remembred and commemorated. And this the Apostle plainly intimates, when he places the *Unworthiness of Eating*, in not discerning, or rather in not discriminating the Lord's Body, and putting a Difference between it and our common Food, by shewing a different Carriage

* Not merely *πίνῃ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ κυρίου ἀναξίως*, but *ἀναξίως τοῦ κυρίου*, as several MSS. partic. Coll. Linc. Coll. Nov. read the Place. And this is followed by St. Ambrose, who reads thus — *Biberit calicem Domini indigne Domino*, v. 27. and St. Chrysostom, who reads thus — *ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων ἀναξίως [τοῦ κυρίου] κρίμα ἐσται αὐτῷ*, &c. v. 29.

Chap. 2. Of Communicating Worthily. 35

and Behaviour in our Receipt thereof. *He that eats and drinks unworthily*, says he, *eats and drinks Damnation to himself*, for such unworthy Usage, which lies in his *not discerning*, or rather *not *discriminating the Lord's Body*, 1 Cor. xi. 29.

Thus doth a worthy eating of the Holy Sacrament, consist in answering its sacred Ends, with sacred and suitable Carriage and Dispositions. And therefore, that we may see what Behaviour is worthy of it, it is fit we run over those several Ends, and enquire what Tempers every one of them requires of us.

Those Ends are Three :

1st, To remember *Christ our blessed Lord and Saviour*, and particularly his *dying for us* ; which call for *Love, Joy, Gratitude, obedient Resolutions*, and such like Tempers.

2dly, To confirm the *New Covenant* with Almighty God ; which is not worthily done by us, unless we come to it in *Sincerity and Faithfulness*, and with full *Purpose and Performance* of that *Repentance and Obedience*, which we therein profess and make *Promise* of.

3dly, To confirm a *League of Love and Friendship*, with all our *Brethren and Fellow-Christians* ; which requires that we lay aside all *Envy, Hatred*, and *malicious Thoughts*, and come to it in *Peace and Forgiveness* of all those, who have any *Ways* offended us.

If we believe all these Things which *Jesus Christ* our great *Prophet* has reveal'd to us, and our *Faith* shews itself in these *Tempers*, and carries us on to these *Performances* ; we are worthy *Communicants*,

* μη διακρίνων.

and have that *Faith*, which will render us welcome Guests at the Lord's Table, and acceptable to him at all other Times.

1st, One End of our eating Bread and drinking Wine at the Lord's Supper, is to *remember Christ*, not only as our *Prophet* and *Teacher* (which I do not make a *distinct* Head now, because the *Belief* required to that, is exercised thro' the whole Action, and falls in at all the other) but as our *blessed Lord, Saviour and Benefactor*; and above all his Benefits, particularly to remember *his dying for us*; and this, to do it worthily, calls for *Love, Joy, Gratitude, Resolutions of Obedience*, and other such like Tempers.

The Remembrance of any thing absent, and long since past, brings it back into our Minds, and gives a Sort of *Presence* to it. And therefore when Things are brought to our Remembrance, they should work upon us, and affect us, as if they were before us. When we remember our Saviour Christ then, at this holy Feast, we must bear the same Mind towards him, as we should do if we saw him, and were conversing with him; and that will consist in these Things which follow. We must *honour him*, and *resolve to obey him*, as he is our *Lord and Master*; and *love him*, and *delight in him*, and *give thanks to him*, as he is our *Friend and Benefactor*; and *be humbled under the Sense of our own Unworthiness*, and *abhor our own Sins*, as they brought him to bleed and die for us; and *resign up ourselves, both Souls and Bodies, to his Use*, as we are bought with his Blood, and are thereby become his own Purchase.

1st, In eating and drinking in the Lord's Supper, we are to *remember Jesus Christ as our Lord and Master*; and to do that *Worthily*, we must remember him with *Honour and Reverence*, and with
Mindfulness

Chap. 2. Of Communicating Worthily, 37

Mindfulness of his Commands, and Resolutions of Obedience, which are Duties that we all owe, and should pay to him, were he present with us.

1st, We ought to remember him our Lord and Master, with Honour and Reverence.

These Tempers *Lordship* and *Authority* always call for, whensoever they are lodged in any Persons. *A Son honoureth his Father, saith God, and a Servant his Master: If then I be a Father, where is mine Honour? And if I be a Master, where is my Fear?* Mal. i. 6. *Honour the King,* says St. Peter, and *Servants be subject to your Masters with all Fear,* 1 Pet. ii. 17, 18. And *Render to all their Dues,* says St. Paul, as *Fear or Reverence, to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour* is due, Rom. xiii. 7.

But when this Authority is in the *most absolute* and *full Degrees*, and is *joined with the highest Excellencies*, and *tempered with the most Endearments*, and *guided by the most surpassing Goodness*, as it is in *Christ Jesus*, it calls for them most especially. For he is every Way wonderfully accomplished, and has all those Endowments in their greatest Perfection, which of right can challenge, or are fit to excite them: For he is *boundless in Knowledge*, he ** understands all Things*; and *infinitely † Wise in Counsel*, able to suit Means to every End, and to bring about every Purpose; and *surpassing in || Alight*, so that he may do what he pleases; and *‡ holy in all his Ways*; and *§ faithful in all his Promises*; and *‡ just and equitable in all his Dealings*; and *glorious in his divine Essence*, being the very *** Brightness of his Father's Glory*, and the *express Image of his Person*; and *supereminent in Power*, having

* Joh. xxi. 17. † Isa. xi. 1, 2. || Isa. ix. 6. & Rev. iii. 7.

‡ 1 Joh. iii. 5. § Rev. iii. 7. † Isa. ix. 7.

** Heb. i. 3.

*all * Authority in Heaven and Earth* put into his Hands. And yet in the midst of all these *Excellencies*, and the Height of all this *Greatness*, which are apt to puff us up with *Pride* and *Contempt of others*, he is *unspeakable in † Love*, and *wonderful in ‡ Condescensions*, vouchsafing to leave Heaven, where he was *equal to God*, and *be made in Fashion of a mean Man*, for our Sakes; and he is *unwearied in § doing Services*; and most prodigiously free in *Bounty and Kindness*, giving his own || *Heart's Blood*, to purchase *Heaven and eternal Life* for us; for all which *Height of Excellencies*, and *Plenitude of Power*, and *Depth of Love*, he is most † *profoundly revered*, and *dearly prized*, and *highly exalted* by *glorified Saints*, and the *pure and immortal Angels*. All these *adorable Excellencies*, are in their utmost *Perfection* in our Lord and Master, *Christ Jesus*; and their *Merit* calls for all the *Honour* and *Reverence* which he can possibly receive from us. And this accordingly God has expressly required of us. *He hath committed all Judgment to the Son, that all should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, Joh. v. 22, 23.* and *highly exalting him, hath given him a Name above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every Knee shall bow, of Things in Heaven, and of Things in Earth, Phil. ii. 9, 10.* He incomparably deserves our utmost *Worship* and *Reverence*, and has a most absolute *Claim* to them; so that we must needs treat him with the most *submissive* and *respectful Carriage*, and should deal most *unworthily* by him, and do what utterly *misbecomes* us, if we should do otherwise.

* Mat. xxviii. 18. † 1 Joh. iii. 16. ‡ Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.

§ Mar. x. 45. Acts x. 38. || Joh. vi. 15. Rev. v. 9.

‡ Rev. v. 11, 12, 13.

Thus we must remember our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, with *Honour* and *Veneration*, if we would do it in such Sort as is *worthy* of him.

Nay, we must not only honour and reverence him *ourselves*, but, if we would deal worthily by him, seek to *make him honourable*, and promote his Honour among *others*. We must be ready always to plead his Cause, and to vindicate his Precepts, and to side with his Servants, and express a just Dislike against those who transgress his Commands themselves, (and much more against those who set up for the Party of Disobedience, and seek to draw in others,) who prophane his Ordinances, or lightly and irreverently use his Name, or any ways vilify any Person or Thing, which he ought to be glorified and honoured in. And this we shall be sure to do, if we have any high Esteem, and Zeal of Love, and affectionate Concern for him. For when these are strong in them, every *Servant* will perform this Office to his *Master*, and every *Man* to his *Friend*; they will not sit still, and tamely hear his Name abused, or see his Commands slighted, his Interests opposed, his Children or Dependents injured, his Appointments disparaged, or his Person any way traduced or disgraced, without expressing a discreet and well-tempered Zeal in his Cause, and concerning themselves in a sober and just Vindication. This, I say, they ordinarily will do, as I am sure they always ought to do, when they have an high Esteem for any Person. And if thro' Lowness of Spirit, or Cowardise of Temper, they draw back from the Trouble or Hazard which they are like to run in his Vindication; they are very much wanting to their Friend or Lord, and deal unworthily by him. So that if we would deal worthily by our Friend and Master Jesus Christ, we must neither dishonour

him ourselves, nor, if we can help it, at least not without expressing our Dislike of it, suffer it to be done by others. And therefore to make this sacramental Remembrance worthy of him, it must not only be in shewing Honour and Reverence to him ourselves, but in a Readiness to maintain his Honour, and promote his Interest among others also.

2dly, We must remember Christ our *Lord* and *Master*, with *Mindfulness of his Commands*, and *Resolutions of Obedience*.

This is another Temper, which Lordship and Authority over us calls for. For the most proper Duty of *Subjects* towards their *Sovereigns*, and of *Servants* towards their *Masters*, is *Obedience*, or a Carefulness to perform whatsoever they enjoin and require them. *Put them in Mind*, says the Apostle, *to be subject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magistrates*, Tit. iii. 1. *And Servants obey your Masters in all Things, not with Eye-Service, but in Singleness of Heart, fearing God*, Col. iii. 22. *And Why call ye me Lord, Lord, says our Saviour, and do not the Things which I say?* Luke vi. 46.

Thus is Obedience the great Duty which we owe to all Masters and Governors who are put in Authority over us. We must neither forget the Commands which they have left with us, nor knowingly transgress them, but carefully call them into our Minds, and conscientiously practice them when we do remember and consider what they are.

And this we are then especially bound to, if they are not only our *Masters*, but our *dearest Friends*, and *noblest Benefactors* also. For these are Names that add new Bonds, and higher Obligations, which will have a great Force so long as there is any thing of Ingenuity left in us. And therefore since
our

Chap. 2. Of Communicating Worthily. 41

our blessed Master Jesus, is not only our rightful Lord and Governor, but withal our most surpassing kind Friend and Benefactor, we ought in all Duty and Gratitude to be mindful of what he desires, and to do any Thing that he would have us; and we deal most undutifully and unworthily by him, if we do otherwise. So that this also is another Instance of the Worthiness of his Remembrance, to be mindful of the Laws, which he has given us, and to think of them with a Readiness and firm Resolution to obey them.

These are the Things then, which must render our Remembrance worthy of him under this Relation. When we eat and drink in Commemoration of Jesus Christ our *Lord and King*, we must *honour and reverence him ourselves*, and be concerned to *maintain his Honour*, and *promote his Interests among others*, and be mindful of *all the Commands which* he has left with us, and *stand ready and resolved to obey them*.

2dly, In eating Bread and drinking Wine at the Lord's Supper, we are to *remember the blessed Jesus*, as our *most kind Friend and Benefactor*; and to do this worthily, we must remember him with *true Love of him*, and *Delight in him*, and *grateful Resentments and hearty Thanks* for all the Kindnesses which we have received from him.

1st, We must remember him our *most kind Friend and Benefactor* with *true Love*, and an *hearty Affection for him*.

This is due to him, as he is our *gracious Lord*, and indeed in every Relation that he stands in, since in all he is most wonderfully winning and obliging. For even there he seeks our own Good, in all the Commands which he lays upon us; and treats us with much Gentleness, and encourages ever Thing that is well in us; and pities our un-

avoidable Infirmities, and bears our many and high Provocations with invincible Patience, and sends Messengers of Peace to entreat and sue for a Reconciliation with us upon any Difference, tho' it is not his Interest but ours, and tho' not he but we are the Offenders; and, when he is forced to punish us, he doth it always with the greatest Reluctance; but, when he can take an Occasion to reward us, he doth that with the greatest Joy and Chearfulness; all which are strangely engaging, and must needs constrain all ingenuous Tempers to be heartily in love with him.

But our Love is due to him more especially, as he is our *most kind Friend*, who loves us as he doth his own Life; and our *most noble Benefactor*, who has so infinitely obliged us, and done such Kindnesses for us, as we are not able to express.

He is our *true Friend*, who espouses our Interests as his own, and is sensible of all our Wants, and pained in all our Afflictions, and rejoices in all our Joys, and seeks to make us share in his own Happiness, and would part with any thing he hath to please us, nay, give his own Heart's Blood in any Case which were worth the while to do us a Kindness.

He is our *most noble Benefactor*, who has done us such Kindnesses, as are beyond all Expressions, having procured for us the Favour of God, the Help of the Spirit, and the assured Hope of eternal Happiness, when all these seemed irrevocably lost, and no Way attainable by us; and when he could not gain them at a less Rate, than by laying down his own Life for the Purchase.

And these are Endearments, which pass all Imagination; they are such Arguments to a reciprocal Love and Kindness, as cannot be withstood by any Man. So that having received all this Love from him,

him, we must needs return the small Tribute of Love to him again, or else we should be the unworthiest of any Persons living.

And this is one Temper, which is necessary to a worthy Remembrance of so *kind a Friend*, and so *noble a Benefactor*, as we have of our blessed Saviour: We must love the Thoughts of him, and be most kindly affected towards him, or else we shall shew ourselves utterly unworthy of him.

2dly, We must remember him our most *noble Benefactor*, and the Favours which he has done us, with *Joy and Gladness*.

This is a Temper very necessary in us, when we would worthily commemorate the Receipt of Benefits. For when we rejoice in them, we shew what Rate we put upon them, and how much we are pleased in them, and how happy we think ourselves in that Love which has bestowed them on us. And this will make the Person who conferred them to think them well placed, and please himself in what he has done, concluding, that we, who are so sensible of a Kindness when it is shewed us, are worthy to receive one. And therefore the Scripture calls all good Men, who have received most invaluable Benefits, to Joy and Gladness. *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye Righteous*, saith the Psalmist, *for Praise is comely for the Upright*, Psal. xxxiii. 1.

And this we all ought to shew, when we commemorate those Blessings, which our blessed Saviour has conferred upon us. He has got all those Things for us, which our Hearts can wish, no less than the pure and perfect Joys of Heaven, and eternal Happiness; and these he has taken the hardest Pains, and been at the greatest Cost to compass, laying down his own Life for them, rather than he would suffer us to go without them. And

this we ought not at any Time to think of, without Joy and Gladness. When we reflect upon so great Love, and such inestimable Benefits, it is most fit and reasonable we should rejoice over them, that thereby we may shew forth how happy we think ourselves in them. And our blessed Lord may well think he threw them away upon us, and repent that ever he bestowed them, or took such Pains for them, if after all he sees us insensible of what he has done, and still as cold and unaffected, as if we had received nothing. So that if we would worthily commemorate the Receipt of so great Happiness, we must do it with joyful Hearts, and chearful Looks, and an open Shew of Gladness; as we are told the *Disciples* did in the *first Days*, who as *St. Luke* says, *continued daily in the Temple, and breaking Bread, eating it with Gladness of Heart*, Acts ii. 46.

3dly, We must remember him our most noble Benefactor, with grateful Resentments, and hearty Thanks for all his Kindnesses, particularly for that inestimable one of his dying for us.

In Thankfulness are implied two Things:

1st, A grateful Acknowledgement of the Gift, and
a Praising him who gave it.

2dly, A Readiness, and Endeavour according to our Power, to requite it.

It implies a grateful Acknowledgment of the Gift, and a Praising of him that gave it. For when we receive an undeserved Benefit, it is very fit that we let the Donor know we are sensible thereof, and understand very well both our Happiness in receiving, and his Kindness in bestowing it. We must give him the Praise of his Beneficence, and express a Sense of our own Obligations: For if we fail in this, we shew, either that we *contemn his Gift*, and set no Value on it; or that we think it only

a *Tribute to our own Desert*, so as that we are not *beholden* to him for it; or that we would be *independent*, and are too proud to be obliged by it; all which, had they been known to him beforehand, would have made *him*, and *all Men*, to judge us most *unworthy* to receive it.

It implies also a *Readiness*, and *Endeavour according to our Power*, to *requite it*. For Love should engage Love, and the Kindnesses which are done to us, should oblige us upon all Opportunities to do the same again. To encourage Benefits and bestow Favours, we ought to take care, that they who gave them, may never have just Cause to repent of them, and to let them see, that if we had the Power and Opportunity, we would do as much for them. For Kindnesses should be a Sort of *Loans*, which, upon any fit Occasion, are to be repaid back to him who shew'd them, that so all Men may be encouraged to abound in them, and never be hindred from the same, by a Fear, lest afterwards they should be offended with themselves for having bestowed them. And if any Man is either so *stupid*, or so *proud*, that he will take no Notice of them, nor endeavour afterwards to requite them, by the Consent of all, he is unfit to be dealt with in this *generous* Way of Love, and is utterly unworthy to receive them.

Thus doth Thankfulness imply, both an affectionate Acknowledgment of the Gift, and praising him who gave it; and also a Readiness, and Endeavour according to our Power, to requite it.

And this we owe in the highest Measure to our Saviour Christ, and must be sure always to pay it to him, when we commemorate the inestimable Benefits which we have received from him. We must not remember the great Things which he has done for us, in delivering us from eternal Death,
and

6 *Of Communicating Worthily.* Part I.

and in gaining for us the Favour of God, and the Joys of Heaven, when it cost him no less than his own Heart's Blood for the Purchase, without affectionate Resentments, and Mouths full of Praise, and a fix'd Readiness and Resolution of Mind to make what small Requital we are able in our Zeal for his Service, and in our Kindness to his *Brethren*, whom he looks upon as his own Members, resenting any Good that is *done to them, as if it were done to himself*, Matth. xxv. 40. And this Duty of Thankfulness, is a most especial Requisite to our worthy Commemoration of his Benefits in this Feast. For *praising God*, is reckoned as one Particular of the Disciples Carriage in their *breaking Bread*, Acts ii. *They continued daily breaking Bread*, says St. Luke, *which they eat with Gladness, praising God*, v. 46, 47. Nay, so great a Share has Thanksgiving and Praise in this Business, that the whole Action is called the *Eucharist*, i. e. the giving of Thanks to God, for those Benefits which are commemorated therein.

And these are the Things, which must render our Remembrance worthy of him, when we commemorate him as our *Friend* and *Benefactor* in this holy Supper. We must *love* him for his Kindnesses, and *delight* in his Benefits, and be *thankful* for all his Favours, particularly for that which is therein especially commemorated, his *dying* upon our Accounts, bursting out into *grateful Acknowledgments* and *Words of Praise*, and being *ready* and *resolved* by our Zeal in his Service, our *Observance of his Laws*, and our *Kindness to his poor Members*, to make him all the small Requital we are able, so that he may never have any Cause to repent of what he has done for us.

But

But besides this Remembrance of his Friendship to us, and *Benefits* in general, which require in us these forementioned Tempers; we are especially to commemorate the *Benefits of his dying for us*, which more particularly calls for certain other Tempers.

In eating Bread and drinking Wine in the Lord's Supper, I say, we are to remember *his dying for us*, and shedding his *precious Blood a Ransom for our Sins*. And to do this worthily, we must *be humbled under the Sense of our own Unworthiness*, and *abhor our Sins* which brought him to bleed and die for us, and *resign up ourselves*, both Souls and Bodies, to *his Use*, as we are bought with his Blood, and therefore become his own Purchase.

1st, We must remember his dying for us, in an *humble and deep Sense of our own Unworthiness*, and in an utter *Abhorrence of our Sins*, which brought him to these Sufferings.

We must remember it, I say, in an *humble and deep Sense of our own Unworthiness*. His Death was not for any Thing that he had done, but only for our Sins; and this shews what *vile Wretches* we are, and how *unworthy Persons*. It lets us see, how *bateful* our Sins have made us unto God, and what they had *deserv'd* at his Hands. For he would not let them pass, without inflicting the highest Shame, and the most exquisite Pain and Tortures. Yea, when his own only begotten Son would intercede for them, and bear the Burthen of them in his own Person, so implacable was the Hatred which he had to them, and so indispensable were the Reasons which constrained him to punish them, that his most tender Love for him, whom he valued as his own right Eye, could not hinder but that he should bleed and die for them. It lets us see also, how *troublesome* they had made us to our
best

best Friends, and how shamefully *burthensome* and *expensive* to the *blessed Jesus*. For when he long'd and labour'd to redeem us from them, he could not be *our* Friend, unless he would cease to be *his own*, nor do us any good at all, except he would give his own Life a Ransom for us. And what Man now can ever think of this, but he must hide his Face, and be quite buried in a shameful Sense of his own Unworthiness? He may see how vile he was when God was so highly offended with him, and thought no Punishment too heavy for him, and would not be reconcil'd at the Intercession of his own Son, unless he would die instead of him; and when it was so dangerous and costly a Thing, no less than the laying down his own Life, for his Saviour to shew himself a serviceable Friend to him. And if this Sight doth not work Shame and Self-Abasement in him, he will be concluded by all, to be the basest Man alive, and utterly unworthy that ever any Thing of all this unparallel'd Kindness should have been done for him.

We must also remember his dying for us, with *an utter Abhorrence of our Sins, which were the Causes of his Sufferings*. For if we do not hate and abhor them, when we consider what Tortures he endured for them, we shew that we are very little concern'd for his Ease, nor have any Feeling of his Pains, nor any Zeal at all against the Occasion of his Sorrows. And this is a very bad Requital of his undergoing all those Pains for our Sakes, and a most unworthy Usage. So that if we would worthily commemorate his dying for us, we must be humbled and ashamed of ourselves, at the Sense of our own Unworthiness, seeing we had deserved such insupportable Punishments, and have put him to such exquisite and intense Pains; and particularly we must turn our Abhorrence on our
Sins.

Sins, which caused all this Michief, and made him, if he would befriend us, to undergo such heavy Tortures himself.

2dly, We must remember his dying for us, with a *Resignation of ourselves, both Souls and Bodies, to his Use, as we are bought with his Blood, and thereby become his own Purchase.*

He died in our stead, and his Blood was given to God for a *Ransom*, to buy us off from Death, that we might not die also. *The Son of Man*, saith he, *is come to give his Life a Ransom for many*, Mat. xx. 28. And since he has bought us, and paid so dear for us, to deliver us from Hell-Torments and Eternal Death, which is not *his*, but *our own* Advantage; in all Equity and Reason he ought to have the Use of us, and we should be wholly devoted to his Service: And this the Scripture requires of us: *The Love of God constrains us*, saith St. Paul, *to live in him, because we thus judge, that if one died, for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them*, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. And again, *Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a Price; therefore glorify God in your Body and in your Spirit, which are God's*, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. And since his dying for us has made us his own Property, and he has thereby acquired an absolute Right over us for his own Use, which we had infinite Reason to desire, but he had no need of; if we would remember it *worthily*, we must do it *justly*, by honestly devoting our Souls and Bodies, and assigning them over to him, to be wholly at his Service.

And these are the Things, which must render our Remembrance worthy of him, when in the Holy Sacrament we commemorate his dying for

us, and shedding of his most precious Blood a Ransom for our Sins. We must be *humbled* with the Sense of our own Unworthiness, and *abhor our Sins*, which brought him to these Sufferings, and *resign up ourselves*, both Bodies and Souls, to be wholly at his Use, and imployed where and in what he pleases, as thereby they are become his own Purchase.

And thus it appears what Tempers are becoming us, and worthy of this *first* End of Eating and Drinking in the Holy Sacrament, *viz. the Remembrance of our Lord and Saviour Christ, and of his dying for us.* We must remember him, with *Honour and Reverence*, with a *careful Concern to maintain and promote his Honour* among others, with *Mindfulness of his Commands, and Resolutions of Obedience*, as he is *Lord* over us: With *Love* of him for his Kindness, and *delight* in his Benefits, and *thankful Acknowledgments*, and *Words of Praise*, and *grateful Returns*, in any thing which he can receive, or we can give, for *all* his Favours, particularly for his *dying on our Account*, as he has so *highly befriended*, and *infinitely obliged* us; and with an *humble Sense of our own Unworthiness*, and an *utter Abhorrence of all our Sins*, which were the Causes of his Sufferings, and with an *intire Resignation of ourselves*, both Souls and Bodies, to his Use, to be imploy'd as his own Purchase in what he pleases, as his Death was a *Sacrifice* for our Sins, wherewith he bought and redeemed us. All these are Duties, which, were he now before us, and conversing with us, we ought to pay to him; and which therefore in our Remembrance of him, which makes him present to our Minds, we must not deny him: and in Them doth consist the Worthiness of this Remembrance and Commemoration.

2dly, A *second* End of our Eating Bread and Drinking Wine in the Lord's Supper, is to *confirm*
the

Chap. 2. Of Communicating Worthily. 51

the New Covenant with Almighty God, which Christ purchased for us by his Death: And to do this worthily, we must come to it in Sincerity and Faithfulness, and with full Purpose and Performance of that Repentance and Obedience, which therein we solemnly profess and make promise of.

We must come to it, I say, in *Sincerity and Faithfulness*. The great Qualification which is requisite in all Compacts, is *Faithfulness*. For they are the great Means of Security among Men, and the great Thing, which they have to depend upon in their Expectations from each other; and therefore it is both *pretended* and *expected* by all who make them, that they will not prove false and deceitful in them. Every Man who covenants, expects of those whom he contracts withal, that they should mean what they profess, and perform what they promise; and makes shew also himself, that he will do so likewise. And if he doth not, he is a very dishonest unworthy Man, such as the *Gospel* condemns, and will sentence for the same in the End, unless he repent thereof, to eternal Destruction: *Covenant-breakers* being ranked among those, who in the *Judgment of God* are *worthy of Death*, Rom. i. 31, 32.

And this *Sincerity* or *Faithfulness* consists in this, that we come with *full Purpose and Performance*, of that *Repentance and Obedience*, which we *profess* and make *promise* of. In this Covenant, to all us *Believers*, God offers at present a *Right to Pardon*, his *Holy Spirit*, and *Eternal Happiness*; and we again *profess*, and humbly make offer unto him, of our *Repentance and Obedience*. And this *Right* he *promises* still to *continue* to us upon the same *Terms*; and answerably we *promise* to perform them upon that Expectation for ever afterwards. And both in these *Professions*, and *Promises*, we must deal sincerely

with him: and neither pretend a present Offer of them, when we want them; nor make Promises of them for the Time to come, when we have no fix'd Design and well-weighed Resolution to perform them.

When we come therefore to renew our *Baptismal Engagement*, and to confirm the New Covenant with Almighty God, giving him both the *Profession* and the *Promise of these Duties*, and receiving from him the *Proffer* and the *Promise of these Graces*, we must be hearty and unfeigned with him. Our Souls must really be acted by that Repentance which we profess, and fully intend to make good that Obedience which we promise. And if we perform in both these, we are *faithful* and *sincere* in this Business; but if we fail in either, we are *Dissemblers* and *Hypocrites*, who *act a Part*, and go to impose upon Almighty God, which is a very *unworthy* Part of us.

And this Sincerity God expressly calls for at this Feast, and requires us to be faithful with him, when we come to confirm the New Covenant, by partaking of it. *Christ our Passover*, says St. Paul, *is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the Feast, not with the Leaven of Malice and Wickedness*, by adhering still to our former wicked Ways, which therefore we are to repent of, *but with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth*, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. And as for Repentance particularly, which is the great Condition of the Covenant that is renewed in it, it is the great Qualification of all worthy Receivers, and is most indispensably required in this Holy Sacrament. It is the chief Thing which is look'd at in every Confirmation of the Covenant, and therefore is so peremptorily called for when we are *baptized: It is the only Thing that can † recommend a Sacri-

* Acts ii. 38. Luke iii. 3.

† Psal. li. 17.

fice, and therefore is the main Point which must fit us for *this Feast upon a Sacrifice*. And this the ancient Church always thought of it; as it plainly shew'd, when at the Celebration of the Eucharist, the Bishop cried out, * *These holy Things must be taken only by holy Persons*; and as St. Ambrose clearly informs us, when he says, † *This is the Order of dispensing this MYSTERY which every Church observes, that first upon their true Repentance their Sins may be forgiven them, and then this Heavenly Food shall be administered and reached out to them.*

As this Eating and Drinking then is a foederal Rite, and in Confirmation of the New Covenant, it requires that we should be faithful and sincere in doing of the same. And then we come worthily, and partake of it as we ought, when we truly *repent* of all our Sins, according as we profess; and are *fully purposed*, according as we promise, at all times after so to do.

3dly, A third End of our Eating Bread and Drinking Wine in the Lord's Supper, is, to *confirm a League of love and Friendship with all Christians*: And this requires that we lay aside all *Envy, Hatred, and malicious Thoughts*; and come to it in *Peace and Forgiveness* of all who have any ways offended us.

We must not come to it in *Envy, Hatred, and malicious Thoughts*; for that were to give the Lye to ourselves, and to contradict our own Professions. For when we come there to partake of that *one*

* Ὁ ἐπίσκοπος προσφωνοῦν, τῷ λαῷ ἔτω τὰ ἅγια τοῖς ἁγίοις. Contit. Apost. l. 8. c. 13. p. 484. Tom. prim. Concil. Ed. Par. Lab.

† Ubique mysterii ordo servatur, ut prius per remissionem peccatorum vulneribus medicina tribuatur, postea alimonia mensae Coelestis exuberet. S. Ambros. Comment. in Luc. l. 6. c. 9.

Bread, we profess ourselves, as has been shewn, to be all *one Body*, and that we are all the *Body of Christ*, and *Members one of another*. We solemnly declare, that we will be Friends, from that Day forwards, with all Persons, and fully reconciled even to our bitter Enemies, and to those who have given us the highest Provocations, tho' not for their own Sakes, yet for the Sake of the blessed *Jesus*, who has bore a thousand Times more from us, and deserves infinitely beyond what this comes to at our Hands. We promise mutually, that we will lay aside all little Piques, and not fall out into Quarrels or Contentions, nor bear Ill-will, or be vexatious among ourselves, nor seek our own Pleasure, Honour, or Advantage, at our Brethrens Loss. But that we will all have a compassionate Sense of each other's Infirmities, and a tender Concern and diligent Care for each other's Welfare; that we will live as Members of the same Body, which all feel what befalls any, and are all solaced with the same Joys, and all languish in the same Sorrows, and all unite in the same Ends, and all bear the Weaknesses, and supply the Needs, and seek the Good and Pleasure of each other, as they do their own. All this Good-will and Brotherly-kindness, Peace and Forgiveness towards all Persons, we profess in eating together at this Feast, and therefore it is most unworthy Dealing if we want them, and are even then acted by Hatred. Envy, and malicious Thoughts, which are most opposite and contrary to them.

Thus it is necessary when we confirm this League of Love and Friendship to our Brethren, that we lay aside all Envy and Ill-will, and have perfect Charity towards all Men. And this Charity must be shewn, as in *Prayers* and *good Wishes* at all Times, and in *courteous Carriage* and *good Offices*, as oft as
we

we have *Opportunity*, towards *all Persons*; so particularly in giving *Alms*, and affording *Relief* to such as are in *Want* and *Necessity*. For the League of Love whereinto we are then to enter, and which Christ exacts of us, is not only to bestow *fair Words*, or *compassionate Looks*, or *faint Wishes*; but if we are able, to *relieve* as we have *Opportunity*, and supply those who stand in *Need* of our *Substance*. *If a Brother or Sister be naked*, says St. James, *or destitute of daily Food, and one of you say to them, depart in Peace, be ye warmed or filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are necessary for the Body, what doth it profit?* Jam. ii. 15, 16. *My little Children*, saith St. John, *let us not love in Word only, neither in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth: And hereby, i. e. by this useful operative Charity, we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our Hearts before him*, 1 Joh. iii. 18, 19. And thus the *ancient Christians* constantly used to do, in the *Apostles Times*. For then at every *Lord's Supper*, they had another *Supper* of their own, which they call'd a *Love Feast*, or *Feast of Charity*, Jud. 12. This consisted of such *Provisions*, as every *Communicant* brought along with him; they who were *rich* brought in much, and the *poorer* Sort less, but when it came, they all sat down in a *Brotherly Way*, and shared in common: Which when the *Corinthians* failed to do, every one eating as they came, without tarrying for their *Brethren*, and the *Rich* taking their own large *Portions* to themselves; and leaving the *Poor* to blush at the *Scantiness* of theirs; the *Apostle* reprov'd them sharply, telling them how much they *prophaned* this *Holy Feast* by such corrupt *Usage*. *In eating*, says he, *at this Feast, instead of joining all like loving Brethren at a common Supper, Every one taketh before other his*

own Supper, or that which he brought for his own Share: *And one* who brought little, *is hungry* through his Scarceness; *and another*, who brought much, *is drunken* with the Excess of his. *Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not*, 1 Cor. xi. 21, 22. And when this Way of being charitable to the Poor at this Feast, was laid aside, by reason of Abuses crept into the same, another was still used, which to this Day is practised in most and the best of our Churches, as it is fit it should be in all, and that is, having *Offerings for the Poor* at every Communion, which may afterwards be distributed among them. Which is a most proper Way, and excellent Opportunity, not only of exercising that Charity which therein we profess to them; but also of expressing our Thankfulness to our Blessed Saviour, for the invaluable Benefits which we have received from him. For in being thus kind to his poor Members, whom he is so tenderly concerned for, we make some slight Return and poor Requital unto him, who puts their Receipts upon his own Score, taking what we do to them as done to his own Person. *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me*, Mat. xxv. 40.

And these are the Things which must render our eating and drinking, as it is in *Confirmation* of a *League of Love and Friendship* with all our Brethren, worthy of that Signification. We must lay aside all *Envy* and *malicious Thoughts*, and come to it in *Forgiveness* of all those who have offended us, and in *Charity* to all our Neighbours, which we must express, as in other Things, so particularly in *giving Alms* to such whose *Necessities* require it of us.

And all these the *Scripture* itself marks out, as necessary Qualifications in all *worthy Communicants*. *Let us keep the Feast*, says the Apostle, *not with the Leaven of Malice*, 1 Cor. v. 8. *When ye come together*

ther into one Place, says he again, I bear there be Divisions among you; And, when there are so, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper, one End whereof is to unite you, 1 Cor. xi. 18, 20. If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, says our Saviour, and there remembreſt that thy Brother hath aught againſt thee, leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go and firſt be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift, Mat. v. 23, 24. And as for the Distribution of Alms at this Time; that, as we ſaw, was the Apoſtolicall Way in the Love-feaſts, as alſo in the Collections for the Poor, as every Man had laid by him in Store, on the firſt Day of the Week (when they always had a Sacrament) which St. Paul mentions, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. And when theſe Feaſts failed, yet theſe Collections and Offerings at the Lord's Table ſtill continued, and do in moſt Places, which in this Reſpect are fit to be Patterns to all others, unto this Day.

And thus at laſt we ſee, wherein the *Worthineſs* of eating and drinking in this holy Feaſt conſiſts, and what Tempers and Diſpoſitions in us, are worthy of all thoſe Ends, which are ſignified and deſigned by it. We muſt eat and drink, in *Remembrance of Jeſus Chriſt*, and of his *dying for us*, with *Honour and Reverence*, with a *careful Concern to maintain and promote his Honour* among others, with *Mindfulneſs of his Commands*, and *Reſolutions of Obedience*, as he is *Lord over us*: With *Love of him for his Kindneſs*, and *Delight in his Benefits*, and *thankful Acknowledgments*, and *grateful Returns for all his Favours*, particularly for his ſubmitting to *taste Death on our Account*, as he ſo highly be-friended, and infinitely obliged us: and with an *humble Senſe of our own Unworthineſs*, and an *utter Abhorrence of all our Sins*, which were the *Causes of all his Sufferings*; and with an *intire Reſignation of ourſelves, both Souls and Bodies, to his Uſe*, to be
em-

employed as his own Purchase in what he pleases, as his Death was a *Sacrifice for our Sins*, where-with he bought and redeemed us. We must eat and drink in *Confirmation of the New Covenant*, professing our Consent to the Terms thereof, and our Resolution to stand by it, in all *Sincerity and Faithfulness*; coming to it with that true *Repentance* of all our Sins, and with those *obedient Hearts* which we profess; and with a *full Purpose* of making all that good afterwards which we promised in the same. And, lastly, we must eat and drink in *Confirmation of a League of Love and Friendship with all our Brethren*, laying aside all *Envy and Malice* towards them, and making *Restitution* where we have wronged them, and *forgiving* them heartily where we have any Grudge against them; and giving *Alms* as our Ability and their *Necessities* shall require the same, and so being in perfect *Peace and Charity* with all Men.

And if we *believe all these Things*, and are carried on by such Belief to *all these Tempers and Performances*, we have that *Faith* which will render us *worthy Communicants*, and acceptable to God at all other Times. If we *believe Jesus Christ* to be our *Lord and Master*, and thereupon do *reverence, honour, and obey him*; if we *believe* him to be our best *Friend and Benefactor*, and thereupon do *love* him, and *delight in him*, and are *thankful to him*; if we *believe that he shed his own Heart's Blood for our Sins*, and for the *Redemption of our Souls*, and thereupon are *humbled with the Sense of our own Unworthiness*, and *abhor our Sins*, which have proved so mischievous, and *resign up both our Souls and Bodies wholly to his Use*, as they are his own *Purchase*: If we *believe that his Death procured us the Grace and Blessings of the New Covenant*, which promises all *Believers Pardon upon their*

their Repentance, and the Holy Spirit's Help upon their own sincere Endeavours, and eternal Life upon their intire Obedience; and thereupon do heartily consent to it, and perform that Repentance and Obedience which are the Conditions thereof, and are faithful and sincere in our Promises and Resolutions to stand by the same. And, lastly, if we believe that he requires us to love, and live in Peace with all the World; and thereupon in this holy Sacrament do confirm a League of Friendship, with all our Brethren, laying aside all Enmity and Hatred, and being in perfect Charity with all Men. If we have all this Faith, I say, which, as appears, is thoroughly exercised in this blessed Sacrament; and can shew all these Fruits thereof, in these Tempers and Performances being effected by it; we have that true, saving, and justifying Faith, which the Scripture speaks of, which purifies the Heart, Acts xv. 9. and works by Love, Gal. v. 6. and is lively in good Works, Jam. ii. 20, 26. And this will make us worthy Communicants at this Feast, and welcome to God at all other Times.

C H A P. III.

A further Account of this Worthiness.

THE CONTENTS.

These recited Tempers are necessary in the Person communicating, but are not all necessary to be expressly exercised in the Time of Communion. A Direction in which of these Tempers it may be fit to lay out our Devotion at that Time. All these are pro-

60 *Of Communicating Worthily. Part I.*

provided for in the Church's Prayers, so that we may exercise them worthily, if we go along devoutly at all the Parts of the Communion-Service.

IN the former Chapter, I have reckon'd up those Tempers which render us *worthy Communicants*, and fit us to be bidden welcome at the *Lord's Supper*, whensoever he is pleased to invite and call us thither.

But of them I must observe, that altho' they are *necessary in the Person communicating*; yet are they *not all of Necessity, to be particularly and expressly insisted on in the Time of Communion.*

They are *all necessary*, I say, *in the Person communicating*, and he is not worthy to remember such a Lord and Saviour, to sign the new Covenant with Almighty God, and a League of Amity and Friendship with all the Christian World, who wants any of them. They are altogether *due* from us, as we have seen, and may in all Reason be *expected* of us, as we stand in these *Relations*, and are admitted to these *Employments*: So that we act *unworthily*, and fail of our Duty, if our Souls are not endowed with them, when we are in those Capacities, and about those Performances which do so justly challenge and call for them.

But they are *not all necessary to be particularly and expressly insisted on in the Time of Communion.* They will be all *implied*, it is true, and *virtually contained* in what is then done; but they are not all necessary to be *particularly insisted on.* And for this there is a very good Reason, because that Time doth not ordinarily allow sufficient Space for the same. For most Communicants are not of such active Minds and quick Apprehensions, as that they can pursue so many Businesses, or work themselves up into an express Fervour of so many
parti-

particular Tempers at one Exercise. And those that are, chuse rather often-times to fix upon some few, that so, having the more Time to stay upon them, they may raise themselves up to greater Degrees, and act them over in much higher Measures. And because, where all cannot be exercised, it is of great Use to know which are best and fittest to be singled out, I shall here set down which of all those Tempers I conceive it were most proper to stir up at that Time, and vigorously to exert and heighten in our own Minds.

If any, then, who come to the Holy Communion, find that they are either *tired out* with the *Length*, or *distracted* by the *Variety* of *many* Particulars, and that their Devotion in this Feast goes better on, and is more full and perfect when they restrain it to a *few*; I think they may do well to lay it out in these that follow.

In *remembering* our Saviour Christ, who, as then we are to believe, *died* for us, and purchased us the *New Covenant* by his Death, offering us the Pardon of our Sins, upon our true Repentance, and his Grace and holy Spirit to help on our sincere Endeavours, and eternal Life upon our intire Obedience: In remembering him, I say, we may do well to shew,

1st, A *joyful* and *affectionate Thankfulness* for this his unspeakable Love and Benefits, particularly for his dying for us.

2^d, An *intire Resignation of ourselves*, both Souls and Bodies, *to his Use*, as they are his own Purchase: In which *two* consists the main Worthiness of this Part, they being the Things which are most becoming us in this Remembrance.

And in *confirming the New Covenant* with Almighty God, whereto we must believe we are then invited, we may add,

3d, *Repentance of all our Sins*, particularly of all those which we find are most apt to win upon us; and *make him Promises* that in all the Instances of Duty, but in them especially, we will join our Endeavours to his Grace, and obey his righteous Laws; and when we promise this, it must be with a *sincere and faithful Heart*, and with full Intentions of Performance, which are the great Duty incumbent on us in these Engagements.

And in *confirming a League of Love and Friendship with all our Brethren*, which we must think with ourselves that we are then called to likewise, we may exercise,

4th, *Charity towards all Persons*, forgiving all who have any ways offended us, and laying aside all Envy, Strife, and malicious Thoughts, and resolving to shew Kindness both in Word and Deed to all about us, nay to all Men, as we have Ability and Opportunity, but to the *Poor* especially, who ought not to be forgotten at such Times; which is the great Thing required of us, and becoming us in this Part of the Service.

So that when we come to the *holy Communion*, where we are all called to *remember Christ*, particularly in his *Death*, to *seal the New Covenant with God*, and a *League of Friendship with our Brethren*; we may do well to express ourselves *joyfully and affectionately thankful* for all his Kindnesses, especially that of his dying for us, and *resign up ourselves*, both Souls and Bodies, to his Service, and *repent of all our Sins*, making him faithful and unfeigned Promises of our Amendment of the same, particularly of those wherein we are most liable to do amiss, and shew ourselves in *Peace and perfect Charity* with all Persons. By these Things we shall duly answer the Ends of this Feast, and in them lies the great Worthiness of our Carriage at it.

And

And this our *Church* has sufficiently intimated to us in her *publick Catechism*, when in Return to that *Question*, *what is required of them that come to the Lord's Supper?* It gives this *Answer*; *To repent them truly of all their Sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new Life; to have a lively Faith in God's Mercy thro' Christ* (which as we have seen, is thoroughly exercised from the *Beginning* to the *End* of this holy Sacrament) *to have a thankful Remembrance of his Death, and be in Charity with all Men.*

When we come therefore to the holy Sacrament, whilst the Minister himself is communicating, or whilst *others* are receiving, we may lay out ourselves on these Things, and spend the Time in the Exercise of these Duties, acting them over in devout Prayers and holy Meditations by ourselves. Or if we are not able of ourselves, but need the Help of others to suggest Thoughts, and to go along with us in this Service, let us join heartily in the *Church's Prayers*, which it has appointed for this Purpose: For in them we have an Exercise of all these Virtues, and they have excellently provided for our Needs in this Case; so that we may duly express these Tempers, if we are careful to join fervently with the Minister in all the Parts of the *Communion Service*. And because it may be of Use to some, to see how all these Duties are exercised in it, that so, being aware of it, they may particularly design them when they come to it; I will shew it of them all particularly.

1. It leads us on to an *affectionate Thankfulness* and *joyful Praise*, the *first* great Qualification, in a Strain which truly to me is most transporting: For thus it helps us to give Thanks *before* Receiving. *It is very meet, right, and our bounden Duty, that we should at all Times, and in all Places, give*
Thanks

Thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God: Therefore with Angels, and Archangels, and all the Company of Heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name, evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory: Glory be to thee, O Lord most High.

And thus again after it:

Glory be to God on High, and in Earth Peace, and Good-will towards Men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give Thanks to thee for thy great Glory, O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.

O Lord the only begotten Son Jesus Christ, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the Sins of the World, have Mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the Sins of the World have Mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the Sins of the World, receive our Prayers. Thou that sittest at the right Hand of God the Father, have Mercy upon us.

For thou art only Holy, thou only art the Lord, thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the Glory of God the Father.

All which are Words expressing joyful Praise and affectionate Thankfulness so meltingly, that better, I think, have not yet been thought of.

2. It leads us also to resign up ourselves, both Souls and Bodies, to his Service, in the Prayer immediately after receiving, in these Words.

And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our Souls and Bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively Sacrifice unto thee; humbly beseeching thee, that all we who are Partakers of this Holy Communion, may be fulfilled with thy Grace and heavenly Benediction.

3. It leads us in professing an *humble and hearty Repentance of all our Sins*, and making God our *faithful Promises of new Obedience*, in the *Invitation to communicate*, and in the *Confession of Sins before receiving*, in these Words:

Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your Sins, and intend to lead a new Life, following the Commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy Ways; draw near with Faith, and take this Holy Sacrament to your Comfort, and make your humble Confession to almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your Knees.

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c. We acknowledge and bewail our manifold Sins and Wickedness, which we from Time to Time most grievously have committed, by Thought, Word, and Deed, against thy Divine Majesty, &c. We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our Mis-doings, &c.

And to prepare us for this Profession of Repentance in *this Place* of the Service, I think it very adviseable to take what Time there is, whilst the Bread and Wine are in preparing before the *Beginning of the Office*, to recollect our *particular Sins* which we are most liable to incur, and at *every one* of them to make God Promises, and fix Resolutions of amending them in our Minds; after which we may the better say in *general*, we *repent of them*, and will no more commit the same; and thereupon beg *Pardon* for them, and receive *Ab-solution*, as it is in this Part of the Service.

4. And lastly, It leads us to act *Peace and Charity* towards all Men, when in the *Exhortation before Receiving*, it tells us we must be in *perfect Charity with all Men*; and in the *Invitation*, calls such as are in *Love and Charity with all their Neighbours*: At which Words our Hearts may strike in with it,

66 *Of Communicating Worthily. Part I.*

and earnestly profess that they at *present* are, and are fully resolved at all Times *afterwards* so to be.

Thus doth the *Church* itself, in our *publick Service*, go before us; and lead us on in these great Duties of joyful *Praise* and *Thankfulness*, of *Resignation of ourselves*, of *Repentance* and *faithful Purposes* and *Promises* of *Obedience*, and of *Charity to all Persons*, which are to render us welcome *Guests*, and worthy *Communicants*. Nay, it doth not only call us to, and bear us Company in these *chief Duties*, wherein above all consists a *Receiver's Worthiness*, but also in *most others* mentioned above, so that scarce any Duty is required in us at this Feast, but, if our Hearts go along with the Office, it puts the same in act, and makes a Place for it.

It exercises our *humble Sense of our own Unworthiness* in the Prayer before *Consecration*, in these Words: *We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our Righteousness, but in thy manifold and great Mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather the Crumbs under thy Table. And so again in the Prayer after receiving, in these: Tho' we be unworthy, through our manifold Sins, to offer up unto thee any Sacrifice; yet humbly we beseech thee, accept this our bounden Duty and Service; not weighing our Merits, but pardoning our Offences, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

It exercises our *Hatred and Abhorrence of our Sins*, which caused Christ's Sufferings; in the *Confession of Repentance*, in these: *The Remembrance of our Mis-doings is grievous unto us, the Burden of them is intolerable.*

And it exercises our *Love, and Reverence, and Honour to Christ*, either in *Words* that express it, or in *Things* that imply it, being *real Proofs and Effects*

fects thereof, in every thing that is done through the whole Service.

If every Receiver therefore who *has* these Tempers, doth but go along heartily and affectionately with the Church's Prayers, and join with the Minister and the Congregation in the Communion Service; he acts them over as he ought, and doth Honour to his Saviour, and is a worthy Communicant: He shews all those Qualifications which God has required, and receives as a worthy Guest, if he can do nothing more than go along and strike in heartily at every Part of the publick Worship. And if, when he wants Help and Employments for his Thoughts, he join heartily in the Prayer, which is made at the Offering of the Bread and Wine to others, either before or after he has received the same himself. Which I speak not for the Ease of those, who, either by their own Invention, or the Help of Books, can set their own Minds on Work, and employ their own Thoughts in meditating and acting over all these Tempers, whilst the Minister is distributing the blessed Sacrament: I speak it not, I say, for the Ease of these Persons, as if, beside what they do in the Church's Prayers, they should not moreover do what they can otherwise: But for the Sake of others who have not these Abilities, that they may not be discouraged; and to let them know, that, if they are good Men, and have these Tempers, there is Exercise of them sufficient in the publick Prayers, were there nothing else from the Help of Books, or their own Invention, to make them worthy Communicants.

And thus we see wherein lies the *Worthiness* of Receiving, and what Virtues are fit for him to exercise, who would be a welcome Guest at the Holy Communion. When he remembers the Death of

68 *Of Communicating Worthily. Part I.*

Christ, and confirms the New Covenant with almighty God, and a League of Love and Friendship with all the Christian World, by eating Bread and drinking Wine, according to Christ's Appointment, he must exercise himself in joyful Praise, and affectionate Thanks, and Resignation of his whole Man, both Soul and Body, to Christ's Service, and in Repentance of all his Sins, making God faithful Promises of new Obedience, and in Charity towards all Persons: All which he may express in joining heartily with the Church's Prayers, besides what he doth whilst the Bread and Wine are in preparing, or whilst others are communicating, in his own Meditations. And if he believes these Things, and is carried on by such Belief to these Performances; he is welcome to the Table of our Lord, and may justly esteem himself a worthy Partaker of this blessed Sacrament.

C H A P. IV.

*Worthy Receiving not extraordinary difficult;
and of Unworthiness to communicate.*

The CONTENTS.

To silence the Complaint of extraordinary Difficulty of coming worthily to this Sacrament, three Things noted. 1. All the Particulars of worthy Receiving, are necessary Parts of Duty, and of a good Man: So that no more is required to fit us for receiving the Holy Sacrament, than is required to fit us to die, or to go to Heaven. 2. They are all
eces-

necessary Qualifications of an acceptance of the Vow, or Thanksgiving; so that no more is required to it, than to a worthy Discharge of the Duties of Religion. 3. However they may be necessary, yet are they not necessarily required, as in the case of and transporting Degrees in it, than in other Instances of Devotion. The only Unworthiness that can put us by this Ordinance, is Impenitency. True Repentance will go down with any Man, and he will else need stick with him. This Point of worthy Communion is sum'd up.

HAVING hitherto shewn wherein the *Worthiness of Receiving* lies, and what those Qualifications are which fit us for this holy Feast: I shall now only note *three Things*, that may silence all good Mens Complaints about the Hardship thereof, and shew plainly who they are that are unworthy to join in it, and so conclude this Point.

1st, I shall note some Things that may reconcile all good Minds to this Feast, and silence the Complaints of the Hardship and extraordinary Difficulty of coming worthily to partake in it. And this had need to be done, and may prove of great Use when once it is done; because one chief Thing, which causes even good People to come so seldom, is the apprehended Difficulty and extraordinary Solemnity of the worthy Receiving.

Now to satisfy all good Souls in this Point, and to remove these hard Thoughts of it, I would suggest to them these *three Things*:

1st, That all these Tempers, which are required to a worthy Communion, are necessary Parts of Duty, and of a good Man; so that no more is required of us to fit ourselves for receiving the Holy Sacrament, than is required to fit us to die, or to go to Heaven.

They are all necessary Parts of Duty, and of a good Man. It is necessarily required of every good Man, who would serve God and be accepted with him, that he ^a honour his Lord and Master Jesus Christ, and be careful to ^b obey him; that he be ^c affectionately sensible of all the Kindnesses which he has done, particularly in dying for him, and most heartily ^d thank him for the same; that he be ^e humbled under the Sense of his own Sins, and utterly ^f abhor them; and resign up himself both ^g Soul and Body, to his Saviour's Use, who has bought and made a Purchase of him with his own Heart's Blood; that, having ^h first believed in Christ, he sincerely consent to the Terms of the New Covenant, and enter into it, performing and promising that ⁱ Repentance, ^k good Endeavours, and ^l Obedience which are required by it, in Expectation of that Forgiveness, Grace, and eternal Happiness which are proposed therein; and lastly, that he should ^m lay aside all Envy and malicious Thoughts and ⁿ forgive Injuries, ^o repair Wrongs, be at ^p Peace, and live in ^q Charity with all the World. All these are Duties indispensably required by the Gospel of Christ, as appears by the Places referred to below; they are no indifferent Things, but are absolutely necessary in every Christian, who would secure his Peace with God, and be sure at last to go to Heaven. And they, as we have seen, are the very Things, which the Worthiness of communicating consists of. So that to be personally worthy for the Communion, is nothing more than to be an accep-

^a Phil. ii. 9, 10.^b Luc. vi. 46.^c Jam. i. 12.^d Eph. v. 20.^e Matt. v. 3.^f Prov. viii. 13.^g 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.^h Mar. xvi. 16.ⁱ Luk. xiii. 3.^k Phil. ii. 12.^l Heb. v. 9.^m Gal. v. 20, 21.ⁿ Matt. vi. 15.^o Ezek. xxxiii. 14, 15.^p Rom. xii. 18.^q Col. iii. 14.

Chap. 4. Of Communicating Worthily. 71

tably good and religious Man: To have all those Virtues which constitute a Saint, and are necessary Parts of that Obedience and holy Living, which must get us all an *Interest in Christ*, and secure our *Title* to eternal Salvation. And therefore if any Man is contented with those Duties, which God exacts of him to make him a good Man; he has no Cause to complain of those, which are necessary to a worthy receiving. And if he doth repine at them, and refrain from the Lord's Table, because he will not be at the Pains to acquire them; it is plain, that it is not the *Hardship of the Sacrament*, but of an *Holy Life*, that he is disturbed at; and the same Difficulties which drive him from the *Communion*, if he understand himself, must drive him also out of his *Religion*, and the *Way to Heaven*.

2dly, *These Duties*, which are required to a worthy Receiving, are required also to every worthy Prayer, Vow, and Thanksgiving; so that no more Duties are required to our Worthiness in this holy Feast, than to our Worthiness in all other Acts of Religion. For unless a Man repents of all his Sins, and is in Love and Charity with all his Neighbours, and believes in Christ and all his Promises, and is ready and resolved to obey all his Commandments; and, in one Word, unless he is a good Man, which fits him for a worthy receiving; he is not more worthy to say his Prayers, to give Thanks, to make Vows to God, or seal Covenants with him, than he is to join in the Holy Communion.

He is not more worthy to say his Prayers; for to the Acceptance of them all the same Things are required of him. If I regard Iniquity in my Heart, says the Psalmist, i. e. if I do not repent of it, and turn away from it, the Lord will not hear me, Psal. lxi. 18. And if Men would pray as
F 4 they

they ought, says *St. Paul*, and as they may hope to be heard, they must have both *Faith*, *Peace*, and *Innocence* to recommend their Petitions, or *lift up holy Hands without Wrath and Doubting*, 1 Tim. ii. 8. *If you forgive not Men their Trespases*, says our Saviour, *neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you your Trespases*. So that when ye pray, say *Forgive us our Debts we forgive our Debtors*, Mat. vi. 12, 15. God says the same of an *ill Man's Prayer*, that he doth of an *ill Man's Communicating*, namely, that he is most *unworthily* in both, and shall receive a *Curse* instead of a *Blessing*. For as the *Unworthy*, i. e. as has been shewn, the *wicked Receiver* (the *Worthiness* required being only that of a good Man) *eats and drinks his own Damnation*, 1 Cor. xi. 29. so it is said of the *Unworthy*, i. e. of the *wicked Petitioner* too, that *he who turns away his Ear from hearing the Law, even his Prayer shall be an Abomination*, Prov. xxviii. 9. and xv. 8.

Thus is every Man, who is *unworthy to receive the blessed Sacrament*, *unworthy also to pray to God*, the same Thing being required to both: An *impenitent ill Man* being utterly unfit for both, but a *truly penitent good Man*, being such as he accounts *worthy*, and most affectionately invites to them.

Nay, he is not only *unworthy to pray to God*, but also, whilst that *Impenitence* lasts, to *give him Thanks*, to *make Vows*, to *covenant with him*, or to have an *Intercourse and Communication* with his Divine Majesty in any *other Actions of Religion*. If he tells God that he is *thankful* for his Mercies, whilst in the constant Course of his Life he *disobeys him*; his Actions plainly give the Lye to his Words, and proclaim him a most *ungrateful Person*. If he *makes him Vows and Promises*, and *covenants to repent of all his Sins*, whilst he still *lives impenitent*, and goes on in them; he only
speaks

speaks him fair, intending no such Thing, and therefore doth nothing else but *abuse* and *provoke* him. He doth nothing that honours God as it should, so long as he is an ungodly Man, nor must hope in any Services or Religious Performances, to be own'd and accepted by him. For God will have nothing to do with ill Men in any Way, whilst they continue impenitent in their Sins; Christ has purchased no Reconciliation for such, nor will he, till they change that Course, have any Friendship for them, or take any Complacence in them. He will hear the Prayers, and accept the Thanks, and trust the Promises and Engagements of those only, who are fully resolved to amend their Lives, and become good Men: So that if any Man persists impenitent, which unfits him for Receiving, he is also unfit for every Thing else, and unworthy to perform any other Actions of Religion.

As for this Business of *worthy Communicating* then, there is no more Cause of Complaint against it, for the *Difficulty* and *Hardship* thereof, than there is against *all Religion*. The same Duties which are required to a worthy Receiving, are no less required to make any of us a good Man; to confer a Right to Heaven, to a worthy Prayer, Promise, or Thanksgiving. So that if any Man will not come to the Sacrament, because he is wicked, and will not be at the Pains to attain those Virtues which are necessary to a worthy Communion: If he understands himself, he must for the same Reason keep back from Prayers, and Praises, and all Pretences to Religion. For unless he will labour after these Duties, and perform them, he is unmeet to come to God, and is very unworthy in all of them. And therefore so long as he is *unfit for the Holy Sacrament*, he is *unfit for every Thing else*, and if he resolves to continue so, may as well resolve

74 *Of Communicating Worthily.* Part I.

resolve to renounce his *Baptism*, and the whole *Christian Profession*.

And as these Tempers, which are required to a worthy Communion, are no more than is required in every good Man, in every worthy Prayer, Praise, or other Act of Religion: So it is to be observed,

3dly, That *however they may be commended, yet are they not necessarily required, as some have imagined, in more intense and transporting Degrees in it, than they are in other Instances of Devotion.*

That which has deterred good People from the blessed Sacrament, more than any Thing besides, is *their too awful Sense and Veneration thereof, and placing it at too great a Distance from other Parts of Worship.* They think no Virtues are worthy of it, but what are expressed in *Extacy and Transport*; and that when it requires the same Duties with other Parts of God's Service, it requires them in *much greater Perfection, and far higher Measures.* So that they imagine they may be worthy to pray and praise God, tho' they are unworthy to communicate: And therefore they join in *them* ordinarily as there is Occasion for them, when, through the Excess of Reverence, they scarce ever join in *this* at all.

But this is a great Mistake, which, tho' it be well meant, has a very ill Effect, and affrights good Souls from performing this Duty and Service, and paying this Honour to their Saviour, when they have no Cause to be afraid of it. For altho' it be *commendable and desirable*, when it can be had; yet it is not *absolutely necessary* that so it should be.

