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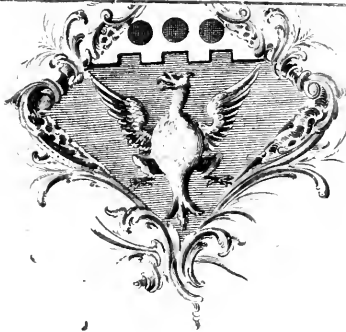
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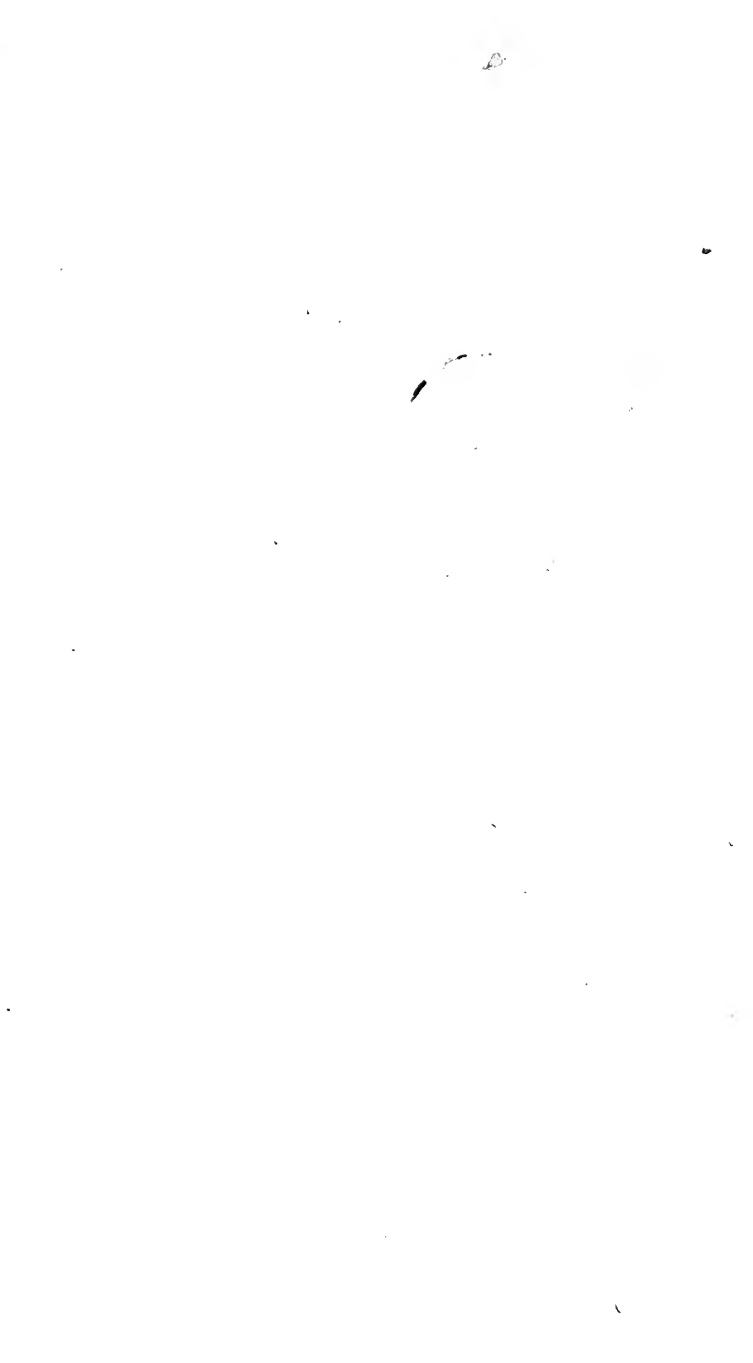
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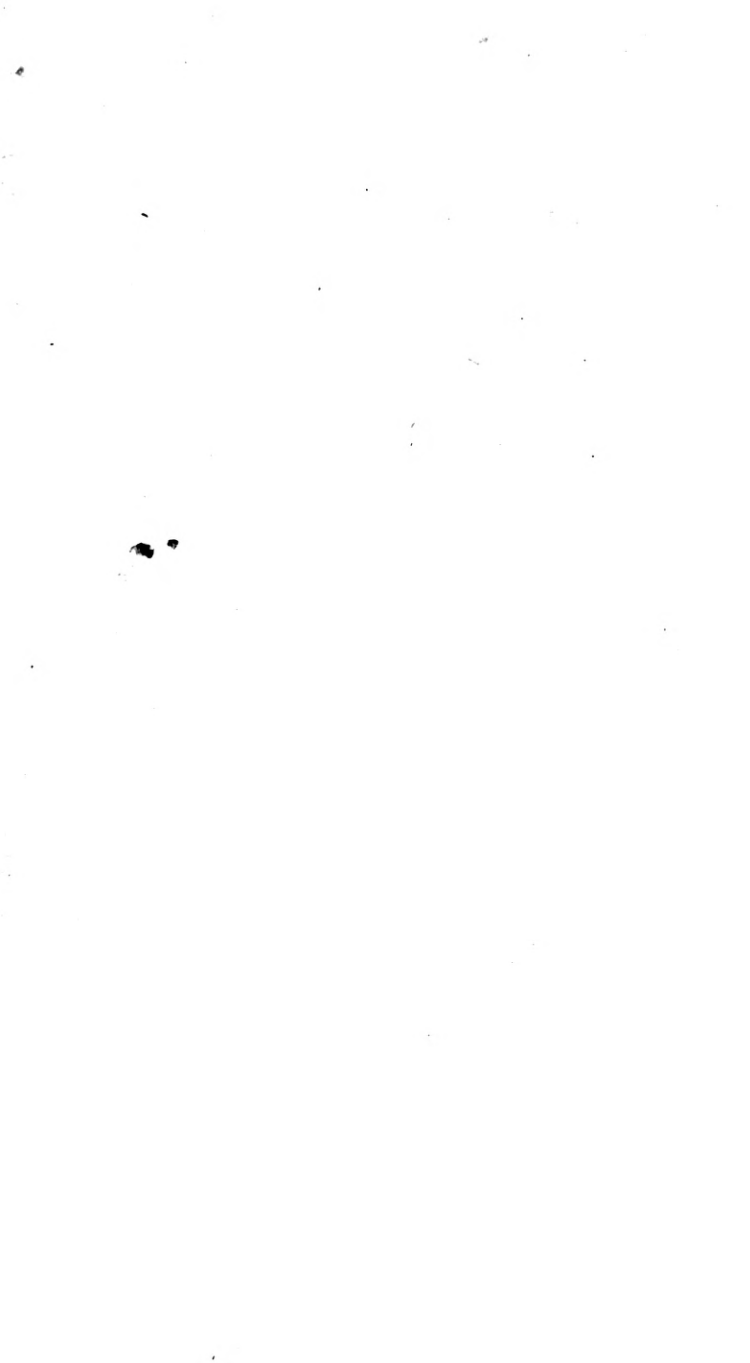


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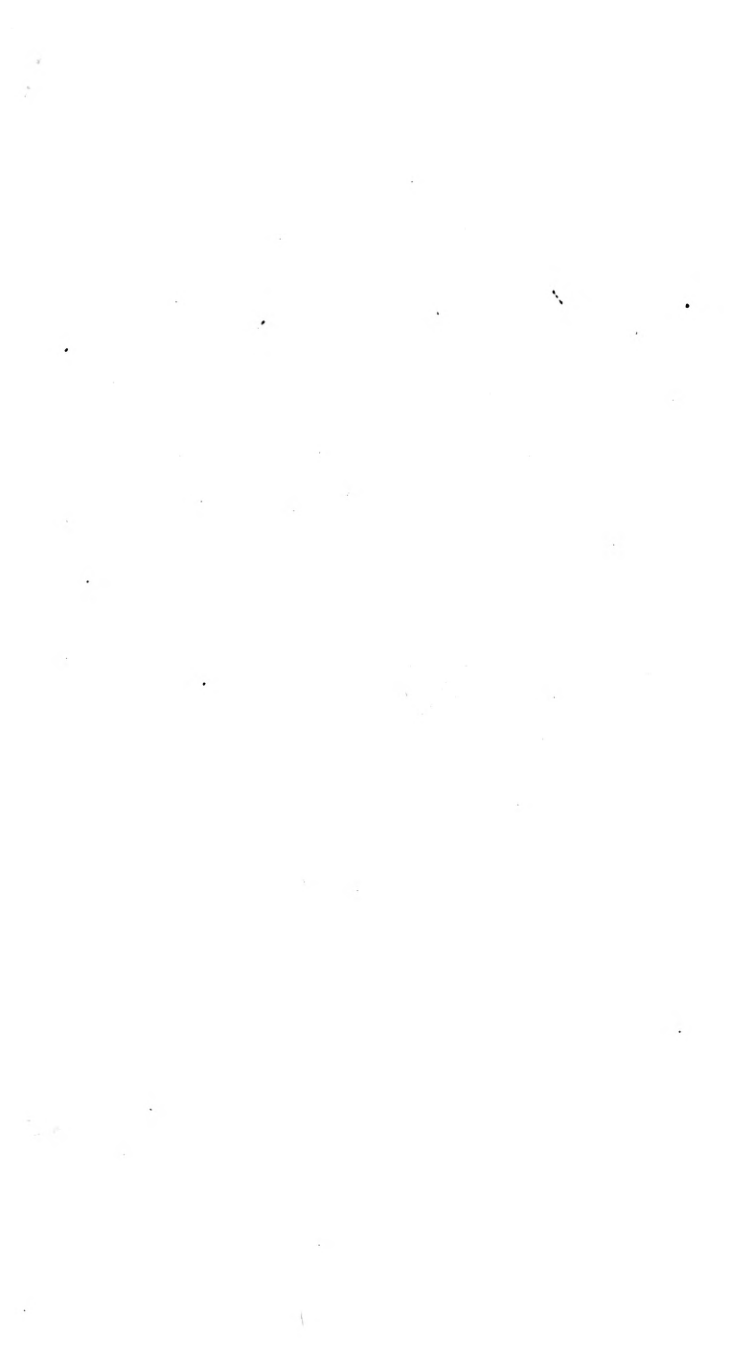














Sacramental Discourses,  
ON SEVERAL  
**T E X T S,**  
BEFORE, and AFTER  
T H E  
**Lord's Supper.**

With a PARAPHRASE  
O N T H E  
**Lord's Prayer.**

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The First Part.

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By *John Shower.*

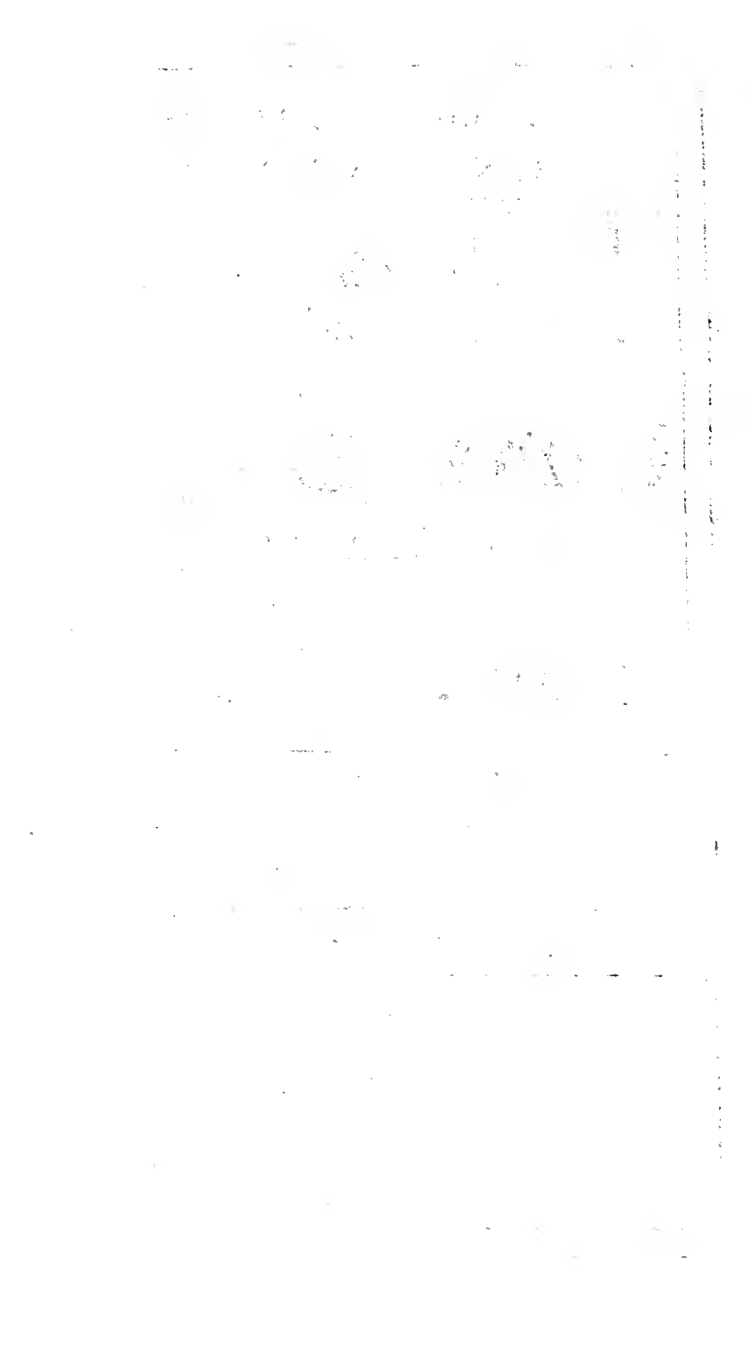
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**The Second Edition.**

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L O N D O N:

Printed for *Tho. Parkhurst* at the *Bible* and  
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T H E

P R E F A C E.

**T**HERE are three Things especially requisite, unto a *Worthy Communicant*; to Believe and own the *Truths*, which our Blessed Lord would preserve the Memory of, by this Institution; and to have a lively Sense of the *Comforts*, and *Encouragements*, that may arise from thence; and then to perform those *Duties*, of Love and Gratitude, and faithful Obedience, which result from our Covenant Relation to him, and the open Profession of it. The *Doctrines* and *Encouragements*, and the *Duties* of Christianity, are admirably connected, and joyn'd together. The Principal of all these we are called to consider in this Sacred Ordinance. Which yet is shamefully neglected by many, who would take it very ill, not to be thought

## The Preface.

Good Christians: Who live from Year to Year in the Omission of it; and make no Conscience of Remembring the Death of *Christ* in this manner. As if they had no Saviour who died for 'em; or he had not Appointed this way of Remembring his dying Love; Or, as if the Command, *Do this, in Remembrance of me*, because spoken to the *Apostles*, did only concern *them*, and the Ministers of the Church. Whereas though our Lord sate down with the *Twelve*, the Command is given to them *as Disciples*, and Representatives of all his Church, rather than *Apostles*. Or if the latter, He gave it to them, to dispence it afterwards to Others; (not excluding their own Communicating; for they who deliver the Elements as Ministers, do partake of 'em as Disciples, and Christians, and Brethren.) *What I have received of the Lord, that also I deliver unto you*, saith the *Apostle*: And if *Ministers* are bound to *Deliver* it, the *People* are bound to *Receive*. If our Saviour's words, *Do this in Remembrance of me*, relate to Ministers *as such*, it is a Command for them to Administer the *Lord's Supper*; and the same Command must be supposed, to bind the *People* to *Receive* it, that doth oblige Ministers to *Deliver* it.

There be Some, who omit it from Superstitious, unbecoming Fears, and Scruples: As if our Lord were more to be Honoured by our absenting from his Table, than by frequenting



## The Preface.

quenting of it. Many, on the other hand, are guilty of Presumption, and Rashness, by careless, unprepared Approaching to it. Several Cases are here spoken to, which relate to both Sorts, though many more should be added.

As to the Manner of performing this Duty, we cannot come *too humbly*, in a sense of our Ignorance, and Weakness, and Sinfulness, owning, that we are nothing, and have nothing, and can do nothing, without his Grace, that may be pleasing to him; and that we have done very much to dishonour and provoke him, (especially by our late Transgressions:) that we deserve to be cast out of his sight, and denied the Privileges of his House and Family, never to taste of the *Childrens Bread*. But having renewed our Repentance, before we come, we are called to express our Love, Gratitude, and Joy. When we view a Dying Saviour, a *Crucified Jesus* before our Eyes, lifted up upon the *Cross*, drawing all Men to him, bowing down his Head, and stretching out his Arms to embrace us. As he appears all bloody, to fright us from our Sins, so he opens his Side, that we may see his Heart flaming with Love. He calls us to behold his wounded Body, with Hearts wounded by a Penitent Sense of Sin, and a growing Love to the Redeemer. He calls us to seal a *Covenant of Fidelity* to him, and to accept the Purchased

## The Preface.

Benefits of a Gracious *Covenant*, sealed back from him to us.

Here we behold the Lamb of God a Sacrifice for those Sins, we have so lately Repented of; removing that Wrath which we so lately trembled at, as having justly deserved; and therefore we should Approach this Table with *Gladness*, and *Rejoycing*. Here we are called, to give publick Expressions of the Love and Honour, we bear to the Remembrance of *Christ*. We do it in *Thankfulness* to him, for all he hath done, and suffered for us. Here we profess our Faith, and Hope, and Trust in a *Crucified Saviour*. We own him for our Lord, and our *Jesus*; we declare we are not ashamed of his *Cross*, or of any Difficulties, Trials, or Sufferings we may be exposed to, for his sake.

He needed not have cared whether we were Saved, or no: And yet how low hath he condescended, to Purchase our Happiness and Salvation; and to Assure us of it? What manner of Love is this? That the Eternal Son of God, Incarnate, should endure a Painful, Ignominious, cursed Death for us, that we might not die Eternally? How wonderful and incomprehensible is this Love! How pleasant should be the Contemplation of it! Here is an Abyss of *Love*, Adorable, Almighty *Love*, (on this side Heaven, but leading to it,) which we cannot fathom, but are called to admire.

## The Preface.

*A Crucified Jesus* represented; and commemorated, as a Sacrifice for us! What more Glorious Sight can we desire to see? How should this awaken all our Affections, and, in some respect, puzzle not only our Passions, but our Faith too? As an Object too large for our narrow Thoughts, too high for our Finite Minds, too great for our Wonder, and for our little Love, and Joy! How delightful is it, to be thus even lost, in the consideration of this matchless Condescension, and Grace of our Redeemer? When the Object is too big for our highest Raptures, and Transports, and we are swallowed up in Silence, and Astonishment.

How should this *Love* constrain, and draw forth ours? When we consider for what vile and sinful Creatures the Son of God gave his Life, and made his Soul an Offering! How his *Love* to us Enemies and Rebels, was stronger than Fear, or Shame, or Death, without bounds, and without Example! When we Feast on this Sacrifice, what can we do less, in requital for this Infinite Love, than devote our selves, Souls and Bodies to him, as the Purchase of his Death! And lay all our Affairs, and dearest Concernments at his Feet, to be disposed of as he pleaseth! How can it be, but our Love to him must be kindled, maintained, and increased by such an Institution? Remembering, and considering his Love to us, till we are brought practically to conclude, and determine, that our Love to him is too little, if we  
love

## The Preface.

love any thing besides him, except it be by his Order, for his sake, and to his Glory; except it be according to the prescribed Rules, and Limits he hath set us.

And how proper is it here, to Renew our *Baptismal Covenant*? Faithfully to promise to be entirely the Lords, to be obedient and resigned to him, to be Treacherous to him no more, but stedfast and resolved in his Service? Taking his Law as our Rule, his Will to be our will, to love what he loves, to hate what he hates, to have the same Friends and Enemies with our Blessed Lord. For here we put God in mind of his *Covenant* with us, through *Jesus Christ*, and our selves in mind of our *Covenant* with God. and upon renewed Repentance for any Sins we have committed, after any Instance of Unfaithfulness to our Solemn Engagements, by unsuitable walking, we here implore his mercy and Grace to pardon us. We declare at the same time: That we desire to take hold of his *Covenant*, that though we are Sinners, we are not *Apostates*, we confess our Sins, and beg Forgiveness, and repeat our Resolutions of Fidelity to him. We trust in the unshaken Faithfulness and Truth of God to his gracious Promises: We place our Hope and Confidence in the stability of his *Everlasting Covenant*, which the Blood of *Jesus*, (*the Blood of the Covenant*) hath confirmed, and made *Everlasting*: Not Trusting in our own Faith, but to his Free Mercy, and invariable Truth;

## The Preface.

Truth; not to our Repentance, but his Gracious Pardon; not to our own Preparations, but his merciful Acceptance of us in his Beloved Son; not to any thing we our selves can do, but to the Merits of *Christ*, the *Fruits* of his *Death*, and the *Purchase* of his *Cross*, as dispenced and applied according to the Rule, Method, and Tenor of the *Gospel-Promise*.

This is our *Privilege*, and this our Employment at the Table of our *Lord*. And there is hardly any Subject will better bear to be treated of, in several different Methods, than this; or upon which, repeated *Discourses*, by several *Persons*, may be more useful. I grant there are many Excellent Books already written, to instruct Men in the Nature, and to direct and assist their *Devotion*, in the Observation of this *Holy Sacrament*. I design not to wrest them out of their Hands, into whose this may fall. I pretend not to add, but to urge and prosecute the same Great End; and sometimes by the same Arguments and Expressions. I acknowledge my having profited by the *Writings* of others; I hope 'tis what they design'd. These *Discourses* were acceptable to many, when *Preach'd*, and being since reviewed (some of them with some Enlargement,) I hope they may be of Use, at least to those who heard 'em, and desired their *Publication*. And it must be granted, that what is of so *Universal*, and *Important a Concern*, as a due *Participation* of this *Ordinance*, ought to be Treated and Inculcated,

## The Preface.

culcated, in as many different ways, as may best suit the *Various Capacities* of several *Persons*. It may be, a shorter Account of the *Doctrine of the Lord's Supper*, with *Meditations* and *Devotions* adapted thereto, would be more proper for the *Younger*, and more *Ignorant Sort*: this I have intended, if God permit, but have not yet had time to perfect. The *Lord* follow this, and all endeavours, for the *Furtherance* of *Real Godliness*, with an *Abundant Blessing*.

F. S.

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THE

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and

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*The*

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*The First Discourse,*  
Of Union to Christ, and of the  
New Creature.

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O R, A

SERMON

Preparatory to the

Lord's Supper.

On the First Day of the YEAR.

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From 2 COR. V. 17.

*If any Man be in Christ, he is a New-Creature.*

**T**HROUGH the Merciful Forbearance of God, we now begin another Year; and have outlived Several, who, a twelve month ago, were as like to have seen *this New years-day*, as any of us. That we may begin it with some Serious Reflexions, suitable to the beginning

B

ginning of the Year, and the approaching Solemnity of the Lord's Supper, I have chosen these words, as proper unto both. They are brought in, as one Inference, among others, from the *Constraining Love of Christ*, which the Apostle had mentioned in the 14th Verse. Many useful things might be observed, in explaining the Context, and shewing the Connexion of this, with the preceding Verses. But I shall at present consider them more absolutely, and in the General.

*If any Man be in Christ, he is a New Creature: or, Let him be a New Creature.* He ought to be so. The Original will bear either sense; The words may be taken *imperatively*, or *affirmatively*: For we find not *Is* in the Original. It is true that *whoever is in Christ, is a New Creature*; And it is true, that he is obliged thereby to prove his Union to Christ, *he ought to be a New Creature*. Neither sense is to be excluded, That *the State* of such as are in Christ, and likewise *their Obligation*, may be comprehended. It is the *Character*, and *Qualification* of such as are in Christ, and it is their *Duty*. So that we may consider these words, either as a *Doctrinal Assertion*, That such as are in Christ Jesus, are always New Creatures: Or, as a *Seasonable Exhortation*, That they should manifest that they are *in Christ*, by discovering themselves to be *New Creatures*.

In both senses *the New Creature* is a necessary Consequent of *Union to Christ*. The connexion is inseparable between these two. So that we may truly affirm, That *all such are so*; And we may rationally exhort All, that pretend to such a Priviledge, that they *would be so*, and show it. But whether consider'd as a Command from God, or as a Wish and Prayer of the Apostle; There are *three things* obvious enough to be explained, and spoken to. 1. Something concerning this Privilege of *being in Christ*, and the import of it. 2. Concerning this *New Creation*, which is to be Connected with it. And, 3. Of the Connexion between them, and the *Universal Obligation* upon all that are *in Christ*, to be *New Creatures*; That *if any Man be in Christ, he is, he must be a New Creature*; or where there is no such Change, it is in vain to pretend to be *in Christ*; Or he that is *not a New Creature*, he is *not in Jesus Christ*; he hath no part in him, and shall have no benefit by him.

Every Man's Title and Claim to a *special Interest in Christ*, and *Relation to him*, must be tryed by this Rule. This is more fully exprest, *Ephes. 4. 20, 21, 22, 23*. But you have not so learned Christ, if so be you have been taught of him, as the Truth is in Jesus; that ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts: And be ye renewed in the Spirit of your mind: And that ye put on the

## 4 The First Discourse,

*New Man, which after God is Created in Righteousness and true Holiness.*

1. *If any man be in Christ.* Something it will be necessary to speak concerning *this Union to Christ*, from which we are said to be *in him*, as sometimes Christ is said to be *in us*. And both are sometimes joyned together, *John 6. 56. He that eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

There are three sorts of *Unions*, which we cannot sufficiently admire. The first from all *Eternity*, in the *impenetrable Secrets of inaccessible Light*. The second, in the *fulness of Time, in the Womb of the Virgin*. The third is made daily by the *Spirit and Grace of Christ*. The *first* of these is the *Essential Union* between the *Eternal Father*, and the *Eternal Word*, in the *Adorable Mystery of the ever blessed Trinity*. The *second* is, the *Personal Union of the Humane Nature with the Divine*, in that *unspeakable Mystery of the Incarnation*. The *third*, is the *Spiritual Union* between *Christ and Christians*, which depends on the two former, and hath some dark resemblance of them. Concerning which, let me mention a few things.

1. That there is a *real Union* between *Christ and the Souls of Believers*, how difficult soever it be to understand the manner of it. He is not only *Emanuel, God with us*,  
as

## Of Union to Christ, &c. 5

as partaker of Flesh and Blood, having assumed our Nature; He is not only for us, in the *Work of Redemption*, by giving himself to God a *Ransom and Sacrifice* for us: But he is said to be in us, and to dwell in our Hearts; and we are said to be in him, and dwell in him, as the Branches are in the Vine, and by many other *Images and Idea's* of Union, is this set forth: By Allusions and Metaphors, and Similitudes of many sorts, to signify and represent to us this blessed Union between Christ and real Christians. And as he did partake with us of Flesh and Blood, *Heb. 2. 14.* We are said to be made partakers of Christ, *Heb. 3. 14.* as the Principle and Measure of all Spiritual Enjoyments and Expectations. And to be in him that is true, in Jesus Christ, *John. 1. 5. 20.*

It is sometimes set forth by the natural Union between Head and Members: At other times, by the Marriage Union; and both are discoursed of together, *Eph. 5. 25, 30.* We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones; By Allusion to what is said of Eve as to the first *Adam.* He is set forth as a *Foundation* for never failing Support, as a *Husband* for the dearest Love; as a *Vine*, as an *Head*, for Vital Influence; as *Food*, and Nourishment, for the most intimate Conjunction. He is said to be one flesh with us, and we are said to be

B 3

one

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• Mr. Pollbil, *Christus in Corde*, p. 10. 12;

*one Spirit with him.* Yea, as Christ is said to be in the Father, Believers are said to be in him, and he in them, *John 14. 20.* Yea further, he is said to be one with them; as he and the Father are one, *John 17. 21.* And he is said also to live in them, and they to live in him, *Gal. 2. 20.* Infomuch that sometimes the Scripture speaks of Christ and the Church as of one Person, *1 Cor. 12. 12.* where the Church is called Christ.

How amazing and admirable is the Expression, *Christ in us,* and *we in him!* What Riches and Glory is there in this Mystery! as the Apostle speaks, *1 Colof. 27.* Who ever heard before of a Servant's being in his Master, or a Disciple in his Lord, or the Members being in the Head? But here is a Mystery of Divine Love and Grace, which the Apostle seems with some kind of Affectation to speak of, at every turn, and upon every occasion; to mention it several times in *one Chapter,* in *one Verse;* yea and over and over *in the same Verse:* So unfeigned, and so fervent was his Love to Christ, If he fight or triumph, it is *in Christ Jesus;* If he bless God, or God bless him, it is still spoken of *as in Christ Jesus:* He speaks, as if he could do nothing without him; His *Life,* his *Motion,* his very *Being,* is *to be in Christ.*

We must silently Adore this Wonder of *Divine Love,* and cover our Faces in *humble Adoration* for such an *Honour,* which the *blessed Angels* might envy, if they were capable of it: For though Christ be their Head, they are  
yet



## Of Union to Christ, &c. 7

yet at his Feet, they are *not in him*, as Believers are. It is true, the *Angels* serve him, and worship in his presence; they follow him by Millions, they compass his Throne with Flames of Love, they quit Heaven to obey his Orders, they fly swift as the Wind to execute his pleasure; But *Christ* is not *in them*, as he is *in us*; nor they *in him*, as we are said to be. The Name *Emanuel*, is to them an inexpressible Name; they cannot say, *God with us*, in the sense that we can: For he took not the Nature of *Angels* at first, and he hath not taken them into such an union with himself, as he has the Sons of men. But,

2. That you may not mistake, remember that all Christians are not in Christ *in a like manner*. Some are so only by *Baptism*, and a *visible profession*, others by a *living Union*. Such a difference our Saviour makes, *John 15. v. 6.* where he tells us, there are some Branches of a Tree, that have only Influence enough to bring forth *Leaves*, and no *Fruit*, and are *cast off as Branches*, *ὡς κλίμα*; They seemed to be Branches, in Christ, they appeared *as Branches*; they profest Union to him, but were not what they seemed to be. In this sense I understand the *being in Christ* spoken of, *Gal. 1. 22.* *I was known by face to the Churches that are in Judea, that are in Christ Jesus*: That is, to the Body of *professing Christians* there, as distinguished from the *Jews*, though there were many rotten

B 4. Members

Members amongst them, that were not in Christ by a *lively Faith*. Therefore,

3. The great *Bonds of Union between Christ and real Christians, or true Believers*; are, the *Spirit on his part, and Faith, and Love on ours*. On which account, *Christ is said to dwell in us by his Spirit, and we are said to dwell in him by Faith*. By the *Spirit* he comes down to us, by *Faith* we ascend up to him. It is by *Faith* we are joyned to *Christ* as our *Foundation*, 1 Pet. 2. 6. And by the *Spirit* we are *built together for an habitation of God*, Ephes. 2. v. 22. And, *he that is joyned to the Lord is one Spirit with him*, 1 Cor. 6. 17. Our *Union* unto *Christ* immediately ariseth from the *Communication of his Spirit* to us; and *Participation of the same Spirit* with him, by which *Spirit* the *Divine Nature, as the Image of Christ, is formed in us*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. Gal. 4. 19. And the *Introduction of this New Spiritual form*, gives denomination to the *Person*. *Christ* enters into us by *Faith*, and inhabits in us by his *Holy Spirit*. And of these two *Bonds*, the *Spirit* is the *primary one*, as being the *Author of the other*. And therefore *Believers* are said to *live in the Spirit of Christ*, and to *walk in the Spirit*, and *after the Spirit*, and to be *led by the Spirit*. Hereby, says the *Apostle*, *We know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit*, 1 John 4. 13. 2 Corinth. 13. 14.

I confess it is hard to conceive any *Union* nearer than that between *God* and every  *Creature*:

ture: For God, as Creator, is *as near* to every Creature, as that Creature is to it self, and yet distinct from that Creature, for that Creature is not God. But the different sort of *Union*, must be distinguished by different *Operations*. God is near to Creatures in their Natural State, worketh on them as the God of Nature. Christ is near to the Souls of Believers by his Spirit, worketh on them as an Head of *holy gracious Influence*. The *different Operations* make the great difference. Though we shall not fully understand this, till we come to that Place and State, where that which is *imperfect shall be done away*. However we are said to be *built on him*, as on a *Foundation*; to be *inserted into him*, as Branches into a *Vine*; to be *incorporated with him* as an *Head*; and what words can be used more significant of an *Intimate Union*? Therefore,

4. We may add, That it is more than a *Relative and Political Union*, such as is between *King and Subjects*. It exceeds it in the *Intimacy* of the Union, as well as the *Benefits of it*. The *Similitude* between *Head and Members*, making one *Natural Body*, amounts to more. Besides, his *Kingdom* is not of the same sort; and he rules his *Subjects* after another manner. And the *Mystery of the Trinity in Unity*, to which it hath some Resemblance, carries it yet hither and further. It is therefore a most near and immediate *Spiritual Union*; whereby every particular *Believer* is *joyned to the Lord*. This

is a *Great Mystery*, *Ephes. 5. 32.* Oh how † *mysterious* and *ineffable* is this *Union of the Lord and the Soul!* Who would not admire at their proud disdainful Folly, that while they cannot explain the *Union between Soul and Body*, are ready to jeer at their just, humble, and modest Ignorance, who call this other, a *Mystical Union*: Or, because they know not what to make of it, would make *nothing*; and will not allow there should be any such Thing at all, or would have it to be next to *nothing*. But have those words no sense belonging to them, or not a Great Sense? *1 Cor. 6. 17.* *He that is joynd to the Lord, is one Spirit.* This is a *Mystery*, saith the Apostle, *that hath Riches of Glory in it, 1 Col. 27.*

And that *Union* is the *Foundation of Fellowship and Communion* with him, as the Apostle speaks, *1 John 1. 3.* *That he may have Fellowship with us, and truly our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* That is, That you may have like Fellowship with God and Christ, as we have. Not that our Union and Communion is *first* with *the Church*, as some of late have argued; though therein they contradict a Learned Man, whose Opinions, in other Instances, they are very fond of; I mean *Episcopius*. For upon that place he says, *That this sense is carefully to be avoided, That we are first united to the Apostles, and then to God and Christ.* It is

is both absurd in it self, and of very ill consequence. It is *in it self absurd*, because *we*, and the *Apostles* themselves are but *Brethren*, in respect of Union unto Christ; They are united to him in the same manner with us. And there are very ill consequences would follow from that Opinion: For then there must be Union and Communion with some Men and Company of Men, before we can have Union and Communion with Christ, which Error, by degrees, was serviceable to introduce the Papacy. Let me add,

5. This Union is not to be supposed without *Regeneration*, without the Renovation of our corrupt Nature by the Spirit of Christ, in order to Communion with him. The Union otherwise between Christ and us, would be like *Nebuchadnezzar's Image, the Head of Gold, and the Arms of Silver, and the Feet of Clay*. If there be not Spiritual Life from Christ by the quickening Spirit, the Body of Christ would be partly dead, And who would ever indure a dead Body to be joined to him, though it were the Carcase of one he never so dearly loved?

6. This must also be remembered, That this Union between Christ and us, is to be brought about by *mutual Consent*, and therefore often set forth by the Conjugal Union, to which Consent is necessary. Our Lord has laid the Foundation, and declared his readiness to receive us into Union with him, by the publication of his Gospel; And it is the work of his Spirit,

Spirit, to make us willing *to yield our selves to the Lord*, that we may enter into Union with him, and be brought under the Bond of the Covenant; We must know him, chuse him, and accept him for our Teacher, Saviour, and Lord, by a present compliance with his Terms. We must devote and give up our selves heartily, and unfeignedly, and unreservedly to be his; And then we may say, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his; I am in Christ, and Christ in me.*

And here is the great Office and Work of *Faith* in this Work, to bring Christ and our Souls into this blessed Union; Upon which Account we are *now in him*, as *hereafter* we shall be *with him*. When the work of Faith is over, and we are brought to Glory, we shall be *with Christ*, and shall be ever with the Lord; But *now* we are said to be *in him*.

It is true, we are now said to *sit in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus*; But hereafter it is promised, *we shall sit down on his Throne with him*. Now he dwells in us, and we in him; Hereafter we shall be with him, to behold his Glory. For so he Prays, *John 17*. And he promised the Penitent Thief, that he should be *with him that day in Paradise*. Our Spiritual life is now hid *with God in Christ*, as to present Union by Grace; but it is hid *with Christ in God*, as to eternal Glory. The expressions are observably different; *In Christ now, with Christ hereafter*; Now united with God in Christ, Hereafter with Christ in God; *In Christ upon Earth, in God in Heaven*. For to be in Christ, refers

refers to the Mediator, and is by Faith; But Faith shall cease in Heaven, and the Mediator deliver up the Kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. Thus for a brief Explanation of this Privilege, of being in Christ.

II. Let us consider what is affirmed of those that are in Christ, or what they are exhorted to; *What they are, if they be in Christ*; What they must manifest themselves to be, if they will prove an Interest in such a Privilege; that is, *New Creatures*. If any Man be in Christ, he is a New Creature; Or a *New Creation*, for so the Original will bear. And it is not in this place only, but several others, where the like Expressions are used, concerning that great Change, that is made by the Grace of God on the Souls of Men. It is termed a *Creation*, for the greatness of the Change; and a *New Creation*, for the Excellency of it.

One may be apt to think, That the Extraordinary Conversion of the Apostle *Paul*, made so great a Change in him, that it is on that Account he so often speaks in such terms; that he mentions so often *old things done away*, and *the old Adam put off*; That he speaks of a *New Man*, a *New Creation*, and *New Creatures*, and a *Spiritual Resurrection* from the Dead, and the like; As that *Glorious Light*, which shone round about him, when he was struck to the ground in the way to *Damascus*, might occasion him so often to use the expression of *Light*; for, at every turn, he speaks of *the Father of Lights*,  
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## 14 The First Discourse,

*the Armour of Light, the Kingdom of Light, the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, of Illumination, of opening the Eyes, &c.* But how fit a representation is this of the Change by converting Grace? as might be illustrated, by considering the state of Spiritual Death, that we are in before; and by considering the nature of the Change it self, and the Effects and Operations, that do afterwards manifest and discover it.

We are created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, begotten again, born from above, quickened and made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins. Several words are used, according to the several Powers of the Soul, and according to the different objects, *the new Creature* is conversant about; For as this Change discovers it self in the *Understanding*, it is a translation from darknes into *Marvellous Light*, and brings us to the true and saving knowledge of God in Christ. The first thing that God created in the Natural World, was *Light*, 1 *Gen.* 3. 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. 1 *Pet.* 2. 9, 10. As in the *Will*, it is a choice of God, and full purpose of heart to cleave to him. And as to the different objects, it has also other Names; As referring to Christ dying, it is *Faith*; To Christ living, it is *Love*; To Christ ruling and commanding, it is *New Obedience*.

But here it is called *a New Creation*. Not as if it were a removal of the old Substance, or any of the Powers of the Soul; But a rectifying, a sanctifying of them, by setting up a new  
light



light in the Understanding, giving a new Bias and Inclination to the Will, turning the Heart from Sin and the World, to God and Christ, to Holiness and Heaven. Not changing the Nature of our Affections, but curing the Corruption and Disorder of them, and changing the Objects about which they are conversant.

Some think the Metaphor is taken from *the Profelytes* to the Jewish Religion, whose Conversion to Judaism was accounted a kind of *New Birth*, and they reckoned *New Creatures*. Which our Lord seems to allude to, in his Discourse with *Nicodemus*, and wonders such a Doctor in *Israel* should be ignorant of it. Others think it may allude to the Jewish Custom, with respect to their *Children*, They taught them to read at three years old, and then instructed them till five, then put them to School, where they learned the Law of *Moses* till ten, and for three years more they applied themselves to understand the Jewish Traditions, and the Mysteries of the Synagogue; and when that time was expired, at the Age of Thirteen, they said a Child was a *New Creature*; that is, sufficiently instructed how to live and please God, alledging *Isa. 43. 21. This People have I formed, or created for my self.*

Our state of Nature and Sin is ordinarily expressed by the Metaphor \* of *Old Age*, our natural corrupt Affections, that are born and grow up with us, are called the *Old Man*; as if since  
*Adam's*

*Adam's* Fall we were decrepit, and feeble, and aged as soon as born; as a Child begotten by a Man in a Consumption, never comes to the strength of a Man, is always weak, and crazy, and puling, hath all the Imperfections, and Corporal Infirmities of Age, before he is out of his Infancy. And accordingly, all that is opposite to this old, decrepit state, is termed *New*. And so we read of a *New Doctrine*, and *New Covenant*, *New Tongues*, a *New Commandment*, *New Man*, *Mark* 1. 27. *Chap.* 16. 17. *John* 13. 34. *Ephes.* 2. 15. and the state of Grace exprest by this, *All things are become New*. The Man, when old, hath entered a second time into his Mothers Womb, and is *born again*, and is become a glorious, beauteous, *New Creature*, so that you would wonder to see the Change. You have heard in the Primitive Church, of a Grain of Faith removing Mountains; The work of *Regeneration*, the bestowing of a Spiritual Life on one dead in Trespasses and Sins, the making of a Carcass walk, the Natural Old Man to spring again, and move spiritually, is as great a Miracle as that.

Therefore called a *Creation*, because of the necessity of Divine Grace, and the power of the Spirit of Christ, (that Power that made us at first, and raised Christ from the Dead;) 'Tis the necessity of that Power unto this Change, that is the principal ground of this term *Creation*. The Efficiency of it, by the the power of Victorious Grace, making us a willing, and holy People, in the day of his  
Power,

Power, comprehending habitual Sanctification, as the root and life of actual Holiness. The Excellency and Extent of this, I might shew, as to the inward and outward Man, Heart and Life; all the Powers of the Soul, and Members of the Body, and our whole Carriage, Course, and Behaviour; And that this is common unto all the Children of God, all that are created again in Christ Jesus, all that are born from above; *If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature.* To this end,

III. Let us consider the certain and *inseparable Connexion between these two*, That all who are *in Christ*, are, and must be *New Creatures*. Every real Christian, he is in Christ Jesus, his Union to Christ doth constitute him a living Member, and his being a New Creature doth prove it. The one is his Essence, the other his Property, but they are inseparable.

What makes a *Man*, but the Union of Soul and Body? What makes a *Christian*, but the Union of the Soul with Christ? How know we that a Man hath a Soul, but by the Motions, Actions, and Operations of a Reasonable Soul? How know you that such a Professing Christian is United to Christ by his Spirit, but by the Effects and Operations of this Spirit, making such a Change in Heart and Life, from which they may be denominated *New Creatures*. Therefore they are said *to walk in the Spirit*, and *after the Spirit*: And at other times, as the Foundation of this, to be *born of the Spirit*,

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rit, and born from above; so as the Divine Life, and Likeness is introduced. But more particularly;

1. They who are thus Spiritually united to Christ, they must be *New Creatures*, because they partake of the *Divine Spirit*; the same Spirit that formed *Christ* in the Womb of the *Virgin*, hath formed the *New Creature* in all that are in *Christ*: the same Spirit that quickened the Dead Body of *Christ*, and raised him from the Dead, imployes the *exceeding greatness of his Mighty Power towards them that believe*, and by Faith are united to him: the same Spirit that carried out the Soul of *Christ* to go to God as a Father, doth enable Believers to cry *Abba Father*. For the Spirit of *Christ*, is the Spirit of *Adoption*, Gal. 4. 6. The same Spirit that led *Christ* into his Tryals and Temptations, and brought him off with Victory, doth the like for all the Followers of *Christ*. *They are partakers of his Spirit*. The Blood of *Christ* cannot save those, who are destitute of his Spirit.

The same Spirit of Holiness conforms them to the *Image and Life* of God; they are under the conduct of the same Spirit of *Humility*, *Meekness*, *Love*, *Charity*, *Prayers*, *Courage*, *Resignation*, and the like, which acted in *Christ*; And this makes them *like to him*; like him in their Judgments and Opinions of things; like him in their Affections, like him in their Designs and Ends, and like him in a course of  
 Actions,

Actions, by which they prosecute those Designs for the Glory of God. I might shew their resemblance and conformity unto *Christ* in *Graces*, in the Rise of them, in the Kinds of them, in the Exercise of them: All which depends upon their Participation of the same Spirit.

2. They must be *New Creatures* if they are in *Christ*, because the *New Creature is an Imitation of Him*. It is a little Module of *Christ* in its *Birth*, and a conformity to his Pattern in its *Growth*, and fully so in its *Perfection*. And therefore we read of coming to a *perfect man*, to the *measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*, Ephes. 4. 12. All that are united to *Christ* are conformed to him. Every *Branch* in him answers to the *Root*; every *Member* suits to the *Holy Head* in Heaven, and in some measure doth resemble him. That the Members of *Christ* should be of a contrary Temper to their Head, is utterly impossible.

I might here urge the Imitation of *Christ*, as becoming those who profess to be *in him*, in several Instances: as in the inward Delight which he took to do *the Will of his Father*, in his *active Zeal* for his *Father's Glory*, in a patient Submission to the Hand of his Father and Dependance on him under all Discouragements; and in his Constancy and Perseverance to do good, notwithstanding all the Hatred and Malice of the World, &c

3. Because the *New Creature* is Represented in Scripture as a *Conformity* to the *Death* and *Resurrection of Christ*, Philip. 3. 10. By putting off the *old man*, we dye unto *Sin*; by putting on the *New*, we are *alive to God*, and *live to Righteousness*. We are hereby *changed into the Image of Christ*, and that *good work begun*, which is to be *finished and consummated* in the *Day of Christ*, Phil. 1. 6. There is a *Conformity to his Death and Sufferings*, in the *mortification of Sin*. *Our old man is crucified with him*, Rom. 6. 6. Gal. 5. 24. And a *conformity to his Resurrection*, in *Heavtlinefs of Mind*, Col. 3. 1. and in *Newness of Life*, Rom. 6. 4.

4. Because nothing else will so prove our *Union to Christ*, as to enable us to take *Comfort* in such a *Privilege*; no external *Advantages* whatsoever will do it. For *neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but a New Creature*, Gal. 6. 15. The highest *Profession of Religion* without such a *Change*, will not save thee. *Except a Man be born again, or from above, he cannot enter into Heaven*, John. 3. 5. Neither can he be *accepted of God*, or *have fellowship with him*, 1 John 3. 2.

No External Duties or Performances, will avail you without this: You may Read, and Hear, and Pray, and give Alms, and do many other things, and yet not be *in Christ*; if you are not Regenerated, Renewed, and inwardly changed, by the Power of the *Divine Spirit*: If you  
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are not made *New Creatures*, you can never prove that you are *in Christ*. You may be Baptized in the *Name of the Sacred Trinity*; you may continue in the *Bosom of the Church*; hear the *sound of the glorious Gospel*, and receive the *Bread and Wine in the Lord's Supper*, and yet not be *united unto Christ*. You may have some *lesser Change* from the *grosser Pollution*s of the World; you may have some partial Reformation, which is far short of being *New Creatures*; some outward temporary change, in your carriage and conversation, while the Heart is unrenewed. In a word, our present Fellowship and Communion with God, our after Service and Obedience in the Fruits of Righteousness, to the Praise of God, and our final Blessedness in the enjoyment of him, do all depend upon this Change, this New Creation; And therefore be assured, *None can be in Christ without it*; none *in Christ*, so as to have any special, distinguishing, saving Benefit by him.

*Application* 1. *Are none in Christ but New Creatures?* How many then must be excluded? How many of excellent and laudable Qualifications, of great Attainments and high Professions, and moral Accomplishments, must yet be excluded and shut out from having any part in Christ; because they are yet Strangers to this *New Creation*: and consequently not in Christ, but under Condemnation. Meer Civility, and a plausible inoffensive Carriage is quite another thing. We need but

view the Lives and Actions of the generality of such, as are called *Christians*, to confirm this, That the Number is but small of those who are in Christ: How few have had any awakening Convictions about these things? And yet many such miscarry.

2. How miserable is the Condition of all un-renewed Souls; without a change, they are excluded from all *saving Benefit* by the *Redeemer*. They are not in Christ, and therefore are under the Curse and Condemnation; which by *Union to Christ* we are delivered from, *Rom. 8. 1. Know ye not, that Christ is in you, except ye are Reprobates?* 2 Cor. 13. 6. All our hopes of Life and Salvation by Christ depend upon it: The Guilt of all our Sins doth otherwise lye upon us; And all the black Clouds of Divine Vengeance hang over our heads; The Wrath of God abides upon us; as if there were no *Christ*, no *Gospel*: And there is nothing between us and Everlasting Ruine, but a little Breath.

3. Then none but *New Creatures* have a Right to the *Lords Table*; For the invited Guests are such who are *in Christ*. The Covenant of Grace cannot be sealed in that *Ordinance*, to those who are not under the *Bond of the Covenant*: The Benefits purchased by Christ are not confirmed at his *Table* unto those, who are none of his: I grant there is an Unworthiness, as to *present Frame*, that even those who  
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are *in Christ* may have ; but it is the Unworthiness *as to State*, that I am speaking of: Such as are not in *Christ*, having nothing to do to eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood, lest they eat and drink *Judgment* and *Condemnation* to themselves: He that doth not truly Repent, cannot be truly Interested in the *Promise of Pardon*, and therefore cannot have a Right to the Seal of it. They that are dead in *Sin*, cannot receive *Nourishment* by this *spiritual Food*. The least that can be said, as *one observes*, is this ; *That it is in vain, and to no good purpose ; for such can no more receive Christ in the Sacrament, than a Chicken that should come into the Assembly, and pick up some of the Crumbs of the Bread from the ground, after Consecration, can be said to receive the Body of Christ.* But the Danger is unspeakable of Eating and Drinking unworthily, for *such eat and drink Judgment to themselves, not discerning the Lord's Body.*

You may desire to come to this *Table*, and you may say enough, it may be, to satisfy a Minister of Christ, who cannot judge of your Heart and Conscience, and doth not know the whole of your Life ; But you your selves must look to it, that you be *in Christ*, and that you evidence you are so, by being *New Creatures*. We can but warn and admonish you, and offer our Assistance and Help: At your own Peril be it, if you come, and yet live in any known *Sins*, and cherish the Enemies of *Christ*, though you profess to be *his*, and presume upon all the Privileges of

his House and Family, as real Members of it.  
But,

I will yet add, That those who are in Christ, if they would have Assistance and Grace from the Spirit of Christ, to walk as New Creatures, they ought, on the other hand, to take heed how they absent themselves from that Ordinance. If they would either have the comfort of their being in Christ, or would have supplies of Grace, to walk as New Creatures, they should be frequent and serious in Sacramental Duties. Have you not weak Graces to be strengthened? And manifold Corruptions to be more subdued? Inordinate Love to this World more Crucified? Do you not need more Ability, to discharge several Duties, and overcome divers Temptations? Do you not desire to be more Partakers of the Image, and Life, and Spirit of Christ? Is your likeness to Christ so compleat, your Faith, in all its branches, so active and firm, your Love to Christ so warm, your Heavenly Desires so fervent, your Patience and Resignation so perfect, your Obedience so exact, your standing so sure, that you need no more Influence of the Spirit of Christ? Should not your own necessity oblige you to be frequent in this work; besides the Authority of your Lord, which is motive enough to those that are in Christ? And he requires, you should remember his Dying Love this way, and *show forth his death till he come.* It is proper work for us to begin *the Year with;* To renew our Covenant with  
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the Lord, by partaking of the *Symbols* of *Christ's Body and Blood*; giving up our selves again to be the Lord's, with renewed Repentance for the Sins of *the Year past*, and repeated Exercises of Faith, for Pardon, and Peace, and Grace, and Righteousness, and Life.

4. The next *Use* may be of *Examination*, To try whether we are *in Christ*, or *no*, by inquiring, *Whether we are New Creatures, or not?* Your Love to Christ, your Likeness to him, your Subjection to him, your Fruitfulness in him, will discover it. Are all old things done away with you, and all things become new? Is there still the old Darkness and Blindness that was upon your minds? Or, Are you *Light in the Lord*? Doth the old Deadness, Security, and Carelessness remain upon your Hearts and Consciences? Old Thoughts, and old Designs, old Discourses and Conversations. As little Saviour in the things of God as ever? As little Victory over the Temptations of the World, and the Flesh, as formerly? Are your Wills as rebellious and stubborn as ever? Are your Desires after Vanity, and your *Affections* towards *Earthly Things*, the same as formerly? So for your Hopes and Fears, Joys and Sorrows, What Change hath been wrought? Does fleshy Appetite, and Sense, and Carnal Interest sway, and govern as much as ever? Or is there a *New Creation* wrought in you? Have you a new Mind and Judgment, a new Heart and new Affections? Do you walk in  
Newness

Newness of Life? Is your Internal Principle changed, and the External Rule of your Actions changed too? Are you no longer conformed to the World, but transformed by the *renewing of your Minds*? Rom. 12. 2. Is that sin hated and crucified, that before was indulged? Is that Saviour prized, [for *to them that believe, he is precious, and the Chiefest of Ten thousands,*] that before was slighted? Do you delight in the Law of God, *after the Inward Man*? Do you find the Holy Law of God written in your Hearts, setting you against every sin, in your selves and others? Do you *walk in the Spirit*, and after the *Spirit of Christ*, and not after the *Flesh*, or according to the *course of the World*, as formerly? Is the Life you lead in the *Flesh* by the *Faith* of the *Son of God*?

How do you stand affected as to inward *Spiritual Duties*, that concern the inward workings of your Thoughts, and Conscience, and Affections, and such things as none but God and you do know of? Is it as great a burden and trouble to your Souls, to act contrary to the renewed Nature, as before to contradict the Inclinations of the *Flesh*? Is Prayer your daily work, and delight? Do you cherish and promote the new Creature? Are you restless after you have fallen into Sin, 'till by Repentance you recover Pardon and Peace? Do you grow up daily into greater Conformity to Christ, and Imitation of him? Desiring nothing more, than that his Image may be drawn more lively on your Hearts, and express more fully

fully in your Lives according to the various Providences of God! that call for the Exercise of such and such Graces, and according to the various Institutions of Christ, wherein such and such Holy Affections are to be employed? The knowledge of this Union to Christ upon examination, will give us the Comfort of all those Privileges which result from it.

Examine how Matters are with you as to these things, and what care you take to maintain the Bonds of Union: To strengthen Faith, and obey the Spirit; and whether it be better now than it was a year ago. While *Merchants* and *Tradesmen* cast up their Books, and make up their Accounts, at the end of the Year; let us not neglect the like work, as *Christians*, with reference to our *Spiritual State*: Let us not be less concerned to know, whether we thrive or decay, whether we advance and go forward, or else decline.

5. The next *Use* may be of *Comfort* to such as are in Christ. Our Union to him is the Foundation of all our *Fellowship* with him, and after Supplies of *Grace* and *Life*. If we are in *Jesus Christ*, he is made of God unto us *Wisdom*, and *Righteousness*, and *Sanctification*, and *Redemption*, 1 Cor. 1. 30. Such shall be delivered from *Wrath*, entituled to *Eternal Life*, have the *Pardon* of all their *Sins*, *Christ* as their *Advocate* pleads for 'em in *Heaven*, in him they are *Adopted*, and have free access to God, his Spirit dwells in them, their *Services* are accepted, &c.

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If we are in him, *there is no condemnation unto such*, Rom. 8. 1. Such a Man is not condemned, is not in a state of condemnation for the present, *John 3. 18*. And such a Member of Christ cannot perish, who by Union to him, is united to God, the Fountain of Life. Our Lord speaks of the Union of the Father unto him as Mediator, and his Union unto us, as both in order to our Perfection, and eternal Felicity, *John 17. 20, 23. I in them, and thou in me, that they may all be made perfect in one*. But there is no Reconciliation to God, no Remission of Sins, no Adoption, no Salvation by Christ, but for such as are in him. Whereas *all things are yours*, even Life and Death, things present, and things to come, when you are *Christ's*

There is a Train of invaluable Blessings follow this new Creation, and Union to Christ; where it is truly wrought, \* *2 Ephes. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 3. 22*. You are brought under the Bond and Blessing of the *New Covenant*. *Jer. 31. 33*. You are dignified with a *new Name*, *Rom. 2. 17*. You are begotten to a *new Hope*, entitled to a *new Inheritance*, *1 Pet. 1. 3. 1 John 12. 13*. And you shall be preserved and kept by the powerful Grace of Christ, unto the full possession of it.

None shall pluck you out of his hands, *because he lives, you shall live*; nothing shall be able to separate you from him. If you are  
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\* See Mr. Poihill's *Christus in Corde*, chap. 8.

planted into the *likeness of his Death*, for the destruction of the Body of Sin, you shall grow up with him, in *the likeness of his Resurrection*. Rom. 6. 5, 6. Not only shall you receive Influence of Spiritual Life from him, while you live, but by virtue of this Union, *you shall dye in the Lord, and sleep in Jesus*, Rev. 14. 13. 1 Thes. 4. 14. You shall be with him in Glory, and your Bodies shall be raised by him, and be made like his most glorious Body, Rom. 8. 11. But,

*Lastly*, Let me close with *Exhortation*. 1. Un- to all, to labour after *Union to Christ*. 2. Un- to those that have good hope through Grace that they are *in him*, and profess to be so. Let me exhort them that they would live as *new Creatures*.

1. *Labour after Union unto Christ*. How earnestly should this be desired, how diligently pursued? For we can have no Communion, no Adoption, no Freedom from *Condemnation*, without it. *Faith* on our part, and the *Spirit* on Christ's, are the Bonds of Union. Let us carefully make use of the Word and Prayer, in order to both, waiting and begging of God, and using all the hopeful means that are in our power in order to it. How earnest should be our pursuits of this Privilege, how fervent our Prayers, and constant our Endeavours after it? Never leave soliciting the Throne of God, till the *Creator and Father of Spirits* have created another

another breath into your nostrils, another Spirit into your Souls, even the *Spirit of Christ*, whereby we are united to him; lay your self at his feet, and with all the violence and importunity, and humility, that your distressed case may prompt you to, beg the *Holy Spirit* to over shadow thee. And yet learn so much Patience from thy beggarly state, as not to challenge him at thine own times, but wait his leisure, and observe his motions; doing all that possible thou canst in the use of common Grace, to prepare the room against his coming; and continue in Prayer, watching thereunto in the use of all the outward means, which God hath afforded thee.

2. Be exhorted to *live as New Creatures*. You are obliged to it by your Baptism, and by your Profession of Christianity. You that come to the Lord's Table are especially obliged, That old things should be done away, *all things become New*. You consider his Sufferings from time to time, as represented in that Ordinance. You *there* feast upon his Sacrifice, and consider the cause of his Sufferings, your own Sins; and the End of them, your Redemption from the Guilt, and Filth, and Power of Sin. Can you do this, and not feel the Obligation to live as *New Creatures*, and resolve upon it? Do you not *there* renew your Covenant, and engage your selves afresh to walk as the Redeemed of the Lord, *unto all well-pleasing*? Do you not *there* cast your selves into the Arms



Arms of a Crucified Saviour, and plead the Merits of his Death, and beg the Supplies of his Spirit, and bind your selves to strict fidelity to him, as long as you live, under a grateful sense of his kindness, who has loved you, *and washed you from your sins in his Blood, that he might purchase to himself a People zealous of good works? False are we to all this, if we do not walk as New Creatures.* There are but two Motives with which I shall enforce this. The Text furnishes me with *one*, And the Season of the Year with the *other*.

1. The Motive in the Text, *Old things are done away, Behold all things are become New.* I shall not consider it as amplifying the other expression, and so referring to the Change of those that are in Christ, and consequently of like import with the Phrase *a New Creature*; but as an Argument to urge and enforce it: And accordingly understand these words, as relating to *the Obligation of the Laws of Moses*; That *that* is now ceased; Those old things are now done away; The Shadows of *the Ceremonial Law* are expired, at the coming of the Substance which is Christ, *Colos. 2. 20.* We are said to be *Dead with Christ, from the Rudiments, or Elements of the World*, Respecting material and worldly things, either to do, or forbear them: For of that kind were the Ordinances, and Institutions of the Ceremonial Law: They were the first and lowest Lessons, fitted to the Infancy of the Church; But now the  
Kingdoms

*Kingdom of Heaven* in come by the Erection of the Gospel-Church, a Kingdom which shall not be shaken, and the Orders and Institutions of it never be changed. Now a more noble and Spiritual Worship is to take place, *those old things are past away*. No wonder if the Scaffolds of Ceremonies be taken down, when the Church of God, the Spiritual Building, is brought by Christ to its full height.

Now *all things are become New by Christ*, the Mediator of *the New Covenant*. The Testament he left us is *a New Testament*. He *rent the Vail of the Temple in twain* when he dyed, and put an End by his own Sacrifice of himself, unto all the *Sacrifices and Services* of the *Jewish Temple*; And therefore it is observable, that the first time he spake of his *Death*, was in *the Temple*; But after his *Death*, he never entred into it, though we read that he was in *Jerusalem* after his Resurrection. We have *a New Sanctuary*, an Heavenly one; *A New High Priest*, of a better Order than that of *Aaron*; *New Heavens*, and *a New Earth*, as the Gospel State is called; *A New Light*, to enlighten the World, even the Knowledge of God in the Face of Christ; *A New Sun*, even Christ the *Sun of Righteousness*, with *healing in his Beams*; *A New Adam*, after the Image of God, the express Image of his Person, and the Brightness of his Glory, in whom all fulness dwells. We have *a New Cælestial Paradise*, into which the Old Serpent shall never enter: *A New Tree of Life*, whose *Leaves are for the healing of the Nations*: *A New Eve*, the Church of Christ, *Bone of his Bone, and Flesh of his*

*his Flesh*, formed of his Blood, and animated by his Spirit. We have *New Sacrifices*, *New Sacraments*, a *New Circumcision*, a *New Passover*, a *New Jerusalem*, a *New Temple*: Behold *all things* are made *New*. And shall not we, that profess to be the Disciples, and Followers of Christ, by whom all things are thus made *New*, Answer all this, by being *New Creatures*, that we may serve him, *in the newness of the Spirit*, and not *in the oldness of the Letter*, Rom. 7. 6. That is, *that we being delivered from the manifold difficult Impositions of the Moisaick Law*, all which we could not fulfil, and *from the Curse upon those which did not*, we should now serve God, with *New Hearts*, and *Lives*, by the Spirit of Christ, according to the Laws of Grace.

2. There is yet another Argument, *from the Circumstance of time*, In the beginning of the *New Year*, which makes the *Exhortation* *seasonable*, to press you to be *New Creatures*. And when may I expect to be attentively heard upon such a Subject, if not at such a Season, when I may hope several of you have had *serious Reflexions*, this very Morning, upon *Time* and *Eternity*, from the Conclusion of *the last Year*, and the beginning of *Another*; to awaken your *Thankfulness* for the Mercies of *the Year past*, and your *Repentance* for the Sins of it, and your good *Resolutions*, and *Self-Dedication* to the Lord for the future?

It will be sad, if the *Experience of another Year* do not teach us some *Understanding*, when *day unto day* uttereth *Knowledge*, and *night unto night* might teach us *Wisdom*. The very thoughts of our *hasty Time*, measured by *Years*, and *Months*, and *Weeks*, and *Days*, should put us upon considering, how *Irrevocable*, and *past Recovery is the last Year*, and all our former *Years*, it being utterly impossible to call back *Yesterday*. Almighty Power may stop the course of the Sun, as in the time of *Joshua*; but to make that which is *past*, to be *present*, and *not past*, is a *Contradiction*, and cannot be done. And oh how small a point doth *separate* and *distinguish* that, which is *past*, from that which is yet *to come*! They are divided by *one Moment*, by an *Instant that is almost nothing*; by that which we cannot speak of without losing, it being gone while we open our Mouths to say the least word about it. *So near is Death to Life*. The very *Nature of Time it self may teach us this*.

And certainly *the Changes of the Year past* should be very *Instructive*, and give us many *Reflections*, according to our *Sins*, and *Mercies*; according to the *Trials*, and *Exercises* we have been carried through, this last Year. May not all of you, look back upon many *Changes* the preceding Year, of several kinds; Those especially which God hath made amongst us by *Death*? We are called to review, how many of Them we knew, and were acquainted with, with whom we familiarly conversed, not a Year since, are now silent in the dust:

While

While their immortal Spirits are some in *Heaven*, and others in the *place of Torment*. And of the Multitude that have dyed this last Year, could we but separate the corrupted, putrifying Relicks of those Persons, whom we Honour'd, Valued, and Loved, from the rest of the Deceased, and view their Bodies, as now they are; How affecting would be the *Spectacle*? To think *what they were*, less than a Year ago; and to consider, *what now they are*, as to *their Bodies*; and the greater Change there is as to *their Souls*. But even as to the *former*, let us compare in our thoughts the Figure they lately made, while acting their Parts upon this Stage, as living Men and Women amongst us: What a Change is made in a few Months, as to every of them? And the like may be our own Case, within a few Months from this moment, long before the End of this Year we now begin.

For consider it, *Christians*, This last Year, that is now ended, is one made towards the Grave. Another such may bring us home. O that we may be found ready! Who knows, but as *the last Year* carried off many of our Acquaintance, and Friends, but that our Names may be amongst those who shall not out-live *this*? It is true, *It may be*, you shall live to see the Conclusion of this New-Year, *but, it may be*, you shall not live till *Midsummer*. It may be, I may Preach a Twelve-month hence; but peradventure you may hear a Sermon occasion'd by my Death, before that time; Or your own Ears may be stop-

ped, if my Mouth be not: *You may die*, if I should live yet a few Years more.

I cannot look round on this Assembly, but I must conclude, that of all this number, it is past doubt, but *Some One* or more will die before this Year be over; I believe I need not scruple to pronounce it. There is none can question, but if the number were much less, *one* or *more* would die within a Year. Therefore the Voice of God is to *Everyone of you*, Awake and mind your Work; Turn to the Lord, and seek after Union to Christ, and see that you be *New Creatures*, for *you shall die before another Year*.

But you will *almost All* be ready to say, To whom, in particular, do you speak this? *Sure, not to me*. Yes, I speak it to *You*, to *every of You*, whether in *Youth* or *Age*; To you, *Parents*, and to you that are *Children*; To you, *Masters*, and to you, *Servants*; To you, *Husbands*, and to you, *Wives*; To you before me, and to you on either Hand; This Call of God, is to *every one of you* in particular, *See that you be found in Christ*, for *you may not be found Alive, at the End of this Year*.

Oh but I hope the contrary, say such and such; *As for me*, I hope I have *many a fair Year* to come; I am in *sprightly vigorous Youth*, or I am in *settled, confirmed Strength, and Health*: or I am *but just entred into the busie World*; or *just now entring upon it*, &c. But, *How many Younger, and more likely to live, have dyed this last Year*; and therefore why may not you be one of those, who shall dye this?

Nay, *Elder Persons* are ready to excuse themselves, and say, *They have many Seniors to go*  
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before them; That many, who are Elder than they, they see, do yet hold out Year after Year. Their inward thought is, that they have escaped many Dangers, and been recovered from many Sickneses; And though they are but weak and Crazy, and have many Infirmities, and Pains, to presage their Dissolution; Yet notwithstanding these, they make a shift to live, and have rubb'd on for several Years, under such weakness; And several of their Acquaintance, as weak and sickly as they, have continued a good while for all that. And so, neither Young, nor Old, will admit the Supposition, as to their own Case; Nor You, nor You, nor any Body, will believe they shall dye this Year. And so the next Year, I doubt not, your Hearts will say the same as now; for there will be the same pretence: And therefore it is *not unto you* I must speak of *Death*, but rather wish you *Joy* of the *long Life*, which with so much confidence you reckon upon. Well, Shall I say then, “ Go  
 “ and enjoy this World, and live as you list,  
 “ if you durst put it to the Venture; Go, and  
 “ gratifie your Senses, Appetites and Lusts,  
 “ for *this Year*, as you did *the last*; and never  
 “ think of *Death*, or fear it: You are not like  
 “ to dye *this Year*, or *the next*? But, How unreasonable is such Security, when some *one* or *more* of this Assembly, you grant, may probably, or most certainly, dye this year: And how can you be *certain*, that you shall be *the Exempted Person*; Or that your *nearest Relations*, and those you love best, that they shall *not dye this Year*? Your Parents, your Pastors,

your Husbands, and your Wives, and your Children; and your Bosom Friends. You will as hardly admit the thoughts that they shall dye *this Year*; But if some or other of those, that now hear me, that now look upon me, that now listen, and attend to what I say, should be called away to Judgment *before another Year*; Why may not *you in particular*, be the Persons, or *the Desire of your Eyes*, those whose Lives are dearest to you?

Certainly, To begin the Year with such a Thought, can do you no harm, but may be improved to many useful purposes. However, I must tell you, If, after all *the Changes* which we have seen within a *Twelve Month*, (and which every Year brings fresh experience of,) we will not look forward to our own great Change; If we will not heartily concern ourselves for our greatest, truest Int'rest, and prepare for an Everlasting State, by voluntary, vital Union with the Son of God; *I must tell you*, for a Conclusion, That *God changeth not*. And if neither the Voce of his Providence, nor the Voce of Conscience; If neither the Calls of the Word, nor the Motions of the Spirit; If neither the Experience of others, nor so much as we have had of our own, will awaken us to *change our Course*: You must know, that the Holiness of God, his Justice, and his Truth, are *Unchangeable*: He will not alter the terms of Life for you and me, He will not find another way, for us to escape Condemnation, than by *being in Christ*, and *being New Creatures*. Therefore look to it that  
you



you may be found *such*. And in wishing, and praying you may all be *Such*, I do not only wish you a happy New Year; but a happy Life, if it be for *many Years*, and withal, a *Blessed Eternity* after Death: which such as are now in Christ, shall then Enjoy with him, when Days, and Years, and Time, shall be no more. God grant it for Christ's sake! Amen.

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*The Second Discourse,*  
**Of Christ's passing over the Brook,**  
**and Entering into the Garden.**

*After the Lord's Supper.*

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From JOHN XVIII. 1, 2.

*When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his Disciples over the Brook Cedron, where was a Garden; into the which he entred, and his Disciples; And Judas also which betrayed him, knew the place; For Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his Disciples.*

**U**PON Thursday, the Day before the Crucifixion of our Lord, he goes to Jerusalem from Bethany, and there eats the Passover with his Disciples; at the End whereof, he institutes the Sacrament of the Supper, and then makes a large Pathetical Discourse, contained in the 15th and 16th Chapters. Upon which followed his admirable Mediatorary Prayer in the 17th Chapter.

Now

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Now having said, and done this, having said these words, and sung an Hymn with his Disciples, *he goes forth with his Disciples over the Brook Cedron, &c.*

The *Jews*, it is true, did not go out of their Houses that Night, after the Celebration of the Passover, *Exod. 12. 22, 24.* Because of the Angels passing by the Houses of the *Israelites*, when the first born of the *Egyptians* were to be cut off; That the *Israelites* might not mix with the *Egyptians* at that time, but sprinkle the Blood of the Paschal Lamb on their own Door-posts, as a Mark of Distinction. Whereas our Lord having abrogated the Passover, and instituted his Supper to succeed in its room; all the Precepts that concern the *Jewish Passover*, with all the *Appendixes* belonging to it, were made Null, and of no Effect. And consequently our Saviour might go out that Evening; especially when the *Jews* tarried within door, to avoid suffering the Wrath of the Angel; but he goes forth that Evening, to meet with suffering: For *he knew that Judas would betray him that Night, and that he was well acquainted with the Place he went to;* for he was wont to retire thither with his Disciples.

He went forth, when he was to be betrayed and taken, as afterwards he suffered Death *without the Gate of the City.* He went out of *Jerusalem*, thereby declaring, it is thought, That the *Gentiles* had an interest in his Sufferings, as well as the *Jews*; That it was not that particular

## Of Christ's passing, &c. 43

particular People alone he was to suffer for, but the rest of the World were to be equal Sharers in the Benefits of his Passion. *He went forth with his Disciples, over the Brook Cedron, where was a Garden, into which he entred, &c.*

In these Two Verses we may consider,

1. The *Place* he passed over, *the Brook Cedron.*

2. The *Company* that was with him, *his Disciples.*

3. The *Time*, *after he had eat the Passover, and instituted the Supper.*

4. The *Place* he retired to, that was the *Garden of Gethsemane.*

5. The *Reason* why he chose this Place, *for Meditation and Prayer, the beginning of his Passion.*

6. His *Custom* to retire there, *He was wont to do so.*

And lastly, I shall consider what *Practical Instructions* may be gathered from the whole, for our own Use.