It is *very commendable, I say, and much to be desired, that we should exercise these Tempers in a higher Degree in this Holy Sacrament, than in other Parts of Worship.* It will be very well if our Prayers are
more

more *fervent*, and our *Praises* more *affectionate*, and if *all the Virtues* which we have Place to exercise, are more *full* and *flagrant* *then*, than at *other* Times. For there we have *Christ's Death* represented, with the *Heinousness* of our *Sins* which caused it, and the *inestimable Benefits* that come by it; and we meet on Purpose, to fix our *Thoughts* and *Contemplation* on it. And that is the *Consideration*, which gives greatest *Force*, and adds most *Strength* to all our *Duties*; so that when we come for that very *Intent*, it very well becomes us for the *Honour* thereof to excel in them. And upon this *Account* it will be very commendable, and much to be desired, that we should be more vigorous in all our *Virtues* at *this*, than at any *other* Ordinance.

But altho' this be *commendable*, and *much to be desired* in us; yet it is not *necessary*, or *indispensably required* of us, but that we may *communicate worthily* when it is *otherwise*. For we have these *Tempers* in *such a Degree*, as is *necessary* to our *eternal Happiness*, we have so much of them, as will render us worthy and welcome *Guests* at *this*, as well as at every *other* Ordinance of *Christ*.

And this is plain from hence, because when we have them in a *saving Degree*, which would procure our *Acceptance* in other *Parts* of *God's Service*, they fit us for the *Communion* of *Christ*, and of *glorified Saints* in *Heaven*; and so cannot leave us unworthy to communicate with *him*, and *them* here on *Earth*. If we *savingly repent* us of all our *Sins*, and are *savingly thankful* for all *Christ's Mercies*, and are *savingly in Charity* with all our *Neighbours*, and have a *saving Faith* in *Christ's Promises*; whether these *Virtues* be at the *Pitch* of the *Strong*, or only of the *Weak in Faith*, we are accepted with him, since he accepts both. And when once he
accepts

accepts us, we may approach to him in any Place; when he allows of the Measure of our Graces, we may be welcome to shew them forth, and offer a Sacrifice of a sweet Smell, when we send them up to him in *any*, or in *all* the Parts of his Worship and Service.

Let a Man come then to the Holy Communion, tho' it be without any Thing of *extraordinary* and unwonted Transports, and only in that *ordinary* Exercise of these Virtues, which gains him Acceptance in *Prayer*, or *Praise*, or *other religious Actions*; and then let him not doubt, but that, altho' more were better, yet is this good, and will render him a worthy Partaker of the Lord's Supper.

And this, as we have great Cause to believe, the *ancient* Christians thought, because they made it not an *extraordinary separate Thing*, as we do now, but an *ordinary and constant Part of the Christian Worship*. It went usually along with the other Parts of the Service, and they who came to *Prayers*, came also to the *Blessed Sacrament*; the *same Preparations*, and the *same Persons* being admitted to both. That, in the *Apostles* Times, they met to *communicate*, as they met to pray, *every Day*; and *breaking Bread*, was no less constant a Part, than *Prayer*, and *Praise*, of their *Communion and Fellowship*. All the *Disciples* at *Jerusalem*, says St. Luke, continued stedfastly in the *Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship*, and in *breaking of Bread*, and in *Prayers*, Acts ii. 42. And again, *they continuing daily with one Accord in the Temple, and breaking Bread from House to House, did eat their Meat with Gladness, and Singleness of Heart, praising God*, v. 46, 47. And afterwards, when their Members increased, and *stated Days* were appointed for the publick Service of God; on the *first Day of the Week*, when they met for other Worship, the Communion always went

went along therewith. Thus it is plain it was in the *Apostles Days*, for then the *Sunday Worship* was expressed by *breaking Bread*; which shews, that it was an *ordinary and constant Part thereof*. On the *first Day of the Week*, says *St. Luke*, *when the Disciples came together to break Bread*, Acts xx. 7. And thus also it continued for a good while afterwards, as is evident from the ninth Canon of the *Apostles*. And to shew how fit they esteemed *all the Faithful*, whether *weak or strong in Faith*, who were worthy to join in other Parts of Worship, to join also in this; that *Apostolical Canon* requires all the *Faithful*, who come to the other Service, to stay the Communion, and to join in that also. * *All the Faithful, that come to Church and hear the Scriptures, but stay not to join in the Holy Communion and the Prayers for that Service, ought to be separated and shut out from the Lord's Table, as they that bring Confusion into the Church. And the like is also enjoined in the Council of Antioch. † All that come to Church, say they, and hear the Scriptures, but do not communicate in the People's Prayers, but turn away disorderly from the Eucharist, shall be excommunicated and expelled the Church, and not received again, till they confess their Fault, and shew Repentance for it.*

And thus we see, however commendable it may be, that People should come to this Holy Sacrament, with more intense Acts, and higher Preparation, than would serve to any other Parts of

* Πάντας τας εἰσιόντας πρὸς, καὶ τῶν γεγραμμένων ἀκούοντας, μὴ παρεμυρόμενας ὅ τῇ προσευχῇ, καὶ τῇ ἀγίᾳ μετέλ' ἡψει, ὡς ἀταξίας ἐμποιοῦντας τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἀφορίζεσθαι χρεή. Canon. 9. Can. Apostol.

† Πάντας τὰς εἰσιόντας εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν γεγραμμένων ἀκούοντας, μὴ κοινωνούντας ὅ ἐν ᾧ ἅμα τῷ λαῷ, ἢ ἀποσπρεφουμένους τὴν ἀγίαν μετέληψιν τῆς εὐχαριστίας, κατὰ τίναν ἀταξίαν τέτοιους ἀποβλήτες γίνεσθαι τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἕως ἂν ἐξομολογησάμενοι καὶ δείξοντες καρπὸν μετάνοίας. Concil. Antioch. Can. 9.

Worship; yet that it is not *necessary* they should do so. They may be welcome and worthy Partakers in this Ordinance, who are worthy to partake in others; so that they are fit for it, who are fit for any other religious Service; the *same Virtues*, and the *same Degrees* may suffice thereto. For they fit them to communicate *with Christ* and with *glorified Saints in Heaven*, and so must needs fit them to communicate with *him*, and *them* here on *Earth*. They fitted Christians for it in the *Apostles Times*, when the *Eucharist* was no *extraordinary* and *separate*, but an *ordinary constant Part* of the *Christian Worship*. For then, not only they whose Virtues were most *high* and *perfect*, but *all the Faithful* were called upon to communicate; and they who were judged fit to meet at the Prayers and other Services, were thought worthy to meet at the Lord's Table too. And since they fitted *them* for it in those Days, it cannot be thought, but that they must needs fit us for the same in ours also.

As for those then, who have been wont to think more hardly of the Holy Sacrament than of other Parts of Worship, and how frequent soever they were in them, to come but seldom unto it, by Reason of the apprehended Difficulty in a worthy Partaking thereof: If they duly consider these *three Things* they will see cause to change their Mind, and forbear to complain any more against it. For the *Virtues which are required of us in a worthy Communion*, are all *necessary Parts of Duty*, and of a good Man; and are as much required to a worthy Prayer, Vow, Thanksgiving, and every other *Act of Religion*; and are not necessarily required in more intense and transporting Degrees in it, than they are in other Instances of Devotion. So that no good Man has any Cause at all to repine at it, or abstain from it. It lies hard upon, and can be
blamed

blamed by none, but those, who for the same Reason, must blame every other Ordinance and Part of divine Service, which requires as much of a worthy Worshipper as this doth; and who, at the same Rate as they cast off it, must renounce their Christianity, and throw aside all Religion too.

And thus having noted some Things, which may help to reconcile all good Minds to this Blessed Sacrament, and silence the Complaints of Hardship in a worthy Receiving of the same: I shall proceed now,

2dly, *To shew plainly who are unworthy of it, and what they must do to fit and prepare themselves for it, and so conclude this Point.*

Now these, in one Word, are *all that are impenitent, or that have committed any wilful or damning Sin, and are not fully set against it and purposed to amend it.* For all the Virtues of worthy Receiving, as we have seen, are necessary Parts of Duty, and of a good Man; so that if any Person would *repent* of all his Breaches of those Duties, and take Care thenceforward to endow his Soul with them, he would be worthy to be entertained at this Feast, and fit to be bidden welcome. Besides, if *Repentance* and *forsaking all his Sins* will go down with him, there is no Man who pretends to Religion, but may perform every Thing else which is required to this Communion. For there would be no great Difficulty in *paying Christ Honour and Reverence, and following him with Love and Thankfulness, and resigning ourselves to his Use, and abhorring of our Sins, if Repentance and Reformation were not annexed to them.* Men could *love Christ heartily, and thank him freely, and honour him abundantly, and resign themselves up to him wholly, and believe in him chearfully, if he would not peremptorily require them to amend their Ways, and forsake their*
Sins,

Sins, which are the Things they place their chiefest Pleasure and Delight in. So that if any Man will not fit himself for receiving, it is not for the Difficulty of other Duties, as if he could not brook them; but only for the Difficulty of Repentance, so that *Impenitence* is truly at the Bottom. He will not *satisfy those who have suffered by him*, or *forgive those who have injured him*, or be at *Peace* and live in *Charity with all Men*, or *renounce that Injustice, Lasciviousness, Drunkenness, or other known Sin*, which, in confirming the *New Covenant*, he must *promise God that he will depart from*. It is because his Heart sticks to some of *these*, or some *other* such like Transgressions, and will not go off from them, that he is an unfit and unworthy Man; whereas, were it not for this, he could do all Things else which are required of him.

He therefore, who is unworthy to communicate, and unfit to receive the Holy Sacrament, is plainly one who is *impenitent*; who is guilty of some damning Sin, and is not resolved yet to leave it, but intends still to continue in the same. He is either a *careless Man*, that lives at large in a constant Course of *Sensuality and Worldliness*, being wholly given to *heap up Wealth*, or *aim at Honour*, or *follow Pleasure, without Conviction*, or making any Pretence at all to serious Religion; or, if he seems to look towards God, and is careful in *many Things* to please him; yet he serves him not in *all Points* as he ought, but allows himself in *some known Sin*, continuing unreclaimed in *common Swearing, Drunkenness, Uncleanliness, Malice, Contentiousness, Fraud, Oppression, Slander, Censoriousness, evil Speaking*, or some other damning Crime, which he will not be at the Pains to leave for Christ's Sake, or for any Thing that he either *has done*, or *would do* for him.

Now

Now if any one of those, who read this Treatise, are such as these, and I put the Matter to their *own Consciences*; I confess they are not worthy to come to the Holy Sacrament, till they turn away from such known Sin, and repent of the same; and would sin against this Holy Feast and their own Souls, if they should partake therein before they have done so. But then I must tell them withal, that as they are not fit to come to this holy Ordinance; so, whilst they continue in that Estate, neither are they fit to come to any other, or to any Thing else that looks towards God, and their own eternal Happiness. For so long as they thus espouse *any Number of Sins*, or *any one Sin* against God, and daily repeat it when they have a Temptation to it, notwithstanding their own Hearts are sensible that he has forbid it, or at least would have been sensible thereof, unless they had been wilfully blinded, or by long Use hardened therein: So long, I say, as they are thus *impenitent in any known Sin*, they are not only *unfit to come to the Holy Communion*, but are also as *unfit to die*, or to go to Heaven, to pray to God, to utter Praises, to make Vows to him, or to join in any other Actions of Religion. For an *impenitent Man*, whilst he continues such, is God's *professed Enemy*, and is welcome to him at no Time but when he *repents*; so that till that is done, he is acceptable in no Service which he pays him

This then is the Danger of their State, who lie impenitent in *many*, or in *few* known Sins: They are unworthy indeed to receive the Holy Communion, but they are equally unworthy to join in Prayers, to give Thanks, or make Vows, or die in Peace, or hope for Happiness, or

82 *Of Communicating Worthily.* Part I.

do any Thing else that shews them to be Christians.

And if any Man's Conscience tells him, that this is *his State*; his Way is not to think there is no Harm, if he doth but *abstain from the Communion*; for, as I say, he is as unworthy in his Prayers and Praises, and in every Thing else that belongs to Religion; but *forthwith to repent, and amend that Transgression*, which shuts him out from the Holy Sacrament, and from every Thing else that looks towards Heaven, that so he may be worthy, and find Acceptance both in *it*, and in *them* too. This Repentance will restore him to the Favour of God, and gain him Acceptance with him; and then he is fit for this, and for every other Part of God's Worship and Service, and may worthily join in any of them.

And by this it appears who is unworthy of this Feast, and what he must do to fit and prepare himself for it. Every Man who is impenitent, is an unworthy Communicant; but if he will seriously repent, and amend his Ways, he will find no Difficulty in any other Duties which make up a Believer's Worthiness, but may then be a worthy and welcome Guest whensoever he has a Mind to come to the Lord's Table.

And thus I have done with the *second Thing* which I proposed, namely, to shew *wherein the Worthiness of eating and drinking at this Feast lies*; which I have stayed the longer upon, because both the *irreverent Approach* of some Men to it, and the *scrupulous abstaining* of others from it, do both take Rise from this Head, so that it well deserves to be carefully explained and clearly stated.

And thus, having endeavoured to give some Help to all those who desire *to communicate worthily,*

Chap. 4. *Of Communicating Worthily.* 83

thily, by shewing what is the Meaning of eating Bread and drinking Wine in the Blessed Sacrament, and wherein the Worthiness of doing it lies: I shall proceed now in the third Place, to exhort and press Men unto it, by shewing them how much it is every good Christian's Duty to frequent the same, and how great the Benefits are that come thereby, which should make them seek it of themselves, though they were not commanded so to do; of which in the next Part.

PART II.

CHAP. I.

Of the Duty of Communicating.

THE CONTENTS.

To communicate, is a Duty incumbent on us, as appears, 1. From the obliging Import of the Command about it. This Command of Christ shewn, and several Notes added, which greatly recommend and inforce it, viz. It is such an Instance, as best shews our peculiar Reverence and Love to him. The whole Yoke of Jewish Ceremonies is taken away, and only it, and Baptism, two cheap and easy Rites, are imposed instead of them. It was his last Command, he gave it the Night before he suffered: In St. Paul's Commission to preach the Gospel, it was particularly specified. We cannot neglect it, without greatest Danger to ourselves, as appears from our Saviour's Words, John vi. 53. which are shewn to speak of it; and from the Danger of neglecting the Jewish Passover, which answered to it. 2. From the obliging Nature of those Things which are meant by it, viz. because we therein publicly own Christ and his Religion, and solemnly remember him, and confirm the New Covenant with God, and a League of Friendship with our Brethren, and are vouchsafed the highest Honour,

Chap. I. Of the Duty of Communicating. 85

Honour, and receive Tokens of greatest Love, and Enjoyment of present Graces, and Pledges of future Glory from him: All which no good Man ought, and no ingenuous Man will decline, when he is called to them. This Duty obliges those only who are of Age for it; and them too only at such Times as they have an Opportunity and a fit Occasion offered. An Objection against its being a Duty, from 1 Cor. xi. 25. answered. The Neglect of it is a great Sin. This God may excuse in those good Souls, who thro' Ignorance or Error are held back, and because of their over-high Veneration for it, think themselves unworthy to come to it, whilst in the Honesty of their Hearts they thus mistake it. But he will not excuse it in them, when they are better inform'd; and much less in others, who neglected it because they are careless of it, or too wicked and impenitent to receive it.

THE worthy receiving the Holy Sacrament, which I have hitherto described, is no *indifferent Thing*, which may either be *done*, or *let alone*, according to Discretion; but an *indispensable Duty*, wherein God has straitly bound, and which he has peremptorily required of every grown Christian.

And this will appear these *two Ways*.

1st, From the *Expressiveness* and obliging Import of the Command about it.

2^{dly}, From the obliging Nature of those Things which are meant by it.

1st, That every Christian ought to frequent the Holy Sacrament, and come to it as often as he is called, and an Opportunity is offered for the same, appears from the *Expressiveness* and obliging Import of

86 *Of the Duty of Communicating. Part II.*

the Command about it. For our blessed Lord has given us his *Command* for it, and that with such *particular Notes and Circumstances*, as shew that he lays a great Weight upon it, which must needs oblige all, who have any just Regard for him, to frequent it.

He has given us, I say, his express Command for it. For thus St. Paul tells us, *he did*, when he ordained this *Feast*. *He took Bread*, says he, *and when he had given Thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat, This is my Body which is broken for you; This DO in Remembrance of me.* And after the same Manner he took the Cup, saying, *This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood; This DO ye, as often as you drink it, in Remembrance of me,* 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. And if we had nothing more than this plain Command for it, it were enough to make every Man, who would please God, and go to Heaven, to come thereto when he is invited. For then ye are my Friends, says Christ, when ye do whatsoever I command you, John xv. 14. And he that shall break the least of my Commandments, and shall teach Men so, shall be least in the Kingdom of Heaven, i. e. he shall not enter, or have any Share at all there, Mat. v. 19.

But besides this *express Command* which he has given for it, we have *other Notes and Circumstances* added, which greatly recommend the same, and shew that he lays a particular Weight upon it. For,

1st, It is a Thing which is to be done purely upon his Account, having no other Reason but his Command to bind and inforce it; so that if we have any Love and Reverence for him, this is the best Way to shew the same. As for the Duties of Humility, Temperance, Justice, Faithfulness, Gratitude, Charity, Peace, Prayers to God, and the like: Though

Chap. 1. *Of the Duty of Communicating.* 87

Though Christ has told us of them, and has expressly *injoin'd them*, as well as *this*, yet is not he alone in that, but they were sufficiently proclaimed before he came, to the *Jews*, by *Moses* and the *Prophets*, and to the *Gentile World*, by *natural Conscience*. In declaring *them*, he had an open way made for him, and the Consciences of all Men were ready to strike in with him, which, among all good Minds, would much facilitate their Reception. But in *this* Command, he stands alone; for *natural Reason* knows nothing of it, nor will the Conscience of any Man, but a *Christian*, oblige him to it. So that here we have no Light but his Word, no Motive but our Obedience to him to persuade it; and therefore if we do it at all, it must be purely for his Sake, without any other Inducement.

And this is a strong Bond upon all who *love their Lord*, and have any *Peculiarity of Respect for him*, to observe it. It is the true Cause and Reason, indeed, why some neglect it, who presume to shew this Neglect thereof, and persist securely in the same, because their own Conscience doth not startle at it, and check them so severely for absenting from this Feast, as it doth for Drunkenness, Whoredom, Lies, Cheating, &c. which have not only *Christ's Laws*, but *natural Reason* also to exclaim against them. And if Men have no Love for their Lord, no peculiar Regard for any things because he has *injoin'd them*, or are not duly inform'd of his Command about them, thus it will be. But if any who see that he has made it their Duty to frequent this Holy Table, have any peculiar Love and Regard to him; they will greedily embrace this as the best Opportunity of shewing their Affection to his Service, since therein they can be sway'd by nothing else, and

88 *Of the Duty of Communicating.* Part II.
will most readily communicate, when he calls them
fo to do.

2dly, *It and Baptism*, those two cheap and easy
Things, are the only positive Commands which our
Saviour Christ has laid upon us, when he took off
the heavy Yoke of the numerous, expensive and laborious
Jewish Precepts; so that out of natural Equity,
and to shew our Thankfulness for such a gainful Ex-
change, we ought most readily to observe them.

The Jews were loaded with a Number of trou-
blesome and expensive Rites, which had no Good-
ness discernable in themselves, nor any thing but
the Revelation made by Moses, to recommend
them to their Consciences: Such as the * *forbearing*
Swines, and several other sorts of *Flesh*; the wash-
ing of their Bodies upon their † *touching of any dead*
Persons; and upon any corporal *Uncleannesses*;
the ‡ *bringing Offerings and Sacrifice of fed Beasts*, for
a Return of Thanks, and for Propitiation upon any
Offences; and many other cumbersome and costly
Rites, which the Apostle calls the *Law of carnal*
Commandments, Heb. vii. 16. and ix. 10. and weak
and beggarly Elements, Gal. iv. 9. which were given
in way of Command to them, not because the
Things deserv'd it, but only that they might be
kept employ'd, as useless Exercises are to Chil-
dren, to hinder them from more hurtful Work;
and so were suited only to the *Infancy*, and *Non-*
age of the World, Gal. iv. 3.

But from all this Burden of Ceremonies, under
which, as St. Peter says, they, and their Fathers
groaned, and were oppressed, Acts xv. 10. by the
coming of Christ, we are most graciously deliver-
ed. For he has abolished in his Flesh, i. e. by his
Death, wherein he gave his Body for us, the Law

* Levit. xi. 7.

† Numb. xix. 13.

‡ Levit. xv.

Chap. 1. *Of the Duty of Communicating.* 89

of Commandments contain'd in Ordinances, Eph. ii. 15. He has blotted out the Hand-writing of Ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us (hedging in the Church within the Jews, and excluding all us Gentiles) and took it out of the way, nailing it to his Cross, Col. ii. 12. All this Law of Jewish Ceremonies he has abrogated, and procured us a complete Liberty and Exemption from the same, injoining us only these two cheap and easy Rites of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, instead of it. And if any Man has but common Ingenuity, and will return equitably for what is done; and much more, if he has any grateful Resentments for so valuable an Exemption, he must needs submit with all Thankfulness to this gainful Exchange and Imposition, and run to it with as much Forwardness, as any Man would to pay twelve Pence in full Discharge of twenty Pounds.

3dly, This Commandment about the Holy Sacrament, was his dying and last Command, he gave it the very Night before he suffered. The same Night, says St. Paul, in which he was betray'd, he took Bread, and said, Take, eat, This do in remembrance of me, 2 Cor. xi. 23, 24. And this, had it come only in the Nature of a Request, and not with the Authority of a Command, must needs have made it of greatest Power with us. For it is great Inhumanity, and shews an hard Heart, to deny the last Suit of a dying Person, though he were a Stranger to us; and base Ingratitude, and a Falsification of all Friendship, to throw back the last Request of a dying Friend, especially, if he is beforehand with us, and has done much more than his Request comes to for our Sakes; and the greatest Aggravation of all Disobedience, to slight the last Will and Words of our Fathers, or Masters, or others who have Right over us, and Power to command

90 *Of the Duty of Communicating. Part II.*

command us. And therefore since our *Blessed Lord*, who came upon Earth for no other End, but to do us Service, yea even to lay down his Life for our Sakes, after all the Pains and Cost which he has been at for us, has left this as his *last Will*, and both *intreated* and *injoined* at parting, that we should eat and drink in Remembrance of him: If we have any *Shame* we cannot, and if we profess any *Duty*, we dare not, and if we have any *Love* for him, we will not neglect it; but come to it out of Mindfulness of our gone *Friend* and departed *Lord*, as oft as we shall have Opportunity so to do.

4thly, It was thought by Christ to be a Commandment so *material*, that when *St. Paul* receiv'd his Commission to preach the Gospel, it was by Name inserted, and particularly specified; and this special Designation of it, shews that he was more than ordinarily concerned for it. *I have received of the Lord*, says he, or by his Revelation, when I was call'd by him, *that which I also delivered unto you*, as from him, namely, *that the same Night he was betrayed, he took Bread, and said, Take, eat, this is my Body which is broken for you, this do in Remembrance of me*, 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24.

5thly, It is a Command, which, as the Scripture plainly intimates, without great Danger to ourselves, cannot either be unworthily kept or neglected.

Without very great and apparent Danger to ourselves, we cannot come unworthily to the Holy Sacrament. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, says *St. Paul*, eats and drinks Damnation to himself, 1 Cor. xi. 29.

And without a like Danger, we cannot neglect, or keep back from it. Except ye eat the *Flesh* of the Son of Man, says our Saviour, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you, John vi. 53. This the ancient

Cháp. 1. *Of the Duty of Communicating* 91

tient Church, as is well known, understood generally of *eating his Flesh in the Holy Sacrament*; which is the great Reason they give for that Practice so common among them, namely, why *Infants are to partake of it*. And of this, there is great Cause to understand this Place. For it is hard to think of any thing that can support such full Expressions, as *eating of his Body*, and *drinking of his Blood*, besides *eating Bread*, and *drinking Wine in the Holy Sacrament*, which he calls *his Body* and *his Blood*, when he institutes it, *Mat. xxvi. 26, 27, 28*. And besides, in this very Place he directs us to his *Body crucified*, and *given for the Life of the World*; to shew that the eating relates to it, as it is *so represented*, which is no where done but in the *Holy Eucharist*. *I am the living Bread*, says he, which *who so eats shall live for ever: and the Bread which I will give*, i. e. to be eaten, is my *Body crucified*, which under that Notion is represented only in the *Holy Sacrament*, or *my Flesh which I will give for the Life of the World*. And except ye thus eat the *Flesh*, and drink the *Blood of the Son of Man*, ye have no *Life in you*, *John vi. 51, 52, 53*.

This Discourse, indeed, of *eating his Flesh in the Blessed Sacrament*, was before the Sacrament itself was instituted. But so was his Discourse of *Baptism to Nicodemus*, before *Baptism* was appointed for the *standing Rite*, whereby all Mankind should be *christened*, *John iii. 5*. And so was his Discourse to the People, of *the Death he should die*, by being *lifted up*, before he was *crucified*, *John xii. 32, 33*. And so was his Discourse of *raising up the Temple of his Body after it should be destroyed*, before he was *raised from the dead*, *John ii. 19, 21*. And so in this very Place, was his Discourse of *giving his Flesh for the Life of the World*,
which

92 *Of the Duty of Communicating.* Part II.

which they understood not before he *suffered*, more than they did this *Sacramental Eating* of his *Flesh* before the *Sacrament* was appointed, John vi. 51. Our Saviour spake several things by *Anticipation* in *undry Places*, as, from this *last Instance*, it is plain he did in *this*; which though his *Hearers* did not at that time fully understand, yet they would afterwards. So that when other Reasons evince him to have spoke in this Place, of the *Sacramental Eating* of his Body and Blood; the *Sacrament's* not being yet instituted, is no good Proof or Argument against it.

Thus, is this Necessity of *eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood*, as ever we would *hope for eternal Life thereby*, spoken of the *Lord's Supper*, wherein we feast upon them. And we need not wonder, that it should be spoken thereof: For it is no more than is expressly spoke of *Baptism*, which is but of *equal Rank with it*, both being *alike Duties, and equally required*. For of that it is said, *He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved*, Mark xvi. 16. And *except a Man be born again of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*, John iii. 5.

But besides this Proof of the *Danger of neglecting the Holy Sacrament*, because our Lord tells us *we have no Life in us without it*; it may also appear from the *Danger of neglecting the Jewish Passover*, which *answer'd to it*, and was the same to *them*, as this Feast is to *us*, wherein * *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*. And as for the *Danger of neglecting that*, it was great indeed, no less than of being *cut off from Israel*, which was the Punishment God had threatened thereto. *Whosoever, in the Feast of the Passover eats leavened*

* 1 Cor. v. 7.

Chap. I. *Of the Duty of Communicating.* 93

Bread, from the first Day to the seventh Day, that Soul shall be cut off from Israel, Exod. xii. 15.

Thus necessary is it for all Men, who would please God, to frequent this Ordinance, and to come to the Holy Sacrament when they are call'd to it. They have *Christ's express Command for it*, who, by injoining it, *has required Obedience in such an Instance, as best shews their particular Reverence and Love to him*; and to engage them the more to it, *has freed them from all the Load of Jewish Ceremonies, and imposed no heavier Burden, than it and Baptism instead of them*; and to make it have the more Effect, *has left it among the last Words which he spake to them*; and to shew that it was a Matter of no small Moment, would have it *expressly specified and inserted in St. Paul's Commission*; and tells them, *That unless they come therein to eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood, they have no Life in them*; and will punish the Neglect, or Abuse of it, as he did of the Jewish Passover which answer'd to it, with *Excision*: All which shew the Greatness of the Duty, and how much it is every Man's Concern faithfully to discharge the same, who would hope to have the Favour of God, or to go to Heaven.

And as this appears from the *obliging Import*, and *Expressiveness of our Blessed Lord's Command about it*; so doth it,

2dly, From the *obliging Nature of those Things, which are meant by it*. For therein we publicly own Christ and his Religion, and solemnly remember him, and confirm the New Covenant with Almighty God, and a League of Friendship with all our Christian Brethren, and are vouchsafed the highest Honour, and receive Tokens of the greatest Love, and Injoyment of present Graces, and Pledges of future Glories from him: All which no ingenuous Man will, and no good Man ought to refuse, when he is call'd to them.

1st, In

94 *Of the Duty of Communicating.* Part. II.

1st, In the *Blessed Sacrament*, I say, we *publicly own Christ, and profess his Religion*. This was always understood to be the Meaning of *Feasts on Sacrifices*, both among *Jews and Gentiles*; they who would eat of the Sacrifice offer'd to any *God or Idol*, were look'd upon to have *Fellowship and Communion with him*, and thereby to *own their joining in that Worship and Service, which was paid to him*. They joined themselves to *Baal-Peor*, says the *Psalmist*, when they ate the *Sacrifices of the Dead*, i. e. when they feasted on those Sacrifices which were offered to the Dead, *Psal. cvi. 28.* and *Numb. xxv. 1, 2, 3.* Thus *St. Paul* tells us it was in the *Sacrificial Feasts of the Jews*, for *they that ate of their Sacrifices, were Partakers of their Altars*. And thus he tells us it was among the *Gentiles*, and that they who feasted in the *Idol-Temples* on the *Sacrifices made to Devils*, did thereby declare their *Communion with them*, and had *Fellowship with Devils*. And the same is true of the *Feast of the Lord's Supper*, which upon this Account, he makes *Parallel to them*, and compares with them. In *Israel after the Flesh*, says he, *they who eat of the Sacrifice, are Sharers in the Worship, or Partakers of the Altar*. And in the things which the *Gentiles sacrifice to Devils*, *they who feast on the Sacrifices, have Fellowship with Devils*. And therefore you that feast with the Lord at his Table, and thereby have Fellowship with him; must not mix *Light and Darkeness, Christ and Belial* together, and, by feasting with Devils at their Tables, have Fellowship with them too. *You cannot drink the Cup of the Lord, and the Cup of Devils; you cannot be Partakers of the Lord's Table, and of the Table of Devils*; since that were to unite the most opposite Interests, by holding Fellowship, and professing yourselves to be the Servants of Christ, and of the Devil also,

Chap. I. Of the Duty of Communicating. 95

1 Cor. x. 16, 18, 20, 21. Our joining in the Holy Communion, is our avow'd owning of Faith in our crucified Lord, and of our Adherence to him. By eating and drinking at his Table, of *broken Bread*, and *Wine poured out*, which are the Representation of his *Death*; we *tell it out to all the World*, that we are the *Servants of that Lord*, and *Worshippers of that Jesus*, who gave himself to be crucified and to die for us. *As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup*, saith St. Paul,^s *ye do shew forth the Lord's Death till he come*. Ye *shew forth his Death*, i. e. ye^{*} tell it abroad, and profess to all the World, that he died for you, and is Lord over you, and that you own him so to be, 1 Cor. xi. 26.

Thus is our eating Bread, and drinking Wine at the Lord's Table, an open Profession of his Religion, and a Token whereby we give out to all the World, who see what we do, that we belong to him. It is a most solemn Sign of our Relation to Christ, and a publick Badge of our being Christians. And this sure no Man will decline, when there is a fit Occasion, who is not ashamed of his Lord, nor repents of his Profession. But if he is really a Follower of Christ, and would be thought one, he will let all the World know it, by joining in this Feast, which is the most solemn Badge, and authentick Mark, which Christ has appointed of his Followers.

2dly, In coming to the Holy Sacrament, according to our Lord's Appointment, we *solemnly remember him*, and *think of the Relation wherein we stand to him*, and of the *Benefits which we have received from him*. *Do this*, says he, *in Remembrance of me*, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25.

And when he is call'd to remember his most precious Saviour, who has both lived and died to

* καταγγέλλετε.

make

96 *Of the Duty of Communicating. Part II.*

make God his Friend, and to do him Service; there is no Man sure, who has any Thing of *Shame*, or *Ingenuity* left in him, who will shew Backwardness, and begin to make Excuses. For has not he done enough for us, to deserve to be thought of? Do not all the inexpressible Favours which he has gain'd, and all the exquisite Pains which he underwent for our Sakes, most justly challenge to be held in Remembrance? He left *unutterable Glories*, and submitted to *all sorts of earthly Calamities*, and took *unwearied Pains*, and shew'd *invincible Patience*, and laid down at last *his own Life* to save our Souls; and must all this be forgotten now it is done, and quite buried in Silence? What Man of any *Ingenuity*, who has been happy in such a *Friend*, can be averse to remember him? What Man, who has been blessed in such a *Saviour*, can ever decline the Thoughts of him? Unless we will shew ourselves *grossly stupid*, or *intolerable proud*, and *both ways Monsters of Ingratitude*; we must needs be ready to celebrate the Memory of such a Person, when we are call'd to do that Honour to him; and no Person that would be thought a *Man*, much more a *Christian*, must ever refuse to remember his Saviour Christ, and give him Thanks, when in the Holy Sacrament he is call'd to it in Christ's own Name, and by his special Invitation.

3dly, In eating Bread and drinking Wine at the Blessed Sacrament, we *confirm the New Covenant with Almighty God*. In this Feast, as has been shewn, we assure him that we will *repent of every Sin*, which we can know ourselves to be guilty of, as ever we hope that he will *forgive* us; and that we will *endeavour*, with his Grace, after every *Virtue*, as ever we expect that he should *assist* us; and *obey every one of his Commandments*, as ever

Chap. 1. *Of the Duty of Communicating.* 97.

we look that he should crown us with *eternal Happiness*; and *believe*, that, *for Christ's Sake*, we shall have the *Pardon, Grace, and eternal Life upon these Terms*, and *not otherwise*. For all these Duties, we give him our Word and Promise; and, on that Condition, for all these Blessings, he gives us his Seal and Assurance back again.

And what Man is there, who pretends to the Name of a *Christian*, who will refuse to do this, when he has an authentick Summons, nay, even a friendly Invitation? Will he not *repent*, that he may be *forgiven*? Nor *endeavour* after such Graces as he wants, that *God's Holy Spirit* may *help* him to them? Nor *obey* all his Saviour's Laws, that he may be *happy in Heaven*? Nor *believe*, that Christ has purchased these Benefits for us at God's Hands, upon these Terms; but that without performing them, we shall never have them? If he will not do all this, why doth he make any Pretence to Religion? If he is unresolv'd, and suspends about any of these Particulars why doth he profess himself a *Christian*? For these Things, are the very Substance of *Christianity*, and the Life and Soul of all *Religion*. No Man can belong to Christ without them, and when he was *baptized* and came to him, he solemnly undertook and engaged for them. And therefore if any Man will refuse to make God his Engagement of this *Faith, Repentance, and Obedience*, when he is call'd to *promise* and *profess* them; he revolts from his *baptismal Vow*, and, if he persists in that Mind, may as well renounce his Profession, and turn his Back on the whole Christian Religion.

4thly, In eating Bread and drinking Wine at the Lord's Supper, we *confirm a League of Love and Friendship with all our Christian Brethren*; this being one End, as I have shewn, of this Meeting;

H

and

98 *Of the Duty of Communicating. Part II.*
and we being therein to *profess ourselves in perfect Peace and Charity with all Men.*

And who now, that owns himself a *Christian*, can seek Shifts, and shun this, when God calls him to do it? When his Saviour, who died to make God Friends with him, asks him to be Friends with all the World; can he refuse him? When he invites him to be at Peace with all his Members, and to embrace them all as his Brethren; can he fly both from him and them? If he shun this, he may as well shun every thing else, and quit all Claim to his Religion. For *by this*, says our Saviour, *shall all Men know that you are my Disciples, if you have Love one to another*, John xiii. 35. And *unless ye forgive Men their Trespases*, says he again, *neither will your heavenly Father forgive you yours*, Mat. vi. 15. And *he that says he loves God, and yet hates his Brother*, saith St. John, *is a Liar*, 1 John iv. 20. And *if it be possible*, saith St. Paul, *and as much as in you lies, live peaceably with all Men*, Rom. xii. 18. Love, and Peace, and mutual Friendship, and Beneficence, are the great Duties which Christ's Law prescribes, and which all his Followers must be forward at all times to make Profession of. And therefore if any Man turns away from declaring them; he turns his Back on the most Signal Duty of his Religion, and will not come to that, whereby, above all things else, he should declare himself a Christian.

5thly, In feasting with God at the Holy Sacrament, we are *vouchsafed the highest Honour*, and *receive Tokens of greatest Love*, and *Injoyment of present Graces*, and *Pledges of future Glory from him*; and these no Man ought to refuse, when he is call'd to them.

He

Chap. I. *Of the Duty of Communicating.* 99

He *vouchsafes us the greatest Honour.* For he calls us to his *own Table*, and tells us he is most glad to see us there, and that the oftner we come, the welcomer we shall be to his Supper; he invites us as his *own Guests*, and thereby seeks our *Company and Acquaintance*, and treats us as his *Friends and Confidants*: which Honour is so high, that greater cannot be shewed us.

He *gives us surest Tokens of the highest Love.* For he calls us to feast upon the *Body and Blood of his own Son*, i. e. upon those Blessings which the breaking of his Body and the shedding of his Blood procured for Mankind; and shews us plainly, that he is still of the same Mind, and is glad, that for our sakes, he parted with him; for his inviting us to eat the Body, and drink the Blood of Christ in this Holy Supper, imports as much as if he should say to us, *Lo! Here my dear and only Son, whom I gave to shed his own hearts Blood a Ransom for your Souls. When I did it, your Sins were most provoking, and render'd you utterly undeserving of it; and since you have received it, you have not been affected therewith as you ought to have been, but have shewed yourselves most unthankful for the same. But yet all this doth not make me repent of what I have done, or grudge you the Benefit of him. I am come here freely to present you with him, and do invite you, and exhort you, nay, intreat you to accept him. Eat his Body, and drink his Blood, i. e. those Benefits, and that Expiation which were the Purchase thereof; I freely give them without grudging, nay, I shall take it extremely ill if you refuse them. For I would by all means have you receive the Advantage of him. I gave him once for you, and now again I give him to you; I am still of the same mind, to part with my own dear Son for your Sakes, and to bestow him upon you: I have nothing*

H 2

better,

100 *Of the Duty of Communicating. Part II.*

better, or dearer, wherewith to present you; but with Him in this Holy Feast I do; and what higher Tokens can I give, of the unbounded Love I bear you?

He gives us present Injoyment of many invaluable Graces. For the Lord's Supper is a Treasury of Blessings, conveying to all those, who worthily partake thereof, the *Pardon of their Sins*, and *Strength against all Temptations*, and *Heavenly Improvements*, or *Growth in all Virtues*, as I shall shew under the next Head.

And lastly, He gives us the surest Pledges of future Glory. For when he offers us his own Son, we may be sure he will not stick at any thing else, since he has nothing that is in any comparable Degree so precious and dear to him, as he is. This Gift is a *Faithful Earnest*, and *certain Pledge* of every thing else, which he can give us. For he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him give us freely all Things? says St. Paul, Rom. viii. 32.

Thus in the *Blessed Sacrament*, are we vouchsafed the greatest Honour, and receive Tokens of highest Love, and Injoyment of present Graces, and Pledges of future Glories from Almighty God.

And what Man now will refuse all these, when he is invited to them? Who can turn his Back upon that Ordinance, wherein God calls him, that he may give Honour to him, and shew by the highest Tokens how he loves him, and confer upon him present Graces, and give him Pledges of future Glories, and assure him what regard he has for him, and how happy he intends to make him? Common Ingenuity, and good Manners, nay, every Man's own private Interest and self Advantage, oblige him most readily to embrace such Offers, and not to slight, or so much as slowly to accept of them.

Chap. I. *Of the Duty of Communicating.* 101

them. So that if any Person really believes, that all this Honour is shewn, this Love is expressed, these Graces given, or these Glories are assured to him in the Holy Communion: he must needs think himself highly obliged to come to it, and never cast about to seek Shifts, and make Excuses, or express a backward and unwilling Mind, when he has an Invitation and an Opportunity so to do.

And thus it appears how much all the *Disciples of Christ*, who are grown up to it, and understand it (for no Duty obliges an *incapable Subject*) are bound to frequent this Holy Sacrament. It is their Duty to come to the Communion, as it is to come to Church, to be Chast, Sober, Humble, Just, or to perform any other Precept of their Religion. For they have their Saviour Christ's express Command for it, who by joining it, has required Obedience in such an Instance, as best shews their peculiar Reverence and Love to him; and to ingage them the more to it, has freed them from all the load of Jewish Ceremonies, and imposed no heavier Burden, than it and Baptism instead of them; and, to make it take the surer Effect with them, left it among the last Words which he spake to them; and to shew it was a Matter of no small Moment, would have it expressly specified in St. Paul's Commission; and tells them, That unless they come therein to eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood, they have no Life in them; and will punish the Neglect, or Abuse of it, as he did the Neglect of the Jewish Passover, which answer'd to it, with Excision. And the Nature of those Things which are meant by it, and of those Employments which are to be exercised at it, most straightly oblige them to it. For therein they shew they have Fellowship with Christ, and appertain to his Religion, and thankfully remember him, and seal the New Covenant with Almighty God, and a League of Love

102 *Of the Duty of Communicating. Part II.*
and *Friendship with their Christian Brethren*, and are *vouchsafed the highest Honour and receive Tokens of the greatest Love, and Injoyment of present Graces, and Pledges of future Glories from him*: which are things, that every *ingenuous Man will do*, and every *good Man ought to do*; and which no Man, when he is call'd thereto, can honestly decline, who professes himself a Christian.

Thus is it a *necessary Duty* in every Christian Man to *come to the Holy Sacrament*, as it is to *come to Church*, or to other *Parts of Worship*: And *when once we are of Age for it, and have a fit Opportunity and Occasion offer'd of joining in the same*, we are in strict Duty engaged, and by a Bond of many Cords, as we have seen, obliged so to do.

1st, I say, we are *bound to it, when once we are of Age for it*. The Duty of this *Holy Sacrament* lies in such Things, as suppose a competent Understanding, and due Knowledge of Religion, in those who must discharge them. For therein we are to *remember Christ*, both what Commands he has left with us, and what he has done and suffer'd for us; and this we cannot do, till *first we have learnt them*. We must *engage to be at Peace, to do Justice, and shew Kindness to all our Brethren*; and this supposes that we know *first* what *Offices of Love, and Acts of Justice are due to them*. We must *consent to the Terms of the New Covenant*, and this implies that, *first we should understand them*. In *Baptism*, indeed, we enter'd into it before we had any Knowledge of it; but that was because God (who deals with us after the most favourable Manner of Men, who allow grown Persons to bear the Parts, and federally to undertake for Infants, in Things conducing to their Advantage) admitted our *Sponsors*, who knew it very well, to stand as our *Representatives*, and in way of *Proxies*,

to

Chap. I. Of the Duty of Communicating. 103

to covenant and undertake for us. But the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*, is to be our *own Act*, and an exprefs Assenting in our own Persons to what our *Sponsors* formerly undertook; and this cannot be done till we are come to Years, and are able of ourselves to judge of it.

Till we are grown up then to the Age of competent Knowledge in spiritual Affairs, we are not *capable* of discharging the Duty of this Holy Sacrament aright. And till we are so, we are not obliged to it, since no Duty obliges an *incapable* Subject. For it is in this Duty, as it is in that of *making Peace*, or *giving good Advice*, or any others; they bind us not, till we are grown up to them, and are come to know rightly how to discharge them. For on all these Cases, God exacts an Account only of those *Talents* which he has entrusted with us, as we are told in the *Parable* of the Men who had *received the Talents*, Mat. xxv. and his Rule of proceeding is this, *unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom Men have committed much, of him they will ask the more*, Luke xii. 48.

2dly, When we are of *Age* for it, we are bound to it only *when we have an Opportunity, and a fit Occasion is offered*. It is in the *Communion at the Sacrament*, as it is in our *Communion in Prayers*, and other *Parts of Worship*; we are bound to join in them *when they can be had, and when we are not lawfully hindered and diverted from them*. But if either there is *no Place* for them, or we are *justly hindered* from attending on them; we have no obliging Opportunity for that Time, but may without Sin omit them. And thus it is, when we are hindered by some *Call of Providence*, when at that Time we are call'd away to do some necessary Duty of *Justice*, or *Charity*, in another Place. Or when we are

104 *Of the Duty of Communicating.* Part. II.

detained at Home by some *Diseases*, or *bodily Indisposition*, under which it is not safe to go Abroad, or to venture out beyond our own Chambers; in which Case God, who prefers *Mercy before Sacrifice* when they thwart and interfere, *i. e. essential Duties*, before *positive Precepts*, will excuse us. Or, lastly, when our *Minds are disturbed* by great *Grief*, that cannot presently be cast off, or by *sudden Anger*, or *Discontent* occasioned hard before the Reception thereof (which Disturbance of Mind, though ordinarily it be our own Fault and culpable, may yet sometimes be more innocent or excusable;) at which Time, since their Discomposure unfits them for so Divine a Service, they may for the Present omit it, as being indisposed for it. This St. *Peter* intimates of *Prayers* (and the Reason is the same of *this Ordinance*) when he exhorts the *Husband*, by a *discreet Compliance*, and *patient Bearing of his Wives Infirmities*, to prevent all *Peevishness* and *domestick Quarrels*, that so they may have no need to omit or put by their *Devotions*; which it seems, they would need to do, if their Minds were acted at that Time by such undue *Temper*. *Ye Husbands*, says he, *dwell with your Wives according to Knowledge*; giving Honour to the *Wives*, or treating them with Lenity and Care, because they are the *weaker Vessels*, that your *Prayers be not hindered* by those *Heats and Animosities*, which very likely might arise otherwise, 1 *Pet.* iii. 7. And this was once the Case of St. *Chrysostom* *, who, at the Time of administering the Holy Sacrament, being accidentally much discomposed in Mind, by an unreasonable demand of Justice made by *Eusebius* against *Antonine* in the

* Παρακαλέσας Πανσόφιον ἢ Πισσίδης προαγαγὲν τὰ δῶρα αὐτοῦ συνεζήλθεν τοῖς λοιποῖς επισκόποις Παρητέτο γὰρ ἐπιτόλως ἱερατεύειν. Pallad. Dial. de Vit. Chrys. p. 128.

Chap. 1. *Of the Duty of Communicating.* 105

Synod then assembled, went out, and desired one of the *Bishops* then present, to Officiate, declining the Communion at that instant, because he had *some Trouble upon his Spirit.*

If then we either are *not come to Years to understand it*, or have *no obliging Opportunity for it*, or *some just Hinderance that would excuse our joining in the same*; this Duty of the Holy Sacrament may *lawfully be omitted.* It is alike in it, as it is in *our joining in Prayers, or going to Church*; it admits of the *same Excuses*, and obliges in the *same Case.* But where these rare Contingencies happen not, to exempt from it; it is a strict Duty, that is bound upon us, as we have seen, by a Bond of many Cords, and a peremptory Commandment. So that when we have an Opportunity for it, and no just Hinderance to put us by the same, to Communicate is a strict Precept, and in all Duty we are obliged so to do.

But against this Expressiveness of the Command, and Strictness of the Duty to Communicate; some, perhaps, may urge the Words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi. *Do this, as often as you drink it, in Remembrance of me,* ver. 25. Which Words, *as often* seem to limit the Precept only to the *Remembrance of Christ when we do Communicate*, and to intimate, as if we had no Command to *do this*, and so without Sin might omit it when we please, but only to *remember him when we do.*

Now in *Answer to this*, I observe,

1st, That these Words, *Do this, as often as ye drink it, in Remembrance of me*, if we had no other Proof for it, *would not clearly amount to an obliging Command, and prove it a strict Duty to Communicate.* For that which is plainly and indisputably expressed in them, is not that we *should Communicate*, but that we *should Remember Christ when we*
do

106 *Of the Duty of Communicating. Part II.*
do Communicate ; and they might be used, and have their full Sense, if nothing more than this were intended by them.

But as of themselves they do not amount to such a Precept ; so,

2dly, *Neither do they infer the contrary, and prove against it.* All that which they do express, is only that we must remember Christ when we do communicate ; and this is done, whether communicating itself be a Duty, or whether it be no Duty ; and suiting thus equally with any Side, as it doth not prove it a Duty to receive the Sacrament, so neither doth it prove that there is no Duty in the same. And of this we have still a further Argument, because if these Words, *as often, &c.* infer there is no Duty to communicate, the same may be infer'd of Prayer, since in *another Place* they are spoken of it, as *here* they are of the Holy Sacrament. *When, i. e.* as often as ye pray, says our Saviour, *say, Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.* Luke xi. 2. So that if they prove that we are *not bound to communicate*, but to *remember Christ when we do it* ; they will prove also that we are *not bound to pray*, but only directed to use *this Form* in Prayer *when we pray.*

Thus are these Words, *do this as often as ye drink it, &c.* neither an Argument that to communicate is a Duty, nor an Argument against it. They are indifferent, and equally incline both Ways ; so that when *that* is the *Question*, of themselves they are no sufficient Proof on any Side, but other things must decide it.

And then, 3dly, Altho' *this Place* do not prove it an express Duty to communicate, yet there are other *Places* *enow* that do sufficiently evince it. For in *this very Chapter*, the Words of our Lord at
the

Chap. I. *Of the Duty of Communicating.* 107
the *Eating of the Bread* are absolute, and imply an *express Command* for it: *Do this*, says he, *i. e.* Take and eat Bread as ye now do, *in Remembrance of me*; where not only the Remembrance is joined, but also this particular Way of doing it, *viz.* by eating Bread, wherein he is to be remembered, *1 Cor. xi. 24.* And so it is also in *St. * Luke*, where the Words are *peremptory* for the *Apostles administering*, and so answerably for the *Peoples receiving* it, without any Intimation of the *Eating itself* being *indifferent* and *uncommanded*; which that *Evangelist* would not have expressed so unwarily, if it had been our Saviour's Design to leave them still at Liberty therein. Besides that this Command to us with such further Marks and Circumstances, as shew that our Lord is particularly careful to be *obeyed therein*; and the very Things themselves, which are signified by such sacramental Eating, are all so many Obligations and Enforcements of the same, as I have already shewn.

When therefore in this Place the *Apostle* says of the drinking of the Cup, *Do this, as often as ye drink it*, he doth not intimate that we may do it as seldom as we please, or as if it were under no Law or express Precept. He uses the Words, *as often*, not because it is an *arbitrary Act*, and there is no Duty in it; but because, tho' it be a Duty, yet we have not *always Opportunity* for it, and so cannot *always* be performing it, for, as has been shewn, there is a Command to communicate, and that, as all other *affirmative Laws* binds us to it at all Times when we have a fit *Occasion* offered for the same. When we eat and drink in the Sacrament, we must remember Christ; and when

* Luke xxii. 19.

108 *Of the Duty of Communicating.* Part II.

we have Opportunity to eat and drink there, we are obliged to embrace it; as the *Jews*, we saw, were to eat of the *Passover* which answered to it, who were to be cut off from *Israel*, when at any Time they omitted it. So that to communicate is no *arbitrary Act*, but an *indispensable Duty*, and peremptory Command still.

And since it is thus necessary a Duty in every *grown Christian* to come to the Holy Sacrament; it must needs be a *great and dangerous Sin* in any of us, when we *neglect* and *abstain* from it. We must not think it an *indifferent Thing*, but make *Conscience* of keeping off from the Holy Communion, as we do of keeping off from Prayers, or publick Assemblies, or making Omissions at any other Duties. For it is expressly and straitly forbidden by God, as well as *they*, and we incur his Anger, and, till we repent and do so no more, cannot regain his Favour, when we are guilty of any of them.

A Neglect of the Lord's Table therefore is a Sin, which altho' God may excuse in those good Souls, who, *because of their over-high Veneration for it*, and *Fear of their own Unworthiness to partake therein*, in the *Honesty of their Hearts* think they ought not to come to it: Yet will he not excuse it in them when they are better informed; and much less in others who neglect it, because they are careless of it, or too wicked and impenitent to receive it.

He may excuse it, I say, in those good Souls, who in the *Honesty of their Hearts*, thro' Ignorance or Error, were held back, and because of their over-high Veneration for it, and Fear of their Unworthiness to partake in it, thought they ought not to come to it. An innocent Ignorance, or Mistake of an honest Mind, may plead our Excuse before God

Chap. I. *Of the Duty of Communicating.* 109

in this, as well as it doth in *other Duties*. For in all of them, *Christ has such a Sense of our Infirmities, as that he can have Compassion on the Ignorant, and those that err, or are out of the Way*, Heb. v. 2. So that if after an upright Endeavour to be rightly informed therein; some good Minds shall happen to mistake, their Error will not be imputed to them. It may be thro' the *loose Discourses of some*, or the *general Practice of the World*, who, by being so seldom at it, seem to set lightly by it; they think themselves *not obliged* to it. Or again, thro' the *extream Rigidness of the Discourses of others*, who require such extraordinary Things to a worthy Receiving as very few have attained unto; they think themselves always *unworthy and unprepared* for it, and that they should sin thereby, and eat their *own Damnation*. But if they fall into these Mistakes which make them abstain from this Holy Feast, after an honest Endeavour to be rightly informed about it; their Ignorance may plead their Excuse, and make their Neglect to be connived at. God will not account it to them as a Sin, because they knew it not, but were mistaken. For in this, as well as in other Cases, *to him that knows to do Good, and doth it not, to him it is a Sin*, Jam. iv. 17.

But tho' God may bear with this *Neglect of the Holy Sacrament in good Men*, whilst they are thus innocently misled: Yet will he not excuse it in them, when they are better informed; and much less in others, who neglect it because they are careless of it, or too impenitent to receive it.

He will not excuse it even in them, when they are better informed; or are in Place, and under Opportunity of being so, if it is not their own Fault. Their only Plea for their not doing of this Duty, is, that after the best Search they could make, they did not

110 *Of the Duty of Communicating.* Part II.

not know they were bound to it, or that with Safety they could perform it; and when once their Understanding is enlightened, or might be if they pleased, this Plea is removed, so that afterwards they can find no Relief at all from it. They abstain then, when they know, or may know, unless they have a Mind to be ignorant thereof; that if they are truly penitent, they *might* and *ought* to come; and that Abstinence is *wilful*, and, unless they repent of it and amend it, will end in their Condemnation. For *to him that knoweth to do Good, and doeth it not, to him it is Sin*, Jam v. 17.

And much less *will be excuse it in others, who are careless of it, and too impenitent to receive it*. If they are hindered from the Lord's Table out of *Slothfulness*, or are unworthy of it by Reason of their *Impenitence*; those are not their *Excuse*, but their own *damning Sin*, and they must expect to bear the Punishment of it. To tell God I did not come to the Sacrament because I would not repent, is to tell him I would not come and promise to be good, because I was resolved to continue wicked; and that is a very odd Way of excusing it. *Impenitence* is no Excuse, but a most damning Sin; and therefore if we have no other Cause to give why we did not come, we must needs be liable to Condemnation.

If any of you therefore who shall peruse *this Treatise*, have refused God's Invitation formerly, and have kept back from this Holy Feast; by what I here said, you may see your Offence, and how nearly you are concerned, as you tender your *dear Saviour's Honour*, or the *Safety of your own most precious Souls*, to amend it. You have offended God in *not coming to the Holy Communion*, as you would offend him in *not coming to Church*,
in

Chap 1. Of the Duty of Communicating. 111

in not saying your Prayers, in not giving Thanks for Mercies, in not being humble, honest, and upright in your Dealings, or in omitting any other Duties. So that you must not think all is well with you when you keep away, as if you had done nothing. If the true Cause why you abstain, was your *well meant Mistake* about it, and your not knowing, after all the Search you had Opportunity to make, that every good Man, who repents of all his Sins, is worthy and fit to partake in it: God will wink at your *Ignorance* whilst it lasted; but that will be no Excuse to you, after once you are *better informed*; so that now you will be guilty of a damning Offence, if you still neglect it after you have been sufficiently told thereof. But if you have absented hitherto, out of a *careless Spirit*, which would not attend the Times, or be at the Pains to come to it; or because you have an *impenitent Heart*, which will not promise that Amendment and new Life that is to be undertaken for and engaged to God therein: Then has your absenting been your damning Sin, which has provoked God against you, as all other Acts of Disobedience and Irreligion do. If this is your Case, you must look upon yourselves all this while to have been in a great Fault, which God will not forgive till you seriously repent of it and amend it. For God will forgive you this Sin of neglecting the Holy Sacrament, upon the same Condition, whereon he will forgive you all others, namely, when you *forsake it*, and *turn away* from it, and, instead of absenting, learn to frequent the same. So that if you would keep a *good Conscience towards God*, and *die in Peace*, and have no *unrepented Sins* to answer for at the last Judgment: Every one of you, that has sinfully slighted this Blessed Sacrament hitherto, must come to it hence-

112 *Of the Duty of Communicating.* Part II.

henceforward, and, according to your Saviour Christ's holy Commandment, readily partake in it when you are called thereto.

C H A P. II.

Of the Benefits of Communicating.

THE CONTENTS.

The Sacrament is full of Blessings, which make it not only our Duty, but our Privilege. In the general, it is the most effectual Means in all Religion to recommend our Prayers, and make them powerful; and so is the likeliest Way to attain all Mercies. In particular, 1. It seals to us the Pardon of our Sins for the Peace of our Consciences. 2. It increases and confirms in us all Graces: Those are ordinarily such as we bring along with us. It confers Grace, 1. By the natural Virtue and Tendency of those Duties, which it both exercises, and excites in us. 2. By those inward Assistances which it conveys to us. Since on all these Accounts it is so excellent a Means of Grace and new Life, it is the best Rule any Person can observe, who would go on in the Work of Repentance. All these Motives to communicate, both from Duty and Interest, summ'd up.

HAVING shewn in the former Chapter how much it is every Christian's Duty to frequent the Holy Sacrament, who is of Age to come to it, and how greatly they sin against God who neglect it, both from the obliging Nature of the Thing, and from

Chap. 2. *Of the Benefits of Communicating.* 113
from Christ's *express Commandment.* I proceed
now in this Chapter,

4thly, To shew *what great Inducements we have to it, and how great the Benefits are that come thereby, which should make us press to it of ourselves, were it not commanded.*

The Holy Sacrament has Blessings enow within itself to recommend it to our Choice, if God had not interposed his Authority, and laid that Weight upon it which he has. It is fully stored with Benefits, which render it not only a *strict Duty*, but an *high Privilege* to come thereto, as the *Christian Church* has always thought, whose *great Penalty* lay in a *Separation or Exclusion* from it. It is not only a Matter of Honour to God, but also of the highest Advantage to ourselves; so that in all Reason we ought to seek it, and heartily thank God that we may be admitted to it, out of a Care of our own Happiness and pure Self-Interest.

Of these *Benefits* I have mentioned some already, such as its being a *Vouchsafement of highest Honour* to us, and a *Token of God's greatest Love* for us, and a *certain Pledge of future Glories*; of all which I have discoursed in the last Chapter. But besides them, it is full of many other *singular Blessings* and *present Graces*, which I shall now treat of in *this Chapter*. And those, which I shall take Notice of, are these,

1st, In the general, *It is the most effectual Means in all Religion, to recommend our Prayers, and make them powerful with God; so that it is the likeliest Way to obtain all Mercies.*

2dly, In particular.

1st, *It seals to us the Pardon of our Sins for the Peace of our Consciencies.*

2dly, *It increases, and confirms in us all our Graces.*

114 *Of the Benefits of Communicating. Part II.*

1st, In the general, *It is the most effectual Means in all Religion, to recommend our Prayers, and make them powerful with God; so that it is the likeliest way to obtain all Mercies.* And this it doth, by being a *Commemoration unto him of the Death of Christ*, which is the only Argument that prevails with him to bestow them upon us.

It is the common Way of all Men, when they sue for Kindnesses from others, and think they have not Interest enough themselves, to use such Intercessions, and suggest such Things, as have most Power with them, and are likeliest to incline them to grant their Desires. And as it is thus in our Requests to *Men*, so it is in our Prayers to *God* too. We set those Considerations before his Eyes, and suggest those Things to his Remembrance, which are fittest to move his Pity, and to make him favourable towards us. Thus the holy Men, in the *Old Testament*, in their Prayers, are frequently putting God in mind of his * *Covenant* and *Promise*; and making mention of his Servant † *David*, or † *Abraham*, or *Isaac*, or *Israel*, for whom they knew he had an especial Kindness; and with their *Prayers* they used to join *Sacrifice*, hoping to be the easier heard when they came with their Atonement in their Hands, and that the Life of the Beast being offered up in Commutation, and accepted instead of theirs, God would be the easier appeased, and more inclined to hear their Supplications. Upon which Account, that their Prayers might have a powerful Argument to recommend them going along with them, they were careful to offer them up at the *Hour of Sacrifice*, as appears from the Prayer

* Psal. cxix. 49. 2 Chron. vi. 42.
† Deut. ix. 27, and Exod. xxxii. 13.

† Psal. cxxxii. 1, 10.

Chap. 2. Of the Benefits of Communicating. 115
of *Ezra*, *Ezra* ix. 5. and of *David*, *Psal.* cxli. 2.
at the *Evening Sacrifice*.

Now that which powerfully *intercedes* with God for us, and which was shadowed out by all the *Jewish Sacrifices*, is our *Saviour's Death*. For it was his *Blood* that *merited* so highly at God's Hands as to make him think of shewing Favour, and being kind to us. *It is the Blood of Propitiation*, *Rom.* iii. 25. that *makes Peace between God and Men*, *Col.* i. 23, and *speaks better Things than the Blood of Abel*, calling for Life and Salvation, as that did for Destruction, *Heb.* xii. 24. And it is the *Representation of that Blood* now in heavenly Places, that gives *Christ himself* such absolute Power with God, and makes him sure to prevail whensoever he *intercedes* for us. For by it he entered into the *Holy Place where the Mercy Seat or Propitiatory was*, *Heb.* ix. 3, 5, 12, 24. and where he ever loves to make *Intercession* for us. *Heb.* vii. 25. So that the great Argument which either *Christ our High-Priest* now in *Heaven* offers for us, or which in our Prayers we can plead for ourselves, is his own *Death and Sufferings*.

Now this is set before God in every *Prayer*, and in all *Acts of Religion*, in all which we use *Christ's Name*, and desire to be heard and hope to prevail thro' his *Mediation*. But in the *Holy Sacrament*, it is done more perfectly, and with greater Solemnity, and that too by God's own Appointment. For one chief End of the *Holy Sacrament*, is, to *commemorate the Death of Christ*, i. e. to set it out in solemn Shew, and make mention of it, not only before Men, but also to Almighty God. *This do in Remembrance* or * *Commemoration of me*, says our Saviour, *Luk.* xxii. 19.

* 'Εἰς ἀνάμνησιν.

116 *Of the Benefits of Communicating. Part II.*

And as often as ye do it, says St. Paul, ye shew forth the Lord's Death, i e. both to God and Man, till he come, 1 Cor. xi. 26.

Thus do we no where so lively and advantageously set out this great Argument of being heard, as in the Holy Sacrament: Which we may justly hope will be the more observed, and have the more Effect, because it is not done of our own Heads, but by God's own special Direction and Appointment. And where the Argument is most advantageously set out, we may expect the better Effect, and greater Force from it. And this the *ancient Christians* thought, accounting their Prayers were not like to be so powerful at any Time, as when this Commemoration of Christ's Death, the only Plea for being heard, accompanied them. And therefore at the Holy Sacrament, they *used to pray not only for *themselves*, but also for *all others*, and to recommend any Person or Thing to God which was dear to them, thinking they could never so advantageously sue for them as at that Time.

Thus, in the general, is the Holy Sacrament a most *likely Means to obtain for us all Mercies*, because it is the most *effectual Course in all Religion to recommend our Prayers*, which must procure them for us.

2dly, In particular.

1st, It *seals to us the Pardon of our Sins, for the Peace of our Consciencies.*

2dly, It *increases and confirms in us all our Graces.*

1st, It *seals and confirms to us the Pardon of our Sins, for the Peace of our Consciencies.* In the Holy

* Thus it is in the Form prescribed. Constit. Apostol. 1: 8. c. 12 & 15. b. 484, 485. tom. prim. Concil. ed. Lab. And this Eusebius testifies, de Vita Constant. l. 4. c. 45. See also Missam S. Basilii.

Chap. 2. *Of the Benefits of Communicating.* 117

Sacrament, God calls us to give us a *full Pardon*, by giving us that Blood which was *shed for the Remission of Sins*, Mat. xxvi 28. and which is the *Blood of Expiation*: And having received that at his Hand, if we are true Penitents, we need not doubt but that our Sins are expiated, and that he is reconciled to us. The Sacrament itself, as we have seen, is nothing less than a *solemn Confirmation of the New Covenant*, which promises Remission of Sin to all that truly repent of it. So that when, with penitent Hearts, we come to join in it, we come to stipulate and secure a Pardon of all our Offences, which will give us all the Security thereof that Covenants and Promises can make us. Whensoever we repent indeed, we have God's Promise of Forgiveness, which may comfort our Hearts after any Sin, not only in the *Holy Communion*, but in *every penitential Prayer and Confession*. But in the Blessed Sacrament this Promise is again repeated, and in the most solemn Manner, sealed and confirmed; to shew us that God is still of the same Mind, and to give us a *renewed* and a *sensible* Assurance of it. And when God has thus set his Seal to it, and a penitent Soul has just received his Word and Bond for it; it need not question but that he is reconciled, and, unless it starts back from these penitential Engagements, and falls afresh into new Provocations, that he will always continue so to be.

And thus the Sacrament is 'the most effectual Means to calm the Fears, and quiet the Consciences of all true Penitents. If once they make sure of their own Repentance after any Offences, it doth that in an *ordinary Way*, which an *Angel from Heaven*, and a *special Revelation* would do in *extraordinary*, i. e. *it lets them know that their Sins are pardoned, and that God is their Friend*. For

118 *Of the Benefits of Communicating. Part II.*

therein they receive from him the *Blood of Expiation*, a plain Proof that their Sins are atoned for and forgiven. And therein there is an expresse Agreement, and *solemn Covenant of Peace and Reconciliation* between God and them, which is confirmed by this Feast of his own prescribing: And having this Instrument of his own Appointment, which they may look upon as his Hand and Seal to it, they may chearfully depend upon it, and rest satisfied in their own Mind.

2dly, *It increases and confirms in us all our Graces.*

These Graces are *ordinarily* such as we *bring along with us*, which we either have already *practised*, or are *fully purposed and resolved to practise*. For therein God gives Grace only to the *worthy Communicants*; and those Communicants only are *worthy*, who *repent of all their Sins*, and are wholly determin'd to lead a new Life, in Obedience to all his holy Commandments. It is not a Sacrament intended to give Strength in Grace to those that have nothing of it; for it is our *spiritual Meat and Bread*, as our Saviour calls it, *John vi. 51, 55.* the Use whereof is not to give *Life to a dead Person*, but *Strength and Nourishment to a living one*. It is not designed to turn an impenitent Man into a true Penitent, or to make an ill Man good; for every impenitent ill Man is an unworthy Receiver, and eats his *own Damnation*, which is a *Curse* and not a Blessing; so that he is not the better, but the worse by it. But it is intended to make a *good Man better*, to carry on Repentance in those that have begun it, and to conform and enlarge every Virtue in those who are already possessed thereof. If we come to it with *Faith*, or *Belief of the Holy Scriptures*, particularly of God's Promises to *pardon* our Sins, for Christ's Sake, upon our *true Repentance*, and to
help

Chap. 2. *Of the Benefits of Communicating.* 119

help us to any Graces upon our honest Endeavours, and to make us eternally happy upon our entire Obedience; it strengthens and assures that Faith: If with Love of our dear Lord, who died for us, it increases it: If with Thankfulness for his Kindnesses, particularly for that of giving his own Life for ours, it makes us more sensible thereof: If with hearty Repentance, and full Purpose of amending all our Sins, it makes us unmoveable and settled in the same: If with Peace and Charity towards all our Neighbours, it fills us with a greater Abundance of them. It augments all the Virtues of a good Man, which he brings to it, making him more perfect in them, and more strong in Spirit to persevere and go through with them. But these Effects it has not upon an ill Man; nor produces this Increase of Virtue in those, who bring nothing of it along with them. So that it is no Disparagement to the Virtue of this Blessed Sacrament, if wicked Men find themselves wicked still, and not at all amended by the Receipt thereof, since it was not ordained for their Improvement. It was not meant to give Grace to those who are graceless, or to give Repentance to impenitent Persons; but to carry them through their Repentance who have fully set upon it, and to enable them to lead a new Life, who are resolved already within themselves to do so, and to strengthen them to amend a Miscarriage, who are wholly bent to strive against the same, and to confer Grace on those that have it, and make them more gracious still.

And this the Holy Sacrament is to every worthy Communicant. It conveys Grace into his Soul, and makes him stand more firm, and increase in every Virtue of a Christian. It is an excellent Means to make him a better Man, and to carry him on to improve him in Duty and holy Liv-

ing: So that every one who comes worthily, will gain a great Increase of Grace and Strength, and be much set on spiritual Growth by Receiving.

Now this it doth two Ways:

1st, By the *natural Virtue and Tendency of those Duties which it exercises and excites in us.*

2dly, By those *inward Assurances which it conveys to us.*

1st, A worthy Receiving conveys Grace into our Souls, and confirms and increases us in all Virtues, by the *natural Efficacy and Tendency of those Duties which it exercises and excites in us.* For it *excites*, and *therein we exercise* several Duties, which help on a good Life, and set it forward; and therein *we bind ourselves by solemn Vows and Engagements* to go on in it; both which are most powerful to effect and improve it.

1st, *It excites, and therein we exercise several Duties, which help on a good Life, and set it forward.* All the Duties of worthy Receiving, are Instances of an holy Life, as we have seen, and Parts of a good Man; but several of them are not only *particular Duties in themselves*, but withal most powerful *Helps to the Performance of all others*: So that in performing and improving them, we do not only discharge and grow in *some* Virtues; but make a Way for our easy Discharge and fuller Growth in *all others* also. And these are a *fix'd Remembrance* and *firm Faith* of Christ's wonderful Kindness to us, especially in *dying* for us; an *intense Love*, and *heartly Thankfulness*, and *intire Resignation* of ourselves to his Service, and *true Repentance* and *Abhorrence* of all our Sins; all which, as they are much improved in a *worthy Communion*, so they are most powerful in *helping us to become obedient and good Men.*

1st, I

Chap. 2. *Of the Benefits of Communicating.* 121

1st, I say these Duties are *improved* in by the *Holy Communion*. And this they are by being both *exercised*, and *excited* in us at that Time:

They are *all exercised* in every worthy Communicant at that Time, because in *them*, as we have seen, the *worthiness of Receiving doth consist*. And the more still they are exercised, the more they are improved. For all *Habits* come by Usage, and Custom makes those Things, which at first seem strange, to become, not only *easy*, but *natural* to us. So that in exercising them at the Sacrament, we shall improve and add to them, and go away with a greater Measure of them, than we brought with us when we came.

And this we shall more especially do, because therein they are not only *exercised*, but mightily *excited* in us also. The Holy Sacrament suggests such *powerful Motives* to them, and presents us with such *obliging Reasons* for them, as we can have no where else; so that we cannot take a better Way, than by coming to it, to improve them. For therein we most *solemnly* and *attentively* remember, how, *when our Sins had made us utter Enemies of God, and Heirs of Destruction, Christ laid down his own Life in our stead, and by that Ransom redeemed us from it*. And this is not only the *biggest*, but, in a Manner, the *Sum Total* of all those Inducements, which can ingage us to these Virtues, or possess us with the same. For what can possibly raise so *warm a Love to Christ* in an *ingenuous* Spirit, that is sensible of what is done to it, as to see how infinitely he has loved us, and, when we were his bitter Enemies, gave his own Life in exchange for ours? What can ever ingage us to so great *Thankfulness*, as to think that a Person so far above us, and who stood in no need of us; and who was not sought to by us, but was even then
most

most highly disoblig'd and had received the greatest Provocations from us, should most frankly give his ownself to do us a Kindness? What can so powerfully move us to *resign up ourselves* to any one, as to see, that he has bestowed himself upon us first, to buy us off from our implacable Enemies; and that for no Self-Interests or By-Ends of his own, but purely for our eternal Happiness? What can work in us so *heartly a Repentance*, and provoke us into so *utter an Indignation and Abhorrence* of all our Sins, as to behold in our dear Lord's Agonies what they deserv'd, and how unmeasurably mischievous they prov'd, and what inexpressible Tortures they brought upon him, when he would put himself in our Place, and undertake to answer for us? These Things are most lively set out, and powerfully suggested to us in this Blessed Sacrament, one chief Business whereof, is solemnly to Commemorate and make Mention of them. And they are the most effectual Means that can be afforded us, to raise in us a constant Mindfulness, and a zealous and intense Love of him who died for us, and an hearty Thankfulness for all his Kindnesses, and sincere Repentance and utter Abhorrence of all our Sins, and an intire Resignation of ourselves to his Use and Service. And the Sacrament being thus richly furnished with the most persuasive Motives, and thus vividly suggesting to us the most powerful Reasons for all these Virtues; it must needs be the best Course to improve them, and we cannot lay out our Time upon them better, or to more effect, in any other Way.

And as these Duties are all improved by the Holy Communion; so are they themselves,

2dly, *Most powerful in helping of us to become obedient and good Men.* If we were but perfect in these Virtues, and they had once got the Ascendant over

Chap. 2. *Of the Benefits of Communicating.* 123

over us, and ruled in our Hearts ; they would have an universal Influence on all others, and govern our whole Lives. For if, when we are tempted to any Sin, our *Minds*, being familiarized to it, would at that Instant readily *suggest* to us that *Christ* died for it, and that it put him to all the Pain and Anguish he suffered ; we should not *endure to come near it*. If we have any *true Love* and *Zeal* for him, we shall shew no manner of *Favour* or *Compliance with it*. If we are really *Thankful* for what he has done, for *his Sake we shall withstand it*. If we are *resign'd* up to his Use, we shall have *nothing to do with it*, because *he* is utterly *against it*. And if we *abhor* it, for the Pains it put him to when he answer'd for it, and which it will at last put us to also if we continue in it, we shall *disdainfully reject* and *turn away from it*. If we *Believe* and Remember always, as we have need, that *Christ* died for our Sins, and procured us Pardon for them upon our true Repentance, and Grace to get quit of them upon our best Endeavours ; that *Faith* will make us *Obedient*, and carry us on to amend them. If we truly *love* *Christ*, that Love will make us do *something for him*, and cast to please and obey him, *John* xiv. 15. If we are *Thankful* for what is done, we shall never despise him by any Sin, which, for all his *Benefits*, were to return the greatest *Injuries* again. If we are *resign'd* up to his Use, we shall *faithfully serve* him. If we are *heartily Penitent*, and *abhor* our Sins we shall forsake them. If we have this lively Faith and Remembrance of *Christ's* dying for us, and this intense Love, and hearty Thankfulness, and entire Resignation of ourselves to his Service, and sincere Repentance, and utter Abhorrence of all our Sins : If we have *these Virtues*, I say, and in these *prevailing Measures*, they will carry us on to an Holy Life,

124 *Of the Benefits of Communicating. Part II.*

Life, and make us Obedient to all God's Holy Commandments. And therefore since this Holy Sacrament, when it is worthily receiv'd, doth so much improve these Virtues in us; it must needs help us on, and improve us in all others, and in the whole Course of a good Life too.

Thus doth a worthy Receiving, by its own *natural Tendency*, confirm and increase us in all good Living, by our *exercising*, and by its *exciting* in us such Duties, as help it on, and set it forward: And so doth it,

2dly, By our *binding ourselves thereat, in solemn Vows and Engagements to go on in it.*

One chief End of our Meeting at this Holy Feast, and a *prime Part* of our Worthiness in partaking thereof, is to *confirm the New Covenant*, as we have seen, and to make God our faithful Promises, that from that Day we will amend all our Sins, that so we may attain that Pardon and Happiness, which he comes to offer and assure to us upon our Amendment and true Repentance. And these *solemn Vows and Promises*, are a fast Hank upon us, to make us leave our Sins, and do all that he requires of us. For every Man *ought*, and thinks himself *concerned*, to be as good as his Word, and to perform what he has promised; especially, when it is to one, who is too *Wise* to be *deluded*, too *Just* and *Powerful* to suffer any Abuses of him to pass *unrevenged*, which all Men that understand any thing, believe of *Almighty God*. When we Promise and Vow to him, we know that he *cannot be deceived*, and that he *will not be mocked*; so that we must needs see it stands us instead, and is our highest Concern, to perform with him. And therefore, since in the Sacrament we do in the most solemn Manner vow to amend our Ways, and promise an Holy Life to Almighty God; in re-
gard

Chap. 2. *Of the Benefits of Communicating.* 125

gard none that are *Honest will*, and none that are *Wise and Serious* dare be unmindful of such sacred and solemn Compacts, *it* must needs be an excellent Way to bind it fast upon our Souls, and fix it in our Minds, and so help very much to establish and imprint it in us.

And thus we see, how a worthy Receiving conveys Grace, and confirms and increases in us all Virtues, by the *natural Tendency* of those Duties, which it *exercises*, and *excites* in us. For it *powerfully excites*, and therein *we exercise several Duties*, which *help on a good Mind*, and *set it forward*, and *bind ourselves by solemn Votos and Engagements to go on in it*, both which are most powerful to improve any Effect.

And as it thus confirms and increases in us all Graces, by the *natural Virtue and Tendency* of those Duties, which it *excites* in us : So does it,

2dly, By *those inward Assurances*, which it *ministers and conveys to us*.

This Sacrament doth not only confer Grace by its *natural Tendency*, as other Means ; but moreover, by virtue of *God's Promise and especial Bounty* to the worthy Receivers of it, as it is an Instrument in his Hands. He tells us, that he will do great Things at the Presence thereof, and be liberal in spiritual Blessings to all those who duly partake in it : So that besides what they do from the Virtues themselves, which are exercised thereat, they may promise themselves much spiritual Grace and Strength from his free Gift, and immediate Concurrence with it. For in the Holy Sacrament, he offers them all that outward Grace, and spiritual Strength, which Christ's Death procured ; and therefore, if they come to it worthily, so as their own Unworthiness may be no Bar against the same ; that Offer will be sure to take Effect, and they

126 *Of the Benefits of Communicating. Part II.*

they shall undoubtedly receive it. And this is plainly intimated to us, when our *Blessed Saviour* tells us of his *Flesh*, that it is *Bread*, the true Use and End whereof, is for * *support and nourishment*, John vi. 51. And when St. *Paul* declares, that the *Cup of Blessing which we Bless, is the Communion*, or † *Communicating to us the Blood of Christ*, i. e. those Benefits which his Blood procured for us: And, that the *Bread which we break is the Communion*, or *Communicating to us the Body of Christ*, i. e. those Graces which the Offering of his Body obtain'd for us, amongst ‡ which are these *spiritual Assistances*, 1 Cor. x. 16. And when our *Lord* himself tells us, that the *Bread* he gives us, is his *Body*, and that the *Cup* he reaches out to us, is his *Blood*, Mat. xxvi. 26, 28. By which, though he meant not that they are his Body and Blood in their *Natures*, yet the least he can mean is, that they are so in their *Effects*; so that when we receive them, we receive all the Blessings of his *Blood-shedding*, and all that Grace which his Death has purchased for all Men.

And thus the *Church* of Christ has still thought concerning it. ¶ *In the Sacrament*, says St. *Ambrose*, *Thou receivest the Similitude of the Body of Christ*, i. e. the Bread and Wine which represent it; but, together with that, all the Grace and Virtue which the true and real Body obtained. § *This Sacramental Food*, says St. *Cyprian*, or whosoever was the Author of that Tract, is in outward Ap-

* Psal. civ. 15.

† Κοινωνία.

‡ Gal. iii. 13, 14.

¶ Ideo in similitudinem quidem accipis Sacramentum, sed veræ Naturæ gratiam, virtutem que consequeris. *Ambros. de Sacram. l. 6. c. 1.*

§ Sed immortalitatis alimonia datur, à communibus cibis differens, Corporalis substantiæ retinens speciem, sed virtutis Divinæ invisibili efficientia probans adesse præsentiam Cyp. de Cæna. Dom. sub. init.

Chap. 2. Of the Benefits of Communicating. 127

pearance a bodily Substance; but by invisible Efficiency, it works all the Effects of a Divine Power and Presence.

* They that partake of the Eucharist by Faith, says St. Clement of Alexandria, are sanctified thereby both in Body and Soul. And, † We eat the Bread, says Origen, which by Prayer is made the Body of Christ, Holy in itself, and making those Holy who feed on it with Resolution of new Life and holy Purpose.

And this is another Way, whereby the worthy Receiving the Holy Sacrament confirms and augments in us all spiritual Graces; viz. As it is an Instrument in God's Hands, who, at the Presence, and in the Participation thereof, ministers and conveys them to us.

And by this it appears, that the Holy Sacrament confirms and increases us in all Graces, both by the natural Virtue and Tendency of these Duties, which it excites and improves in us; and also by those inward Assurances and spiritual Aids, which it ministers and conveys to us.

And thus we see how the Holy Sacrament is full of Grace and a quickning Spirit, and helps mightily to set us on in an Holy Life, and in the Work of Reformation and Amendment. And therefore then, any Persons that turn Penitents, and resolve to lead new Lives; one of the best Rules that can be given them, is to frequent it. For it will carry them forward in their Work, and, what by the natural Tendency of the Duties themselves which are exercised in it, what by the Assurances which are conveyed by it, increase their

* Εὐχαριστία, κέκληται, ἥς οἱ καὶ πῶς μεταλαμβάνοντες, ἀγιαζόντα καὶ σῶμα καὶ ψυχὴν. Clem. Alex. Pedag. l. 2. c. 2. p. 151. Ed. Par.

† Ἄρτους ἐδίδουσι σῶμα θεοῦ διὰ τῆς εὐχαρίαι, ἀγίων καὶ ἀγιαζόντων τοὺς μετ' ὕμιν προσέσεως αὐτοῦ χάριτας. Orig. Cont. Cels. l. 8. p. 399. Ed. Cant.

128 *Of the Benefits of Communicating.* Part II.

Strength, and give them Power to go through therewith. It will perfect them in Obedience, by *exercising* and *exciting*, and by both *improving* in them that *Faith*, *Love*, *Thankfulness*, *Resignation*, and *Repentance*, which are the most genuine *Principle*, and effectual Cause thereof. It will bind it upon their Souls, and ingage them to it, by their *repeating*, every Time they come therein, their *solemn Vows* and *sacred Promises* to go on in it. And it will inable them to succeed in the same, by bringing down from God those *inward Helps* and *spiritual Assistances*, which shall bear them thro' it. So that if any Man begins to look towards God, and longs to go forward with the Work of Reformation and Amendment: He ought in all Reason to seek out, and press in to be admitted to the Holy Sacrament. For it is one of the best Rules that can be prescribed in his Case, and serves his End above any Thing: And therefore *he* must not in any wise shun it, but lay out for it above all Men living. A Man who will not repent, indeed, whilst he continues in that Mind, must not come to it; for he would not receive Good, but Hurt thereby. But if he resolves to amend his Ways, and seeks out for Help, and would make use of any Means which would do him most Service in effecting the same; let him be constant at the Lord's Table, and frequently Communicate. It will quicken him when once he is in the Way to become Good, and amend his Pace where he has need to be set forward, and strengthen him in those Parts where he is weak and most liable to be assaulted, as St. *Ignatius* told the *Ephesians*, when he advised them to be frequent in this Holy Feast; saying, * *Shew haste to assem-*

* Σπεύδ' ἄγετε πυκνότερον συνέρχεσθαι εἰς εὐχαριστίαν θεῶν καὶ εἰς δόξαν· ὅτι ἂν γὰρ πυκνῶς ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ γίνεσθε, καθαιρούμενοι οἱ δυνάμεις τοῦ σατανᾶ.

Chap. 2. *Of the Benefits of Communicating.* 129

ble often in the Eucharist; for the oftener you meet thereat, the more your standing is secured, and the Power of Satan is destroyed. It will fortify him in all Trials, wherein he is like to be most endanger'd; enlivening in him that *holy Zeal*, and *steady Purpose*, and other *Graces*, which must bear him through the same: For which Cause, it was used *anciently*, and upon a like Occasion would be so still, as a *Preparation* for the *greatest Trials*, and to fit Men to die *Martyrs* for the Cause of Christ. Those, * says St. Cyprian, and the other African Bishops, whom we would preserve safe and invulnerable against the fiercest Darts of the Adversaries, we arm first with the Lord's Supper, wherewith they may be guarded as with a Shield, and wherein they may be secured as in an impregnable Fortress. It is an excellent Means of confirming every Grace, and affording spiritual Help and Strength to all that want it: And that is Inducement enough, were there no Command of Almighty God for it, for every Man, who desires to be intirely good and strong in Spirit, to resort thereto.

And thus at last it appears, what those Blessings are, which come by the Holy Sacrament, and which are sufficient to ingage all good Souls to press to it themselves, tho' it had no where been commanded.

In reality, all Christians who are of Age for it, and have an Opportunity, and are call'd to join in it, and can shew no lawful Lett or Impediment of *providential Hindrances*, *Sickness*, or the like, which

* Quos excitamus & hortamur ad prælium, non inermes & nudos relinquamus, sed protectione Sanguinis & Corporis Christi muniamus: Et cum ad hoc hat Eucharistia, ut possit accipientibus esse tutela, quos tutos esse contra adversarium volumus, munimento Dominicæ Saturitatis armemus. Cyp. & alii Episc. in Epist. Synod. Eccles. Afric. ad Eccles. Roman. Ep. 57. Ed. Oxon. 54. Pamcl.

130 *Of the Benefits of Communicating. Part II.*

would excuse their Absence from *Prayers*, or other *Ordinances* of Jesus Christ ; are bound in *Duty* to repair to the Holy Sacrament. Our Blessed Lord, as I have shew'd in the foregoing *Chapter*, has given his *express Commands therein*. And the Nature of those Things which are meant thereby, and which in that religious Feast, we are call'd to employ our Minds upon, do most straitly oblige his true and faithful Followers to the same. And after once they have been sufficiently instructed, how much it is their Duty to resort to it, and how true Repentance doth duly qualify them for this Holy Table, and make them worthy of it ; if still thro' *Carlessness*, or *Impenitence*, they shall stay away from it, they *sin against God thereby*, and are guilty of a *damning Neglect*, which will not be forgiven them till they *repent* of it, and *amend* it. But if there were no *Guilt* in the *Neglect*, and to Communicate had not been thus required of them ; yet would the *Blessings of the Thing itself* have engaged all *penitent good Men*, to *press in to be admitted thereto* : For it is the *most effectual Course in all Religion to prevail with God*, and to *be heard in all their Prayers* ; it *seals to them Pardon of their Sins*, for the *Peace of their Consciences* ; and *confirms and augments in them all their Graces* ; bringing down such Help, as may make them stand in all Trials, and carrying them on, beyond any other Means that can be prescribed for that Purpose, in the Course of Repentance and new Obedience. Which Benefits, to all that love the Ease of their own Minds, and have any Care of their own immortal Souls, are Invitation more than enough, to engage their Presence at this Ordinance : And as for those who have no Care what becomes thereof, they are neither to be won by *them*, nor by any *others*.

Chap. 2. *Of the Benefits of Communicating.* 131

And thus, having shewn what is the Meaning of eating Bread and drinking Wine in the Blessed Sacrament, and wherein the Worthiness of doing it lies, and how much it is every good Christian's Duty to frequent it, and what great Benefits there are that come by it, which might make us press to it of ourselves, had it not been commanded by our Blessed Lord: I shall proceed now,

5thly, In the last Place, to consider those Excuses, and to take those Pleas, which are most usually made by any Persons against coming to the same; of which in the next Part.

P A R T III.

C H A P. I:

Two Hindrances from Communicating.

THE CONTENTS.

One most general Hindrance, that keep Men from the Sacrament, is a Fear of their being unworthy and unfit to receive it. This is answer'd by shewing,

1. The Partiality of it, because they are not so scrupulous about neglecting, as about unworthy receiving the Holy Communion, though there be the same Cause to scruple both.
2. That every true Penitent is worthy of it: Yea, he that has only fully purposed Amendment, though he has not had Time to perform it.
3. Impenitence, which unfits them for it, is no Excuse for the Neglect thereof.
4. Impenitent Men, who alone are unfit, if they understand the Danger of their State, cannot continue therein, but will amend it, and then they may worthily Communicate.

2. A second Hindrance is, because an unworthy Receiver eats his own Damnation, 1 Cor. xi. 29. which makes not Receiving seem the safer Side. By Damnation is meant,

1. A damning Sin, which is deadly till we repent of it; and such are both unworthy Eating, and sinful Abstaining, so that they are equal as to that Point.
2. Temporal Penalties, which were inflicted for their Intemperance

perance at this Feast, and other Disorders peculiar to those Times, and are not now usual in ours, so that the Fear of them need not discourage us from it.

SINCE a worthy Receiving of the Holy Sacrament is a *Duty* which our Blessed Lord has so *straitly injoin'd*, and from which we may all hope to reap so great *Benefits*, as has been shew'd; it may well be expected, that all who would do Service, either to their *Saviour*, or to *themselves*, should readily join therein, whensoever an Opportunity is offer'd for the same. And so, it is like, all who pretend to serious Religion would, were it not that they have some Exceptions in their own Minds against it, which till they are removed, make all Discourses of the *Duty* or *Usefulness* of this Holy Feast to fall without Effect, and persuade them, that however *necessary* or *adviseable* it may be to *others*, yet it is not so to *them*, who have so *just* an Hindrance to excuse or discourage them from being present at it.

To give this Duty as fast hold as I can, therefore, on the *Consciences* of all those who shall peruse this *Treatise*, having already set forth the *indispensable Obligations* which we have to it, I shall now proceed to remove those *Hindrances*, and to take off those *Pleas*, which are offer'd to excuse, and keep Men back from complying with it. And as for *them*, the most weighty and considerable, which I have been able to learn, or have had Opportunity to meet withal, are such as follow:

Men are most ordinarily hindred from the Blessed Sacrament, notwithstanding it is so much both their *Duty* and their *Interest* to frequent it, by one or other of these Things.

1st, Because they think themselves unworthy of it, and unfit to receive it.

2dly, Because of the great Danger of unworthy Communicating, Damnation being said to be eaten therein, which seems to make abstaining the safer Side.

3dly, Because therein they are to promise concerning every Sin which they find themselves guilty of, that they will no more commit it; and this Promise some dare not make, because they fear they shall not keep it.

4thly, Because of the great Difficulty which they apprehend to be in worthy receiving, and their want of Time and Leisure to prepare for it.

5thly, Because they see others, or have found themselves, to be no whit bettered or improved thereby; so that it is not worth their while to fit themselves for it.

6thly, Because they have not that Charity for all the World, which is to be professed in it.

7thly, Because, though they be with others, yet others are not in Charity with them; and therefore they fear they want that Peace which is required thereto.

8thly, Because it is a Presumption in us to approach it, and therefore say some, an humble Man should abstain from it.

9thly, Because many good People are seldom or never seen at it, and therefore they may be good too, and have good Company, if they keep away from it.

10thly, Because others who are unworthy of it, are admitted to join in it.

11thly, And lastly, Because, though they ought, and would come to the Holy Sacrament, yet they would not kneel, which is the Posture appointed by the Church, wherein they are to receive it.

These are such Things as do most ordinarily hinder good People from partaking in this Holy Ordinance; but indeed they ought in no Case to be their Hindrance from doing their Saviour, and their own Souls this Service, as will more fully appear from treating all the Particulars.

1st, *One Thing*, that is the most general Hindrance of all, and keeps back very many from the Blessed Sacrament, who otherwise are desirous enough to partake in the same, is their *thinking themselves unworthy of it, and unfit to receive it.*

Now to silence this Plea, and to satisfy the Minds of those who make it, so as that there may be no more Cause for it; I shall observe these *four Things*:

1st, *They shew great Partiality in this Plea*, because they are not so scrupulous about neglecting the Communion, as about the unworthy Receiving of it, though there be the same Cause to scruple both. They shew all their Niceness about doing what God bids them, but none about letting of it alone. They are afraid of offending in coming to the Holy Sacrament, but have no Fear of giving Offence in staying away from it: As if God had only forbid them to receive unworthily, but had no where forbid them to absent themselves, and not receive at all.

But this, as I have already shewn, is a very wrong Judgment, for Almighty God doth as straitly *injoin a worthy*, as he forbids an *unworthy* Communicating. He has given us his Command for it, and that too with such Notes and Circumstances abovementioned, as shew that he lays a particular Weight upon it, and highly expects to be obeyed therein. So that if we would not bring Guilt upon ourselves by sinning against him, we must make Conscience of *not coming* to the Sacrament, as well as of *irreverent Treating and Prophanation* of it when we come.

This then is very *partial and unfair* Dealing, to be scrupulous only about the *Manner of performing* this Duty, but to have no Scruple at all about the *Omission* of it: As if, when God commands us to *do a thing*, *not to do it at all*, were not as much a

Fault as *to do it wrong*; and it were not equally transgressed when we *neglect*, as when we *prophane* it. And if all those who are full of Fear about *unworthy Receiving*, would be but as fearful of *sinful Abstaining*; this equal Fear on both Sides would make them diligent in seeking Satisfaction, and in carrying on the Work of Preparation: So that they might neither offend by *coming*, nor by *staying away*, but worthily approach to the Lord's Table, and be heartily welcome to it when they do.

2. *Every Penitent, who is resolved to leave his Sins, and has begun the Change, is really worthy; so that the Thoughts of Unworthiness ought not to put him by it.*

He is a *true Penitent*, who considers of all God's Laws, and is resolved, by God's Grace, to keep them; and of all his own Sins, and is resolved, by God's Grace, to leave them: And so changing his former evil Course and Practice, becomes a new Man. And whosoever does this, he is a fit Person, and worthy to come to the Holy Communion. For all the Particulars of worthy Receiving, are Instances of Duty, as has been observ'd, and necessary Parts of a good Man; so that every Man, who turns penitent, and becomes truly and acceptably good, will be endowed with all of them. Nay, if any Man were to learn them, there would be Difficulty in any thing else, if *Repentance* would go down with him: So that any Person who sincerely repents, may do every thing else which God requires him to shew forth in the same. The great Things expected of us at this Feast, as has been said, are these; namely: That we give Thanks for Christ's Death, and resign ourselves up to his Service, and repent of all our Sins, and be in Love and Charity with all Persons, and have Faith in Christ and his Merits: And all these are easy, and create no great Difficulty

Difficulty to a penitent Person. For is it not an easy Thing for him to *thank Christ*, who verily believes that he *died* for him? And cannot he readily *resign* himself up to his Use, who has already given himself up to an *Holy Life*, which is all the Use he would make of him? And is not he in *Peace* and *Charity* with all Men, who has *repented* of all his Sins, and then surely of *Malice* and *Unpeaceableness* among them? And doth not he believe those Things which his Saviour Christ has declared to him, viz. That he died for us to purchase Terms of Grace; and that now, for his Sake, God will forgive us any Sins, when we truly repent of them; and help us by his Spirit to any Graces, when we carefully endeavour after them; and give us eternal Life in Heaven, when we intirely obey him; but that otherwise, than upon these Terms, he will not give us any of them; which are those Declarations that he makes to us in the Holy Scriptures, and wherein he expects to be trusted and believed by us: Doth not every penitent Man, I say, believe all this, who is at the Pains to live according to it, and repents that he may be pardoned, and endeavours that he may be assisted; and obeys that he may be graciously rewarded for it? All this Faith, which is required to the Communion, is necessary to Repentance, and is shewn therein; for we should not leave Intemperance, Fraud, Malice, or any other Sin that is strongly recommended to us, unless we believed God had forbid it, and would now for Christ's Sake freely forgive, and eternally reward those who repent of it. And all this Thankfulness, and Resignation, and Peace, and Charity towards all Men, which are likewise required to the same, are not only easy after it, but are Parts of it. For if we are unthankful for Christ's Benefits, or unresigned to his Use, or out of Charity with any Persons, we have

have not yet *repented* of *all* our Sins, but, as to *these* at least, are still *impenitent*. So that when once Repentance of all our Sins is, there is, or may be in us every thing else, which God requires at this Feast to fit us worthily to partake thereof.

Thus is every true *Penitent* fit to eat at the Table of his Lord, and to be a worthy Communicant. And therefore when any Persons do from their Hearts repent them of all their Sins, and are fully purposed to lead new Lives thenceforwards; let them not be afraid to come to the Holy Sacrament, for they are truly such as God accounts worthy of it. If they have not shaken Hands with their Sins, indeed, but live still in them, and are ready to repeat them on the next Occasion, they will come unworthily whilst they are in that State, and will not be made the better, but the worse for it. But if they have broke loose from them, and have been acted by God's Fear, and led new Lives for some Time; and are still putting out more Endeavours, and praying for more Grace to do this yet more perfectly: They are the Persons whom God calls to this Feast, and may justly expect to receive an hearty Welcome at it. Nay, if their Return to God has been so late, as that they have not yet had Time sufficient for *well-doing*, but only for *holy purposing* that they will do well as often as they shall have Occasion, yet, if out of a *serious Conviction* of the *Detestableness* of every *sinful Course*, they are *fully resolved* to leave it; and after a *due Consideration* of every *Part* of their *Duty*, they are *fully*, and *without all Reserve* resolved to *practise* it; I doubt not, but that this *Will* and *Purpose*, before the Time and Opportunities for *Practice* come, will render them welcome Guests, and worthy to Communicate. For whatever Rigors afterwards came in, not from the
Nature

*Nature of the Sacrament itself, or the Necessity of the Thing, but only through the discretionary Power of the Church, and the Rules of Discipline, thus I think it is plain it did in the Apostles Times. For the three thousand Souls, whom St. Peter converted at one Sermon, did not stay till they had Opportunities of performing, but were admitted that very Day, upon their inward Change and Resolution, to the Apostles Fellowship, and therein to the Holy Sacrament, which was a Part of it. They that gladly received his Word, says St. Luke, were baptized; and the same Day there were added unto them about three thousand Souls. And all these continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers, Act. ii. 41, 42. And when the Apostles went about to convert the World, they admitted Men presently to Baptism and the Christian Worship, upon their Profession of Faith in Christ and being penitent, without staying to see them practise what they had promised, as appears in the Converts now mentioned, and in the Story of the * Eunuch: And when they were admitted to the Christian Worship, they were admitted to the Communion too, because in the Apostles Days, as I have † shewn, that was an ordinary Part thereof, and always went along with it.*

If any Persons then have already left their Sins, and do not willingly allow themselves in any of them; if they have been striving long against them, and are daily gaining ground, and making a more perfect Conquest thereof: Nay, if they, who, since their Return to God, have not had Time to perform all this, are yet fully and deliberately purposed, and without all Reserve, resolved within

* Acts viii. 36, 37, 38.

† Part I. Chap. 3.
themselves

themselves so to do : They are the Persons, whom God invites to this Feast ; they are *worthy* to come to it, and will be sure to meet with a kind and hearty Entertainment there. *God* and *they* are fully agreed in their own Thoughts, and the Terms of Reconciliation betwixt them are consented to on *both* Sides. For he proclaims *Mercy* upon *Repentance*, and they thankfully accept it ; he offers to return into Favour with every Sinner that will amend his Faults, and they are glad of the joyful News, and fully resolve an End to theirs. And since they are both agreed upon the Thing, what should hinder them from coming to the Holy Sacrament, which he has appointed for this very End, that therein they may give their express Consent to this Agreement, and mutually make this Declaration.

Thus is every Man, who has left his Sins, and begun to lead a new Life, or, who is fully purposed in his own Mind, and absolutely intends so to do ; a welcome Guest at this Feast, and worthy to communicate : So that no Apprehensions of Unworthiness ought to put him by it.

And as for those who neither have left all their Sins, nor are determined in their own Hearts, and wholly bent to leave them ; they are plainly *impenitent*, and thereupon most unworthy to Communicate. But then,

3dly, *That Intemperance which unfits them for the Holy Sacrament, is no Excuse at all for the Neglect of it.*

Impenitence will excuse a Man in no Act, but is itself a very great Aggravation of the same. It is no *extenuating Plea*, but a *damning Fault* ; so that no Man must ever hope to escape the easier after he has omitted any Duty, by giving it as the Reason for it. When God calls us to the Sacrament,

to promise him that we will amend our Faults, and lead new Lives thenceforward; if we return Answer, that we *come not* because we are *impenitent*, that is as much as to say, we *come not* as he bids, because we *will not*, which is certainly the worst Plea that ever was made for any Offence, and can never render his Case better, but much the worse that uses it.

As for those then, who keep away because they are *impenitent*; they are left without all Plea, and have no Excuse at all to make, for their not coming to the Holy Sacrament. The only Thing that can stand them in stead, either as to it, or as to any thing else, is their Repentance and Amendment; which they will not delay, if they consider in how great Need they stand thereof. For,

4thly, *Impenitent Men, who are unworthy of the Holy Sacrament, if they understand the Danger and Misery of their State, can by no Means continue therein, but must forthwith repent and amend, and then this Hindrance is gone, and they may worthily approach to it.*

If they understand the Danger and Misery of their State, I say, they cannot continue in it. For so long as they remain impenitent in *many*, or in any *one* known Sin, they are not only unfit to receive the Sacrament, as I have shewn, but also to say *their Prayers*, to give *Thanks*, to make *Vows*, or to have any thing to do with God in any other Part of religious *Worship* and *Service*. They are shut out from all Benefits of Religion, they have no Salvation by *Christ*, nor any Hopes of Heaven. If they happen to die suddenly whilst they are in this State, or are call'd away before the Work of Reformation is finish'd (as it is greatly to be fear'd they may, if they put it off for the *present*, and

as in all likelihood they will, if they delay it till their *Death-bed*, at which Time it is a very rare Thing for any Man to go through therewith) they will go to *Hell*, there to be tormented with the insupportable Anguish of a *wounded Conscience*, and *unsatisfied Appetites*, and a *raging Fire*, and with all the *Terrors* and *Disconsolation of Darknes*, and the utmost Malice of *Devils* and *dammned Spirits*, and the highest *Shame* and *Confusion of Face*: All which they must undergo without any *Eye to pity*, or *Friend to comfort them*, or any one to *refresh them*, or any *Abatement*, or *Intermission* for evermore. And this is a State of such Horror and Astonishment, as no Man, who looks upon it, can abide in: It is a Condition of such extreme Danger, as no one in his Wits can willingly endure. So that if any of those who are *impenitent*, will but be at the Pains to lay to Heart, and consider of the Sadness of their State; they can by no Means persist therein, but will run with haste to repent, and instantly set about the Amendment of their Ways, that so they may be delivered from it.

And as soon as ever they do so, this Hindrance is gone, and they are *worthy* to come to the Holy Communion. For that which *fits* us for it, is not an *high Pitch* and *Perfection in saving Virtues*, or *extatick Degrees* and *Transports in Devotion*, as I have (*Part I. Chap. 4.*) *shewn*; but such *true Repentance* and *Change of Life*, either in *Deed*, or at least in *Will* and *Purpose*, as make us *acceptable* and *honest Christians*. So that whatever we were before, whilst we continued impenitently wicked, we are meet Partakers of this Holy Feast, now we have repented of all our wicked Ways, and are fully resolved to become obedient, and not scrupulously draw back, but may come to it gladly when we are call'd, and expect a friendly Wel-

come

come from our Blessed Lord and Saviour, when we meet him there.

And thus I have consider'd this great, and most common Plea, whereby so many are kept back from the Holy Sacrament, viz. *their thinking themselves unworthy of it, and unfit to receive it*; and shew plainly, that no ill Man can be excused, and that no good Man ought to be hindered thereby. And the Result of it is this: If any Person tells me he cannot come to this Holy Feast, because he is *unworthy to join therein*: I must tell him again, That he must not only be afraid of *unworthy Coming to it, but also of unworthy Abstaining from it*; and that unless he is impenitent, and still unresolv'd to leave all his Sins, he is worthy to come to it; and that if such Impenitence is the Cause of his not coming, it is no Excuse for the same; and that he must consider of the Danger and Misery of that State, and so repent and get out of it; and when once that is done, he will be worthy, since every true Penitent is welcome thereto. If he is truly penitent, he is worthy; and if he has not repented yet, he must instantly repent, that he may be worthy: And then let him not hold off from this heavenly Banquet, but cheerfully approach to it as often as he is invited.

2dly, Others, who cannot positively say they are unworthy of it, are yet kept back from the Holy Sacrament, because, of the great Danger of *unworthy Communicating, Damnation being said to be eaten therein, which seems to make abstaining from it the safer Side.* He that eats and drinks unworthily, says St. Paul, eats and drinks Damnation to himself, 1 Cor. xi. 29. Now in answer to this, I shall observe, 1st, That by eating his own Damnation, the Apostle means, not that he shall inevitably be damn'd for it; but only that he commits a damning Sin, which will prove deadly to him unless he repent thereof: And this

is

is true, not only of *unworthy Eating*, but also of *sinful Abstaining*, so that they are equal as to that Point.

He means not, I say, that he shall inevitably be damn'd for it. And this is plain, because for Christ's Sake, God has promised to forgive us all our Sins upon our true Repentance, and therefore this of *unworthy Receiving* among the rest. Nay, as for this their *unworthy Eating*, the Apostle tells the *Corinthians* in that very Place, that when they are judged, or condemn'd for it, that Judgment, if it brings them to Repentance, is not to consign them to, but to deliver them from eternal Torments. When we are judged, says he, or condemned for this Offence, i. e. to be sick and weak, which God inflicted on them because of it, we are not in Anger punished, but in Mercy chastened of the Lord, or trained up to Repentance by present Sufferings, that we should not, at the last Day, be condemned with the World to eternal Misery, 1 Cor. xi. 30, 31.

But only that he commits a *damning Sin, which will prove deadly to him, unless he repent of it. He that eats this Bread, and drinks this Cup unworthily, says he, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, i. e. unless his Repentance, that Gospel Remedy for all Sin, prevents it, he shall be liable to be punished, not only for an Abuse in Meat and Drink, as if it were only common Food; but for violating and prophaning the Body and Blood of Christ, which he should have discerned therein. 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29.

And this is true, not only of *unworthy Eating*, but also of *sinful Abstaining* from the Holy Sacrament. For that our Lord has expressly forbidden,

* So St. Chrysost. understands it. Vid. Chryf. in v. 32, 34.

as I have shewn, and that too in such Sort as shews he lays a great Weight upon it; so that we most highly offend him therein, and cannot expect to regain his Favour till we repent and amend the same; and therefore they are *both equal as to that Point*. We shall be condemned, without Amendment, for unworthy Eating, and so we shall too for sinful Abstaining. And therefore if the Fear of Damnation be of Force with us, it must keep us off from both them, and neither suffer us to neglect this Feast, nor to profane it, but ingage us to come to it *worthily, i. e.* with penitent Hearts, whensoever we are called thereto.

2dly, By *Damnation*, the Apostle means *temporal Death and Punishments, which God did then inflict on unworthy Communicants*. And this was not for all *Unworthiness*, but particularly for their *Intemperance at this Feast, and other Disorders which were peculiar to those Times, and are not usual now in ours*: So that the Fear of them need not discourage us from it.

By *Damnation*, I say, he means *temporal Death and Punishments, which God did then inflict on unworthy Communicants*. This he plainly intimates, when he sets down *Weakness, and Sickness, and Death, as the Penalties* whereunto they were condemned for their unworthy Usage. *He that eats and drinks unworthily, says he, eats and drinks Damnation to himself*, whereof you have many sad Examples now in *Corinth*, for this very Cause of unworthy Eating, many now are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep, 1 Cor. xi. 29, 30.

And this God inflicted, *not for all Unworthiness, but particularly for some high and heinous Disorders, such as were not only their open Schisms, but their gross Intemperance that had crept in by Occasion*

of their *Love-Feasts*, which was a Prophanation peculiar to *those* Times, and is not now usual, or any where to be seen in *ours*.

They came to the Holy Sacrament in *open Schisms*, not eating all together when they met in the same House, but *scandalously dividing into factious Clans*, and *separate Tables*. *When ye come together in the Church, and meet all in one Place*, says the Apostle, *I hear there be* * *Schisms or Divisions among you*, or that you bandy in Parties, and do not meet all as one Body, 1 Cor. xi. 18, 20.

They came to it also in a most *scandalous Excess*, and *gross Intemperance*, which *Vice*, tho' so confessedly loathsome in all other Places, had yet, by Occasion of their *Love-Feasts*, crept into this most solemn Part of the Christian Worship and Service. St. Jude seems to charge the *Gnosticks*, those *sensual and luxurious* Persons, with some such Fault. *They are Spots*, says he, *in your Feasts of Charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without Fear*, i. e. so freely as shews they have no Fear of God, or of the Solemnity and Religion of the Feast, Jude 12. And so doth St. Peter more plainly in his Description of the same Men, 2 Pet. ii. 13. *They count it Pleasure to riot in the Day-Time*, says he, *Spots they are and Blemishes, sporting themselves, or being* † *luxurious with their own* ‡ *Deceivings*, as we read it; but in some Manuscripts of greatest Authority, particularly the *Alexandrian*, with which the Translation of the || *vulgar Latin* agrees, it is *being luxurious in their* † *Feasts of Charity when they feast with you*, v. 13. And with a like Excess *Socrates* charges the *Egyptians* a good while afterwards.

* Σχίσματα.
ἀπάταις.

† Ἐντραφόντες.

‡ Ἐν ταῖς

|| It reads, *Deliciis affluentes, not Fraudibus.*

† Ἐν ταῖς ἀγάταις.

For * *they*, says he, *communicate at Even, after they are full fed, and have glutted themselves at their Love-Feast with all the Varieties of a choice Banquet.* And because the *Love-Feasts* minister'd Occasion for such Excess, and made Way for several Abuses, they came, in Time, to be wholly laid aside in *Communions*. And to prevent that *Intemperance* which they had introduced, it was order'd generally, that Men should receive *fasting*, contrary to what our Lord did at first, which was ratified by a † *Decree* in the third Council of *Carthage*, held near 400 Years after the Birth of our Saviour Christ.

Now this *Intemperance*, which had crept into the *Love-Feasts*, and so mixt with the Holy Sacrament which always went along with them, was another most shameful Offence, which St. Paul reproved in the *Corinthian Communions*. They did not only change this *Ordinance of Union* into a *factious Meeting*, by falling into separate Gangs and Parties when they came to it: But also turned this *pure and holy Treat* into a *drunken Club*, and a *riotous Entertainment*. In your *eating*, says he, *every one as he comes sooner, takes before other his own Supper, and one, being poor, is hungry, thro' the Smallness of his Provisions, and another, being rich, is drunken thro' the Excess of his,* 1 Cor. xi. 20, 21. And upon this *schismatical and intemperate Eating*, he lays the Danger of that Judgment or *Condemnation*, which God was wont in those Days to inflict on them. If any Man pretend

* Μετὰ γὰρ τὸ ἐναρξῆσαι ἢ πάντων ἰδεσθῆσαν ἐμπαρξῆσαι, ἀλλ' ἕσπερον πεσπύσμετες, ἥβ' οὐκ ἐλαφὺς καταλαβόμενοι. See *Hist. Eccles.* l. 5. c. 22. p. Ed. Val. 287.

† Ut Sacramenta Altaris non nisi a jejunis hominibus celebrentur, excepto uno Die anniversario, quo cœna Domini celebratur. *Concil. Carth.* 3. *Can.* 29. apud *Sin. Vel. prim. Concil.* p. 711.

Hunger, says he, for this Greediness and Intemperance, *let him eat at home, that so ye come not together at the Lord's Supper, as now ye do, to Condemnation, v. 34.*

Now these *scandalous Irregularities*, but especially this *Intemperance* at the Lord's Table, for which God was so severe upon the *Corinthians*, is no Crime in the Communicants of *our Days*, when among all the unworthy Receivers, none are so by Reason of such *Excess*; but it was peculiar to *theirs*, when together with the Holy Sacrament, they always joined their *Love-Feasts*, which were liable to be abused to *Gluttony* and *Drunkennes*. And when they did provoke God thereby, and, by these heinous *Prophanations*, which call more loudly for *Vengeance* than other common Offences, were exposed in those Days to be thus miraculously struck with *Death and Diseases*; yet was there Place still to prevent these *temporal*, as well as the *eternal* Punishments for the same, by true *Repentance*. If they bethought themselves in *Time*, and judged or afflicted themselves for their wicked *Prophanation*; their hearty *Repentance* and *Humiliation* might stop the destroying *Angel* from inflicting sudden *Death* upon them in this *World*, as well as *eternal Damnation* in the *World* to come. If we would judge ourselves, says St. Paul, to these Offenders and horrible *Prophaners* of this *Holy Feast*, we should not be thus judged, or immediately afflicted and punished of the Lord, 1 Cor. xi. 31.

As for this *Damnation* then, which the *Apostle* charges on *unworthy Eating*, it either signifies a *damning Sin*, and that is true of *wilful Abstaining* as well as of *unworthy Receiving*; or a *temporal Punishment* miraculously inflicted for their *Drunkennes* and *Intemperance*, wherewith at that Time they

they polluted and prophaned this Holy Feast, which was a Thing peculiar to those Days, and is not now derived down to ours, so that we have no just Cause to be deterred thereby.

Thus it is, if really we should come *unworthily* to the Blessed Sacrament, we only commit a *damning Sin* thereby, as we should do by *wilful Abstaining*, which will be forgiven us afterwards upon the same Terms whereon God forgives all our other Sins, *i. e.* our *repenting* of it, and amending it. Yea, and if thereby we should have provoked God to visit us, not only with future and eternal Death, but also with present Diseases and temporal Calamities; such Repentance, when used seasonably and sincerely, will likewise put by, and, thro' the Merits of Christ, cover us from them too. But if, when we come to this Holy Table, we are truly *penitent*, and have broke off from all our evil Ways, intending fully to lead new Lives thenceforwards; then we may with Comfort assure ourselves, that we are *worthy* and welcome Guests, and are not concerned at all in this Damnation, which is threatned to *unworthy* Communicants.

CH A P. II.

Of three other Hindrances from Receiving;

THE CONTENTS.

A third Hindrance is, *because therein they are to promise concerning every Sin, that they will no more commit it; which Promise some dare not make,*

because they fear they shall not keep it. If this be sufficient to hinder any Man from the Communion, it ought also to hinder him from Prayers, and being baptized a Christian. But it must not hinder Men from any of them. 1. Let them promise this Amendment, and keep it, and then the Doubt is answered. They ought to make it; and by God's Grace they may perform it, if they have a mind to it. 2. If after some Time they happen to break it in any Instance, they have the Benefit of Repentance afterwards. A fourth Hindrance, is the great Difficulty supposed to be in worthy Receiving, and Want of Time and Leisure to prepare for it. This lies not more against the Holy Communion, than against an holy Life, and all Religion. But it must not put us by from any of them. For, 1. If it required all that Time and Pains which is supposed, that would be no Excuse for any of us to neglect it. To true Penitents, the Time and Pains is not so great as is imagined. It requires more of ill Men, but less of good, who may prepare for it in a less Time. A strict and particular Examination of our whole Lives is not necessary to be repeated every Time we come to the Holy Communion. This is not required by Almighty God, nor was it believed or practised by the first Communicants. Nor doth the Sacrament's being a Renewal of the Baptismal Covenant, and a Seal of Pardon, necessarily require the same. What the Necessity, and what the Expedience is, of these strict Scrutinies. If they are used to Self-examinations, good People may prepare themselves for the Holy Sacrament upon a few Minutes Warning. 3. The poorest and most employed have Time sufficient, if they would use it to that End: And where they have fewer Helps and less Time, the less Preparation is accepted of them. A fifth

Hindrance is, because they see others, or have found themselves to be no better by it; so that it is not worth while to fit themselves for it. If this has any Force, it is not to be restrained to the Holy Sacrament, but holds stronger against Prayers, and other Parts of Worship. But it ought not to hinder any Persons. For 1. Where it is true, there is no Excuse from it. 2. In all good Mens Case it is false, for they are really better by it; many by improving in their Goodness, and all by continuing in it, for which it is richly worth their Pains to come thereto. 3. Where they are not bettered at all, or not so much as might be expected; that is purely through their own Fault, in not using the Means of improving thereby: So let them amend that, and this Hindrance is removed.

A Third Thing which keeps back several from the Holy Sacrament, tho' both in Duty to their Saviour, and in Tenderness to their own Souls, they are most straitly bound to frequent the same, is because *therein they are to promise concerning every Sin which they find themselves guilty of, that they will no more commit it; and this Promise they dare not make, because they fear they shall not keep it.*

Now as for these Persons, I would desire them to consider, that if this be a sufficient Hindrance to keep them from this Ordinance, it is equally so to keep them from their *Prayers*, nay, from their very *Baptism*, and being enrolled *Christians*: For God will not hear their *Prayers* for the *Pardon of any Sin*, till they *repent* of it, and resolve within themselves, and make him faithful Promises that they will never more commit the same. Nor did he admit them to *Baptism*, to be lifted

Members of his Church, till they had renounced the Devil and all his Works, with all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, and promised to keep his holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of their Lives. If we stick at these Promises, then we must scruple saying our Prayers, and boggle at all Religion, and if we were yet unbaptized, upon this Account we should refuse our Baptism, since therein we did, and ought to make as large and express Promises of leaving all our Sins, as we can, or are required to make in the Holy Communion.

But to those who are afraid of the Holy Sacrament upon this Account, I have these two Things to add.

1. *Promise this Amendment, and keep it, and then the Doubt is answered.*

2. *Though after some Time they should forget themselves, and break it in some Instances, yet still they have the Benefit of Repentance afterwards.*

1st. I would advise them to *promise this Amendment, and to keep it, and the Doubt is answered.* When the Objection against *Promising* is only the Danger of *Performing*, when they both *can* and *ought* to perform it; it is an Objection that lies only against *themselves*, in a Suspicion that they will be wanting to their own bounden Duty and Service: And that is better removed, by their own Care faithfully to discharge it, than by any thing that I can say to it. They *ought* to perform it, and if *they will*, by God's Grace, *they may* do it; and therefore let them be careful to do that, and this Difficulty is at an End.

They ought, I say, to perform this Amendment which they promise to Almighty God, to leave every Sin which they have formerly committed. God will not forgive us any wilful Offences, whilst we
persist

persist *unrepentant*, and continue to repeat them; but requires first, on *our* Part, that we forsake and amend the same. *Sin no more*, says our Saviour to the *Woman taken in Adultery*, and then *will not I condemn thee*, John viii. 4, 11. And *let the wicked Man forsake his Ways*, says God by *Isaiab*, and *return unto the Lord*, and then *he will have Mercy upon him, and abundantly pardon*, Isa. v. 7. It is no indifferent Matter that is left to our own Choice, whether we will leave our Sins, or no; but the Thing must of Necessity be done, if ever we hope to appease God, or to go to Heaven. So that we must not be less forward to promise, for that is our Duty, but more careful to perform.

And as they *ought* to perform this Amendment, which they promise to Almighty God, so by *his Grace* they *may* perform it, if they *will*, and have a Mind to do so. When at this Feast, they say that they *will* never commit *this* or *that* Sin any more, according as God has required, they say not that they will never be *surprized* into it, but that they will never act it *wilfully*, *i. e.* when they see it, and are aware thereof; or, if at any Time they do fall into it again, that they will not *persist* therein, but *amend* it, *Repentance* always going along and being implied from the *Beginning* to the *End* of the *Gospel Covenant*. And this by *God's Help* they all may do, if they make it their serious Business, and lay out their utmost Care and Pains upon it. For when a Man's *Conscience* tells him, that the Thing is sinful which he is about to act, or at least he could readily see it, if he would direct his Eye thereto; he need not go on therewith, unless he will, but, if he please, may instantly turn away from it. This, I say, he may do; for if he will not be wanting to himself, God will not be

be wanting to him therein, but inable him effectually to abstain from the same when he truly endeavours so to do. If once we are careful to *work out our own Salvation*; St. Paul assures us that *he will work in us both to will and to do*, Phil. ii. 12, 13. *To him that bath*, i. e. imploys what he hath, our Saviour promises that *more shall be given*, Mat. xxv. 29. And elsewhere again, *God will give the holy Spirit to those that ask him*, Luke xi. 13.

And since by God's Grace they may perform this Amendment if they will, and ought to perform it, if ever they hope he should accept them; let them but be careful so to do, and then this Hindrance will give them no more Trouble, but be quite removed. They will have no cause to be slow to promise what they will be thus honestly careful to perform.

2. Though afterwards they should forget themselves, and break this Promise in some Instance; yet is not their Case desperate thereupon, but they have still the Benefit of Repentance for that Breach of Promise afterwards.