1. The *Place* over which he passed, *the Brook Cedron*; a little Rivulet of that Name, between the Temple of *Jerusalem*, and the Mount of *Olives*, that ran through a dark deep Valley. In Summer it was often dry, and in Winter, or after the fall of any considerable Rains, it was full. The cursed things were burnt here, when *Hezekiah* and *Josiah* purged

purged the Temple and City of Idolatry. The Filth and Uncleanness of the Temple was cast into the Valley, through which this Brook ran, that our Lord passed over. Which may mind us of his being made Sin, and a Curse for us, to abolish the Curse of the Law, to purge us from our Filthiness, and to bring about Everlasting Righteousness for us.

As hardly Two Circumstances of our Saviour's Passion, but had a Type; so in this, for instance, we have an Eminent One, in *David's* going over the *Brook Cedron*, when, by the Rebellion of his Son *Absalom*, he was forced to quit the City of *Jerusalem*, 2 *Sam.* 15th Chapter. *David* was then forsaken by his own Countrymen; and as *He*, and all the People wept, when they went over the *Brook Cedron*, to the Ascent of the *Mount of Olives*; Our Lord, when he went over this *Brook*, retired to a *Garden* on a part of that Mount, and there prayed himself into an Agony, and wept *Tears of Blood*. As soon as *David* had passed over this Brook, He worshipped God, and poured out a Prayer, recorded in the 3d *Psalms*. So did our Lord pour out strong Crys and Intercessions to God, on the same Mountain, when he had passed over this very *Brook Cedron*.

From this *First Particular*, before I proceed further, we may learn to expect, in Imitation of Christ, to follow him in the like Path; to go through the dark Valley of Suffering, before we come to God's Holy Mountain. As he passed over  
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the Brook *Cedron*, to the *Mount of Olives*, we must ascend likewise by the Cross, to God's Holy Hill. But for our Encouragement, we may consider too, That he having drank of the Brook by the way, hath sanctified the bitterest Cup of Affliction unto us. This little *Brook*, this *Rivulet*, would never have been fordable for us, but we must have been drowned in the Waters of *Cedron*, if he had not passed over before us. But now a Cup of Consolation is put into our hands, he hath prepared a Path for us to *Mount Olivet*, he hath smoothed our way to God's Holy Hill, by his own Sufferings and Death; so as we need not fear, to walk through the Valley of the shadow of Death.

2. Let us consider *the Company*, wherewith our Lord passed over this Brook, *with his Disciples*. There may be *Two Accounts* of this; the *one*, in reference to their future preaching of the Gospel; the *other*, for their more resolute and courageous suffering for it.

1. *As to their future preaching of the Gospel*. It was fit and necessary the Disciples should be Spectators, of the most considerable Passages of our Lord's suffering; Not only because some of them were to write the History of his Life and Death, and transmit this Everlasting Gospel to *future Generations*; But they are also to Preach to *Jews and Gentiles*, in the Name of Christ; and what more *powerful Argument* could

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could they use to gain Credit to what they said, than by being able to attest the *Truth* of their History by their own Evidence: And to say upon their own Knowledge, *We speak that which we have seen and heard.* The Apostle Peter, and the Evangelist John, we find, insist much on this, *We cannot but speak the things which we have seen,* Acts 4. 10. 1 Joh. 1. 2.

2. Hereby They might not only be the better fitted for their Ministry to preach in his Name, but be *thereby, the better prepared to suffer for his sake.* His Example of Patience, and Meekness, and Resignation, might be of singular Use to them upon that account. He had foretold and forewarned them by his Discourse in the way, That they *must* expect to suffer. He had told them, that *when the Shepherd was smitten, the Sheep should be scattered.* And what more likely to animate them to Patience, and Perseverance, than the Example of their Lord's *Voluntary Suffering*? Especially if in any measure they understood the Design, and Reason, and End of his *Suffering*: For if he drank of the Brook in the way, they might well expect to *taste* of it; If he travelled thro' the dark Valley, they could not expect a smooth and a pleasant Path to Glory; if he endured the Contradictions of Sinners against himself, they could not think that they should escape Opposition. Let us remember this, and not think it *Strange*, if we meet with *such Usage* as our Lord and his Followers have already done.

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1. We may learn from the Influence their Presence with Christ might have upon their future Ministry, by being Eye-witnesses of the Truths that they delivered, That if ever Ministers would persuade Others to believe any Doctrine, the best Expedient is, to endeavour to be fully persuaded our selves of the Truth and Certainty of those things that we deliver. No wonder if other Men are not persuaded by us, if we speak to them such things, as we believe not our selves; or do either preach, or live in such a manner, as to give them reason to think so.

2. From the other Reason, to encourage them to patient suffering, we may observe, That the Example of Christ's Courage and Constancy, should be very influential upon all his Followers; and if duly considered is like to be so. For he is our Captain and Forerunner, we are to follow him, and fill up that which remains of his Sufferings. All that we can suffer, is but the gleaning of the Vintage, after he has trodden the Wine-Press alone. God hath spoken it once, yea twice have we heard it; that is, in the Old Testament, and in the New, That Sufferings are the way to Glory; That many are the Afflictions of the Righteous; That through many Tribulations we must enter into Heaven, &c.

3. The Circumstance of Time is next to be considered, When our Lord passed over the Brook

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Brook Cedron; *viz.* After he had instituted the Sacrament of the Supper, After he had spoken those words of Consolation, and Instruction to his Disciples, and of Petition to his Father, *Then he walked over the Brook Cedron, with his Disciples.* He went forth to meet with Sufferings, and his Disciples were with him. How admirable is the Wisdom, and Condescension of our merciful Saviour, thus to antidote and forearm his poor Disciples? thus to prepare and dispose his faint-hearted Followers, to be Witnesses of his Sufferings, and Partakers of them: For after such a blessed Preparative, what should be able to sink their Spirits? After they had joined in such an Ordinance, as the Lord's Supper, administered by Christ himself; After they had received such excellent Instructions, and heard such a Sermon from his own Mouth; After they had been present, when he put up such a Prayer to God, as that recorded in the 27th of *John*, what could dishearten them, or damp their Courage?

We may hence take notice, That *the Participation of Solemn Ordinances, and Communion with God therein, is an excellent Preparative to more than ordinary Trials.* What better Preparation for patient and courageous suffering for Christ, than the Lord's Supper, wherein we remember his dying Love that should engage us to it? And so for other Afflictions, even the Calamities common to Men: The Sacramental Bread may be our staff, and strength, to fortifie, and confirm our Minds against all Difficulties:

ties; The Sacramental Wine may be a Cordial to our fainting Spirits, to inbolden us against all Discouragements. On this Account; they that neglect this Ordinance are wanting to themselves, as to preparedness for, and support in, a time of Affliction. And for this Reason, we may suppose, the Primitive Christians did communicate so often, *every Lord's Day*, sometimes *every Day*, whenever they met for publick Worship, because they were in continual Jeopardy of their Lives: And the multitude of *Martyrs* in those Times, and their invincible Patience and Perseverance, was much owing to this, and influenced by it.

4. Let us consider the *Place he retired to*, when he went over the Brook *Cedron*; viz. *The Garden of Gethsemane*. The word *Gethsemane* signifies an Oil-press. It was a little Village situated at the foot of *the Mount of Olives*, on which Mountain there were many *Olive-trees*, and so many *Oil-presses* in that *Village*. The *Mount of Olives* hath its name with relation to this: And the *Jewish* Writers call it sometimes *the Mountain of Ounction*, sometimes *the Mountain of Light*, sometimes *the Mountain of Health*, because of the use of Oil, as to all these.

This Garden of *Gethsemane*, as some think, was first planted by *David*, or *Solomon*, and then enlarged and beautified by succeeding Princes, for their Recreation and Delight. If that be true, where they took their pleasure, the *Messias*, the true Son of *David*, began his  
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Passion;

Passion; in memory whereof *Hellen*, the Mother of *Constantine the Great*, afterwards built a Chapel there, which was visible in the days of *Jerom*; and some affirm the *Virgin Mary*, the Mother of our Lord, was buried in, or near this place. But to pass that as doubtful, it is very probable, that in or near this Village, (near *Jerusalem*,) many of the rich Citizens had their Gardens, and Country-Houses, and among them some of Christ's Followers, who gave him and his twelve Disciples Entertainment, therefore it is said, *he often resorted thither*, with his Disciples. But,

5. *Why* he did so, is more to our purpose to enquire. Why our Lord chose this place to prepare himself for his Suffering, and to begin his Agony. And this may be answered in Three Particulars.

1. The *first Sin* was committed in a *Garden*, and therefore the beginning of our Lord's Passion, for the expiation of Sin, did very fitly begin in a *Garden* too. It was in a *Garden* that Man began to sin, and in such a place, the Son of God began his Sufferings. *The first Adam* incurs the Wrath and Displeasure of God in a *Garden*: *The second Adam* trembles, and groans, and sweats, and prays, for the turning away of that Wrath from us, in a *Garden* too, he there began his *Passion* for our *Recovery*. Our *first Parents* lost the Image of God by their Disobedience, and heard the Sentence of Condemnation

tion in a *Garden*, our Lord comes to restore the Divine Image, and reverse the *Sentence of Condemnation*, by his *bloody Sufferings*, and *Death*, which begin in this *Garden of Gethsemane*, as the Promise of it was first made in the *Garden of Eden*, that the *Seed of the Woman* should bruise the *Serpent's-head*.

Compare *Eden* and *Gethsemane*. We were first seduced by the *old Serpent* in the *Garden of Eden*; and his Head was bruised by the *Agony*, and *Bloody Passion of Christ*, which began in this *Garden of Gethsemane*. In the *one Garden*, the Devil conquered the *first Adam*; but is overcome by the *second Adam* in the *other*, when he resolved to drink the *Cup*, saying, *Not my Will, but thine be done*. In the *first Garden*, that of *Eden*, Man surfeited on the *forbidden Fruit*, and fell from God, for which our blessed Redeemer had a *bloody Sweat* in the *Second*, the *Garden of Gethsemane*. We were turned out of the *Earthly Paradise* by *sinning in the first*; we have the Purchase of the *Heavenly Paradise*, by our *Lord's Suffering*, which began in the *second*. The *beginning* of our Calamity, and of all the Miseries of Mankind, had its rise in the *Garden of Eden*: And the *beginning* of the *Messias Passion* for our Recovery, was in the *Garden of Gethsemane*. There our Lord signed the Decree for his own Crucifixion by his *bloody Sweat*, as the Pledge and earnest of his shedding his Blood, the next day, upon the Cross.

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2. Another, and more evident Reason, why our Lord chose this *Garden*, was because it was a *solitary place*, fit for *Meditation* and *Prayer*, and the more *solemn Preparation* of himself for his *Crucifixion*, which was now so near. He was now in prospect of his approaching Death, he knew that within a few Hours he should be apprehended and taken, judged, and condemned to a *shameful Cross*; and therefore retires here for *Meditation* and *Prayer*, in order to it. To bear the Curse of the Law, and struggle with the *Wrath of God*, the due Wages of our sin, which he undertook to expiate; And to conflict with all those *Sufferings*, antecedent and concomitant to such a *Death*, needed such Preparation. Yea, the *solemn Resignation* of himself to the Will of God, by *Prayer*, in this *Garden*, before he offered himself upon the Cross, was necessary, as the Accomplishment of a legal *Type*, that prefigured it: For all the *Levitical Sacrifices* were first consecrated by *Prayer*, before they were burnt upon the *Altar*. This Lamb of God, the Truth of all those Sacrifices, the Substance of all those Types, was first to devote himself to God by *Prayer*, before he was nailed to the Cross; And this Garden of *Gethsemane*, being a solitary Place, was fit for that purpose.

3. I may add another Reason, He went thither because it was a Place that Judas knew of, where his Enemies might be sure to find him, and so accomplish the eternal Counsels of God

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concerning his Sufferings and Death. Several times before this, they endeavoured to lay hands on him, but *his hour was not come*; But *now* he was willing, and resolved to dye; And therefore knowing that *Judas* would betray him, and having bid him *do quickly* what he intended to do, he doth not go about to abscond, and hide himself to prevent it: He retires to this Garden which the Traytor was well acquainted with: And when he comes with a Company to take him, he tells them more than once, He is the Person they seek for.

Let me make a few Reflexions on this Particular. As 1. Since our Lord's Passion began in a *Garden*, Let me caution you not to abuse your Gardens, and Places of Retirement, and Recreation, to Vanity and Sin; but improve them by holy Meditation, when you are walking there. How often is Christ dishonour'd in such places, either when you are in Company, or when you are alone? *In Company*, by intemperance in Banquetting, or by vain or wanton Discourses, or by uncharitable and backbiting Stories of others, &c. Or when you are *alone*, by wanton and lustful Thoughts, by speculative Uncleanness, wicked Projects, &c. But thus to retire into a Garden, is to retreat from Men, and fall into the hands of the Devil. Such persons imitate their Mother *Eve*, in the Garden of *Eden*, and hold a Dialogue with the *old Serpent*.

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Others, who are less criminal, are yet to be reproved, that make no holy Improvement of such places, but only for Recreation and Pleasure, to gratifie their Senses. Every wise and good Man loves sometimes to be *alone*, and ought to be so, *for serious Meditation*: Now a Garden is a fit place for such a purpose, and may be of excellent use to such an end. And there is no Object can meet our Eyes, or affect any of our Senses there, without giving us some Notices of God, and directing us to some useful Instructions in reference to our selves, if we did not want a holy heart, and spiritual wisdom to improve them.

Especially in your *Garden-walks* meditate on the *Garden of Eden*, and think of this *Garden of Gethsemane*. Consider how Man sinned in the *one*, and how *Christ* suffered in an Agony in the *other*. *First*, From the Garden of *Eden*, you may take Occasion to contemplate the State of Innocence, the Entrance of Sin, the Fall of our First Parents, the Subtilty of the Tempter, the Danger of gratifying the sensual Appetite, from their Example in eating the Forbidden Fruit; the prevalency of Temptation, when a near and beloved Relation is the Instrument of the Devil, to urge it, &c. *Secondly*, Think of the Garden of *Gethsemane* too, when you are delighting your self in some *pleasant Walk* in your own *Garden*. Think how the Son of God lay prostrate on his Face in an Agony, in this *Garden of Gethsemane*. When you look upon a Fruit-tree, especially a Vine, or taste of a Grape,



Grape, remember the *Blood of Christ*, that trickled from his Sacred Body. If you are sometimes merry, and chearful with your Friends in a *Garden*, forget not how your Saviour was *exceeding sorrowful*; *My Soul is exceeding Sorrowful unto Death*. When you are cooling your selves in the Shade, remember his *Agony*, and *Bloody Sweat*, under the Apprehensions of the Wrath of God, due to your sin. How his Soul *boiled up*, as one of the *Greek Expressions* does signifie, and his Blood broke out at every part of his Body, with the extremity of the Heat. You may consider how *the First Adam* was tempted by an *Evil Angel* in the *Garden of Eden*, and *the Second* was comforted in his Agony by a *Good one*. *Adam's* Sentence in the former, was, to get his Living by the *Sweat of his brows*; *Christ*, by his *Bloody Sweat*, in this, procures our Life. And let not such places be abused to Sin and Vanity, that may so easily be improved, to put us in mind of such *Important Truths*.

2. In that this was a *Solitary Place*, we may observe, That it is fit to retire for *Meditation* and *Prayer* to some *Secret Place*, from the Company, and Observation of others. There are many things, which are proper enough, and may become us in an affectionate Prayer *in secret*, especially for a *Penitent*, which are not allowable in Social Worship, or Publick Prayer with others. As Prostration of our selves on the Ground, Beating the Breast, Extraordinary

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Sobs and Sighs, Plentiful Tears, and Passionate Expostulations with God, &c. which either Modesty, or Prudence may restrain in publick, may be used with greater Liberty in Secret, where is no Temptation to Hypocrisie, or Vain-glory to abuse them. And therefore our Lord directs us, *Matth. 6.* That we enter into our Closets, and shut the door, and then pray to our Father, who is in Heaven, who seeth in secret, and will reward us openly.

3. In that Christ retires here, to prepare himself, with the greater Solemnity, for his Approaching Death; We may learn, That whenever we have a Prospect of our Change at hand, we should not content our selves with *habitual Preparation*, but use a *more solemn, distinct, and Actual Preparation* for it. Our Lord, no doubt, was always in a Readiness, for that which he knew was the great end of his Incarnation: And yet the Night before his Sufferings, he retires into this *Garden* to prepare himself for that hour. We should always to live, as to be fit to die, because every hour we make some steps towards the Grave: Every thought, every word, is a Sand running from the Glass of Time: We sleep every night in the outer Chambers of Death, and should, by Prayer, prepare our selves for it, even for *that Image of Death*: And shall we not, much more, for *Death it self*, when we have a Prospect of its Approach? In whose Arms we must rest Prisoners, till the great Morning of the *Resurrection*?

If

If God give us Notice and Warning by Old Age, or a dangerous Sickneſs, or a *languiſhing* Body, or by any other Method, that we ſhall ſhortly leave this World; Solemn, actual Preparation in ſuch a caſe is fit and neceſſary. If God tell any of you, by a bodily Sickneſs, your Change is near; If the Decays and Infirmities of old Age, (the moſt incurable of all Diſeaſes,) tell you, That you have not long to live, that it is high time to ſet your Hearts, and your Houſes in order; You ought *actually* to prepare, *ſolemnly* to do ſo. You that have one foot in the Grave already, forget not this, leſt the Devil trip up the other before you are *Ready*. But *you* that have ſerved the Lord from *your Youth*, and have the comfortable Review of *your* paſt Sincerity, in walking with God; *you* may rejoice upon any ſuch *Summons*, that *your Race* is almoſt *run*; *Your Warfare* will ſhortly be *accompliſhed*; *you* have but a few ſteps more of *your Pilgrimage* to make; a few Temptations more to reſiſt; a very little time longer of Trial and Conflict, before *you* ſhall receive the *End of your Faith and Hope*, and be *for ever with the Lord*. Should *you* not then; with ſuch a warning, ſtir up the Grace of God, quicken holy Deſires, ſtrengthen Faith, and exerciſe it about the Inviſible World, and ſolemnly reſign *your ſelves* into the Arms of the Redeemer?

4. Becauſe this was *the Place that Judas knew of*, where he might find our Lord, and betray him;

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him; Let us take notice of *Christ's Willingness, and Resolvedness to suffer Death*, and what an Obligation it lays upon us of *Love and Gratitude* to this Merciful Saviour. This I shall a little urge, as *suitable* to the past Solemnity of this day to make us Thankful, who have been Partakers of the Memorials of his dying Love, in the *Sacrament of the Supper*.

He was *free and voluntary* in Suffering. He went to the place which Judas knew of, though he knew Judas would come, and betray him. He freely offered himself in the Council of God, to undertake *our Redemption*; He *voluntarily* quitted his Father's Bosom in the fulness of Time, to assume our Nature, and therein suffer and dye. He was not forced into a State of Poverty and Humiliation; but for *our sake became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich*. The necessity of his Death arose from his own *holy Will*, his free Act and Undertaking; which doth not lessen his *Willingness*, but heighten the Obligation of it. It had been *Injustice* to punish an *Innocent*, who was *unwilling* to suffer in the place of a *Criminal*; But he gave himself a Sacrifice of a sweet smelling Odour unto God for us. He was not driven by force and violence, as the legal Sacrifices unto the Altar; But, *he comes to the Door of the Tabernacle*, he enters into this Garden that Judas knew of. He endeavours not to go out of the way, to escape their Malice, but *chuses* a place that the *Traytor* was acquainted with. He had a Baptism to be Baptized with, and he longed

longed for its Accomplishment. He walked forth of his *own Accord*, over *the Brood Cedron*, with his Disciples, into *this Garden*, where *he knew* he should be taken: And when they came to take him, he permits *Judas to kiss him*, which was the sign he had given them to distinguish the Person. He twice tells the Officers, That *he was He whom they sought for*. He would not suffer an *Apostle* to use a Sword in his Defence, though he *could have commanded Legions of Angels for his Guard*. He proves, that he might have escaped if he would, for he speaks but a mild word, saying, *I am he*, and they *all fall to the Ground*, as if he had come to apprehend them, and not they him. After this, he would not work a *Miracle* to gratifie the Curiosity of *Herod*, and make him his Friend, in order to his Deliverance. Yea, he was *silent* under all the Accusations of the False Witnesses, and afterward *bore his own Cross*, as far as he was able, towards the place of Execution; And then he poured out his Soul unto *Death*, and rendred up his Spirit to his Father, saying, *It is finished, It is finished*.

And that last Circumstance is very considerable to prove his *Willingness*: For we read, that *when they came to break his bones, and found him dead*, which prevented the breaking of his Bones, and accomplished the Prophecy concerning him, which says, *A bone of him shall not be broken*, they wondered he was dead so quickly; So quickly indeed, when immediately before he gave up the Ghost, *he cryed with a loud Voice*; Which sufficiently declared, that no

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man took away his Life, but that he voluntarily laid it down: For having cryed with a *loud Voice*, and thereby given sufficient Proof, that his strength was not gone, that his Spirits were not exhausted, but he might have continued longer alive; he then *bowed his Head*, in token of Reverence to his Father, and gave up *the Ghost*: which was a Circumstance so considerable, that a *Centurion*, who stood by observing it, was thereupon *converted*, and gave God the Glory.

But it may be objected, though his coming into *this Garden* might be a Proof of his Willingness, yet what passed *there*, seems to intimate the contrary; why else does he pray so earnestly, *that the Cup might pass from him*, if he was willing to drink it?

I answer, That even in the Time of his Agony, when he seemed most Unwilling, *as Man*, even when he prayed, that the Cup might pass from him, yet was he still willing, *as Mediator*. The Text says, he *began to be exceeding sorrowful, and sore amazed, saying, My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*. The Original words are very emphatical, to express Sadness, and Fear, and such Affections of the *Soul*; *His Soul*, not *his Body*; nor his *Soul* with Sympathy only with his *Body*: For he was here *alone* in the Garden, crucified, as it were, without a Cross. *His Body* here suffered by reason of *his Soul*. The whole Nature of Man had sinned, and the *Soul* being the Principal in the commission of Sin, the Redeemer, who

who was to expiate Sin, suffered in *his Soul*; *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even to death*; In-  
 somuch that Clods of Blood dropt from him, though there was no visible Hand to strike him: Which makes him pray and cry in such a manner, to his Father for the passing away of the Cup, *Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me? Father, save me from this hour!* Oh what Pain, what Fear, what Horror, what dismal Apprehensions, and cruel Sufferings, must force such words of Complaint from such an Heart as his! But, no wonder his Cries were so strong, his Prayers so earnest, his Complaints so loud, and the Comfort of an Angel not sufficient for his support: when the greatness of his *Agony*, and the extream *Sufferings of his Soul* are above *our thoughts* to conceive, who understand so little of the Evil of Sin, and the vengeance due to it, so little of the *Terror of the Lord*, and the Power of his Wrath as a Righteous Avenger.

However there is a *great Difference* between what Christ suffered, and what *the Damned in Hell* suffer. For they hate God, and Holiness, and are hated of him, and forsaken by his Holy Spirit, and are under the power of Sin, and are tormented by the Conscience of their Personal Guilt. But what Christ suffer'd was for us, and He was still in the Love of God, and continued to love him, &c.

Let us consider him incompassed with Grief, and seized by Sorrow, appaled with Fear, lying

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lying prostrate on his Face on the ground, deprecating that Cup of Vengeance, which the Justice of God had mingled, saying, *Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me!*

He Prays again, a second time, in the same place, to the same purpose, *Abba Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass.* He adores his Majesty, he owns his Omnipotence, he takes hold of his Power, he pleads his filial Relation, with all imaginable earnestness, submission, and importunity; *Father, if it be possible, and with thee all things are possible: Abba Father, Holy Father, let this Cup pass from me; And then he groans, and sweats, and his Sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground.*

He prays again, *the third time*, using, in effect, the same words; as if nothing else would, yet *his Importunity* might, prevail for the removal of the Cup. And yet notwithstanding all this, he was then *Willing*; All the strugglings of his Innocent Nature issued in this, That the Will of God should be done, and his Glory be accomplished. *Holy Father, glorifie thy self; Not my will but thine be done. It was for this End I came into the World, for this End I came unto this hour.* The desire of his Humane Soul submits, and yields to the determination, and Will of his Father. And therefore those words, *if it be possible*, must be explained by those other, *if thou wilt*, if it be most for thy Glory; of a possibility in respect of the *Divine Will*, and *Glory*, rather than of the *Divine Power*. And having *two Natures*, he must needs have



have *two Wills*, he could not else be the true *Son of God*, and *true Man*. He desires to decline his Sufferings *as a Man*, for so they were against Nature; But as they were the means, to reconcile us to God, he is willing, *as Redeemer*, to undergo them. We may abhor a Medicine as bitter, and yet resolve to take it as wholesome. So that after all the reluctance of his Humane Nature, he was still *willing*; and his entring into *this Garden*, when he knew that *Judas* was acquainted with the place, and would find him there, and betray him, is a proof of it.

6. 'Twas Our Saviour's *Custom* to retire to this Garden, *He was wont to resort thither with his Disciples*. This Garden of *Gethesemane* was on the side of *the Mount of Olives*, and that we are told was at the distance of a *Sabbath-days Journey* from *Jerusalem*, Act. i. 12. If we reckon from the foot of the Mountain, or the nearest part of it unto the City, it is thought to be about five or six furlongs, or two thousand cubits, or half yards, computing by that cubit, after which the *Tabernacle* and all things about it were measured. And it is most probable, that the People in the *Wilderness* were to keep from the *Tabernacle*, at the distance of *two thousand Cubits*; And, on that account, this distance is supposed the measure of a *Sabbath-days Journey*, when they went to the Ark to worship. It is an ordinary Tradition among the *Jews*, That it was not lawful on their Sabbaths to walk above two thousand cubits, which seems to be founded

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on that Text, *Josh. 3. 4.* where the People are commanded in their March after the Ark, and on either side of it, to *keep at the distance of two thousand cubits*; and when they encamped, did usually pitch their Tents at that distance from the *Ark*: and so the Custom arose of travelling but 2000 cubits on their Sabbath-days, which is reckon'd *not above half a Mile*. It may be, for this reason, the *Holy Ghost* measures the distance between *Jerusalem*, and the *Mount of Olives*, by a *Sabbath-days Journey*, and not by so many Furlongs; Because, in fair Weather, many devout *Jews* were wont to retire thither for Meditation, after the Publick Worship was over. From hence let me make two Reflections for our own practice, and so conclude.

I. Since our Lord was wont to retire from *Jerusalem*, to the *Mount of Olives* for *Meditation* and *Prayer*; Let me hence take occasion to press these Duties. It is certainly one of the best Evidences of an Upright Christian, to be serious in this secret work. It is of mighty advantage to our growth in Grace, to the Evidence, and Comfort of it: And he deserves not the Name of a Serious Christian, who can pass whole days and weeks contentedly, without Meditation and secret Prayer. Our stedfastness in the ways of God, and our daily walk in holy Security and Peace, is manifestly assisted by it. Such a course cannot consist with regarding, and indulging deliberately any known sin. This will be a good Argument

Argument of our Integrity before God, this constant Intercourse and Communion between God and us; These frequent visits to Heaven will be so, conversing with God, and pouring out our Hearts before him in Secret, retiring, as it were, to the other World, so as no temptation of Applause, or Reputation from Men, can be thought to byass or mislead us; when no eye sees us, but the great searcher of Hearts; when no ear hears us, but that of our Invisible Judge; when no Hand can reward us, but the Omnipresent Lord, our Father and our Redeemer in Heaven, who *sees in secret, and will reward us openly.* You have been often told, *That the Conscientious performance of Secret Prayer, will make you leave sinning, or a Course of sin will make you desist daily serious praying.*

2. I infer from this Example of our Lord, *That after the Participation of solemn Ordinances, especially on the Lord's-day, it is very fit and useful for Christians, to retire by themselves, to spend some time alone, in Meditation and Prayer; To call your selves to an Account, to reflect on your Ways, and Frame, to make a trial of your State, and Temper; to observe your Spirits, how they have been influenced, or not, by the Divine Spirit, in the Solemn Duties of Worship; to humble your selves before God, for the sins you are convinced of, such especially as other Men cannot charge you with, but God and Conscience know you are guilty of: To thank God for his numberless Mercies, to beg*

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the suitable supplies of his Grace, and whatever Blessings you stand in need of, for you and yours. This is the right Improvement of *Sabbaths*, and *Sacraments*, and such seasons of Mercy, as God is pleased to continue to us, in order to Eternal Life: And without something of this kind, tho' you frequent the Publick Assemblies, *and sit before him as his People*, you do but mock God, and trifle with Heaven, while you pretend to Religion, and assume the Name of *Christians*: You act a Scene, and a Part, and *have only a Form of Godliness*, but must expect to pay dear for your Solemn Hypocrisie.

Let me therefore Advise you to *three things*, in your Retirement, after the Publick Worship, and Solemn Ordinances of Christ, as *the End*, and *Reason*, for which I will press it.

1. That you retire in order to *the Confession of Sin*, and the Exercise of *Repentance*. That when you have finished the publick work of a Sabbath, or come from any special Ordinance of the Gospel, by after-Meditation, you would reflect upon your selves, and take notice of your Defects; and Failings, Discomposures, and Distempers of Mind; What unsuitableness of Spirit there has been to heavenly Mysteries, or what unprepared Addresses we have made to the Majesty of Heaven and Earth, the roving of our Fancies, the vanity of our Thoughts, &c.

We should humble our selves on such Occasions, That we attended with no more Reverence and Diligence to the Word of God ; That we did not receive the *Truth* in the Love of it ; That it was not mixed with Faith ; That we did not make particular, and close Application of it to our selves ; That our Hearts were not lift up in the ways of the Lord, and our Souls under an awe of God in Prayer, with becoming Affections, and suitable Exercise of Grace, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, and in the Name of the Mediator. That we approached the *Table of the Lord*, with no more Examination of our Hearts and Ways, before we came, with no more Repentance for our past Guilt, no more hungering after the Bread of Life, no more Spiritual Thirst for the Fountain of Living Waters. That we beheld the *Memorials of a broken, bleeding Saviour*, with no more raised Affection ; That we remembered the Agonies of his Soul, with no more correspondent Impressions upon our own. In a word, we may lament (for the most part I fear we may) after such Ordinances, that our Spirits were but in a common frame, our Repentance so partial, our Love so cold, our Faith so weak, our Hope so low, Desires so faint, Charity so narrow, Thankfulness and Joy so little, in the Participation of such Glorious Mysteries, in conversing with such adorable Objects, under the Offers of such rich Grace, under the loud Calls to such manifest Duty, under the Assurances and Expectations

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of such great and blessed things, as the Word and Sacraments propose, and seal.

2. Another Reason, and Ground of this Retirement, is in order to *Petition* and *Intercession*, for needful Mercy, to our selves and others. Have we been convinced of any Duty we had formerly neglected? Shall not the Reflection on it excite us to beg Wisdom and Strength to perform that Duty? Has any sin been called to remembrance, by the preaching of the Word? Should we not beg Forgiveness, and Grace to leave and forsake it, as the best Testimony of our Repentance? Have we joyned in Prayer and Supplication with others, for the greatest Blessings, and are sensible we are undone if God deny us; and shall we not beg the same things again in secret? Have we renewed our Vows, and entred into fresh Obligations to be the Lords; and shall we not beg that God would heal our past back slidings, and confirm our holy Resolutions? *That having sworn, we may perform it, that we will keep his righteous Judgments?*

You therefore, who have this Day been at the Table of the Lord, let me beseech You, in a special manner, to retire when you come home, and think of these things, that *you may wrestle with God in secret for a future Blessing*. O, what can he deny you, when he hath given you his Son, and sealed that Gift in so solemn a man-

manner? Go therefore, and represent to him all your Necessities and Wants, all your Grievs, and Groans, and Complaints, and Fears, and secret Desires. Pray earnestly for your selves, your Families and Relatives, for your Ministers and Fellow Christians, for all that have communicated this day with you, and in other Assemblies; and for all that desired to do so, that were providentially hindered; for all your Brethren, for all the Churches of Christ throughout the World, especially for those in this Nation; for those in others, which are oppressed by the Tyranny of the Sons of Violence, for all actual Believers, for all those for whom Christ dyed, for your Friends and Enemies, for the whole World.

3. Retire in secret to express *your Gratitude and Thanksgivings to God*, for Mercies received, and hoped for. Thank him for the Liberty of his Sanctuary, for Publick Assemblies of Social Worship, for Sabbaths, and Sacraments, and the Ministry of the Gospel, considering how the Case now is with our Brethren, and Neighbours in other places. Thank him for another *Opportunity*, for the *Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ*, and for so much *health* as to be able to partake of *such a Privilege*, in a *publick Solemnity*. But above all, as the Foundation of all the rest, for that Inestimable Blessing of Divine Love, the *Gift of his Son*, for the Inexpressible Love of Christ, in

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*giving himself for us Sinners, and Enemies, and while we were so.*

Thank him for the Means of Grace, and the Hopes of Glory, for any good Hope through Grace, of present Pardon, and Everlasting Communion with God in Heaven; for the Offer of Forgiveness by a Covenant of Grace; for the Promise of Eternal Life by Christ, purchased by his Blood, confirmed by the Word and Oath of God, who cannot lye, witnessed to so many ways by the Holy Spirit, made sure by the Everlasting Covenant, and that sealed by *Baptism*, and by the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*.

Yea, let us thank him for *another such solemn Occasion*, of paying Homage to a *Crucified Christ*, and of holy Fellowship with the Father, and the Son, by the Spirit, which this day has been afforded us. Praise him for any Assistance of his Grace, in the actual Celebration, and for any help in our preparatory Work; for reviving any of our Convictions, awakening our Repentance, strengthening our Faith, animating our Hope, quickening our Zeal, exercising and encreasing our Love to Christ, clearing our Adoption, dispelling our Doubts, scattering our Fears, warming and filling our Desires. Let *our Souls*, and all within us bless him, for any Beams of his Heavenly Light, for any Glympse of his reconciled Countenance, for any Token of his Love to us, any Expression and Exercise of our own to him.

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Let us thank him for what he hath given and sealed to us, and promised to give us; for what we have already received, as the first Fruits, and the Earnest, and the Pledge of a great deal more.

We may Express our Gratitude and Joy, to some such Purpose, as this, (a) which follows;

*O my gracious God, thou hast surpass'd all humane Comprehension in thy Love! Is this thy usage of unworthy Prodigals! I feared lest thy Wrath, as a consuming Fire, would have devour'd such a Guilty Soul; but while I condemn'd my self, thou hast forgiven, and justified me; and surpriz'd me with the sweet Embraces of thy Love. I see now thy thoughts are above our thoughts, and thy ways above our ways, and thy Love above the Love of Man, even more than the Heavens are above the Earth: With how dear a Price hast thou redeem'd a Wretch that deserves thy Everlasting Vengeance! With how precious and sweet a Feast, hast thou entertain'd me, who deserved to be cast out with the workers of Iniquity! Shall I evermore slight such Love as this? shall it not overcome my Rebellion, and melt my cold and hardn'd Heart? Angels are admiring these Miracles of Love, and shall not I admire them? Their Love to us doth cause 'em to Rejoyce, while they stand by, and see our Heavenly*

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Feast;

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(a) almost in the words of Mr. Baxter.