Indeed, if they break it as soon as ever they have made it, and run constant Changes in sinning and repenting, performing this Time, and transgressing it the next; that Repentance, I doubt, will be of no Avail with God, because it rests only in fair Words and Promises, or, at best, in some faint Attempts, without any real Reformation and Amendment. Nay, if they fall a second Time into some Sins, which lay waste the Conscience, such as Murder, Adultery, wilful Perjury, and the like, which few good Men can ever incur at first, and which fewer can afterwards repeat, when once they have smarted for the same: It may still give Cause, why the Sufficiency of their
Re-

Repentance should be questioned. But if in Sins which are more ordinarily incurr'd, as *Discontent, Pride, Revenge, Back-biting, Passion, &c.* which are generally meant by those who are kept back by this Impediment; if after they have promised to leave *these* Sins, I say, they go on for some due Time to make good their Word, and avoid the Offence in several Opportunities which lead them to repeat the same; but at last they happen to forget themselves, and break it in some Instance; yet doth not that *null* their former Repentance, or make their Case desperate thereupon; but they have still the *Benefit of Repentance afterwards*, for that Breach both of Duty and Promise; and, by amending what they have done amiss, may be perfectly restored and made whole again. For God will pardon us upon our true Repentance, not only *once*, or a *second* Time, but as *often* as there is Occasion. So that if after we have promised in the Holy Sacrament, that we will never more be guilty of any particular Sin, we yet happen to yield to it at length, and are anew overcome: Let us but truly repent of that Breach, and fully resolve against it a second Time, and then we are made whole as we were in our former Station.

As for this Hindrance then, whereby some are kept back from the Holy Sacrament, *viz.* Their *promising therein concerning every Sin, that they will no more commit it, which Promise they dare not make, because they are afraid they shall not keep it*: It need not stick with them, nor ought to hinder any Man who pretends to Religion. For let them promise *this Amendment*, and keep it, and then the *Doubt is answered*. Or if, after they have kept it for some Time, they happen to fail upon some Occasion; let them repent of that
Break,

Breach, and make new Promises, and faithful *Resolutions*, and then they are whole again. And all this has nothing in it that *can be avoided*, or *ought to be feared*, but is all *necessary* and *desirable* to be done: For it is their Duty thus to promise, and their Duty to perform, and their great Privilege, that, if they fail in any Instance afterwards, yet still upon repeating their *Repentance*, they shall receive a *Pardon*. It is what every Man must do, not only to be a worthy *Communicant*, but to be a *Christian*. For the same Things are promised in *Prayer*, and in *holy Baptism*: So that if any Man draw back from them, and sticks to promise them; he must not pray to God, nor pretend to Religion, nor, were he to chuse again, would he be *baptized* into the Christian Profession.

4. A *fourth* Thing which keeps back several from the Holy Sacrament, is the *great Difficulty* which they apprehend to be in a *worthy Receiving* of it, and their *Want of Time and Leisure* to prepare for it. They fancy it is a very hard Thing for any Man to Communicate worthily; and since it is *hard*, it must needs require much *Time* and *Application* to prepare themselves for it: and as for their Parts, they have little *Leisure* from their *Business*, and are not made to *master Difficulties*; so that they must be content, and hope they shall be excused if they abstain from it.

This *Objection* many are ready to make against coming to the Holy Communion. But every Christian will be much ashamed of it, and slow to urge it a *second Time*, when once he considers, that it lies not more against it, than against an *Holy Life*, and *all Religion*. For all the Particulars of worthy Communicating, as I have shewn, are equally Parts of indispensable Duty, and a good Man,

Man. God has required no more *Virtues* in us at the *Time of Receiving*, than he requires of us at all other *Times*, to render us *acceptable Christians*, to fit us to say our *Prayers*, or to give us any *Hopes of Eternal Happiness*. So that if any Man says, that the Work of the Holy Sacrament is *over hard*, and therefore that he is *not willing*, or *wants Time* to fit himself for Receiving; he may as well say, that he is *not willing*, or *wants Time* to be a *Christian*, or to go *Heaven*, and upon that Plea may with equal Reason bid adieu to all *Religion*.

But to answer this more particularly; I must observe to them,

1. *That if the worthy Reception of the Holy Sacrament did really require all this Time and Pains to prepare for it which is supposed, yet will that be no sufficient Reason or Excuse for any of us to neglect it.* For when God bids us do a Thing, can any Man think it a good Excuse to say, *I would do it, if it were not troublesome, or long a doing.* Must we perform those Things only at his Command, which are easy, and soon over; but neglect all others, which employ more Care and Pains, and require to be attended longer? How we may like such *Masters*, I will not say, but I am sure God will entertain no such *Servants*, as will pick and chuse with his Commandments, and obey them no further than their own *Ease and Occasions* will suffer them. No, he expects we should do him Service, tho' it be with Difficulty and Loss to our own selves. And this in all Reason he may very well require of us, because we ourselves, who can plead no such *Deserts* as he can, nor make any such *Recompences* as he proposes, do all look for it from our Servants, in any Business which they are to do for us. For if we set them to any Work, we should think it a very odd Answer, if they tell us that they would do it for us,

us, but that they are unwilling to be at *so much Pains*, or to spare *so much Time* as it requires.

Although a worthy Communicating then would require much Time and Pains to prepare for it, yet would not that be a just Excuse for any Person to neglect it. For since God *commands* it, nay, *commands it urgently*, and lays a great Weight upon it; we are bound in all Duty to perform it, tho' it cost us both *Time* and *Pains* so to do. But,

2. *To all true Penitents it is not so difficult, nor requires so much Time as is imagin'd; so that they have not so much as this Discouragement to make them backward in it.*

The Difficulty of worthy Receiving lies not in giving Christ Thanks, or believing the Holy Scripture and all its Promises, as I have shewn; but only in Repenting of all our Sins. And this, indeed, has more Difficulty in it, and requires more Time to ill Men who are held Captives by their Sins; but not very much to good Men, who are already set free, and have broke off from them.

1. *I say, Repenting of all their Sins, and Amendment of their Lives, has more Difficulty in it, and requires more Time to ill Men. For they have many Lusts to pare off, which are very dear to them; and many Things to set straight, which cannot all be done upon the sudden, when they come to enter upon a good Life, who as yet are Strangers to it; they must consider particularly of all God's Laws, which are the Rule thereof, and examine their own Hearts at every one, to see against which of them they have offended, and there make their particular Purposes, and full Resolutions of Amendment. They must spend Time and Pains upon this Examination, to bring themselves to a penitent Purpose, and a deliberate well-weighed Resolution: And when that is done, it will cost them more Time*

Time and Pains still in *frequent Trials*, as in the Course of Life and Business they meet with Opportunities, to *practise* and *perform* what they have resolved upon. For when upon a strict Review of their whole Lives, they find they have several Sins to amend; they must not think, after they have resolved against them, to get perfectly quit of them on the *sudden*. But they must withstand the Temptations to them *once* and *again*, and pass thro' frequent Trials, and exercise themselves in many Conflicts, before they will have got the Conquest, and be indeed reformed from them.

Thus will it require both much Time and Pains for an ill Man to become good, and not only to *resolve* that he will amend all his evil Ways, but to put in *practise* and *perform* it too.

'Tis true, indeed, I cannot say that the *actual Amendment* of every Fault, and the *Performance* as well as *Purpose* of obeying in every Commandment, is necessary to a *worthy Communicant*. For a *full Resolution* of Amendment, without staying for Time and Opportunities to fulfil the same, is sufficient to fit us for this Feast; as I have observed it did in the *Apostle's Days*, when, upon their first Conversion and becoming penitent, before they had Time to perform what they had promised, Men were admitted to the Holy Sacrament, as they were to other Parts of Worship. So that the Repentance requir'd of us to a worthy Communion, will not take up all that Time, which is necessary to amend a whole Life, and to practise all the Duties of a good Man.

But although it will not call for all that Time, which is necessary to a *New Life* and *Practise*; yet will it require all that Time which is necessary to beget and actuate a *New Heart* and *Purpose*; and that will be much more in *ill Men*, than it will

will be in *Good*. For when ill Men examine themselves, to find out all their Sins, that they may resolve against them; they have many *more Sins* to repent of, and to employ their Minds upon; and are more *Strangers* to their own *Hearts* and *Lives*, having never observed or looked into them, and so need the greater *Labour of Recollection*; and have more *Hardness of Heart* and *Coldness of Spirit*, so that they do not so easily *renounce* them, nor can so *readily* and *fully resolve* against them, when they have discover'd them, as good Men can.

As for this Repentance of all their Sins then, which consists not in an *actual Amendment* of them, but in *full Purposes* and *Resolutions* never more to commit the same, which is sufficient to a worthy Communion; It has more *Difficulty* in it, and requires more *Time* than ordinary to ill Men, who are *held Captives* by them. But,

2. *It doth not require very much to good Men, who are set free and have broke off from them.*

The great Thing which they have to do, is, to examine what their Offences are, and to find out their own Miscarriages; for if once they do *discover* them, they are so *habitually* set to amend every thing that is amiss, that they will quickly resolve against them. And this Discovery they will make much *easier* and *sooner* than ill Men can. For their Offences being fewer in Number, are sooner run over; and their Consciences being tender, and used to observe them, they do better remember them, and are the readier, when they are asked, to give in an Information of them, than the others are. Indeed, if they do not accustom themselves to *Self-Examinations*, they will find more to do, and need a longer Time, when they come to them. But if they are much versed therein, especially if they take daily an Account
of

of the Day *past every Evening* ; having daily discovered and acknowledged all their Offences, they will bear them still in Mind, and have an habitual Sense of them ; and so be able at any time to tell what Acts they are to promise and resolve upon, at a few Minutes Warning ; as we may well suppose they did in the first Times, when they Communicated *every Day*, and, under the *pressing Wants and Distractions* which they conflicted with, could not set apart *whole Hours* for Preparation.

And here under this Head, I think fit to take Notice of their Mistake, who think *a strict and solemn Examination after every known Sin, which they have at any time been guilty of, and a particular Confession and Repentance for the same, to be one necessary Part of their Preparation every Time they come to the Holy Communion.* Whereas indeed, the Work and Need of Self-Examination, which is to make them see their own Ways, is not one and the same to all Persons, nor to the same Persons at all Times ; but ought in Degree to be either more or less, according as they who use it are already more or less acquainted with themselves.

But as for this strict Review and Examination of our whole Lives before every Sacrament, where doth God require it? *St. Paul*, it is true, bids Men *Examine themselves, and so eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup*, 1 Cor. xi. 28. But this Rule doth only require, that this Work of Self-examination be finished some time or other before we come to the Holy Table ; but it doth not prescribe how often. It doth not say, that he must examine himself again To-day, who had done it with Care Yesterday ; or that he must renew the same strict Search on every Return of the Holy Sacrament, which he did at the first time of his receiving it. And the Apostle speaks it here, to

warn against their Neglect, who eat and had never duly examined themselves, either about the mysterious Nature and Purposes of this Heavenly Food, or about their own Fitness to partake thereof: As those *Corinthians* had never done, who came to eat the Lord's Supper, as a common Meal, not at all *discerning the Lord's Body* there; for which God punished them with *Sickness* and sometimes with *Death* itself, *ver. 29, 30.*

And as for the Belief and Practice of the *Primitive Communicants*, such particular Survey and Confession of all the Sins of their whole Lives, was not held for a Part of Mens necessary Preparation for the Holy Sacrament in their Times. They made such Searches and Enumerations of Sins for the Holy Communion, as they did for their Prayers, in their Holy Assemblies; and whatever they might do at sometimes, yet it cannot be made appear, that at all times, or even ordinarily, they did more. For the Communion was not separated from the ordinary Service in those Days, as, God knows, it has been since, thro' the Indevotion of later Ages, but always made a Part thereof, for all those to join in who came to join in the Church's Prayers. Yea, even the *Holy Apostles* themselves, so far as we can judge from that Account which the Scripture gives us thereof, were not put upon any such strict Search and particular Examination of themselves to prepare for the same, when they received it at our Lord's Hands; nor the *Jerusalem* Christians afterwards, when they received the same at theirs. For they receiving the Holy Communion, as *St. Luke* says, *Acts ii. 42. every Day*; and being Persons of indigent Fortunes, who for the most part had little Leisure to retire from their daily Labours, such solemn stated Examinations, and tedious Researches every Day, would ill

ill comport, as I noted before, with their Circumstances.

In the Holy Sacrament, it is true, we are to renew the Baptifmal Covenant with Almighty God. And to renew this Covenant worthily, it is requisite that we understand, both what the Covenant itfelf is, and what our own Performances or Violations thereof have been. But this we may know fufficiently, without having Recourfe to fuch exact and particular Examinations every Time we renew the fame. When by Means of fuch careful Reviews we have once got this Knowledge, it may ftick by us; and by Ufe, we fhall come to be habitually acquainted, both with the Terms of God's Holy Covenant, and with our ownfelves. And befides, good Minds do not love to run long upon the Score in their Accounts of thefe Matters, but are wont to keep up this Knowledge, and to revive their Acquaintance with thefe Things, by taking new Reviews thereof at convenient Times; yea, they are daily imprinting the fame upon themfelves by their daily Recollections. So that when they are call'd to a Renewal of this Covenant in the Holy Communion, they need not always to make thefe exact Inquiries, like Perfons who as yet are wholly ignorant and unacquainted with God's Holy Covenant, and with themfelves; which were to make themfelves very unprofitable Learners, who are ever learning thefe Things, but never attain to any Knowledge of them. But the fixed and habitual Knowledge which they have of thefe Matters, may ferve them upon Occafion, to renew it in this Holy Feaft. as I have fhewn it ferved the Holy Apoftles and Primitive Chriftians; and as it ordinarily ferves themfelves to renew the fame in their Prayers and penitential Devotions.

The Holy Sacrament likewise, is to *seal to us the Remission of our Sins*. And till we have particularly repented of all our Sins, especially of all wilful ones, we are not fit for the Seals and Assurances of God's Pardon of the same. But what follows upon this, is only that we inquire after them, and repent of them one time or other, before we come to the Holy Communion. But tho' this must be done once, it is not necessary that it be always a doing : And when Sinners have once thus repented and renounced their Sins in the Particulars, they may come to God afterwards, either to seek his Pardon, or to receive his Assurances thereof, in more general Confessions. And thus we daily come to seek his Pardon in our Lord's Prayer, where we pray in general that God would *forgive us our Tresspasses* ; and in the Form of *Confession* in the daily Service of the Church, which rests in Generals, and descends not to Particulars. And so we do likewise to receive his Assurances thereof, as in the Church's *Form of Absolution*, which in the daily Service is pronounced upon a general Confession of our Sins. And as the *Jews* did also in their Sacrifices of Expiation, which sealed and assured Remission of Sins to them, as the Holy Sacrament doth to us ; and wherein, tho' the Sin for which the Sacrifice was more especially offered, was mentioned by Name, yet as for all the rest of their Sins, they were confessed to God in a general Form.

Indeed, as for this solemn and strict Scrutiny, and particular Review and Examination of the several Parts and important Passages of our Lives ; when it is managed carefully and discreetly, it is of great Use in the Way of Piety. It is highly fitting, and next to necessary in all grown Persons, at one Time or other ; both that they may fully and universally repent them of all their Sins, (for a particular

particular Search must discover to them all those particular Offences, which they need to bewail and repent of) and also when they do repent, that they may know they do it, and have the Comfort thereof: And this Necessity, to the Fulness, and likewise to the Comforts of Repentance, is both the Ground and Measure of its Necessity both to Prayer and Sacraments, and other Religious Acts; it being so far only necessary in them all, as Repentance is, and as without it Men cannot be either compleat or comfortable Penitents.

But when once this End has been duly served thereby, and it has been used at any Time to perfect Repentance, as often as we have fallen into any Sins which need to be particularly repented of; there is an End, I think, of its Necessity, and that which calls for it afterwards, at particular Seasons or Ordinances, as at Sacraments or on Humiliation Days, is not strict Duty and Necessity, but Usefulness and Expedience.

And very useful and expedient it is, for Improvement both of the Holiness, and of the Peace and Comfort of Religious Spirits, where it can be had conveniently, and whilst neither their Lives are too much burdened with it, nor their Consciences are insnared by it. And as such a grand Expedient of a Holy Life, I think it very adviseable for all *young Converts* to acquaint them thoroughly with all the Particulars, both of God's Will and of their own Weakness; and that by this Means, having a clear Prospect of all before, they may not either be surprized or beat back, by any Emergencies or After-Accidents. It is also very adviseable in all grown Christians at some *certain Times*, which they will chuse for themselves, according as Discretion, animated by the Love of Godliness, shall direct them, and which they will make more or

less frequent in their Returns, according to the Degree of their Zeal for Holiness, and of their Leisure for these Exercises, and according as they feel themselves more or less to stand in need thereof, or to receive Benefit thereby. But it seems more particularly adviseable and fitting on Days of Fasting and Humiliation, and at the Holy Communion. For what Time more proper to examine into all the great Passages and Particulars of our Lives, than when we are going solemnly to treat with Almighty God about them, and to seek Reconciliation with him for all our evil Deeds, which are past, and to ingage that they shall all be mended for the Time to come.

But then as for this Adviseableness thereof at the Holy Communion, that is not to be understood, but when, being aware of the Sacrament before, there is Time to prepare for the same by such solemn Examination. And likewise when Sacraments succeed each other at so considerable a Distance, as may make a Need thereof; the Knowledge of ourselves which had been gain'd by former Examinations, being in part worn off thro' Length of Time, or much new Matter being stor'd up for another Review. But when Communions come so near together, that it is easy to remember what we had discover'd before, and little new Matter has occur'd, but what may soon be inquir'd after; it is most adviseable, I think, for most Persons, especially for those who complain of the Burden of these particular Researches, to proceed on the Stock of their former Examinations, however to do so several Times; and to run over all again, would not yield Benefit enough many Times, to recompence the Burden and Trouble which it brings along with it.

I have thought fit to say thus much upon these
strict

strict and solemn Scrutinies and Examinations of ourselves, especially before the Holy Sacrament. And to shew both their Necessity to true Repentance, and when that End is served, both their further Expediency, and withal our own Liberty, as Occasion requires, in using or omitting thereof, or in examining ourselves, sometimes by more exact and full, and at other times by more compendious and defective Catalogues of Duties. And this, I hope, may be sufficient to cure and remove their Mistake, who *conceive such exact Researches to be necessary before every Sacrament*; which I have taken the more Pains to rectify, because it has much prevailed over some very good Minds, and greatly incumbered them. And they have been unhappily mislead thereinto by some less wary and ungarded Expressions, which they sometimes meet withal in Books of Devotions; which, whilst they do very profitably prescribe these strict Examinations, as they do other Things, as wise Directions and prudential Means and Helps of Piety, have not always been equally mindful to let their Readers know, that they are no necessary Laws thereof: Which last is found by Experience to be no less needful, for preventing their proving a Snare to Conscience, than the other is profitable for the wise Promotion and Advancement of good Life.

And thus, I think, it may appear, that the Work of *Preparation for the Holy Communion*, is not so difficult to true Penitents, nor requiring so much Time of them, as some have imagined. It may cost them some Time, whilst they employ their Thoughts, in actuating their *Love* and *Thankfulness*, and other *Graces*, before they come. But if they have but little Leisure for it, this need not be long a doing. For most good Minds are so *inclined* and *habituated* to these Tempers, that they

can express them, and that too, answerable to the Degree of Warmth which their Complexion allows of in other Things, with *Hervor* and *Intention*, upon any Warning. But the great Work, which may seem to have *Length* and *Trouble* in it, is *Repentance of all their Sins*; and this will not be either *long* or *troublesome* to them. For the only thing that will give them *Trouble* in it, is, the Work of *Self-Examination*, to find out what their Sins have been; their Hearts being so good, that they can quickly resolve against them, when once they have discovered them; yea, indeed, being habitually set against all already. And this Work of *Self-Examination*, they will not find tedious, having used to look into their own Ways, and thereby got to be pretty well acquainted with themselves. Indeed, if they have not been used to frequent Examinations, so as to have all their Sins at hand before them, it may hold them a longer Time; but if they have examined *often*, especially if they have reviewed and acknowledged every *Night* their *every Day's* Transgressions, they will be able to do it at a few Minutes Warning. So that if they should happen at any Time to be *surprized* with a Communion, which it is not decent for any good Christian to flinch from, tho' all would desire a more solemn Preparation where they have Time for it, yet can they fit themselves for it in that Strait, and know what Sins to resolve against upon a few Moments Recollection.

But besides that *it would be no sufficient Excuse to any Person to neglect the Holy Sacrament, though it requir'd all that Time and Pains which is supposed*; and that *to all true Penitents it is not so tedious, or difficult as some have imagined, so that they have not so much as this Discouragement to make them backward in it*: I proceed now,

3. To shew that *all*, even the poorest and most employed, have Time sufficient, if they will use it to that End; and that of those who have less Leisure and Opportunities, so as that they cannot fit themselves for the same in great Degrees, God expects the less Preparation, and accepts it at their Hands.

All Men, I say, even the poorest and most employed, have Time sufficient to prepare themselves for the Holy Communion, if they would use it to that End.

That which makes them apprehend they have no Time for it, is a Persuasion, that *all Preparation must be carried on in the Closet*, when they are sequestred from all worldly Affairs, and have set themselves apart for Devotion, and religious Meditations. And for doing this, they who are full of Business, who must labour all the Day long, till they have quite tired themselves, for Maintenance, or whose Time is not at their own Disposal, but at the Will of others, complain that they have no Leisure, or vacant Time to spare.

But now, besides that no Persons must pretend they can find no Time for set Devotions, and separate Thoughts, since the most employed of all can find it some Times to throw away on Vanity and Diversions: This Conceit, *That all Preparation ought to be carried on in the Closet*, is a Mistake; for, when any Persons are so minded, it may go on whilst they are held at Work, and engaged in the Course of their Employment. For the great Business of Preparation, as has been shewn, lies in examining our own Hearts, to find out what our Sins have been, and in resolving particularly against them. And this a Man may carry on in any Place, where he has Liberty for Thought and Recollection. He may call to mind his own Ways, as he is on a Journey, or busy at his Work;

Work ; for Thought is free at all Times, and every Man may consider and reflect whensoever he has a Mind to it. And so long as he can find Time for this, he has Time enough to prepare himself, let his Condition be as dependant, or his Time as much taken up, as it will.

And as for those *who have less Leisure and Opportunities, so as that they cannot fit themselves for this Holy Feast in great Degrees, God expects the less Preparation, I say, and accepts it at their Hands.*

Thus much he expects of every Man, and that all may, and it is fit they should perform, *viz.* That (unless they are duly acquainted with themselves before, so as to know without much Examination what they have to resolve upon) *they do examine themselves about those Things which they know are sinful, and, wheresoever they find themselves guilty, resolve stedfastly to do so no more, and humbly ask his Pardon; and that they have an affectionate thankful Sense of Christ's Death, and of all that he has done for them.* But as for the Degrees of these Duties, how high they shall be in their Detestation of every Sin, how ardent in their Acts of Resignation, how passionate in their Love and thankful Affection; tho' he is well pleased with it where he finds it, yet he exacts not the utmost Height, as I have observed*, in those who are fitter for it; nor looks for more in any, than that every Man return according to the Opportunities which he has given him. Some have naturally much Flame, and great Vehemence in all their Passions, and much Time in their own Hands, and much Help from good and invivifying Books, or great Quickness of Wit and Parts, which can rea-

dily and advantageously represent to their own Minds the *Motives* to these Dispositions; and these Persons are able to imprint an *higher Measure* of them, and affect their own Hearts more deeply with them, than others of *cooler Tempers*, and *less Leisure*, and *fewer Helps*, and *slower Understandings*, can ever hope to do. But when Men have *less Time* and *Abilities* for them, God expects the *less Perfection* and *Degrees* of them. For in these Cases, his Rule is this: *Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required; and to whom Men have committed much, of him they will ask the more*, Luke xii. 48.

And thus I have consider'd this *fourth Hindrance*, and shewn that the Difficulty of the Thing, or the *Want of Time*, can be no just Reason or Excuse to keep any Man from Receiving. And the Sum of what I have suggested in this Business, is this: *If it required all that Time and Pains which is supposed*, that is no sufficient Ground for any Person to neglect it; because when God commands us to do a Thing, as he has done most strictly in this Case, we must be willing to spend both *Time* and *Pains* upon it. But in Reality, it is neither so painful nor tedious to good Men, as is ordinarily imagined. It costs more, indeed, to ill Men, because they have *more Sins to examine* after, and *more Backwardness to resolve* against them; but this Expence of Time and Pains they must not impute to the Communion, but to an *holy Life* and *Regeneration*, which, whether they communicate or no, if they love their own Souls, they must labour and manfully endeavour in. But as for good Men, their great Work is *Self-Examination*, it being an easy Thing for them to resolve against any Sins when once they see them; and this will not be long or tedious to them: Nay, if they have

have been used to examine *often*, and to call themselves to an Account *every Evening*, if Necessity so requires, it may be dispatched at a *few Minutes* Warning. It is a Thing which *all Men*, even the *Poor* and *most Employed*, may find Time for, yea, when there is Need thereof, without *hindring* or *neglecting* any other *Affair*, if they are *careful* to use it to that *End*; and when they have *less Leisure* and *Abilities*, so as that they cannot fit themselves in great *Degrees*, there God expects the *less Preparation*, and accepts it at their Hands. To communicate, is a most necessary Duty, which will not be excused; and a most equitable and easy one, which need not to be declined; so that no *Presence of Hardship*, or of *Want of Time*, ought ever to be urged, or can ever be allowed to put us by it.

5. A *fifth* Thing, which hinders several from the Holy Sacrament, and makes them carelessly to neglect it, is, because *they see others*, or *have found themselves to be no whit bettered or improved thereby*; so that it is not worth their while to fit themselves for it.

This is a Plea, which some, who are pretty constant in *other Ordinances*, are wont to make for their great Neglect of *this*. But if there be any Weight in it, they are much to blame in restraining it to the *Sacrament*, since it would hold much stronger for their *not coming to Prayers*, or the *publick Assemblies*, or other *Parts of Worship*. For these same Persons that make this Complaint, of being little bettered or improved by it; could say the same of *them* too if they had a Mind. For they are much more frequent in *reading the Scriptures*, in *saying their Prayers*, in *hearing Sermons*, and in joining in all *other Parts of Worship* at the *publick Assemblies*, than they are at this Ordinance;

dinance ; so that if they are no ways better'd under the *Means of Grace*, that *Unfruitfulness* ought least of all to be charged upon the *Sacrament* ; for alas ! it is but very seldom they are seen at it, but much more upon *praying to God*, and *hearing the Word*, and *other Parts of Worship*. And therefore if *Unfruitfulness* under any Ordinance be a Reason, not of using *greater Care* therein, that they may get *Profit* by it, but of a *negligent Abstaining* from it ; they are to blame in confining it to the *Communion*, since it would serve much more to excuse them from *Prayers*, and *Sermons*, and all *other Parts of Worship* and *Devotions*.

But that none may be hindered by this Pretence from coming to this Holy Feast, I shall lay before them these Things following :

1. *Where it is true that they are no better by the Holy Sacrament, there is no Excuse for their Neglect of it.* And this is plain, because we are bound to communicate, not only in *Interest*, so as that whensoever that ceases, we might be free to do other wise ; but in *Duty* too, our Lord having most expressly injoin'd and requir'd it of us. Had we nothing but our *own Benefit* to engage us to it, then indeed, it would be a good Reason not to trouble ourselves with it, when we found we were no better by it. But God has made it our *Duty* to come, as we have seen, by an *express* and *indispensable Commandment* : And when there is God's *Law* and *Precept* in the Case, it is an ill Excuse for any Man who neglects the Sacrament, to say he did so, because he could not hope to be a *Gainer* by it. If we refuse to do what he bids us, when it brings in no Advantage to ourselves, we cast off his Service, and begin to be acted by other Principles ; we do as good as tell him, that we will do all Things out of *Interest*, and
with

with an Eye to our *own Profit*, but nothing for *his Pleasure*, and in Obedience to his holy Commandment; which is as much as to say, we will only *serve ourselves*, but not *serve him* at all.

2. *In all good Mens Case it is false, for they are really made better by the Holy Sacrament.*

They are not better, perhaps, in what they *expect*, because their Expectations are not right, but they look for such Benefits from the Sacrament, as God never intended them thereby; nay, such, it may be, as in this World he never means to convey to them, either by *it*, or by any *other Instrument*. And thus it is, when Men hope, after they have communicated, to be *filled with sensible Joys and Transports*, to be *absolutely assured of God's special Love and Kindness*, to be *freed thenceforward from all further Fears and Doubtings*, to have a *Removal of some troublesome Temptations*, to go *quit of evil Thoughts and Desires*, and the *very first Motions to ill Things*, of all *Dullness*, and *Distraction in their Devotions*, of all *sinful Surprizes and involuntary Escapes*, and such like. These are Benefits, which, although God out of his *abundant Grace and Indulgence* may sometimes allow to us, yet he has no where *promised us*, nor sees always *fit for us*; nay, some of them in this Estate do *not agree to us*, being Exemptions from such *Infirmities* as are *inseparable from our Natures*: And therefore, when we come to the Sacrament, they are not to be expected from the same. They are not of the Number of those Blessings which are inseparably made over to it, or of those Effects which are always wrought by it; so that we have no Reason to complain of its being a barren and unfruitful Ordinance, because they are with-held from us.

But

But although they are not benefited in *these* Respects, yet are they in *others*, which make it richly worth their while to fit themselves for this Feast, and are an abundant Recompence for all the Pains it costs them. For, besides the *quieting of their Consciences*, though not with an *absolute Assurance*, (a Pitch of Hope that is very rarely found in any, even of the *best* Persons) yet with a very *comfortable Sense of God's Love and Friendship*; which is an Effect it will have in those good Minds, who consider that therein they confirm'd the New Covenant with God, wherein he promised them Pardon if they would repent, and they profess'd to do it: Besides this Effect, I say, of *quieting their Consciences*, it benefits them further in their *Graces and virtuous Endowments*. For, though some of them fear they are not, yet in reality *all good Men are made better by the Holy Sacrament*, some by improving, and all by continuing in their Goodness, which they ought to ascribe thereto.

1. *Some good Men*, I say, (and those, I hope, the greatest Part) are *better'd in the Holy Sacrament*, by an *Improvement of those Graces which they bring along with them*: They thank Christ more freely, and love him more affectionately, and are resign'd to him more intirely, and watch against those *Temptations* which were wont to win most upon them more carefully after every Receiving, than they did before. It *stirs* them on, where their Pace was *slackned*; and makes them *more mindful* of any Duty, when they had forgot it; and *brings them back* to it, when they had *strayed* from the same; and makes them *circumspect* to discharge it, when they had been more *remiss and careless* thereof. It helps *Husbands* to be more tender and affectionate; *Wives* to be more dutiful and
obsequant

observant; *Children* to be more *respectful*, *towards*, and *obedient*; *Servants* to be more *faithful* and *diligent*; and *all Men* to be more concerned to *honour God*, to be more *humble* and *temperate*, *true* and *faithful*, *just* and *charitable*, *meek* and *peaceable*, than they were before they partook of it. All these virtuous Tempers and Dispositions, as there is Need of them, and they can *attend* and *apply their Minds* to them, are quickened and set on thereby. And tho' this holy Flame, which was kindled in their Minds at the Altar, will burn dim, and grow cool again; and this religious Bent of Heart will flaken and be more remiss in Time: Yet being afresh enlivened and intended by a new Approach to this holy Feast, the former *Ardours* will be revived, and the same Bent established, and so they will be always advancing forward in a continual Improvement.

This Increase of their Graces, and Augmentation of all virtuous Dispositions, especially of those wherein they are most defective, the Sacrament works in *many* good Persons, and it is very fit it should do it in *all*. And altho' I dare not say they are *unworthy* of it, or *unbether'd* and *unfruitful* under the same; yet I will say they are very much *wanting to their own Souls*, who are not careful to carry on, and attain this Improvement thereby. And if they examine their own Growth in Grace and Goodness, by a Growth in these Points; I believe the greatest Part of careful and devout Receivers will find that they are really made more perfect, and improved in Virtue by frequenting the Holy Sacrament.

Yea, I add further, they may be thus improved thereby, tho', upon *Examination*, they themselves should not be able to point out, determinately, in *what*, or make a *clear Discovery* thereof. For
very

very few Persons do so strictly *observe the Degrees* of their own Attainments in any Virtues, with what *Ease* they do them, and how seldom they sin against them, as may inable them to compare exactly the Pitch of their *present* Graces, with the Pitch of the *same* Graces some Time *afterwards*. And if they should very narrowly observe them, yet would they not be able nicely to judge of every *small Increase*. For *little Things* are no more discernable in *Grace*, than they are in *Nature*, nor can be easier seen in *growing Virtues*, than in a *growing Man*, or *Tree*, or other *natural Improvements*. And besides, since the Grace which the Sacrament is to improve in us, is so *diffused*, and extends to so *many* Instances; when really we have gained and advanced *therein*, yet may it be hard for us to recollect, and shew determinately in *what*, and specify it in the *Particulars*. It is so I am sure in *Knowledge*, which is another Thing wherein the Instances are so *infinitely numerous*. For altho' it be very plain, that the longer any Man lives, the more *ordinarily* he understands and improves in Knowledge, yet if most of us were asked *how much* we are wiser *now*, than we were a *Month* or *two Months* since, it might often puzzle us to answer it, and, tho' it be plain *we are improved*, to *particularize in what*, as well as it is to *particularize our Improvements by the Holy Sacrament*. So that not only those good Men, whose Growth is apparent; but also several others, who have not particularly discovered the same, are bettered in communicating, by an *Improvement of those Graces which they brought along with them thereto*.

But if any good Men are not bettered in the Blessed Sacrament, by *improving*, yet are they all,

2. By continuing in their Goodness, which they must ascribe to it, and for which it is most richly worth their Pains to frequent it.

It is one great Grace and Benefit to all good Men, that they can maintain their present Station in Goodness, and not relapse, and fall back again into their former Sins. Their *natural Lusts* are only kept under, not quite extinguished in them, and will grow bold, and strive for Mastery upon any fair Occasion. And they are daily in the Way of manifold Temptations, which awaken them, and give more Strength and Advantage to them. And they are many Times either wearied out with Watchings, or lull'd asleep in secure Carelessness, which makes them liable to become a Prey to them. They are closely beset with powerful Enemies, and much indanger'd by continual Temptations, and oft-times unguarded, and fit to make but a very weak Defence; which are Things that would hinder them from standing where they are, as well as from improving and going farther. So that it is a very great Benefit, and they are much the better by it, if any Thing can help them to keep what Grace they have got already, as well as inable them to gain more. This Continuance in Goodness is less, indeed, than Improvement; but yet it is a most valuable Thing, and of so great Account, that, were there nothing more to be had thereby, for its Sake alone it were most richly worth any Man's While to come to the Holy Sacrament.

And this Benefit, which all good Men hold, since they would cease to be good, should they fall from it, all worthy Receivers ought to ascribe as much to the Communion, as to any other Thing. They owe it not to it alone, indeed, but to other Means also, viz. to bearing and reading the Word,
and

and meditating upon it, which puts them in Mind of their Duty, and of the great Motives thereto; to *Self-Examination*, which shews them their Falls and Deviations from it; to *solemn Vows* and *Promises*, which bind them to be careful therein; and to *servent faithful Prayers*, which bring down God's Grace and Spirit that inables them to perform it. All *these*, and *others*, are great Means of securing their standing in an holy Course, amidst all their Temptations to depart from the same; and therefore to every one of them they must in Part ascribe it. But the Sacrament contributes to it as much, at least, if not more than any Thing besides; so that in accounting whence they receive this great Benefit, it ought not in any wise to be excluded. For therein they *remember* and *fix in Mind the Death of Christ*, which is the highest *Motive* to this Continuance in Goodness; and exercise that *Faith*, and *Love*, and *Thankfulness*, and *Resignation*, and *Repentance*, which are the best Means to set it forward; and make God *solemn Vows* and *Promises*, which are the straitest *Bond* to ingage and fasten it upon themselves; and put up many *servent Prayers*, which are the best Course for the Security and Maintenance thereof; and to receive those *inward Graces* and *Assistances*, as I have shewn, which *inable* them to stand fast therein. So that when worthy Communicants continue, after the Holy Sacrament, to hold their present Pitch of Goodness, and do not slide back again into their former Sins; they must not say they are no better by it, for this Benefit *of standing in a good State*, they do receive from thence. Tho' it doth not improve and bring them *forward*, yet it helps mightily to continue and keep them where they are.

N o

Thus

Thus are all good People really bettered by the Blessed Sacrament. For besides the *Peace of Conscience*, which is thereby much settled in those Penitents, who understand and consider that therein they have sealed the Covenant of Pardon with Almighty God: Besides this Effect, I say, in those who rightly understand it; the *Graces of some are much improved*, and the *standing of all is greatly maintained thereby*, which last, were there no other Expectation from it, is a most valuable Benefit, and such, wherefore it is highly worth any Man's Labour to frequent it.

3. *Where they are not bettered at all by the Holy Sacrament, or not so much as might be expected, that is purely through their own Fault, and they must amend it.*

Where they are not bettered at all by the Holy Sacrament, I say, or not so much as might be expected, that is purely through their own Fault. If they examine their own Hearts about it, they will find, that they have been wanting in those Things which should have made it a lively Means and Help to their Improvement. It may be, after they have felt in their own Souls that they have *renounced all evil Ways*, which might fit them for this Holy Feast; they do not yet perceive any *affecting Peace of Mind*, and comfortable Sense of the Love of God to be thereby wrought in them. But then that is, because they do not *consider*, how therein they confirmed a *League of Love*, and received Assurance of his Favour to the Penitent. Perhaps they are not *improved in an holy Life*, nor prevail more against their Sins, after Receiving; but then that is, because they themselves are *wanting* in those Things which are necessary to such Improvement. They did not *enquire what their particular Sins were*, and *deliberately resolve* against them,

them, *before* they came to the Holy Table; nor are careful to *bear in Mind* what they have promised, and to *watch the Opportunities of performing* it, *after* they have been there. Had these Things been done, and this Care been shewn, both *before* and *after* the Communion; they may be assured, as I have shewn both from the *Virtue of God's Promise*, and from the *Nature of the Thing*, that they would have been the better by it. But when these Means are not used, but omitted, they cannot expect it should have its due Effect, in making them obedient, which otherwise it would have had. For the Sacrament helps us to grow in Grace and Goodness, as a *moral Means*, which works only in *Concurrence with our own Care*, but not *without* it. It makes us *leave our Sins*, by engaging us to *examine* after them, and *particularly to resolve* against them, and to *strive*, as the Opportunities come for repeating the same, to get quit of them; and by bringing down such *gracious Assistances* to us, as will serve our Turn when we carefully endeavour therewith. But if we will be wanting to ourselves in these *Self-Examinations*, and *particular Resolutions*, and *After-Care*, and *good Endeavours*; then can it do us no Good, because we will not suffer it: And therefore, as we were before, so we shall continue, the same unreformed and unimproved Persons still.

Thus is the Want of being bettered by the Blessed Sacrament, either *at all*, or *so much* as might be expected, altogether our *own Fault*. Namely, because we come not to it with that *particular Sight* and *Consideration* of *all our Sins*, and *Resolution* against them, nor are afterwards so *mindful* of our Resolutions, nor shew that Care in *performing* what we have *resolved*, which we ought, and which are all necessary to our *Amendment*:

Nor have that *Consideration* of its being a *Sealing of the Covenant of Peace and Reconciliation*, which is as necessary to our reaping any *Comfort and Peace of Mind* from it. So that whensoever we fail of that Benefit which should accrue thereby, it is purely through our own Neglect, and we must thank ourselves for it.

And since this Want of being bettered is wholly our *own Fault*, let all those who are kept back thereby, take Care to *amend* that, and then this Objection is answer'd. When they receive no Benefit from the Holy Sacrament, they themselves are to be blamed, for omitting those Things which are necessary to make it benefit them; and if they will take Care to use them the next Time, they will feel more Benefit and Comfort therein. So that this Hindrance lasts no longer than they are pleased it should, and when they will, it need be no Hindrance to them at all.

As for those then, who urge this for their not coming to the Holy Sacrament, *viz. Their not being bettered or improved thereby*: My Answer to them in *Sum* is this. If there be any Force in it, it will hold much stronger for their not coming to *Prayers*, or to the *publick Assemblies*, and ought not so much to hinder them from *this Feast*, as from all *other Parts of Worship*. But indeed it is no just Hindrance, nor is there sufficient Excuse at all from it. Where it is *true*, there is no *fair Excuse* in it; because we are not only bound in *Interest*, but in *strict Duty* also, to communicate. But in the Case of all *good Men* it is false, for they are really *better* by the Sacrament, tho' perhaps they do not *think* or *understand* themselves to be so. For it either *improves them in their Goodness*, as it is highly fit it should and will do all, who are not wanting to themselves; or
at

at least it *keeps* and *continues* them in the same, which, where there is nothing more, is of itself most richly worth all the Pains which they bestow upon it. And where they are not better'd at all, or not so much as might be expected; that is purely their *own Fault*, and will hinder them no longer than they have a Mind it should; for when they please, they may amend it. If they are *good Men*, they are *better* by the Holy Sacrament; and if they are *ill*, their being no better doth not *excuse their Neglect* thereof; and they may be better'd the *next Time*, if they will take that *Care* which is necessary to it: So that this ought not in any wise to be an Hindrance, and keep them from it.

C H A P. III.

Of Want of CHARITY.

THE CONTENTS.

A Sixth Hindrance is, a Fear lest they want that Charity, particularly towards Enemies, and those who have given them Provocations, which is required to it. An Account what Love is, and what is not due to such Persons. 1. We are bound to shew them all the Offices of Charity, which are due to our Neighbour at large, or to all Persons. This Love contains in it all the particular Offices of Justice, Charity, and Peace, which are due to all Mankind. It is transgressed by all the opposite Instances; but by nothing more than hard and uncharitable Conferences and Suspicions. The

Commonness and Sinfulness of this Carriage. The Want of this Charity unfits Men for this Feast; but so it doth for Prayers, and all other religious Worship. 2. We are not bound to shew them all the Offices of special Esteem, Trust, and Confidence, which are not fit to be placed on all Men, but on such only as are qualified for them. When they sufficiently shew Repentance of their Fault, they are to be re-admitted to the same State of Favour and Friendship. We must be candid in judging when their Repentance is sufficiently evidenced. An humble Confession is ordinarily a sufficient Proof of it for the first Fault; but not when it has been oft repeated. Luke xvii. 4. which seems to affirm it, answer'd. Several Cases clear'd, which are sometimes thought by pious Souls to be a Breach of Charity towards Enemies, but in Reality are not. As, not forgetting Injuries or Unkindnesses, but still retaining a Remembrance of them: Thinking the worse of those who offer'd them: Being troubled at the Sight of them, as that puts them in Mind of the great Losses which they have sustained by them: Shewing more Reserve, and carrying a greater Distance in conversing with them, than with other Men. These are no Breach of Charity towards them, nor can be a just Hindrance from the Communion.

A Sixth Hindrance which keeps back several from this Holy Feast, is, their Fear lest they want that Charity which is required to a worthy Participation thereof. They have some profess'd Enemies, that own Hatred and a mischievous Inclination in all their Carriage; or some false Friends and Confidants, who, tho' not out of Malice, yet to serve a particular Turn or Interest, have proved very unfaithful or injurious; or some
impru-

imprudent and unwise Dependants, who, when they meant well, perhaps, have done Things very disadvantageous and displeasing to them in their Business. From the *Malice of some*, or the *Falseness of others*, or the *Folly of a third Sort*, they have received those Provocations, which they cannot yet cast out of their Minds; and when they remember them, they feel their Hearts are much estranged from those who offer'd them; and whilst they are so, they fear they love them not as they ought, nor have that Charity towards Enemies and injurious Persons, which God requires in all worthy Communicants.

And this Want of *Charity* for *Enemies* and *offensive* Persons, is urged, not only by those, who either *do*, or *wish* ill to them; who, indeed, have just Cause to say they want it: But also by others, who are not guilty of either of these towards their Enemies, and therefore have no sufficient Cause at all to say so. For many good People who requite no Injuries to those who have provoked them, but shew them all those Instances of *Justice*, *Charity*, and *Peace*, which God requires of us towards *all Men*, and which are all that is due *to them*, are yet afraid that they have not so much Charity for them as the Law enjoins, because they *still remember their Injuries* or *Unkindnesses*, or *think the worse of their Persons*, or *keep a greater Distance from them in their Carriage*, or *forbear to use them*, as formerly they did, in the *Quality of particular Friends and Confidants*, or with-hold some other *special Favours*, which are not really due to them, nor make any Breach at all of that Charity, which they ought to have for them.

This is a great Cause of *Scruple* to many honest Minds, who are really troubled therewith; and parti-

particularly it is a most common *Hindrance* from the Holy Sacrament ; there being no Duty, I think, which the Generality of Men believe to be more indispensably requir'd in every worthy Communicant, than *Peace* and *Charity*. And therefore, that they who *want* this Love of Enemies, which unfits them for this Heavenly Feast, may quickly set about the Attainment thereof ; and that they who *have* it, may not be troubled, or held back from Receiving as if they had it not ; I shall here endeavour to give a plain State of this Point, and shew, both *what is*, and *what is not* implied in this Duty. And this I shall do in these two Particulars :

1. *We are bound to shew our Enemies, and all others who have provoked us, all the Offices of general Charity, or all that Love which is due to our Neighbour at large, and to all other Persons.* So that whilst we allow ourselves in the Breach of this, we are unfit for this Holy Feast, and must instantly amend, that we may be fitted for it. But,

2. *We are not bound to shew them all the Offices of special Esteem, Trust, and Confidence, which are not fit to be placed promiscuously on all Men, but on such only as are qualified for them.* So that when we fail only in these, we are in no Fault, nor have any Need to be troubled, or kept back thereby.

1. I say, *we are bound to shew our Enemies, and any others, who, by their unkind, indiscreet, or injurious Carriage have provoked us, all the Offices of general Charity ; or all that Love which is due to our Neighbour at large, and to all other Persons.* So that if we allow ourselves in the Breach of it, we are unfit for this Holy Feast, and must instantly amend, that we may be fitted for it.

We are bound to shew them all the Offices of general Charity, or to treat them with all that Love,
which

which is due to our Neighbour at large, and to all other Persons.

How hardly soever they might be treated either among *Jews* or *Gentiles*, yet in *Christianity* our *Enemies* are *Neighbours* and *Brethren*, and ought to share in all that Love, which God requires of us towards the promiscuous Multitude of other Men. For it takes off all that *Hatred* and *spiteful Resentment*, which would exclude them from all good Offices; and sets them in the Rank of *Neighbours*, whom God commands us to treat with all those Instances of Kindness, wherein consists the *loving our Neighbour as ourselves*. This is plain, from its not permitting us to *bate them*, as the *Jewish Law* did, but strictly enjoining us to *love our Enemies*, Mat. v. 44, 45. For where *Love* is, it naturally issues out in all these Duties, as there is Occasion for them; upon which Account, it is call'd the *Fulfilling of the Law*, i. e. of that Part thereof which concerns us towards Men, because *working no Ill*, as St. Paul says, *to our Neighbour*, it will keep us from any Breach of those Laws which respect them, Rom. xiii. 9, 10. Besides that our Enemies are to share in all that Love which is due to our Neighbours, our Saviour plainly declares, when he singles out a most *bitter Enemy*, and sets him forth as the *Neighbour* whom the Law mentions, making the *Samaritan* a Neighbour, even to a *Jewish Man*, between whom was the most inveterate and inbred Enmity and Opposition. For when the *Lawyer* asked him, *Who is my Neighbour?* he tells him by the *Parable* of a *Jewish Man*, who being left wounded by the *Thieves*, found a *Neighbour* of the *Good Samaritan*, that it is any one he meets withal, though a *Stranger*, though an *Enemy*; yea, though of a *Party* and *Profession in Religion* most odious unto his,

his, which ordinarily causes the highest and most implacable Enmities, as it did between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, who stood at so great a Distance, as that they would not *give or ask* so much as a *Cup of Water* of each other, or have any Sort of Intercourse together, *John* iv. 9. This was his Neighbour, says he, and so must thou be in a like Case, *Go, and do so likewise*, *Luke* x. ver. 29, to 38.

Thus are all we Christians bound to hold our Enemies, and those who have provoked us, in the same promiscuous Rank with all other Persons; and notwithstanding all their Unkindnesses, or injurious Carriage, to look upon them as our Neighbours, whom we are to love as we do ourselves.

And that Love contains in it all the particular Offices of *Justice*, *Charity*, and *Peace*, which we owe to *Mankind at large*, even to all Persons.

1. It contains in it all the Duties of *Justice*; as namely, that we be *true* to them in all our *Speeches*, and *faithful* in all our *Promises*, and *just* and *equal* in all our *Dealings*, never *seizing*, *hurting*, or *detaining* any thing which belongs to them; nor any ways *perverting*, *obstructing*, or *infringing* any Right, because it is theirs.

2. All the Duties of *Charity*, as that we *honour* them for their *Virtues*, and *pity* them in their *Miseries*, and *relieve* them in their *Wants*; and, when they will take it, *reprove* them for their *Faults*, not *passionately* and *publicly* (which shews not any Love for them, but our *Wrath* and *Spleen* against them) but with great *Friendship* and *Privacy*; that we *congratulate* with them in their *Joys*, and *conceal* their *Defects*, and *vindicate* their *injured Reputations*, when we see them loaded with false *Aspersions*; that we be *courteous* and *condescending*,
meek

meek and gentle in our Carriage towards them ; candid in putting a good Interpretation upon all their *Words* and *Actions*, especially such as relate to our *own selves* ; placable or easy to be intreated after any *Offences*, and apt to forgive and requite them with *soft Speech*, *fair Carriage*, *good Offices*, and the like.

3. All the Duties of *Peace* in maintaining *Unity* and *Quietness*, as far as lies in us, and avoiding all *Strife* and *Variance*, *Clamour* and *Brawling* with them, as with all Mankind.

All these, as I have * elsewhere particularly shewn are such Duties, as we owe to our *Neighbour at large*, even to *all Men* ; and then to our *Enemies* among them, since in Christianity they are *Brethren* and *Neighbours* too, and have a Claim to the same. And these, *Love* and *Brotherly Kindness*, when once they are seated in us, will be sure to effect, and make us pay to them. *For he that loveth another, as St. Paul saith, bath fulfill'd the Law. Because this, Thou shalt not commit Adultery ; Thou shalt not Kill ; Thou shalt not Steal ; Thou shalt not bear false Witness ; Thou shalt not Covet : And if their be any other Commandment. i. e. respecting others, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no Ill to his Neighbour, therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law, Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10.*

And since we are bound to love our *Enemies*, in paying them all this *Justice*, *Charity* and *Peace*, which I have mentioned as due to *all Persons* : It is plain that we fail of our bounden Duty therein, whensoever we act against it in any of these *Particulars*.

1. We fail of it, if at any Time we do any *Wrong*, or shew any Acts of *Injustice* towards

* Meas. of Christ Obed. B. 2.

them.

them. As if we *falsify* and *lie* to them, or *break* our *Faith* and *Promise* with them, or *raise* *Calumnies*, or *report* *false* and *standerous* *Stories* of them, or *bear* *false* *Witness* against them, or *wrongfully* *withhold* what is there *Due*, or *oppress*, *cozen*, or *defraud* them, or *take* *away* their *Lives*, or *maim* their *Bodies*, either by *secret* *Arts*, or *open* *Fight*, or *Assassination*, or the like.

2. We fail of it, if in any *Instances* we shew ourselves *uncharitable*, or *break* the *Peace* with them. As when we *envy* and *repine* at their *Good*, or *rejoice* at their *Hurt*, or *suffer* *false* *Stains* to *stick* upon them without any *Vindication*, when it is in our *Power* and in our *Way* to wipe them off; or when we *speak* all the *Ill* we know of them, and *back-bite* and *revile* them, especially if we do it with *Aggravation*, *Triumph*, and *Scorn*, when any *Fall* of theirs has given us an *Occasion* for so doing, or, when we *openly* *upbraid* them with our *Kindnesses*, or *reproach* them with their *own* *Sins*, or *mock* and *deride* them with their *Infirmities*, or *affront* them in our *Carriage*, or are *passionate*, and burst out into *Bitterness* and *Brawling*, *Strife* and *Debate* with them, upon any *Provocation*; or when we are *unthankfully* *forgetful* of their *former* *Favours*, or *implacable* after their *Injuries*, or *thirst* after *Revenge*, and are *hasty* to *punish*, or *rigorous* in *Exactions*, or such like,

All these are a *Breach* of that *Love* and *Duty*, which we ought to bear towards our *Enemies*, in common with all other *Persons*, as might be proved, were there any *Need* of it, of *every* one of the *Particulars*. And by reason they have deserv'd *Ill* of us, and have given us great *Provocations*; unless we are very *circumspect*, and keep a *strict* *Guard* upon ourselves, in all our *Discourses* and *Carriage* towards them, we shall be in great *Danger* to incur them more or less. But

But among all the Instances of Uncharitableness to our Enemies, there is none whereto we are more obnoxious, and against which we ought to watch with greater Carefulness, as we tender the Safety of our own Souls, than rash and *hard Censures and Suspicions*, or *fancying the worst Designs*, and *putting the worst Interpretations* upon all their *Words and Actions*, when they come before us.

This, God knows, is a most *general and reigning Sin* among *all Adversaries*, and is daily seen, not only among the *notoriously ill and irreligious*, but also among those, who are otherwise very *sober and devoutly serious*. For even the Generality of Men, when the Actions of their Enemies come to be scann'd before them, are very apt to turn them into an ill Sense, and to make the most of them to their Prejudice, and judge of them, not as indifferent and unconcern'd Persons, but as they who are desirous and industrious to find Faults, and to pick out something which they may accuse in them.

And this has been every where done, not only against *particular Persons*, but, on all Hands, against *whole Bodies and Parties* of Men, who, in any thing relating to the Times, are of different Persuasions, and either *think or act* not after their *Projects and Opinions*. For how apt have, not only *private Men* been in the Case of particular Quarrels, but many also in the Heat, and at the Top of *all Parties*, in the Judging of their Opposites, to mistrust *ill Designs* even in their *good Actions*; and to impute all their ill ones to *unmixt Malice*, without making any Allowances of *Forgetfulness, Over-sight, impetuous Heat*, or other human Frailties; to take every thing by the *wrong Handle*, and where it *might, and would* bear a *good Sense*, were there any Love to construe it,

to fix upon it an *ill* one, and to interpret it to their Disadvantage. In arguing upon all their Words and Actions, they suck'd out nothing but the Venom, and turn'd every thing into a Sore about them, and were strangely rash in bestowing *opprobrious* and *ill* Names upon them, and laid about them at that rate, as if they fancied they could not exceed, either in *thinking* or in *speaking* Evil of them. In all which, instead of being checked with any Remorse for it, their *Consciences* rather countenanc'd and encourag'd it. For since, as they apprehended, the Cause which they contended for, was good in their *own Party*, and bad in the *Party* that *opposed* it: This Carriage they call'd not *Wrath* and *Spite*, but *Zeal*, and thought accordingly that God would own and accept it.

But this is a very *sinful* and *unchristian* Carriage. It is utterly contrary to the *Love of Enemies*; for Love is always inclinable to think the best, and leans, so far as the Thing will bear, to the Side of Favour, both in *judging* and *speaking* of all their Actions. It is plainly contrary to our *Lord's Rule*, who warns us *not to judge, that we be not judged. i. e.* not to be forward in passing Sentence against others, that God may not pass Sentence against us; *for with what Measure we mete, in judging of their Actions, he will mete out to us again, Mat. vii. 1, 2.* It is a direct Breach of that *Charity*, which *St. Paul* describes, and makes of absolute Necessity to our immortal Happiness. For *Charity*, says he, *thinks or surmises no Evil, it believes all Things*, so far as in any Reason it may, to other Mens Advantage. And *without this Charity*, though we have the *sprightliest Zeal* for the best Parties, nay, though we *give our Bodies to be burnt as Martyrs, it profits us nothing, i. e.* towards God's Acceptance, 1 Cor. xiii. 3, 5, 7. Since it
is

is a *Zeal* which is not *peaceable* as well as *pure*, since it is not *full of Mercy* and *good Fruits*, but issues out in a *bitter* and *invenom'd Spirit*, which turns all Things to the worst, and is bent in all Points to the *Hurt* of those who fall under it : It is plain it can never come from *God*, who being *Mercy* and *Love* itself, can never be Author of so much *Cruelty* and *Hatred* ; but must be ascribed to our own *Lusts*, and to the *infernal Spirits*, as its true Parents and Abettors. And this *St. James* expressly says of that *bitter Zeal*, which takes not a tender *Heart*, and *Bowels of Love* or *Charity* along with it. If it were that *from above*, saith he, it would first indeed *be pure*, but then it would next be *peaceable*, *gentle*, *easy to be intreated*, *full of Mercy* and *good Fruits*. If *God* kindled it, since he is *Love* itself, and requires us to love our *Enemies* as ourselves, these first *Fruits of Love* and *Mercy* would be sure to accompany it. But if all these are shut out, and it dwells in an hurtful and imbitter'd Spirit ; if that be a *bitter Envy*ing or * *Zeal* that dwells in *your Hearts*, then, adds he, *glory not in the same* ; for *this descends not from above*, so as to have *God* for the Author of it, but is *sensual*, i. e. arising from our own *Passions*, nay, *devilish*, being set on by the malicious Agency of *infernal Spirits*, *James* iii. 14, 15, 16, 17.

And thus it appears when really we are out of *Charity* with any Persons who have provoked us, and fall short of that *Love of Enemies*, which *God's Law* requires of us. For then we love them not as we ought, when we are any ways *unjust* to them, or apt upon every little Occasion to *strive* and *contend* with them, or deal *uncharitably* by them in any *Conversation*, particularly in *ma-*

* Πικρὸν ζῆλον.

licious Surmizes, and Suspitions, and uncandid Censures, which are so general in all, but more abundant in our Times, when the Nation is divided into Parties, and Men seem to have forgot that there is any Religion towards Enemies, or any Love due to them, who have given them personal Provocations, or side with a Party opposite to that which they espouse.

And if upon a Survey of our Carriage in these Particulars, we find this to be our Case, and that we are thus out of Charity, and have not forgiven any who have provoked us: It is very true, whilst that lasts, we are *unfit for the Holy Sacrament*, since he who worthily joins in it, must come in *Love*, and have freely forgiven all the World. But then we are also equally unfit to *pray*, or to ask the *Forgiveness of our own Sins* at God's Hands; since, if we pray in *Wrath* and *Enmity*, he will not hear us. Nay, this *not Forgiving others*, turns all our own Prayers into a *Curse*, and makes them a dreadful and downright *Imprecation* against ourselves. For when we say this Prayer, *Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us*, with *Malice* in our Hearts: The plain *English* of it is, that God would *revenge* our *Trespases* on our Heads, as we are ready to *revenge* their *Trespases* on theirs; which is so bold and foolhardy an Address, as no Man, I presume, will put up to God, who considers what he says.

When really we are out of Charity therefore, and have not forgiven others; we are not only unfit to Communicate, but to the full as unfit to make any Prayers, or place any Hope in Almighty God. And when once he is sensible that this is his State, there is no wise Man will continue in it, but will forthwith resolve to lay aside all his Resentments, and get out of it.

This

This he may find *difficult*, indeed, when he sets about it ; but it is *absolutely necessary* to be done, and unless he would incur the Wrath of God, and the eternal Pains of Hell, which are ten thousand Times *more* difficult, he must go through therewith. But if he considers how much he himself needs to be forgiven, and how he has infinitely more provoked God, than his Brother has provoked him ; he will find it no very hard Matter to forgive him for *Christ's* Sake, tho' it might be hard to do it for his *own*. And besides, if he will not dwell upon the Injuries or Unkindnesses which are so provoking, but *cast them out of his Mind* so soon as he perceives they are enter'd into it, it will yet be much easier to him. He cannot *quite forget* them, it may be, so as that he shall never more think of them : But when they happen to start up in his Thoughts, without his Leave, he can chuse whether he will *harbour* and give Way to them. And if he will be careful to do that, the great Difficulty of Forgiveness is removed. For it is our dwelling upon an Injury received, and harkening to ill Suggestions, which *aggravate* the Deed, and the *Malice* or *Unworthiness* of him who offered it, that heightens our Resentment thereof to that Degree, that we have much ado before we can bring ourselves to be reconciled. So that if we would not harbour and entertain the Thoughts of it, the Forgiveness of an Injury would be found much more easy. And this Remedy St. *Paul* prescribes, to prevent all *Wrath* and *revengeful Carriage* ; *Let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath, neither give Place to the Devil, or to a * Calumniator and Accuser, i. e.* to exasperating Thoughts and Insinuations, whe-

* Τὸ Διαβόλη.

ther suggested to us by our own Minds, or by the Whisperings of others, *Eph. iv. 26, 27.*

And thus having proved that we are bound to shew our *Enemies*, and those who have provoked us, *all the Offices of general Charity*, or all that Love which is due to our Neighbour at large, even to *all other Persons*; so that whilst we allow ourselves in the Breach of them, we are unfit for this Holy Feast, and must instantly amend, that we may be fitted for it. I proceed now,

2. To shew that we are not bound to shew them *all the Offices of special Esteem, Trust, and Confidence*, which are not fit to be placed promiscuously on all Men, but on such only as are qualified for them: So that when we fail only in these, we are in no Fault, nor have any Need to be troubled, or kept back thereby.