Feast; and should it not be sweeter to us that are the Guest who feed upon it? O my God, how dearly hast thou Purchas'd my Love! how strangely hast thou deserv'd and sought it? nothing is so much my grief and shame as that I can answer it with no more fervent and fruitful Love. Oh what an addition would it be to all this precious Mercy, if this Love poured out might draw forth mine, and my soul might flame by approaching unto these thy Flames? and that Love drawn out by the sense of Love, might be all my Life? O that I could love thee, as much as I would love thee! yea as much as thou wouldst have me love thee! but this is too great an Happiness for Earth: Thou hast shew'd me the place where I may attain it. My Love is there in full Possession, who hath left me these pledges, till he come and fetch us to himself, and feast us there in our Masters joy. O Blessed Place! O Blessed Company, that see his Glory, and are filled with the streams of those Rivers of Consolation! yea happy we, whom thou hast called from our dark and miserable state, and made us Heirs of that Felicity, and Passengers to it, and Expectants of it, under the Conduct of so sure a Guide? O then we shall love thee, without these sinful pauses and defects, in another measure and another manner than now we do. Till then, my God, I am devoted to thee; by Right and Covenant I am thine! My Soul bears witness against my self, that my defects of love have no Excuse: Thou deservest all, if I had all the love in Heaven and Earth to give thee. What bath this vain World

*to do with my Affections? what is there in all the sufferings, that Man can lay upon me, that I should not joyfully accept them, for his sake that hath redeem'd me from Hell, by such matchless voluntary sufferings? Lord seeing thou so regardest so vile a Worm, my Heart, my Tongue, my Hand confess that I am wholly Thine. O let me live to none but thee, thy service, and thy Saints on Earth! O let me no more return unto Iniquity: nor venture on that Sin, which kill'd my Lord? And now thou hast chosen so low a dwelling, O be not a stranger to the Heart thou hast so freely chosen! O make it the daily Residence of thy Spirit! Quicken it by thy Grace, adorn it with thy Gifts, employ it in thy love, refresh it with thy joys, and the light of thy Countenance? and destroy this Carnality, Seifishness, and Unbelief! and let the World see, that God will make a Palace of the lowest Heart, when he chuseth it for the place of his own Abode.*

To conclude, Did we thus retire at the close of every Lords day, after the Participation of solemn Ordinances, to renew our Repentance, to beg needful Mercies, to offer the Sacrifices of Praise and Thankgivings, for the Blessings we have and hope for; the Advantages of such a Course would be so many, and so considerable; and the Consequences would be so comfortable to our own Souls, and so beneficial unto others; it would be so influential to exercise, and increase our Grace, to promote our Assurance, to secure our E-  
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stablishment and Perseverance, to render us useful in the World, for the Honour of Christ and his Gospel, and the Credit of our Holy Profession; That it surpasses the possibility of an exact Description, and reserves its full Discovery, to be the reward of Experience.

*Blessed be God for Jesus Christ.*

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*The Third Discourse,*  
 CONCERNING  
 SPIRITUAL WASHING,  
 The Nature, Means, and Evi-  
 dences of it  
 Before the *Lord's Supper.*

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I C O R. VI. II.

*And such were some of you, but you are Washed, but ye are Sanctified, but ye are Justified, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

**O**UR Lord's Condescension to wash the Feet of his Disciples, and the Discourse between Him and the Apostle *Peter* upon that Occasion, contains many things very observable, and instructive unto all Christians. *S. Peter* is astonish'd at his Master's Proposal to wash his feet: he

he wonders he should ever design, or attempt so low a Service, He cries out as a Man amazed. 13 *John 6. Lord dost thou wash my Feet?* Words that favor of humble Respect and Reverence unto Christ: And had he proceeded no farther, it had been very commendable; for these Expressions seem to proceed, from a true sense of his own unworthiness, considering both himself, and our Blessed Lord, and the meanness and inferiority of the Action, which he offered to do toward him. Unto which our Lord replies; *What I do, thou know'st not now, but thou shalt know hereafter; i. e.* when the Spirit shall be more abundantly pour'd out, as it was upon his Ascension to Heaven. But *Peter* is not satisfied with this, but peremptorily refuses to submit to an Order, which he did not yet understand the Reason of: And therefore replies again, *Thou shalt not wash my Feet.* or far be it from me, that thou shouldst wash my feet.

This gave occasion for that severe Rebuke, and Threatning, which went to his very heart, in those words of Christ, *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me, no Int'rest in me, no Communion with me.* It cannot well be thought that the external Washing, should be the *only* thing here meant, for *Judas* was partaker of that as well as the rest: And yet our Lord says, at the tenth Verse, *Ye are clean, but not all.* Upon this, we find the Apostle *Peter* submits to his Saviour, and instead of denying that he should wash his feet, he passionately cries out,  
*Not*

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*Not my feet only, but my hands and head too; i. e. Lord wash me all over, Hands, Head, and Feet, the three most visible parts of the body for the whole: Our Lord tells him, that was not necessary; for he that washeth, need not but to wash his feet, ver. 10. as one that comes out of a Bath, may have contracted some Filth in walking out of it, and therefore needs only to have his feet washed; alluding to the Custom \* of the Jews, as to those who did officiate in the Temple, who after having been purified, and washed in the morning, as often as they came out, and returned again, did only wash their Feet. Doubtless therefore the Necessity of inward Purification and Holiness must be comprehended, as the import of this washing: The being sanctified in Soul, Body, and Spirit, as necessary unto all that are accepted of God, and in a Covenant Relation with Christ: Necessary to a Saving Int'rest in Him, and Communion with Him. And such a Change as this some of the vilest, and worst of Sinners have experienced, upon true Repentance, and an unfeigned Faith. This the words I have read give us an account of. And such were some of you, &c.*

In the beginning of this Chapter, the Apostle reproves a very unwarrantable Practice among these *Corinthians*, to implead one another in matters of Right and Wrong, before the Heathen Tribunals: Which seems to blemish

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\* D. Lightfoot.

mish the Christian Profession, and contradict the prescribed Rule of our Lord. *Matth. 18. 15.* They were also injurious, and unjust in their carriage to their Brethren: From which he endeavours to deter them; 1 By that dreadful Threat'ning, *ver. 9. Know you not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven?* And for the farther confirmation of it, enumerates several kinds of such Persons; and bids them look well to it, and not deceive themselves (tho' one would hardly think that Men should be deceived in so plain a case) as if their Profession of Christianity would save them, while they lived in any such Wickedness. *Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, &c. shall inherit the Kingdom of God.*

He then adds another Argument in this Text, to dissuade them from such an unchristian Behaviour, *viz.* from the mighty Change that had been wrought upon several of them, by their Conversion to the Faith of Christ. *And such were some of you, but ye are washed, &c.*

The *Change* is represented by three several Expressions: And the *Means* by which it was brought about is double, *viz. In the Name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

1. The mighty *Change* which was wrought upon them by their Conversion to the Faith of Christ, in those words, *But ye are Washed, but ye are Sanctified, but ye are Justified.* Some would consider these three Expressions, as a regular



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regular Gradation, and make this *Washing* to signify the first Change by Regeneration, or the new Birth: And being *Sanctified*, to denote the further progress, measure, and degree of the Spirit of Holiness: And being *Justified* follows, as that, which by a real change of Heart and Life is evidenced, and cleared, to the comfort of Believers. Others think we may consider this being *Washed*, as the general Term comprehending the other two, *Sanctification*, and *Justification*. For we find that Expression used in both senses: For our deliverance from the guilt of Sin, by pardoning Mercy; and from the impurity and stain, the power, and filth of Sin, by renewing Grace. *David* begs to be *Washed* and made *Clean*, in both respects, 51 *Psalms*, 2, 7, 10. And our Lord is said to have loved us, and *washed us from our Sins*, in his own Blood! *Rev.* 1. 5. Which comprehends both the Forgiveness of Sin, and the sanctifying Influence of the Spirit of Christ. Others think all the three Terms *Washed*, *Sanctified*, and *Justified*, are here Synonymous: as significant of *the great Change*, that is wrought by the renewing and converting Grace of God; and that *Justified* in this place is not to be taken in a \* Forensic or Law-sense; but hath the same import with the other two Expressions, *Washed*, and *Sanctified*;

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\* *Le Blanc, Theses Theol. de usu & acceptatione vocis Justificandi, &c.* p. 256. §. 6. 8, 9. Answered by Dr. Q. of Justification, p. 179.

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so the Expression, 12 *Dan.* which we render *turn many to Righteousness*, in the Original is, *Justifie many.*

So Sanctification, they think may be comprehended under the Term *Justified*, Rom. 8. 30. Or else one of the greatest Advantages we enjoy by Christ is not there enumerated. So here where our *Justification* is ascribed to *the holy Spirit*, whose Office and Work it is inwardly to renew and change us: and whereby those *Corinthians*, who were vile and impure before, are now qualified for the Kingdom of God, *Tit.* 3. 5, 6, 1. However I exclude not our being *washed* from the *Guilt* of *sin*, as part of the *Sense* of this *Text*; but it is the other *Washing* by *Sanctification*, of which I would speak at this time.

2. You have the double means, whereby this is brought about. *In the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, &c.* 1. *In the Name of the Lord Jesus*, or *by, and through the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, as the *Greek Particle* doth often signify. For it is the same in the *Original*, in both Clauses. The first may as well be rendered, *By the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ*: as the other, *By the Spirit of our God*. The same Preposition being used in both. Referring the whole to *Sanctification*. In my present Discourse I shall not need to assign Reasons, why the word *Justified* is put last, or search for the like Instances of an *Ἐπίνατος*, or *ἐπίπνοια*, tho' such may be given, to vindicate the

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the order of the Expressions; and why *the Name of Christ*, which especially refers to *Justification*, should be mentioned before the *Spirit of our God*, which especially refers to *Sanctification*, which yet is named before our being *Justified*.

*In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, or by his *Name*, may import, in the general, for the sake of *Christ*, upon the account of his *Merit*, and *Mediation*: And so we pray in the *Name of Christ*, and beg *Mercy* for his sake. But more distinctly, the *Name of Christ* may be considered,

1. In relation to his Office of Mediator, and the Sovereign Authority of it: He is *the Jesus, the Saviour*. This is *the Name that is given him above every Name*, and so *in, by, or through the Name of Christ*, does signify, *through Faith in him*, as the only Mediator between God and Man. In several like Expressions we must grant that *Faith* must be supposed, when it is not expressed: As when we are said to be *Baptized in the Name of Christ, for the Remission of Sin*, Acts 2. 38. i. e. believing on his Name.

2. It may be considered, in relation to the Truth of his Doctrine, and the Divine Authority of that Revelation, which he made from God to the World, upon which his Name is engraven. As when we read of suffering for *the Name of Christ*, i. e. for owning the Profession of the *Christian Religion*. To this purpose

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our *Sanctification* is said to be, by *the Belief of the Truth*, *John 15. 3. 17. Chap. 17. 1 Pet. 1. 22. 2 Thes. 2. 13. Ye are clean through the word that I have spoken to you*, says our blessed Lord. And in his *Mediatory Prayer* to the Father, *Sanctifie them by thy truth, thy word is truth*. Accordingly we find *Sanctification* is ascribed unto *Faith in Christ*, as the true *Messiah*, or a sound *Belief of the Revelation* he hath made, *Acts 15. 9. Purifying the heart by Faith*. So that we are washed, and sanctified, through the *Name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, or *by Christ known, and believed on*, as *one Means* of it, and by the *Efficiency of the Spirit of God*, as *the other*; which I shall afterwards speak of. *In the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*.

In *discoursing* of these Words, I shall therefore, *First*, Give some brief account of the *Nature of this Change*, here exprest by being *Washed, Sanctified, and Justified*. *Secondly*, Of the two great *Means*, whereby it is brought about, *the Name of the Lord Jesus, and the Spirit of our God*. *Thirdly*, Make some *Improvement*, by *Application*. Especially, to assist you, in examining your selves, in order to *the Lord's Table*; that we may know, whether we are in the number of such, upon whom this *Change* is passed. Whether we are *Washed, Sanctified, and Justified*, in the *Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God*.

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1. Concerning the nature of *this Change*. It is evident, that the defiling nature of Sin is here supposed: there could not otherwise be any need of *Washing*. And we find it represented in Scripture by *Spots*, and *Blemishes*, by *Mire* and *Vomit*, by the *Blood and Pollution* of a *New-born Child*, by the most *filthy Dung* and *Excrements*, and whatsoever is reckoned the *most vile* and *Abominable*. Therefore whatsoever *Excellencies* and *Ornaments*, whatsoever *Privileges* and *Advantages*, an *Unsanctified Person* may partake of, to recommend him to the eyes of the World, he is yet a *Vile Person*, loathed, and abominable in the sight of God.

2. Consider, that by Nature we are All as an Unclean thing. *That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh*; and, *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* John 3. 6. Rom. 3. 10. Job 14. 4. All the *Purifications* and *Washings* under the Law, did suppose our inward *Defilement*, and represent our need of *Cleansing*.

Whatever was injoin'd by the *Mosaick Institution* of this kind (which we find was very strictly charged, and earnestly prest, and indispensably required, and the neglect of it most severely punished :) yet did but signify and represent this. Which proves our *Sanctification* necessary, Tit. 3. 5. *He saved us by the washing of Regeneration, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost*. All Men are defiled, and unclean by Nature, and need to be *Washed*.

3. We are all over Unclean, from the Crown of the Head, to the Sole of the Foot. Universally diseased and polluted, and so need to be sanctified in Soul, Body, and Spirit, *Ephes. 5. 26. 1 Thes. 5. 23. Isa. 1. 6.* we read of the *filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit*, from which we are to be cleansed, *2 Cor. 7. 1.* All the Powers of the Soul, and all the Members of the Body are tainted: Heart and Hand must be cleansed; the inward and outward Man sanctified. *Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purifie you hearts ye double-minded. Jam. 4. 8.*

4. The Change therefore by Sanctification, must be universal, *in heart and life.* By the Knowledge of God, and Affection to him (of whom we were ignorant, and to whom before we were disaffected) by the Image of God recovered; by participation of the Divine Nature, and Life; by the Law of God written on the Heart, and expressed in the Conversation. Holiness and Love to God, must be the Frame and Temper of our Souls; so that the Actings of it become easie, pleasant, and delightful. *The Old Man must be put off, the New put on; Old things be done away, and all things become New.* New Principles, New Ends, New Motives, New Rules, New Comforts, which will make an unspeakable Difference between this Change, and that of Negative Religion, and common Honesty, which many may pretend to, who are Strangers to Regeneration. There  
were

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were many *Philosophers* and *Sophists* among these *Corinthians*, who boasted of Purity and Reformation, which came unexpressibly short of this *Sanctification*, which I am now speaking of, as owing to some other Cause than the Spirit of Christ, unto whom the production, continuance, and progress of this *Sanctification*, is alone to be ascribed.

5. It may farther be considered in its Beginning, or Progress, or Consummation. As begun by the Spirit of Life and Power from Christ; as maintained and carried on, by a continual Influence from the same Spirit, and the diligent use of God's appointed means. Whereby the Lineaments of the Divine Nature are render'd more clear, holy Impressions more powerful, and efficacious; Whereby we go from strength to strength, and are enabled to *perfect Holiness in the Fear of God; pressing on towards Perfection, to the fulness of the stature of the Man Christ Jesus*, till it be consummate in Heaven: when, by seeing Christ *as he is*, we shall be made like him, and be presented to the Father, *without spot or wrinkle*, or any such thing.

6. For the sake of those who intend to come to *the Lord's Table*, let me add, That such Washing and Sanctification is requisite to our Communion with Christ, in the special Ordinances of the Gospel, particularly that of *the Lord's Supper*. This is intimated by our Lord

in the 13th of *John*, v. 7, 8. in his words to *Peter*, *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.* It must have a Spiritual meaning, because notwithstanding the external Washing, *Christ* says, *All of them were not clean.* And soon after this, he instituted his Supper, to the due participation whereof, it is necessary we be Washed and Sanctified. For we cannot otherwise have a Right to the Benefits purchased by his Blood, which are Sealed to us in that Ordinance; and we can have no Communion with him there, till Partakers of the Spirit of *Christ*. Unless we are sanctified by that Spirit, we have no Interest in him, no Right to his Supper, and so we can have no Communion with him: if we are not cleansed from our Filthiness, if we have spots upon us that are not the spots of *God's* Children, unto whom this Feast doth particularly belong. And therefore I may say, as *Peter* to *Simon Magus*, *Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right with God;* neither can it be, if this change do not precede. The Enquiry therefore is highly seasonable, whether we are thus Washed, and Sanctified, or not. But before I give the Characters of such Persons, it will be expected, I should speak somewhat concerning the double Means of this Change, *In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God.*

II. The double Means of this Change, by the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.  
First,



*First*, We are Purified, and Washed, *By the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, or by Faith in him.*

To this purpose, Consider,

*First*, That all the Arguments laid down in Scripture, to press Sanctification, and Holiness of Heart and Life, have influence and force according to our *Faith*. The Arguments from God, from Christ, from our selves, from the Divine Nature, from the Example and Life of Christ, from his redeeming Grace, and dying Love, from his precious Promises, &c. They all depend upon our *Faith*; and have no Force, or Power, any further than we believe in Christ, and heartily embrace the Gospel-Revelation.

*Secondly*, It is *by the Name of Christ, or by Faith in him*, that we are Sanctified, because in order to our Sanctification, Christ is to be eyed, and improved several ways.

*First*, The Blood of Christ must be eyed in order to our Sanctification. Our Faith must be employed upon a Crucified Saviour. As his Blood is able to cleanse us from all sins. *Who loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own Blood; Who gave himself for us that he might sanctify and cleanse us, by the washing of Water by the Word, Rev. 1. 5. Eph. 5. 25.* For, as the

Apostle argues, from the taking away of Ceremonial Uncleaness by the Legal Purifications; *If the Blood of Bulls and Goats, and the Ashes of an Heifer, sprinkling the unclean, availed to the purifying of the Flesh, how much more shall the Blood of Christ, who by the Eternal Spirit offered up himself to God, purge our Consciences from dead Works, Heb. 9. 13.* Accordingly we find, *The Sanctification of the Spirit, connected with the sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus, or, as the Purchase of his Blood, 1 Pet. 1. 2.*

*Secondly,* Faith makes use of the *Intercession* of Christ, and his Prayer in Heaven, for this Effect. The whole Fruit of the Death of Christ, whereof the Sanctifying Spirit is one principal part, is given out by the Father upon the Intercession of Christ. What he merited on the Cross by his great Sacrifice, he prays in Heaven may be applied to particular Souls, as the Fruit of it: and upon the Account of the everlasting value of his Death, his Intercession founded on it, is always prevalent.

*Thirdly,* His Promise and Covenant, whereby he hath engaged to cleanse us from all *Iniquity*, and to sprinkle clean Water upon us, *Ezek. 36. 25.* He hath promised his Blood shall be a *Fountain open for sin and uncleanness, Zach. 13. 1.* *That Christ shall save us from our sins, and be exalted to give Repentance, and to turn us from our Iniquities, and bring us back to God, &c.*

*Fourthly,*

*Fourthly*, Hereupon our Faith must eye *the Spirit of Christ*, as the great Sanctifier of Souls, and the Author of all our Purity. This great Benefit, which is promised in the Word, purchas'd by Christ upon his Cross, and bestowed, granted, and given out upon his Intercession, is applied by the Efficiency of the Eternal Spirit. He Sanctifies our Hearts and Natures, and continually vouchsafes holy Influences of Light, and Life, and Power, answerable to the Duties, Difficulties, and Necessities of particular Souls, in every Age and Place of the World. This brings me to consider the other means of our *Sanctification*, viz.

*Secondly*, *By the Spirit of our God*: And that he doth two ways; *First*, By removing our Defilement and Pollution; and *Secondly*, As the Author of Actual Grace and Holiness. *First*, By the removing our Defilement and Pollution; and accordingly he is promised sometimes as a *Refiner's Fire*, and *Fuller's Soap*, *Mal. 3. 2.* and sometimes under the Notion of *Water*, *Isa. 4. 4.* Because all things under the Law, were purged from their Typical Uncleaness, either by *Fire*, or *Water*. What would abide the *Fire*, was to be *Purified by Fire*; and what would not, was to be *Cleansed by Water*, *Numb. 3. 23.* And here I might consider a Three-fold Defilement, wherewith we are chargeable. *First*, That of our Nature, by Original Sin. *Secondly*, That which is contracted

tracted by Actual Sin. *Thirdly*, The Pollution and Defilement that cleaves to our best Duties. So far as we are delivered from our Pollution, as to either of these, the Holy Ghost, in the Vertue of the Blood of Christ, is the Author of it.

*Secondly*, We may consider the Holy Spirit, as the Author of Positive Holiness, and Grace in the Soul; and show,

*First*, How he convinceth us of our *need of it*.

*Secondly*, That he enables us to *pray for it*.

*Thirdly*, To believe the *Value and Vertue of the Blood of Christ*, as able to *procure it*.

*Fourthly*, How he makes use of *the Word*, as the ordinary means of *our Sanctification*.

And *Fifthly*, Sometimes enables us to improve *Afflictions*, to promote the *Influence and Efficacy* of the Word, to this purpose.

### AP P L I C A T I O N .

*First*, From the consideration of what these *Corinthians* were *before this Change*, we learn, that some of the Worst and Vilest of Sinners may be call'd, and sanctified, and find Mercy with God. *Such were some of you*, such Idolaters, such Drunkards, such Extortioners, such Adulterers, &c. *Τὰυτα*, *such things, such sins*, were some of *you*, to express the height of their Wickedness. Sins of a Crimson and  
Scarlet

Scarlet Die may be cleansed and forgiven. The most polluted Sinner may be purified by the Blood of Christ. The most loathsome Diseases may be healed by our heavenly Physician. The most unpolished Stones may be framed by the Spirit, for a spiritual Building; a *Manasses*, a *Mary Magdalene*, may be changed and justified; God will hereby magnifie the *Truth*, and *Authority of his Word*, and the Power of his Spirit. He will hereby bear Testimony to the Freeness of his Love, and the Riches of his Grace. He will hereby hearten and encourage the greatest Offenders to hope for pardon, upon Repentance, *Isaiah 55. 7. Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and the Unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and turn to the Lord, and he will abundantly pardon him.* He will hereby encourage Ministers in their Work, though among a dissolute, and perverse People: For we preach *in Hope*, that if the vilest of Men can but so far break the Snare of the Devil, as to hear the Word, we preach to them *in hope of success* We know not whose Hearts God will touch. It may be the most Unlikely Person in the whole Assembly shall feel the Power of the Word.

*Secondly*, What Love and Thankfulness do we owe to Christ? And how should we admire and praise him, for his *Blood and Spirit*, unto which we owe this great *Blessing of Sanctification*? That there is a *Fountain opened for Sin and Uncleanness*, for the *Men of Judah, and the Inhabitants*

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*habitants of Jerufalem*: For all sorts and degrees of Persons, and kinds of Sins. That *His Blood cleanseth from all Sin*: Not only did so formerly, but does so still.

*Thirdly*, Learn where to go for this Benefit, even to *Jesus Christ*. Beg to be *Sanctified through the Merits of his Death*, and the *Influence of his Spirit*; endeavour to be sensible of thy *Filthiness*, and cry out, *Unclean, unclean*: Lord, wash me thoroughly from my Sins, and purge me from all my Pollutions. Apply the Word of God, and especially the Promises of the Gospel, in order to thy being cleansed from all the Filthiness both of *Flesh and Spirit*, 2 Cor. 7. 1.

*Fourthly*, What a *Difference* doth the Grace of God make upon the Hearts and Souls of Men, from what they were, and what others are. You were some of the most Abominable Sinners; but ye are washed: You were carnal, but you are spiritual; you were proud, but now are humble; you were Darknes, but now are Light; You were earthly and sensual, but now are heavenly; You did wallow in all manner of Impurities, but now are Holy: You were sick, but now are healed: You were defiled, but now are cleansed: You were at Enmity with God, and Haters of him, but now you love him, and his Love is shed abroad in your hearts: You did love and delight in Sin, and Sinners, you now disaffect and loath it, and them; and are ashamed to think of those things, wherein you once took pleasure. Such were

## Of Spiritual Washing, &c. 93

*were some of you, but you are washed.* You were careless and vain, and worldly as others, *but are now a selected, chosen, peculiar People, zealous of good Works.* You could before live without Prayer in your Closets, and Families, for many weeks, *but now dare not live a day without it.* You were glad when the Sabbaths were over, and the Season of holy Worship gone, *but now you are as glad when they approach, and think with pleasure before-hand that they do so, &c.* Oh the mighty Difference that the *Grace of God* hath made, between what you were, and what you now are! What manner of thankful rejoicing in God, have such cause for, as are thus *washed*? But this will lead me to the Principal Use, *viz.*

*Fifthly,* To Examine and Enquire, whether we are in the Number of such. Whether any such Change of Heart and Life, any such cleansing from the filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, hath been experienced by us. To assist you a little to understand this, Consider, *First,* What have you ever experienced, and known of any humbling Convictions of your own Pollution, and Defilement by sin? How loathsome to God sin hath made you: How odious and abominable to God's Holy Eye. Have you been made to loath and abhor your selves, as in dust and ashes, before God? trembling before his Holiness, and Majesty, who hateth your sins with a perfect hatred? being covered with shame and confusion of Face, to think of  
your

your own Vileness? That your Hearts are so disaffected to him, the Author of your Being, and the Fountain of your Felicity: That you have so often affronted, and provoked him to Anger, by violating his Authority: That you have lived so long as *without him in the World*: and could be *content* to live such a stranger to the God that made it and you. That your corrupt Inclinations, contrary to his Holy Nature, Image, and Law, so long remain'd uncured: That you have gratified those Inclinations so often, for so many years, &c. Have you thereupon been heartily desirous to be purged, and cleansed, to be sanctified, and renewed, to be delivered from the Power, and Pollution of sin, as well as from the Damning-Guilt of it? If you have known nothing of such kind of Convictions, you have no reason to conclude that you have been washed.

*Secondly*, What is your *practical Judgment* concerning *Holiness*, and the Divine Image, and Life? and what *Prevalency* hath it with you? Do you esteem, and yield conformity to the Image of God? Is Holiness accounted your Honour, your Glory, your Pleasure, as unspeakably preferable to all the Riches, and Pleasures, and Dignities of the World? Is this your fixed Judgment? and does it put you upon the diligent use of God's appointed Means, to recover this Image, and to be made partaker of his Holiness? Does it make you watchful over your Hearts, and sensual Ap-  
petites.



## Of Spiritual Washing, &c. 95

petites, Passions, Words, and Ways, so far as ordinarily to prevail against the Power of Worldliness, and Sensuality? I do not ask, whether it keeps you from *every sin*, but whether it prevail so far, that you regard no Iniquity in your Hearts. Is there no secret way of Wickedness you indulge, and continue in? But you loath your selves in the Presence of God, and mourn in secret for those sins, that none but God and Conscience can charge you with? and carefully watch, and walk, as believing sin to be the greatest Evil? Is this your habitual Frame, and ordinary Course? If it be thus, you are *Washed*, and *Sanctified*.

*Thirdly*, Examine your selves, from what *Motives*, and upon what *Principles*, you abstain from those Sins, you are otherwise inclined and tempted to. Is it from the Fear of God, and Love to him? Is it from the Awe of his Authority, and Gratitude for the innumerable Obligations you are under by his Kindness and Grace? Is it because Sin is hateful and displeasing to God, and Christ, as well as because of its miserable and destructive Consequences and Effects to you? Is it from an inward ruling Principle, that makes the pleasing of God your daily and delightful Work?

*Fourthly*, How do you stand affected to the Impurities, and *Sins of Other Men*? Are you grieved at the Dishonour of God, by the Sins of  
of

of others. Do you pity and pray for your sinful Neighbours, Relations, and Acquaintance? Especially when they fall into the same sins, that you your selves have formerly committed, and repented of? And therefore endeavour what you can to promote the Repentance, and Salvation of others, in your Place and Station?

*Fifthly*, How are you affected to *Heart-sins*? and to the remainders of Impurity in your own souls? If the Fountain be cleansed, and the Heart purified, the inward Motions of sin will be abominable and hateful to you. Do you feel the Burden of the Body of Sin and Death, and complain of it? Do you walk humbly under the sense of your remaining Pollutions? The more you are Washed, and the more Assurance you have of it, the more you will mourn for your remaining Uncleanness. *Ezek. 36. 25, 31. I will sprinkle clean Water upon them, and they shall be clean: I will give them new Hearts, and new Spirits, and they shall remember their evil ways, and doings, and loath themselves for all their Transgressions.*

Are you diligent in the Use of all Means, for further Purification of Hearts? Is it the grief of your souls, that there is so much Filth yet remaining? Do you not go to Sermons and Sacraments, with this Desire and Design, and Hope, That you may be more sanctified in Soul, Body, and Spirit? Do you not beg that all Providences may be blessed, and improved

to that purpose? Can you not thank God for such Afflictions, as you hope have been serviceable to this end, &c.

*Sixthly,* How are you affected towards *the Temptations*, that would insnare you, and defile you again? He that is truly cleansed, will take care to keep himself clean. If Conscience be not tender to make you watchful, and circumspect to avoid being defiled, it is a sign you were never truly washed. If you can make as bold with Temptation as ever, and are not afraid of entering into it, and being overcome.

*Seventhly,* How are you affected towards *Christ*, by whose Blood and Spirit we are sanctified and cleansed? *He loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood:* And if he have applied it to you in particular, you cannot but *adore, and love him*, and delight in Communion with him: Love him, and love his Image where-ever you see it: Love him, and have the same Friends and Enemies with him: Love him, and prize your part in Christ above all things in this World. And if you love him, you will watch and observe his Carriage and Behaviour; whether he smile or frown; whether he be angry or pleased; more than what all the World can say, or do, for you, or against you: If you are washed by Christ, it must needs be so.

And the sense of his redeeming Love, and pardoning Mercy, and sanctifying Grace, will so raise your Love to him, as to increase your hatred and detestation of sin. *You will remember, and be confounded, and melted, and ashamed, and humbled for sin,* by the sense of his being pacified toward you, and having washed you in his Blood; For so is the Promise, 16 Ezek. 63. *That thou may'st remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.* The Experience of Christians confirms it.

*Eighthly,* How do you stand affected as to your *Company*? Washed Persons will delight in clean Company. They that are the Sheep of Christ, washed in the Blood of Jesus, cannot take delight in the Company of Swine. Nothing but Necessity, or the design and hope of doing them good, will bring you into such Company. You will not chuse it, and take pleasure in it, as formerly; or make such your Familiars.

*Ninthly,* I might add, that such will long for the *Perfection of Holiness*; when they shall be perfectly cleansed and purged from Sin. It will be their daily work to purifie themselves as Christ is pure, by the hope of seeing him as he is, 1 John 3. 3. the Thoughts of *Heaven*, as a state of *Perfect Purity*, in conformity to the Image of Christ, will be very delightful: and

*Death*

## Of Spiritual Washing, &c. 99

Death it self, as the way to it, will lose its Terrors, and become desirable.

*Sixthly*, The next use I would make, shall be, for the *Encouragement of repenting Sinners, and returning Backsliders*. How vile soever they have been, through Repentance toward God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus, they may yet be washed, sanctified, and Justified. If you are under a serious Conviction of your Guilt, and Filthiness; and ready to cry out, *O God, I am ashamed, and blush to look up, because of my Iniquities*; or with the Prophet, *We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us, for we have sinned against the Lord*, Jer. 3. 5. Yet turn to the Lord, and he can heal, and cleanse, and pardon, and sanctifie. Tho' your Sins be as Crimson, or Scarlet, they shall be as Snow and Wool. The Blood of Jesus can cleanse from all Sin. That Fountain is yet open. Forgiveness and Sanctification may yet be had. He is willing to receive and accept you, if you are but heartily willing to forsake your sins, and turn to him. *Who is like unto our God, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgressions of his Heritage*, Mich. 7. 18.

Object. I. *But some of you, may be ready to reply, I have broken my Vows, and greatly backsliden from God, after I had returned to him: I have defiled my Garments, after having been washed: I have turned with the Dog to his Vomit, and with the Sow, that is washed, to her wallowing in the Mire:*

100 **The Third Discourse,**

*Surely God will never be reconciled to me, or gracious to me more. I have known somewhat of the Truth of Christ, and tasted of the good Word of God, and had some experience of Holy Walking, and the pleasure of it, and gave up my self again and again to the Lord, at his own Table; and yet I have revolted from him since. My Conscience flies in my Face; I durst not go to God, as formerly: He may Justly upbraid me, and say, what Iniquity did you find in me, that you have left me? Was I a barren Wilderness, or a Land of Drought, That you thus forsook me? Was I an unlovely God, that you could not like me? Was my Arm shortned, that I could not help you? Or have I ever failed my word, that you might not trust me? &c. How then shall I look him in the Face, after such Apostacy? How shall I ever hope to be washed again, that have so defiled my self, after having been washed?*

*Ansiv.* But have you not an exprefs Call, and Promise from God to encourage you to Return? Jer. 3. 22. (A Promise worth Millions of Gold and Silver.) *Turn unto me, ye back-sliding Children, and I will heal your back-slidings. Do but turn, and I will help you. He calls you Children, and you must call him Father, as you can, and not turn your backs upon him, v. 19. I said, saith God, Thou shalt call me, my Father, and shalt not turn away from me, even though I said, for thy back-slidings, How shall I put thee among the Children?*

Object.

Object. II. *But you will say, I have wounded my Faith, as well as my Conscience: I read a Promise, but it yields me no Comfort. I hear of the Fatherly Mercies of God, but I cannot apply them; for I have forsaken God, and he may justly forsake me. My Heart misgives me, I cannot go to him as to a Father. I question whether ever I was a Child or no: I fear my spots are not the spots of his Children.*

*Ansiv.* But consider this: If thou be a *Returning Back-slider*, God can see the truth of thy Grace, when thou canst not discern the truth of his Love. Thy Father seeth and knoweth thy Heart; and if thou truly Repent, and Return, he will accept thee. He can behold a Child through a *Back-slider*: When thou canst not look up to him, as to a Father, there is yet ground enough for thee to Return, that he may *heal thy Back-slidings*.

Object. III. *But I have little hope, that such a Treacherous Back-sliding Heart, as mine, should ever be healed. If I should be washed now, I shall again defile my self. If I should once more be received to Mercy, I should backslide again: And as good never come, as to come to no purpose. If I return to him, and continue not with him, it will but be the worse in the latter end.*

*Ansiv.* If God undertake the Cure, he can purge away thy Iniquities, as well as forgive them.

them. Destroy the power of Sin, as well as remove the Guilt. He can *heal thy Back-slidings*, in the Root, and Cause, and Principle of them; so as thou shalt not turn aside from him, as formerly. He can establish, and strengthen thy Heart, and give thee more Stedfastness, and he calls thee to Turn, in order to it. Therefore *turn to the Lord*.

Object. IV. *O But if I am never healed, till I Return, I must die of my wounds. I shall perish in my filthiness, if I am never washed, till I come, as I ought, to the Fountain opened. For my Heart is hard and impenitent; I feel it so. I have not such an Heart to turn to God, as I should: It is the grief of my Soul that I find it thus. I am without strength, and unable to turn.*

*Ansiv.* But hast thou no Strength, no Power to consider whence thou art fallen? and how low thou art sunk, and to bewail the wretchedness of thy present Case, which thou beginnest to be sensible of? Canst thou not lament the Hardness of thy Heart, which thou ownest to be thy grief? Canst thou not consider thy past, and present Condition, and thereupon Cry to God for help? And a little thing will save a Man that is Drowning. One look from Christ made *Peter* remember the Warning, he had before given him, and go out and *weep bitterly*. Canst thou not reflect, and consider? How much better it was with thee formerly than now? When thou hadst good hopes,  
thro



thro Grace, of Divine Acceptance; when thou couldest go to God with Comfort, and pour out thy Heart before him with Freedom: But *now*, since the Breach thou hast made upon Conscience, if thou comest at all into his Presence, thou art drag'd by fear, and hardly knowest what to do, when thou art there. Art not thou ready to cry out, *O the Communion with Christ that once I had, in such or such an Ordinance; but now it is lost. He is a stranger to my Soul. He hath justly withdrawn himself. If I seek him where I was wont to find him, I find him not. My Peace, my Joy, my Light, my Strength, is gone. Therefore let me return to my first Husband, for it was then better with me than now, Hosea 2. 6, 7.* Can you not thus reflect, to awaken your Repentance, and assist your Resolution to return, and stir up your selves to call upon God for healing Mercy?