We are not bound to make an Enemy a familiar Companion, or a particular Friend, a Partner of our Secrets, a Sharer of our Trust, or an Officer in our Business; but may be more afraid of him, and keep more at a Distance from him, and use more Caution and Reserve in conversing with him, than with other Men. As for all the Instances of general Charity, indeed, they are due upon a Reason which is common to our Enemies with others, *i. e.* their being Men and Christians: So that they ought to share in them, and we fail of our Duty towards them, when at any Time we withhold them from them. But as for these Marks of special Esteem and Confidence, they are founded on particular Reasons and Fitness of Persons, as *Likeness of Humour, Fidelity of Affection, Aptness for our Affairs*, or the like: So that in them we are not bound to our Enemies, who are plainly unfit, thro' their profess'd Enmity, or treacherous Falseness; nay, nor to any one among
others;

others; but are left at Liberty to make such Choice as shall seem best to our own *Prudence*. This Liberty must in all *Equity* and *Reason* be allowed us, because upon a right Choice of those Persons, the *Innocence*, *Ease*, and *Safety* of our Lives most nearly depends; and without being left to Discretion therein, we must unavoidably throw ourselves into inextricable Snares, and numberless Calamities. And that it is allowed, our Saviour clearly intimates, when he recommends to us the *Wisdom of Serpents*, bidding us shew all the Prudence we can devise, so long as no Unrighteousness mixes therewith, but it is wholly guided by the *Dove's Innocence*, Mat. x. 16. And in this he has gone before us in his own Practice. For tho' he loved those *who believed on him*, John ii. with all that Love which his Law requires, *i. e.* with a *general Affection*: Yet, as the *Evangelist* tells us, *he did not trust, or commit himself to them, because he knew all Men*, v. 23, 24.

So long then as we *requite no Injuries* upon our Enemies, or others that have offended us, nor are wanting to them in any Point of *Justice*, *Charity*, or *Peace*, which is due to all Persons; we are not uncharitable towards them, in *thinking the worse* of their Persons, or *carrying* ourselves at a *greater Distance* towards them, or *forbearing* to use them in the Quality of *particular Friends* and *Confidants*, as we did formerly, or *withdrawing* some other *special Favours*, which their Fault has justly forfeited, and they have no more Claim to.

Indeed, if afterwards they *repent* of their Offence, which makes the Breach between us, and amend that Fault which unfits them for our *Business* or *Converse*; when only *we ourselves* are concerned in their Re-admission, and the Things we

have to intrust with them are not of that Weight as that we may justly be *jealous* over them, and we have no other Cause but that Offence to exclude them from the same, it is a Christian Part, not only to retain them in a general Charity in common with all other Persons, but also to re-admit them to the *same* State, which formerly they held with us.

When the Concern is not purely *our own*, but we are set to secure *higher* and more *publick Ends*; there, it is true, we are not bound presently to re-admit them to the same State upon their Repentance. And thus it is in the Point of *Discipline*, wherein the Sin is not presently pardoned, so soon as the Criminal has repented of it: But the Punishment is oft-times continued (as it was in the *lasting Excommunications* of the *primitive Christians*) that the Durableness of the Smart may both *terrify others* from offending in like Manner, and *amend themselves*, by begetting a more lasting Memory and Abhorrence of their Offences. And thus it is too in Point of *publick Trust*, when we act not for ourselves, but pursuant to our Care of others: For there we may lay aside *Penitents*, because they have once sinned, thinking there is more Safety in those who have still stood firm, and kept always innocent. And thus St. Paul did with Mark, who had once declined the Toil and Peril of *converting the Gentile World*, Acts xiii. 13. For, after he had freely forgiven that Tergiversation, yet, says St. Luke, in the Dispute betwixt Barnabas and him, *he thought not good to take him* for a Companion, because he had once deserted them, and *went not with them to the Work*; but preferred Silas before him, who had never flinched from it, Acts xv. 37, 38, 40.

But

But when only we *ourselves* are concerned in their Re-admission; and when the Things which we have to intrust with them are not of that Weight as we may well be *jealous* over them, (in which Case, indeed, a great Caution is requisite) and when we have *no other Cause* but *that Offence* to exclude them from our Kindness or Confidence (for if upon other Accounts the Choice at first was ill made, and either already *is*, or *may* be alter'd to our Benefit, since the fixing on any Man for a Friend or Dependant, is not a necessary Duty, but a discretionary free Thing, we are not blameworthy in correcting it :) When the Case, I say, thus stands, as to all those Particulars, it is a *Christian Act* to admit returning *Penitents* to the same State which they held before they offended us. For when once they have repented of a Fault, they are as fit for our *Affairs* or *Friendship*, as they were before they committed it. So that if any Marks of our Displeasure remain upon them still after that, which in the present State of Things might conveniently enough be alter'd, it is not *their Unfitness*, but *our Resentment*, which is the Cause thereof. And when we go so to *ease* our offended Minds by their *Loss*, this looks not like *forgiving a Trespass*, but *revenging* it. And this Re-admission to their former State, is according to St. Paul's Direction, *Col. iii. 13. to forgive others, even as Christ forgives us*; for he admits Penitents to the State of innocent Persons, pardoning without upbraiding, and quite *forgetting*, as if the Sin had never been done, *Ileb. viii. 12.* and according to what he prescribes, *1 Cor. xiv. 20.* when he bids us in *Malice to be Children*; for after once they are made Friends, they forget all, and return to the same Degree of Love and Confidence again. The *wise Son* of *Sirach* says, in-

deed, that for *four Things*, viz. *Upbraiding*, and *Pride*, and *disclosing of Secrets*, and a *treacherous Wound*, every Friend will depart, and never more be reconciled, *Ecclus. xxii. 22.* But he speaks only of what *ordinarily is done*, or of what *might have been done among the Jews*; not of what *may now be done among us*, of whom God expects an higher Forgiveness, after the Manner of *Children*, and the Example of *Christ Jesus*. So that when once they have sufficiently repented of their Sins against us, it is fit that we forgive them to as full Purpose, as if they had never sinned at all.

And in judging of this Repentance, we ought not to be *strict* and *rigid* in standing upon exact Proofs; but to be *candid*, and apt to interpret all Signs of it to the best Sense, leaning to the Side of Love and easy Admittance. If they take Shame to themselves, and are so far humbled as *penitentially to confess their Sin*: It is a great Argument of their being set against it, and, in the case of the *first* Offence especially, a strong Presumption that they will no more commit the same. Altho' when once these Confessions become *customary*, and are still made and broke anew upon every fresh Occasion; it is a Sign only that they mean well, and would amend if they could; but no Presumption that they will do so, since their penitent Resolution plainly is too weak, and their Lusts, upon the Trial, prove still too strong for it. And since these Confessions are manifestly an incompetent Proof of their having thoroughly repented; we cannot be bound to believe them, or obliged thereupon to a Return of Friendship.

Our Saviour, indeed, tells us, that *If our Brother trespass against us seven Times in a Day, and seven Times in a Day turn again, saying, I repent; we must forgive him*, *Luke xvii. 4.* And here, if
by

by *forgiving*, were meant *restoring to the same State of Favour and Affection*; this would infer his Profession of Repentance, tho' never so often broke, to be a sufficient Demonstration of the same, and a just Ground of our Return to Friendship with him. But this, I suppose, speaks only of such Forgiveness, as admits him, not to the *same State* which he held with us before, but only to the State of a *Neighbour at large*, or of other Persons. And albeit this is due to him, whether he say, *I repent*, or no; yet doth our Saviour here injoin it upon his Repentance, not because the *Thing* required it, but that he might more directly oppose the *Jewish Doctrine* in this Point, which was too scanty in forgiving even a *returning Penitent*. For this they limited to a small Number of Times, it being a received Rule among the *Rabbins*, that *after one has forgiven any Person thrice, he has gone as far as he needs, and that no Man is bound to forgive the fourth Offence* *.

To forgive an Injury then so far as not to return it, nor to be wanting in any neighbourly Office toward him that offer'd it, is plain a Duty, upon his saying he repents of it: Yea, as hath been shewn, whether he repents or no. But to the evidencing of such a Repentance, as would oblige us to confide in him again, and as leaves *no Imputation of Unfitness in him*, but only of our *Resentment* for a Reason of our Distance from him, we may require more than his saying *He repents*, and giving us his bare Word and Promise, after they have several Times deceived us. For no *wise Man* would trust to that, which is oftner wrong than right, as every Person's Word is, who hitherto has always failed to keep his Word: And

* Dr. *Lightf.* Hor. Heb. in loc. e Jom.

Christianity in no Case forbids us to be *wise* in our own Concerns, but directs us to be *as subtle as Serpents*, so long as we are careful withal to keep *as innocent as Doves*, Mat. x. 16. It commends us for being *prudent* in Business, and seeing beforehand to prevent *other Mens Sins*, by cutting off from them all Opportunities; and it may be *our own* too, by putting by those Temptations which would *always* trouble and molest our *Peace*, and *often-times* indanger our *Innocence*. So that altho' we are to be very *favourable* in construing the Sufficiency of our Enemies Repentance; yet may we be *discreet* withal, and are not to be *foolishly blind*, and unreasonably easy in approving it. We must only lean to the Side of Favour, when there are such Signs as to a wise Man look towards it; but not rashly conclude he has sufficiently repented, when there are no likely Signs thereof at all. But the Fault of Men seldom lies on this Side, of being *over easy to be fully reconciled*; so that the other, of being *over rigid*, is that which the Generality of Men ought to guard themselves against. And therefore in judging of the Sufficiency of their Repentance, this is the great Rule which we are to take along with us, *viz.* That as it is *one* Part of Charity *fully to forgive our offending Brother*, and re-admit him to our *former Favour*, on his *Repentance*; so it is *another* to be *favourable* in judging whether he has *sufficiently repented*, and given such Proofs thereof as ought to be believed, or no.

As for these farther Effects of Love towards Enemies, and those who have provoked us then, *viz.* *our not barely retaining them in a general Charity and Affection*, as we do *all other Men*, but *re-admitting them to special Trust, Familiarity, and Friendship*, which they had in their *former Station*; they

they are not always *due* to them, nor are at all *proper* to be placed on them, but only when they *repent* and *amend* those Faults and Unfitnesses which made them *unqualified* for the same. So that whilst their *Impenitence* lasts, or that Change doth not *sufficiently* appear to us, we are not obliged to express our Love in these at all.

And since we are not bound to them, nor are guilty of any Sin in omitting them; that Omission can never unfit us for the *Holy Communion*. So that whilst we shew them all the Offices of *general Kindness*, and are wanting in nothing but *special Favours*, which belong not to them in their present Circumstances; we have all the Charity for them which our Lord requires, and therefore, if we have nothing else to hinder us, may readily join in this Feast of Love when God invites us to it.

And this might serve for a sufficient Answer, to those *supposed* Instances of *Uncharitableness* mentioned above, which hinder several *fit* and *worthy* Persons from partaking in this Holy Ordinance. But for their *fuller* Satisfaction in these Points, I will add something concerning each of the *Particulars*.

1. They fear they have not that Charity for *Enemies* and *offensive Persons*, which God's Law requires of them, because *they cannot forget as well as forgive*, but still remember their *Injuries* or *Unkindnesses*.

But did not our *Saviour* himself, that perfect Pattern of Forgiveness, remember *Peter's Denial* of him after he had *bitterly repented* of it? *John* xxi. 15, 16, 17. Did he not sufficiently hint it to him, by questioning him *three Times* about his *Love of him*, answerable to his having *three Times denied him*; that by calling it over upon his Remembrance, he might encrease his Care and
Watch-

Watchfulness against it afterwards? So that it is not the *bare* Remembrance, but remembering them to *evil Purposes*, which is to be blamed in us. When they bear in Mind the Evils which they have received then, let them consider whether they do it to any ill Effect. Do they think of them to *upbraid their Enemies therewith*, or to do them a *Shame for the same*, and sit as *Spies* upon their Actions, only that they may *find Fault*, and *aggravate Miscarriages*, or to return the Ill to them again in transgressing any of those Instances of *common Justice* or *Charity* above recited? If their Remembrance thereof doth not provoke them into any of these sinful Expressions of *Hatred*, and *Ill-will* against them, they need not be troubled at it, for there is no Hurt done thereby. It is not in *their Power*, it may be, to forget the Wrongs they have received; for when the Knowledge of Things is once fix'd in our Minds, though we can forbear to *reflect* and *insist* on them, wherein the great Danger lies, yet can we not lose that Knowledge when we please. So that after we have received an Injury, we are not to be blamed barely for remembering it; since we are no more *able* always wholly to *forget* what has *past*, than we were at *first* to be wholly *ignorant* and *insensible* of it whilst it was present. Nay, in many Cases, if we *could*, it is not *adviseable* that we *should* forget it. For whilst the injurious Person is *impenitent*, and ready to repeat the same again, the Remembrance of the Harm he has done us will do us good, in *quickning our Care*, and making us more *wary* and *watchful* to prevent his doing us any more. But if once he has repented of what he did, so as that he ought to be admitted to his *former State*; then, indeed, it may seem very desirable, that as much as in us lies, we should *forget* it, by giving no Entertainment

tainment or Incouragement to the Thoughts thereof. For the Remembrance then can serve no good Ends, but may prove a very great Snare to us, in making us *backward in Kindness*, or *fit to catch fire on small Provocations*, or *uncandid in interpreting his Words*, or *Actions afterwards*. It will not be our *Sin*, till these, or some other ill Effects are wrought thereby. But it will be our *Temptation*, whereby, it is very like, we shall sometimes be much endangered. So that then it may be very fit to lay it aside, for fear of receiving Hurt by it.

2. They fear that, after an *Unkindness* or *Injury* received, they are not so *charitable* as they ought, because *they think the worse of him who offered it*.

Now if they are *uncandid in judging the injurious Action*, i. e. if they impute it to the worst Cause, and make not those Allowances of *Forgetfulness*, *Over-sight*, and the like, which it would well admit of, and which Love would fix upon it, were it to make the Construction; it is true they are so far wanting in their Duty of *Love to their Enemy*. This, indeed, is hard for us always to avoid, and therefore we must be sure to take the more Care, and keep the stricter Watch against it. And if after all, through *Unwariness*, through an *Accuser's* laying out only the *Interpretations of the ill Side*, or our own *suspicious Temper insensibly leaning towards it*, we are engaged in an uncandid Construction ere we can discover the same: There our *Inconsideration* and *Unadvisedness* will be our Excuse for it. But so soon as ever we can *observe* it, or are shewn how the Action is equally capable of a *favourable Sense*, we must strike in with it, and correct our former *hasty Judgment*. So that if by *thinking worse*, they mean that they think worse than needs of the *Action*, and incur an *uncandid Interpretation*; this is the Sentence which they are

to

to pass upon it. Either it was an *innocently inconsiderate Escape*, and then their *Haste* and *Unadvisedness* will excuse it: Or it was a *known Sin*, i. e. it either was, or, had they not been grossly partial, and evidently bent to think ill, would have been committed with Observation; and then their *Repentance* and *Amendment* must atone for it.

But if by *thinking worse*, they mean, that when the Fact is evidently ill, they have a *worse Opinion of the Person*; there is no want of Charity in that, because their ill Opinion is upon just Cause, and they cannot in reason think better of him. They judge only according to the plain *Truth* of Things, and that the best Souls may safely do, and it is no uncharitable Part in any of them, For thus our *Lord* thought of *Judas*, when he most affectingly suggested to him the Baseness of *his Betraying*, and that too *with a Kiss*, Luke xxii. 48. the Sign of Friendship and Affection. And thus the *Apostles* thought of the *Jews*, whom they looked upon as *wicked Murderers*, Acts ii. 13. and vii. 52. for our Saviour's Crucifixion. And thus St. *Paul* thought of *Peter*, when he blamed him for his *sinful Compliance* and *Diffimulation*, Gal. ii. 11, 12, 13, 14. And thus *God* himself thinks of *us* upon our Miscarriages, for he sees them, and dislikes us for them, and thereby magnifies the Honour of his *Patience* and *loving Kindness*, in that he is good, even to the *Unthankful* and the *Evil*, Luke vi. 35. and shews us Favour notwithstanding them. And thus also may we very *innocently*, and *charitably* too think ill of any others, when they have evidently deserved it, and given us just Occasion for it. For the Work of *Charity*, or Love to others, is not to make us blind in a plain Case, and see no Faults in them when they are clear before us.

For this is *Love without Eyes*, which is by no means the *Love of wise Men*, or the *Charity of Christians*. It is not always possible in Nature, nor could be shewn if we should attempt it. For, when other Mens Faults are evident, there is no way of being dark against the Sun, or shutting out the Light whilst our Eyes are open. But if it always could be done, yet is it not in any wise proper to be *advised*. For if we must see no Hurt in any Persons, it unavoidably destroys all wise *Choice of Friends and Companions, Relations and Dependants*; all seasonable *Counsel and Instruction, Reproof and Admonition*; and so produces most sad Effects, both in *Conversation and Religion*. The Work of Charity to others then, is not to wink against a Fault when it is *apparent*, but not to be *quick in discerning*, and *forward in presuming* it, when there is *no just Cause* to impute any Fault to them. So that if we would be charitable to our Enemies, we must not believe ill of them, till it sufficiently is made out to us; nor conclude them faulty in a doubtful Case, when there are Reasons on both Sides, and they are as likely to be otherwise; nor presume they had an ill Design in that, which lies as open to a good, and might have no Hurt at all in it. In these Cases, where their Offence is not clearly proved, it is Uncharitableness in us to be hasty in believing them to be guilty thereof. But when their *Enmity is profess'd*, and their *Unkindness, or injurious Dealing, is evident*; it is no Duty in any Man to shut his Eyes against the Light, nor any Uncharitableness at all to esteem them the less for it, We may think him a *dishonest Man*, who has wilfully *injured* us; and him a *false Friend* who has *betray'd our Secrets* to our Prejudice, as our Saviour Christ did Judas; and that he is not so kind

to us as he *professes*, who refuses to *do good* to us when he might do it. When we judge of Persons not from *rash Surmises*, but from clear *Evidence* and *Experience*, we may judge as we find Cause ; and if we judge ill of them, it is not because we are inclined to think hardly of them, but because they have deserved to be hardly thought of ; so that our ill Opinion is owing purely to their Faults, and not to any want of Charity in ourselves.

3. Some Persons of *passionate Natures* fear they have not that Charity for Enemies which is requir'd of all good Men, because, when some have been most mischievous to them, *their Hearts are troubled*, and *they are inwardly moved as often as they see them* ; not with any *angry or revengeful Passion*, which would do Hurt to their Enemies, but only with a *sad Remembrance of their own Losses*, which they have sustained by them.

Now where this is really the Case, (and they who are concerned must be faithful to their own Souls in judging whether it be or no) if there be any Fault for them to answer for, it is not *want of Charity towards their Enemies*, but *want of Patience towards God*, and of *Contentment in their own Condition*. They shew no Uncharitableness towards their Enemies thereby, since they have no wrathful Intent to seek their Hurt, nor have the least Desire to return the Injuries which they have suffer'd from their Hands. They are troubled at the *Sight of them*, indeed ; but that is only as they put them in mind of their own Miseries, which they have occasioned. They are grieved to see *them*, as they would be to see the *Picture of a departed Friend*, whose Death went very near to them, *i. e.* only as it calls into their Thoughts that Loss, which is very afflicting. And this *Grief*, whatever it may be with *Impatience*, is not chargeable,

able with any *Uncharitableness* towards our Enemies. For it is no Part of the Charity which we owe them, to be insensible of what befalls ourselves, so that they cannot complain of us for lamenting our own Miseries. Nor can they complain of us for doing it at their Presence, because they being the Cause of all, the Sight of them may well bring it to our Remembrance ; And if we may be sorry at all for our own Unhappiness, we may be allowed to grieve then, especially, when we have those Things before us, which are most apt to represent and suggest it to us.

So long then as they are careful so to *moderate* their Grief for what is lost, (and they must be watchful in this Point) as that it doth not make them *distrust God*, nor *repine* at what he has order'd, nor settle into an *habitual Discontent*, nor is otherwise *sinful or intemperate* ; it need be no Scruple to their Minds, nor hinder them from the Holy Sacrament. They may endeavour to prevent it, both for their own *Ease and Safety*, that they may neither be *pain'd* nor *tempted* therewith : And to this End it may be very adviseable so far as they well may, to avoid the *Presence of the injurious Person*, till they have so well digested their Loss, as that they can look on him without Trouble. But if at any Time they meet, and their Hearts are sorrowful at the Sight ; so long as this Grief is not in itself sinful or intemperate, nor has any angry Motions and Expressions of Revenge accompanying it, they need not be put into Doubts and Scruples with it, since their State is not disturb'd, nor their Souls at all endanger'd thereby.

4. They are afraid they have not such Charity for their Enemies as they ought, because *they are not so free with them, nor repose the same Trust in them*

them as they formerly did, but carry themselves with more *Reserve*, and at a greater *Distance* from them, than they used to do before the Breach was made betwixt them.

But so long as their Enemies are *impenitent*, all this has no Hurt in it: So that they ought not to be hindered from the Holy Sacrament, or affrighted by it. For this Wariness in conversing with our Enemies, is no more than *Christ* himself shew'd in conversing with the *Jews*; who would not walk openly among them, because they sought to kill him, John vii. 1. and chap. xi. 53, 54. It is no more than he taught his *Disciples* to use, when he sent them forth as *Sheep in the midst of Wolves*; for then he bid them take to themselves all the wary *Wisdom* and prudent Care of *Serpents*, Mat. x. 16. Indeed, if any one who injures or offends us, expresses himself sorry for what he has done, and sufficiently repents thereof; we ought, as I have shewn, to admit him to his former State, and to treat him, now he is a *Penitent*, as God doth us, or as *Children* do their *Play-fellows*, i. e. as if he had never sinn'd, but had kept always innocent. But still we see, that we may very lawfully, and very wisely too, withdraw from him our particular *Familiarity*, *Trust*, or *Friendship*. If we find a Person dishonest once, till we see him a new Man, we are not bound to trust him a second Time; for that were to give him an Opportunity of committing, and put us into the Danger of suffering the same again from him. If it is his Temper to fall foul upon us in *Discourse*, or to be passionate, or reproachful upon light Occasions; till it appears that he has learned to act otherwise, we are not bound to use his Company and Acquaintance; for that were not only to throw away our own Ease, but to endanger our own Meekness, Peace,

2

and

and other Virtues, by casting ourselves upon *Temptations*; when as we ought to be so far from seeking them ourselves, that we are taught to *pray daily* against those, which *God's Providence* might allot for us, *Mat. vi. 13.* If he lays wait to *over-reach*, or is industrious to *vex*, or is any ways *uneasy* or *prejudicial* to us in his Conversation, we may lawfully carry ourselves at a Distance from him, till he has reformed those *Vices*, or corrected those *ill Tempers* which harm or annoy us, and shew'd us that now we may come nearer to him with Safety to ourselves. This Distance we may use towards any Persons who offend against us, out of a *natural Love* and *Care* for our *ownselfes*; but if they are our *Children* or *Servants*, or any ways *subject* to us, and *dependant* on us, there is still a more obliging Reason for the same, and that is *their Amendment* and *Reformation* likewise. For when the Fault is great enough to bear it, these Marks of our Displeasure are a necessary Part of *Discipline*, and altogether fit to be used, to make them duly sensible of their Offence, and afraid ever after to repeat it. Which is so far from being an *unkind* Part towards them, that in reality it is the truest Way of *shewing Kindness*, being the most proper Course to amend them, and to bring them back at once to *their former State of Innocence*, and to all Expressions of our *Favour* too.

And thus it appears, that so long as we are careful to shew our Enemies all that *Justice*, *Charity* and *Peace*, which is due to our *Neighbour at large*, and to all other Persons; we have as much Love for them as God requires, though we still remember their *Injuries*, and *Unkindnesses*, or think the *worse* of their *Persons* as we have just Cause, or use more *Reserve*, and keep a greater Distance in our Carriage towards them, and the like, than we did

before they had provoked us. We shew all the Love which is expected, when we are not wanting to them in any Offices of *common Charity and Neighbourhood*. This makes us accepted with Almighty God, and so fits us for the *Holy Sacrament*: So that although we do not admit them to our *particular Esteem and Friendship* whilst they have not sufficiently evidenc'd that *Repentance*, which should qualify them for the same, that ought not to put us back, and hinder us from partaking thereof.

As for *these* Hindrances then, which detain some good People from this *Feast*, viz. their *remembering Injuries*, or *thinking the worse of their Enemies*, or *carrying themselves at a Distance towards them*, or *excluding them from all particular Trust and Confidence*, and the like; so long as they shew them all that Love, which is due to all Men out of *common Charity and Neighbourhood*, and are ready to shew them *more* when their *Repentance* has made them fit to receive it; they ought not in any wise to put them by it. They are no Breach of that Charity which God has required, and therefore do not unfit them for the Holy Sacrament; so that when they are all their Hindrance, they need not stay away, but may chearfully approach thereto.

CH A P. IV.

Of LAW-SUITS.

The CONTENTS.

They are an Hindrance from the Communion, when there is Sin in them. They are not sinful in themselves,

selves, which is shewn, 1. From the Necessity of them. 2. From the Magistrates Office being appointed for them. 3. From God's taking legal Determinations upon himself, as if he were the Author thereof. 4. From Courts erected by Consent in the Apostles Days, which ministered to them. These St. Paul prescribed to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. vi. They are the Assemblies mentioned, James ii. 2, 5. From our Saviour's, and St. Paul's Practice, who, in claiming the Benefit of judicial Process, warranted and authorized it. An Objection from Mat. v. 38, 39, 40. considered: which is shewn, not to condemn defending ourselves in any Case, when others implead us; nor moving Suits in all Cases, but only in case of lighter Losses and Indignities, such as our Saviour there mentions, or making them minister to Revenge in any others, which are of more Importance. And 1 Cor. vi. 7. answered, and shewn to speak only of the same. But they are sinful, 1. When they are begun upon an unjustifiable Ground. Such they always are, 1. When they are vindictive, not reparative; as when we sue insolvent Persons; or others upon such Words or Actions, for which, besides Costs, no Damages that are valuable are like to be allotted us. 2. When they are for Reparation of small Things, which do not countervail the Evils and Hazards of a Suit, but ought to be a Matter of Patience and Forgiveness, and so should be put up without Recourse to Judicatures. In judging of this Smallness, we must not estimate by our own Pride and Passions; but by the Reality of Things, and the Judgment of indifferent, humble, and dispassionate Persons. This is true, not only in case of Injuries to our own selves, but also in case of Trust, when we have the Charge of others. 2. Suits are sinful, when they are carried on by a sinful Management:

As they are, when they make us transgress any of those Duties towards our Adversaries, which oblige us towards all Persons. To avoid all these in suing, is an hard Point: So we must be slow in commencing an Action, and very circumspect when we are forced upon it. The Answer to this Hindrance summ'd up.

BESIDES those Particulars, which I have consider'd in the *last Chapter*, there is another *Want of Charity*, which may seem of greater Weight, and which is most commonly pleaded in Excuse of Mens abstaining from the Holy Sacrament; and that is, the Point of *Law-Suits*. For this is very frequently given as a Reason why Men dare not receive the Communion, because they have a *legal Controversy with their Neighbours, and a Suit depending*.

Now as to *Law-Suits*, when they have *no Sin* in them, they are like all other *indifferent Things*, and *need not hinder Men*: But when they are *sinful*, they are like all other *Sins*, i. e. they unfit us till we shew *Repentance*, and ought to hinder us so long as we continue in them. But as then they are an Hindrance to a *worthy Receiving*; so are they equally to a *worthy Prayer*, and to all *just Hopes of Heaven*. Whilst we go on with them, we cannot pray to God, or think to have our Sins pardon'd, or, should we be snatched away to Judgment in this State, expect to be happy in another World. And this is a State, wherein no considerate Man will persist for one Moment. But when he sees his Suit is so offensive unto God, and brings his eternal Welfare into so great Hazard, he will either learn to manage it more innocently, so as that he may no longer offend thereby; or break it off without Delay, and instantly

stantly put an End to it. And when once he has done this, or is fully purposed in his own Mind so to do; he is again a Friend of God, and fit to join in the Holy Sacrament, as well as in Prayers, or in any other Part of Worship.

Thus doth the *Weight of this Hindrance* from the Holy Communion, lie in the *Innocence*, or *Unlawfulness of the Suit* which is depending. And therefore that Persons *at Law* may know, when they are unfit to communicate till they have put a Stop to their Guilt, and when they are fit for the same, during their *Prosecution of it*: I shall here state the Case of *Law-Suits*, and shew when a *Trial* is our *Fault*, and when it is *faultless*, that so we may know both when we *need not* be hindered from the Holy Table, and also when we *ought to be hindered* thereby.

In pursuit of this, I shall endeavour to clear up these *two Particulars*.

1. *A Suit at Law is not a Thing unlawful in itself, but may be innocent, if nothing else comes in to make a Sin thereof.* But then,

2. *It is our Sin, and a Matter of our Account, when it is either upon an unjustifiable Ground, or carried on by a sinful Management.*

1. I say, *a Suit at Law is not a Thing unlawful in itself, but may be innocent, if nothing else comes in to make a Sin thereof.*

It is no unlawful Thing barely to dispute a Title, or to bring an Action; it is in some Cases allowed, as well as in others it is prohibited: So that a Man may be faultless who has a Suit, unless something more comes in to make him a Transgressor. The Offence lies not in the *Nature* of it, so as to be inseparable from the *Thing*; but only in the *Cause*, or in the *Manner of suing*. For as St. Paul said of the *Law of God* among the

Jews, so may we of the *Laws* of our *several Countries*, the *Law* is a good Thing, if a *Man* use it lawfully, 1 Tim. i. 8. it is no Sin to use it, or take the Benefit of it; but only to transgress some other Precept, or join some other Sin therewith, when we do make use thereof.

Now this may appear,

1. From the *Necessity of Law-Suits*.
2. From the *Magistrates Office* being appointed for them.
3. From *God's taking a legal Determination upon himself, as if he were the Author thereof*.
4. From *Courts* being erected by Consent in the *Apostles Days*, to minister thereto.
5. From the *Practice of our Blessed Saviour, and St. Paul, who claimed the Benefit of Judicial Process*, and thereby plainly warranted and authorized it.

1. It appears, I say, from the *Necessity of Law-suits*. A *Trial at Law* must needs be innocent in itself when nothing else corrupts it, because it is a Thing which we cannot want, and there is no living in this World without it. For take away *Law*, which would secure *innocent Mens Properties*, and bridle all *envious, angry, spiteful, covetous, insolent, and ambitious Mens rapacious, and encroaching Humours*: And, since all Places are fully stored with these injurious Tempers (the Wicked being by far the greatest Numbers) the *Quiet and Conscientious* must flee into *Woods and Deserts*; or, if they stay to associate with others, they will every where become a *Prey*, to their *greedy, and usurping Neighbours*. If there were no *Laws* to protect them, there were no living in this World for good Men; and in effect there would be no *Laws*, if it were a Sin in them to cry a *Title*, or right themselves by them. For no
I
Man,

Man, who had a Mind to do wrong, would be aw'd from doing it, by a Law that is always to be a Sword in a Scabbard, and must never be pleaded against him, or executed upon him, when he transgresses it. The Use of Law then in this World, is absolutely necessary to *all Society*, to *keep Peace* and *Justice* in all Converse, and to *protect* and *encourage* all such as desire to *serve God*, and to be *conscientious*. And since there is that Necessity of it for God's Service, and all virtuous Ends; it cannot in its own Nature be a Thing offensive, and unlawful to us. It cannot be itself a Sin, which God has made so absolutely necessary to keep all others out: It must needs be allowed by him, since without it, his own Ends of Peace and Justice cannot be attain'd. It is at least sure an *innocent*, if not a *good* Thing, which gives the only Protection to all Goodness, and without which there is no living for good Men in Societies, where they may do God publick Service, and draw in others, nor indeed any safe Abode for them upon the Earth at all.

2. That a Suit *at Law* is not *sinful in itself*, but may sometimes be *innocent*, appears from the *Magistrates Office being appointed for it*.

One Part of the Magistrates Office lies, indeed, in *protecting* his Subjects against all *foreign Force* and *Invasions*. But his most *ordinary* and *constant* Work, is to *administer Justice*, and *maintain Peace* among *themselves*, which is done by *bearing Causes*, and *judging in all Controversies and Arraignments*, giving Sentence on the Side which the Law favours, and where the Right lies. Thus is it the Magistrates Office, to *bear Causes or Suits at Law*, and to *decide* them. And this Work he doth not assume to himself, either *without*, or *against* God's Liking; but *according to his Appointment*, and altogether

together with his Approbation. For by me, says Wisdom, Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice, Prov. viii. 15. And the Powers that be, says St. Paul, are appointed of God, they are God's Ordinance, Rom. xiii. 1, 2. And since God himself appoints them to hear our Causes; we may well presume that he will not look upon it as our Sin to bring them to their Hearing. For God would never appoint an Ordinance to minister only to Mens Sins, and to put them in a Way of multiplying Offences; so that since he has appointed Officers to hear it, a Suit at Law in itself must needs be innocent, and capable to be carried on without any Sin at all.

Nay, God has not only appointed the Magistrates Office for it: But moreover,

3. When a legal Determination is given, he takes it upon himself, as if he were the Author thereof; which is still a farther Evidence, that we do not sin, barely in seeking such a Determination of our Case.

He takes a legal Determination, I say, upon himself, as if he were the Author thereof. In the Jewish State, God was their political Prince and Sovereign, and the Judges among them were as much his Deputies, and did represent his Person, as now the Judges do the Persons of their several Princes in all other Nations. And therefore Moses told them when he appointed them, that the Judgment was God's, and that they gave Sentence only as his Deputies, and judg'd not for themselves, but for the Lord, Deut. i. 17.

Now, though other Nations cannot look upon God as their secular King, and State-Head in all those Points which the Jews could, for he gave them Laws in Civil Affairs, and issued out Directions in State Enigences, and the like: Yet as to
this

this they can, that *all their Governors* are but *Substitutes under him*, and that he owns what is legally, and justly determined by them. For, the *Magistrate* he looks upon, as his *Minister* and *Vicegerent*, who doth all Things in his Name and Stead; the *Power*, says *St. Paul*, is the *Minister of God*, *Rom. xiii. 4.* And since he acts as *his Servant*, he takes his judicial Determination upon himself, as if it were his own, and he were the Author of it. For this he doth plainly in *criminal Causes*, and the Case is the same in other *judicial Causes* which are not *criminal*. When any Man is wrong'd, saith he, let him not *avenge himself*, for *Vengeance is mine*, *I will repay it*, i. e. by the Magistrate, who is my *Avenger to execute Wrath*, so that when he punishes, you may look upon it as if I had done it, *Rom. xii. 19.* and *xiii. 4.*

And since a legal Determination is owned by God himself, as if he were the Author thereof, we may be sure whilst all Things else are right, that there is no Hurt barely in our seeking to have our Cause so determined. It can be no Sin to ask what God grants, for *he bears not Sinners* in their Sins, *John ix. 31.* nor can it give any Offence in a controverted Case, to appeal to his own Sentence. So that since in all legal Determinations it is God himself, who by his Ministers passes Judgment; we may be assured that we do not displease him in applying ourselves thereto, when there is just Cause for us to do so.

4. That a *Suit at Law*, and all *judicial Process*, is not in itself a *Sin*, appears from *Courts being erected by Consent in the Apostles Days*, for the *Management and Conduct of them*.

Now that such Courts were then erected, I shall shew from *two Places*; one of *St. Paul*, wherein

wherein he *prescribes* them; and another of St. James, wherein he makes *mention* of them.

1. It appears from one Place in St. Paul, wherein he *prescribes* them; and that is 1 Cor. vi. where he orders the *Corinthians* to appoint *Courts of Judgment* among themselves, that so they might have no Need to expose their Religion, by impleading one another before the *Heathen Tribunals*. Do ye not know, says he, that the *Saints* shall judge the *World*? And if the *World* shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the *smallest Matters*, or unworthy of the *smallest Judicatures**; If then ye have Judgment of Things pertaining to this *Life*, or if ye have Recourse to secular Judicatures†; go not before Unbelievers, but set some, yea, rather than Infidels, those that are least esteemed, or set at nought in the Church‡, set them, I say, to judge, or in the § Chair of Judgment, ver. 2, 3.

Thus doth he advise them to erect among themselves standing Courts by *Consent*, when, by Reason of the Civil Power being in Heathens Hands, they could not otherwise be supplied in their own Body with Seats of Judgment.

2. It appears also from another Place in St. James, wherein he makes *mention* of them: And that is Jam. ii. 2, 3, 4. If there come into your Assembly or Synagogue**, a Man with a Gold Ring, &c. into your Assembly, i. e. your judicial Court, where the Respect of Persons here taxed, was not to be permitted.

That the Word here rendered *Assembly*††, or *Synagogue*, signifies sometimes more particularly

* Κριτηρίων ἐλαχίστων.

βιωτικῶν.

† Ἐξουθετημένους.

** Συναγωγῆν.

†† Συναγωγῆν.

† Ἐὰν κερτίαια ἔχητε

‡ Τότους καθίζετε.

Court-Assemblies, and *judicial Consistories*, appears from *Mat. x. 17.* where our Saviour tells his Disciples of being *delivered up to Consistories*, and *scourged in their Synagogues* *, i. e. in their *Judgment Halls*. And so also *Mat. xxii 34.*

And that it ought to signify such *Consistories* and *Court-Assemblies* (which were then used both in *Ecclesiastical* and *Civil Affairs*) in this Place, appears both from the *Thing itself*, and from *several Particulars* here spoken of *these Assemblies*, which seem to determine it to that Signification.

The Thing itself, I say, seems to require that we understand the *Apostle* in this Sense, viz. the *Exclusion of Preference of Persons*. For in these *Assemblies* *St. James* condemns all *Respect of Persons*, and *Discrimination of Rich and Poor*, by giving *Honour* according to *Peoples Qualities*; which was unlawful only in *Judicatures*, but is a *Duty in Conversation* and *common Carriage*. For it is an *Apostolical Precept*, to give *Honour to whom Honour is due*, *Rom. xiii. 7.* And those *Servants* who have believing *Masters*, are forbid to withdraw any *Thing* of their worldly *Respect*, as presuming upon their spiritual Kindred; or to *honour them the less*, because they are become their *Brethren* in being *Believers*, *1 Tim. vi. 2.* So that altho' in *Judgment-Seats*, not *Mens Qualities*, but *Causes* only ought to be respected; yet in other *Assemblies*, a *Regard* may be given to their *Persons*, and it is commendable so to do.

And *several Particulars* here spoken of *these Assemblies*, seem to determine his *Meaning* to these *Court-Assemblies*. For the *Offenders* here taxed with respecting *Persons* in these *Assemblies*, are said to have a *Footstool*, which belongs to *Chairs of State* and *Judicatures*.

* Ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς.

For

For so the Apostle expresses himself, *ver. 3. Ye have Respect to him that wears the gay Cloathing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good Place; and say to the Poor, Stand thou there, or sit under my Footstool.* And this is a probable Intimation of their *Dignity and Authority* in the Place where they fate. For *Footstools* ordinarily are Appendages only of the *Chairs of great Persons*, who have Power and Superiority over others, as of *Princes* on their *Thrones*, and *Judges upon Tribunals*.

They are said also to give evil Judgment, i. e. to pass Sentence on the wrong Side, as he is like to do who tries not *Things*, but *Persons*, and determines from *By-respects*, not from the *Merits of the Cause* which is to be decided. By this *Respect of Persons*, says he, *Ye are become Judges of evil Thoughts*, i. e. you give evil and perverse Judgments, *ver. 4.*

They are likewise said to pass Sentence on the poor Man's Cause, without deliberating on it, or debating it. *Ye say to the Rich, saith he, Sit thou here; and to the Poor, Stand thou at a Distance there: * And ye are not doubtful, or debate his Cause in or † among yourselves, but are Judges of evil Thoughts, or give perverse Judgments; for so the Words are most naturally rendred, and not,*

* So the Greek is literally to be rendered. The Words are *ὃς ἐ διακρίθη ἐν ἑαυτοῖς*, and ye have not disputed it among yourselves, not, are ye not partial in yourselves? By way of Interrogation, as we translate it. For *ὃς* is wont to ask a Question, only when it is put first, not when it has another Word before it, as *ὃς* is here. And *διακρίθη* in the Passive, signifies not ye have made a Difference, or acted partially, which is expressed by the Active *διακρίνεν*: But ye have not been in doubt or dispute about it, which is a Signification that agrees to it ordinarily. For so it is rendered, *Mat. xxi. 21. Mark xi. 23. Rom. iv. 20. James i. 6. and in other Places.*

† *Ἐν ἑαυτοῖς.*

as we do, are ye not partial in yourselves, and Judges of evil Thoughts? ver. 3, 4. And this shews plainly, that their *Respect of Persons* was expressed in judicial Process, in giving rash Sentence in Favour of the Rich, without ever staying to hear the Plea, or weigh the Reasons of the Poors Cause.

They are said in the last Place, to transgress the Law in this regarding Persons, and treating them differently, according to the Difference of their outward State and Condition. When in this different Carriage towards Rich and Poor, ye have *Respect of Persons*, says he, ye commit Sin, and are convinced of the Law, which plainly forbids such Practice, as Transgressors, ver. 3, 9. And this seems clearly to restrain it to their Court-Assemblies. For in Judgment there is a Law forbidding all Respect of Persons, *Ye shall not respect Persons in Judgment, but ye shall hear the Small as well as the Great*, Deut. i. 17. and Lev. xix. 15. But there is no Law that forbids it, yea, rather, since St. Paul enjoins us to give Honour where Honour is due, and directs Servants to pay never the less, but rather more Reverence to their Masters, because they are Believers, and would not have * Confusion introduced, but Order kept up in the Church, as well as in other Places, there may seem enough, not only to warrant, but to recommend it in all other Cases. Besides, what is still a farther Evidence of this Point, they are said particularly to transgress the Law in bidding the Rich to sit, and the Poor to stand, ver. 3, 9. which, as a † great Man observes, was a Thing expressly forbid by a Canon of the Jews to all who sate in Judgment. For that required in all Suits and judicial Trials betwixt Rich and Poor, that either both should

* 1 Cor. xiv. 13.

† Dr. Ham. Annot. in loc.

stand,

stand, or both should sit. Which is a Thing, as he adds, that the *Jews* observe at this Day in hearing Causes; for there, if one presuming upon his Quality, *takes a Seat*, the Judge presently says to the other, *Sit thou down also.*

And thus I think it appears, that the *Assemblies*, which St. James mentions in this intricate Place, are *Court-Assemblies*, and *Judicial Consistories*; both because *the Nature of the Thing seems to require it, viz. the Exclusion of all Preference or Respect of Persons*, which is taxed in these Courts, but is not censurable elsewhere, and also because he says several Things of *these Assemblies*, which seem to determine his Discourse to *Assemblies of Judicature*. For they are said to be *such Assemblies*, wherein is a *Foot-stool*, the usual Appendant to *Chairs of State*, and *Seats of Judgment*; wherein *Men were Judges of evil Thoughts*, i. e. judged wrong, and gave *perverse Sentence*; wherein they condemned the *poor Man's Cause* without deliberating on it, and debating it; wherein to respect *Persons* was forbid by a plain Law, as we find there is a very express one forbidding it in *judicial Proceedings*, but none at all, nay, rather the contrary in all other Cases; and, lastly, such wherein to bid a rich Man sit, and a poor Man stand, was a *Transgression of a Precept*, as in *Court Assemblies* it was plainly, being an express Canon of the *Jews in Judgment*. By all which I suppose it may appear, that *judicial Consistories* are the *Assemblies* here intended.

Thus were *Judicatures prescribed*, and *ordinarily used* in the Apostles Days. St. Paul appoints the *Corinthians* to erect them; and St. James makes mention of them as of an ordinary Thing among them; and that too without passing any Mark of Dislike upon the Courts themselves, when he blames

blames that Partiality and Respect of Persons which the Judges shewed therein. These *Judicatures*, indeed, were erected by their own Consent among themselves; and were not imposed on them by *Power* and *Authority*, as other *legal Tribunals* are. But they serv'd for the same End of *hearing Causes*, and *passing such Sentence as should take Effect*, and *put an End to Controversies*, as other *Judgment Seats* do; so that the same Thing was done by them in suing in *their Courts*, which is now done by us in suing in *ours*. In our *Judgment Halls*, it is true, where Things are managed by Advocates, who oftentimes seek *Conquest* and not *Justice*, and ransack all Reserves of Law to support an unrighteous Cause, as long as *Craft* can do it; there is more Room for ill Arts, which bring more Sin into our *Pleadings*. But that is not a Fault inseparable from *Suits*, but is the Sin of *Managers*; it lies not naturally upon the *Thing*, but only upon the *contingent Circumstances* and *Manner of doing*; so that if we are careful to keep it free from them, a Suit in itself may still be innocent, and carried on as lawfully in our *Courts*, as it was in those of the Apostles Days.

And as this Lawfulness of Judicial Process, appears from these *legal Courts* erected to minister to it in the Apostle's Days; so doth it yet farther,

5. From the *Practice of our Blessed Saviour*, and of *St. Paul*, who both claimed the Benefit of it; and thereby plainly warranted and authorized it.

Our *Blessed Lord himself*, I say, claimed the Benefit of it. For when the Officer, in the *High Priest's* Presence, struck him with the *Palm of his Hand*, he openly complains of the Illegality of the Act, and expostulates before him for a Redress thereof. *If I have spoken Evil*, says he, testify

Q

against

against me, and *bear Witness of the Evil*; but if well, *why smitest thou me?* John xviii. 22, 23.

And after him St. *Paul* was not afraid to plead his own Cause, and serve himself of Law, when others went about to use him with Violence, contrary to it. For when the chief Captain ordered him to be *scourged uncondemned*, he pleads the *legal Privilege* of a *Roman*, who ought not to be treated so, *Acts* xxii. 24, 25. And when the Magistrates of *Philippi*, contrary to a Law and Privilege, had *scourged him* and *Silas*, without any Hearing of their Cause; he threatens them for it, and would not put it up, unless in Compensation they would *come themselves* in Person to *release them out of Prison*, and do them Honour before all the Multitude, *Acts* xvi. 36, 37, 38, 39. Nay, he uses all *wise Arts of Law* to maintain a *righteous Cause*, and when he was not like to have *Justice* done him in one Court, he protests against it, and claims the Benefit of *Appeal* to another. For when *Festus*, willing to do the Jews a Pleasure, would have had him go up to be judg'd before him at Jerusalem, in the Way whereto the Jews had design'd to murder him; he answered, *I stand at Cæsar's Judgment Seat, where I ought to be judged; if I have committed any Thing worthy of Death, I refuse not to die; but if there be none of these Things whereof these accuse me, as thou very well knowest the Law of the Empire is my Protection, and no Man may deliver me unto them, I appeal unto Cæsar, Acts* xxv. 3, 9, 10, 11.

And thus, from all these Considerations it appears, that a Suit at Law is not a Thing unalterably evil, and *unlawful in itself*; but may very innocently be carried on, if on Sin mixes with it to turn it into a Transgression. It is a Thing which God has allowed when we have *just Cause* for it,
and

and are guilty of *no Vice* in the *Course* and *Conduct* thereof. For he *himself* has put us into a *Necessity* of it, and *has appointed* the *Magistrate's Office* for it, and takes upon himself the just Judgment which is given therein ; and, when Christians became a distinct Body, Courts were set up by the Order of the *Apostles themselves*, to minister to *Judicial Process* ; and, as it fell in their Way, our *Blessed Lord*, and *St. Paul* too, have serv'd their own Turns thereby. By all which it is plain, that a *Course of Law* may sometimes be innocently used, since otherwise *God* and these *Good Men*, could never have been thus concerned about it.

But against all this some may urge *two Places*, which seem to take away all Suits among Christians, and to forbid all legal Defence, by requiring a patient Sufferance of all Losses and Indignities, which should occasion them. One is, *Mat. v. 39.* in Point of *Indignities* ; the other is *Mat. v. 40.* and *1 Cor. vi. 7.* in Point of *Losses* and *Spoil of Goods*. And if both these must be suffered with *Patience*, without any legal Defence or Righting of ourselves ; what is there left to be Matter of Civil Causes, for us to sue and contend for ?

These Pleas seem fair, and therefore it is fit they should have an Answer.

One Place seems to forbid all Suits and legal Righting of ourselves, in case of *Affronts* and *Indignities* ; and that is, *Mat. v. 38, 39.* We have heard, says our Saviour, that it hath been said in the Law of *Moses*, an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth : i. e. When any one had offered these Violences to them, they were allowed by judicial Process (this Law of Retaliation being directed to the Judges, *Exod. xxi. 23, 24.*) to inflict the very same on them again. But in Opposition to this,

I say unto you, resist not Evil, or the evil Man, not only forcibly by private Violence, but also legally by publick Process, for so the Word † rendered Resist sometimes ‡ signifies, and its Opposition to these legal Retaliations among the Jews here imports. But whosoever shall smite thee on the right Cheek, turn to him the other. And so again in case of Losses and Spoil of Goods, ver. 40. If any Man will sue thee at the Law, and take away thy Coat, or || inner Garment; rather than contend with him for that, hazard a further Loss, and let him take thy Cloak §, or upper Garment also. Conformable whereto the Apostle tells the Corinthians, that they are utterly in a Fault, in not suffering themselves to be defrauded, but seeking Remedy by a Suit, or going to Law at all, 1 Cor. vi. 7.*

Now in Answer to these Places, I observe,

1. That *they are not meant literally, and absolutely, of turning the Cheek to all Smiters, or yielding our Goods to all ravenous Incroachers; nor forbid us at any time to serve ourselves of Law, when we are brought before Tribunals. For this our Blessed Lord himself did, as we have seen when the Officer struck him before the High-Priest; he offers not himself for another Blow, but argues against the Illegality of what he had received already, John xviii. 22, 23. And this St. Paul did, when the chief Captain would have scourged him uncondemned; he pleads the Privilege of a Roman, which ought to secure him from being so hardly treated, Acts xxii. 25.*

* Τῷ πονηρῷ.

† Ἀντιστῆναι.

‡ As, Jer. xlix. 19. who will appoint me the Time, or as it is rendered in the Margin, convent me to plead; which the LXX expresses by Τίς ἀντισησέαι μοι; And so again, Chap. l. 44.

|| Χιτῶνα.

§ Ἰμάτιον.

And

And this he did again, when *Festus* would have sent him to *Jerusalem* to be tried; he *appeals to Cæsar*, and claims the Benefit of his *Judgment-Seat*, where he ought to be judged, *Acts* xxv. 9, 10, 11. They did not invite fresh Injuries, by laying themselves open to them; but stood upon their own Defence, and legally withstood them. So that these Precepts, are not to be taken in the literal Compass (in which Sense *St. Paul*, yea, and *Christ himself* too, would have been Transgressors) nor so as to forbid us to serve ourselves of Law at any Time when we are brought before Tribunals: Since *St. Paul*, who very well understood them, nay, our Blessed Lord, who to the Height fulfilled them, have taught and authorized us by their Example to serve ourselves thereof.

Nay, they do not forbid us in all Cases to bring others before Magistrates, and seek unto Judicatories to right ourselves: For *St. Paul* did something towards this, in his Contest with the *Philippian Magistrates*. Where, though he was an Offender against the Laws, yet in regard they had treated him illegally, in scourging him and *Silas* uncondemned, against the Privilege of *Romans*, he terrifies them with their illegal Proceedings, and would not put it up, till they compounded with him upon his own Terms, and brought him honourably out of Prison, in the Eyes of all the Citizens, *Acts* xvi. 36, 37, 38, 39. Besides, as I have already shewn, that this seeking to Judicatures is sometimes lawful among Christians, is evident from the *Law-Courts* in the *Apostles Days*, which were prescribed by the Apostles themselves for this very Purpose; it is clear, from its own Necessity, since there is no living in this World, for honest and conscientious Men, without it; from God's having appointed an Officer on purpose, the Magistrate I mean, to take

Care of it; and from his taking a *just Law Determination* upon himself, as if he were the *Author* thereof. So that *some seeking unto Courts*, and judicial Endeavours to right ourselves, are still *innocent*; and therefore *all* cannot be here *prohibited*.

As for these Places then, they are not meant *literally* and *absolutely* of turning our *Cheek* to all *Smiters*, or of yielding our *Goods* to all *ravenous Encroachers*: They do not forbid us at *any Time* to serve ourselves of *Law*, when others *unjustly implead* us; nor at *all Times* to *seek unto Magistrates*, and *implead others*. But,

2. They are meant *proverbially*, and only forbid *MOVING Suits* in *lighter Losses* and *Indignities*, such as our *Lord* there mentions; or making *Law* the *Minister of Revenge* in any others which are of more *Importance*.

They require *Patience*, and forbid *MOVING Suits* in *lighter Losses* and *Indignities*. To turn the *Cheek* to a *Smiter*, is a *proverbial Speech*, which denotes our *calm Endurance* and *patient bearing* of *Injuries*. And so the afflicted Man's patient *Carriage* is expressed, *Lam. iii.—he giveth his Cheek to him that smiteth him*, ver. 30. And to let him that *sues for the Coat*, i. e. the * *Shirt* or inner *Garment*, *take the Cloak also*, is a *proverbial Phrase* too (for in the *Truth* of the *Letter*, a *Shirt* is no likely *Matter* of a *Law-Suit*) and signifies an *uncontesting Sufferance* of such *small Losses*, though that may expose us to bear some others, and those more *weighty* ones. So that when our *Saviour* bids us *give the other Cheek to the Smiter*, and the *upper Garment to him that has taken away the inner*, i. e. to venture the inviting him to a *second Injury* by his *Success*, rather than to engage in *Variance*:

His Meaning is, that in *these*, or such other *light* Injuries, which either leave *no permanent Effect*, or only such as may be borne without any great *Prejudice*, we should exercise our *Patience*, and not go to Law, either to *recompence the past*, or to *prevent future* Sufferings. And therefore if in *these smaller Matters* we enter Actions, and implead others, that indeed is our *Sin*; since here he enjoins us *charitably* and *patiently* to bear them, and not to commence Suits for them; as I shall shew more fully hereafter in its proper Place.

And as they forbid *all Suits* in *these* smaller Matters; so do they all *Malice*, and *making the Law* the Instrument of *Revenge* in any others which are of more Importance. *We have heard*, saith our Saviour, *that it hath been said an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth*, i. e. they who had suffered Evil, were allowed in Course of Law to return it, when as in these Instances mentioned, they had no other Benefit thereby, but only the Pleasure of seeing him smart who had occasioned their Sufferings; which is properly revenging the Injury they had received, for to *revenge* an Injury, is in *Hatred* to return it. *But in Opposition* to this, *I say unto you* (so that Revenge being the Thing there allowed, it must also in this Opposition be the Thing here prohibited) *resist not Evil*, i. e. in any kind of Resistance, which is revenging it as they might: *But whosoever shall smite thee on the right Check, turn to him the other, &c.* i. e. Be readier to suffer another Injury, than spitefully to commence a Suit, or in any sort to revenge that which is received already, ver. 38, 39, 40.

As for this Place in *St. Matthew* then, it forbids us not to *defend ourselves* by Law in any Case, nor in all Cases, to *bring an Action*, and *implead others*. But it only forbids Suits in *lighter Losses* and *Indignities*,

nties, such as our Lord there mentions, and making the Law the *Instrument of Revenge in weightier Matters.*

And the same is to be said of that Passage of St. Paul, 1 Cor. vi. where after having taxed both the Sin and Scandal of impleading each other before Unbelievers, he adds moreover: *Now there is utterly a Fault among you, because ye go to Law one with another. Why do ye not rather take Wrong? Why do ye not suffer yourselves to be defrauded?* ver. 7. In which Words the Apostle doth not speak as a Publisher of a new Law, but only as a Teacher and Monitor of what his Lord and Master had taught before. And the Words are not to be taken in their utmost Latitude, more than the forementioned Words of our Blessed Saviour were, or made to forbid this Way of legal Defence of one Christian against another, universally and in all Cases: But they are to be restrained to little Causes, as a Prohibition against Litigiousness, or running to Law, as the *Corinthians* then were wont to do, for light and tolerable Injuries.

This *Littleness of their Causes*, he taxes, ver. 2. *If the World shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest Matters?* or, according to the more literal Rendering, * *in the smallest Judicatures, i. e. in Courts set up for hearing or determining small Causes?* And he refers to it again, I conceive, ver. 4. when he sends them for Arbitrations and Decisions of the Differences then current among them, to *those who are least esteemed in the Church, i. e. to those of the least Note*, not in the Rank of Christians, but † in the Rank of Judges, or to such inferiour Courts, or Arbitrators, as set to hear and decide the lowest or slightest Matters.

* Κριταρίων ἐλαχίστων.
i. e.

† See Dr. Lightf. *Hor. Heb.*

And indeed these *Corinthians*, whose Law Suits he here condemns, seem at that Time to have been very litigious, and apt to quarrel, or go to Law on small and slender Pretences. The Apostle taxes them for their Contentiousness in his *two Epistles* to them. And in this Place he reproves them, as Persons who were ready to make use of Law, not only to redress Injuries, but also to commit them, and who were neither willing to do Right nor to take Wrong. Instead of *suffering yourselves to be defrauded*, saith he, *ye do Wrong, and defraud, and that your Brethren*, ver. 8. So that among those Persons, *going to Law was utterly a Fault*, being ordinarily on such Accounts, as were too light for the Hearing of Courts or Umpires, and should have exercised their Christian Charity and Patience. Indeed if we take away Suits for tolerable Injuries, and for Gratification of angry Passions, we should cut off the greatest Part of those Causes which are wont to trouble Courts, and to divide Neighbourhoods; and the ordinary State of Christians, would be a State of Peace and Patience, and Suits would become rare Things among them. And this Restraint and Inhibition of Suits at Law, viz. the Prohibition of going to Law ordinarily, by the usual Latitude of Speech in moral Rules and Maxims, which are uttered indefinitely, though they be intended only for the most Part, may be call'd by an indefinite Speech, *not going to Law*, as St. Paul calls it in this Place, or *not resisting Evil*, as our Blessed Lord was pleased to express himself when he spake thereof.

And in this Sense it might be said of the Primitive Christians, as *Athenagoras* doth, that * *when their Goods were taken away by Violence, they did*

* Παύμενοι μὴ ἀντιτάττειν, ἀπαζόμενοι μὴ διώζεσθαι.
Athenag. Legat. p. 12.

not go to Law for Redress, because they did not do it for any tolerable Injuries, which made up the Number of Actions that troubled the Courts, and were the common Causes of Suits to others. Besides which, the greatest Part of the Violences they fell under, were Losses for their Religion, which the Heathens took Occasion to offer and put upon 'em, because they were under a general Odium, and instead of punishing the Magistrates, might be willing to connive, or sometimes to encourage what was done against them; which Sufferings coming on on them for his Cause, and with such Countenance both from Courts and Rulers, they did not seek to redress them by Law, but bore them with Patience, and trusted to God for their Recompence.

As for these Places then, which seem to forbid Suits, either on *Losses* or *Indignities*, they do not forbid them *absolutely*, and in *all* Cases. They only forbid us to fly to them in *smaller* Matters, such as our Saviour mentions; or to make them a *Means of Revenge* in *great* Ones. So that there is still Room left for *Suits at Law* in Case of greater Injuries; which, although all good Men may and will several Times put up, without seeking a legal Redress, when by such patient Sufferance they can serve the Purposes of Piety and Prudence: yet, when the Assertion, or Prosecution of their own just Rights therein, is of considerable Account to themselves or their Families, or is fit and requisite for wise and good Ends; they may safely call in the Help of Law to indemnify themselves, and seek to Courts without any Offence to God, or Wrong to a good Conscience.

And thus it appears, that Suits at *Law* are not *sinful in themselves*, but may lawfully be used, if there is no Unlawfulness in the *Ground*, and *Way of Management*. The Thing itself has no Sin in it,
and

and so may be innocent, if we take Care that no other Sin doth adhere to it. So that barely to try a Title, is no Matter of any Man's Account, nor has any Offence in it all.

But although Suits *at Law* are not thus unlawful in themselves, but may sometimes be innocent : Yet as I said,

2. *They are our Sin, and a Matter of our Account, when they are either enter'd upon an unjustifiable Ground, or are carried on by a sinful Management.*

1. I say, *Suits at Law are our Sin, and a Matter of our Account, when they are begun upon an unjustifiable Ground.*

It is not every Cause that usually begets it, which can warrant and justify a *Law Suit* before God. For sometimes Men are led on to it only by *Revenge*, when they have no lasting Damage to be repaired, but seek only their Brother's Smart, and to be even with him who occasioned theirs : And then the Suit must needs be unlawful, having a *Sin* at the Bottom of it. And at other Times, when there is a *real Damage*, yet it is so *trivial*, as that the Making of it up will not countervail the Evils and Temptations of a Suit : and then it will be sinful still, as wanting a Ground of so much Weight, as can bear the Burthen of it. For a Trial *at Law*, besides its being a *costly* and *painful* Thing, is also a very *perillous State*, and a *dangerous Temptation*. It will be sure to put the Person whom we sue, to much *Trouble* and *Pains*, in *collecting and examining Evidences*, *preparing Witnesses*, *informing Advocates*, and *attending Courts*, which is *Toil* in itself, and an *Hindrance* to better Business ; and in the whole Course and Conduct of it, it will put him to *constant Charges* and *Expence*. And it will be a *State of great Temptation*,

tion, both to *him* and to *ourselves*, insnaring us, unless we are very circumspect to prevent the same, into *covetous Wishes*, or *Delays of Justice*, or *vexatious Arts*, or *uncharitable Surmises*, and *revengeful Thoughts*, or *deceitful Suggestions* and *Falsifications*, *hypocritically disguising the Weakness* of our own Cause, or *unreasonably aggravating the Flaws* of our *Adversaries* to our own Profit and his Prejudice, and the like. These Sins are ever before Men whilst a Suit is depending; they have constant Opportunities for them, and are perpetually provoked to them; and it must be a *great Conduct* and *Proof*, both of their *Skill* and *Care*, that must preserve them from being intangled and engaged in them. And since there is so *much Toil* attending a Law Suit, so *great Charge* occasion'd by it, and so *many Temptations* and *great Dangers*, both to our *own Souls*, and our *Brother's*, laid in the *Way* thereof; it must not be a *light Thing*, but a *weighty Cause* indeed, which can over-balance all these Considerations, and justly draw us to commence it.

But in this Point to be more Particular. Suits are *unlawfully* entred, when they are begun, either,

1. *For Revenge*, and not for *Reparation of Damages*. Or,

2. When for *Reparation* only of *small Things*, which cannot *countervail the Evil and Hazard* of a Suit, but ought to exercise our *Patience* and *Forgiveness*, and so be put up without *Recourse to Judicatures*.

1st. I say, Suits are *unlawfully* entred, when they are *vindictive*, not *Reparative*, and are begun only for *Revenge*, not for *Reparation of Damages*. And this they always are, when they are commenced either against *insolvent Persons*; or upon such *Words* and *Actions* against others, for which, besides *Costs*,

no Damages that are valuable, are like to be allowed us.

They are not *reparative*, but *vindictive*, when they are commenced against *insolvent Persons*. When we *sue a poor Man*, who cannot pay what he owes, or recompence the Wrongs which he has done us, it is not that our own Sore may be heal'd, but only that his Smart may be wrought by the legal Process. For the Law doth not make him coin Money who has it not, but only forces him to pay it, who has it, but will not part with it. To put a *Beggar* in Prison, and run him out at Law to the utmost, is not the Way to put Money in his Pocket ; so that when we have to do with such a Person, it is only Revenge upon him, and not the Compensation of our Loss, which we can propose to ourselves thereby. If we go to right ourselves by the Law then upon an insolvent Man, we go only to return the Hurt which he has done, and to be even with him. And this is a great Instance of an *hard Heart*, and a *spiteful Spirit* ; and is quite contrary to that *brotherly Kindness*, *Compassion*, and *Forgiveness*, which how *unworthy* soever he may be of it, yet, so long as the *Misery* of his *Case* requires it, God has enjoyn'd us to use towards him. It is exactly to deal with him, as the *wicked Man* did with his *insolvent Brother* in the *Parable*, which provoked God to return the same Rigor upon his own Head again. For when he owed his Lord ten thousand Talents, he freely forgave him that great Debt, because he was not able to pay it. But when his *Fellow-Servant*, who owed him only an hundred Pence, could not tender down that small Sum when he demanded the same, he shewed nothing of that Compassion towards this poor Man which God had shewn towards him, but laid Hands on him, and cast him into Prison till

Payment

Payment should be made. But when the *Fellow-Servants* told this to their Lord, he resolves to deal with him in his own Way, and strictly *exacts* that Debt, which otherwise he intended freely to have *acquitted, delivering him*, as he had done his *Brother, to the Tormentors*, till all should be discharged. And so likewise shall my heavenly Father do to you, says our Saviour, if ye from your Hearts forgive not every one his Brother their *Trespases*, Mat. xviii. ver. 24. to chap. 19.

And what I have here said of insolvent Persons, has Place likewise more or less, according to the Degree of their Necessity and of our Ability, in others whom we are obliged in Charity to spare. A good Christian must be a charitable Person, who must avoid doing, not only an unjust, but also a rigorous and hard Thing. And in righting of himself, he must consider, not only what satisfies his own just Claims from others, but also what suits with his Ability and Christian Obligation of shewing Compassion towards them. And therefore in legal Seisures and righting himself on those, who, tho' not perfectly insolvent, are yet very necessitous, a good Man will not be hasty in going to Extremities; nor, when he doth, will he take all away from them, and neither leave them Cloaths to wear, nor a Bed to lie on. He will deal with them with Moderation and Tendernefs, and have a due Regard to the Supply of their Needs, as well as to the Satisfaction of his own Claims. Being put to right himself upon the Needy, he will look upon it as a Call from God to Charity, and make compassionate Abatements, more or less, according as he has more or less of that noble Disposition, which in Tendernefs for others, as St. Paul says, *seeks not her own*, 1 Cor. xiii. 5. and according as his own Ability, and the Degree of their Necessity may require. But

But if they are commenced against *responsible* Persons, they are not *reparative*, but *vindictive* still, if they are upon *such Words or Actions*, for which besides *Costs*, no *Damages* that are valuable are like to be allowed us. A great Number of Suits are for *abusive Words*, or a *Box on the Ear*, or other *trivial Matters*, which leave no *permanent ill Effects*, but if our *Passions* may be withheld from estimating them, pass off without making us the *worse*, or doing us *any Prejudice*. And in all these, since there is no Damage that sticks to us, there is no *Need* of any *Reparations*. So that if we begin Suits, it is not to *indemnify ourselves*, but to be *vexatious*, and *afflict others who have afflicted us*, wherein consists the very Nature of *Revenge*.

And this is always *unlawful*, and most expressly forbidden to all us *Christians*: To the *Jews*, indeed, it was allowed in the *Old Testament*: For they were permitted to *return Ill for Ill*, and to demand *an Eye for an Eye*, and a *Tooth for a Tooth*, when thereby their own lost Member was not restored, but only their Adversary's was sent after it, and, bating the Pleasure of *Revenge*, they reaped no other Benefit by it, *Mat. v. 38*. But this is most strictly forbidden to all us *Christians* in the *New Testament*. For we are taught to *recompence to no Man Evil for Evil*, but to *overcome Evil with Good*, *Rom. xii. 17, 20, 21*. — to *forgive those that trespass against us*, i. e. not to return their injurious or hard Usage, as ever we expect *Forgiveness of our own Trespases at God's Hands*, *Mat. vi. 12, 14, 15*. And particularly in Opposition to this going to *Law for Revenge*, our Saviour forbids us *judicially to resist the evil Man*, as has been shewn, i. e. in Course of Law, to return the Evil on him, as by Virtue of that Rule,
an

an Eye for an Eye, &c. the *Jews* did: But, instead of that, by the Phrase of turning *one Cheek to him who has struck the other*, he requires that we patiently submit, and sit down under it, *Mat. v. 38, 39, 40.*

This then is the *first* Thing which God requires to the Lawfulness of all judicial Trials, *viz.* they must never be *vindictive* but *reparative*, and we must not sue another in order to *his Smart and Prejudice*, but only to *heal or secure our own selves*, either by *holding the Goods* which he *claims* from us, or by *repairing the Loss*, which he has *occasioned* to us.

2. Suits for *Reparation of Losses* are unlawful, when the Reparations are only of *small Things*, which cannot *countervail the Evils and Hazards of a Suit*, but ought to exercise our *Patience and Forgiveness*, and so be quietly put up without Recourse thereto.

In the Course of *secular Wisdom*, indeed, which looks only to secure the Concerns of *this World*, when Men are *rich or potent*, and have *Wealth and Interest* enough to go thro' therewith, the *smallest Affronts or Infringment of their just Power and Privilege*, are often-times esteemed a sufficient Occasion of a *Law-suit*. For thereby they think they stop the *first Breach* in their *own Right*, which, if it be suffered to be once made, as it is in the Breach of a *Water-Bank*, or a *fortified Wall*, it is after that a much easier Thing to widen it. They *check an incroaching Humour* in the Bud, before it has got Heart, or Ground enough to make a greater Contest. And they shew the World that they are not of a *yielding Temper* which will be *wrong'd or baffled*; and thereby strike an *Awe*, which will keep all others from attempting them, and purchase their own *Quiet*. Upon these, or
such

such like *secular Maxims*, when nothing but the Interest of this World guides Men, they many Times conclude that the slightest Wrongs are not to be put up; and therefore, when in any trivial Thing their Right is invaded, they betake themselves to Course of Law, for Maintenance and Vindication thereof.

But in *Religion* the Case is alter'd. For that seeks not only what is fit to *secure ourselves*, and maintain our *worldly Rights*; but what is fit to maintain an *universal Innocence*, and to shew *Charity* towards *others*. Its main Work lies in lessening the Love of this World, and making us easy to part with any Enjoyment of this Life, when it becomes inconsistent with any Duty, and endangers our Passage to a better. And therefore, altho' *secular Wisdom* would, perhaps, sometimes advise us, yet will *true Religion* altogether forbid us to go to *Law* for *trivial Losses*. For a Suit at Law, as I have noted, will put our *Adversary* to great *Cost* and *Pains*; and since in Christianity he is our *Neighbour* and our *Brother*, this we ought not to do for little Things, whereby we shall not gain near so much as he loses; for this is not according to the Commandment, *to love him as ourselves*, Mat. xxii. 39. Nay, it will be a *great Snare* both to *his Virtue* and *ours*; for altho' it be no State of *direct Sin*, yet it is a State of very *dangerous Temptation*, there being so many Ways to offend while a Suit is carrying on, and it being so very hard to avoid them without great Conduct and Circumspection. And this also we ought not lightly to cast either in the Way of our *own Souls*, or of our *Brother's*. Yea, we shall not do it, if we have any of that *tender Love* and *Care for Souls* which *Christ* has shew'd, and which he requires us to shew, when, upon a Prospect of saving them, he

commands us not only to *bear a Reproach*, or to *part with our Substance*, but even to *lay down our own Lives for others*, 1 John iii. 16.

Thus, when the Damages to be repaired are but of *small Account*, and the Trouble and Charges of the Suit will take much more from him than we are like to get by it; out of our *tender Care of all Persons*, whom God commands us to *love as we do ourselves*; and out of our *Love to each other's Souls*, and a Desire to keep both *ourselves and them from dangerous Temptations*, which would rob us of our *Innocence* (a Thing that ought not to be hazarded for *trifling Regards*) we ought *patiently to bear the Loss*, and not seek out by Law to redress it. And this, as I have intimated, is what our Saviour has expressly commanded, Mat. v. *If one smite thee on the right Cheek*, which is a tolerable Affront, *turn to him the other also*, or expose thyself to be smitten again, rather than resist it judicially. *And if any Man sue thee at the Law, to take away thy Coat*, or inner Garment, a Thing that may easily be spared, hazard an higher Loss, and *let him take thy Cloak also*, rather than sue to regain it, ver. 38, 39, 40. So that rather than sue to recover little Matters, and enter Actions for small Reparations; we must be content to want them, and sit down without any Repairs at all.

And in rating, when Things are thus *little and frivolous*, we must not judge by our own *Pride and Passions*, which count nothing little, but aggrandize every Affront or Injury that is done to our own selves: But by the *Reality of Things*, and according as we *ourselves* should judge, were we humble and dispassionate, or as they would be judged of by *other holy and indifferent Persons*. Our own *Pride*, and the *Opinions of the World*,

World, would whisper to us, that every *Trepass* against us is intolerable, and deserves a *Proceſs*; every *Imputation* of a *Lie*, a *Stab*; and every actionable *Affront*, a *Suit* at least, if not a *Challenge*. But *Pride* and *Passion*, and the *Opinions* of the *World*, must not be our *Counsellors*: For we renounced them at our *Baptism*, when we were first made *Christians*; and if we would please God, they must not sway us, but ought daily to be mortified and subdued in us. And since they are so much our *Sin*, and so directly against our *baptismal Vow* and *Profession*; we must not think to excuse ourselves for going to Law on little *Losses* and *Indignities*, by saying they seemed great according to their *Representation* of them. In judging then what are little Things, we must not be governed by our own *Pride* and *Passions*, but by the *Reality* of Things, and the *Judgments* of *dispassionate*, *humble* Persons. And this our Lord plainly shews, by setting down a *Box on the Ear*, (which in reality doth no Hurt, nor leaves any permanent Effect behind it) among those *light* Indignities which ought not to be a Matter of a *Suit*, though every where the *Pride* and *Passions* of Men, and particularly at that Time the *Haughtiness* of the *Jews*, thought it a great Thing, which ought by all Means to have Satisfaction made for it. For this, as a * learned Man observes, was their Rule about it. *Doth any Person give his Neighbour a Box on the Ear? let him give him a Shilling, yea, says Rabbi Judah, a Pound; or if it were upon the Cheek, let him give him two hundred † Zuzes to make Amends for it. Nay, if he give him another Box, he ought to give him four hundred to recompence*

* Dr. Lightf. Hor. Heb. in Mat. v. 39.

† i. e. in English Coin, 6 l. 5 s.

it. So great did they think the Indignity to a Jewish Man, esteeming all their own Nation, as he observes from Maimonides, even those of the most beggarly Condition, to be Gentlemen, because they were all the Children of Abraham.

And thus it appears when a Suit is unlawful upon this first Account, *viz. its entring upon an unjustifiable Ground.* For such it is in all Cases, when we bring an Action only for *Revenge*, and not for *Reparation of Damages*; or when for the *Reparation of such small Things*, as ought not to expose us to all the *Evils and Temptations* of a *judicial Process*, but to exercise our *Patience and Forgiveness*; which *Smallness* of Things is to be rated, not by *Mens Pride and Passions*, which esteem no Ill small that is done to themselves, but by the *Reality of Things*, and the *Judgment of humble and dispassionate Persons.*

And this holds true, not only in Losses and Indignities offered to *ourselves*; but also in the Case of *Trust*, when they are offered to *others* who are committed to our Care and Guardianship. For when Suits are *sinful*, as we have seen they are in the Case of *Revenge*, and of *lighter Affronts and Injuries*, which Christ commands us not to redress by Law, but to bear with *Patience*: I see no Difference, but an *equal Unlawfulness*, whether we sue upon our *own*, or upon their Accounts. For surely our taking of a *Trust*, doth not ingage us to *disobey* our Lord, or do any *evil Thing*; but only to do all that for our Charge which we can do for them, as *good Christians and honest Men.* And therefore in *lighter Matters*, when Suits are *sinful*, we may no more sue for them, than we can tell a *Lie*, or *swear* an unlawful Oath, or *over-reach* in their Cause, or be guilty of any *other Transgression.* If they were come up to act in *their own Name*,

in these Cases a *judicial Trial* would not be *lawful*, but a *Sin* in them: And where they themselves could not sue, we must not think that *we*, who act only as their *Proxies* and *Representatives*, may do it for them. If these Losses and Indignities, which are shewed to them, were offered to *ourselves*, we ought not to commence an Action, but to be patient under them; and they have no Reason in the World to think us wanting either in our *Trust*, or *Friendship*, when we do all that to the utmost in *their* Case, which we durst do in *our own*.

So far then as Suits are *sinful*, and the putting up Injuries without entring Actions for Reparation thereof is a *strict Duty*, as it plainly is in case of *lighter Losses* and *Indignities*; it equally obliges us in *Trust for others*, as in our *own Business*. Where it is no *Duty*, indeed, and where a Suit is not a *Sin*, though Forbearance might shew a greater Height of Christian Patience and Perfection, as it is sometimes in the Case of *greater Injuries*, there is a Difference; and though it were commendable still to refrain in our *own* Case, yet it is not in *theirs*. In the former Instances, to forbear is a *necessary* Point, having an express Precept for it; and necessary Things may be done for them by those who represent them, without their *own* Consent and Approbation. But in these Cases where it is no Sin, to forbear is no *necessary Duty*, but a *voluntary Act*: And it is no Part of our Trust to perform voluntary Heights, and unrequired Generosities at their Cost; but if these be done, they must be left to themselves, when, by making it a Matter of their *own Choice*, they themselves may have the *Virtue*, and the *Reward* of it. So far then, as the putting up an Injury without a Suit is no *strict Duty*, but only a *Free-will Offering*, and

a *voluntary Act*, it must not be done in *their* Case; though it were much to be commended in our own. But when Patience is a Duty, and Suits are *sinful*, whether it be *their* Concern, or *ours*, it matters not, for *both* are *equal*. We must be *faithful to our Lord*, and observe the Duties of *Patience, Peace, Forgiveness*, and all other Laws of God, in acting for *others* as well as for *ourselves*. So that when there is no justifiable Ground of Suit, we must abstain from it, whether it be for *publick* or *private* Ends, whether it be only our *Charge*, or *we* ourselves that are concerned therein. And this I have noted for the Use of those, who, I think, are much out in this Point. For there are several, who *would*, or at least *pretend they would* bear much in their *own Business*, who will bear nothing at all, and yet think they are not *litigious*, in commencing Suits for every Trifle, when they are in *Trust for others*.

But as some Suits are thus *unlawful*, because *they are upon an unjustifiable Ground*; so, when the *Grounds* are good, are others *unlawful*.

2. Because *they are carried on by a sinful Management*.

A Suit at Law is a very *dangerous State*, and has *strong Temptations* to several Sins accompanying it. And if, when there is *just Cause* for it, any of these are incurr'd in the *Management* thereof, it is our *Sin* still, and we shall be put to answer for it.

To shew what these are, and when Suits are unlawful upon this Account, I observe, that when we have an Action against any Man, we must for all that look upon him as our *Neighbour*, and *love him as ourselves*, paying him all that *Justice, Peace, and Charity*, which are due to all Persons. And this is hard to do, when Men pursue any *Controversies* wherein their Interest is concerned; especially, when they are *publick*, and, if they do not succeed,

ucceed, the Eyes of the World look on to see them worsted, as it is in *Law-Suits*. For then *Conquest* is the End which is ordinarily sought, and in Prosecution of that, *Mens Passions* generally are engaged; and *both* these are opposite to the *Love of others*, and seek only to *please ourselves*, and so push us on to transgress this great *Law of Charity* in several Instances. Where *Conquest* is the End, there is much *Emulation* and *Strife* to gain it; and where *Envy*, or *Emulation* * and *Strife* is, saith St. James, *there is Confusion, and every evil Work*, James iii. 16. And where *Passion* is high, and *Anger* is once moved, there a *Law of Love* is not like to be observed; for, as the same Apostle says, *the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God*, James i. 20. And since *Law-Suits* generally have both these attending them, they do too often lead the *Litigants*, God knows, into many Breaches of *Justice*, *Peace*, and *Charity* towards each other, particularly into these following :

If their Cause is *bad*, they use *Delays* to tire out their Adversaries ; they *feign Pleas* to gain Time for themselves, and *insist* upon *Punctilio's* in his *Proceedings*, wholly *foreign* to the *Merits* of the Cause, to make him begin all afresh, and hunt out all *Reserves of Law* to *prolong the Suit*, and *suspend the Sentence*. And this, besides its being most *opposite* to *Love* and *Brotherly-kindness*, and being a Course most *uncharitable* and *vexatious*, is also a most *unjust* Thing, being a doing *Wrong* as far as in them lies, and endeavouring, what they can, to put an Hindrance and Stop to *Justice*.

And whether it be *good* or *bad*, they generally incur many *Sins* in pursuing their Cause, and fall

into sundry Instances of *Injustice* and *Uncharitableness* to succeed in the same.

They have a *longing Desire to overcome*, and to have the Verdict pass for them, be it *Right* or *Wrong*; which is *coveting other Mens Goods*, against the Law of the *tenth* Commandment, *Exod. xx. 17.* And this disposes them to *judge* all in *Favour* of their *own Right*, and to *fret* and *murmur* when they have lost the Verdict, and to *suspect* (if not *complain*) of *Injustice* in the Judge and Jury, who were concerned therein; against the plain Duty of *Patience*, *Reverence to Governors*, and *meek Submission* under Judgment.

They watch their Opportunity to *take Advantage* of their Adversary's *Over-sight*, or to bring the Trial on at a Time when he doth not *expect* it, or is *unprepared* for it; which is not only against the great Law of *Charity*, that, as *St. Paul* saith, *seeks not her own* at other Mens Hurt, *1 Cor. xiii. 5.* but also against *Justice*, which forbids defrauding, or *going beyond our Brother in any Matter*, when we can *over-reach* and *out-wit* him in the same, *1 Thess. iv. 6.*

They suggest *false Pleas*, or supply Circumstances out of their own Heads in favour of their own Cause, and, when a little more would do it, stretch beyond the Truth, to help out an Evidence, and make the Matter full to serve their Purpose; which is clearly against the Duty of *Simplicity*, and *speaking the plain Truth with our Neighbour*.

They have an *inward Hatred* against their Adversaries, which makes them *envious* at any Good, and glad of any Ill that doth befall them, especially in the Process of the Cause, and which renders them apt to *surmise ill Things* of them, and *defame* them as often as they can find a fit Occasion
so

so to do, and to watch all Opportunities of being *revenged* upon them, and to burst out into *Anger* and *exasperating Carriage*, *Strife*, and *Variance*, *Clamour* and *bitter Words* against them, upon any the least Provocation. All which are directly contrary to the great Duty of Love and Charity, which *rejoices with them that do rejoice, and weeps with them that weep*; Rom. xii. 15. which *suffers long and is kind*, which *thinketh no Evil*, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5. which *renders Good for Evil*, Rom. xii. 17, 21. which *puts away all Bitterness, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil-speaking, with all Malice*, Eph. iv. 31. and engages us, so far as it is possible, and as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with all Men, Rom. xii. 18.

Lastly, They love to be vexatious, and cut out Work for their Adversaries, deferring a Trial several Terms for no other End, but to make them throw away both their Money and Pains in attending to prevent a Surprise; or putting them to prove needless Things, which influence not the Merits of the Cause; or insisting on every Fetch of Law, that may be an Hindrance in their Way, though it is no way necessary to the main Business; or studying other mischievous Arts of creating them Trouble, and being vexatious; which is absolutely against the *loving of our Neighbour as ourselves*, and having a *Brotherly-kindness*, and doing *Good as we have Opportunity to all Persons*, Gal. vi. 10. and is that very Sin which St. Paul mentions, and which he expresses by *Wickedness* or *Mischievousness*, i. e. a Studying to do Mischief, and make * Work for others, Rom. i. 29.

Thus, to mention no more, are all these *Prolongations of Suits, and Delays of Justice*, these co-

* Πονηρία ὁ ἐκ πλεονεκειῶν εἰς τινα παρὰ τὸ ἀντὶ τὸν ὀνόμενον. *Suid.*

vetous Desires, and Acts of Impatience, these Arts of Circumvention and going beyond our Adversaries, these deceitful Suggestions and Falsifications in Pleadings, these mischievous and vexatious Ways, this Hatred, Envy, Evil-speakings and Surmises, Anger, Bitterness, Strife Clamour, Revenge, &c. which are so ordinarily the Concomitants of judicial Causes, most unlawful and forbidden Things; so that whensoever we have any Suits depending, we sin in them, if any of these do intrude and mix therewith. A judicial Controversy that is begun upon a justifiable Ground, will not be innocent if it is carried on by so unjustifiable a Management. And therefore to clear our Consciences in all legal Trials, we must take care, not only that, after all other Means of righting ourselves have fail'd, the Suit be commenced for a *Thing of Weight*, which is a *justifiable Ground*; but also that it be pursued in Ways of all this *Justice, Charity, and Peace*, which makes a *justifiable Management*. For it is not enough that the Cause be good, unless the Manner of maintaining it be good too.

This, I must confess, is an hard Point, because in managing a Suit we are in the Way of so many Sins, and meet at every turn with strong Temptations, which must needs very much endanger us. For all the Way these Sins lie before us; so that unless we have a constant Care, we shall step into them. They generally serve our Ends, and set on the Cause; so that we are still under a Temptation to them. And, what thro' our own Interest and Desire of Conquest, what thro' the Opposition which is made, unless we are very circumspect, our Passions will be engaged; and then, more or less, we shall be hurried into the Commission of them. So that if no Suit be innocent where the Ground is good, except all these
Sins

Sins be avoided in the Management ; it will be a very hard Thing, may some say, to sue innocently, and appeal to Courts at all.

This, indeed, is very true, and I am ready to confess so too. For though some *even temper'd* Men, who are endowed not only with great *Goodness*, but also with great *Discretion* and *Government of themselves*, may do it with some Ease, and not find it *very difficult* ; yet are those Men very few in Number, who are so well set out, and qualified for an irreprehensible Management of Law Suits. But ordinarily it is a very difficult Task, and there is great Danger of offending God attending the same. For I think there is hardly any thing, that shews more the *Conduct* and *Goodness* of a Man, than to be able to keep innocent whilst he is put upon contending, and so to manage a *Suit*, or *other Contest*, as that his own Conscience shall have no Cause to *accuse* or *condemn* him for it when he has done. But then the Effect of this can be nothing else, but that Men be very *slow* in coming to a Suit *at Law* ; and very *circumspect* in all they do, when in a Thing of Weight, after other Means have been tried in vain, they cannot avoid it. It must make them *slow* in coming to it, I say. And this, besides its quitting them of the *Hazard*, will, I believe, make also for their *Ease* ; for they will generally find less Difficulty in *bearing their Loss*, than in *keeping themselves innocent*, whilst they seek *judicially to repair it*. But when the Thing is of so great Weight, that a Suit cannot well be avoided ; it must make them very *circumspect* and watchful over themselves all the Time it is going on, lest they incur any of these Sins in Pursuit thereof. The Greatness of their Care must answer to the Greatness of the Danger, so that they must resolve to set a strict Guard
upon

upon themselves in suing, or else not venture to begin any Suit at all.

And thus it appears, that although in *itself*, a Suit at Law be an innocent Thing; yet, when it is either begun upon an *unjustifiable Ground*, or carried on by a *sinful Management*, it is not innocent, but defiles the Conscience of a Christian. It is our *Sin*, and we must account for it, when we seek *Revenge* thereby, or *Reparation* of a Thing so *small* as cannot bear to have a Suit commenced for it; or if it be a *weighty Matter*, when we seek to have our Loss repaired, by *Delays of Justice*, *Falsifications*, *vexatious Arts*, or any other Instances of *Injustice*, or *Uncharitableness*, which is a *sinful Way of managing our Suit*: When this is the State of our Case, there is a great Offence in it. And whilst that lasts, it deprives us of the *Favour of God*, and ought to exclude us from the Holy Sacrament. Whereas, were it free of *these*, there would be no Hurt in suing, nor any Cause at all why a good Soul should be hindred from the Holy Table thereby.

As for this Hindrance then, whereby devout Minds are oft times withheld from coming to this Holy Feast, *viz.* their *being engaged in a Suit at Law*; we see now at length what Weight is to be laid upon it, and when indeed they ought to be hindred by it. For if there are no *Damages* to be expected in the Cause, but we sue only for *Revenge*; or if, when there are, they are so *small* as will not bear a Suit, but ought to be a Matter of *Forgiveness*; or if, when the Loss is of that Moment which would justify a Suit, we transgress any Instances of *Justice* or *Charity* in managing the Process; our Suit is our Sin, which will not be forgiven us till we shew *Repentance of the same*. When it is unlawful upon the *Unjustifiableness of the Ground*,

Ground, we sin in it till we *put an End* to it ; and when it is so upon some particular *Injustice*, or *Uncharitableness* in the *Way of Management*, we sin in it till *that Particular is corrected and amended*. And so long as we are impenitent in either of *these*, we are *unfit* for the Holy Sacrament, since no Man, who allows himself in any Sin, is worthy to partake of it. But then we are equally unfit to *pray*, or perform any other *religious Service*, or *hope for the Forgiveness of our Sins* and *eternal Happiness* ; because, as I have formerly observ'd, *Justice, Peace, and Charity*, and other Virtues, are equally necessary in all these Cases. If our Suit then is either upon an *unwarrantable Ground*, or sinful in the *Way of Management* ; so long as this Sin *lasts* and is unamended, we are *unworthy to communicate*. But then that is not all, for so we are also to *die*, to *pray*, or to have any *spiritual Peace*, or *Comfort*. And this is a State which no wise Man will persist in for one Moment, but, whensoever he lays it to Heart, he will forthwith repent and get out of it ; and when once that is done, this Hindrance is removed, and he may be welcome to feast with Christ at the Holy Table. But if the Suit is innocent in *both* these Respects, and none of these Sins do adhere to it ; if there is a *weighty Loss* to be repaired, or a *weighty Right* to be got thereby ; and we are in all Points *just, charitable, and peaceable* in looking after that Right ; or if, when we happen to fail in any Instance we do in that, as we do in all other Slips of our *daily Converse*, viz. Watch better the next Time, and *immediately repent* of our Failure ; then has a Suit *no Offence to God*, nor any Hurt at all in it ; and so unfits us not for *any good Thing*, and then surely not for the *Blessed Sacrament*. When this is our Case, our having a Trial at Law depending,

depending, need no more hinder us from Communicating, than from any other Business. So that if there is nothing else to discourage us, we may safely come to the Lord's Table, and expect to be kindly entertained by him when we do.

CHAP. V.

Of three other Hindrances.

THE CONTENTS.

A Seventh Hindrance is, because others are not in Charity with them, so that they are afraid lest they want that Peace which is required of all worthy Receivers. As for other Mens Uncharitableness, it is their Sin, and so unfits them; but not being ours, it unfits not us for Receiving. If that ought to exclude any from the Holy Sacrament, it had excluded our Saviour Christ and his Apostles, and the primitive Christians, since none had ever such implacable Enemies as they had. Care to be taken that their Enmity to us be not continued thro' our own Fault; so that if we have given them just Occasion, we must endeavour a Reconciliation; and if we gave them none, we must be careful not to hate them again. An Eighth Hindrance is, because it is a Presumption in us to come to this Holy Feast, and therefore an humble Man ought in all Modesty to abstain from it. But, 1. It is no Presumption to come when we are called, and to do what we are bidden. 2. It is a very great Presumption to stay away, and leave it undone. 3. If the Height of Privilege and Honour vouchsafed to us therein, be sufficient to make an humble
Man

Man refuse the Communion; it will also carry him to renounce the whole Christian Profession. A Ninth Hindrance is, because many good People are seldom or never seen there, so that they have good Company, and may be good too, if they abstain from it. But, 1. In enquiring after our own Duty, we are not to ask whether others practise it, but whether Christ has any where enjoined that it should be practised. 2. If any good People keep from the Sacrament, that is no Part of their Goodness, so that therein they are not to be imitated. 3. Tho' they might be acceptably good whilst they were afraid to come to it, thro' innocent Scruples and honest Ignorance; yet will it be a very great Fault even in them, to neglect it after they are better informed, which will not be forgiven, but upon their Amendment thereof.

A Seventh Hindrance which keeps back several Persons from the Holy Sacrament is, because *altho' they be with others, yet others are not in Charity with them; and therefore they are afraid lest they want that Peace which is required of all worthy Receivers.*

Now if this ought to hinder them from the Holy Communion, it ought equally to be their Hindrance from Prayers, and all Devotion; since there is the same Necessity in them all, as I have noted, of Peace and Reconciliation with our Brethren, *Mat. v. 23, 24.*

But if this be really their Case, it need not hinder them. For if *other Men will hate us, do what we can, that is our Unhappiness, indeed, whilst we suffer under it: But it is not our Fault, nor renders us ever the worse in the Eyes of Almighty God, since we have done nothing to deserve their Hatred, nor is it in our Power to help it.*

it. God commands us to *love our Enemies*; so that if we *bate* them we sin, and are justly kept back by our *own Uncharitableness*. But he nowhere commands us to *make our Enemies love us*: So that if after all they will still bear Enmity towards us, that is only *their own Sin*, and therefore whatever it do with *them*, it ought not in any Reason to be *our Hindrance*.

And indeed if it ought, it would much more have hindred our Saviour *Christ* and his *Apostles* from communicating, than now it can any *other* Persons; because none of those who stick at this Impediment, have any Enemies so bitter and implacable as *they found theirs*. For the *Jews* hated *him* so far, as to seek his *Life*, and at last, in most barbarous Sort, obtained their Purpose. And he tells his *Disciples*, that the Time was coming, when *every one that killed them*, would think that therein he approved himself a Friend of Religion, and *did God good Service*, John xvi. 2. And this they all found by sad Experience, being accounted, as St. Paul says, *the very Filth of the World, and the Off-scouring of all Things*, i. e. Nuisances as necessary to be swept away, as Dirt out of the Streets, 1 Cor. iv. 13. and accordingly being persecuted in every Place, till they had laid down their Lives for Christ's Sake, and the Gospels. Thus were they reputed as *publick Enemies* of all Countries, and hated of all Men as the vilest Miscreants, who breath'd Infection wheresoever they came, and were the common Pest of all Places. And therefore if this be a sufficient Hindrance from the Holy Communion, that *others bate us*, it should always have hindred, and utterly excommunicated our Saviour *Christ*, and his *Holy Apostles*, and all the *Christians* of the *first Times*, who, being always implacably hated, and most spitefully

spitefully persecuted, upon this Account, ought always to have abstain'd, and not to have receiv'd at all.

As for *others being out of Charity with us* therefore, that ought not to be *our Hindrance*. But then we must take Care that *we be in Charity with them*, and that their Hatred to us be not either begot or continued through any *Offence or Fault* of ours ; else we shall be kept back thro' our own *Uncharitableness*. So that if we gave *just Cause* for their wrathful Indignation, we must endeavour a *Reconciliation*, by *confessing our Fault*, and *repairing the Wrong* which we did to them, or if we gave *none*, we must still be careful to *love them*, though they will not be persuaded to *love us*, and not harbour any *Enmity or Hatred* towards them again.

If *we have given just Cause*, I say, for their *wrathful Indignation*, through any *Injuries or Offences* of ours, we must endeavour a *Reconciliation*, by *confessing our Fault*, and *repairing the Wrong* which we did to them. When we have done any thing whereat they are displeased, if they have no Reason for it, we should seek to rectify their Mistakes about it, and inform them better : But if they *have*, we must give them all proper Satisfaction, and make a just Amends for it. If the Offence be by Reason of our *Affronts or contumelious Carriage* ; we must *acknowledge our Fault to them*, and *promise to do so no more*, and *ask their Forgiveness* : And if we have *injuriously prejudiced* them in their *Estates, Good Names, or Business* ; we must, as far as in us lies, *repair the Loss* which they have sustain'd by us. And this God expects from us, before he will accept of our Offerings, or be pleas'd with us in any Ordinance. *When thou bringest thy Gift to the Altar*, says our

S

Saviour,

Saviour, and there remembreſt that thy Brother hath aught againſt thee, go thy way, firſt be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift, Mat. v. 23, 24.

But if they hate us, when we gave them no Cauſe, nor have in any wiſe deſerved it of them ; yet muſt we ſtill be careful to love them, though they will not be perſuaded to love us, and not harbour any Enmity, or Hatred towards them again.

We muſt love them, I ſay ; not with that Degree of Love, indeed, wherewith we embrace our particular Friends, and thoſe who have better deſerved of us ; but with that, which we owe in common to all Perſons. We muſt have ſo much Affection for them, as will reſtrain us both from doing, and ſpeaking Evil of them, and make us exerciſe that Juſtice, and ſhew that common Kindneſs towards them in all Converſation, which is due from us to the promiſcuous Multitude of other Men. For all theſe Inſtances of general Charity, are due to our very Enemies, as I have already ſhewn. So that when they are unmoveable in their Hatred, and perſiſt in their malicious Ways ; yet muſt not that provoke us into any ſpiteful Returns, or chaſe us into any hard Speeches, or injurious or unkind Carriage towards them again.

An Eighth Hindrance, which holds back ſeveral Perſons from coming to this Holy Feaſt, notwithstanding it is ſo much both their Duty and their Privilege, as I have ſhewn, to join therein ; is, becauſe it looks like an high Preſumption in us to feaſt on the Body and Blood of our Sovereign Lord, and to eat at the ſame Table with Almighty God ; and therefore, ſay they, an humble Man ought in all Modeſty to abſtain from it. I have already conſidered, that Unworthineſs, which reſpects the Manner of Receiving, and answered thoſe, who urge that they are
unworthy

unworthy to communicate, meaning thereby, that they want that *Height of virtuous and devout Tempers*, which they apprehend to be required thereto. But this Unworthiness, is not from the Want of such *due Dispositions*, or from the *Indecency in the unsuitable Receiving* ; but from the *inaccessible Height and Greatness of the Thing*, which they think is so far above us, that *fit or unfit*, no Person is worthy of it, but that it is Boldness in any one to touch Things so surpassing high and excellent. But to satisfy these Persons, who think it a Piece of *Arrogance and Presumption* to come to this Holy Sacrament, when the Lord not only *requests*, but *commands* them to come, I shall suggest to them these *three Things*.

I. *It is no Presumption to come to this Feast when we are called, and to do what we are bidden.* If we should intrude of our *own Accord*, and come uninvited, we might be too *bold*, indeed, and very *rudely arrogant*. But when we are particularly sent to, and called to come, especially if there be, as in this Case there is, great Earnestness and Importance in the Invitation ; it is the Part of an humble Man to comply therewith, and he is not guilty of the least Shew of *Arrogance and Ill-breeding* in so doing. There is *Civility* shewn sometimes in *accepting* as well as in *offering Kindnesses*, and it is *Good-manners* to *receive what God would have us*, yea, indeed, to accept any thing from the Hand of our *Betters*. So that in all *Civility and inoffensive Carriage* we were bound to come, had we nothing more than a *Friendly Invitation*. But besides that, God has expressly enjoin'd, as I have observ'd, and peremptorily required it of us : So that now we must approach to this Holy Table, not only out of *Civility and Respect*, but also out of *Obedience* to his Holy Commandment. And

true Humility is no Hindrance, but the greatest Furthurance in the World to such a Service ; it being not the Part of a *presumptuous*, but of a *truly humble* Man to do what he is bidden, and to please those whom he is bound in Duty to obey.

It is no Presumption then to come to the Holy Sacrament when we are called, and to do what we are bidden. But,

2. It is a *very great Boldness and Presumption to stay away, and leave what he bids us do undone.* He is no *proud* Man who *accepts* a Kindness when it is *offered*, and he is *earnestly invited* to it : But he may shew *Pride and Haughtiness* enough, who *slights and despises* it. And he is no *bold* Man, that doth what he is *commanded* ; but he shews *Boldness*, and *presumes*, indeed, that dare venture to *transgress* it. There are no Men so bold and presumptuous with God, as they who will act what he forbids, and refuse to do what he enjoins them. So that it is truly an high Presumption to stay away, when he has expressly charged us, both upon our *Duty* and our *Love* for him, to join in the Holy Communion.

3. If the *Height of Privilege and Honour, which is vouchsafed to us therein, be sufficient to make an humble modest Man refuse the Communion* ; since his whole Religion is made up of *high Characters and honourable Privileges*, it will not rest in that alone, but will carry him on equally to renounce the whole *Christian Profession*. What thinks he of *Holy Baptism*, wherein he was made not only a *Servant*, but a *Child of God* ; not only a *Friend*, but a *Brother and joint Heir with Christ* ; and an *Inheritor*, not of a *small Estate*, but of a *Kingdom*, and that no *cheap or fading* one neither, but of the *Kingdom of Heaven* ? What thinks he of the *Happiness of another Life*, wherein God will fill us with unutterable

unutterable Joys, and adorn us with Crowns and Scepters, and take us, as our Saviour says, into the *same Throne with himself*, Rev. iii. 21. What thinks he of his *Redemption* and the Rate it cost, not being obtainable unless *God's only Son* would come down from Heaven and be made Man, and pay down his *own Life* for it? Are not *all these* as superlatively high Things, and as much above us, as *feasting with God in the Communion* is? Is it not as great a *Presumption* in us to become *God's Sons*, and to inherit *Kingdoms*, and to hope for *Crowns*, and *Thrones*, and *Scepters*; as it is to sit down with him as his *Guests*, and to eat and drink in his *own Presence*? Is it not as high an *Arrogance* to admit that *Christ should die for us*, as it is to come and remember his *Death*, and to accept of those *Benefits* which are conveyed to us thereby? All these Things are infinitely above us, and we could not have had the Face to have asked any of them, if God had referred it to our own Choice, and bid us name what we would for our own selves. But yet, since in his unbounded Love and Kindness he has *freely offered* them, we must have the good Manners in all *forward Thankfulness* and *Humility to accept them*, and not out of a Shew of *Modesty*, and *unreasonable Self-abasement*, refuse the same. When God calls us then to feast with him in the Holy Sacrament, and to feed upon the Body and Blood of our dearest Lord; we must not hold back because there is so eminent a Privilege, and so high an Honour in it. For we desire no greater Favour, or higher Honour therein, than in being made *God's Children*, as we were in *Holy Baptism*; than in *Christ's Incarnation, Death, and Suffering*; than in the Offers of *Crowns*, and *Thrones*, and the other glorious Privileges of our Religion. So that if the *Fear of receiving too much*

Honour from God, ought to put us by the *Communion*; it ought as much to the full to put us by our *Baptism*, and the whole *Christian Profession*.

As for those then, who are hindred from the Holy Sacrament, by the Fear of being too *bold* and *presumptuous* with Almighty God, in coming to a *Feast* which has such *Height of Privilege* and *Honour* in it: They are hindred without any just Ground, and kept back by that which ought not to hinder them. For it is no *Presumption*, but the Part of *humble Men*, to *come when they are called*, and to *do what they are bidden*; but it is a very great *Boldness* and *Presumption* to *stay away*, and *leave it undone*; and if the *Height of Privilege* and *Honour* vouchsafed therein, be *sufficient to keep back* *humble Souls* from this *Feast*, it must also keep them back from *Baptism*, wherein the same Honours are conferred which are conferred in the *Eucharist*, and carry them in the same *Guise of Modesty* to refuse *Christ's dying for them*, and all the *Hopes of Heaven*, and, in a Word, their *Christianity* and *whole Religion* too.

A *Ninth Plea*, whereby several Persons are wont to excuse their not coming to the Holy Sacrament, is, because *many good People* are *seldom or never seen thereat*, and therefore they may be good too, and have good Company, if they keep away from it.

Now, as for those who urge this in Excuse, I would desire them to consider, that when they are enquiring after their *own Duty* in any Matter, it is no right Way to ask whether *others practise* it, but whether their *Lord* has any where *commanded* that it should be practised. For Mens Practice is not always fully answerable to their own Duty, and so is a very false Rule whereby to judge of *ours*. All Persons have their Faults,
and

and tho' no good Man can continue in any wilful ones, yet will even they be subject to several ignorant Slips, and unadvised Miscarriages. But when at any Time they either wilfully break any Commandment, or ignorantly mistake it; that is no Warrant for us to do so likewise. So that if we would truly understand whether we are bound to communicate, our Way is not to enquire whether others do it, but whether our Lord has any where enjoined it to be done; for if he has, we are certainly obliged to communicate, whether others do it or no.

But in more particular Answer to this Plea, I must tell them,

1. That, *If any good People keep away from the Blessed Sacrament, that is no Part of their Goodness, but their Blemish, so that therein they are not to be imitated.* For we have God's express Command to come, and that we cannot slight, without being disobedient, and guilty of a plain Transgression. We are called therein, to shew ourselves *thankfully mindful* of our blessed Saviour's Death, and of all that he has done or suffered for our Sakes; and this Call we cannot deny, without proclaiming ourselves most *shamefully unthankful* towards him. We are summon'd in to *profess Repentance and Amendment* of all our Sins; and this we cannot honestly decline, if *really* we are *resolved* to leave them. We are invited to *declare ourselves at Peace* with all the Members of our Lord, and reconciled to all the *Christian World*; and this Invitation no Man can fairly refuse, who in very Deed is in *Charity* with all Men, and is become an *heartly Friend* to them. God's *Laws* peremptorily *enjoin* us, and the Things therein implied do straitly oblige us to partake of the Holy Sacrament, when we have an Offer of a fit Opportunity

tunity for the same; so that every Man, who makes *Conscience of his Duty*, and regards Obedience to his Lord, must be careful to join therein. And it is the *greatest Means of a good Life*, and Obligation to Amendment that can be prescribed; so that every one who has a *just Care of his own Soul*, and is earnestly desirous of virtuous Improvements, will seek to be admitted to it. A good Man's *Duty* binds him, and the *Care of his own Soul* engages him to communicate; so that there is neither *Virtue* nor *Prudence* shewn in staying away, nor is it any Part of Goodness to neglect it. And therefore if any Persons otherwise good, are seldom seen at the Blessed Sacrament; that is no Part of their Goodness, but their Fault, so that therein they are not to be imitated.

2. *Though they might be acceptably good whilst they were afraid to come to it, thro' innocent Scruples, and honest Ignorance; yet will it be a very great Fault, even in them, to neglect it after they are better informed, which will not be forgiven them, but upon their Amendment thereof.*

A good Man cannot indulge himself in any *known Sin*; for he ceases to be good and acceptable to God, if he persists in any Sins after he is plainly told of them, and has had his Duty evidently set before him. *The Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all Unrighteousness*, saith St. Paul, *Rom. i. 18.* And *he that breaks one Law*, saith St. James, *is guilty of all*, i. e. of that eternal Punishment which is denounced, not barely to some one, but to all, *Jam. ii. 10.* So that when once this great Duty of coming to the Holy Sacrament is clearly laid out, and his Conscience is enlightened and possessed with a Sense thereof; he can be no good Man who wilfully holds off still, and refrains to come to it. Whilst

he

he was perplexed with Doubts about it, indeed, and either thro' the *loose* Discourses of some, thought himself *not obliged*; or, thro' the unreasonable *Rigour* and *Severity* of others, after all his Repentance and full Purposes of Amendment, thought himself still *unprepared* to receive the same: For the Pitiableness of his *Ignorance*, and *unwill'd Mistake*, so long as they lasted, his Neglect thereof may be excused and connived at. But if after all his *Doubts* have been *resolved*, and Things have been set in a *clearer Light*, he continue still to slight the Lord's Table; then he is guilty of a very *great Offence*, which will not be forgiven till he *repents* of it and *amends* it. *To him that knows to do good, and doth it not*, saith St. James, *to him it is Sin*, Jam. iv. 17. And when any wilful Sin stands charged on our Account, it will not be struck off, till we forsake and turn away from it. For to all such Sinners, God's Declaration is this, *Except ye repent, ye shall all perish*, Luke xiii. 3.

As for those then, who urge this in Excuse for their not coming to the Holy Sacrament, because *several good People are seldom or never seen at it*: My Answer to them in *sum* is this. In *judging our Duty*, we must not take our Measures from *other Mens Practice*, but from our *Blessed Lord's Commandments*; since, if they disobey any Precept, that is no Excuse to us, nor gives us any Warranty, for Company's Sake, to disobey likewise. And as for the Sacrament, in particular, if any good People *keep away* from it, that is no Part of *their Goodness*; so that therein they are not to be imitated. Nay, if they *continue* in this *Neglect*, after their *Consciences* are *rightly instructed*, and *informed* about it; they *cease to be good*, and commit a *damning Offence*, an *impenitent Continuance* in any

any one known Sin, putting any Person out of a State of Grace. Whilst they were held back purely by *Doubts* and *Scruples*, and *Want of Knowledge*, without their own Fault; their Omission was fit to be *connived* at, and they might continue acceptably good notwithstanding it. But if still they persist therein, after they know more, and are better instructed about the same; they are guilty of a very criminal Neglect, which will not be passed over, but upon the same Terms as all other known Sins are, *i. e.* their *Repentance of it*. If they stay away out of Ignorance and Mistake, all they can expect, is, to be pitied, but not to be commended for their Omission; and if, out of Willfulness, after their Conscience has been set right therein, they will be severely punish'd, unless they are timely reclaimed from it. So that no Man must ever hope to justify himself in refraining the Lord's Table, because he has good Company, and knows of several others, whom he takes to be very holy Persons, that are wont to refrain it too.

C H A P. VI.

Of Three other Hindrances.

The CONTENTS.

A Tenth Hindrance is, because others, who are unworthy of the Holy Sacrament, are admitted to join in it. But, 1. They ought not to be forward in judging others unworthy, lest they be mistaken in their judgment of them. 2. When some, who as they have great Cause to think, are unworthy,
do

do receive, yet ought not that to hinder them from receiving too. For if it be a sufficient Hindrance, it had equally hindered our Saviour Christ, and the primitive Christians. It ought not only to hinder us from the Communion, but also from being Members of the Christian Church and Profession. But it is plainly of no Force for either of them, since one Man shall not bear another's Burden, but every Man shall bear his own. St. Paul's forbidding to eat with Fornicators, &c. 1 Cor. v. 11. shewen not to speak against mixt Communion. 3. If still any are really offended at the Communion of the Wicked, upon Complaint made against them in the Congregation, they are to be suspended from the Holy Table, and denied the Sacrament. An Eleventh Hindrance, is, the Gesture of Kneeling, which is required in receiving the Communion. When any are absent upon this Account, there is no Excuse from it. Three Things insisted on, to prevent their being hindered thereby. 1. Kneeling is no unsuitable Posture in receiving the Holy Sacrament, so that if we were left at Liberty, we might have enough to justify ourselves in making use of it. 2. It is appointed by our Governors, whom God commands us to obey in all lawful Things; so that every good Man ought to observe it. But if it neither had Authority to enjoin, nor Reason to recommend it, but another Posture might be better used: Yet, 3. Since it may lawfully be used too, tho' not so well, as they think, for the Sacrament's Sake, which is not otherwise to be had, they should at least comply with it. No Hindrance to this Compliance, because the Gesture of Kneeling is different from that which our Saviour used. For so is Sitting too, and therefore they and we are equally concerned to answer this Argument. The Posture be used was no Part of the Institution, so that
the

the Institution is not broken when the Posture is altered. Neither that Posture, nor any other has any Command of God for it ; so that none is necessary, but all are still indifferent. When a Posture, different from that at the first Institution, was introduced in Sacraments, our Saviour himself, and they themselves too have submitted to it. Again, no Hindrance to our Receiving the Sacrament Kneeling, from the Fear of worshipping the Bread, or its being a Popish Rite. A Conclusion of this Point.

A Tenth Cause, which many Persons are wont to assign for their absenting themselves from this Holy Feast is, because *others, who are unworthy of it, are admitted to join in it.* Tho' this be a very good Thing, yet they fear they should give Offence in doing it with ill Partners; and how worthy soever they may be in themselves, they are jealous lest they should be defiled by the Unworthiness of others. So that unless they can receive the Sacrament in an unmixt Company, and only with the pure and true Believers, they think best to stay away, and not receive it at all.

But that they may not be kept back by this Hindrance, I shall observe to them these *three Things.*

1. That *they ought not to be forward in judging any others unworthy to communicate, lest they be mistaken in their Judgment of them.* For every penitent Man, who is fully resolved to leave all his Sins, is really worthy to receive the Blessed Sacrament; and whether the Person whom they think unworthy be so resolved or no, is very hard for them to judge, since no Man can see into another's Heart, and only God and his own Soul are privy to it. When he comes to the Lord's Table,

Table, every Communicant professes to repent, and promises to lead a new Life thenceforward, and when he solemnly declares he is thus resolved, it is hard for another Person, who cannot see into his Soul, to say he is not, but is still impenitent. Tho' all good Men therefore may be free in judging of themselves, yet ought they to be very wary how they pass a Judgment on the Unworthiness of others. They must not be forward to pronounce of it, because it is hard for them to know it; so that when they give Sentence against their Brethren in this Point, it is venturously done, and they are liable to be deceived therein.

2. *When some others, who, as they have great Cause to think, are unworthy, do receive the Holy Sacrament; yet ought not that to hinder them from receiving it too.* Our Business should not be to move Questions and Disputes about the Preparedness of others, but to be careful duly to prepare ourselves; and when once we are fitly qualified for it, we ought to come whether they be so or no. Their Unworthiness will have all its Effect upon themselves, but will not hinder our Acceptance, nor ought to put us by from doing both our Blessed Saviour, and our own Souls this Service.

To shew this, I shall observe these three Things.

1. *If the Company of ill and unworthy Persons be a sufficient Hindrance from the Holy Communion, it is not so barely unto us, but would equally have hindered our Saviour Christ, and the primitive Christians.* For when our Lord eat his own Supper, it was not with a select Company of worthy Receivers, but with a mixt Multitude of Saints and Sinners. Thus he found it in the Jewish Passover; for all the Congregation of Israel, both good and bad, were to eat of it, and none but Foreigners and hired Servants were excluded from it,

it, *Exod.* xii. 45, 47. And the like Mixture of *Guests* he allowed, when he instituted this Feast instead of their *Passover*. For in great likelihood *Judas*, who, as the Scripture says, *was a Thief*, *John* xii. 6. and *the Son of Perdition*, *John* xvii. 12. was one of the Twelve who communicated with him, *Mat.* xxvi. 20, 25, 26. *Luke* xxii. 20, 21. And in the *first* Times, all Christians, as I have shewn, *Part I. Chap.* 4, who came together to pray to God, met also to receive the Holy Sacrament, that being then a constant Part of their publick Worship. The Number of *Communicants* in those Days was the same with the Number of *Christians* or *baptized* Persons. For all Men then met in the Communion, who were made Members of Christ's mystical Body, the Church, by *Baptism*, and had neither broke themselves off from it again by *Schism*, nor were cut off by *Excommunication*, as *St. Paul* plainly intimates, when he says of those *Many*, who make up *the one Body*, that they *are all Partakers of that one Bread*, *1. Cor.* x. 17; and of all those who *have been baptized into one Body*, that they *have been all made to drink into one Spirit*, *1 Cor.* xii. 13. So that *their Communions*, as well as *ours*, were mixt Assemblies, which were made up of worthy and unworthy Receivers. And therefore if other Mens Unworthiness ought to be our Hindrance, it should also have hindred our Blessed Saviour Christ, and his Holy Apostles, and the Primitive Christians, who, if this be a good Reason for it, should all have forborn the Sacrament, because *Judas*, a lost Man, and other unprepared and unworthy Persons, met also with them at the same Time to partake thereof.

As to the Instance of *Judas*, which proves so convincingly the Lawfulness of Receiving with unworthy

unworthy Persons, some, perhaps, may make a Doubt of it, and question whether he staid to receive with the rest. *St. Matthew*, it is true, says, *Christ sate down with the Twelve, and while they were eating, took Bread, &c.* *Mat. xxvi. 20, 25, 26.* Nay, *St. Luke* says farther, that after he had instituted and delivered his own Supper, *Luke xxii. 19, 20*, he particularly told them, that *the Hand of him who betrayed him, was with him on the Table*, ver. 21. But *St. John*, in the Account which he gives, says, that *Judas went immediately out after he had received the Sop*, *John xiii. 30.* And a Sop dipped in the thick Sauce being Part of the Paschal Supper, from his going out immediately after the Receipt of the Sop, some would presume that he staid only to partake in the Passover, but arose and went out before Christ instituted his own Supper, which was not begun till the Passover was ended.

But in Answer to this, it may suffice to note, that the Ground of this Conjecture is a Mistake. For this Supper, mentioned by *St. John*, whereat he says *Judas* went out immediately after the Receipt of the Sop, was not the Paschal Supper. For besides that it is expressly said of *St. John's* Supper, that *the Devil made his Entry into Judas after it was ended*, ver. 2, 27; which could not therefore be the Passover, because, as *St. Luke* testifies, he had entred into him before the Passover was fully come, when it only drew nigh, *Luke xxii. 1, 3.* Besides this, I say, *St. John* says expressly of the Supper he mentions, that it was before the Feast of the Passover, ver. 1. And when, during that Supper, our Lord bade *Judas* dispatch what he had to do quickly, ver. 27. Some of the other Disciples took the Meaning of that to be, as if he had bid him buy what was needful again.

against the Feast, ver. 29, which they could never have understood to be meant so, if they had then been making an End of the Paschal Feast, it being vain, indeed, at the End of a Feast, to think of making Provision for it. So that the Supper whereat Judas went out immediately after the Sop, and stayed not to see the rest, was not the solemn Feast of the Passover, which Jesus celebrated at Jerusalem; but some other ordinary Supper, and very probably that which St. Matthew speaks of, which he had at Bethany, in the House of Simon the Leper, two Days before, Mat. xxvi. 2, 6, 7. But when the Passover came, he stayed to the End of it, and of the Lord's Supper which followed it; Jesus plainly declaring, as I observed, that the Hand of the Traytor was with him on the Table, after both the Bread and Wine were blessed and distributed.

• 2. If the Company of unworthy Persons be a just Impediment from the Holy Communion, it ought to hinder us also from being Members of the Christian Church and Profession. For the Church itself is a mixt Multitude of fit and unfit, of holy and unholy Persons. It is compared to a Net, wherein Fish of all Sorts are caught, both good and bad, Mat. xiii. 47, 48; to a Field, where both Wheat and Tares spring up together, and wherein both must grow together till the Harvest, ver. 24, 25, 30. All Christians are not such as their Saviour Christ was, and such as their Religion requires they should be: And therefore if we refuse to share in any holy Thing whilst some unworthy Persons pretend to it, and will not join in any Act or State wherein ill Men participate; we must not only shun the Communion, but cease also to be Members of the Church, or to profess the Christian Religion. Nay, I might add farther, since all Commu-

Communities have *some* corrupt Members, and in every Body of Men there are some vicious as well as some godly Persons; if we decline all Society and Fellowship which has ill Men to mix and partake in it, we must not stop in avoiding the Communion, and leaping out of the Christian Church and Profession, but, if we run on so far as this Principle will lead us, become Out-Laws to *Families, Townships, Kingdoms*, yea, to all Mankind.

3. *One shall not bear another's Burden, but every Man shall bear his own; so that if not we, but only they are unworthy, we are safe, and may freely come, and they alone are debarr'd from Receiving.* God will not punish one Soul for another's Fault, or be angry at *this*, because *that* Person has deserved it. But every Man shall stand or fall by his own Work, and either be approved or rejected according as it prepares him for the one or the other. *Let every Man prove his own Work*, saith the Apostle, *for every Man shall bear his own Burden*, Gal. vi. 4, 5. So that if we take Care to come worthily ourselves, we shall be kindly treated and accepted by him, and not any ways prejudiced or frowned upon, for the Unworthiness and undue Preparation of other Men.

But against all this it may be objected, that this *eating in mixt Communion* is against the Rule of St. Paul, who forbids the Christians at *Corinth* to *keep Company with Drunkards, Fornicators, Railers, &c.* or to *eat Bread with them*, 1 Cor. v. 11.