Object. V. *But some may say, If God should again receive such a returning Backslider, Will he not bear me a Grudge for it? Will he not hereafter upbraid me with it? I shall hear of it again the next Sacrament, besure, or under the next Afflicting Providence.*

Ans. No, saith God, *turn, and I will heal your Backslidings; I will receive you graciously, I will love you freely, I will be merciful to your Iniquities, and remember them no more, Hos. 14. 1, 2. 3.* Did he upbraid the returning Prodigal, and say, *Where hast thou been?* Resolve, there-

fore, O *Backsliding Children*, to return to your Father ; to be again Washed, Sanctified, and Justified. Whatever Discouragement be in the way, you may hope for welcome. For you are *Children* still, though *Backsliding Children*, And remember he is *your Father*, though you have displeas'd him. For,

*First*, If it be said by the Devil, or an accusing Conscience, How darest thou take the Name of *Father* into thy Mouth, since thou hast so dishonour'd him, and griev'd his Spirit by thy Revolt ? “ *A Returning Backslider* “ may say, he is *A Father* still ; and the Love “ of a *Father* is unmeasurable ; the kindness of “ a *Father* is infinitely Tender. Though his “ Paternal Justice may Correct me with a “ Rod, he will not take away his Loving “ Kindness utterly from me. *I will*, there- “ fore, *go to my Father* ; though he frown up- “ on me, though he chastise me, though he “ threaten to turn me out of doors ; *I will yet* “ *Return and go to my Father*, for I must be “ there. I will die in his Arms, or I will die “ at his Feet ; I will Return. But,

*Secondly*, What wilt thou venture to go presently, all in Rags, like a *Beggar*, rather than a *Child*, all in thy filth and dirt ? thou wilt shame thy Father's House, and discredit his Family, if such a one as thou shouldest come, and call him *Father*. “ Notwithstand- “ ing

## Of Spiritual Washing, &c. 105

“ ing this, I will return presently to him, faith  
“ *the penitent Backslider*; for, the longer I de-  
“ lay, the more hardness shall I contract,  
“ and the greater will my Sin be; and eve-  
“ ry day I shall be exposed to further Sin;  
“ and the same Duties now lie upon me,  
“ as before, which I cannot perform duly,  
“ except I Return; therefore I will return  
“ *presently*. This Dr. *Preston*, upon 1 Sam.  
20. 22. adviseth, as the wisest and best  
way, after the Commission of any great  
Sin, or the Guilt of any great Backsliding.

*Thirdly*, But it will be said, thy Work  
is great and difficult, before ever thy Peace  
can be made, thou must mourn and weep,  
and Repent in dust and ashes, and be hum-  
bled to the very mouth of Hell, before thou  
and thy Father be Friends again.

And will not that discourage thee?

“ No, says the Returning Backslider, I  
“ will yet go to *My Father*; I will own,  
“ that I deserve to be rejected for ever:  
“ but I'll plead the Mercifulness of his  
“ Nature, and the Freeness of his Cove-  
“ nant-Love, and Promise; you shall ne-  
“ ver beat me out of it, *I will return to*  
“ *my Father*. I know he will meet me  
“ half way; yea, he hath met me, and pre-  
“ vented my by his Grace; He put it un-  
“ to

“ to my Heart to return; therefore he will  
 “ accept me.

I easily foresee what will be Objected against all this. no Backslider is able *thus* to argue; He is holden in the Chains of his own Sins; He durst not use such Language.

I grant, that while he is under the full power of Backsliding, he cannot thus speak, and act.

But, to a *Returning, Penitent Backslider*, that begins to be Awakened, who feels the burden of his Sin, and seeks after God, the Relation of a *Father* is an unspeakable Support. And notwithstanding his late Backslidings, he may make out his Relation to God as *his Father*, when once he is awakened to Repentance; Partly by his Mourning, and Godly Sorrow for Sin; Partly by the Remembrance of his former Covenant, and Communion with God, which, when he returns by Repentance, may yield him comfort, though before it could not; Partly by the Inward Motions of the Spirit, which he finds lusting against the Flesh; Partly by his vigorous importunate Desires to turn to God, and be at Peace with him.

When

## Of Spiritual Washing, &c. 107

When it comes to this, he may take Heart and ought to receive Encouragement by the Promise and Call of God, *Turn, you Backsliding Children, and I will heal your Backslidings.*

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*The*

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*The Fourth Discourse,*  
 After the LORD'S SUPPER.

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O F T H E  
**Communion.**  
 O F  
 Christ's BODY and BLOOD.

From 1 COR. X. xvi.

*The Cup of Blessing that we bless, is it not the  
 Communion of the Blood of Christ?*

*The Bread which we break, is it not the Commu-  
 nion of the Body of Christ?*

**W**HEN the Apostle would Reform the  
 Church of Corinth, as to that profane  
 liberty which some of them took, boldly to  
 meddle with the *Mysteries of Paganism*, and to  
 Eat of things offered unto Idols; He gives an  
 Account of the Nature of this *Divine Institu-  
 tion* of the Lord's Supper. and leaves it to  
 themselves

themselves to judge, whether they did not do very ill to be present at the Feasts upon the *Heathen Sacrifices*, and to eat of things that were offered unto Idols. I say, he leaves it to themselves, *Verse 15. I speak as unto wise Men; Judge ye what I say.*

That was the Case amongst many of these *Corinthians*, they did not scruple to accompany their Unbelieving Neighbours and Acquaintance, to the Banquets that they made in Honour of their false Gods; They did not scruple to eat with them, of those things that were taken from their *Execrable Altars*, as a Part, and Remnant of those *Sacrifices to Idols*, which were performed in the City of *Corinth*, with all the Pomp of an *Abominable Superstition*. This the Apostle shews to be unsuitable to their *Profession of Christianity*, and that it could not agree with the Honour they had, of eating at the *Table of the Lord*: For these *Heathens* were seduced by *Satan* to make those *Sacrifices*, and they were *Devils* whom they Worshiped, as supposed *Demi-Gods*, and in such Feasts they had a *familiar Communion* with them. And I would not, says the Apostle, that you should have fellowship with *Devils*, *Verse 19, 20, 21. You cannot drink of the Cup of the Lord, and the Cup of Devils: You cannot be partaker of the Lord's Table, and the Table of Devils.*

In the Words of the *Text*, he leaves it to them to judge, Whether it be not a most horrid Impiety, to pretend to joyn these Two together, the *Divine Body and Blood of Christ*,  
with



## Of Christ's Body and Blood. 111

with the *Impious Sacrifices of these Idolaters*. For he makes the partaking of the *Lord's Table*, not only a *Testimony of our Union unto Christ, and our Communion one with another*, as his Members, but also a *Testimony of our Disunion and Separation from all Idolatrous Worship*.

*The Cup of Blessing that we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ. And the Bread that we break, &c.* Where we are to consider, 1. The two Sacramental Signs, *the Cup, and the Bread*. 2. What is to be understood by *the Body and Blood of Christ*. 3. What by *Communion in them*. 4. How *the Cup and Bread* in the Sacrament of the Supper, are the *Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ*: And then I shall help you to Apply it.

1. Concerning the Sacramental Signs, *the Cup and the Bread*. The *Cup* for the *Wine* in it, by an ordinary Figure: and the *Bread which we break*. These are the two outward Elements in this Institution, and neither of them must be omitted. Whereas in *Baptism* there is but one outward Element, here are two. And there is good Reason for it.

1. Because this Represents the *Violent Death of Christ*, wherein his Blood was shed, and separated from his Body. It is therefore necessary, there should be one Sign to represent his *Body*, and another Sign to represent his *Blood*, there having been a Separation by Death, which is here to be Represented.

2. The *Lord's Supper* being the *Mystery of our Spiritual Nourishment by Christ*, it was proper to employ both *Eating* and *Drinking*, which are the two parts of our *Corporal Nourishment*, and that could not have been entirely Represented, by either of them alone:

*The Cup of Blessing*, or *Benediction*, which we bless, or give Thanks for, *i. e.* Which we set apart by *Prayer*, and *Thanksgiving*. *Blessing*, and *giving of Thanks*, being often put one for another, *1 Cor. 14. 16.* And in the *Evangelical History*, *Matth. 26.* and *Mark 16.* What one *Evangelist* calls *Blessing*, another calls *Thanksgiving*. By virtue of which *Blessing*, or *Prayer*, by a *Minister of Christ*, in his *Name*, and according to his *Example and Order*; That which before was *common*, is set apart to an *holy use*, and becomes the *Sign and Seal* of the *Body and Blood of Christ*.

*The Cup of Blessing.* The *Jews* were wont at the *Passover-Feast*, or rather after it, to drink of a *Cup*, which the *Master of the Family* did bless, *i. e.* Did pray over it, or concerning it. To distinguish *this* from *that*, the *Apostle* says, *The Cup of Blessing*, which we bless, which we *Christians* set apart in our *Assemblies*, to shew forth the *Lord's Death* by. And from this *Passage* of the *Apostle*, this *Ordinance* is called by the *Ancients*, the *Eucharist*, upon the account of the *Blessing*, or *giving of Thanks*. *Justin Martyr*, who liv'd but *Fifty Years* after the *Death* of the *Apostle St. John*, calls it the *Bread of the Eucharist*, in *Memory*

## Of Christ's Body and Blood. 113

of the *Passion of Christ*. Nay, the *Greek* word for *Blessing*, in this Text, *εὐλογία*, as well as the other, *εὐχαριστία*, giving of *Thanks*, is sometimes used by the \* *Ancients*, as the Name of this *Institution*. Among others, *Cyril*, Bishop of *Alexandria*, does often call it by the Name of *εὐλογία*.

*The Cup of Blessing which we bless, and the Bread which we break.* At the Feast of the *Passover* the *Jews* made use of such Bread, as was flat and round, and so was to be broken, and cut asunder: And the *unleavened Bread* among the *Jews* to this very day is of this kind. Now our Lord Instituting his *Supper*, the same Evening after the Celebration of the *Passover*, we may suppose made use of the same sort of Bread: That is, As he changed the Signification of this Bread, from that of their unleavened Bread, to be a *Sign of his Body*; so he employed *the Breaking of this Bread*, to signify his *cruel Sufferings in that Body, upon the Cross*.

*This Cup, and this Bread, even after Consecration,* (For the Bread is not broken till after that,) is said to be *the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ*, not his real *Flesh and Blood*. For, besides the *Vanity of such a Sense*, and the *Indecency and Uncomeliness of it*; yea, the *Contradiction, and Impossibility of it*; It is against the express *Testimony of the Apostle here, and in other places*. According to the *New Doctrine of Rome*, instead of say-  
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\* See Mr. Daille in loc.

## 114 The Fourth Discourse,

ing here, *The Cup that we bless*; He would have said, *The Cup that we Transubstantiate, and change into the proper Substance of the Body and Blood of Christ*: The Cup, in which we leave not one drop of Wine; But, by pronouncing four or five little words, fill it with the Body of Christ. And is not this a strange way of blessing a Person or Thing? To destroy the very *Nature of the Thing*; that it shall be no longer what it was before? The Bread was not blessed, that it might be destroyed; nor given to be eaten, that it might cease to be, before it was eaten. 'Tis to suppose God to put forth Miraculous Power, to make his own Command (of eating the Bread) impossible. *The Bread that we break*; it is therefore *Bread*, after it is *broken*, after the Consecration and breaking, *it is Bread still*: For the *Transubstantiation*, if there be any, is upon the Consecration, *before it be broken*. But I hope most *English Protestants* are pretty well Instructed in this *Truth*, and therefore I need not insist longer upon it.

2. What are we to understand by *the Body and Blood of Christ*, of which this is said to be the *Communion*? How is *Christ's Body and Blood* present in this *Ordinance*? Our Lord is Ascended into Heaven with his Human Body, and the Heavens are to contain him, till the Restitution of all things. And therefore as the Bread and Wine are not annihilated, or not destroyed, nor changed into the *Flesh and Blood of Christ*, according to the *Romanists*;  
So,

## Of Christ's Body and Blood. 115

So, nor present with, in, and under the Bread, and Wine, according to the *Lutherans*. So that we need not say, that the Body and Blood of *Christ* are at all *present* there, for they are in Heaven: But the Bread and Wine are the *Signs*, and *Memorials* of the Sacrifice and Sufferings of *Christ*. The *Death* of *Christ*, and his *Sacrifice* upon the *Cross*, with the *Fruits* and *Effects* thereof unto us, are especially to be understood by his *Body and Blood*: And it is in these, that we have *Communion* in the Ordinance of the Supper.

The Expressions therefore, which some Protestant Writers have used about *the Real Presence of Christ's Body and Blood in this Sacrament*, are very \* unwary. For thereby they seem to make *Mysteries*, where there is no need at all of any. It is true, in the *next Chapter* it is said of the Bread, *This is my Body*; that is, *the Sign and the Memorial of it*: Yet here the *Bread broken*, is said to be the *Communion*, or the *Communication of his Body*; that is, a Solemn Rite instituted by God, to communicate to us the *Fruits and Benefits of Christ's broken Body*, or of his *Sacrifice and Sufferings* Represented by it. That as verily as we are Treated at the Table with the Bread and Wine, so the worthy Receiver shall share in the *Benefits of Christ's Death*. This is *Intelligible and Plain*.

I 2                      3. This

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\* See a Tract on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, by Mr. John Hales of Eaton-College, in Oct.

3. This will help us to understand, what is meant by *the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ*; By this *κοινωνία*, or *Communication*, as it may as well be rendered, that we have in the Body and Blood of *Christ*, in the Ordinance of the Supper: Two Things may this Import,

1. Our Participation of the *Fruits of Christ's Death and Sacrifice*: That we share in the *Privileges of Reconciliation to God, Forgiveness of Sin, Peace of Conscience, and the Promise of Eternal Life, by Virtue of Christ's Death.*

2. That *Others* share with us therein, or that we Partake of these Benefits *with Others*. For so it follows in the next Verse; That *tho' many Members, we are all one Body, and one Bread, for we are all Partakers of that one Bread.* That is, We are all one Church, and one Body of *Christ*, by Covenant-Union unto him; And of him we do all Sacramentally, and Spiritually partake in this Ordinance: As many Grains of Corn make one Loaf, and many Members one Body.

*We being many, are one Bread, and one Body.* The Church of *Rome*, from that Expression, might as well argue, That all Christians are substantially changed, first into the *Bread*, and then into *the natural Body of Christ*, by partaking of this Sacrament; As well as that, the *Bread* is changed into the *Body of Christ*: For all Christians are said to be *one Bread*, and

## Of Christ's Body and Blood. 117

*one Body*, by virtue of their Communion in this Ordinance.

4. Hereby also we understand, how we have *Communion* in the *Body and Blood of Christ*, by the *Lord's Supper*: How we and others partake in the Benefits of his Death and Passion. And that *two ways*: As this Sacrament is a *Sign* and a *Symbol* of ; and as it is a *Means*.

1. It is a *Sign* of it. All that eat of this *Bread*, and drink of this *Cup*, do thereby Commemorate the Death and Passion of *Jesus Christ*, and profess to own, that the *Body and Blood of Christ* offered upon the Cross, is the Food and Nourishment of their Souls to Eternal Life: That Christ is their Saviour, and Redeemer; That they hope for all their Acceptance with God in both Worlds, only upon the Account of the Sacrifice of *Christ*. They professedly declare, that living and dying, they are, and will be *his*: They hope for Victory over Death and the Devil, by the Cross of *Christ*, and for a Glorious Resurrection from Death, as the Fruit of his Death and Resurrection.

2. These Words do import further, That the eating of this *Bread*, and drinking of this *Cup*, are the *Means* appointed by *Christ*, for our Communion in his *Body and Blood*. We share in the Benefits of his Death and Sacrifice; and, by due Attendance upon this Ordinance, the

precious Fruits of his Death, and the Gifts and Graces of his Spirit, are augmented and encreased in us, in order to our full and final Blessedness in the other World, which this is preparatory to, and fits us for.

As the partaking of things sacrificed to Idols, was a Fellowship with Devils, 1 Cor. 10. 20. So the partaking of that, which was sacrific'd to God, is a Fellowship with him. \* Prayer is an Act of Homage, and Praise, and Gratitude; but we have not so near a Communion with a Person, either by Petitioning for somewhat we want, or by returning him Thanks for a Favour received; as we have by sitting with him at his Table, partaking of the same Bread, and the same Cup. In all Nations the nearest Fellowship consists in things of this nature. Take, Eat, manifests a Communion.

It would be an Empty Mystery, and unworthy of an Institution by Divine Goodness, if there were not some Communion with God and Christ in it. There would be some kind of Deceit in the Precept, Take, Eat, and Drink, *this is my Body and Blood*; if there were not a Conveyance of Spiritual, Vital Influences to our Souls: For the natural end of Eating and Drinking, is the Nourishment and Encrease of the Body, and Preservation of Life, by that which we Eat and Drink.

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\* See Mr. Charnock's 2d. Vol. p. 759. And of the Divine Attributes. p. 638.



## Of Christ's Body and Blood. 119

I might consider this *Ordinance* as a *Sign*, and *Means of our Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ*; or of our sharing in the *Fruits of his Death*: And amplify it several ways.

1. By considering on what *Accounts*, this is a likely *Means* of such a *Communion*.  
And,

2. How *Faith* must be acted, that it may be so, as to us. As to the former, 1. As this *Ordinance* is *Commemorative* of the *Sacrifice of Christ*, and being to be observed in *Remembrance* of him. 2. As it is an open *Profession* of the *Cross of Christ*; that we *Glory* in it, and therefore shew forth the *Lord's Death* that way, professing our selves not to be ashamed of our *Character*, as the *Followers of a Crucified Jesus*. 3. As it is a *Renewal*, and *Confirmation* of the *Covenant* between *God and Us*, through *Jesus Christ*; *Renewing* our *Engagements and Obligations* to be the *Lord's* for ever. In the *Celebration* of this *Ordinance*, we have a *Special Opportunity* for this: It is a *principal part* of our *Work* at this *Table*. 4. As it is a *fit Season* for extraordinary *Thanksgiving and Praise*: *Blessing God* for *Jesus Christ*. Which *Thankfulness for Christ*, disposes and fits us for the *Reception* of further *Grace*, as the *Fruit and Purchase* of his *Death*; and so is the *Means* of our *Communion* in his *Body and Blood*. Thus it is the *Cup of Blessing*, and of *Thanksgiving*, that we

there Receive. *Which Cup of Blessing, upon such Accounts as these, is our Communion in the Blood of Christ.*

2. You will hereby the better perceive, what is to be done on our part, in order to this Communion.

1. Our *Faith* must Eye the *Authority of Christ*, enacting it. We must act in Obedience to an Institution, and Appointment of *Christ*. It was a Remarkable Instance, and Act of his Kingly Office, to enjoin this Memorial of his dying Love. And the Season of its Institution is the more observable, *viz.* In the close of his Publick Ministry, of his *Prophetical Office* upon Earth, and in his Entrance upon the Execution, of the principal part of his *Priestly Office*, by being made a sacrifice: *between both of these*; and to render *both* Effectual, our Lord interposed an Act of his *Kingly Office*, in the *Institution of this Ordinance*. Accordingly it should be eyed, and owned by us, in order to our Communion with him therein.

2. *The Love of Christ* must especially be eyed, and attended to, in this Supper, as Exprest by his *Death and Sufferings*. Of this we have here the most lively Representation, with the Glorious Effects of that Love, which are not Represented with such a Beauty and Lustre, by any other Ordinance, as by this. The constraining *Love of Christ* in his whole  
Under-

## Of Christ's Body and Blood 121

*Undertaking*, is better discerned and tasted in this Ordinance, than as it is proposed in several parts in the Holy Scripture. Here we are called to the particular Application of it, *He loved me, and gave himself for me*, Gal. 2. 20. Rev. 1. 5.

3. *The Sovereignty, and the Wisdom of God*, in Instituting these *External Signs and Elements*, of *Bread and Wine*, must also be Eyed, and Attended to. They most fitly Signifie, and Represent the great Things they are designed for, and yet without a *Divine Institution*, could have no Relation to the Thing signified.

How suitable is the *plain Matter* of this *Sacrament*, unto the *holy Author* of it. We remember in this *Supper*, his *Body hanging on the Cross*, and therefore it was not fit, the *Sacrament of his Body should be sumptuous, and rich upon the Table*. Nevertheless by *Bread to strengthen*, and *Wine to comfort*, all the *Benefits of a Crucified Saviour* are fitly Represented, and much better than they could have been by the *Choicest Delicates*.

In order to this *Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ*, we must take heed to our selves, not to rest in the *External Signs*; but to *discern the Lord's Body*, to apprehend the *Spiritual Import, and End of this Divine Institution*. That by *Faith we may receive Christ, and feed upon him*, so as to Experience the *Communications of his Grace*, and Receive *fresh Influences of his Spirit*:

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*Spirit: That we may Accept all the Benefits of the New Covenant, which are here Offered and Sealed to us; and that we may Devote, Resign, and Dedicate our selves afresh to be the Lord's; to Obey him, and serve the Purposes of his Glory, while we live, in hope of the blessed Recompence, which he has Purchased and Promised, and is gone to prepare, and which he will not fail to come again and bestow. Until which time, this Ordinance is to continue in the Church, To shew forth the Lord's Death, till he come.*

*Use 1.* The first Reflection I would make on this, is upon the Sacrilegious Confidence of those Men, who deny to Christians, the Means of their Communion in the Blood of Christ; who rob them of one half of this Sacrament, by denying the Cup of the Blessing to the Laity. The Cup is the Communion of the Blood of Christ, says the Apostle. Drink ye all of it, says our Lord. And yet the Church of Rome will not suffer the People to taste it. But as one Error makes way for another, they pretend by the New Doctrine of Concomitancy, the Bread, or the little Wafer, (which is not broken neither, according to the Order of Christ, but put whole into the Peoples Mouths, by the hands of the Priest;) This Wafer shall be enough for the People, and by the help of a strong Imagination concerning the Authority of their Church, the very Body, Blood, and Bones of Christ, shall be contained under the Form and Appearance of Bread.

## Of Christ's Body and Blood. 123

One would wonder how any Thing can be plainer, both in *this* and the *next Chapter*, and in the *Institution* it self, as Recorded by the *Evangelists*, than the Universal Obligation upon Christians, to partake of the *Cup*, as well as the *Bread*. And what Authority can any Man, or Number of Men, have to alter such a Constitution? May they not as well take away *the Bread* from the People, as the *Cup*? They will grant that for a *Thousand Years* after *Christ*, it was the *Sense and Practice* of the *Christian Church*, that the People should partake of the *Cup* too; And for *Fourteen hundred Years*, it can be prov'd, that they did, even from the *Apostle's Time*, down to that of *Thomas Aquinas*, in the latter end of the *Thirteenth Century*. *Justin Martyr*, *Cyprian*, *Nazianzen*, *Chrysostom*, and all the most considerable *Writers* of the *Ancient Church*, are express in their *Testimony* for it. But what need we concern our selves about the Judgment of Antiquity? When there is a *Positive Institution* of *Christ*, and in a large Account thereof by the *Apostle St Paul*, 1 Cor. XI. he speaks but one word of the *Confecration* of the *Bread*, but uses others Expressions, to signify the Excellency of the *Cup*.

*This is my Blood*, says *Christ*, the *Blood* of the *New Testament*, shed for the *Remission* of the *Sins* of many. His *Sufferings*, and the *Reality* of *Death*, are in a most lively manner set forth by the shedding of his *Blood*. Not to insist upon

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upon his *bloody Sweat* in the Garden, You know when he was whipt, and scourged, and crowned with Thorns, he then shed *Blood!* *Blood* issued from his Hands and Feet, when he was nailed to the Cross; and from his Side, when he was pierced by the Roman Soldiers: By the shedding of his *Blood*, he lost his Life; and *without shedding of Blood, there could be no Remission.* So that to deprive the People of the *Cup*, is to take away the most lively, and the most essential Representation, of the Sufferings, and Death of *Christ.*

The Doctrine of *Concomitancy* will not avail in this case, The partaking of the *Bread* only, is not sufficient whereby to remember his Death: For the *Separation* of his *Blood* from his *Body*, was the means of his Dying. This destroys the Distinction between *the two Symbols*, which yet are very different in their *Names*, in their *Properties*, in their *Use*, and in the *Time* of receiving them. Besides, it is contrary to all the Rules of Language, to say, *I drink*, when *I only eat.* But there is worse in it still; For they Seal up the Fountain of *Christ's Blood* from the People; They pour it back again, as it were, into his *Body*; and shut up his wounds; as if his *Blood* were not shed for any, but *the Priests.* God has appointed the double Elements, to encrease the Consolation of Christians. and we should not marvel, says one, that they who deny the Certainty of Grace, and the Possibility of Assurance,

## Of Christ's Body and Blood. 125

Assurance, should deny the People the double Elements. By their Doctrine, they Preach but a *half Comfort* to Souls, and by their Practice, they Administer but a *half Sacrament* to the Laity.

It is true, They tell us, that we read of this Ordinance under the Name of *Breaking of Bread*. We grant it; But they may as well conclude, That when *Joseph* Feasted, and Entertained his Brethren, that he gave them nothing to Drink, because it is only said, That *they did eat with him*. Can any one doubt, but when we pray for our *daily bread* in the Lord's Prayer, that we ask what is necessary, for the Relief and Satisfaction of our *Thirst*, as well as *Hunger*, in that Petition?

Notwithstanding all that may be said, against their Practice of denying the *Cup* to the People, we read in the History of the *Council of Trent*, when *Communion in both kinds* was proposed to those who were sent from *France*; In the Reply made to that Motion, They called the *Cup* for the Laity, a *Cup of Poison*: Among other *Anathema's* in the *Council of Trent*, there is one against all those that shall say, *That the Church had not good reason, to take away the Cup from the People*. And yet they assign no Reason at all, when there is manifestly as much Reason, for drinking of of the *Cup*, as for eating of the *Bread*; the same Authority requiring both. *The Cup of Blessing which we bless is the Communion of the Blood of Christ*.

2. With what humble Thankfulness should we use this Privilege, and obey this Order of our Lord, to Remember him in this manner, since thereby we have *Communion in his Body and Blood?*

The Night before he was betray'd, he took *Bread*, and took the *Cup*; He Instituted the Feast, and bid us Celebrate it *in Remembrance of him*. “ You, my Friends and Followers, “ as if our Lord had said, I am now about to “ leave you, for the hour is at hand, when I “ shall be Apprehended, Bound, and Judged, “ Condemned, and Crucified; and then I “ shall Rise again, and go to my Father and “ and your Father, to my God and your God: “ Ere long I shall be received out of your “ sight; you shall see me no more on Earth; “ you shall not eat and drink with me as you “ have done; But let me not be out of your “ mind, when I am gone, I have loved you, “ and will love you to the Death; And to “ morrow you shall see the Proof of my Love “ to you, and to the lost World; when I “ shall offer my self a Sacrifice for Sin, and “ lay down my Life for you. And will you “ forget me? That you *may not*, I do Institute, “ and Appoint this Solemn Memorial of my “ Death, and leave it in Charge upon you, and “ my whole Church, to the end of the World, “ upon all my Followers in all Ages, to do it “ *in Remembrance of me; As often as you eat “ this Bread, and drink this Cup of Blessing, that* “ you



“ you shew forth my Death till I come. Accordingly the first Disciples of Christ, did every Lord's Day make it a part of their Publick Worship: But as the Zeal and Fervour of Christians abated, the Frequency of Celebrating this Feast did abate too.

But some will be ready to say, *The Privilege is so great, I durst not adventure. It is the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, I am not fit for so great an Undertaking: My Conscience tells me I am utterly unworthy of so high a Favour: My sins are so many, and my Frailties so many, I durst, by no means, as yet, adventure to come.*

I Answer, 1. That Sense of our Unworthiness and Unfitness, which keeps us from the performance of a plain Duty, is not true Humility. It is not Presumption, to do what we are required, and to come when we are bidden, though we are Unworthy to come. We are unworthy of Food and Cloathing; Will you therefore starve your selves, or go naked? Remember you are Invited, and your Refusal thereupon may proceed from *Pride*, if the Sense of Unworthiness hinder your Obedience to the Call of *Christ*. It is a bold thing, you think, for you to come; But is there no faulty Boldness in your neglecting to come, when *Christ* has bid you remember him this way? For this is not a *Privilege* only, but at the same time it is a *Duty* too; And if your  
Sense

Sense of your Unworthiness, help you to come humbly and better prepared, it is one of the best Characters of a worthy Receiver; but it ought not to keep you altogether from Receiving.

2. You say you are Unfit. *It may be you say true.* Will you continue so from Year to Year? Is it not a Duty to fit and prepare your selves, to repent of all sin, and give up your selves to God in *Christ*, as your God and Saviour, and then renew your Covenant? Do not you know, that the *Ignorant* and the *Impenitent*, who are unfit to come to the Lord's Table, are unfit to die, unfit for Heaven? And will you continue in such a State, wherein you are unfit to die? And yet are uncertain to live an hour. Your Unfitness is your *Sin*, and will you turn it into an Apology for your other Sin? It is the Duty of *all real and unfeigned Christians*, to come to this Ordinance; And it is the Duty of all to be *Such*, that they may come. Not to Commemorate the Death of *Christ* this way, as he hath appointed it, is *one Sin*; To live in the neglect of due Preparation for it, is *another*. Will your being Unprepared, excuse your not coming, when it is your Duty to be such, as may come? How can you think God will forgive one sin, because you commit another; How can you expect he should pardon your neglect of his Table, when all that you can say, is, that you neglect to fit your selves for it? Men will not do their Duty in other things,

things, and so are unfit for this. Therefore,

3. How is it that you are not as much Afraid of disobeying this Command, of thus Remembering the Death of *Christ*, as you are Afraid of doing it Unworthily? You are afraid you should offend God by Coming; But ought you not to fear, lest you offend him by staying away? Should not a total Neglect be apprehended a Fault, as well as an undue Performance? You do well to fear Unworthy Receiving: O be but as fearful, to continue Unworthy, and Unfit to Receive! This equal Fear of Caution *on both sides*, would make you diligent and solicitous, to fit and prepare your selves. And this concerns those, who have formerly been at the Lord's Table, but very often do tarry away, though they have Time and Opportunity, as being afraid to come, by reason of their own Unworthiness.

4. Consider further, What are those Sins that you charge your selves with, as the ground of your *Unfitness*. They are either of *Weakness*, or of *Wilfulness*; Either such as can hardly be avoided by the Care and Watchfulness of Good Men, as Sins of daily Infirmity. These do not make you unfit for the Lord's Table: For if they did, who at all would ever be fit? If a perfect sinless Fitness were necessary, none could come aright. And by such a thought we make *Christ* an hard Master. But if they be sins of *Wilfulness*, you are Self-condemned,

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condemned, if you do not Reform. And yet how many are there, concerning whom we may charitably judge, that they do not allow themselves in wilful Sins, that do yet tarry away from this Table?

5. Let me ask you further, Have you ever tryed to fit and prepare your selves, as worthy Receivers of the Lord's Supper? Have you endeavoured, in the use of all God's appointed Means, to obtain that Knowledge, Repentance, Faith, and Love, which should fit you for this Ordinance? If you have never used the Means that God hath appointed; if you have never seriously, and in good earnest, set upon the Work of Preparation, How can you say that you never shall, or can be fitted for this Privilege? What Minister of *Christ* have you ever consulted about it? It may be you mistake the very Notion of the Lord's Supper, and understand not the True Nature and Design of it. Have you set apart time, to search your Hearts, and examine your Consciences, and Repent of all Sin, and give up your selves to God in *Christ*, and beg the help of Ministers and Friends to that purpose?

6. Therefore let me ask you again, Is not your Unfitness from *Sloth and Idleness*, or the *distracting Hurry of Worldly Affairs*; that you cannot be brought to *spare so much time*, as is necessary for *this Work*? How will you Answer  
this

## Of Christ's Body and Blood. 131

this at the Great Day? Will you then have the Courage, to tell the Lord Redeemer to his Face, what this Pretence amounts to? Will you tell him in that Awful Solemnity? *Lord! I would not have omitted the Ordinance of the Supper, but have remembred Thee, and thy dying Love, by breaking of Bread; But, I was unfit for it, altogether unfit, because my Mind was distracted with the Cares of the World: I had so much of other Matters all the Week, from Month to Month, to take up my Thoughts and Time, that I had no leisure for serious Preparation.* What self-condemning Excuses will these prove at last?

*Lastly,* Is there not yet something worse at the bottom, *viz.* That you are unwilling of that Strictness and Seriousness, that you think such are obliged to, as come to the Lord's Table? Unwilling of that circumspect Walking which such, of all others, should be Exemplary in? Are you not afraid, that if you come, you must abridge your selves of some Liberties, that you now take? That you must be more constant in secret Prayer; That you must set up daily Family Prayer in your Houses; That you must spend more Time in Reading; be more careful of your Company, and be more faithful and exact in your Dealings, and do many things that now you neglect?

How dreadful is the Import of such an Excuse for not Coming? Of such a Ground for

staying away. For it seems to lye in this, *That Men are resolved they will live at large, and not be bound up by the Rules of the Gospel: That is, they never mean to take upon them the Yoke of Christ, or to live as his Disciples; If they would speak it out, it must signifie thus much; Thou shalt not be my Lord and Redeemer, I will not deny Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, and live Soberly, and Righteously, and Godly, in this World. Notwithstanding my Baptism, whereby I have sworn Fidelity to Christ, he shall not reign over me.* This is practically. and in effect, their Sense: For this Command and Order, to do this *in Remembrance of Christ*, is as much a *Law of Christ*, as any in the Bible. And yet many refuse to obey *this Command*, lest they should be obliged more strictly to obey *all the other*. How little do such Professors consider, how unbecoming it is to call themselves *Christians*; or that they are, (Antecedently by their *Baptism* and *Christian Profession*,) bound to obey *Christ* in all these Instances. And at the *Lord's Table* we do but renew the *Obligation* upon our selves to do so. We are bound to obey *Christ* as our Ruler, and to yield Obedience to *all the Laws of Christ*, whether we come to *this Table* or no; Though we are also bound to come, and to profess, and promise Obedience there.

There are other *Objections* I may consider hereafter, and therefore shall now close with a few words of *Counsel*.

## Of Christ's Body and Blood. 133

1. Let those of us, who have eaten of this *Bread*, and drunk of this *Cup*, and so have professedly had Communion in the *Body and Blood of Christ*; Let us Examine, whether we have really and truly had any *Fellowship* with him in this *Ordinance*, or no; Whether we have only been partakers of the outward *Signs*, and been present at such a *Feast of Love*, without any *Spiritual Nourishment* to our *Souls*. Without attending to this, *the Design of the Institution is overlooked, and all the Genuine Advantages of it will be lost*. Without this, we have but played the *Hypocrites*, and acted a *Part*, and shall pay dear for our *Solemn Trifling*, as having slighted the *Redcemer's Love*, and made our selves *Guilty of his Body and Blood*.

If we have not laboured to *see the Evil of Sin*, and to have *our hatred of it encreased*: If we have not found our *Hearts set more against it*, and our *Resolutions confirmed to forsake it*: If we have not felt the *Attractive Influence of the Love of Christ*, to bring us to *Adore him*, and *Magnifie his Condescension and Love*: If we have not had *Admiring Thoughts* of the *blessed God*, of the *Parity of his Nature*, the *Justice of his Government*, and all his *Excellent Perfections*, which are so highly honoured in our *Redemption* by the *bloody Sacrifice of Christ*: If we have not been cordial and unfeigned in the *Dedication* of our selves to him, and all we have, and are, to be at his *Dispose and Order* for the rest of our *Time*: If we have not had our *Thoughts raised up to Heaven*, to a *risen glorified*

*fied Redeemer on his Throne, as triumphing over all the Adversaries of our Salvation, as able to save to the uttermost All that come to God by him, as faithful to compleat what he hath begun, and to preserve what is committed to him, and to give us the full purchase of his Meritorious Death, in the Heavenly Kingdom.*

And if we have not been *melted under the Sense of pardoning Mercy to our selves, and brought to better Temper of Mind, as to the Forgiveness of Others.* If we have not had *Love to our Fellow-Christians more excited in us, to all that are Members of the same Body; though they err and mistake, though they differ from us, though they be angry with us, though they think hardly of us, and speak hardly against us; Yet if we have not had our Spirits brought to a Temper, able to forgive them, to pray for them, and be ready to do them good, &c.* We cannot say, we have had *Communion with Christ in this Ordinance.* For such Effects as these will follow upon it; Or rather it is *in these things,* wherein a great part of our *Spiritual Communion* doth consist.

2. If there have been any thing of this kind, *Bless God for such a merciful Season.* For this is the real Advantage and Good of any such Ordinance, when it *Rectifies our Spirits, and betters our frame, and subdues our Corruptions, and recovers us from our Back-slidings, and gives us any thing more of the Divine Image and Likeness, and makes us hate Sin more, and love God;*



## Of Christ's Body and Blood. 135

God, and one another better. This is the Real Advantage of such Seasons: These are gainful Opportunities indeed, where these Things are Attained, where in any measure there are such Consequences, of Approaching to the Lord's Table.