But in Answer to this it may be observed, that the *eating* there spoken of, is not that of the *Communion* in the *publick Assemblies*, but only that of *civil Conversation at private Tables*. This was one Rule of Discipline in the first Times. For when

the Authority of the established Guides, and the Awefulness of Church-Censures, were insufficient to reduce Offenders in a divided Church; the Apostles ordered all private Christians to shun their Company and Acquaintance, till thereby they had shamed them out of their evil Courses. Thus they dealt with misguided *Hereticks*. If there come any unto you, saith St. John, and bring not this Doctrine, receive him not into your House, neither bid him God speed, 2 John 10. According to which Rule, when he went into the * Bath at Ephesus, and found the *Heretick Cerinthus* there, he leaped out again unwashed, saying, Let us fly from this Enemy of the Truth, lest by staying with him, the Bath fall down upon us, as *Irenæus* says, several then alive could testify from the Mouth of Polycarp, one of his Disciples. And in like Manner, Polycarp himself, when the *Heretick Marcion* desired him to take Notice of him, and salute him; replied, He would take Notice of him no otherwise, than as of Satan's First-born. So studiously cautious, says *Irenæus*, were the Apostles, and their Disciples, of entering into any Discourse or Converse with heretical Depravers of the Truth. Thus also they dealt with stubborn and contumacious Persons, who despised Church Orders, and the Establishments of their spiritual Governors. If any Man obey not our Word by this Epistle, note that Man,

* Ac sunt qui hoc ipsum (viz. Polycarpum) commemorantem audiverint, Joannem Domini Discipulum, cum Ephesi ad Balneum iisset, ac Cerinthum intus conspexisset, illotum Balneo exiliisse, atque his verbis usum fuisse, Fugiamus ne Balneum ruat, quod intus sit Cerinthus veritatis Hostis. Quin ipse quoque Polycarpus, cum Marcion aliquando in ipsius conspectum venisset, ac dixisset, Agnosce nos; respondit, Agnosco Primogenitum Satanæ. Tanto studio Apostoli, atque ipsorum Discipuli cavebant, ne cum quoquam eorum, qui veritatem adulterabant, vel sermonis commercium inirent. *Iren. adv. Hæres. l. 3. c. 3.*

and

and have no Company with him, says St. Paul, that he may be ashamed, 2 Theff. iii. 14. And thus they dealt, lastly, with scandalous and noted evil Livers. We command you, Brethren, in the Name of Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every Brother that walketh disorderly, and not according to the Tradition be received of us, 2 Theff. iii. 6. And so again to the Corinthians in this Place. If any Man that is called a Brother, be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, I write unto you not to keep Company with such an one, no, not to eat with him, i. e. exclude him from all Familiarity and civil Conversation, 1 Cor. v. 11. An Emphasis lies in these Words, *no, not to eat with him*; noting a Restraint from that, which seemed to most Men a very little Thing, as eating is in Conversation, tho' it be of the highest Account in the Communion. And moreover, the Eating here forbidden, is such *Eating and keeping Company* with loose and disorderly Christians, as was not forbid with other disorderly Walkers, who were not Christians; which cannot be said of Sacramental Eating, but only of eating at private Tables, ver. 10, 12.

Indeed, as for this Withdrawing of Acquaintance, Converse, and Trading from such Offenders (which was a Kind of *civil* Excommunication, that private Christians would use of themselves when the Scandals were notorious, as well as the ordinary Consequent in those Days of the publick Censures of the Church) it was no lasting Thing, but wore out by Degrees, and was much laid aside in Time. Whilst it was a prudent Rule of Discipline, and fit to shame and reclaim *heretical* or *vicious* Men, it was used towards them; and that by the private Zeal of good People, tho' no

publick Censure had passed against them. And this it was fit to do whilst Christians lived among Heathens; for then they would desire to keep in with their own Party for Protection; and whilst the Hereticks and scandalous Livers were few in Number; for then they could not have a considerable Party of their own to abet and support them. And whilst Religion was in this State, which renderd it a prudent Course, as it was most especially in the Apostles Days, this, as I have shewn, was a common *Rule and Practice* of the Church. But when once Christianity became the common Religion, and both Heresies and Vices would have great Names, and Numbers enough to abet and support themselves, if all the Orthodox and Godly should decline them: Then this Renouncing of their Converse would have served to combine the Vicious and Erroneous into united Numbers, and put them out of the Way of good Counsels and Opportunities of Repentance, and every where extremely endanger'd and laid waste the civil Peace. So that the State of Things being alter'd, which made it prudent and practicable, this Rule vanished by Degrees, and was laid aside. It lived longer in the Zeal of some *particular* Persons, who withdrew themselves from all Converse of vicious Livers and heretical Opiniators; whereof *Monica*, the Mother of *St. Austin*, is an Instance in that Age, who, as he himself testifies, * *refused to diet with him, her own Son, when he was perverted to the Heresy of the Manichees*. But as for the Body of Christians, they left it off; this Way of private

* Nam unde illud somnium, quo eam consolatus es, ut vivere me secum crederet, & habere mecum eandem mensam in Domo, quod nolle coeperat, averfans & detestans blasphemias erroris mei. *Aug. Con. l. 3. c. 11.*

Christians renouncing all civil *Converse with such* as were not publickly excommunicated and cut off by the Church-censures, being laid aside, as *St. Chrysostom* relates, before his Time. And so it continues still, not only in our Church, but in all other Sects and Parties that are among us. For whatever some may do upon *discretionary* Grounds, to encourage and maintain their own Party; yet none of them think themselves obliged in *Conscience* to confine their Conversation or Dealing to their own Church, and neither to be acquainted nor trade with Men of other Opinions, but to do all among themselves.

Besides all this, for a fuller Clearing of this Place, I add farther, that when this Rule of *not keeping Company with open tho' unexcommunicated Offenders*, was most of all observed, as it was in the *Apostles* Days, yet even then did it admit of many Limitations, and it was still allowed to company with them in several Cases.

It forbade not private Christians to join with them when they met together in *publick Offices of Religion*. For *Prayers* and *Sacraments* are a Duty we all owe to Almighty God, which we are indispensably bound to perform, and must not desert, because ill Men intrude to do the same. And thus our Blessed *Saviour* kept Company, and eat with *Judas* himself; and so did the Church of *Corinth*, and other Churches, with other Offenders, in those very Days, as I have shewn, when this Rule was given.

It forbade not joining with them in the *Duties of any Relation*. For notwithstanding this Rule, *Children* were to honour and obey their *Parents*, and *Wives* their *Husbands*, and *Servants* their *Masters*, and *Subjects* their *Princes*, and all Men to shew *Gratitude* to their *Benefactors*, whatever ill

Life they lead, or heretical Opinion they had imbib'd. *Tho' a believing Woman have an unbelieving Husband*, says St. Paul, *let her not leave him*, 1 Cor. vii. 12, 13. And he bids *Children to obey their Parents in all Things*, Col. iii. 20. and *Subjects to obey Magistrates*, Tit. iii. 1. and *Servants to be subject to their own Masters*, 1 Pet. ii. 18. at a Time when they lived under Heathens.

It forbade not any Conversation which *sought to do them good, and endeavour'd their Amendment*. For, at the same Time when St. Paul enjoins this *Withdrawing* from them, he directs still to *admonish* them for their Reformation. *Note that Man, and have no Company with him; yet count him not as an Enemy, to be looked no longer after, but admonish him as a Brother*, 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15.

Nay, lastly, It forbade not good Christians to company with them, *when it was highly convenient and advantageous to themselves*, but allowed it, as Need required, in the Way of Trade and Livelihood. This St. Paul thought a sufficient Reason, why this Rule should not keep them from *dealing and conversing with Gentile Sinners*. When I wrote to you, says he, *not to company with Fornicators*, I meant not to forbid your *companying altogether with the Fornicators of this World, for then must you needs go out of the World*, and could not drive any Trade or Business, your Heathen Neighbours, among whom your Concerns lie, generally being such, 1 Cor. v. 9, 10. And where the same Detriment would have ensued, by forbearing to deal with *offending Christians*; in Reason and Equity, there would have been the same Allowance. The Rule was not given to punish the Innocent, but to reclaim the Guilty; so that in any Case, where the Good were like to be oppressed by it, it would have been equitably relaxed, and not have obliged at all. As

As for this Place of *St. Paul* then, it makes nothing against *mixt Communion*, nor forbids us to receive the Sacrament in Company with an ill Man. For it speaks not of companying and eating, in the Sacrament, but in civil Conversation. There, indeed, while the Church was young, it did oblige for a Time: Tho' that Time is long since gone, this Course of shunning all Converse with unexcommunicated Offenders, being vanished long ago, as the State of Religion alter'd, which made it prudent, and being now universally neglected over all the World. And even during that Time, wherein it did oblige, it was with many Exceptions. For it allowed us of joining with them publickly in divine Offices, and also in the Duty of any particular Relations; so did it likewise of all such Conversation, as either sent to reclaim them, or was either necessary or highly advantageous to the sound Christians themselves. But as for Religion, it neither requires nor authorizes any Persons to withdraw from any Offices of it, when ill Men join in them. It is *Church-Governors* that must keep them away from these by *publick Censures*; and no Part of the Care of *private Christians*, to prevent meeting them there, by *absenting of themselves*. So that at Prayers and Sacraments the Good must be sure to shew themselves, whatever Offenders happen to be there too.

But if the Presence of such Persons would defile our *ordinary Converse*, would it not much more defile *divine Offices*, may some say, and stain our Communion in *Prayers* and *Sacraments*, which being more sublime and sacred Things, must needs be more prophaned by the Company of such Persons? To which I answer, that if their very Presence did defile our Converse, or our private Tables, so indeed it would: But the Reason

why private Christians are to withdraw themselves from such Offenders, is not lest they should be defiled by being in the same Place with them, for that they are not, except they either join in their Sins, or learn some Ill from them; but that they may reclaim the Offenders by their withdrawing. This withholding Converse is a Rule of Discipline, which was prescribed for the Sake of those Sinners whom they withdraw from, and was intended, as *St. Paul* says, *to shame them*, 2 *Thess.* i. 14. And this might be enjoined in Civil Conversation, because that is a free Thing; but not in Prayers and Sacraments, because they are necessary Duties, and no Man, when he is called to them, is at Liberty to absent from them.

Thus ought not the Sight of some unworthy Persons joining in it, to strike any Terror into us, or drive us from the Holy Sacrament. There is a great *Sin* and a great *Danger* in unworthy Receiving, which is enough to discourage all impenitent unworthy Men from *offering* at it: And where the *Censures* of the Church are held in any Esteem, and are likely to gain their End, thro' the Awe and Reverence which Men have for them, the Governors of the Church, both out of Compassion for their Souls, and Concern for the Honour of this Ordinance, may see Cause to *remove* them from it. But if neither the *Danger of the Thing*, nor any *affectionate* and *fair Warning*, nor any *enfeebled Hand of Discipline*, when it is become impotent, and of small Account, thro' the *Number of Offenders*, who are too strong for it, or thro' the *Multitude of Schisms and Divisions*, one Party entertaining those whom another shuts out, which mightily impairs the Force of it: If none of these, I say, can keep them out, but unworthy Men will press in, and presume to communicate;

municate; yet is their Unworthiness only to *themselves*; but as for others, who are truly worthy, they have no Hurt at all thereby. They shall not suffer for their Brethrens Sins, nor are incapacitated by their Unfitnesses; so that whilst they have no Unworthiness in their own Souls, they may safely approach to the Holy Table, and chearfully receive still.

But yet farther.

3. *If any should be really scandalized at the Presence of those who are notoriously wicked, or who have done any Wrong to their Neighbours, either in Word or Deed; upon Complaint made against them in the Congregation, they are to be suspended from the Holy Table, and denied the Sacrament.* For this Care our Church has taken in this Case, to prevent all those whose Wickedness gives publick Scandal and Offence, from sharing in those Holy Mysteries. *If any Communicant, says the Rubrick before the Communion Service, be an open and notorious evil Liver, or have done any Wrong to his Neighbour, by Word or Deed, so that the Congregation be thereby offended; the Curate, having Knowledge thereof, shall call him, and advertise him, that in any wise he presume not to come to the Lord's Table, until he hath openly declared himself to have truly repented and amended his former naughty Life, that the Congregation may thereby be satisfied, which before were offended; and that he hath recompensed the Parties to whom he hath done wrong, or at least declare himself to be in full Purpose so to do as soon as conveniently he may.*

As for those then, who are kept back from this Holy Feast, because they see *some unworthy Persons are admitted to it*, my Answer to them in brief is this: That they ought not to be forward in judging any others unworthy, because it is hard
for

for them to *know* it, and they are liable to be *mistaken* in their Judgment of them. And that when they have *great* and *plain* Cause to conclude *others unworthy*, yet ought not that in any wise to hinder them, who are *truly worthy*, from coming to receive too. For if the Company of unworthy Receivers were a just Hindrance from the Holy Sacrament, it would have hindred our *blessed Lord*, and the *primitive Christians*, since it lay in *their Way*, as well as now it doth in *ours*; it would not rest in withholding us from the Holy Communion, but would serve equally to put us by from being *Members* of the *Church*, or professing the *Christian Religion*. But it is plainly of no Force for either of them, since *one Man* shall not bear *another's*, but *every one his own Burthen*. But if still any are really scandalized by the Company of such as are notoriously wicked, that Offence may be removed when they have a mind to remove it; for upon *Complaint* made, those unworthy *Persons* are to be *suspended* from the *Holy Table*, and denied the Sacrament.

An *Eleventh* Hindrance, whereby several Persons are kept back from joining in this Feast, is the *Gesture which is required thereat*. For tho' right-gladly they would be admitted to the *Holy Sacrament*, yet they say they *dare not kneel*, as the *Church appoints all Men to do when they receive it*.

Now when any Persons refuse the Holy Sacrament upon this Account; they have no sufficient Plea or just Excuse from it. When our blessed Lord shall ask them, at the last Day, *Why they did not communicate according to his Appointment?* It will be but a bad Answer in them to say, it was because *they could not sit*, or use some other *Posture there which they thought convenient*. For since he has only required the *Thing*, but has no
where

where enjoin'd the Gesture which we are to receive in; he will have just Reason to reply to such Men, that then it seems they would not do what *he bid* them, unless at the same Time they could do that also which he had *not bidden*; nor perform his Will, unless withal they should be allowed to have their own; which justly merits a severe Re-proof, but is far from being a Matter of Commendation.

But that they may not inexcusably neglect so great a Commandment, upon so weak a Reason for it, I would offer to their Consideration these *three Things* :

1. *Kneeling is no unsuitable Posture in receiving the Holy Sacrament, so that if we were left at Liberty, we might have enough to justify ourselves in making use of it.* For the Sacrament, as I have already shewn, is a *religious Feast*, wherein we are set in the Presence of, and are *concerned with Almighty God*: And when we have to do with him, it is no ways unfit sure to use such a Posture, as is *humble and reverent*. It is a Feast wherein we *receive the greatest Benefits*, no less than our Saviour Christ's most blessed *Body and Blood*, i. e. those Benefits which his bloody Death procured: And when we *receive Gifts*, especially of that *infinite Price*, and from our *Betters and supreme Governors*, it cannot misbecome us to use such Carriage as expresses most *Respect and Thankfulness*. It is a Feast whereat we *confirm the new Covenant*, and solemnly *give Thanks and Praise* to Christ, and pour out many *Prayers and Promises* to our heavenly Lord; and when we are *exercising Repentance*, and *uttering Praise*, and *making solemn Prayers and Oblations*, it is not certainly improper to use such Gestures, as best become *Devotions*. In the Sacrament we have to *do with Almighty God*, and
receive

receive most noble Gifts, and act most humble Repentance in shamefully confessing and renouncing of our Sins, and give most hearty Thanks, and put up most ardent Prayers: And therefore that Posture must needs suit well with it, which becomes these Services. And that Kneeling will be allowed to do by all Persons, since it has been ordinarily well liked in all Times, nay, preferred before others for the *Posture of Devotions*. As it is a *Supper* and a *Feast*, some are apt to think *Sitting*, which with us at least is the ordinary *Table-Posture*, to be more convenient. But as this is not a *common*, but a *religious Feast*, wherein we have to do with God, and perform so many Things whereto all *inward Reverence* and *Humility* is required, there are Reasons enough which most justly authorize *Kneeling* too; so that if we direct our Eyes to them, we shall soon see that it may very reasonably be used, and is in no wise unsuitable or improper for it. And therefore if we were left at *Liberty* to receive it as we *pleas'd*, we might have enough to justify ourselves in making use of it.

2. *Kneeling* is appointed by our Governors, whom God commands us to obey in all lawful Things; so that every good Man, who is under Authority, ought to observe it. God requires us to be subject to *Principalities and Powers*, and to obey Magistrates, Tit. iii. 1. and to obey them that have the Rule over us, and to submit ourselves; for they watch for our Souls, as that they must give an Account of them, Heb. xiii. 17. Now to obey, is to do what we are bidden; so that when they command this Posture, we are bound in all Duty and Submission to comply with them. Before they enjoind it, we were at Liberty to use either it, or another, according to our own Discretion. But when once they have interposed their Authority,

rit, St. *Paul* tells us, that Obedience in all *lawful Things*, such as *Kneeling* is, is our Duty. So that although we think another might be *better* used, and, were we left to ourselves, would make use of it: Yet when once they have enjoined this, we must deny ourselves, and submit to it.

But if *Kneeling* had neither any *Authority* effectually to enjoin it, nor any *Reason* from itself sufficient to recommend it; but that *Sitting*, or some *other Posture*, were much fitter to be used: yet,

3. *Since even in their own Opinion it may at least lawfully be used too, tho' not so well as they think; if Men have any due Value for, or Desire of the Holy Sacrament, for its Sake, and rather than miss of it, they should comply with this Posture.*

When we are hindered from the Holy Sacrament by *little Things*, and refuse to communicate unless we can have it ordered according to our own Liking in all Points, it is a Sign we do not think we greatly *need* it, nor are very *desirous* of it; for if we were, it is certain small Matters would not put us by it. Were we fully sensible how much it is both our *Duty* and our *Privilege* to partake therein, and thereupon did earnestly covet and long after it, we should be glad to be admitted to it in any Posture, and, so we might join in the Thing, submit readily to any Gesture to receive it in. If any Man refuse a *Present of a thousand Pounds*, because it is brought to him in an homely Purse that is coarse and much decayed; or if he will throw back the *Conveyance of a fair Estate*, because it is sealed with a common Stamp which wants a Coat of Arms to it; all the World would say he would not be so *curious* if he stood in any great *Need* of them. And if any Person should turn away from the most *savoury*
and

and choicest Meat, because it is dished up on *Pewter*, not on *Plate*; the By-standers would all conclude that he is full enough already, and has no great *Edge of Appetite*. And the Case is just the same when any of us shew Niceness about the *Posture* of the Holy Sacrament. For did we really think we were in very great *Need* of it, and had such an *ardent Desire* as that we might be said to *hunger* and *thirst* after it; we should be glad to have it in any *Posture*, as we could be allowed to have it. So that altho' *Kneeling* were a Gesture where-to we were no ways obliged; nay, tho' it were justly to be disliked, not as *unlawful* indeed, but as *inconvenient*; yet, when the Sacrament is not otherwise to be had, there is no Man, who is duly desirous to receive the same, but will comply therewith. He had rather, it may be, communicate *Sitting or Standing*, or after some other Manner which he fancies better, were it left to his own Liking, but yet, if he desires it in such Measure as he ought, he will *submit* to receive *Kneeling*, rather than miss the Opportunity, and not receive at all.

And this is the great Thing which I would urge upon all those who are kept back by this Hindrance; namely, that altho' for its *own Sake* they would not *chuse* it, yet for the *Sacrament's Sake*, which is not otherwise to be had, they would at least *comply* with the *kneeling Posture*. In my Judgment it is their *Duty* to kneel, since their Governors require it; and the *Posture* is so *suitable* to the Feast, that were it not required, they might have enough to justify themselves in making use of it; and if, upon the Reasons I have here given, they are convinced of these Things, that clears the Case without more ado, and is the
best

best Solution of it. But if their Prejudices stick still after all, and in those Points they happen not to be of my Mind, but think themselves *free* from any Obligation to lawful Authority which appoints Kneeling, and conceive that *Sitting* is much *better* used; yet at least, since Kneeling may lawfully be used too, for the Blessed *Sacrament's Sake*, which, if they value it as they ought, they would gladly accept of, tho' in a Posture less convenient, let them condescend and submit to kneel. Tho' they had rather receive *Sitting*, when they may be allowed to do so; yet they may receive Kneeling, when there is a Need to kneel. And they must needs think it better to kneel to the Holy Communion, than, by stopping at a Thing so *innocent*, tho' *less significant*, to be quite put by, and go without it.

But against this Compliance they may, perhaps, *object*, and it is the fairest Thing which I know said against it, That they cannot comply with this *Injunction of Kneeling*, because it is cross to our *Saviour's Institution*; for as he instituted the Holy Sacrament, so they think we ought to observe, and partake of it.

But to clear this Point, which I shall do as plainly as I can, because it seems to have some Weight in it, I shall observe,

1. That if using a Posture different from what our Saviour did in the Holy Communion be a Breaching his Institution, *Sitting* no less than *Kneeling* is a Breach of it; so that they and we are equally concerned to answer this Argument.

The Posture which our Saviour used, was neither *Sitting* nor *Kneeling*, but another different from them both. In the *Passover* it is plain he used *lying* or *leaning down*, which was the *banqueting Gesture* of that Time, when they used to eat at their

their Feasts, *lying upon Couches*. And thus the *Evangelist* expresses it: *When Even was come*, says *St. Matthew*, *he sat down*; so according to the Custom of these Countries we render it, but the Word is, *he * lay down with the Twelve*, *Mat. xxvi. 10*. And in the 21st of *St John's Gospel*, *St. John* is said to have *lean'd on Jesus's Breast at Supper*, which tho', as I observed, it be not spoke of the Passover, but of another Supper, which *Jesus* had two Days before, yet it shews the *Table-Posture* of those Days, when at Meals they lay one within another, *ver. 20*. And this Posture in great Likelihood he continued to use at his own Supper; for they were both *religious Feasts*, and there was no more Reason why it should be excluded from the *one*, than from the *other*. But if when he alter'd his Gesture, according to the *Jewish* Custom, at *giving Thanks*, he continued in that all the Time of his *own Supper*, as some suppose; yet was not that either *Kneeling* or *Sitting*, but a *standing* Posture. So that the Gesture which our Saviour used, was as different from *Sitting*, as it is from *Kneeling*. And therefore if the Use of one different from his be a Breach of his Institution, it is equally broken on all Sides, and one cannot urge it against another, but both are alike in Fault, and equally obliged to answer it.

And if any say, That albeit in *Sitting* they do vary from the Posture which he used, yet it is still to another *Table-Gesture*, which is of the same Nature, and may be held equivalent; I desire them to consider, that then *they* are plainly gone off, as well as *we*, from the *Example of our Lord*, and from the Mode which he used, since, whereas he *lay along*, they *sit upright*; and only stick to such a Gesture, as agrees to the *Nature of the*

* Ἀνέκειτο.

Feast, and to the Notion of the Communion being a *Supper* and a *Banquet*. So that their Sitting is not authorized by our Lord's having used it at first, for that he never did; but by its being a Table-Gesture, which becomes a *Feast*, and is thereby suited to the Nature of the Holy Sacrament. And when once this Ground is admitted, it will make Way for Kneeling too, since there is much also in the Nature of the Thing to render it very suitable and convenient. For, as upon the Account of its being a *Feast*, whilst they direct their Eye to that, they may be embolden'd to sit down thereat; so also upon Account of its being a most *venerable* and *religious Feast*, whereat all inward *Reverence* and *profound Humility* is required, they may see just Reason to use another more lowly Mode, and *kneel* when they receive it. But if still they should think Sitting the more agreeable Mode, and that, it being a Table Gesture, a Supper is best suited thereby; yet would this be no Reason why they cannot *comply* with Kneeling, but only why, if they were left to their own Liberty, they would not make *Choice* of it. For tho' they would not chuse it, yet are they at Liberty for all that to forbear Sitting, and either to *stand*, or *lie*, or *kneel* at a *Feast*, when *Need* requires that they should do so. So that whatever it may be to their own *free Choice* of Kneeling, this can be no Hindrance to their Submission and Compliance with it.

But since both in *their* Way and *ours*, the Gesture of our Lord, being now out of Date thro' the different Usage of the World, is quite relinquished; for a full Vindication of them as well as of ourselves in this Point, I observe,

2. That *the Posture which he used was no Part of the Institution, so that the Institution is not broken*

when the Posture is altered; yea, neither it, nor any other Posture, has any Precept or Command at all for it; so that no Posture is necessary, but all, both theirs and ours, are still indifferent.

The Posture wherein it was first received, I say, is no Part of the Institution of a Sacrament; so that the Institution is not broken when the Posture is altered. It is only the Thing which is appointed; but as for the Posture, or the Time, or the Place, or the Company, they are little Matters that are unworthy of a particular Appointment, and are left at Liberty to be order'd as Mens Discretion shall judge most convenient. And, indeed, if the Gesture which our Lord used, were any Part of the Institution of this Holy Feast, the Time, and Place, and other Circumstances would be so too; for they seem all of equal Weight, and were all equally used at first, which is all that the Gesture has to plead for its being a Part thereof. So that if it be a Part of the Institution to receive in the leaning Posture, because in his Eating thereof our Lord used that Posture, it is equally a Part of it to receive after Supper, which is the Time when he chose to eat his own Supper; and in an upper Room, which was the Place wherein he celebrated the same; and only with Men, who were the Company whom he invited; and those no more than twelve, which was the Number he selected to sup with him. All these can plead the same Title for being Parts of the Institution, which the Gesture can, i. e. their being used at the first Appointment of the Holy Sacrament, which is all the Claim it can make thereto. And therefore since the Time, and Place, and Number, and Persons are no Part, but may be alter'd, without any Breach of the Institution, as it is on all Hands concluded they may; the Posture is no Part of it, but
may

may be alter'd without any such Infringement also.

And to shew this more fully, it really *has* been done in Sacraments, and that too in the Judgment of our blessed Lord himself, without any Wrong to the Institution; and that was in the *Jewish Passover*. For the Posture wherein it was first celebrated, was in that of *Travellers*, with their *Loins girt*, and their *Staves in their Hand*, and their *Shoes on their Feet*; yea, and what makes this Circumstance more considerable in their Case, it was by *God's own Order and Appointment*. For *thus shall you eat it*, saith God, *with your Loins girded, and your Shoes on your Feet, and your Staff in your Hand, and you shall eat it in haste, it is the Lord's Passover*, Exod xii. 11. But afterwards, in Compliance with the Course of Times, and the Custom of other Countries, this *standing Posture* of Travellers was changed into the *leaning or discumbing Posture* of Men at Ease, which Change our Saviour himself most evidently allowed, by his *own Usage* and Observance of it. For when he eat the *Passover* with his *Disciples*, it was not in the *travelling Posture* used at first, but in this *discumbing Posture*, which had been introduced since instead thereof. *When Even was come Jesus sate*, or rather * *lay down to Supper with the Twelve*, Mat. xxvi. 20.

Thus is the Posture which our blessed Lord used in the Holy Sacrament no Part of the Institution, so that the Institution is not broken when his Posture is alter'd. And if it had been any Part of it, his *Lying* could no more be changed into *Sitting*, because it is another *Table-Posture*, than the *Bread* and *Wine* can be changed into any other *Food* or *Liquor*, because they are a *Table-Furniture*. For the Parts of the Blessed Sacrament

must be kept the same as our Saviour left them, and we must not go about to alter and put in others instead of them, lest we be thought to cancel his, and to institute a *new Sacrament* of our own.

Yea, *neither it, nor any other Posture has any Command at all for it; so that no Posture is necessary, but all, both theirs and ours, are still indifferent.* It is not at all enjoyn'd by our Saviour Christ, for he only commands the *Thing*, bidding them *take Bread and eat it, and Wine and drink it*, Mat. xxvi. 26, 27. and to *do this in Remembrance of him*, Luke xxii. 19. but says not a Word prescribing the *Gesture, Time, or other Circumstances* which they are to use in so doing. Neither is it at all mentioned by St. Paul, who, as our Lord had done before, commands only, after the Mention of the *Bread*, that we should *do that in Remembrance of him*; and after the Mention of the *Cup*, that we should *drink that in Remembrance of him*; but gives no Command at all concerning *Posture*, nor any other such inconsiderable and outward Thing, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. And yet he delivered all that to them which he had received in Command from Christ, relating to the Holy Communion: *I have received of the Lord*, saith he, *that which I also have delivered unto you*, ver. 23. So that altho' God has most strictly commanded the *receiving of the Holy Sacrament*, yet has he no where commanded *any Posture* to be used therein; and therefore *none* of them is *necessary*, but *all, both theirs and ours, are still indifferent.*

Thus then is our *kneeling Posture* at the Holy Communion, as also others *Standing* or *Sitting* where that is the Fashion, no *unlawful Thing*, nor any *Breach* of the *Institution*, tho' our Sa-
viour

viour used a *different* one. The Posture which he communicated in, was *no Part* of the Appointment; so that there is no Breach of his Appointment when that Posture is altered; and neither *it*, nor *any other Posture* has any Command for it; so that none of them are either *necessary* or *unlawful* upon, but all may still be used, either as *publick Authority*, or in Want thereof, as *private Prudence*, and Love of Peace shall determine us.

And as the Posture which was used at *first*, may be altered without any *Breach* of the *Institution*, or of any *Law of Christ*, and a new one lawfully brought in instead of it; so,

3dly, *When a Posture different from that at the first Institution, was introduced in Sacraments, our blessed Lord himself, and they themselves too, have submitted to it.*

As for our *blessed Lord*, the Matter is plain of him in the Case of the *Passover*, which I have mentioned already. He found the Posture different from that which was at first used in *Egypt*: For then, as I have noted, they *stood* like *Travellers*, but now they *lay down*, like Men at *Rest* and *Ease*. But since *common Usage* and *publick Authority* had altered the former Mode, and settled this latter instead of it; he would not go to dispute it, but readily conformed himself to it. For when he *came to eat the Passover*, says St. *Matthew*, *he sate*, or rather *lay down with the Twelve*, Mat. xxvi. 20.

And as for *themselves*, they do the same Thing too in Sitting, where that is the Posture, which Law or Custom has introduced among them. For *Sitting* is a Gesture very different from that which our Saviour used, who did not *sit*, but *lie down* at the Holy Sacrament. But when the *Assembly of Divines* had brought in this Mode

amongst us, notwithstanding its being a Deviation from what was done at first, they did then comply with it, and would, it seems, adhere to that Change, and do so still.

If they will be guided therefore, either by their *Saviour's Practice*, or by *their own*, in this Point; when *Use* and *publick Authority* have settled any Posture of Communicating, they must submit to receive in that Posture. The Gesture which they find now among *us*, is not more different from what our *Saviour* used, than the Gesture which *he* found in the *Passover* was from that which the *Jews* had first used in *Egypt*: But yet he made no Scruple of this Posture, so plainly novel and of a later Date, but readily complied with it. In Conformity to which *Example* the *Apostle* teaches us in *lesser* Things, to make common Usages our Rule, for the Prevention of all *Disputes and Variances*: *If any Man seem to be contentious in the Case of Womens being unveil'd in the publick Assemblies, we have no such Custom, nor the Church of God*, 1 Cor. xi. 16. And the *Sitting* which they think well of, is as different from our *Saviour's Posture* as *Kneeling* is; but yet they readily embraced it, when once the *Assembly* had directed that it should be used. So that if they are but free to follow our *Saviour's Practice* and *St. Paul's Rule* in this Case; or if they will go as far with the *Church's Order*, as formerly they did with the *Assembly's*: Since *common Usage* and *publick Authority* have settled *Kneeling* at the Holy Sacrament among us, they ought not to stick out, but to submit to it.

And thus it appears, that their *Compliance* with our Use of *Kneeling* in the Holy Communion, is not at all against our blessed *Saviour's Institution*; so that the Fear of wronging that ought not to hinder

hinder any of them from complying. It is indeed, a *different Posture* from what our Lord first used; but if that be a Breach of his *Institution*, *Sitting* no less than *Kneeling* is a Breach of it; so that *they* and *we* are *equally* concerned to answer it. But in Behalf of *both* it is easily answered, That the *Posture which he used*, was no Part of the *Institution* of the Blessed Sacrament; so that the *Institution* is not broken, when the *Posture* is altered. That neither *it*, nor *any other Posture*, has any *Precept* for it; so that none of them is *necessary*, but all of them are *indifferent* and *lawful* to be used, according as Mens own *private Judgment* and *Discretion*, where they are left to that, shall direct, or as *publick Authority* and *Custom* shall any where prescribe. And that when *these* have in any Place introduced a *Posture different* from what *he used*, *he himself*, by his own Practice in this very Case, and *they* too who make this Objection, by *theirs*, have taught us to comply therewith.

But against this Compliance it is by some still farther urged, that *Kneeling* in the Holy Sacrament is *worshipping the Bread*, and a *Popish Rite*, and that therefore they dare not *yield* and *conform* to it.

Now in Answer to its being a *Worshipping the Bread*, I would observe to them, that there is no Fear of that, because *we do not kneel to the Bread*, nor have any *Intention to worship it*; and if really we did intend to worship the Bread, without which there is no Adoration paid to it, we should worship it whether we kneel or sit; so that as to this Point of *worshipping the Bread*, their Mode and ours are *equally concerned*, and it must be owned on all Sides, that where that happens, not the *Posture*, but the *Intention* is to be blamed for it.

1. In *Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament*, I say, *there is no Fear of worshipping the Bread*, because *we do not kneel to it, nor have any Intention to worship it*. If we should *kneel down to the Bread*, indeed, and, submitting ourselves before it, pay *divine Honour and Homage* to it; this were really to *worship the Bread*. And this the *Papists* plainly do in that *Reverence* which they shew towards it. For they verily believe it to be *transubstantiated*, i. e. that the Substance of the Bread, after the Words of Consecration, is passed into the natural Body and Blood of Christ, which, with his human Soul, has his Divinity hypostatically united to it: And upon this Belief, they fall down to it with a Design to reverence it, and to give as much Adoration to it as they would to Christ himself, were he visibly present. But altho' this be *their* Intention, yet is it in no Case *ours* in *Kneeling at the Sacrament*. For we kneel not to the *Bread*, to give any *Homage* and *Adoration* unto it, as our * *Church* has most expressly declared in the *Rubrick*; so that if any Persons intend any such Thing, they must not say they follow the *Church* in that, since in the most earnest and express Words it utterly disclaims and warns us all against it. But we use *Kneeling* to a quite different End, viz. only as it is a *reverential* humble

* *It is hereby declared, that thereby (viz. by Kneeling) no Adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread and Wine there bodily received, or unto any corporeal Presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood. For the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their natural Substances, and therefore may not be adored (for that were Idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians.) And the natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven, and not here; it being against the Truth of Christ's natural Body to be at one Time in more Places than one.* At the End of the Communion Service.

Posture,

Posture *, wherein we may very decently receive Gifts, and make Confession of our Sins, and give Thanks, and pour out our Prayers to Almighty God: So that our Kneeling is only unto God, who is the proper Object of our Worship, but not at all to the Bread, which is never intended to be served, nor receives any Homage or Submission by it. This, I say, is all we do in Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament, as the Church requires, and as our own Consciences bear us Witness, which are the only sure Judges in this Case, since they alone do thoroughly understand, and are privy to our own Intents and Purposes. And when both our Church and we do thus openly profess that we kneel not to the Bread, nor have any Intention thereby to worship and submit ourselves to it; there is none sure will be so rash and unchristianly censorious as to charge us with it. But if any do, they are thereby guilty, not only of an open Uncharitableness, in imputing the worst Things to us without any just Cause; but also of great Presumption and high Arrogance, since therein they take upon them to teach us our own Thoughts, and tell us our own Hearts and Intentions better than we can tell ourselves.

2. If in Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament we should have any such Intention, without which there is no Adoration paid to the Bread, we should worship whether we kneel or sit; so that their Mode and ours are equally concerned in this Doubt, and it must be owned on all Sides, that where such Worship is paid to Bread, it is not the Posture, but the Intention which is to be blamed for it. For when

* Which Order (of Kneeling) is well meant, for a Signification of our humble and grateful Acknowledgement of the Benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy Receivers. Rub. at the End of the Communion Service,

we design Worship to any Object, we can give it by a bare *inward Homage* and *Submission of the Mind*, without the Help of any *outward Act*; or, if we would make it a Worship of the *Body* too, that may be done by any *Posture* wherein we design to express it. It may be done *Sitting*, as well as in a more *humble Mode*; for tho' that seem to shew more of *Familiarity* than *Respect*, yet has it sometimes been used for the *Posture of Worship*. Thus the *Gentiles* worshipped their *Gods*, as *Tertullian** tells us; *The Nations*, says he, *worship their Images Sitting*. And thus also the *Jews* sometimes worshipped in their *religious Feasts*, when they fed upon their *Sacrifices*, 1 Sam. ix. 13, 22. For so it was plainly in the Worship of the *Golden Calf*, where, after they had offered their *Burnt-Offerings* and their *Peace-Offerings*, *they sate down to eat and to drink upon what they had offered*, *Exod. xxxii. 6*. So that if any of those who *kneel*, are guilty of worshipping the *Bread*, their *Kneeling* must not be accused for it, since, when giving Worship is their Intention, they would be guilty of the same Thing if they *sate*. And therefore it is not the *Posture*, which were very commendable were it directed unto God, but the mis-applying it unto the *Bread*, and using it with that *irreligious Intention*, which is to bear the Blame thereof.

As for those then, who are afraid to *kneel at the Holy Sacrament*, for fear lest thereby, with the *Papists*, they should *worship the Bread*; my Answer in brief is this. To *worship the Bread*, as the *Papists* do, is to *kneel down to it*, and to pay

* Cum perinde faciant Nationes adoratis Sigillaribus suis residendo, vel propterea in nobis reprehendi meretur (viz. *sitting at Prayers*) quod apud Idola celebratur. *Tertul. de Orat. C. xii.*

divine Honour and Adoration to it, because they believe Christ bodily present therein; and this may be done in any Posture, either Sitting or Kneeling, when any Persons intend such Worship to the Bread; and without such Intent, we do not worship the Bread by Kneeling in the Holy Sacrament; and they are best able to tell themselves whether in Receiving they intend any such Thing to the Bread or no; and if they say they do not, it is great Arrogance, as well as Uncharitableness in others, to charge them therewith; and if they have any such Design, they must not say it is to comply with our Church, because it expressly declares against it, and warns them of the Danger of it. If they worship the Bread, their Kneeling is no Cause of that Worship; and if they are so minded, they may use that Posture only to confess their Sins, and give Thanks, and make Prayers, by all which they worship God; and if still they will worship the Bread by Kneeling, they go off from the Injunction of the Church, which would deter them from doing so. So that their Submission to the Church's Order in this Case, can put them in no Danger of worshipping the Bread; and therefore in complying with her, they have no Cause at all to be afraid of it.

And then, as for this Kneeling in the Sacrament being a *Popish Rite*, if they mean that the *Papists* use it, they may call their own *Sitting* a *Popish Rite* too upon the same Ground, because that also is sometimes used by them in Receiving. For the *Benedictine Monks*, as * *Didoclarivius*, a zealous As-

* *Hodie in Cathedralibus Ecclesiis & Monasteriis Benedictinorum, in Die Cœnæ Domini ante Parasceuen, &c. Evangelium Joannis à Diacono publice prælegitur, & dulcissima illa colloquia Christi, quæ abiturus cum discipulis habuit, recitantur: interim ordine dispositis mensis, convivæ assident, panem azymum frangentes, &c. Didoclar. Alt. Damasc. C. x. p. 746.*

Restor of the *sitting Mode*, has observed from *Bullinger*, *Sit at the Communion sometimes, yea, and the Pope himself at certain Times doth so*. For thus much *William Thomas*, an Eye-Witness of it, in the Year 1547, plainly testifies, as the * *Quench-Coal* says. And the same in his *History of Italy*, *Durandus* † also clearly affirms: And likewise the *Book of the sacred Ceremonies* ‡ sufficiently intimates it in one Case, viz. at the *Coronation of the Emperors*. *Sitting and Kneeling* then are both equal as to this Point, that the *Papists use them*: But that need not make us throw them away as *Popish Rites*, or be any Disparagement to either of them. For the *Papists* have many *harmless Things*, and many *very good*, as well as many *bad* among them. They have the *Scriptures*, which are nevertheless the *Word of God* because they *read* them; and the *Creed*, and the *Lord's Prayer*, which none of us will cast aside because they *use* them; and *kneel at their Prayers*, which yet we ought not to disclaim for fear of *symbolizing* with them: So that both *Sitting* and *Kneeling* may be *good Things* among us, tho' both are used by *them* too.

But if by a *Popish Rite*, they mean that it is one of the *Corruptions of Popery*, whereby they have depraved *Christianity*; that is a great Mis-

* *Quench-Coal*, p. 12.

† Summus Pontifex ad sedem ascendens, ibique confidens, universis cernentibus, majorem partem oblatae suscipit de Patina quam Subdiaconus apportaverat de Altari, ipsamque Dentibus subdividens, unam particulam ejus sumit, & aliam in Calicem mittit, &c. *Durand. Ration. Divin. Offic.* l. iv. c. 54. Num. 4. p. 203.

‡ Imperator retrahens se ad partem dextram, stat usque quo Pontifex ad sedem eminentem communicaturus revertatur, quem Imperator sequitur, *Lib. Sac. Cerem. S. Rom. Eccl.* l. i. sect. 5. c. 3. p. 59.

take, which has no Colour of Reason or Ground at all for it. For Kneeling is not only a very innocent, but a very decent Posture wherein to receive Gifts, and make humble Confession of our Sins, and put up Prayers and Supplications to Almighty God; all which we are to do in the Holy Sacrament. It is probably a much more ancient Rite, and either it, or some other Posture of Reverence and Adoration, which is of the same Account with it, was used in the Communion long before Popery, i. e. the Popish Errors and Corruptions, which are a novel and upstart Religion, had any Footing.

But then in further Return to this Exception, I must observe to them, that, on the other hand, the Way of *Sitting at the Holy Table*, which they contend for, is a Socinian Rite, which they first introduced into the Protestant Churches, and that in Disrespect and Irreverence to Christ himself, whose Death is there set forth, to shew that they held him for a mere Man, and denied his God-head. And on this Account, when other Postures, as *Standing* or *Kneeling*, have been left indifferent in the Holy Sacrament, *Sitting* has been particularly rejected and forbid by Protestants, in Detestation of its having been first introduced among them by these Men, and that upon so very impious and horrible a Design. As for *Standing* or *Kneeling*, says the General Synod of Petracow in Poland, held in the Year of our Lord 1578. Men may be at Liberty to use either, as they please. But as for *Sitting at the Lord's Table*, because that is contrary to the Rites commonly used in all the Protestant Churches throughout Europe; and because they were the first Authors and Introducers thereof among us, unskilfully pretending Christ's Example for the same, who as treacherous Runagates are fallen from us to the Arians: Therefore we have rejected it, as pro-

per to them, who distinguish themselves by their irreverent Treatment, as of Christ himself, so also of his holy Ordinances; and as a Ceremony less decent and religious, and which is very apt to scandalize weak Minds*.

As for this Objection then against complying with the Injunction of *Kneeling* in the Holy Sacrament, viz. its being a *Worshipping the Bread*, and a *Popish Rite*; there is really no Weight in it. For they cannot *worship the Bread* in complying with the Church, since it forbids them to worship it. Nor are they chargeable with any Thing therein that is truly and culpably *Popish*, tho' the *Papists* use the same Posture (as indeed they do *Sitting* too, which yet is never the worse for their Use thereof;) because *Kneeling* at the Communion is none of the *Corruptions of Popery*, (as *Sitting* among *Protestants* at first was of *Socinianism*) but either it, or some other Posture of *Adoration* which is of equal Danger with it, as to the Matter of *Worship*, was in Use in *Christianity* before the *Popish Errors* were introduced. So that altho' they cannot see Reason enough to desire this Way, nor would receive *Kneeling*, were another Posture allowed in *Receiving*; yet since the Sacrament is

* Thus Synod. Gen. Petracoviensis, An. Dom. 1598, Menſe Junio, Decree that the Poſture of Receiving ſhould be either Stantes or Genuflectentes: And ſay of Sitting, Sessiſionis vero ad menſam Domini, quia præter Ritus in omnibus per Europam Evangelicis Eccleſiis vulgo conſuetos illi inter nos primi autores extiterunt, qui omnia temere in Eccleſia immutantes, & ſine ſcientia Chriſtum quaſi imitantes, à nobis ad Arianiſmum perfidi Tranſugæ facti ſunt; quare hanc propriam ipſiſ (ut Chriſtum, ita & Sacra ejus irreverenter tractantibus) & tanquam minus honeſtam ac religioſam, ſimplicioribuſque admodum ſcandalofam Cæremoniam rejecimus.

So Synod Gen. Cracov. Anno 1573. Act 6. which permits Ceremonies in the Sacrament to Chriſtian Liberty. Monemur à patribus, ut qui Sessiſione in Sacra cœna utuntur, eam Cæremoniam quaſi Arianobaptiſtiſ propriam relinquunt.

not otherwise to be had, they may very safely and wisely comply with it, and submit to it still.

And thus I have considered this *Impediment*, whereby many good Minds, who are sensible of the Duty of it, and are otherwise very well prepared for it, are yet unhappily kept back from the *Holy Sacrament*. And the Result of all is this, That when they stay away upon this Account, because *they will not kneel in receiving the same*, they refrain upon a most unjustifiable Ground, which will afford them no *Excuse*, nor ought in any Reason to be their *Hindrance*. For *Kneeling* is really no *unsuitable*, but a very *decent Posture*; so that if we were left at *Liberty* to receive how we would, we might have enough to *justify ourselves* in making *use* of it. And it is *appointed by our Governors*, whom God commands us to obey in all *lawful Things*; so that in regard to *their* having *prescribed* it, every good Man among us ought to observe it. And if neither *Authority* could impose it, nor it had any *Reason* from itself to recommend it, but that *Sitting* were on all Accounts much *fitter* to be used; yet since in their own Account it may *lawfully* be used too, and is only, as they conceive, a *less decent Mode*, but has no Sin or Offence in it; if they have any earnest Desire for the Sacrament, which is not otherwise to be had, for its *Sake* they will at least *comply* with *Kneeling*. If they rate Things truly, since *Authority* has *enjoyn'd* it, they will see themselves *obliged* to use it. But however, since their Saviour has laid no Weight upon it, but accepts of a truly devout Mind at his Table in any Posture; tho' they had rather use another, yet is there nothing to hinder their Compliance and Submission to use this. So that there is no just Pretence for any, upon this Account, to refrain coming to the Blessed Sacrament.

C H A P. VII.

Of some other Hindrances.

The CONTENTS.

An Account of some other Hindrances. One abstains from the Holy Sacrament, because the Day before he was at a Feast. Another, because his Child is sick, or he himself is lightly indisposed. A Third, because his Wife, or Husband cannot come along with him to join therein. A Fourth, because he has a Visit to make, or a Friend is come in, who in all Civility must be attended. A Fifth, because of a Shower of Rain, or a sharp Air abroad, so that he must endure a piercing Blast, or wet his Foot to go out to it. These are no Excuse from it, but still Men are bound to communicate.

HAVING hitherto considered those *Pleas* which seem to be of most Weight in hindering Men from the Holy Sacrament, and possess them either with a *Scruple*, that they dare not, or with an *important Reason* why they should not chuse to come to it; before I dismiss *this Head*, I shall take Notice of some *others*, which, though of less Moment, may yet seem fit to be considered.

Men oft-times give such Reasons for their Neglect of the Blessed Sacrament, as are Reasons to themselves for neglecting nothing else that is of half that Moment. *The Unseasonableness of the Weather, the Sickness of a Child, the paying a Compliment to a Friend, or the like, is thought a sufficient,*

cient Hindrance from the Communion: Whereas it would not hinder them from any Business, which either *Friendship*, their *own Pleasure*, or their *Profit* requires of them. For how cogent soever they may account them in keeping them back from it, they would not be with-held by them from pursuing any *Sport*, or from driving an *advantageous Bargain*, or carrying on any *End* or *Interest*, or *serving their Friend*, in any *Business*, or *Affairs of Moment*. And can any Man now have the Face to give that for a Reason to Almighty God, which he would be ashamed to offer as a Reason to any one else? Can he expect to excuse the *Neglect of a weighty Duty unto him*, by such trifling Apologies as would not excuse the *Neglect of a Bargain*, nay, nor of a *Pastime to himself*; nor of a *Concern of Weight*, or, perhaps, of a *Compliment to his Companions*? Those Men are surely in a sad Case, who are forced to seek Shelter under such thin Pretences; and rather than make such trifling Pleas for any Act of Disobedience, it were by much the wiser Course to be wholly silent, and not seek to defend themselves at all.

When these Pleas are made then, there is no Excuse in them. And indeed they would not be made by any Men, if once they were convinced how much it is both their *Duty* and their *Interest* to come to the Holy Communion. For when they are detained by such frivolous Reasons, as would not either be urged, or admitted in Excuse for any other Business; they shew only their great Indifference to it, and how they esteem it less than any other Matters: And this they could not do, if they held it either as a valuable Privilege, or as a Point of Conscience. The best Way therefore to remove these Hindrances from the Sacra-

ment, is to possess Men with a Belief that God has peremptorily enjoined them to partake in it, and that it is infinitely their own Interest and high Privilege to be admitted to it. And having shew'd these very largely in the *Second Part*, I shall refer the *Reader* unto that, as a very likely Way, not only to answer *these*, but also to prevent all *other* such like Pleas against it.

But that such Persons as are serious in these Hindrances, may not think themselves too much slighted, besides this *general* Answer, I shall say something to the *Particulars*.

1. One keeps away from the Holy Sacrament, because *the Day before* either *he himself* has made a *Feast*, or has been treated by his Neighbour at a noble Entertainment. But why, I pray, must this excuse it? For if at the *Feast* he was guilty of any incapacitating Offence, or any ways intemperate; it is not the *Feast*, but such Offence or Intemperance which is to be alledged for it. But if the Entertainment was friendly in the Design, temperate at the Table, and every Way harmless and charitable, hurting no Man's Fame, nor disturbing any Man's Quiet in the Conversation; wherein was his Lord offended, or his Soul unfitted for this Holy Supper thereby? The primitive Christians received it at a friendly Treat, for in those Days their Love-Feasts always went along with it: So that an hospitable Entertainment the Day before, yea, or even the *same Day*, doth not unfit Men to communicate; but if in all Things else they are duly qualified, they may worthily receive still.

2. Another abstains from this Holy Feast, because *his Child is sick*, or because *he has taken cold himself*, or has some aching in his Head, or is otherwise lightly indisposed,

But

But what if his *Child is sick*? Doth he attend it? Or is it adviseable for him to be so far disturbed at his Child's Illness, till his Mind is unfit for those religious Tempers which he is to exercise at the Holy Sacrament? Perhaps his Child fares the worse, because of some Sin which he has committed; and will he not then instantly repent of his Sins, and come to the Lord's Table, there to have his Pardon sealed for the same, that so this Load may be taken off, and it may find Ease by his coming? But whether that be so or no, if he has any Sense of Religion, either in his *Child's* Case, or his *own*, he will be earnestly desirous to make God his Physician, and call out to him for Help: And that he cannot do so effectually, or prevail in it so certainly at any other Time, as I have shewed, as in the Holy Sacrament. For God is never more enclined to hear us, nor are we ever more likely to have our Prayers granted for any Thing that he sees fit for us, than when we send them up along with this solemn Commemoration of our Saviour's Death, which is the only Argument that has Authority and Power with him, to obtain any Thing on our Behalf. So that if a wise Man longs to have his Child recovered, he cannot do a more unwise Thing, than either to grieve so far till he is *unfitted* for this Holy Feast, or, when he might be fit for it, to *neglect* the same, since his Prayers there would be a most *probable* and *prudent* Course to obtain it.

And then as for his *own Indisposition*, if indeed it has brought upon him such *Heaviness* as unfits him for any spiritual Act, or if it is in that Degree that it is not *safe* for him to stir abroad with it; God prefers *natural* and *essential* Duties before *positive* Institutions, and *Mercy* before *Sacrifice*, so

that it will be a just Excuse for his staying away from the Holy Sacrament. But if it cannot hinder him from looking after Business, and going among his Neighbours, or venturing out upon any Appearance of doing either himself or his Friend a Kindness: Why must it excuse him from attending upon God, and doing him this Service? except that be thought sufficient to excuse our Attendance upon him which excuses nothing else; which is a Thing, I presume, they would be loath to own, who stay away by Reason of this Hindrance.

3. Some again refrain the Holy Sacrament, because *their Wife or Husband cannot bear them Company, and join with them in the Receipt thereof*. One of them is either *accidentally prevented* that they cannot, or, *sinfully negligent and unprepared*, that they *will not* come to it; and therefore in Compliance, and for Company's Sake, the other also keeps away at present, and defers it to another Time, when both may receive together.

This, I think, is a *popular*, but it is a very *weak* Excuse. For the Receiving the Communion is an indispensable Duty, concerning which every Person must give Account of *themselves* unto Almighty God; so that one near Relation can no more talk of neglecting it for the other's Sake, than of neglecting to say their *Prayers* and *serve God*, because the other doth it not, or of being *irreligious* to symbolize with some dear Friends, and *casting away* their *precious Souls* out of *Compliment*. Nay, if he had not thus *enjoined* us, but had only *friendly invited* us to communicate; yet would it be a very *rude* and *disobliging* Thing to refuse his Invitation upon this Account, because some others, who are very dear to us, have not
either

either the Opportunity or good Manners to accept thereof. For if an *Husband* or a *Wife* will not receive unless the *other* also will consent to receive too; it is a Sign they come not so much for the *Lord's*, as for *each other's* Sake, so that *they*, and not their *Saviour*, have the Service and the Honour of it; and this is an odd Account for any Man to give to Christ of his neglecting this Holy Feast, when he is most affectionately and earnestly invited to it.

When any Persons stay away from the Sacrament then, because they cannot have their Bosom-Friend to join with them therein; they are guilty of a *great Sin* (since one is bound to it whether the other comes, or not) and pass a *great Affront* and *Dis honour* upon their Lord, so that this is far from having any Excuse in it. Nay, instead of being a Reason why they should abstain from it, the Neglect of one dear Relation lays a greater Obligation on the other to communicate. For when one cannot come, so that there must be a Defect on that Part, that is *too much* already, since neither ought to be wanting in this Service; and therefore there is the *more Need* that the other should receive, not only thereby to shew their *own Duty*, but also to *supply their Friend's Defect* as well as they can, and make amends for it.

4. A *Fourth* absents himself from this Holy Feast, because *that Day he is to visit a Friend abroad, or has a Friend accidentally come in to dine with him, who must, in all Civility, be attended.*

But why must our Respects to our Saviour and our other Friends be made thus to *interfere*, so that *one* must needs be a Temptation to omit the *other*? How comes it that of all the Days in the Month we fix upon that for visiting or entertaining of our Friends, when our Blessed Lord in-

vites us to his Table, there to entertain us? Or if by Accident a Friend then breaks in upon us, why must that detain us when Christ calls us? Is it any Part of his Friendship to make us disobey our Lord, or to put us by embracing this high Honour and most advantageous Opportunity when it is graciously offer'd? Or if he be God's Friend too as well as ours, is it not very fit that he should go also and join with us? When to communicate is a Duty in both of us, is it anywise reasonable that he should make us stay away, and not go along with us? But if it happen that a Friend who is *unwilling to communicate* falls in to be entertained, or a Visit at that Time would be expected; since our Saviour and they cannot be attended too, which ought in Reason to be preferred? Is there any to whom we owe more Respect and Observance than we do to Christ Jesus? Should we affect the Company, or court the Conversation of any Person, more than his? Are there any who ought more highly to be valued by us, or have better deserved of us, or whom we should study more to make our Friend, than him who has gained us eternal Life, and that by laying down his own Heart's Blood for the Purchase? When more *honourable Persons*, or *better Friends* invite us, let us turn our backs upon his Table, and pay *them* Attendance. But since he can have no Competitors in this Case, where is the *Justice*, the *Honour*, and *Respect* to him, when this is given as a Reason of our Absence?

5. A *Fifth* neglects the Holy Sacrament, because of a *Shower of Rain*, or of a *sharp Air abroad*; so that he must, *altho' not much*, prejudice or endanger his Health; (in which Case, as I said, God is willing to have Mercy take Place of Sacrifice) yet however, endure a *piercing Blast*, or wet his Feet if he goes out for it.

But

But is he thus tender of himself in any other Matters? And would these dreadful Scare-crows put him by any other Concerns which fright him from this Ordinance? If they stood in the Way of his *Pleasures*, would he refrain them? If they lay between him and his *worldly Interests*, would he be discouraged by them? If they met him in the Way as he were going to *do his Friend a Kindness*, would they cause him to turn back again? Tho' they would not *justify* it, yet when they hinder him from these, and such like Matters, they may with more *Colour be pleaded* in Excuse of his Absence from the *Lord's Supper*. But are not Men much at a Loss for Excuse to shift off this Duty, when such as this, so full of palpable Contempt and a careless Spirit, must serve their Turn, and be thought sufficient? And have not we an hard Task to *conduct them on to eternal Happiness*, which must put them upon *fighting and striving*, and *giving all Diligence*, and *denying themselves*, and *taking up the Cross*, and *plucking out right Eyes*, and *cutting off right Hands*, &c. when they stumble thus at *Straws*, and are beat back by the Force of every *Feather* which is blown in their Faces? and such Trifles as these can discourage their going on in the most weighty Duties, and make them recoil again upon our Hands?

C H A P. VIII.

Devotions fitted for the Holy Sacrament.

The CONTENTS.

A Meditation and Prayer for the exciting and exercising the Grace of Thankfulness in the Communicant. Another for the Exercise of Charity. A Third, for the Exercise of Resignation to God's Will. A Fourth, for the Exercise of Repentance. Some other Forms of Devotion, both at, and after Receiving. After we have received, we must be careful to make good those holy Vows and Promises, which we made to God in the Holy Sacrament.

AS for all these Excuses then, which *careless* Men, who make *no Conscience* of the Holy Sacrament, give for their Absence from it, they will not stand them in any Stead; nay, they are such as no wise Man dare own, when once they are examined. They shew nothing else but the *Disregard* Men have of Christ, their *Unaffectedness* with all that he has done and suffered for them, their *absolute Indifference* to have it remembred, and their *utter Contempt* of this Duty, which he has commanded them. They are a good Evidence of their own *careless, undutiful, and irreverent* Mind, and manifest how little they set by their Blessed Lord; so that the urging of them is a ready Way to give *more Offence*, but not to make any *Excuse* at all.

And

And thus I have done with all those *Pleas* which are wont, I think, most generally to keep Men from the Communion, and would be most apt to hinder those Things, which I have said about the Duty and Advantage of it in the second Part, from having their due Effect upon them. Among these, there are some, perhaps, may seem to be little Objections: But little as they are, they are an Hindrance to some Minds; and since it is not below them to stop at them, I am far from thinking it too trivial and low a Thing for me to answer them. And upon the whole Matter it appears, that to communicate is a great Duty, and a great Benefit, and that none of those *Pleas* which are ordinarily urged for it, can in any just Sort excuse Mens Neglect of the Blessed Sacrament. For neither their Unworthiness to partake of it, nor the Danger of Damnation threatened to every unworthy Communicant, nor the Fear of breaking that Promise of new Life which is made therein, nor the apprehended Difficulty and Want of Leisure to prepare for it, nor their being unbettered and unimproved by it, nor the Want of that Charity which is to be professed at it, nor the having some Enemies, after all their Endeavours for Reconciliation, still unreconciled to them, nor the seeming Presumption in joining in this sacred Feast, nor the customary Absence of many good People from it, nor the Admittance of unworthy Receivers to it, nor the Imposition of Kneeling at it: Neither these, I say, nor any other Impediment whereby Men are apt to excuse it to their own Minds, can really justify and bear them out in absenting themselves from the Lord's Table, when they are invited to it. No ill Man can be excused, and no good Man need to be hindered by them. So that every Man, as
he

he tenders our blessed Lord's Command, and his own Soul's everlasting Interest, must be careful reverently and devoutly to partake in this Holy Feast, when he has an Opportunity, and is called so to do.