3. Let us endeavour henceforward to walk worthy of such a Privilege, and long for the Repetition of it. Let us watch our Spirits this Evening, and to Morrow, and the following Week and Month; that we may not presently lose the Savour of these things, by secular and common Discourse, and vain Converse. When we go away from the Publick Worship, let us spend the Remainder of the Day in such Offices, and Exercises of Religion as may Assist us to prosecute our Great Design, and may strengthen the Vows of God, into which we have newly entred.

And let us shew we like his Fare, and are pleased with the Entertainments of his House, by desiring more such Opportunities, and by Improving them whenever they return. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, says the Psalmist, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord for ever.* By this means we should endeavour to become growing, thriving, fruitful, humble, self-denying, heavenly, exemplary Christians, walking worthy of our High and Holy Calling, purifying our selves more and more from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit: That our Hearts may be more fixed for God and

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Christ, against all Competitors, and under all Discouragements. *That Christ Jesus may have the more intire Possession of our Souls, and the Service of our Lives. That his Love being shed abroad in our Hearts, nothing may ever be able to separate us from it. That whether we live or die, Christ may be All in All to us. Who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own Blood. To Him be Glory, throughout all the Churches, for ever. Amen.*

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*The*

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*The Fifth Discourse,*

Before The

**Lord's Supper.**

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T H E

*Sin and Danger*

O F

U N W O R T H Y R E C E I V I N G .

From 1 C O R. XI. 29.

*He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.*

**S**O deep and General is the Corruption of Mankind, that it may truly be said of very Many, whose Carriage and Conversation is fair and unspotted, that they are rather restrained by the Fear of Punishment, than of Guilt; of being Sufferers rather

ther than of being Criminal. Such an Error, it is true; is injurious to the Dignity of the *Divine Law*, and to the Honour and Authority of *God's Government*: Nevertheless God doth so far Accommodate himself to our State, as to Rule us by Moral Arguments, that are proper to Influence our Hopes and Fears; and therefore employs Threatnings as well as Promises, and punishes some, as Examples of Severity, to warn others from the like *Transgressions*.

This *Method* the *Apostle* makes use of in this and the foregoing Chapter, when he designed to Reform the scandalous Abuse of the *Lord's Supper*, which these *Corinthians* were guilty of. After he had Explained the *Nature of the Institution*, and opened the *Design and End* of it, having Represented it, as the *Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ*; He tells them what most manifestly follows from thence, *viz.* The *Greatness of the Sin*, to eat that *Bread*, and drink of that *Cup unworthily*; that if they do it without *Self-Examination*, they are guilty of the *Body and Blood of the Lord*: They offend against the *Lord Redeemer*, who hath appointed this *Sacred Rite*, and even against *his Body and Blood*, which are Signified and Represented by the *Bread and Wine*, as the *Memorial and Sign* of it.

This, to those that have any due Regard to the *Authority and Love of a dying Saviour*, one would think, should be Argument enough;  
But

## Of Unworthy Receiving. 139

But lest it should not, besides the *Declaration of their Sin*, he Denounces the *Punishment of it* in these Words; 'That such do Eat and Drink *Damnation to themselves*.

Wherein we have *First*, The Description of their *Punishment*, who do unworthily partake of the Lord's Supper, That *they Eat and Drink Damnation to themselves*. *Secondly*, The Reason of that *Punishment*, intimated in the Nature and kind of their Sin, That *they discern not the Lord's Body*.

Before I consider the *Punishment of Unworthy Receivers*, it will be proper to open a little the *Nature of their Sin*, mentioned in the latter part of the Verse, *Not discerning the Lord's Body*. This may refer to the foregoing Expression, of being *Guilty of his Body and Blood*; and the one Phrase will give light to the other: Such as receive Unworthily, are *Guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ*, because they do *not discern*, and *distinguish it aright*; They do not think of it as they ought; They do not carry it suitable to its *Excellent Nature and Use*; and so *they eat and drink Judgment to themselves*, by *not discerning the Lord's Body*; And thereby are Criminal against the *Person of the Redeemer*, as clothed with *Human Nature*, and as giving the *Memorials of his Body and Blood separated, to betoken his Death and Sufferings*. For so we remember a *Crucified Saviour in this Ordinance*. It is

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is therefore no wonder, *if such a Fault be severely punished.*

That which we Translate *Discern*, it is well known, signifies *to make a difference between one thing and another*; as *Acts 15. 19.* So, *not to discern the Lord's Body*, is not to difference and distinguish concerning it, to look no further than the outward sense, not to make a difference between *Common and Sacramental Bread*, not to eye the *Body and Blood of Christ*, as signified by the *Sacramental Elements*; not to remember or consider his *cruel Sufferings*, which this should put us in Mind of. This, be sure, is *not to discern his Body.*

But few can be supposed so ignorant, as not *speculatively to discern and distinguish* in this case. But *practically to do so*, is a greater matter; it Imports, *to mind, to attend to, to esteem, to honour, to apply, to use the Body, and Blood of Christ, and the sign, and the Memorial of it, according to its Dignity and Excellency*: And thereupon to compose the outward and inward Man, in partaking of this *Ordinance*, as those that know we have to do with Christ himself, and that the *Body and Blood of Jesus Christ*, is Refer'd to by the Bread and Wine. Such a *discerning of his Body* would help to compose us to *serious Reverence*, would awaken *suitable Affections*, would excite the *Exercise of Repentance, Faith, Love, Thankfulness and Joy*, answerable to the *Nature of this Feast of Love*, upon the *Sacrifice of Christ*. This would *Regulate the Behaviour of our Bodies*, and the *Temper of*

our Spirits, the Governments of our Thoughts, and the Motions of our Affections, and make us *Worthy Receivers*. The Neglect of this, the not thus discerning the Lord's Body, is the Sin here mentioned, and thereby they are Guilty of the Body and Blood of the Redeemer, i. e. They are Profanely Injurious to the very Person of Christ, they treat his sacred Body and precious Flood unworthily, and with Contempt. It is a Guilt like theirs, that abused and crucified the Lord himself, when he was upon Earth; It is a Sin against the Body of Jesus Christ, against his Humanity; which of all Creatures that ever were upon Earth, or that are now in Heaven, is the most Sacred. The Affront, Contempt and Injury, Redounds to the blessed Redeemer, as God Incarnate, as having our Nature now in Heaven: 'tis an Injury to the Body of Christ: That Body wherein he bore our Sins upon the Cross; wherein as a Sacrifice for Sin, he offered himself to God; That Body that was prepared for him, and formed by the Holy Ghost in the Womb of the Virgin; that was afterwards Gloriously raised from the Dead to a Divine Life, and is now in Heaven, the Wonder and Admiration of the blessed Angels, and Raised to a State of Glory there, as the Pledge and Earnest of our Resurrection and Bliss. The not discerning the Lord's Body, has such a Guilt as this Implied in it.

2. The Punishment of this Sin of Unworthy Receiving, (expressed by not discerning the Lord's Body,) is here set forth by Eating and Drinking  
 Damnation

*First*, That the, whole blame should be laid upon our selves; If such a *Divine Institution*, designed for the Spiritual Good and Advantage of our Souls, do prove to our Detriment and Damage. In such a case, it is *we our selves* that are the sole Cause of it.

*Secondly*, The Expression may Import further, *That such as Receive Unworthily, they only hurt and defile Themselves, but not other Men, that communicate with them.* You may partake worthily, and to Edification, while *Another*, by *unworthy Receiving*, that sits in the same Pew, may Eat and Drink Judgment and Condemnation: but he *Eats and drinks Judgment, to himself only*, not to You. Ephes. 4. 5. *Every man shall bear his own burden: Let every man prove his own work.* It cannot be thought, that our Lord was defiled by coming to the *Baptism of John*, when there were such a *Generation of Vipers* who came to it, as well as *Christ*: Or that our Lord and the *Eleven Apostles* were defiled by the company of *Judas* at the *Passover-Supper*: For there be sure he was; *The Lord's-Supper* was at the close of it: And for his being present at *that* also, may contend, though \* Others think it probable, that he went out before.

But

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\* See Mr. Charnock, *Of the Lord's-Supper*, 2d. Vol. 793 Compared with Mr. Kettlewell, *of the Lord's-Supper*, 12<sup>o</sup>. 1687. p. 357, 383, &c. The one for his being Present, the other against it.



## Of Unworthy Receiving. 143

*Damnation to our selves, or Judgment to our selves. That is, As sure as he eats and drinks, if he do it unworthily; So certain it is, that Judgment shall follow; he eats and drinks Judgment to himself. That Addition, To himself, may denote two Things:*

But the presence of some *unworthy persons* is made an *Argument* by many against their Partaking of the *Lord's-Supper*, in such or such a *particular Church*, as if their presence would defile and infect them.

This therefore I shall consider as *one Objection*, which several are apt to make against the Performance of this Duty, *Of frequent remembering the Death of Christ at his Table.*

And then, *Secondly*, Consider the other *Objection*, from this *Text*, viz. *From the Danger of Receiving Unworthily*, lest they should *Eat and Drink Damnation to themselves.* And,

*Thirdly*, What many more are wont to plead, *That the Danger being so great, they durst not Adventure, till they know that they are Believers, or such as are Invited: For, it is Childrens Bread, and they durst not come till they are Assured of their Regeneration and Adoption.* I shall therefore enquire, *Whether any ought to come to the Lord's Table, till they have Assurance, or while they want it.*

1. It is Objected by many, *That they do not Communicate, because there are such and such Admitted, who ought not to come to the Table of the Lords:*

*Lord*: Such as *walk disorderly*, who discredit their Profession, and are as bad as any of their Neighbours, and Acquaintance. And the Apostle says, 1 Cor. 5. 10. *That with such we should not so much as eat.* That we should have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, Ephes. 5. 11. That we should *withdraw, and separate*, and have no free familiarity with such. 1 Thes. 3. 6. 2 Tim. 3. 5. 2 Cor. 6. 17.

I Answer, *First*, That the Separation from Wicked Men required in such Passages of *Holy Scripture*, refers to our intimate Converse and Familiarity with such, who live in *notorious and scandalous Sins*, and do not *Testifie their Repentance*; We must avoid their company lest we be Infected: And there is much more danger of Infection, by Familiarity with them in *daily Converse*, than by joyning with them in *Religious Duties*. But we must be careful not to call those *Ungodly* whom we cannot prove to be so; we should rather hope they are not, unless we can prove the contrary. What Sins are there, that even a good Man, by the surprize of a *Temptation*, may not commit, who yet mourns in secret, and truly Repents? It may be you may have heard of *the Sins* of many, of whose *Repentance* you have not heard. And yet they might truly Repent, and you might know it, if you would enquire. But where the mixture of the *Tares* and the *Wheat* is such, that the one cannot be pull'd up without the other; *both must grow together till the Harvest.*

*Harvest.* Such a Difference as God will make at the last Day, cannot now be made by us.

We may safer let the *Righteous* and *Wicked* go together, as if all were *Righteous*, when we cannot prove the contrary; And we do not therein make a *false Judgment*: we do not judge, *that it is certain*, that such and such are *Sincere*, and truly *Godly*, but that it is probable *they may be so*. And we may have a stronger Confidence concerning the *Sincerity* of *Some*, while we have only probable Hopes of *Others*; yea with such Hopes there may be some Fear of their *Hypocrisie* joyned, when yet there is not sufficient Evidence against Such, to bar them from the *Lord's Table*; much less to exclude them, after once they are Admitted to such a Privilege. A seemingly serious Profession, if not contradicted by a contrary Profession of Words or Actions, is the Evidence of Men's Interest in *Church-Privileges*, \* *in Foro Ecclesie*. *Charity believeth all things, and hopeth all things.*

2. You ought first in Charity to reprove the guilty Persons, as you have Opportunity, and to acquaint the Pastors of the Churches, that they may deal faithfully with them, in order to their Repentance: And Several by such means may be brought to give you Satisfaction concerning their true Repentance, and Amendment. But there are many, who are so far from this that, on the contrary, they

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\* See Mr. Baxter's third Disput. Of Right to Sacraments, 4<sup>o</sup>.

solicite and tempt Men to Sin, if they know they come to the Lord's Table, that they may find occasion to reproach Religion: And others applaud and consent with such as do this, that they may shame Religion by the Irregularities, and Excesses of some that profess it. Such have a dreadful Account to give to God. And so have they, who come to the Lord's Table, and yet by their Drunkenness, or Unfaithfulness, their Worldliness, or Unrighteousness, or any disorderly walking, do give occasion to such an Objection, and open the mouths of Enemies to reflect Dishonour, and Reproach upon the Profession of Religion in General, and upon that particular Church or Congregation, unto which they are joined. Such have a *double Guilt* to answer for, and woe be to them, if they do not Repent. Such as these we often warn, not to *come to the Lord's Table*, till they give some *good Testimony* of their *Repentance*, and so far as they are known, they ought to be refus'd.

3. If you know of a *purer Communion*, where there are *none but Saints*, at least such as you are strongly confident to be so; rather go and joyn with them, and Communicate there, but do not live in the *Neglect and Omission of this Duty*. For I am not pleading for any particular Church, or Society of Christians, but only speaking of the Duty in general, of all sincere Christians, to joyn somewhere, for the Participation of this *Ordinance*. If you are scrupulous

scrupulous as to the *Company* admitted in some *Christian Assemblies*, and know of *Others*, which you think are *purer*, where you believe you can *statedly Communicate more to your Edification*, do it with out Delay. You are allowed by God, (and at present by the *Laws of the Land* too) to chuse your own *Pastor*.

4. However you ought to consider, *That it is impossible but some Hypocrites, and false Professors, will be Admitted to the Lord's Table.* Not only as *Pride, and Covetousness, and Envy,* and some such *Sins* are hard to be defined, so as to convince a particular Person, that in a prevailing Degree he is guilty of these: Not only as it is hard to determine what particular Acts, now and then, of grosser Sins, are consistent with *true Grace*: But because the *Tares* and *Wheat* are mixt together in the visible Church, and *All are not Israel that are of Israel.* If we will Communicate with *none but Saints*, there is no Church on Earth we can joyn with, without Fear and Doubting. So that if the Errors and Faults of the *Pastors*, or of the *People*, with whom we joyn in the *Worship of God*, do defile us, and make us guilty; or if our Communion with them upon that account, be a Sin, we should joyn *no where at all.*

'Tis true, If the *Doctrine, Ordinances, and Worship* of any Church be so corrupted, as that *the Substance of the Worship* is unlawful, Separation is a Duty: For when any Thing *sinful* is required of us, as necessary to our

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*Communion*; in such Cases, *Separation is a Christian's Duty*. \* But to keep from the *Ordinance*, because some come *unworthily to it*, hath no *Order* or *Command* of *Christ* to warrant it. Though he had many Things against the *Seven Asian Churches*, *Rev. 2. 3.* yet he did not call them to *separate*; but there are *Promises* to them, if they keep themselves *pure*.

5. If it be *unavoidable* to Communicate with some such, as are not *sincere Christians*, then to do so is *not unlawful*. Every one is to *Examine himself*; so says the *Apostle* to these *Corinthians*, among whom there were so many *unworthy Communicants*; and if they *Eat and Drink unworthily*, they did *Eat and Drink Judgment to Themselves*. Though the *Apostle* speaks of the *Profanation* of that *Ordinance* by *Some*, he does not bid *Others* *Withdraw*, and *Separate* upon that Account. *Christ* hath commanded thee to *Examine thy self*, and so *Eat*; but it is not necessary, thou shouldst *Examine* and *know* the *fitness* of all *Others*. How would you know when to *Communicate*, if we may not do it, till we know *Others be prepared as well as we*. Great *Strictness*, and *Severity* should be used in *Judging of our selves*, and *our own Case*; but we must use *Great Charity*, and *Tenderness*, as to the *Case of Others*: and not conclude them *Hypocrites*, when we cannot tell but they truly *Repent*. But if they

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\* See Mr. Vines, *On the Lord's Supper*, Chap. 20.

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they do not, their Presence cannot pollute me, if I endeavour to discharge my Duty, by *personal, private Reproof*; and then if that be *unsuccessful*, with *Others*, and afterwards by acquainting the Pastors of the Church, &c.

If I have Right to *come to the Lord's Table*, shall the coming of Another that has *none*, bar my Right? Shall I sin in keeping from the *Ordinance*, because another sins in coming to it? Or because the Church, or the Pastor sins in not Excluding of him? The Power of the Keys is not in my Hand, I have no Authority to cast out such a Member. And though that particular Pastor, or Church should be faulty in not doing of it, it is not yet a sufficient ground of my *Separation*, Rev. 2. 14, 15, 20. If I have a *Wedding Garment*, I will come to the *Marriage Feast*, though there should be Others there that have *none*. Should not I *offer my Gift at the Altar*, because my Neighbour comes there with me, who should *first go, and be reconciled to his Brother*? I may *relish and digest my Food*, though there is one who sits by me, who hath a *weak Stomach and a bad Digestion*. If I am duly prepared, it will not hurt me that Another is not: Whilst I partake not of other Mens Sins, surely I may joyn with them, in the Performance of necessary Duties.

I say not, *That the Wicked and the Unregenerate ought to come*; you often hear me declare the contrary: such are *forbidden to come*. But if they will come under a *false profession*, and *shew of Religion*, after having been forewarned

of their Danger, and been faithfully told their Duty: It is at their own Peril, and they eat and drink *Judgment to themselves*, and to no Body else: For, *neither a Minister of Christ, nor a private Christian, can deny Communion with several persons, who if they would judge righteous Judgment concerning themselves, ought to tarry away*: As having no Right before God to *come to the Table of the Lord*, as the Case is with them at present.

In short, It is unlawful to Communicate with Wicked Men, if they be so bad, and their Number so great, as that it is our Duty to forsake such a Church: If Heresie and Impiety be justified by the Major Vote, and bare down *Faith and Godliness*, then that particular *Society* is incapable of the Ends of *Church-Communion*, and so to joyn there, would be sinful. But in Cases of lesser Irregularity, if we do not sin by the Neglect of our Duty, it will be no Sin of ours to Communicate with that Church, though Unworthy Persons be Admitted. The Sins of the Pastor, and of particular Delinquents, are not ours; much less may we refuse Communion upon the Account of other Men's Faults, when we have not done our Duty in order to the Remedy and Cure of them.

2. *Object*. But others will say, *I am truly afraid to venture; the Danger of Unworthy Receiving is so very great, that it makes me tremble to consider it: I have been many Years frighted with your Text*; That he that Eats and Drinks Unworthily



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worthily, Eats and Drinks *Damnation* to himself.

*Ansiv.* 1. The Word which we translate *Damnation*, signifies only *Judgment*, or *Punishment* in the general, and so is used in several places. What *Judgment* therefore is meant, the *Context* must determine; And that speaks principally of *Temporal Punishments*; for such are mentioned, *Verse 30.* as inflicted on the *Corinthians*, for the Profanation of this Ordinance. *For this cause some of you are sick and weak, and many are fallen asleep.* Besides, the Reason that is assigned for these *Punishments*, or *Judgments*, was, *That they might not be condemned with the World*, *Verse 32.* *For when we are judged,* says the *Apostle*; It is the same word; it may be as well Rendred *Damned*, as that in the Text, *Damnation.* But when we are judged, *we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the World.* God did thus judge, or punish the *Corinthians* in this World, that they might be Reformed, and not perish Eternally. So that he who *Eats and Drinks Unworthily*, may fear lest his Contempt and Profanation of the Ordinance, be followed by some Remarkable *Judgment of God*, at least it was so in the *Apostles* time.

2. Consider, further, *That the Disorders committed by the Corinthians, and occasioned by their Love-Fests, that preceded the Lord's Supper; They were such as were peculiar to those*

*Times, and are now Abolish'd and disus'd.* Christians then Feasted by themselves in their Religious Assemblies, in Imitation of what the *Heathens* did in their *Idol-Temples*. The Rich sent in their own Provisions, and every one contributed to this Feast, by bringing some Portion; but there they banded into several Parties as they came, without tarrying one for another, and feeding lovingly together: Every one fell to that Portion of Meat which he brought, as if they were at home, when it should have been divided in Common, and the Poor have had their share: *Whereas*, says the *Apostle*, *Some are hungry, and others intemperate, and drunken.* This they are taxed with in the 22. Ver. *What*, says he, *have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?* They made little or no Difference between *these Love-Feasts*, and the *Lord's Supper* at the close of them; between *these Sacred Symbols* of our *Lord's Body and Blood*, and *common Food and Drink*. They were in the *House and Worship of God*, just as in their own, and made no *Distinction* between this and a *common Meal*. Nay, it was worse, They turned this *Ordinance* into a *drunken Club*, or a *Riotous Entertainment*, making it an *Instrument* and *Occasion* of *Debauchery*. This was *Eating and Drinking Unworthily indeed*; and no wonder if God did so severely punish them for it. The *Apostle Jude* taxes *these Love-Feasts*, Verse 12. But there is no danger of such *Excesses* at the *Lord's Table* now, or of *Eating and Drinking Unworthily*

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*Unworthily* in the same manner as the *Corinthians* did.

3. If we take *Damnation* for *Eternal Punishment*, which *Unworthy Receiving* does without *Repentance* expose to: Yet consider, that the *Wages of every Sin is Eternal Death*. And you have the same Reason to be afraid of *Other Sins*, because you run the same Hazard. *The Sacrifices of the Wicked, God abhors*; And the very *Prayers of the Hypocrite, are an Abomination to him*. But,

4. Consider, That by *eating and drinking his own Damnation*, the Apostle does not mean, that every such Person shall *certainly and inevitably be damned*; but that (*without Repentance*) it is a *damning Sin*. Unworthy eating is so, and so is sinful abstaining too, without *Repentance*. And why so much *Tenderness* in the one Case, and not in the other? No Man needs be blamed for being unwilling to *Damn himself*: But why should Men be fearful of it in this Instance, and not in others? *Infidelity, Disobedience, and Impenitence*, will as certainly expose a Man to *Damnation, without the Sacrament*, as *with it*. And they cannot fairly urge the *Fear of Damnation* against coming to it, who are not restrained thereby from *other Sins*, as *damning as this*.

5. That therefore which the Apostles words will most properly infer, and direct us to, is  
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this, That since we are required, in Obedience to *Christ*, to do this *in remembrance* of him, and yet such severe Punishments are threatned to those that do it unworthily; The plain consequence is this, That *we should not omit it, because of the Command; nor yet carelessly undertake it, because of the threatned Judgment.* But it will by no means excuse, or plead for the total Neglect, and Omission of it.

'Tis plain, the Apostle never thought that the Sin and danger of doing a Duty amiss, might be made an Exception against the doing it at all; or that threatning Damnation to eating and drinking *unworthily*, should scare Men from eating and drinking at all. He takes what care he can, that the Duty may be perform'd, and the Error in doing it, may be effectually prevented: But never makes the Danger of the one a Dispensation from the other. He tells them of *the Sin*, to eat and drink *unworthily*, and of *the punishment* it makes 'em obnoxious to, but he doth not therefore tell 'em, they may stay away from the Sacrament, for fear of committing *the Sin*, or of incurring *the Danger*: Not even in that Case, where they were actually Guilty, and really Punisht.

6. You ought to consider, That you will but increase your Sin, and aggravate your Damnation, by all the other Duties of Religion, and other parts of Divine Worship, if you continue *Impenitent*. You are often told, that you

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you ought not to come to this Table, till you Repent, and turn to God in Christ with all your Heart, and give up your selves intirely to be the Lord's: But if you do not Resolve to do so, the same Argument will hold for the neglect of Prayer, and other parts of Divine Worship: All these will aggravate your Sin; But the Possibility of doing other Services of Religion amiss, is not counted a sufficient Reason for the not doing 'em.

After all such Pretences and Excuses, there is too much Reason to think, that the most are afraid of coming to this Ordinance, lest the preparing for it, and the consequent Duties which they know, are required, should interrupt their Sensual Pleasures, or their inordinate Prosecution of the World, and oblige them to leave their Sins, which, as yet, they have no mind to part with. Such as these ought not to come indeed, they have other work *first* to do: They are *first* called to *Repentance*, and *Faith* in Christ, and afterwards to *the Communion of his Body and Blood*. They are called to understand, and own their *Baptismal Covenant*, by the Answer of a good Conscience, and then to *renew it* at the Table of the Lord. This Privilege belongs not to them, till they have truly repented, and forsaken Sin, and yielded themselves to be the Lord's.

3. *Object.* but others are ready to say, *I would come, and have had many a Thought about it; But I doubt of my own Sincerity, and the Truth*  
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of my Grace; I know it is *Childrens Bread*, and I am not certain I am one of that number. *And does not the Apostle tell us, That he that doubteth, is damned if he eat? Now I doubt whether I am passed from Death to Life or no; May such a one as I venture to come, who have no Assurance that I am in a State of Grace? Are all those Unworthy, and unfit to come, who come in any other State of Soul, than they think they may safely die in?*

Several things may be said in Answer to this.

1. That many mistake the Nature of *true Faith and Sincerity*, and think, if they have not *Assurance of the Love of God*, that therefore they have no true Faith. They make saving Justifying Faith to consist, in believing the special Love of Christ to their Souls, in believing that their Sins are pardoned, and that they are in Christ. But this is a dangerous Mistake, which one would wonder, under such clear Light as we enjoy, should be so *Common*.

For how unspeakable is the Difference between the Truth of Grace, and the Knowledge of its being true; between a hearty Consent to the *Terms of the Covenant*, and the *Reflex Act of Faith*, so as to be able to say, *I know my Interest in the Covenant*. Many a false Professor may flatter himself, that his Faith is true, when it is not; and many an Upright Christian may doubt and question, *Whether he be one or no?* But the Latter shall one Day be ashamed of their

their *Fears*, as the *Former* of their *Hopes*. The *Lord* knoweth *who* are *his*, when many that are *His*, do not know it *themselves*. And if a *Minister* of *Christ* will ask a few *home close Questions* of such *doubting, trembling Christians*, by which their *heartly Consent* to the *Covenant* may be judged of: Their *Answers* plainly shew, *That they believe in Christ, and love him above all the World, and regard no Iniquity in their Hearts*; And yet will continue to doubt of their *Integrity*, though the *Bent* of their *Hearts*, and the *Endeavours* of their *Lives*, do abundantly prove that they are *Sincere*.

2ly. However, it may ordinarily be known *whether your Faith be of the right kind or no; and whether you are Upright towards God or no*. We are bid to *Examine, and Search, and try, and prove our selves*, in order to it; that we may find the *Mark and Impress* of *God* upon our *Souls*, the *Fruits of the sanctifying Spirit* there, and so *have Rejoycing in our selves, and not in another*. It is so far from being unlawful to collect *Comfort* from the *Marks and Signs* of our *Sanctification*, and to prove our *Union* to *Christ*, and *Justification* that way; that it is the very *Method* of the *Gospel*, to direct us to know our *State* towards *God*, by thus looking inward, to find the *Image of Christ upon the Soul*, and by observing the *Fruits of the Spirit in a godly Conversation*.

Such *doubting Christians* would do well to *Consult* some *Faithful Minister* of *Christ*, and  
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Represent the State of their own Case, what they feel; that so they may be told what it doth signifie, and be help'd to judge of themselves.

It is granted, that you know how it is with you, better than any Minister can do: For, as \* One well expresses it, *A Patient knows better than any Physician what he feels; but a Physician when he hears it, can tell from what Cause it comes, and what is the Nature of the Disease, and what is like to come of it, and what is the proper Method for a Cure.*

There is a great deal of Reason, why you should expect and hope for the Resolution of your Doubts in such Cases, by consulting some Minister of Christ; especially him, under whose Ministry you have chosen to place yourselves, as the Helper of your Faith, and Joy.

3. The Penitent Christian, *though he want Assurance*, is Accepted of God, and hath Right to this *Ordinance*, whether he believe it or no. If you unfeignedly consent to the *Covenant of Grace*, and with an humble penitent Sense of your past Sins, are willing and desirous to close with Christ, on the Terms of the Gospel, *That God shall be your God, and Christ your Redeemer and Lord, and the Holy Spirit your Sanctifier and Guide*; If you are willing, heartily willing, to give up your selves to be instructed,

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\* Mr. Baxter.



ed, ruled, and saved by him : *This is the very Heart of saving Faith.* And if this be your Character, *you are the Members of Christ, and ought to come to the Lord's Table:* For though your Timorousness, and present Scruples may make you Suspend for a-while, they cannot deprive you of *your Right to the Ordinance;* nor disoblige you from the Duty of coming to it. For *All such who unfeignedly consent to the Covenant, they may, and ought to come, to signify their Consent, and to receive the Seal of the Covenant.*

4. Every Christian ought to endeavour to know his State; lest they be distracted between the *Hopes of God's Acceptance of them on the one Hand,* and the *Fears of coming Unworthily on the other.* Because they doubt of their *Worthiness,* they fear to come: And because they have *some good Hope,* they dare not stay away, lest they neglect their Duty.

The proper Remedy, is to Resolve Unfeignedly *to please God, and obey him in this, and all other Instances;* and then *do this in Remembrance of Christ, as what all his Followers are obliged to do.* It may be that Ignorance of thy State, from whence thy Doubts proceeds, is owing to the Neglect of *Self-Examination,* and the use of proper Means to know thy Self.

5. It may yet be Adviseable for *some melancholy tempted Persons,* under some perplexing Doubts, to stay away for a-while, till they have competently

competently over-come their *Fear*; lest they should get more *hurt* than *good*, and be even swallowed up with *Desperation*, should they come; while they use better Means to be acquainted with themselves. It is better for them to do so, than that all the *Hypocrites*, and *Impenitent Persons* in the Congregation, should be told, it is their Duty to come to the Lord's Table, if they can but make themselves *uncertain*, whether they be *Impenitent* or no.

6. However, he that, upon the best Search and Examination of himself, as to his Heart and Life, can say, *That it is true, I am not certain, that my Heart is sincere with God in his Covenant; yet I must say, (and blessed be God that I can say it, ) that as far as I know my own Heart, I think I do truly Repent of all my past Sins, and that I do unfeignedly consent to the Covenant; I am not fully sure, but so far as I know my own Heart, I do.* Such a one may come to the Lord's Table, and find Welcom.

And the Truth is, if None should come but such as have *full Assurance*, and a *Certainty* of their *Salvation*; I think in most places there would be *very few Communicants*: very many of you, that do come would tarry away, and ought to do so, and I should sometimes be one of the Number.

7. As to the *Apostle's* Expression, *Rom. 14. 24. He that doubts is damned if he eat.* In the Original it is, *Is self condemned.* But it is  
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not meant of eating at the Lord's Table, but of eating Meats, which he doubts whether it be lawful to eat of, when at the same time he knows it is lawful to forbear. In cases of such indifferent things, the safest course is to forbear; but in a Case of Duty, your doubting alone will not disoblige you: Else Men might give over any Duty, without Sin, if they are but blind, or erroneous enough to doubt whether it be a Duty. If thou art a real upright Christian, though a doubting one, thy doubts will not make the neglect of this Ordinance not to be a Sin.

8. Be sure of this, *He that endeavours not, to know his State, and to be prepared to come to this Ordinance, he lives in continual Sin.* Let them consider it, who fright themselves with the danger of coming unworthily, but seldom think of the Sin and Danger of not coming at all. He that continues in his Sin, and will adventure to eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup, he shall be judged and punished; and so shall he that stays away, and will not pay this part of Homage and Worship unto Christ, which he requires of all his Followers, in Remembrance of his dying Love: He who is not fit company for Christ, and the Faithful, at this Feast of Love, cannot be in a good and safe condition. His Business is to Repent, and to get Ready.

9. Let weak Christians, who have some Doubts remaining, consider, *That this Ordinance is appointed for an help to weak Faith.* The

Seals of the Covenant are for greater Confirmation to us, *That the Heirs of the Promise might have abundant Consolation.* In this Sacrament God speaks more solemnly, more particularly, more affectionately to us, for the help of our Faith. A sealed Pardon is here offered to every one by Name. *That which is spoken in general by the preaching of the Word, is here particularly applied to individual persons.* And usually the sincerely Penitent get Relief and Comfort, against their Doubts, and Jealousies, and Fears, by Obedience to Christ in this Ordinance. To Allude to that Expression, Luke 24. 30. *Christ was known to his Disciples in breaking of Bread.* I say Allude to it, for I question whether that was *Sacramental Bread*; though \* some plead strongly for it.

Lastly, If we have any good Hope through Grace notwithstanding some Remaining Doubts and Fears; though we cannot come with Assurance, we may come humbly and penitently. We may give up our selves again to God in Christ as *his Servants*, though we cannot say certainly, *that he is our Saviour.* We are Sinners, and need a Pardon; we are penitent Sinners, and are desirous of one. If we do not know we are pardoned Sinners, yet let us come penitently, *humbling our selves before him, under the sense of our Vileness,* as knowing we  
need

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\* Dr. Bury, and others.

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*need a Saviour to Reconcile and Justifie us. Let us look upon him as the Saviour, whom we have pierced, whom we have crucified, if we cannot look upon him as Ours in special Covenant. Let us take shame to our selves, and acknowledge the Guilt of our Sin, though we cannot apply the Comfort of his Salvation. You may come (\* faith One) with brokenness of Heart for Sin, when you cannot come with the Joy and Rejoycing of Assured Believers. You may hunger and thirst after Righteousness, and have earnest, eager, fervent Desires after him; though you cannot, dare not, Glory in him as yours.*

Let us therefore Apply our selves to him *as we can*, though we cannot Apply him to our selves *as we would*. Let us stir up the Grace that is in us, do our best, use the weak Faith we have, and say, Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. I cannot say, it may be, with the Apostle, *That the Life I live, is by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*: But I can say with the same Apostle, in another place, *That this is a Faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, That Christ came into the World to save Sinners, of whom I am Chief*. I cannot say as yet, *My beloved is mine*; But I

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must

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must say, I will say, that *I am his*; I resolve to be so, *wholly, only, entirely, unreservedly, everlastingly his*. Lord, *I am thine*, says David; *O save me, for I am thine*. It would be more comfortable if we could say, *Lord, thou art mine*; *Thou hast accepted me in thy Christ, Thou hast placed thy Image and Love upon me, and Adopted me into thy Family*. But though I cannot say, *Thou art thus mine*; yet this I can say, *I am thine by my own Choice, I am thine by the Resignation of my self, and all I have to thee; I am thine by entire Devotedness to thee, and sincere Desire to please thee: I am thine, and if thou cast me off, and reject me, and I perish for ever; there shall one perish that was heartily resolved to be the Lord's; and this I hope, believe, and know, shall never be*.

To conclude therefore, *You that want Assurance, who are filled with Doubts and Fears concerning your State, and therefore keep from the Lord's Table, you must endeavour to come in this manner*. For my own part, I must profess, ( though I hope it is better with some *stronger Christians* ) that this *last mentioned Particular* is very often to me, the Support and stay of my Soul. And thanks be to God, if in the Sincerity of our Hearts we can reach this; we may then expect to meet with *Welcome, and Consolation*. But if we do not, though we should never have sensible Consolation, and full Assurance, and raised Joys, at the *Table of the Lord*, never while we live; yet the *Authority of Christ* requiring

## Of Unworthy Receiving. 165

quiring us, *To do this in Remembrance of him*, should be enough to determine our Practice, against all the little Cavils and Objections, that may be made against it. O let us not be wanting in our Duty, and *the God of Love and Grace*, who is *the Father of Mercies*, and *our Gracious Redeemer*, of whose Compassion we have had such large and dear Experience, will never be wanting to those, who diligently and sincerely seek him.

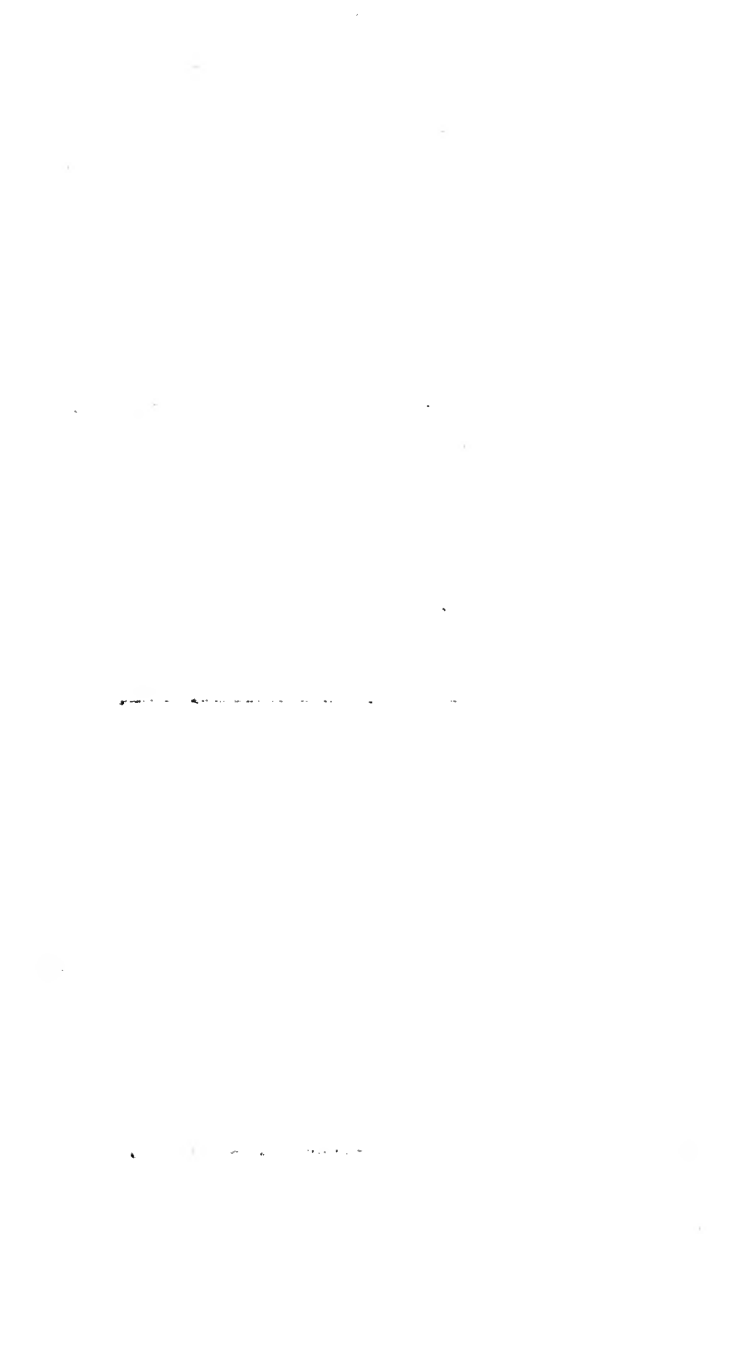
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*The Sixth Discourse,*

After the LORD'S SUPPER.

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O F

CHRIST'S Last Passover,

And its Accomplishment.

From LUKE XXII. 15, 16, 17, 18.

*With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you, before I suffer.*

*For I say unto you, I will not anymore eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.*

*And he took the Cup, and gave Thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among your selves.*

*For I say unto you, I will not drink of the Fruit of the Vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come.*

**G**reater Love hath no Man than this, saith our Blessed Lord, than to lay down his Life for his Friend; To part with that for Another, which, of all things, is the dearest, and the most va-

luable to himself. In all Ages of the Christian Church, there have been some, ready to give this proof of their Love to *Him*, who spake these words, by not loving their Lives unto the Death, when they stood in Competition with their Fidelity to *Christ*. And with how much the greater Chearfulness and Alacrity, Willingness and Desire, they did it; by so much the more powerful, and constraining was the Principle of Love. By this we may make some Judgment, what manner of Love it was, wherewith the Lord Redeemer loved us, when *He gave Himself for us an Offering, and a Sacrifice of a sweet swelling Odour unto God.* The *Voluntariness* of his Sacrifice, argued the *Excellency* of his *Incomparable Love*.

Though *his Death* was *Necessary*, with respect to the Eternal Purpose and Appointment of Heaven, For it was by *the determinate Counsel of God*, that the *Messiah* should suffer Death; And though it were *Violent*, with respect to the Instrumentality of Men in his Crucifixion, *they did it with wicked hands*: Yet with reference to himself, *his Death* was *voluntary*, He made a willing Sacrifice of his own Life; *He laid it down*; None else could have taken it from him. *He gave himself a Ransom, He became Poor, He made himself of no Reputation, He poured out his Soul unto Death*, It was not rent from him. *He was obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross.* This gave an extraordinary Value to his Sufferings: Upon this depended the Merit of his Sacrifice, and the Efficacy

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ficacy of his Blood. And *this* is one endearing Circumstance, which heightens his Love, and calls for our thankful Admiration.

He willingly offered himself in the first Council of Peace about our Redemption, and undertook to suffer for us, and make satisfaction to Divine Justice. And after his Incarnation, he always knew, and frequently foretold his own Sufferings and Death. He reproves *Peter*, as if he acted the Devil's part, when he would have dissuaded him from it. Yea, he most certainly desired this most bloody Baptism, *I have a Baptism to be Baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?* Luke 12. 50. The night before his Sufferings, he makes his Last Will and Testament, and leaves it with his Disciples, Giving *his Blood* to drink in the Sacrament, to show, how willingly he would pour *it* out the next day upon the Cross. And on this Account he so earnestly desired to eat *this Passover*, which the Text speaks of, because it was *the last*, before he should suffer *Death*. And afterwards, even the same Evening, he goes out into the *Garden*, where he knew he should be betray'd; And so in effect, he brings himself to the Door of the Tabernacle, to be offered to God a Sacrifice for us.

*With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you, before I suffer.* As if he had said, The Sufferings I have so often spoke of, are now approaching; The hour is at hand, when I shall be betray'd and Crucifi'd; This is *the last Passover*

*Passover* I shall ever keep with you, before I am lifted up from the Earth; And therefore I most earnestly desire it, because it is *the last*, that will precede my Death: Whereby I shall put an end to these legal Services, which have all along referr'd to me, and to the Sacrifice and Oblation I am to make for Sin. Henceforth I will eat and drink no more of the *Passover* Supper, for my own Sufferings and Death is that which they signified, and related to. I am the true *Paschal Lamb*, All the Rites and Observances about the killing, and eating of it, were but Typical of my Passion, and shall now be fulfilled.

And here, 1. shall consider *the Passover*, which our Lord desired to eat of. 2. His ardent *Desire* to eat of this *Passover*, and the Reason of it. 3. The *Company* with whom he desired to eat it, *With you*. 4. The *Time* when, *Before I Suffer*. 5. *The Accomplishment of it in the Kingdom of God*. What we are to understand by *the Kingdom of God*, and what by *the Fulfilling of it* therein. 6. His Resolution and Declaration, *That he would eat and drink no more so, till it were Accomplished*. Lastly, *Some Reflections of Truth, and Duty*, as the *Application* of the whole.

1. Concerning *the Feast of Passover*, You have the Institution of it. *Exod. 12.* the beginning. Where we find, that it was appointed by God, as a Memorial of the *Israelites* Slavery in *Egypt*, and their Deliverance out of it.

it. Former Miracles having been unsuccessful upon *Pharaoh*, God intends to slay all the First-born of *Egypt* in one Night; whereby, in part, the Curse of God pronounc'd on *Cham*, is executed on his Posterity, *viz.* the *Egyptians*; in destroying All the First-born of both Man and Beast. The *Israelites* were ordered by *Moses* to slay a Lamb, on the Fourteenth Day of the First Month, which answers to our *March*, and to Sprinkle the Posts of their Doors with the Blood of that, and to feed upon the Flesh of it, in their several Families. That very Night the destroying Angel strikes the First-born of every Family, where this Command, of sprinkling the Door-posts with the Blood of the Lamb, was not observed. On this, you know, they were delivered out of *Egypt*, the *Egyptians* not only giving leave, but desiring them to be gone. And this Deliverance being the Foundation of the Jewish State, was to be perpetually observed by them in their Generations, and to be an Ordinance for ever, *Exod.* 12. 42.

The whole Institution of the *Paschal Lamb* is called by the Name of *the Passover*, though it refer especially to *the first Lamb in Egypt*, whose blood was sprinkled on the Door-posts of the *Israelites* Houses, when the destroying Angel passed them by. And the Reason of that Name, *Passover*, is because of *the Angel's passing by their Houses*, and their consequent Deliverance out of *Egypt*, passing out of the House of Bondage into Liberty. And nothing is

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is more usual, than to give to the *Cause* the Name of the *Effect*. Upon which Account *Christ* is called our *Righteousness, Wisdom, Resurrection, and Life, &c.* But the same Name, *Passover*, is also given to those Lambs which were slain *every Year* afterwards: This Feast being *Annually* observed, in remembrance of that Deliverance of theirs out of *Egypt*. This being a constant Memorial of *the first Passover*, has *the same Name* given it, with *that* to which it related. And this also is common in Scripture, to give the Name of *the thing signified*, to the *Sign* which represents it. So the Jews are said to kill the *Passover*, that is, *the Paschal Lamb*, which was in Remembrance of the Angel's passing by their Houses, and their consequent Deliverance out of *Egypt*. Thus *Circumcision* is called *the Covenant of God*, And *the Rock* in the Wilderness is called *Christ*, And the *Seven Candlesticks* in *St. John's* Vision, are the *Seven Churches*, That is, These are signified, and represented by them.

'Tis therefore very absurd for the *Romanists* to insist upon these Words, *This is my Body*, to prove, that the Substance of *Christ's* Flesh and Blood is in the Sacrament. They may as well argue, That the *Paschal Lamb* that *Christ* did eat with his Disciples, was *the same* with that which was slain by the *Israelites* in *Egypt*; Or that it was not an *Animal*, because it is called a *Passover*; Or that the *Paschal Lamb* was *Transubstantiated* into the *Flesh of Christ*, because

*Christ*

## Of Christ's Last Passover. 173

Christ is called *our Passover*, and sometimes called the *Lamb of God*, as well as *the Bread* in the Sacrament called *his Body*, and the *Wine* his *Blood*.

Before I leave this Head, I might mention the *Historical Evidence*, that agrees to that of the Holy Scriptures, concerning *the Israelites Passover in Egypt*, and the sprinkling of their Door-Posts with the Blood of the Lamb, in that Memorable Night of their Deliverance. For the better understanding whereof, we may consider,

1. That the *Jews*, after the Death of *Moses* and *Joshua*, were several times in Subjection to the Neighbouring Nations, and could not have had the Confidence to keep up such a Solemn Memorial of this thing every Year, if the Matter of Fact had not been known to the *Egyptians*, and their other Neighbours round about, to be true; which yet *the Jews* continued to observe every Year, till their last General Dispersion: And to this day they have something in Imitation of it, where-ever they are scattered upon the Face of the Earth. Besides this,

2. The Tribe of *Levi* were set apart by God, and consecrated to him in a Solemn manner, instead of *the First-born* of the People of *Israel*, that were preserved in *Egypt*, as you read, *Numb. 3. 12, 13.* For when I smote all the First-born in *Egypt*,

*Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the First-born of Israel, They are mine, and the Levites instead of them.* So that every Levite was a living Memorial of that Miracle.

3. Besides the constant Law enjoined upon the *Jews*, and observed to this day, concerning the *Redemption of every First-born* among them, and of unclean Beasts, *Numb. 18. 15.*

4. The Memory of the Death of *the First-born* in *Egypt*, which gave occasion to the Ceremony of the *Passover*, continued among the *Egyptians* even after the Death of Christ. For \* *Epiphanius* relates, “ That at the same time  
“ of the Year, the Night before the *Israelites*  
“ went out of *Egypt*, when the First-born in  
“ *Egypt* were slain, the *Egyptians* were wont  
“ to mark their Houses, their Trees, their  
“ Sheep, &c. with red; by that, as by a kind  
“ of *Talisman*, thinking to avoid some such  
“ Mischiefs and Calamity as their Fathers experienced at that time, and which the *Israelites* escaped, by following the Advice of  
“ *Moses*, to Sprinkle the Door-posts of their  
“ Houses with *Blood*. Some such Custom as  
“ this continued in *Egypt*, even after the  
“ Incarnation of Christ.

II. Having spoken thus much concerning the *Jewish Passover*, Let me now consider our  
Lord's

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\* *Heref. 18. adverb. Nazareos.*



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Lord's Desire to eat of it. *With desire have I desired to eat of this Passover before I suffer. With desire I have desired.* An usual Hebraism, to signify the earnestness and vehemency of his Desire. The Evangelist *Luke* hath many Instances of this, agreeable to other Expressions in other Places, as *Heb. 6. 14. In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee.* The Zeal, and Earnestness, and Ardency of his Desire is expressed by it: Agreeable to that fore-mentioned place, which referr'd to his Death and Sacrifice, *Luk. 12. 50. I have a Baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.* As if he could not live in Ease, have no Rest or Quiet, till he was made a Sacrifice. And that is the *first*, and great Reason of desiring this Passover,

1. Because this was to be *the Last before he Suffered.* Therefore he so earnestly desires it. The near approach of his Sufferings did not at all abate his Resolution, and Desire of Suffering, but rather gave an Edge to his Affection. He was so far from being disheartened by the near Prospect of his *Crucifixion*, that the nearer he comes to it, the more he desires it; And therefore desires to eat of *this Passover*, which was to be his *last*: And then makes his Last Will, and Institutes *this Supper* the same Evening, being desirous every thing should be dispatched, that was necessary or fit to be done before he Suffered.

It was the Last Night of his Life, and the Night wherein he was to be Betrayed, and foreknew he should be so. Other Passovers Prefigured his Death, this did both Prefigure, and Accompany it: For his Death was now in a manner present. 'Twas this that made him long, and desire to eat this Passover, Though at the same time he had so near a Prospect of his Amazing Sufferings in the Garden that Night, and on the Cross the next day. Could we understand the Agonies of his tormented Mind, that made him complain, *That his Soul was sorrowful, even unto death*, and Pray with doubled and trebled Importunity, *that the Cup might pass from him*; we may then judge of his Love in desiring to eat of *this Passover*, for this reason, because *his Last*.

2. Another Reason may be *To give us an Example of Obedience*: And therefore, being *made under the Law*, he would exactly observe it; And so for our sakes fulfil all Righteousness, as in many other Instances, of Subjection to his own Creatures, of paying Tribute to his own Subjects, &c. And, to teach us Humility, a little before this, he would wash the Feet of his own *Disciples*, with those Hands, which, just after this Passover, had all Power in Heaven and Earth Solemnly given into them.

And not only as to the *Moral Law*, But he stooped down to the very Fringes of the *Ceremonial*

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*monial Law*, as an Example of Obedience. And therefore the Skin of his Flesh was Circumcised, and his Holy Mother Purified : And he that was *the true Passover*, would keep *the Typical one*; And so, as one well expresses it, did obediently stand under his own Shadow.

3. One Reason of his Desire to eat of this Passover, might be, *to put an end to the Sacraments of the Legal Institution*. And therefore after the eating of the Passover, he instituted *the Lord's Supper*, which succeeds in its room; Which is a Feast upon the Sacrifice of Christ, the *True Lamb of God*, the *true Christian Passover*, in Remembrance of our Deliverance by Him from *Sin* and *Hell*, from *Death* and the *Devil*. Those things therefore that were but *Types* and *Shadows* of Him, must cease after his Death, the *Truth* and *Substance* of them being now accomplished, as I shall shew presently.

4. Another Reason might be, *That he might have Fellowship and Communion with his Disciples*. And that leads to the consideration of the Third thing,

III. The *Company*, with whom he desires to eat this his last Passover, *With You*. The *Jews* tell us concerning the Number of those that were to eat the Passover, That it was not to be under *Ten*, for the whole Lamb was to be eaten: Nor above *Twenty*, lest they should need two Lambs. Therefore our Lord sent

word to one of his Disciples, to prepare every thing for that Solemnity; that the House might be searched, if there were any *Leavened Bread* left in it: Which they were wont to do very carefully in every corner, saying, *Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast Sanctified us by thy Precepts*: And then throwing a little Dust into the Air, they used these words, or the like, *If there be any leavened Bread in this House, let it be as this dust, cast into the Air*. But the principal Reason of sending word before-hand, might be, because the Persons in the Family were to be numbred. And it is not improbable, but there were more Men, than the *Apostles*, and our *Lord*, who were present at the eating of this Passover, and it may be some Women too. For,

1. It is probable, That the *Man and his Family*, in whose House it was, did eat of the Passover with *Christ*, and his *Apostles*. *Secondly*, The Expressions of the *Evangelist* are very considerable, concerning him that should betray him. There is a *Threefold Gradation*; He says, first, in the General, *One of you shall betray me*: And afterwards he comes nearer, and says, *One of the Twelve*; Or, of my *Apostles*; (often so called,) So that at the eating of this Passover, there seemed to have been more present than the *Twelve Apostles*. And afterwards he particularizeth the Person, *He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish*. *Thirdly*, We read that the *Virgin Mary*, and two or three other  
Women,

Women, did usually accompany him, and were then at *Jerusalem*, to eat the Passover: For the next day, *the Virgin Mary* was standing by the Cross, when our Lord was Crucified. And it being the Jewish Custom, for the Relations to join together at the Passover Supper, it is not unlikely, that she did eat the Passover with Christ. And it being in the House of one of his Disciples, she might tarry there that Night, while he went out from thence, about *Eleven or Twelve a Clock* at Night into the Garden, where he was betrayed and taken: And she hearing of his being taken, might go to the High Priests Hall, and be at the Cross the next Morning, at *Nine a Clock*.

*With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you, before I Suffer. With You, You, my Disciples and Friends,* with whom I shall never eat another Passover. Notwithstanding the Prospect of his Approaching *Sufferings* and *Death*, He did not decline, but earnestly desire *Communion* and *Fellowship* with them in such an Ordinance:

When he gave them the *Cup*, 'tis observable he bids 'em *divide it among themselves*. The Scripture saith not, that he gave the *Elements* into every one of their particular hands, much less into their mouth, without their touching the *Bread* or *Cup*, with their own Hands: Except we will admit that *Christ chang'd the posture he was in*, and alway used at Meals (and the Scripture saith not he did,) how could he reach

it to so many, as Eleven Persons in the same Posture?

IV. Let us consider *the Time* when, *Before I Suffer*. There is a great Controversie about *the Time of this Passover*. It was certainly upon *Thursday-Night*, He being Crucified on the *Friday* in the *Forenoon*, though he did not give up the Ghost till *Three* in the *Afternoon*. But the Question will be, whether it was at *the same time*, that the *Jews* kept their *Passover*, or a *Day sooner*; And if it was a *Day sooner*, How could the *Paschal Lamb* be killed, which was to be brought to the Temple, and be killed by the Priests, *between the two Evenings* of the *Fourteenth* day, the first whereof began when the Sun began to decline, or as soon as *Mid-day* was past; The other *Evening* was after *Sun-set*. Some Learned Men think it is plain, That the Time when our Lord did eat this *Passover* with his Disciples, was the day before the Generality of the *Jews* kept theirs, from *Joh. 18. 28. Chap. 19. 14.*

For the better understanding of this, you must know that the Time for the Observation of the *Jewish Festivals*, was Regulated by the Appearance of the *New Moon*. They had not Almanacks \* *in those days, as we have now, to tell us beforehand, when will be a New-Moon.* But  
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\* Dr. Wallis of the Christian Sabbath, in Answer to Mr. Bampfild, Page 13.

## Of Christ's Last Passover. 181

(if we may believe the Jewish Writers) about the time when they expected a New Moon, they sent Men to watch for it on the Top of some Hill, or High place; and he who could first discover a New-Moon, was to tell the Priest, and he to Blow the Trumpet, to give the People notice, that there was a New-Moon. But, in case of Cloudy weather, if in Three days time, from their first expectation, no Man could see a New-Moon, they did then venture, (but not before) to blow the Trumpet without seeing it, which must needs cause a very great Uncertainty, and the same Moon be sooner seen at one place than at another, and the Passover kept accordingly.

So that sometimes there was a Mistake of One day, or more. Now it hath been \* proved, out of Epiphanius, and others, that there was a Contention and Tumult amongst the Jews, at this very Passover, concerning the Time, or the Day, wherein it was to be observed: And that the Senate had appointed a Day too late, and had not determined according to the True Phasis, or Appearance of the Moon: 'Tis manifest our Saviour kept the Passover on one Day, and the Generality of the Jews on another (perhaps he, about a Fortnight before, might see a New-Moon, a Day sooner than they did.) And therefore we may suppose our Lord, and the more Pious Jews, did not Approve of that

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\* Dr. Cudworth's Notion of the Lord's Supper, Page. 50, 70, &c,

Order of the *Senate*, but followed the true Appearance of *the Moon*, confirmed by sufficient, and assured Witnesses; The *Passover* being to be kept on *the Fifteenth Day*, from the Appearance of *the New-Moon*.

But you will say still, How could that Lamb be brought to *the Temple*, and killed there, if it were not on the same Day the *Jewish Passover* was generally Observed? Unto which it is Answered, *That either the Master of the Family, might be permitted on that day to kill the Lamb; Not all the Lambs, to be eaten by the Paschal Societies, were to be killed by the Priests at the Temple, and their Blood poured out upon, or at the Foot of the Altar; but some of 'em in stead of All. Or that as to this and other Feasts, whose Time depended upon this Determination, that it was usual, in Doubtful Cases, to permit the Feast to be Solemnized for two days together. Many Instances can be brought of this, out of the Writings and Practices of the Jews, and it is probable it was so now. It is certain it was the Night before he suffered, that he did thus eat the Passover, and the Day wherein Israel went out of Egypt. And it is a Tradition among the Jews, says Grotius, That then Israel should be delivered and redeemed in the Days of the Messiah, even on the same day, wherein they were delivered out of the House of Bondage in Egypt. Thus admirably did the Wisdom of God concur, to make the Antitype agree with the Type, as will appear more distinctly under the next Head.*



V. *The Accomplishment of this Jewish Passover in the Kingdom of God. For I say unto you, I will eat no more thereof, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. Which denotes it should be accomplished very shortly in that Kingdom: But Until will not argue, as if he should have afterwards eaten of it again. That will not follow, any more than that Michal, Saul's Daughter, had a Child after her Death, because it is said, She had no Child till the day of her Death.*

1. *What is meant by the Kingdom of God?*

2. *What by the Fulfilling of the Passover therein? And how, or wherein it was then Accomplished, and Fulfilled?*

1. *What are we to understand by the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven? Sometimes the expression is used for the Kingdom of Glory. Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God. Sometimes for his Providential Government, His Kingdom ruleth over all. Sometimes for the Execution of Judgment on the Nation of the Jews, Mark 9. 1. Some standing here shall not taste of Death, till they see the Kingdom of God come. But most usually it is taken for the Kingdom of Grace, in General, The Messiah's Kingdom, with what belongs thereto. The outward Means of Salvation are sometimes so called, Matth. 21. 43. If I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God, then is the Kingdom of God come unto you. The Internal*

nal Renovation of the Soul is also so expressed, *The Kingdom of God is within you, and cometh not with observation*, Luk. 17. 20, 21. The Essentials of Christianity are also expressed by this Phrase, Rom. 14. 17. *The Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*. But the Church-State, or the Evangelical Dispensation by the *Messiah*, is most commonly understood; As when *the Kingdom of God is said to be at Hand*, by the Preaching of Christ, and his Apostles. And no greater Prophet than *John the Baptist*, yet *the least in the Kingdom of Heaven*, or the meanest Minister of the *New Testament*, who Preacheth the Accomplishment of those things, which *the Baptist* saw but the beginning of, *is greater than John the Baptist*, for he died before the Sacrifice of Christ. So in this Text, our Lord says, *He will eat no more of the Passover, and drink no more of the Fruit of the Vine*, till it be accomplished *in the Kingdom of God*; that is, till what was represented in the *Figure*, and *Type* of the *Jewish Passover*, was really fulfilled by the *Messiah's* Offering himself a Sacrifice upon the Cross. Which Sacrifice and Death of Christ was supposed, and anticipated in the Lord's Supper, as the first Institution of this New Kingdom, or Gospel-Dispensation, *My Body broken for you*. And this brings me to consider,

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2. *The Fulfilling of this Passover, in the Kingdom of God, Or the Accomplishment of the Legal Passover, when Christ, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the Sins of the World, was Sacrificed for us. And here we may consider in the General,*

1. That something more than the *History* was intended.

2. That these things did refer to the *Messiah*.

3. That the Faithful under the Old Testament did so regard them.

1. It is certain, that somewhat more than *the History* was designed. All the Sacrifices and Ceremonies of the *Mosaick Institution*, were but *Shadows of good things to come, But the Substance is Christ*, Colos. 2. 17. He is so even of the *Jewish Passover*: For the *Jews* can never assign any pertinent and solid Reason of the Passover-Rites, if there were no Reference to the *Messiah*. What need of the Choice and Separation of a *Lamb* in that manner? What Vertue could there be in *the killing* of one, and the Sprinkling their Door-posts with *his Blood*? What Influence could That have on their Deliverance out of *Egypt*? Could not God distinguish the Houses of *the Isrealites*, from those of *the Egyptians* without this? No Reason can well be assign'd of such Rites and Orders, but by the Doctrine  
of

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of the *New Testament*: These things are thereby discover'd to be Excellent Emblems of the great Mystery of our Lord's Death.

2. The whole Design therefore of *this Passover-Feast*, had an *Aspect* upon the *Messiah*, and does Admirably Represent the Death and Sufferings of Christ, *the Lamb of God*, Sacrificed for us; By whose *Blood* we have a Spiritual Deliverance from *Sin* and *Satan*; as by the *Blood* of the *Paschal Lamb*, they had a Deliverance from the *destroying Angel*; and afterwards a Deliverance from *Egyptian Bondage*. Even the *History of the Institution of this Passover*, shows a manifest Reference to *Jesus Christ*: For we read, *Exod. 12. 46.* concerning the *Paschal Lamb*; *Neither shall ye break a Bone therefore.* And this is said to be fulfilled in *Christ* the *Antitype*, as if pronounced immediately of him, *John 19.* *When the Souldiers found him dead, they brake not his Bones, as of the other two.* And it follows *These things were done, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which says, A Bone of him shall not be broken.*

The *Faithful* under the *Old Testament* did so regard these Things: And therefore *Moses*, who esteemed *the Reproach of Christ* as *greater Riches than the Treasures of Egypt*, and therefore did know him, is said to have kept the *Passover in Faith*, *Heb. 11. 28.* In which Chapter, the *Apostle* speaks all along of *Faith in the Mediator*, and not of *Faith in God simply.* But,

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2. Let us consider more particularly, how these things, with Relation to the *Jewish Passover*, were accomplished by Christ, as the *Lamb of God* to take away Sin. And that will appear, if we consider *four Things*.

1. *The Person of Christ as our Passover, or Paschal Lamb.*

2. *His Sufferings, and Sacrifice.*

3. *The Fruits and Benefits of them to us.*

4. *The Way and Manner of our Participation of these Benefits.*

1. *The Person of Christ, who is the true Paschal Lamb.* I shall not stay to consider the Resemblance of his Character, to a *Lamb*, for *Meekness*, for *Patience*, for *Submission*, and *Obedience*: He was brought as a *Lamb to the Slaughter*, and as a *Sheep before the Shearers is dumb*, so he opened not his Mouth. Nor, that the *Paschal Lamb* was to be *without Blemish*, sound and entire, without Bruise or Maim; Thus holy was our Lord in his Conception, and Birth, and in all the Actions of his Life; *A Lamb without blemish, and without spot*, 1 Pet. 1. 19. *Holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from Sinners*, Heb. 7. 26. Nor how the *Lamb* was set apart, and chosen for *three days*, and killed the *fourth*; answered by Christ's being set apart to his *Prophetic Office*, wherein he manifested himself for about *three years*, before he offered himself a  
Sacrifice

Sacrifice in the *fourth year*. Those that write concerning the *Types*, are large upon this Subject.

2. We may consider his *Passion*, and *Sufferings*, the Fulfilling of it as to his *Death*, and the *Time* of it. The *Paschal Lamb* was to be *Roasted with Fire*; Which might not only put them in mind of the Hardships they endured, in the *Brick-Kilns* of *Egypt*; but Prefigure the *Sufferings of Christ*, as *Crucified* and *Pressed*, when *his Strength was dried up like a Potsbeard*, and *his Tongue did cleave to his Jaws*, Psal. 22. 15. The *Time* also of his *Suffering* agreed with the *Time* of the *Jewish Passover*, *About the Ninth Hour*, or *Three a Clock* in the *Afternoon*, the usual *Time* that the *Passover* was to be *Killed*.

3. As to the *Fruits and Effects* of his *Sacrifice*, there is a further *Accomplishment* of the *Type*: For the *destroying Angel* is diverted from the *Israelites Houses*. The *Blood* of a *Lamb* could not *Merit*, or procure this, but as it *Represented* the *Blood of the Messiah*: Whereby the *Wrath of God is quenched*, and *we delivered from Satan the great Destroyer*. And as this was the *Earnest* of their *Deliverance* from their *Bondage* in *Egypt*; by the *Death of Christ* we are set free from a much worse *Slavery*.

4. Consider the *Manner*, how we partake of the *Benefit*, and *Fruits* of *Christ's Sacrifice*. Our *Hearts* must be *sprinkled with the Blood of Christ*,

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as the *Israelites* were to sprinkle the Blood of the Lamb, on the Door-post of their Houses. They were to feed upon the Flesh of the *Paschal Lamb*: We are, in a Spiritual Sense, to do so with Reference to *Christ*, *John 6. 53*. They were to eat it with sour Sauce, with *bitter*, or *wild Herbs*: *Repentance* for *Sin* must be joyned, with *Faith* in a *Saviour*. *Unleavened Bread* was to be thrown out of the House; And you know how the *Apostle* applies this, unto those who are called to the *Feast*, even that *Feast upon the Sacrifice of Christ*, at his own *Table*, *1 Cor. 5. 7, 8*. *Not with the Leaven of Malice, and Wickedness; But with the Unleavened Bread of Sincerity, and Truth.*

It was Remarkable as to the *first Passover*, It was to be eaten *in haste, with their Loins girt, Shoes on their Feet, and a Staff in their Hand*: As Pilgrims and Strangers here, who are hastning to a better Country, which God hath promised, and which their *Canaan* may Mind us of, and make this also Applicable to our Case: Which will bring me to the *Sixth, and last thing.*

Sixthly and lastly, *The Resolution and Declaration of Christ, to eat and drink no more of this Passover, till it be accomplished.* Some think that the 18th Verse, *I will drink no more of the Fruit of the Vine, till I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom*, is misplaced, and ought to come in *after the Institution of the Lord's Supper*, as it is placed by the *Evangelists, Matthew*  
and

and *Mark*, \* *Chrystom* thinks it refers to his Eating and Drinking with his Disciples, *after his Resurrection* in this World; That he would not more Eat and Drink, till he had suffered Death, and was risen again: And then, to manifest the Truth of his being Risen, he did condescend to satisfy, and convince them in that manner. But there is little ground for that *Interpretation*.

It is not improbable, but our Lord may Allude here to the Custom of the *High Priest*, who coming out of the *Holy of Holies*, did keep a *Feast of Joy* with his Friends: For if he were a Wicked Man, say the *Jews*, he died in the Place; If a good Man, he came safe: And then he Rejoyced with his Friends, and kept a Feast, where they were wont to drink *New Wine*. To this Custom our Lord may Allude in this Expression, thereby telling his Disciples, *That he should not sink in the performance of what he undertook; † in the great Offering that he was to make to God his Father; but come off with Success*: And then they should Rejoyce and Feast together; He would *drink new Wine with them in the Kingdom of his Father*.

Some think the *Evangelist Luke*, as to *Christ's drinking new Wine*, refers to the *Lord's Supper* that was to follow. And as he recites the  
Words,

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\* 83. *Homil. in Mattheum.*

† *Dr. Alix.*



Words, they are more Intelligible, than as they are mentioned by St. *Matthew*, or *Mark*. He annexes them to the *Passover Cup*, though the other recite this Passage after the *Cup in the Lord's Supper*: But the Words might have been spoken by *Christ* before. And 'tis easier to Transpose the Words in *Matthew* and *Mark*, to the unmentioned Occasion, which was immediately before the *Lord's Supper*, than to Transpose the whole 19th and 20th Verses in *Luke*, before the 17th Verse, which would also make it a Tautology.

By the *Kingdom of God*, all the *Evangelists* seem to mean the *Gospel Dispensation*, which was to Commence in the *Lord's Supper*, as the first of that sort; for the *Baptism of John*, and of the *Disciples of Christ*, before his *Death*, was different from *Baptism* since, the *New Testament Baptism*, Acts 19. 4, 5. The *Lord's Supper* by *Anticipation* did signify, and shew forth the *Lord's Death*. *This is my Body broken for you*. He supposed it broken, and *Himself Sacrificed*, and the *Passover fulfilled*: *Jesus Christ* being the *Lamb of God* Typified, and Presignified by the *Paschal Lamb*, till his *Sacrifice of Himself*. And so to put a Period to the former *Oeconomy*, on which the *Gospel Dispensation* did ensue.

The Term *New*, (*till I drink it New*;) may be accounted for; and that some of the *Evangelists* say, *that Day, I'll drink New*; though it were the *same Hour*, because it refers to a different

ferent Period, and Dispensation, *viz.* The ceasing of the *Mosaick*, and the beginning of the *Evangelical one*. In the like Sense, the same Word is used in other Places, as *Zac.* 14. 6, 7. And that which answers to the Word *New*, is that it is opposed *to the old Dispensation*; that it serves to Divine Purposes, by a *new Institution*, and so is made *New*: And it declares that the *New Gospel Dispensation*, to which it is appropriate, *is now beginning*, or *to commence*. *I'll not drink of it, till I drink it New with you, in my Father's Kingdom, or in the Kingdom of God, i. e. In the Lord's Supper, which is my Gospel Institution, and the Beginning of the Peculiar Kingdom of God, as dispensed after my Actual Death and Sufferings.*

No question but the Sense is very safe, to consider it with Reference to the *Heavenly Glory*, as it is usually understood, when all the Blessings of this *Passover* shall be fully Accomplished in the *Heavenly Canaan*.

Neither is it strange or unusual for the same Ancient Type, or Figure, to have respect to several Objects, and to have several Degrees of Accomplishment. \* This of the *Paschal Lamb* might not only have Relation to the Angel's passing by the Houses of the *Israelites* in *Egypt*, and their Passage out of Bondage into Liberty, by the Deliverance that follow'd; but unto the Absolution and Deliverance of Believers

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\* *Les OEUVRES Posthumes de Mr. Claude, Tom. 2. l. 4. cap. 9. traité de J. Christ.*

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Believers by the Blood of *Christ*, and unto the Deliverance of *Christ* himself out of the Grave, and from a state of Humiliation to that of Glory; and to the Passage of the Church Militant upon Earth, to a state of Triumph in Heaven.

The Blessedness of Heaven is frequently set off by this Metaphor of Eating and Drinking. And at the *Lord's Table*, which was Instituted at the close of the *Passover-Feast*, the Thoughts of Heaven are proper. We meet at this Table, as those who hope to sit down with all the Children of the Kingdom, at the last great Supper of the Lamb.

This Ordinance is a lively Resemblance of the *Heavenly Feast*, and should assist our Meditations on it. Our Lord doth here speak to us such kind of Language. *Ere long we shall Feast together in Heaven: What is now done in Emblem, shall be then done in Reality. You have here the Earnest, Pledge, and Assurance of it.*

This *Table* is a Preparatory Entertainment for the Eternal Supper. \* It is some foretaste to stay our Longings, and yet excite our Desires after the Heavenly Feast above. Here we break our Fast (as I may say) but are made thereby very Hungry, till that Great Supper come. Here we have but a *Prælibation*, a little short *Antepast* of some Rare things to come: Yet seeing it is an *Earnest* of those things, it creates in an Holy Soul a wonderful Contentment,

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† *Bishop Patrick's, Mensæ Mystica, cap. 18.*

ment, both from its own Sweetness, and the Hopes wherewith it feeds us. It nourishes in us most Delicious Longings, it makes the Soul even swell with Comfortable Expectations: And we Receive it not only as a *Remembrance* of what was done, but as a Pledge of what shall be. We taste not only what he is to our Souls at present, but what he shall be for ever.