And now I have gone thro' all those *Particulars* which I proposed at the Beginning of this Book, and which I thought most proper to be insisted on, to engage Men to a worthy *Reception* of the Holy Sacrament: I have shewn what is the *Meaning of eating and drinking in this mysterious Feast*, and *wherein the Worthiness of doing it lies*, and *what strict Obligations we have to do so*, and *how great Benefits we are like to receive by it*; and answered those *Pleas which are most generally given out to excuse the Neglect thereof*: And this, with all honest Minds, who are desirous and free to hear, and will have the *Patience to consider*, may seem sufficient to enforce a due Attendance on it. And when once Men are so disposed, and seriously resolved to communicate, I shall add a few Things to assist them in a right Discharge of this Duty, and so conclude this Subject.

When we come to the Holy Sacrament, to *commemorate the Death of our bleeding Lord*, whose *Body* there is represented as *broken*, and his most precious *Blood* as *shed*, upon our Account; we are to shew forth an *affectionate and hearty Thankfulness* for so invaluable a Kindness, and entire *Resignation of ourselves to his Use and Service*, and *true Repentance of all our Sins*, fully purposing to amend them all thenceforwards, and an *universal Peace and Charity towards all our Neighbours*; all which we must excite in our own Souls by due Considerations.

I. We must shew forth an *affectionate and hearty Thankfulness* for so invaluable a Kindness.

And

And what Soul can be flow to pay this, who considers how *infinitely our dear Lord has deserved of us?* For he has got us the most *precious* and *glorious* Things which Heaven itself could afford, *viz.* that *all our Sins* should be *freely pardoned*, and that the *Holy Ghost*, that *immense, eternal, and all-sufficient Spirit*, should come in at all Times to our *Help*, and that we should be in no less *Quality* than that of the *Sons of God*, and *Heirs of a Kingdom*, who are assured of *eternal Joys and Glories* in another World. And ought not *Gifts* so *august* and *superlatively excellent*, to be most *affectionately acknowledg'd?* He has bought all these, to bestow upon us, at the *dearest Rate*, not only taking the most *unwearied Pains*, but also paying the *highest Price*, and *laying down his own most precious Blood for the Purchase*. And must not such *astonishing Kindness*, which was affrighted by no *Hazards*, nor stopt at any *Difficulties*, nor declined any *Sufferings*, not the *Suffering of Death* itself, for our *Sakes*, be always held in a most *thankful Remembrance?* And in all this he had no *Ends of his own* to serve of us, but was led on purely by the *Pleasure* which he takes in our *Happiness*. He was not *won by our Deserts*; for, alas! we were his *profess'd Enemies*, who had nothing to shew but highest *Provocations*; he was not *wearied* out with the *Importunity of our Intreaties*, for it came, as *undeserved*, so altogether *unasked*, whatsoever he did for us; he was not *moved* by the *Mediation of Friends*; for whom, alas! had we to *intercede* for us? And shall not such *amazing Love and Goodness*, so *frankly shew'd*, without any *Eye at Self-Ends* or *private Interests*, without *Intreaties* or *Deserts*, nay, in *Spite of all Discouragements* and *highest Provocations*, be entertain'd with *greatest Joy* and *grateful Acclamations?* He has
been

been an *infinitely endearing* and *intire Friend* to us, without any *Inducement* but his own most *generous Kindness*, and *against all Discouragements*, and *beyond all Bounds*, and *under the most frightful Hazards*, and *at the highest Expences*, giving his *own Soul* even to *Death*, for a *Ransom* to redeem *ours*. And whensoever we hear or think of this, I am confident it will not be difficult for any of us to embrace him with *Hearts full of Love* and *holy Desires*, and to pay him most *intire Thanks*, and burst out into *Songs of Praise*, and find it a most *joyful Business* so to do.

“ What am I, my dear Lord, will a devout
 “ Mind then say, that thou shouldest leave the
 “ right Hand of God, and come to visit me?
 “ Hadst thou no Ease in thy own Breast so long
 “ as I lay plunged in Misery? And couldest not
 “ thou be happy in Heaven, nor enjoy thyself
 “ amidst all the Joys and Glories of that blissful
 “ Place, unless I were there to bear thee Com-
 “ pany? How camest thou, being so highly ex-
 “ alted, and the eternal Son of God, to have an
 “ affectionate Concern at all for me? Was not I
 “ a deformed polluted Wretch, and thy profess’d
 “ Enemy? And were not these enough to turn
 “ away thy Face from me? But if, notwithstand-
 “ ing all this, thy overflowing Goodness would
 “ put thee upon doing something for my Sake,
 “ why must thou come thyself upon the Earth,
 “ nay, come to bleed and die, to redeem me?
 “ Am I dearer to thee than thy own Life,
 “ that thou shouldest part with it to save me?
 “ Dost thou love me better than thou lovest thy-
 “ self, that thou wilt shed the last Drop of thy
 “ own Heart’s Blood to make me happy? Blessed
 “ Jesus! how unfathomable is thy Grace, and
 “ what

“ what an unsearchable Depth of Love is this,
 “ which thou hast opened to us, poor miserable
 “ Sinners! O how happy do I think myself in it,
 “ and how doth my Heart rejoice at the Remem-
 “ brance of it! Lord! I love thee dearly, and
 “ long to love thee more! I wish no greater
 “ Pleasure than to be found perfect in thy Love,
 “ and to have thee so dear unto me, that I can
 “ easily condemn all the gilded Vanities and Al-
 “ lurements of this World at the Thoughts of
 “ Thee! O! that I had the Heart of the Sera-
 “ phim, that I might be all over Love, and feel
 “ my Soul affected to that Degree, which I de-
 “ sire, and which thou, holy Jesus, hast infinitely
 “ deserved of me! But if that may not be, yet
 “ at least possess me, I pray thee, with such a
 “ Sense of thy Love, and with such Thankful-
 “ ness for all thy Favours, as is fit for me, and
 “ may in some Sort be worthy of thee: Tho’
 “ should I offer the utmost Acknowledgments
 “ which the most affected and enlarged Heart
 “ can pay, I should not give thee the thousandth
 “ Part of what I owe thee. Let all the holy and
 “ elect Angels adore thy glorious Goodness, and
 “ let all the Sons of Men, so long as they have
 “ a Tongue to speak, set forth thy noble Praise.
 “ For thou, O sweetest Jesu, art the Son of the
 “ Blessed, and the Joy and Glory of the World;
 “ thou art the Lamb of God, and the Saviour
 “ of Mankind, who wast slain for our Sakes,
 “ and art alive again; and who sittest now for
 “ ever at the right Hand of Power, in the Glory
 “ of the Father, that Angels may submit to thee,
 “ and that all the World may worship thee, sing
 “ of thee, and praise thy Goodness, Power, and
 “ Glory, to all Eternity.

2. We must shew ourselves *reconciled to all those who have any ways offended us, and that we are in Peace and Charity with all Persons.* And this we shall not think much to do, if we consider how highly our dear Lord is concerned for them, and how earnestly he sues in their Behalf; for then we shall be readily brought to it on his Account, tho' we might be more averse to it on their own. He has loved them so well as to shed his precious Blood for them; and can we find in our Hearts to hurt any Person, when we see him giving his own Life to save him? He owns them as his Friends and Brethren; and is not that enough to make us kind, to see that he is so near a-kin to them? He has made them Members of his Body, and thereby Parts of his ownself; and can we study Revenge against them, when he comes in at last to bear the Stroke, and is wretched in so doing? He becomes a *Petitioner* to us in their Behalf, and intreats us, by Virtue of all that he has done for us, to be Friends again; and can we have the Face to deny him, who has so infinitely obliged us, and ought to command us in every Thing? Shall we refuse so small a Suit to him that died for us? Or stick to throw away a sinful Resentment for his Sake, who has parted with his own Heart's Blood for ours? Tho' they are most unworthy to be pardoned, yet is he most worthy to have their Pardon; so that when he intreats for it, we must not be backward to grant it. Nay, we stand daily in a thousand Times more Need of his Pardon than they do of ours; so that we block up the Way to our own Forgiveness, if we refuse, at his Suit, to forgive them. For what if they have injured us? Have we been altogether innocent, and have offered him no Injuries? What if they have most

ungrate-

ungratefully abused us, after they had received the most endearing Kindnesses at our Hands? Have we been duly thankful unto him, and never offended against all his Mercies? Do not we owe him *ten thousand Talents*? whereas their Debt to us is but a Trifle of an *hundred Pence*, Mat. xviii. 24, 28. And since we are daily asking him the Forgiveness of these *vast Sums*, can we at the same Time stick at his Instance to remit these *smaller Matters* to *our Neighbours*? Have we the Face to ask Pardon, whilst we have not the Heart to grant it? Or can we hope that Christ should give it to us, for the most heinous Sins, at our Request, when we deny it to our Brother, for the smallest Trespases, at his? Or rather, since he most frankly forgives us, and that too without upbraiding us, shall not both our own *Necessity*, and the *Example of his Mercy* engage us to forgive our offending Neighbours also?

“ Lo! here, my blessed Saviour (will a devout
 “ Heart then say) how I cast by all angry
 “ Thoughts, and am Friends with all the World,
 “ as thou requirest I should be! They shall all be
 “ dear to me, because I see they are so to thee,
 “ who hast given thine own Life for their Ran-
 “ som. Thou ownest them all as thy Brethren,
 “ and therefore they shall evermore be mine; for
 “ I desire to have the same Friends, and to go
 “ along with thee in every Relation. No Mem-
 “ ber of thine, whom I had never seen before,
 “ shall ever be a Stranger unto me, but I will
 “ embrace him as a Part of my own Body. Nay,
 “ even my bitterest Enemies shall have no Hat-
 “ red or hard Usage at my Hands, but I am
 “ Friends with all the World, since thou wilt
 “ have me to be Friends with them. Shall not

" I, O Lord, forgive other Men, who am un-
 " done myself, unless I be forgiven? Shall not I
 " have pity on their Souls, as thou, blessed Jesus,
 " hast on mine, and freely pardon them when
 " thou becomest their Advocate, to sue and in-
 " tercede for them? O! my dearest Saviour, I
 " do from my Heart forgive them, and will ne-
 " ver yield to return their Injuries or Unkindnesses
 " upon them. Nay, I most humbly beseech
 " thee, and that by thy own most precious Blood,
 " that thou wouldest forgive them also. Give
 " them Grace to repent of whatsoever they have
 " done against thee, or against me, and im-
 " pute not their Trespases unto them, but receive
 " them, I earnestly intreat thee, into thy Favour,
 " as here I do truly and unfeignedly, into mine.
 " Hear me, O blessed Jesu! both for myself and
 " them, that we may be all one with thee, and
 " among ourselves, being united to thee, by a
 " Spirit of Holiness, and to each other, by a
 " Spirit of mutual Charity and brotherly Kind-
 " ness, that so all the World may know we are
 " thy Disciples, by that Spirit of Love which
 " thou hast given us."

3. We must *resign ourselves up to our Saviour's Use*, and *repent truly of all our Sins*, promising him *faithfully that we will amend them all from that Time*.

We must *resign ourselves up to our Saviour's Use*, that *he may dispose of us as he pleases*. And what Man can stick at this, who considers that he has *bought us*, and would put us to *no Use* but what is *infinitely for our own Advantage*? Has any Person a better Claim to us, than he who bought us with his Blood, and gave his own Life for the Purchase? Should not he have the Benefit of all our

Service, who has paid so dear for it, by dying himself in our Stead? But if we were at Liberty, and he had no Power over us, is there any better Way to dispose of ourselves, or could we desire to be in other Hands rather than in his? Can we hope for more Wisdom in any one to direct, or for more Power to bring our Happiness about, than in him who knows and governs all Things? Durst we trust more to the Faithfulness and Affection of any Heart than of that which died for us? Or can we think ourselves happier in any Hands than in his, who is in all Things studious of our Advantage. For our blessed Lord seeks no other Ends by us, but our own eternal Happiness; he imposes no Duties on our Consciencies but what he has done himself before us; nay, what had we the Understanding to discern it, we should all have impos'd upon ourselves. So that in committing ourselves to his Conduct, we do not give, but seek a Benefit, and dispose of ourselves in that Way, which is incomparably our highest Interest. We are absolutely his own Right, and it is infinitely our own Interest to be wholly given up to him, and govern'd according to his Liking; and therefore every considerate Man will freely resign up his Heart to Christ, and never suffer the World, or his own Lusts, to pull it back again.

“ Come then, my dear and rightful Lord, will
“ a poor Soul say, and take Possession of me:
“ Thou hast bought me with thine own Blood, a
“ strange Price for so despicable a Purchase! and
“ here I come, in all Humility, to present thee
“ with what thou hast so dearly got, and without
“ all Reserve, to give up myself unto thee. I
“ know, O Lord, that I am a deformed and pol-
“ luted Creature, most unworthy to be offered to

“ so excellent a Majesty. But gladly would I be
“ thine, that thou may’st make me better, and
“ so adorn me with thy Grace, that I may be
“ fitted for thyself; and therefore I earnestly be-
“ seech thee to accept of me. I humbly beg to
“ be delivered from myself, for I am mine own
“ most mortal Enemy. O! that thou wouldst
“ give thine holy Spirit Power over me, and not
“ let my own corrupt Will any longer govern
“ me, nor my false Heart any more deceive me,
“ nor my unbridled Passions any more to reign
“ in me, which, alas! have tyrannized too long
“ already. O! that thou wouldest purge my
“ Understanding from all foolish Principles, and
“ from all Darkness and Ignorance of holy
“ Things; and cure my Will and Affections of
“ all their Stubbornness, and Opposition to thy
“ Laws; O! that thou wouldest first take them
“ as thine own Propriety, and then fit them for
“ their Master’s Use, that I may never hereafter
“ live to myself, but unto thy Glory! And wilt
“ thou throw back a Soul, O dear Lord, that
“ would hang itself upon thee? Wilt thou dis-
“ dain an Heart which is desirous of thee, and
“ would fain be no longer its own, but thine,
“ that thou mightest use it as it may best serve
“ and honour thee? O blessed Jesus! do not re-
“ ject it, for it is the Purchase of thy own most
“ precious Blood. Let not all that be thrown
“ away, which thou hast already done for it, for
“ Want of thy further Care and Conduct thereof.
“ Accept me, good Lord, who here unfeignedly
“ devote myself unto thee, that both my Soul
“ and Body, and all I have, may be employed
“ as thou seest fit to order me, I am nothing, I
“ have nothing, and I desire nothing but to be with
“ thee, to be filled with thy Grace, and to obey
“ thee

“ thee perfectly ; that so I may have nothing
 “ of myself, but may do all Things thro’ Christ
 “ dwelling in me.”

And when we thus *resign ourselves* up to our Saviour’s Use, we must *heartily repent of all our Sins, faithfully promising never more to yield to them, but to amend them all for the Time to come.* To repent particularly of all our Sins, we must first *discover* them, by taking some *Catalogue of Christian Duties*, and examining our own Hearts at every one, whether we have consented to transgress them ; and where we find we have done so, there we must *bemoan ourselves*, and *fully resolve*, that if God will be pleased to pardon what is *past*, we will never *yield* to do the like again. And what Man will not thus *stedfastly resolve to leave* all his Sins, who has the Patience to consider what will be the *End of his Continuance* in them ? For by that, we shall *infinitely offend our dearest Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, who gave his own Life for ours, and whom therefore we are bound to please above all Persons ; we shall *certainly lose all the Joys of Heaven and eternal Happiness*, a Loss which the whole World put together cannot recompence ; we shall *unavoidably be doomed to Hell Fire and eternal Torments*, which is the utmost Height of Misery that can possibly befall us. This will infallibly be the Effect of our *Perseverance*, and *Allowance* of ourselves in any Sins which we find ourselves guilty of. And now let us ask our own Souls, Whether we love them so well, that we will *endure all this*, rather than *forego* them ? Shall I prize my Sin to that Degree, as for its Sake to act Despite to my dearest Lord, who died for me ? Must it be dearer to me than his Love, that I should dishonour and offend him whenso-

ever it bids me? Is this the Return which I have to make to my truest, dearest Friend, to side with his professed Enemy? Is this my Thankfulness for all his Kindness, to stick to a Lust which aims at nothing but my Destruction, rather than to him who gave his own Life to save mine? Thou lovest it dearly, O my Soul; but canst thou value it at such a Rate, as to part with everlasting Life for it? Hadst thou rather have it, than enjoy the Face of God, and be for ever happy? Art thou content for the short and unsatisfying Pleasures which it affords, to lose all the Joys and Glories of a blessed Eternity? Wilt thou die sooner than be divorced from it? and accompany it even into the Flames of Hell, and the Midst of eternal Torment? God forbid, will every Man say, whose Heart is thus particularly posed thereupon, that ever I should be so desperately mad, and unaccountably wicked. I cannot *despite so dear a Lord, nor throw away the eternal Joys of the Heavenly State, nor endure the most exquisite Smart of Hell, and the insupportable Load of everlasting Torment.* No Man can bear it, and I stand amazed to think of it. And therefore since this will be the Effect of my wicked Ways, and of my allowed Continuance therein, I am resolved, from this Moment, to renounce them, and by the Help of God, will never return to them any more.

Thus let the *Drunkard* think with himself on his *Cups*, the *Swearer* on his *Oaths* and *Perjury*, the *unjust Man* on his *unlawful Gain*, the *Contentious* on his *Quarrels*, the *unclean Person* on his *Fornication* and *forbidden Pleasures*, the *vengeful Man* on his *spiteful Carriage*, the *Slanderer* and *evil Speaker* on his *reproachful Words*, *Back-bitings*, and *Defamations*, and every other *Sinner* on his *particular Sins*. And when they seriously consider that
this

this Saviour must be lost, this Happiness of Heaven forfeited, and this eternal Anguish and Extremity of Pain endured, if they allow themselves still to go on, and persist in them; they will instantly resolve to forsake them, and never yield to be guilty of them again.

This may be used as a penitential Confession of our Sins after Self-Examination.

“ **O** Blessed Lamb of God, who hast redeemed
 “ ed me with thy Blood, *will every contrite*
 “ *Heart then cry out,* I am utterly ashamed to
 “ look thee in the Face, considering all the cruel
 “ Usage which I have brought
 “ upon thee. * I scarce know
 “ how to think of Feasting on
 “ thy most precious Blood, now
 “ I am most earnestly invited
 “ to it, since mine own Sins have shed it. I am,
 “ alas! a most polluted Creature, who have daily
 “ offended both in Thought, Word and Deed,
 “ against thy divine Majesty.
 “ My † Pride and Contempt † *Here mention*
 “ of God, and my sensual *particular Sins.*
 “ Lusts, and covetous Desires,
 “ and uncharitable Practices, have cried aloud to
 “ thee for Vengeance on me; and that Cry
 “ would not be silenced, unless thou, my dearest
 “ Saviour, would’st die instead of me. Of all
 “ these Offences I am guilty, and the Horror of
 “ that Guilt would fright me from thee, were it
 “ not that thou freely callest me to accept of
 “ Mercy. I come, Lord, in Obedience to thy
 “ Word, and with an humble and a penitent
 “ Heart, I earnestly intreat thee to have Pity on
 “ me. I am sensible of these, and of the other
 “ Errors of my Life; and utterly ashamed that

“ ever I committed them. I am weary of them,
“ and fully purposed, by thy Grace, to become
“ a new Man, or else I durst not ask to be for-
“ given. My Heart shall never more join with
“ them, nor will I ever hereafter yield to live in
“ such ungrateful and wicked Ways again. They
“ nailed thy tender Hands and Feet! O blessed
“ Jesu! to the accursed Tree, and thrust the
“ Spear into thy Side; and can I then endure to
“ see, or any longer side with them? They made
“ God, who is the Author of all I have and hope
“ to enjoy, to become my utter Enemy; and
“ shall I then be still a Friend to them? They
“ would bring me to eternal Destruction both of
“ Body and Soul; and whilst I consider this, is it
“ possible that I should have any more to do with
“ them? No, blessed Lord, I hate them, and
“ am utterly resolved, from this Time forth, for
“ ever to abandon them. They have been the
“ Shame of my Life, and are now the Sorrow of
“ my Heart, as, alas! when thou endurest such
“ Anguish for them on the Cross, once they
“ were of thine. I loath myself by Reason of
“ them, and will never consent any more to live
“ in them; and with an humble and contrite
“ Heart, I most humbly beseech my heavenly
“ Father, that thro’ the Merits of thy Blood I
“ may be forgiven. And wilt not thou, O God,
“ who sentest to seek after me whilst I was an
“ open Rebel, now meet me graciously, as thou
“ didst the prodigal Son, when I return again to
“ my Duty? Wilt not thou, my sweetest Sa-
“ viour, who diedst for me whilst I was thine un-
“ relenting Foe, now intercede for me, when I
“ come to serve thee? O speak Peace unto my
“ poor Heart, and let me know and feel that
“ thou forgivest me! Send thy holy Spirit to
“ take

“ take Possession of it, to keep it true unto thy-
 “ self, that it may never more start back from
 “ thee. Thou hast promised thy Grace to those
 “ that ask it, and endeavour in Expectation
 “ thereof. O! I desire it, and will do what I
 “ can in Hopes to be thereby assisted in the
 “ Amendment of my Misdoings; and therefore
 “ I humbly hope that this Promise shall be made
 “ good unto thy Servant. Whatsoever thou doest
 “ in other Things, deny me not this Grace, O!
 “ heavenly Father, for Jesus’s Sake, who is infi-
 “ nitely dear to thee, and who died for me. *Amen.*”

Thus may we *discharge* the Duties of this Feast,
 and *excite* and *actuate* in our own Minds that *Faith*
 and *Thankfulness*, and *Charity*, and *Resignation*,
 and *Repentance*, which are to render us *fit* and
worthy of the same. If any are destitute of other
 Helps, they may make use of these Meditations
 and Prayers to affect their own Hearts, and to
 shew forth these Virtues of worthy Receivers.
 They will not always find Room for *all* these De-
 votions, whilst the Sacrament is administering; but
 they may go thro’ with all of them before they
 come, for then they may allot what Space of
 Time they please for them, and make use of such
 of them as the Time allows when they are Re-
 ceiving. And for a more actual adorning of their
 Souls with them at that Time, whilst the *Minister*
 himself, or *others* before them are Receiving, they
 may express them all in one *continued Devotion*, by lift-
 ing up their Hearts to God in the Words following.

“ **O** Blessed Jesu! who gavest thyself to die
 “ for my Sake; how near have I lain to
 “ thy kind Heart, when the precious Blood which
 “ streamed thence was not so dear to it? I am ut-
 “ terly ashamed of myself, that ever I should put

“ thee to part with such a Price, and to endure
 “ such exceeding Smart and Tortures to befriend
 “ me. I blush to think of it, and abhor my
 “ Sins, which brought thee to suffer all this for
 “ my Deliverance from them. But since my
 “ Need required, and thy boundless Love would
 “ make thee undergo what thou didst, in the ut-
 “ most Thankfulness of an humble Heart, I
 “ gladly accept the inestimable Benefit. For
 “ which I love thee most affectionately, and will
 “ serve thee most faithfully, and praise thee with
 “ joyful Lips, evermore extolling thy boundless
 “ Goodness and glorious Excellencies, and en-
 “ deavouring that all others may do so too.

“ Thou hast bought me with thy own most
 “ precious Blood, O! merciful Lord; and here,
 “ with an unfeigned Heart, I give up my Soul
 “ and Body, my worldly Goods, and all that I
 “ have, to be employed in thy Service, and dis-
 “ posed of as thy Providence shall order me.
 “ Take Possession of me by thy Spirit, that my
 “ Body may always be the Temple of the Holy
 “ Ghost; and that my Soul and all its Faculties
 “ may be entirely devoted to thy Behoof and In-
 “ terest; and that all my worldly Goods may be
 “ acquired so innocently, and enjoyed so thank-
 “ fully, and spent so temperately, and laid out
 “ so charitably as becomes thy faithful Steward. I
 “ will not henceforward call any Things my own,
 “ when once my Lord has Need of them; but I
 “ freely resign all up unto thee, since thou hast
 “ paid so dear for me.

“ I have grievously offended thee, O Father!

** Here name such
 Sins as you know your-
 selves most guilty of.*

“ by many Sins, particularly
 “ by *, &c. I am perfectly
 “ ashamed of them, and sorry
 “ at my Heart now that ever

“ I

“ I committed them, and would never do so,
 “ were they to be done again, and I faithfully
 “ promise thee, that for the Time to come, it
 “ shall be my sincere Desire and Care never more
 “ willingly to yield to them; and I humbly beg,
 “ that for Christ’s Sake, in whom thou offerest
 “ Pardon to every truly penitent Heart, thou
 “ wouldest forgive them.

“ Thou, O Christ! hast purchased the holy
 “ Spirit, to help and strengthen all those who are
 “ ready to labour in an holy Life, and to join
 “ their own best Endeavours to his divine Assist-
 “ ances; and dost most graciously offer him to
 “ all such industrious Souls in this Holy Sacra-
 “ ment. Lord, I do sincerely desire to amend
 “ all these Sins, which I have here with Sorrow
 “ and Shame acknowledged before thee. I am
 “ fully bent upon the Amendment thereof, and
 “ by thy Help will endeavour what I can to-
 “ wards it, and do humbly depend upon thy
 “ Grace and Aid to carry me thro’ therewith. Oh!
 “ be it unto thy Servant according to thy Word.

“ I am at Peace, O Lord, with all Persons,
 “ and forgive all those who have offended against
 “ me, even as I expect Forgiveness of my own
 “ Offences at thy Hands; and am fully resolved,
 “ by thy Grace, to be kind to all the World,
 “ but especially to all the Members of thy mysti-
 “ cal Body, for thy Sake, that by these Returns of
 “ Charity I may in some Sort answer that infinite
 “ Love and Kindness which I receive from thee,
 “ Thy Blood, O blessed Jesus! has procured;
 “ and thou, holy Father, for Christ’s Sake, hast
 “ promised Pardon of Sins to all those who truly
 “ repent of them; and the Assistance of thy
 “ Holy Spirit, to every one who is sincerely
 “ ready to use his Help and Endeavour there-
 “ with,

“ with, and eternal Life to all such as are en-
 “ tirely obedient to thy holy Laws. And to
 “ shew that thou art still of the same Mind, and
 “ wilt make all this good, thou graciously callest
 “ and earnestly invitest us to receive Assurances
 “ thereof in this Holy Sacrament, Lord, I
 “ heartily repent me of all my Sins, for Christ’s
 “ Sake do thou pardon me. I am fully resolved
 “ to shew Care, and to labour in the Amend-
 “ ment of all mine Offences, let thy Grace and
 “ holy Spirit come in to assist and enable me.
 “ I am stedfastly purposed to keep thy Holy
 “ Commandments, do thou O! then graciously
 “ accept me for the Sake of my crucified Sa-
 “ viour, whose Death I now most thankfully
 “ commemorate, and who is here offered unto
 “ thee as our Atonement, on his Table.”

Or shorter, Thus;

“ **O** Blessed Jesus, who diedst for my Sake,
 “ and daily still renewest thy Kindness, by
 “ shewing thyself well pleased with what thou
 “ hast done, and calling me to meet thee in this
 “ joyful Commemoration of it: I come at thy
 “ Command, to shew myself humbly and thank-
 “ fully mindful of so infinite a Benefit. Blessed,
 “ yea for ever blessed be thy Love, which made
 “ thee think upon me when I lay in Misery; nay,
 “ forget thyself, and throw away thine own Life
 “ to save mine. I humbly adore thy marvellous
 “ Goodness, which shall ever be the Joy and
 “ Praise, the Wonder and Astonishment of Men
 “ and Angels. And, O! that I may always
 “ love thee better than I do my Life, that so I
 “ may not flinch even to die for thee, as thou
 “ hast

“ hast done for me, if ever thou shalt call me to it
 “ for thy Glory! I see, in this Bread that is
 “ broken, and in this Wine which is poured out,
 “ what cruel Pains my Sins brought to my dearest
 “ Lord, * and how they stand
 “ guilty of his Body and Blood. * *Here name Particulars.*
 “ I come with Shame and a
 “ troubled Heart to confess it; I utterly abhor
 “ them for what they have done, and declare,
 “ since they have proved thy cruel Enemies, that
 “ they shall evermore be mine, and that I will
 “ never, from this Day, admit of a Reconcilia-
 “ tion with them. I am here to assure thee, O
 “ dear Saviour, that I will not live unto myself
 “ or them, but unto thee, and freely devote all
 “ I have to thy Use, since thou hast bought and
 “ paid so dear for me. I love all Men, and will
 “ embrace them as my Brethren, because they
 “ are thine; and I do freely forgive all the
 “ World, even as I desire to be forgiven. O
 “ holy Jesus, according to thy boundless Mercy,
 “ accept of these small Returns of thy poor Ser-
 “ vant, which tho’ very mean, alas! are yet the
 “ best I have to offer thee; and supply me, I
 “ humbly intreat thee, with a more abundant
 “ Measure of thy Grace, that I may be able to
 “ pay back something which is more worthy of
 “ thee. Let this Holy Sacrament, O Christ! be
 “ the Comfort and Refreshment of my Heart,
 “ conveying thy Pardon and Peace to it, and the
 “ enriching and establishing of my Spirit with all
 “ the Benefits of thy Blood. Make it a great In-
 “ crease of present Grace to me, and a certain
 “ Pledge of Immortality, to assure me that I
 “ shall ever live with thee, and be near to that
 “ kind Heart which died for me. Be it even so
 “ for thine own Sake, blessed Jesu! *Amen.*”

In

In these, or such like Words, may we act over all those Virtues which are to render us worthy Communicants, before the Holy Mysteries are brought to us. And at the Receipt of them, we may lift up our Hearts to God in these, or the like Expressions.

After the *Receiving of the Bread*, we may say to our dearest Lord, with an affectionate Heart:

“ **I** Receive this, O my Lord! in Remem-
 “ brance of thy bloody Death and Passion,
 “ and thank thee most intirely for laying down
 “ thine own Life for me. O! how do I rejoice
 “ in thy marvellous Love, and in this Remem-
 “ brance of it! I will always live to thee, O
 “ sweetest Saviour, and do here utterly renounce
 “ every Sin whereby I have most ungratefully
 “ pierced thy bleeding Heart, and am Friends
 “ with all the World for thy Sake; and I will ex-
 “ tol thy matchless Bounty whilst I have a Tongue
 “ to speak, giving all Honour, Glory, and Praise
 “ to thee, the Lamb of God, who wast slain, and
 “ now sittest upon the Throne for evermore.”

And in like Manner after the *Receiving of the Cup*:

“ **T**HE Remembrance of thy Blood-shed-
 “ ding, O sweetest Saviour! is dear to
 “ me; I can never forget it, since it was spilt for
 “ my Sake, and I owe my very Life to it. In
 “ all the Affection of an infinitely obliged Heart,
 “ I humbly thank thee for what thou hast done
 “ and suffer’d for us, and gladly consent to those
 “ Terms of Life and Mercy which were pur-
 “ chased for us thereby; and, by thy Grace, I
 “ will never wilfully yield henceforward to do
 “ any Thing that is unworthy of so great and in-
 “ estimable a Benefit; O blessed Jesu! I adore
 “ thy

“ thy Love, and will ever love thee above all
 “ Things, and love and embrace all my Brethren
 “ with open Arms for thy Sake, yea, and love
 “ my Enemies too, since thou requirest I should
 “ do so. And my Heart’s Desire is, after this
 “ Sort, to fulfil thy Will in all Things, and most
 “ devoutly to adore thy glorious Goodness, and to
 “ shew forth thy boundless Praise to my Life’s End.
 “ O! keep me unalterable in this Mind, *may*
 “ a devout Soul then go on, and never suffer my
 “ own corrupt Lusts to turn me from it. I have
 “ now, O holy Saviour! taken thee into my
 “ Heart. O let thy Presence banish them away,
 “ that they may never pretend to it again, since
 “ now it is holy to the Lord, nor ever appear to
 “ pollute that Place wherein so divine a Guest is
 “ lodged. Now thou art pleased to enter under
 “ my Roof, have me always in thy Keeping, for
 “ I am safe in no other Hands. Preserve the
 “ Place which thou hast taken Possession of, and
 “ let not thy Enemies and mine any more invade it.
 “ Pour into my Heart all the Benefits of thy cruci-
 “ fied Body and Blood, since now, by thy wonder-
 “ ful Grace, I am made Partaker of them. Thy
 “ Blood was shed for the Remission of Sins: O
 “ let me know and feel that mine are all for-
 “ given! It obtained the Assistance of thy holy
 “ Spirit and Grace; O! let me ever enjoy that
 “ as I stand in Need of it. It was the Price
 “ which thou paid’st down for eternal Life. O!
 “ let that finally be my Lot, since thou hast paid
 “ so dear for it. Bid me hope assuredly, O
 “ blessed Jesu! that all this shall be made good
 “ unto thy Servant, because now thou hast given
 “ thyself to me, and fed me with thine own
 “ Body, whereby mayest thou ever dwell in me,
 “ and I in thee. *Amen.*”

And when this is done, whilst others are Receiving, we may employ ourselves in some of the *foregoing Devotions*; or, when we have enough of them, join heartily in the *Prayer* which is made at the Delivery of the Bread and Wine to *others*; or strike in affectionately with the *Psalms of Praise*, which, for the Ease and Exercise of all, but of those particularly who have already received, is wont at that Time to be sung in many Places.

After this Sort then may we lift up our Hearts to God, and discharge all those Duties which are required in every worthy Communicant. When we have no other Helps, we may acceptably express them all in a devout Concurrence with the *Church's Prayers*; since in them, as I have shewn, Part I. Chap. 3. there is an actual Exercise of all these Duties. But when we can do more, either by the Help of *Books*, or of our own *Invention*; we may act them over still more fully in *these*, or *such like* Forms of Devotion.

And when all this is done, and this solemn Feast is concluded, we must not think the Work of *worthy Receiving* is at an End. For *one* Thing still remains, which must employ us always afterwards, and that is *a careful Performance of all those Promises which we made to God in this holy Ordinance*.

In the Blessed Sacrament, as has been shewn, we seek not only a Pardon for what is *past*, but also vow and promise Amendment for the *future*. And these Promises must be made good afterwards, and it must be our Care whilst we live to fulfil them.

This we are *highly concerned to do*, and it will greatly increase our Guilt and Condemnation if we fall short of it. For if we return to our former Sins again, after we have thus solemnly vowed

vowed to forsake them, we are false to our Word, and treacherous where we seem to be most sincere, and seek more especially to be trusted. We break our Faith with God, and go about to delude his Expectation, had he been capable to be imposed upon, and believed as we would have had him; which is as great an Abuse as we can well put upon him. And this *doubles* the Sin which we commit, and sets God farther off from being intreated; for now we have not only the *Offence itself* to answer for, but also this *Perfidiousness* and *Breach of Vows*, which adds a new one to it, and makes it greater. So that after every Sacrament, if we still continue impenitent, our Guilt is aggravated, and our Souls more endanger'd, and we are greater Sinners than we were before.

Thus highly are we concerned to perform the Promises which we made at the Table of our Lord.

And this we shall be *very like to do*, if we *think often of them every Day*, for some Time especially *after we are gone from it*. Indeed, if we forget all we did, and all the Vows which we made there to Almighty God; we are like to be the same Men still, and must not expect that it should amend us. For the Sacrament, as I have shewn, doth not better us without our own Care, but by helping and engaging us to good Endeavours after it is over. It works not as a *natural*, but as a *moral* Means, and improves none but such as remember what they did thereat, and labour after their own Improvements. So that if we think all our Work was done at Church, and fall into a careless and secure State of Mind when we get home again; we shall be held still in the same Sins, and the Matter is not like to be much mended with us by such Receiving. But if
after-

afterwards we frequently remember what we promised there; if we set our own Vows every Day before our Eyes, and call to Mind our own Engagements; that Remembrance will give them Force and make them have their Effect upon us. For the Thought of our having *promised* and *solemnly undertook* for any Duties, is the readiest Way to have them all *performed*.

To reap that Benefit then which God designed, and which we expect by it; we must dwell much in our own Thoughts upon what passed there, after the Feast is ended. We must maintain that Acquaintance with our blessed Lord which then we began, and look upon it not as a *transient Act*, but as an *Entrance on a lasting State*, which ever after we are to continue in. We must bethink ourselves daily, that when last we were with our Saviour, we cut out Work for our whole Lives, and in that Hour made many Promises, which thro' all the Remainder of our Days are most religiously to be performed by us. This Course will render it an Ordinance full of Grace and heavenly Benefits, which will set us on mightily in our virtuous Attainments. And when we reap this Profit by it, it will cure all our Indifferency and Aversion to it, and make us run to it the next Time with Edge of Appetite, as we would to a most delicious and enlivening Entertainment. We shall no more account it a fruitless Work, when once we have tasted these sweet and wholesome Effects of it; but desire to share in it oftener, as it can be had, and bless the Time that ever we came thereto.

H E A D S

O F

SELF-EXAMINATION,

F O R

The Use of those who would find out what Sins they have to repent of, either before a Sacrament, or at any other Times.

The Particulars of Duty towards God and Men, as they are briefly summed up in the Church-Catechism.

MY Duty towards God is, to believe in him, i. e. to believe the holy Scriptures, which are his Word, taking all the Laws of Humility, Charity, &c. there recited, for his Laws; and the Promises of Pardon and Happiness to the Penitent, &c. and the Threatnings of eternal Death to all impenitent Sinners, &c. for his Promises and Threatnings, which he will see fulfilled upon us: To fear him, as every Man doth, who dare not do any evil Thing which he sees is offensive to him: To love him with all my Heart, &c. as those Persons do, who for his Sake do every Thing which he bids them: To worship him, to give him Thanks, to put my whole Trust in him, i. e. both in his Providence, for outward Supplies, as I need them; in his Mercy, for Pardon of Sins, when I repent of them; and in his Spirit, for Grace and inward Aid, when I endeavour together with him: To call upon him,

to honour his holy Name and his Word, and to serve him truly all the Days of my Life.

My Duty towards my Neighbour is, to love him as myself, or to do to all Men as I would have them do to me: To love, honour, and, when Need is, succour my Father and Mother: To honour and obey the King, and all that are put in Authority under him: To submit myself to all my spiritual Pastors, and all my Governors: To shew Reverence to all my Betters: To bear no Malice or Hatred in my Heart: To hurt no Body by Word or Deed: To be true and just in all my Dealings: To keep my Hands from picking and stealing, and my Tongue from Evil-speaking, Lying and Slandering: To keep my Body in Temperance, Soberness, and Chastity: Not to covet other Mens Goods: To be diligent in my own Calling, and do my Duty in that Relation, State, or Way of Life unto which it has pleased God to call me.

A particular Enumeration of Sins, whether against God, our Neighbour, or Ourselves; taken out of the Measures of Christian Obedience, which are all there explained in the second Book.

SINS against ourselves, are *Pride*, i. e. too high a Conceit of ourselves, and Contempt of others; *Arrogance*, i. e. assuming too much to ourselves, in setting off our own Praise; *Vain-glory*, i. e. intemperate Affectation of the Praise of others; *Ambition*, i. e. a restless Pursuit of Honour and great Places; *Haughtiness*, in contemptuous, scornful Carriage; *Imperiousness*, i. e. a lordly Way of Behaviour, in commanding Men no Way subject to us; *Worldliness*, i. e. an over-eager Care of worldly Things; *Gluttony*, *Voluptuousness*, *Drunkenness*, *Revelling*, *Incontinence*, *Lasciviousness*, filthy or obscene Jestings, *Uncleaness*, Sodomy,

Sodomy, Effeminateness, Alutry, Fornication, Incest, Rape, Covetousness, i. e. Unsatisfiedness with our own, and an impatient Desire of more, or of what belongs to others; *Refusing the Cross, i. e.* deserting a Duty to avoid it; *Idleness, Sensuality, i. e.* an industrious Care to gratify our bodily Senses; *Carnality, i. e.* Subjection to our fleshly Lusts and Appetites.

Sins against God, are, *Atheism, denying Providence, Blasphemy, Superstition, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Foolishness* or gross Ignorance of our Duty, *Unbelief, hating God, Want of Zeal, distrusting him, not praying to him, Unthankfulness, Discontent in our present Condition or repining at his Ordering, Fearlessness* or venturing on any Thing, tho' we know it will offend him; *Common Swearing, Perjury, Prophaneness, Disobedience.*

Sins against our Brethren at large, where are Sins of

Injustice, as, Murder, False-witness, Slander, i. e. defaming them with false Things, *Lying, Unfaithfulness, or Breach of Promise; Theft, Oppression, i. e.* wronging one who cannot cope with us in Contention; *Extortion, or depressing in Bargaining, Circumvention, or going beyond our Brethren.*

Uncharitableness, as Wickedness, i. e. a Delight in doing Mischief, and making others Work: *Despising and hating them that are good, giving Scandal to weak Brethren, i. e.* laying in their Way an Occasion of Sin; *Envy, rejoicing in Evil, Uncharitableness in Allis; suffering false Stains to stick upon them,* when it is in our Power to vindicate them; *Evil-speaking, or divulging any Ill we hear or know by them; Censoriousness, i. e.* a Proneness to blame or condemn them; *Back-biting, Whispering, Railing, Upbraiding them with our Kindnesses, Reproaching them with their own Faults, Mocking them for*

their Infirmities, *Difficulty of Access, Affronting them, Uncourteousness, Uncondescension, Unhospitableness* towards Strangers, *Surliness, Malignity*, or putting the worst Sense on what is said or done by others; *Unquietness, Unthankfulness, Anger, Variance, Bitterness, Clamour, Hatred and Malice, Implacableness* or Difficulty in being appeased after any Offences; *Revenge*, or returning Ill for Ill; *Cursing Enemies, Hastiness and Rigour* in exacting Punishments.

Discord; as, *Unpeaceableness, Emulation* or provoking one another; *Pragmaticalness* or being *Busy-Bodies*; *Tale-bearing, not Satisfying for Injuries, Contentiousness, Division and Faction, Heresy, Schism, Tumult.*

Sins against our Brethren in particular Relations.

Sins against sovereign Princes; as, *Dis honour, Irreverence, Speaking Evil of Dignities, refusing Tribute and Taxes, Traitorousness, neglecting to pray for Kings, Disobedience to them, Resistance and Rebellion.*

Sins against Bishops and Ministers; as, *Dis honour of them, especially for their Works Sake; Irreverence, not providing for them; Sacrilege*, or taking away, either by Force or Fraud, those just Dues which are given to God for their Support; *Not praying for them, Disobedience.*

Sins of married Persons; as, *Unconcernedness in each others Condition, not bearing each other's Infirmities, provoking each other, Estrangedness, publishing each others Faults, not praying for each other, Jealousy.* Of the Husband against the Wife; as, *not maintaining her with convenient Supplies, not protecting her from outward Annoyances, Inferiourness*, or a harsh and magisterial Exercise of Commands; *Uncompliance with her reasonable Desires, and Uncondescension to her pitiable Weaknesses.* Of the Wife against the Husband; as,
Dis-

Dis honour in inward Esteem and Opinions, *Irreverence* in outward Carriage, *Unobservance* in not forecasting to do what may please him, *Disobedience* to his just Commands, *casting off his Yoke*, or *Unsubjection*.

Sins of *Parents* and *Children*; as, *Want of natural Affection*, not praying for each other, *Imprecation*. Of the *Parents* against the *Children*; as, not providing for them, *irreligious and evil Education*, provoking them to *Anger* by imperious *Harshness* or needless *Severity* in Governing. Of the *Children* against the *Parents*; as, *Dis honour* in their Minds, *Irreverence* in their Behaviour, *being ashamed* of them, *mocking* them, *speaking Evil* of them, *stealing* from them, *Disobedience* to their lawful Commands, *Contumacy*, or *casting off Subjection* to them.

Sins of *Brothers* and *Sisters*; as, *Want of natural Affection*, not providing for our *Brethren*, not praying for them, praying against them.

Sins of *Masters* against their *Servants*; as, not maintaining them, not catechising or instructing them, *unequal Government* or *Injustice* shewn in requiring unlawful, *Wantonness* in requiring superfluous, and *Rigour* in requiring unmerciful Things of them; *immoderate Threatning*, *Imperiousness*, or contemptuous haughty Treating of them: *defrauding*, or *keeping back the Wages of the Hireling*. Of *Servants* against their *Masters*, as *Dis honour*, *Irreverence*, *publishing* or *aggravating* their *Master's Faults*, not clearing, when they can, his *injured Reputation*, *Unfaithfulness* in what he intrusts with them, shewn either by their *Wastefulness*, *i. e.* spending it for their *Pleasure*, or *Purloining*, *i. e.* diverting it to their own *Profit* and secret *Enrichment*; *Disobedience*, *Non-observance*, *answering again*, *Slothfulness*, *Eye-service*, *Resistance*, not praying for him, praying against him.

342 A Prayer before the Sacrament.

To all which, add two other Sins, which are peculiarly so among Christians, *viz.* the *Neglect of Baptism*, and *absenting from the Lord's Supper*.

When we are desirous to discover all our Sins, that we may truly repent of them, we may examine our own Hearts in all these Particulars, trying ourselves either by the *former* Catalogue when we have less, or by this *latter*, when we have more Time, according to our own Discretion. We may ask ourselves at every one, Whether we ever *willingly yielded* to it? and if we have, Whether since that Time we have *amended* it? And noting all those whereof we stand guilty before God, affect our own Hearts with a sorrowful Sense of what we have done, from such Considerations as are before laid down; and then renew our Vows, and make God our humble Confession and Engagements that we will never have more to do with them. For which End, they who are not otherways supplied, may make use of the *Devotion*, p. 325, which may serve as a *penitential Prayer and Confession*.

A Prayer before the Sacrament.

O Father of Mercies, who hast once given thy Son to die for me, and art now ready, in the Holy Sacrament, to offer him to me again, I humbly adore, but am utterly at a Loss when I would duly prize so invaluable a Mercy. What am I, poor wretched Creature, that I should sit down to eat with my blessed Lord, when the glorious Angels do at a Distance adore and pay him Homage? Why should I be called to feed upon his sacred Body and Blood, when my Sins had a Hand in all the Miseries which he suffered, so that I deserve to be ranked among his Murderers, who were guilty of that horrid Fact, which nothing, but the Blood they shed, could
ever,

ever expiate? But since it is thy glorious Excellency, O blessed Jeshu! to love those that hate thee, and to save their Lives who barbarously took away thine, and accordingly to call to this heavenly Feast so unworthy a Wretch as I am; I am ready to come at thy Command, but would fain come worthily, and leave all my Sins behind me, seeing it is no Feast for them. O! I loath them, and would never yield to commit them, were they to do again; and humbly intreat my Heavenly Father, that for thy Sake he would freely forgive me what is past, and rid me of them for the Time to come. Slay them, good Lord, for they have slain thee, and will slay me too, in Time, if they are suffered to reign in me. Meet me in this heavenly Banquet, with a full Pardon of all mine Offences, and with a perfect Cure of all mine Infirmities and spiritual Distempers, that I may be cleansed by thy Blood, and quickened by thy Spirit, and assured of that eternal Life, which, for thy Sake, God has promised to all his elect ones.

All this thou art ready to do for me, O holy Jeshu! if I come worthily. And therefore my humble Request is, That thou wouldst assist me acceptably to perform the Duties of this heavenly Feast, that so I may enjoy all the Blessings of it, and feel it a Communion of thy very Body and Blood. I would gladly remember thy dying Love with the most devout Affections, and with an Heart that is full of Thanks, and intirely devoted to thy Service, and is quite weary of my Sins, and most desirous of thy Grace, and is thoroughly prepared to seal a lasting Covenant of Repentance and Reconciliation with thee, and with all my Neighbours? All this I desire to do, and to do it fervently: But alas! I cannot do it as I ought, unless thou, O blessed Saviour! wilt graciously come and help me. My Apprehensions of this amazing Love are very low, O! do thou exalt them. My Heart is still insensible of what thou hast done and suffer'd

344 A Prayer after the Sacrament.

for me, and my Affections are dull and heavy, O! do thou quicken and inflame them. Make me love thee as much as it is possible for my Heart to love any, and to desire thy Grace as highly as I need it; and to be set against every Sin as irreconcilably as there is just Cause for the same, both for thy Sake and for mine own; and to love all my Brethren as I am beloved, that I may be fit to receive the abundant Communications of thy Grace in the approaching Sacrament? I earnestly ask, and humbly hope for all this, O good God! only because I infinitely need it; and because thy Grace is infinite, which will not suffer thee to see the Necessities of thy poor Servant unsupplied; and because, unworthy as I am, I am still the Purchase of thy Son's most precious Blood. O! then do not despise me for thine own Mercies, and for thy dear Son's Sake: In whose holy Name and Words I farther pray as he hath taught me.

Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

A PRAYER and THANKSGIVING after the SACRAMENT.

I Thank Thee most intirely, O my God! for calling me this Day to thy Own Table, to shew me how thine only Son freely died in my Stead, and to assure me that now, for his Sake, thou art fully reconciled, and wilt live in me by thy Grace now at present, and raise me up to be eternally happy with thyself at last; of all which thou hast given me the surest Pledges in his most precious Body and Blood. What can I render unto thee, holy Father, or to thee, my dearest Saviour, for so incomprehensible a Benefit? I admire thy marvellous Love, and magnify it above all Things. Thy Praise shall ever be in my Mouth, and I will tell out thy wondrous Works with Gladness. And may all Hearts adore, and every Tongue confess, that thou, holy Jesus, art the Saviour of the World,
and

and the Son of the Father, whom Heaven and Earth must honour, and call blessed for evermore.

Pardon, O good God! the Unaffectedness of my dull Heart, in the Receipt of so inestimable a Communion. And fill me with Desires some Way suitable to my Needs, and to the Richness of thy Mercies, that whensoever this Cup of Blessings shall again overflow, my Heart may run over with Joy and Thankfulness also. Let me never forget the Love which I have received, and the Peace which I have sealed, and the Promises of new Life, which I have made this Day; but as thy Grace has help'd me to them, so keep me in a lively Sense of them, and enable me always to fulfil the same to my Life's End. Now thou hast given me the Blood of Expiation, to shew me that we are Friends; O! never let me be guilty of any Thing to break the Peace, which is now so solemnly ratified betwixt us. Now I have vowed Obedience to thy holy Laws, to be humble, chaste, temperate, just, charitable, patient, devout*, and entirely resigned to thy holy Will and Pleasure; O! let me not start back again from these holy Promises for ever! Now

* Here mention Virtues particularly vowed at the Lord's Table.

I have received my blessed Lord, never suffer me to do any Thing unworthy of him; now I am Partaker of his Body and Blood, let his holy Spirit go along with them, and then I shall be what I ought to be when I am in his Keeping. My Sins, which I have renounced, will return again, except he chase them away; and my false Heart, which now seems fix'd for God, will revolt, unless he establish it. O! sweetest Saviour, let thy Body be my Food, thy Strength my Guard, thy Spirit my Life, and the Sense of thy Favour my greatest Joy and Comfort. Go on graciously to accomplish what thou hast now begun in me, and let me ever be secure and happy in thy Custody. Be it even so, for thine own Sake, blessed Jesu!

And

And then, when there is Time for it, or afterwards, where there is not, may they go on, and say;

Give thy Grace, O holy Jesu! to all the World, and let all who were redeemed by thy Blood, acknowledge thee to be the Lord, and become thy Worshipers and faithful Servants. Make all Christians conscientious Practisers of that Holiness which they profess. And above all, inspire them with uniting Principles and charitable Hearts, that by their loving one another, as thou hast loved us, all the World may know that they are thy Disciples. Let all Governors rule with Wisdom and Justice, and all Subjects obey with Love and Obedience. Let the Priests of the Lord be exemplary in their Lives, and discreet and diligent in their Labours, having a most compassionate Love for Souls; and let the People be humble and towardsly, most desirous to hearken to, and fully bent to follow wise Instructions. Be an Help at Hand to all that need and are afflicted. Send Supplies to all that are in Want, and assist them contentedly to depend upon thee. Raise Friends to the Widow and Fatherless, the Prisoners and Captives, and to all that groan under Oppressors, who are thrown upon thy Mercy. Give Repentance, Patience, and Resignation to all who are sick, and Ease when thou see'st it convenient for them. Be a Comforter to all troubled Consciencies, helping them to an acceptable Holiness, and enlightening their Minds about all causeless Scruples, that they may not fear where no Fear is. Succour all that are tempted, with such a Measure of thy Grace, as may enable them to stand in all their Trials. Think particularly on all my Friends, who are especially endeared to me by their Kindnesses or Acquaintance; on all my Relations in the Flesh; on all who pray particularly for me, or desire my Prayers. Teach us all to desire what thou approve'st, and then grant us whatsoever is desired. Prevent us in all our Actions, and guard us against all Dangers, and relieve us in

A Morning Prayer for a Family. 347

all Streights, and grant that we may always make thee our Stay and Confidence, and take all Things well which thou orderest for us. Shorten all our Sorrows, and prevent all our Sins, and fit us all for that eternal Kingdom which thou hast prepared for us, for Jesus's Sake, in whose holy Name and Words I further pray unto thee.

Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

Being sensible how plain Minds, who are ready to do it so far as they are inabled, are often-times at a Loss for their *daily Devotions*; and not knowing but this Treatise may fall into some such Hands; I have added *two Prayers*, which such Persons may say *Morning and Evening* in their Families.

A Morning Prayer for a Family.

O God, who art the Giver of all good Gifts, and the Father of Mercies, we thine unworthy Servants intirely desire to praise thy Name for all the Expressions of thy Bounty towards us. Blessed be thy Love, that gave thy Son to die for our Sins, to put us in a Way of being happy, if we would obey thee; and after all our wilful Refusals of thy Grace, still hast Patience with us, and hast added this one Day more to all we have mispent already, to see if we will finish the Work which thou hast set us to do, and fit ourselves for eternal Glory. Pardon, good Lord, all our former Sins, and all our Abuses of thy Forbearance, for which now we are sorry at our Hearts; and give us Grace to lead more holy Lives, and to be more careful in improving all future Opportunities. Make thyself present to our Minds, and let thy Love and Fear rule in our Souls in all those Places and Companies where our Occasions shall lead us this Day. Keep us chaste in all our Thoughts,
tem-

348 A Morning Prayer for a Family.

temperate in all our Enjoyments, and humble in all our Opinions of ourselves, charitable in all our Speeches of others, meek and peaceable under all Provocations, sincere and faithful in all our Professions, and so just and upright in all our Dealings, that no Necessity may force, nor Opportunity in any Kind allure us to defraud or go beyond our Neighbours. When thou bestowest Good on others, let us not envy, but rejoice in it; and when thou addest any to ourselves, let us own thy Mercy and humbly thank thee for it. Afford us convenient Supplies in all our reasonable Necessities, and protect us against the Approach of all Dangers. Make us diligent in all our Business, and give such Success to our honest Endeavours as thou seest most expedient for us; and teach us contentedly to submit, and not to repine at any Thing that happens to us by the Allotment of thy wise Providence. In all our Passage thro' this World, and our manifold Concerns therein, suffer not our Hearts to be too much set upon it; but always fix our Eyes upon the blessed Hope, that as we go along we may make all the Things of this World to minister to it, and be careful above all Things to fit our Souls for that pure and perfect Bliss which thou hast prepared for all who love and fear thee, in the Glories of thy Kingdom.

Extend thy Grace, we farther beseech thee, to all Men, in all Places; especially to the Governors and Subjects, to all both high and low, rich and poor, who pray for it, or need it in these Kingdoms. Bless all our Relations, who are near us in the Flesh, and all our Friends and Benefactors, who are endeared to us by their Kindnesses. Forgive all our Enemies, give them Hearts to fear thee, and to be kind to us; and supply all us, and all others with whatsoever thou seest proper for us, for Jesus Christ's Sake; in whose blessed Name and Words we still recommend ourselves unto thee, saying,

Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

An

An Evening Prayer for a Family:

O Most gracious God, who daily multipliest upon us thy Mercies, notwithstanding we every Day renew our Provocations; accept, we beseech thee, of our most humble and hearty Thanks for thy unspeakable Kindness towards us. Blessed be thy Goodness, which has this Day supplied us with Food and Necessaries; and hast preserved us in Health, the chiefest of all outward Enjoyments; and hast prosper'd the Work of our Hands, and lent us our Friends to be still a Support and Comfort to us. Adored be thy Love and Patience, which hast allowed us one Day more to amend our Ways, and assist us by the Suggestions of thy Spirit, and thy gracious Providences, to make up that Resignation, Humility, Contentedness, Chastity, Sobriety, Meekness, Charity, and other Virtues which are yet wanting in our own Souls. We desire to shew ourselves duly sensible of these endearing Benefits, by learning to depend upon thy Providence, which has been so watchful over us; and to be contented with thy Orderings, which are so wisely fitted to our own Advantage; and applying all Opportunities to the Encrease of that Righteousness and holy Living which thou requirest at our Hands. We fain would do it, and are here sincerely resolved to endeavour it; and thou hast promised to aid all those who labour in so good a Work. Be it then, O Lord, unto thy Servants according to thy Word, and enable us by thy Grace and holy Spirit so to do.

We are sensible, O God, how highly we have offended thee, altho' we stand thus indebted for all we have, or hope to enjoy, to thy free Grace and Bounty. How many Ways have we dishonoured our Profession, and revolted from the Vows which we made in Baptism,

i/jm,

350 An Evening Prayer for a Family.

tism, by Pride, and Envy, and Anger, and Discontent, and Evil-speaking, and serving divers Lusts, which then we utterly renounced, and promised never to live in again? We are heartily grieved and ashamed for these, and all other our Mis-doings, and are fully resolved, by thy Grace, hereafter to amend them. We unfeignedly repent of them, and for Christ's Sake, humbly beg to be forgiven, and that thy Grace and holy Spirit may rid us of them for the Time to come. Our full Purpose is to endeavour after a thorough Amendment of our Ways, and thy Promise is to help us therein; O let thine Arm be our Almighty Aid, and then we shall return to them no more.

Keep us under the Defence and Care of thy good Providence this Night; make our Sleep safe, and refreshing to us. Fit us for our great Change, that it may not surprize us unawares, but that having led holy Lives, we may be happy in our Deaths, and have Comfort and well grounded Hope in thee.

Give all Men Grace to repent of all their Sins, and to become thy faithful Servants. Let all Christians live up to the Laws of that Religion which they profess; especially bless these Kingdoms wherein we live: Let our Governors rule with Justice, and our People obey with Cheerfulness: Make the Rich and Prosperous to shew themselves temperate in using, and charitable in distributing of their Substance; and the Poor and Afflicted to be patient and contented under their Burthens: And cause us all to love as Brethren, and to be pitiful and tender-hearted towards all Men. Preserve our Friends in their Souls and Bodies: Forgive our Enemies, and make them kindly affected towards us: And do whatsoever thou see'st fitting for us all, for the Sake of thy Son, our Advocate, and only Saviour Jesus Christ, who hast taught us in his own Words thus to pray,

Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

T H E

CONTENTS.

THE INTRODUCTION Page 1

PART I. CHAP. I.

The Meaning of <i>Feasting</i> in the <i>Sacrament</i>	4
II. Of the WORTHINESS of COMMUNICATING	32
III. A farther Account of this <i>Worthiness</i>	59
IV <i>Worthy</i> Receiving not extraordinary difficult; and of <i>Unworthiness</i> to <i>Communicate</i>	68

PART II. CHAP. I.

Of the DUTY of COMMUNICATING	84
II. Of the BENEFITS thereof	112

PART III. CHAP. I.

Two <i>Hindrances</i> from COMMUNICATING	132
II. Of THREE other HINDRANCES from <i>Re-</i> <i>ceiving</i>	149
III. A <i>Sixth Hindrance</i> ; of Want of <i>Charity</i>	187
IV. Of <i>Sinful</i> LAW-SUITS	212
V. Of THREE other HINDRANCES	254
VI. Of THREE other HINDRANCES	266
VII. Of	

The CONTENTS.

VII. Of SOME other HINDRANCES	304
VIII. DEVOTIONS fitted for the HOLY SACRAMENT.	312

HEADS of SELF-EXAMINATION, *to find out what Sins are to be repented of before a SACRAMENT, &c.* 337

A particular ENUMERATION of SINS, *whether against God, our Neighbour, or our Selves, &c.* 338

A PRAYER *before* the SACRAMENT 342

A PRAYER and THANKSGIVING *after* the SACRAMENT. 344

A MORNING PRAYER for a Family 347

AN EVENING PRAYER for a Family. 349

F I N I S.