If it be a Privilege to be Admitted to sit at *his Table*, and to have his *Covenant* sealed to me by *Outward Ordinance*, and *his special Love* by *his Spirit to my Heart*. All the Life and Comfort of these, is, That they Declare and Assure me, of more and better Comforts hereafter. Their Use is darkly to signify, and seal higher Mercies. When I shall Drink with *Christ* of the Fruit of the Vine renewed. How pleasant a Feast will that be? O the Difference, \* as *One* hath well exprest it; O the Difference between the *last Supper of Christ on Earth*, and the *Marriage Supper of the Lamb at the Great Day!* Here is an *Upper Room* accompanied with *Twelve poor selected Men*, feeding on no curious Dainties, but a *Paschal Lamb*, with four Herbs, and a *Judas* at his *Table*, ready to betray him. But then his *Room* will be the *Glorious Heavens*; his *Attendants*, all the Host of *Angels and Saints*; no *Judas*, nor unfurnished Guest comes there; but the *humble Believers*

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vers must sit down by *him*, and the Feast will be their *mutual Loving, and Rejoycing*.

You know nevertheless, that when the *Israe-*  
*lites* were got out of *Egypt*, and delivered by  
*the Blood of the Lamb*, and had a Promise of  
*Canaan*, they had yet a *Wilderness* to pass  
through; many Enemies to Encounter, and  
Difficulties to overcome, before they entred  
into *Canaan*; though God protected, and  
maintained, and supply'd them in the *Wilder-*  
*ness*, all that while. So is it with us *Christi-*  
*ans*, though we recover our *Spiritual Liberty*,  
*by Faith in the Blood of Jesus*, and are made a  
*peculiar People unto God*, a *Nation of Kings and*  
*Priests unto the most High*, and are marching  
towards the *Heavenly Canaan*, and have the  
Promise of it; We have yet a *Wilderness* to  
pass through; We have *Adversaries* on all sides  
to resist; We need a *Pillar of Cloud*, and of  
*Fire* to direct us, and *Manna* from Heaven to  
supply us: And this we shall have from time  
to time, till we come to *Canaan*; and then our  
Lord will eat and drink with us after a better  
manner; we shall have *New Wine in his King-*  
*dom*: He is gone to prepare a *Feast for us*; to  
make ready the great *Supper of the Lamb*, for  
all the *Children of the Kingdom*.

After he was *Sacrificed as the Lamb of God*,  
he tarried *Forty Days* upon the Earth, from  
his *Resurrection*, till he *Ascended into Heaven*:  
As the *Jews* after their *Passover in Egypt*, wan-

dred *Forty Years in the Wilderness*, before they entered into *Canaan*. But all *Believers*, after a few Years Difficulties and Tryals in this World, with the Presence of God to Conduct, and Guide them; shall at last sit down for ever with *Christ*, to Reap the full Harvest of his Sufferings, to receive the compleat Deliverance, which he hath procured, to enjoy all the blessed Fruits of his Death, all the Purchase of his Redeeming Blood. This he will come again to bestow, upon those who believe, expect, and prepare for it.

Some *Inferences* of Truth, and Duty, may be Collected, as the *Application* of what has been said.

1. That *Believers*, under the *Old Testament*, and under the *New*, have the same Object of Faith. They did eat the same *Spiritual Meat*, and drink the same *Spiritual Drink*. Their Sacraments and ours have different Signs, but in Substance were the same: Theirs having Relation to *Christ*, the *Messiah*, as well as ours. Accordingly we read of *Circumcision*, and the *Passover*, in a *Spiritual Sense* under the *Gospel*; And that which answers to *Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper* with us, even They, under the *Old Testament*, had, 1 Cor. 10. 2, 3. They were under the *Covenant of Grace*, though not so clear a *Dispensation* of it, as we; They were to be Saved by Faith in a *Mediator*, as well as we: *The Gospel was preached unto them, as well as unto us.*

2. Did

2. Did *Christ* desire Fellowship with his Disciples, Friends, and Followers in the Passover? What shall we think of those that despise such Institutions, and look upon themselves as *above such Ordinances*? As if they had a nearer, and better way of Communion with *God and Christ*, than this. Any Remissness and Indifference, as to these things, Neglect and Carelessness in Preparation for them, is likewise a degree of Contempt, that deserves to be Reproved.

3. Was *Christ* so desirous to eat his *last Passover* before he suffered for us, because of his *Willingness* to Suffer? What Ingratitude does this imply in our Backwardness, and Cowardize, when we are called to suffer for him?

4. Did our Lord desire to eat *this Passover*, because it was *the last*, and consequently was *Willing to be a Sacrifice for us*? What an Argument of *his endearing Love* does this afford us? And how should it Enflame ours to him? It was not from *Ignorance* of what he was to Suffer; he fully knew what he had undertaken, he perfectly understood what his *Baptism of Blood* did signify; and yet he *earnestly desired* it, and was straitned, till it was Accomplished. He knew the Burden of *Sin* that he was to Expiate, as a *Sin-Offering*, when he bore our *Sins in his own Body on the Tree*, as a Sacrifice to

*Divine Justice* for us: He knew the *bitterness of that Cup*, which he was to drink of before hand; and yet for our sakes he desires it. What *Thankfulness* do we owe for such *Inestimable Love*!

He was willing to submit to such difficult *Terms*, to bring about our *Reconciliation* to God. He was willing *to be obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross*, to turn away *the Divine Displeasure* from us, and to restore us to the *Divine Favour, and Image*. He was willing to be a *Sacrifice for Sin*, that we might be made the *Righteousness of God, through Faith in him*. He was willing *to bear the Curse*, that the *Blessing of Abraham* might come upon us. He was willing to be our *Paschal Lamb*, or be slain and sacrificed for us, that by the *sprinkling of his Blood*, we might be delivered from *Sin and Hell*; that by feeding on him as our *Passover*, we might be *Partakers of Spiritual and Eternal Life*. And even in the midst of his *Agony* in the *Garden*, notwithstanding the struggling of his *Humane Nature* against the *Bitterness of the Cup*, which made him pray for the passing of it away; yet, as *Mediator*, he was willing, and therefore adds, *Not my Will, but thine be done; Father glorifie thy self*.

O matchless and incomprehensible Love! How should our Souls be Ravish'd with the Contemplation of it! How hard and insensible are our Hearts, if they feel no *constraining Vertue*, in the Consideration of such Love! If we do not Sacrifice our Lusts, in Requital

of



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of his being a willing Sacrifice for us. Shall not *the Love of Christ*, which bubbles up in every Drop of his Blood, and made him willing, and resolved, to shed it on our Account, make us hate that Sin, which he died to Atonement for, and to destroy? Can we consider him, *Groaning, Sweating, Bleeding, Dying for Sin*, and yet Retain an Affection to it? And rush into it through the Wounds, and Blood, and Agony, and Death of *our Redeemer*? Shall that ever be sweet to us, which put so much Vinegar and Gall into his Cup?

Let me add a few Words for *Counsel*, and *Direction*.

1. Did *Christ* earnestly desire to eat this *Passover*, and have Communion with his Disciples therein? How earnestly should we desire to have Communion with him, in that Ordinance that succeeded to it, which was Instituted by *Christ* himself the same Evening, in the close of the *Paschal Supper*! Is not a Spiritual Communion with him, now he is in Glory, as desirable, as his Bodily Presence was, when in a state of Humiliation? Is it not the Spirit and Temper of all the Disciples of *Christ*, in every Age of the Church, to value, and to desire such near Approaches to him? How did the *Believing Jews* prepare themselves for such a Solemnity as the *Passover*? How did *David's* Heart pant, and faint, and long for Communion with God in the Services of the Temple? *Psal. 27. 4. One thing have I desired of the*

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*the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the House of the Lord, all the days of my life, to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple.*

The *Israelites* were to eat the *Passover* in haste, with *Greediness of Desire*, *Non lento Corde, non languido Ore*: And is it not a Shame to us, to have no Appetite for such a Feast? Is it not for want of such Desires of Communion with *Christ*, that we meet with so little Satisfaction when we come? *Let him that is a thirst, come, and such shall be filled, when others shall be sent empty away: But as for the hungry Souls, they shall not be sent empty away from the Lord's Table.*

We may likewise heighten our Desires and Appetites, when we come to this Table; by considering, *For ought we know, This may be the last Communion with Christ in such an Ordinance, that we shall ever enjoy, before it be fully Accomplished in Heaven.*

2. Let us endeavour to Imitate *Christ* as our *Passover*; Both in his Readiness to Suffer, and in his Character and Qualification, as the *Spotless Lamb of God*, in Meekness and Patience, and Submission, &c. Without this we can never prove our Interest in him,

3. Let us thankfully Contemplate *this Lamb of God*, as desiring to be Sacrificed for us. Let us seriously and often consider, the Voluntariness of his *Death*, and *Sacrifice*; the  
Fruits

## Of Christ's Last Passover. 201

Fruits of his *Suffering*, the *Merit of his Cross*. How *Acceptable his Sacrifice was to God*, how *beneficial unto us*: What a *Deliverance we have by it*, what a *Bondage we are saved from*, what a *Glorious Liberty he has purchased*, what a *complete Salvation we expect*, when all shall be fulfilled in Heaven. These are proper Thoughts for those of us, *this Evening*, who have Feasted this Day on the *Sacrifice of Christ*. Every one of us in particular, not only in Publick, but in Secret, should bless God for *Jesus Christ*; Admiring the *Matchless Grace and Love of the Redeemer*, in being thus a *Willing Sacrifice for us*, and calling us to *Feast upon it*, having Instituted *this Ordinance* on purpose, for that very end.

*Lastly*, Live in the *Daily Exercise of Faith on the Blood of Christ*, as the *Lamb of God*, *Sacrificed for us*. It was the *sprinkling of the Blood of the Paschal Lamb*, that was the *Mark of the Israelites Deliverance*; So the *shedding of the Blood of Christ*, with particular *Application by Faith*, is as necessary for us; Without it we cannot escape the *Stroke of the destroying Angel*: Without it, the *Blood of the Son of God will call for Vengeance*, and his very *Sacrifice and Sufferings plead against us*.

We should every Day, by *fresh Acts of Faith*, Apply this *Blood for our Encouragement*, and *Consolation*, as the *Purchase of our Peace with God*, and as that whereby we have *Peace with Conscience*. All the blessings we receive, are owing to *this Blood*. All the Services we

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perform, must be Accepted, *through the sprinkling of this Blood, and our Faith in it.* Let us therefore continually *apply, and plead it.* The Vertue of it is still the same, as when it was at first shed. We need not doubt but it is as Acceptable to God *now,* and of as sweet smelling a Savour to him as ever: Therefore the Life that we Live in the Flesh, should be *by the Faith of the Son of God,* having daily Recourse unto his Blood, for Pardon, and Cleansing, and Strengthening Vertue. *The Lord teach us this Great Mystery of Practical Godliness.*

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The Seventh Discourse,  
 BEFORE THE  
**Lord's Supper.**

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From CANT. II. 4.

*He brought me into the Banqueting-House, and  
 his Banner over me was Love.*

**I** SHALL not need to spend Time to prove this Book to be *Canonical* and of *Divine Authority*: It was never questioned to belong to the *Jewish Canon*, though some other of the *Writings of Solomon* have been doubted of. The whole is an *Allegorical Description* of the *mysterious Union* between *Christ* and his *Church* as Represented under the Persons of a *Bridegroom*, and *Bride*: Which Metaphor is pursued in several other Places of Scripture, and alluded to by *Christ* and his *Apostles* in the *New Testament*. The *45th Psalm* is in some  
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fort an *Epitome*, and *Abridgment* of this *Song of Solomon*; And that by all *Interpreters*, even the *Jews* themselves, is acknowledged to speak of the *Messiah*.

In this *Chapter*, *Christ* and the *Church* seem to strive, who shall outvie each other in their *Encomiums*, and *Commendations*. In the Two first Verses *Christ* speaks: In the following you have the *Voice of the Church*, or the *Language of sincere Christians*; They Praise, and Magnifie, and Extol *the Lord Christ*, in the *Fourth Verse*, for his Bounty and Magnificence, in making such Rich Provisions to Feast and Entertain them. She had said before, in the *Third Verse*, That *She sate under his Shadow with great Delight*, and *his Fruit was sweet unto her Taste*: And there-upon adds this Commendation of his Rich Provisions, *He brought me into the Banqueting-House*, &c.

Where, 1. She describes the Place, or the Means of such a Spiritual Feast, *The Banqueting-House*.

2. The *Welcome* she met with there, *His Banner over me was Love*. Under the first Expression, is Represented the Excellent Provision, which our Lord makes, to Entertain the Souls of Believers. He led me to the *House of Wine*, the Place where the Master of the House was wont to entertain his Friends; *Where the Wine is drank*, or the Entertainment made; for so  
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the Word signifies. Some understand it of the Places where Christians Assemble, and meet together, to Worship Christ, and Receive the Communications of his Grace; the Places where the *Ordinances* of the *Gospel* are Dispensed. But there is more, than the Places of such Communication, here meant, *viz.* All the special Means, and Instruments of Blessing unto the Souls of Believers. It may comprehend the *Holy Scriptures*, the *Ministers of the Word*, the *Sacraments*, the *publick Assemblies for Worship*, and all the *Institutions of Christ*. But amongst them all, none more fitly, or exactly answering to the Allegory, than the *Holy Supper of the Lord*, the great *Feast on the Sacrifice of Christ*, where we hope to be Entertained to Morrow.

2. The *Welcom* she met with, *His Banner over me was Love*. His *Standard* towards me, by the lifting up whereof I was invited, and drawn to come over to his side, to yield to him, to give up my self to him. The Love of a Crucified Saviour is displayed like a Banner, to invite and draw Souls to Christ. Therefore it is promised, *Isa. 49. 22. I will lift up my Hand to the Gentiles, and set up my Standard to the People*. Christ the Captain of our Salvation, lifted up upon a Cross, Displays a *Banner of Love* to all the World, to invite them to come to him. And the *Motto* of his *Banner* is nothing but this, *Dying Love Victorious*; Or, *The Crucified Jesus, Loving us to the Death*; And by  
his

his Love conquering our Hearts, and constraining us to be *his*, to love him, and live to him, and even die for him.

1. We may observe, That our Lord has *his Banquet, and Feast*, whereunto he leads, and where he Entertains the Souls of his Followers.

2. That the Display of *Christ's free, and glorious Love*, is of all things the most proper to Invite, and Attract the Souls of Men.

1. *That Christ hath his Banquet, and Feast, unto which he leads, and where he entertains the Souls of his Followers.* Under this Metaphor of a Feast, or Banquet; all the Spiritual Blessings of the Gospel-State are often Represented.

Thus when we Read of the Invitation, *to come to the Marriage Feast of the King's Son*, Mat. 22. All the Graces and Comforts of the Spirit are meant; *Forgiveness of Sin, the Promise, and the Hope of Eternal Life*: These are the Provisions of this Feast, which in the *Word and Sacraments* we partake of. *In this Mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all People, a Feast of fat things, of Wine on the Lees well refined*, Isa. 25. 6. It is a Promise concerning the Days of the Gospel. *In this Mountain, In Mount Sion, In the Church, God will make a Feast for all People, for the Gentiles, as well as the Jews.*



1. It's Literally true of *Mount Sion* at *Jerusalem*, (in which sense it must be understood in the next *Verse*,) This was the first Place, (this *Mount Sion*,) whence the *Christian Law* was to be given out, and *the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem*. There the *Holy Spirit* fell upon the *Apostles* at *Pentecost*: And there the *Apostles* began their *Preaching* after the *Descent* of the *Holy Ghost*, with *Wonderful Success*. So *Psalms* 36. 8. *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the Fatness of thy House; Thou shalt make them drink of the Rivers of thy Pleasures*. The like in *Prov.* 9. 2. Where *Wisdom* is said to have killed her *Beasts*, and mingled her *Wine*, and furnished her *Table*. The *Revelation of the Gospel*, &c. All kind of *Gifts*, and *Graces*, and *Comforts*, distributed by the *Ordinances* of the *Gospel*, are to be understood. Especially that part of our *Spiritual Provision*, which is said to be *Meat indeed*, and *Drink indeed*: I mean, the *Crucified Body* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and his *Blood* shed for the *Remission* of *Sins*. That *Institution* therefore, hath the very *Name* of the *Table of the Lord*, *1 Cor.* 10. 21. *We cannot be Partakers of the Lord's Table and the Table of Devils*. It is called a *Feast on the Sacrifice of Christ*, *1 Cor.* 5. 7, 8. Of which I shall have occasion to speak afterward. There being all *Things there*, that are necessary to a *Feast*. And a *Feast for all People*, for the *Gentiles*, whom the *Jews* despised, and counted as *Dogs*, and who were *Vile* and *Miserable* in themselves,

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themselves, without God, and Christ, and under gross *Idolatry*. This Feast is for *Us Gentiles*. Which I shall first particularly *Explain*, and *Prove*, and then *Apply*.

1. In *this Spiritual Feast*, or *Banquet*, are the Choicest Provisions that can be, for the Nourishment of our Souls. There is *Spiritual Food*, for the satisfaction of *Spiritual Hunger*; where we may eat and be satisfied, and find that which is sweeter than *Honey*, the *Love of Christ better than Wine*. Psal. 22. 6. Cant. 1. 2. *Wine*, that is said to *cheer, and delight the Heart*, Eccles. 10. 19. To lift a Man above sad, and melancholy Thoughts; to make a Man forget his Affliction, and Misery, Prov. 31. 7. *Give Wine to him that is of a heavy Heart, Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more*. It may much more be said so, of this Sacramental Wine, exhibiting the Love of Christ to the Soul. And though *Wine* be put for all manner of *Delicacies*, Isa. 25. 6. *Yet the Love of Christ is better than Wine*, Cant. 1. 4. *His Blood is Drink indeed, and his Flesh is Meat indeed*, John 6. 55. Far beyond *Manna*, which yet is called *Angels Food*. He is *Manna* for Food, the best *Bread*; And He is *Wine* for Drink.

And the Blessedness of the *Heavenly State*, whereof this Feast is the Earnest, is set forth by the Pleasures of eating and drinking, Luk. 22. 30. *That you may eat and drink at my Table*

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*in my Kingdom.* O the Satisfaction and Delight, that Holy Souls experience, in tasting of those Provisions, when they come with that due Preparedness which they ought! All the Delights of this World are not to be compared, with one hours Enjoyment of Christ in this Ordinance: One hour, one half hour of Communion with the Father, and the Son, by the Spirit, in such a Duty, is more delightful, than all the Pleasures of the Palate and Taste. It is a nobler, a purer, a sweeter, a better kind of *Content* and *Satisfaction*, that we here meet with. I may appeal to the Experience of Serious Christians, for the Truth of this.

2. At a Feast there are *All Sorts of Provision*; Not only the Choicest and the Best, but there is *Variety*. It is a *Feast of Fat things full of Marrow*, of *Wine on the Lees well refined*. And it is suitable to every Condition, to every Relation, to every Necessity. *Grace for Grace, out of his Fulness*, that is, All manner of Supplies of Grace, *John 1. 16*. Forgiveness of Sin, to take away our Fear of ~~Hell~~: And the Assurance of Eternal Life, to answer our Desires of Happiness. And therefore 'tis answerable to the Exigencies of our Case. For what can we need, but may be received from *Christ*, who of God is made unto us, *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption*? His precious Blood can wash away the stains of our blackest guilt; and his perfect Righteousness be the Covering of our Naked Souls; by Meriting and procuring

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ring our Pardon, by Purchasing and applying the Spirit of Holiness, Light, Strength, Stability, Comfort. Whatever we need we may receive from him, among the Provisions of the Gospel, in this Spiritual Feast.

We may apply to the *Heavenly Nourishment of this Table*, what the *Jews* say of their *Manna in the Wilderness*; which was sent down by God from Heaven to them: It contained, they tell us, all the Tastes of what any Man desired or longed for; It was suited to every Palate, and to every Constitution: That none could fail of being \* fed, and pleased, though they were of never so different Tempers. It is called *the Bread of Heaven*, Exod. 16. 4. And *the Taste of it*, is said to be *like Water made of Honey*, Verse 31. And yet in *Numb. 11. 8.* the Taste of it is said to be, *as the Taste of Fresh Oil*. Now, How can all these be true? How can they all Agree? That this *Manna* should be like *Bread*, and like *Honey*, and like *Oil* too? The *Jews* Answer, That the *Young Men* tasted in it *Bread*, the *Old Men* *Honey*, and the *Infants* *Oil*. We may Accommodate this to the Divine Food of the Lord's Table, which is suitable to every Complexion of Mind, and Temper of Spirit. The Infant Christians are there cherished, and encouraged, they having the Oil of Joy and Gladness poured upon them: The

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\* Bp. Patrick's *Christian Sacrifice*,

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The Young Men have Strength and Power by this Bread of Life, to overcome the Wicked One: The more Aged, the more Exercised Christians, they find such Relish in it, that they can say, *Thy Commandments are sweeter than the Honey, and the Honey comb, and in keeping of them there is great Reward*: Being a little Earnest, and Pledge, and Foretaste of the Joys of the Heavenly Feast. For therefore, *Manna in the Wilderness* had the Taste of Honey, say the *Jews*, that it might be an Earnest and Representation of *the Land of Canan, a Land flowing with Milk and Honey*, unto which they were now going. In a word, Young and Old, Weak and Strong, Christians of all Sizes, and different Stations, may receive Nourishment, Refreshment, and Advantage, by this Heavenly Food of the Table of the Lord. There is *great Variety* at this Feast, to suit every ones Palate and Temper.

3. At a Feast, as there is *Rarity*, and *Variety*, so *Plenty* and *Abundance*; that none need go away hungry or empty, complaining or discontented. Here are Riches, unsearchable Riches of the Grace of Christ. We have here *All things* given us, *richly to enjoy*. And the Sanctifying Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, are said to be shed on us *richly*, or *abundantly*, through *Jesus Christ* our Saviour, *Tit. 3. 6.* There is a Fountain of Grace, that will not have the less for us, by supplying the wants of others.

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4. There is a *Mirth*, and *Chearfulness* at this Feast, which is another Concomitant of a *Banquet*. *A Feast is made for Laughter, and Wine maketh Merry*, Eccles. 10. 19. When prodigal Sinners first return, their Father hath *Mirth*, and *Musick* to entertain them. Luk. 15. 24. *Let us kill the fatted Calf, and make merry; For this my Son was lost, and is found; was dead, but is alive.* And shall not the Reconciliation between God and our Souls through *Christ*, when it is solemnly professed, and avowed at the Table of the Lord, be accompanied with *Joy* and *Mirth*? The *Jews* were not to Afflict their Souls in any of their Feasts, *Religious* or *Common*. *Thou shalt Rejoyce in thy Feasts*, Deut. 16. 14. We are not called to the *House of Mourning*. You may eat this Bread with *Joy*, and drink this Wine with a *Merry Heart*, in hopes of God's Acceptance of you, and your *Sacrifice*, Eccles. 9. 7.

Our *Redeemer* seems to speak to those, who are *Disconsolate* at his Table, and if he see us *Sad* and *Melancholy*, to use some such Language.

*What, Do you not know where you are? Do you not understand what I have done to you, and for you? What I have done upon the Cross, and what at the Table?*

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O did we understand it better, and consider it more, what he hath done and Suffered, purchased and Promised; we should come to this Feast with a Gladsome, Merry Heart. All the Musick and Melody, that the Feasts of Sensual Men are attended with, would be nothing to it. Therefore take heed of mistaking the Nature of this Ordinance, so as to come like *Mourners* to Morrow, to a *Funeral*: It is to no such Solemnity, but to a *Feast*: you are invited to a *Royal Feast*: And therefore your Hearts and Lips should be full of the high Praises of God, and Thankful Admiration of *Christ*, and his Redeeming Love and Grace. *I will bring them to my Holy Mountain, and make them Joyful in my House of Prayer.*

5. At a *Feast* there is *Good Company*. Now there is no such Company in all the World, as is to be found at *Christ's Table*, *While the King sitteth at this Table*, Cant. 1. 12. *Christ* himself is there present, and the *Father* also: For in this Ordinance especially, we have Fellowship with the *Father*, and the *Son*, through the *Spirit*. A *Communion* with them, supposes the *Presence* of *Father*, and *Son*, and *Spirit*. *The Cup of Blessing* which we Bless, is the *Communion* of *Christ's Blood*, and the *Bread* we break, the *Communion* of his *Body*, 1 Cor. 10. 16. We are invited *Guests* by *Christ*, and treated as his *Friends*. We are entertained with *Kindness*, and *Familiarity*, which is an *Honour* we ought to value. In his own *House* we are treated; and

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have the same Fare, with the best of his Friends, who are Invited with us. We sit down with him, at his own Table, in *the best Company*, that we can desire. *Haman* expresses it as an Honour, that the Queen let none come to the Banquet but himself: *And to morrow*, says he, *I am invited also with the King*, *Esth.* 5. 12. If the Father, and the Son, and Holy Spirit, and the Children of God that are his special Favourites, and Heirs of the Heavenly Inheritance, if these are *Good Company*, you may have it at the Table.

6. At a Feast there is *Welcome*, *Express* and given, by the Master of the Feast. Such an expression we have of it, *Psal.* 23. 5. *Thou preparest my Table for me, and Anointest my Head with Oil*, or with Aromatical Ointments, formerly used at great Feasts, as a token of Respect, and Kindness. Thou biddest me to a Feast, and biddest me *Welcome*; Alluding to the Custom of the Eastern People, and of the *Jews* particularly, who express the hearty Welcome they gave their Guests, by pouring some precious Ointment on their Heads, *Psal.* 92. 10. *Luk.* 7. 39. A very usual \* Festival Solemnity.

Therefore, when you come to morrow to this Feast, you must think, and believe, that  
*Christ*

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\* See *Bp. Patrick's Christian Sacrifice*, p. 100.



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Christ speaks to you, when you behold the Symbols of his Body and Blood. For you are not to consider *the broken Bread*, and *the Wine poured out*, as *dumb Signs*; no, they speak very distinctly to all the Communicants. Therefore come with a cheerful Wedding Garment, hearing the Voice of your Redeemer, as if Christ should say to you, “*That you were welcome to his Table, and that he is pleased, that you accept his Invitation. Come, My Brethren,* as if he should say, for so he calls us, when he Ascended to his Father, John 20. 17. “*Go and tell my Brethren, that I Ascend to my Father, and their Father, to my God, and their God. Come, my Brethren, doth he say, I sent and commissioned my Ministers, to call you to my House, solemnly and earnestly to Invite you to my Table; You did well that you are come; I take it kindly that you did not reject my Invitation; I am glad you are come, to Remember my Love, and to shew your selves my Friends. I have no other Design in sending for you, but to make you more sensible of my Love, and to give you Fresh Tokens of it; to repeat the pledge and assurance of my Dying Kindness. Do not despise the Entertainment I here give you, though ye see only Bread and Wine. Open the eyes of your Minds, and let your Faith discern, that this Bread is my Body, my Crucified Body, my Body broken for you: And this Wine poured out is my Blood, my Blood shed for you. Oh see how I loved you!*

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“ see what my Love to you brought me to under-  
 “ go; Consider how I was used for your sakes,  
 “ to procure your Peace, and to purchase your  
 “ Reconciliation. I have nothing to desire of  
 “ you, but that you would continue in my  
 “ Love; and then I promise you the Love of  
 “ my Father, and that your sins shall be forgi-  
 “ ven, they shall not be remembered against you,  
 “ you shall not come into Condemnation: And  
 “ all your wants shall be supplied. Nothing you  
 “ can need but I have purchased, nothing you  
 “ can want but I will give. Till I have fitted  
 “ you for my Presence above, till you come to  
 “ be with me in the Heavenly state: You shall  
 “ receive it all from time to time. Come, take  
 “ the Pledge, and the Assurance of this, by  
 “ doing this in Remembrance of me.

“ Come therefore, says Christ, Take and  
 “ Eat; Eat, O Friends, drink abundantly, O  
 “ Beloved. Take, eat this Morsel; as little  
 “ and inconsiderable as it seems to be, it cost  
 “ my Life: I give it to you as a Token of  
 “ my Love, and of my Fathers Love. Take  
 “ it, and Remember both. I say the same for  
 “ the Cup of Blessing, Drink it in Re-  
 “ membrance of me. Come pledge me, This is  
 “ Wine of my own making, when I trod the  
 “ Wine-press of my Father's Wrath alone.  
 “ This will strengthen and revive thy fainting  
 “ Spirit; This will cure the Ulcers of thy Heart,  
 “ This will give thee Boldness, and Courage,  
 “ to enter into the Presence of thy Father, &c.

“ Thus

“ Thus does Christ give Welcome to his prepared Guests.

7. And Lastly. This is a peculiar sort of Feast, viz. a Feast upon a Sacrifice: A Feast that betokens a Covenant, and Reconciliation between God, and Such as are Invited Guests at this Table. I often take occasion to mention this, because I judge it, *the true Notion of the Lord's Supper*, and the sense of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 5. 8. *Christ our Passover was Sacrificed for us; Let us therefore keep the Feast, with the Unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth*, which is spoken of the Feast, from which the *Corinthian Church*, by the Authority of Christ, was to bar and seclude the disorderly Person, even the Lord's Supper.

It is well known, that *Sacrifices* were wont to be attended with a Feast. The *Peace-offering* under the Law, was to be brought on the top of the *Burnt-offerings*: No *Burnt-offerings* were without some *Peace-offerings*: And having offer'd them to the Lord, they were to eat their part chearfully among their Friends. For then they had, as it were, one Dish sent them from God's Table. One part of the Offering, viz. *God's*, was consumed upon the Altar; Another part, *the Priests had*, by God's Appointment; And a *Third*, the *Offerers* had to Feast upon. *Christ's Offering* up himself upon the Cross, is *the Great Sacrifice*: This Banquet at the Table of the Lord, is a Feast on  
that

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that Sacrifice, Pſal. 50. 5. *Gather my Saints together, who have made a Covenant with me by Sacrifice.*

The Offering a Sacrifice was a *Fæderal Rite*, whereby God and his People became one. Upon which account *Salt* was used in Sacrifices by God's own Direction, *Lev. 2. 13.* All Nations lookt on \* *Salt*, as a Token of *Love*, a Pledge of *Friendship*, a Symbol of *Peace*. And *Feasting* on a Sacrifice was a Rite of the same Nature with Sacrificing; It being but the *Complement*, the *Close*, the *Finishing* of the Sacrifice. In this sense some understand those words, Pſal. 50. 16. *Unto the wicked, God saith, What hast thou to do, to declare my Statutes, and that thou shouldest take my Covenant in thy Mouth, i. e.* Eating the Signs and Symbols of the Covenants partaking of those Sacrificial Banquets, which were a Token of God's Covenant. Thus when the Covenant was renewed between God and the Children of *Israel*; *Moses* and *Aaron*, and the *Seventy Nobles* of the *Children of Israel*, went up to God, and saw his *Glory* on the *Mount*; and after their *Burnt-offerings* and *Peace-offerings* were Sacrificed, they did *eat and drink*, *Exod. 24. 11.* The eating of the *Passover* was such a *Fæderal Solemnity*, and therefore *no Stranger* was  
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\* See Dr. Hammond on Mark 9. 50. And P. Fagius in Levit. 2. And more largely in Dr. Cudworth's Notion of the Lord's Supper. Bishop Patrick's Christian Sacrifice; and Dr. Belling of the Sacrament, Chap. 1, 2, 3.

to eat of it, Exod. 12. It did not belong to those, who did not belong to that Covenant which God had made with his Peculiar People, the *Children of Israel*.

This Evangelical Feast at the Lord's Table, is of the like nature and signification. Besides, the Analogy and Resemblance between these, the words of Institution do sufficiently prove it; for speaking of the *Cup*, or the *Wine in the Cup*, Our Lord said, *This is my Blood of the New Covenant*. It is the Representation of that Blood, which is the Seal of the *New Covenant*: As *Circumcision* is called *the Covenant of Circumcision*, Acts 7. 8. because it was the Token and Seal of the Covenant between God and *Abraham*.

Eating and Drinking together was alway reckon'd some token of Friendship, and Accord: Especially when there is a *Solemn Feast* on purpose to express, and signifie this Agreement: And when it follows after Disagreement and Variance, it amounts to a *Covenant*, or *League*, which the Parties enter into, to be henceforward Friends. As *Gen. 26. 28, 29, 30, 31. Verses. Let us make a Covenant with thee, &c.* And then it follows, *He made them a Feast, and they did eat and drink.* But in the present case, there is yet more, for it was a more sacred way of *Covenanting*, when they feasted upon *part of the Sacrifice*; that was  
made

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made to God, of which I shall speak more presently. And usually it was accompanied with an Oath, in the presence of God.

*Now at the Lord's Table, Do we not profess our owning the New Covenant, made between God and us? And do we not there renew our Baptismal Covenant? Do we not Accept of Christ, and all the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace? Do we not Resign our selves, and all we have, to be His, according to the Tenour and Terms of it? Do we not receive the Pledge, and Assurance of his Love to us and engage our Faith, that we will be his Servants? Binding our selves to all the Duties of the Covenant, as God does oblige himself to bestow all the Blessings of it?*

2. Having thus explained somewhat of this Banquet, or Feast, I might consider the Reasons of its Appointment, and the excellent purposes it serveth for: Besides the known, express, and principal one, of being a *Memorial of Christ's Love*, that we may remember him Crucified for us; there may be *other Considerations*, partly with respect to God, and Christ, partly with relation to the Souls of Believers.

1. To represent *the Royalty, and Magnificence* of God, and the Transcendant Riches and Glory of the Grace of Christ. Accordingly we Read, that Princes and Potentates, and Great Men, upon such Accounts, were wont to make Sumptuous Entertainments, Eph. 1.

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3, 4. *He made a Feast unto all his Princes, and his Servants, to shew them the Riches of his Excellent Majesty.*

Partly with respect to us. *First*, To encourage us, in the difficult Services we may meet with: To animate and embolden us to hold on our way, and work, of doing and suffering the Will of God, in obedience to Christ. The Burden of Affliction would be much more heavy, and our Spirits more like to faint, were it not for some Refreshment, Quickening, and Comfort, now and then, in such Ordinances of the Gospel: But the Pledge of the Love of God, the Everlasting Love of Christ, the Earnest of Heaven, and the Hopes of it, that we should Sin, and Suffer, and Sorrow no more, makes our outward Afflictions tolerable: For if God be reconciled to us, and pleased with us; If the Redeemer shine upon us, and say *he is ours*; If *his Love* be shed abroad in our Hearts, and *ours* kept alive to him; we can bear any thing, or lose any thing, and not Despond. Besides, the Solemn Dedication of our selves, and all we have unto Christ, which we there make, helps to awe our Hearts, and check our impatient Murmurs; when by any severe Dispensation of Providence he doth but take us at our word. For he can only *Take* that, which we *Resigned* to him before; And when he doth, he tries whether we were Hypocrites, or Sincere in our Resignation.

2. It may be consider'd, That at this Feast we have the *nearest Fellowship*, and *sweetest Communion* with God, and Christ, of almost any Ordinance of the Gospel; And the continuance of such a blessed Entercourse between God and our Souls, was another ground of his appointing it. Which will appear more plainly, by considering Another End of it, *viz.* to ratifie and confirm *the Covenant*, between God and us. This is one special design of thus eating and drinking *in his Presence*, to confirm our *Covenant*. It was very usual, especially in the Eastern parts of the World, to ratifie Contracts and Covenants, by *eating and drinking together*. Thus in the fore-mentioned Instance, *Abimelech* and *Isaac* celebrated such a *Covenant-Feast*, *Gen. 26. 30.* as a Token of Friendship between them. *Laban's* eating with *Jacob* on *an help of Stones*, was a *Fœderal Rite*, *Gen. 31. 46.* The *Israelites* eating of the *Gibeonites* Victuals, was the contracting a League with them, *Josh. 9. 14.* When *David* speaks of his *Friends Treachery* (in words very applicable to *Judas*) *Psal. 41. 9.* he saith, *My own Familiar Friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of my Bread, hath lift up his Heel against me:* He meant one, who had entred into *Covenant* with him by a *Feast* (as you find that *Abner* did, *2 Sam. 3. 20.*) Therefore, in stead of a *Friend*, 'tis otherwise rendred in the *Margin* of our *Bible*, *The Man of my Peace*, or the *Man that was at Peace* with me. Hence the *Hebrew* word



word, which signifies a *Covenant*, is derived from a *Root*, which signifies to *Eat*. And hence we read of an Idol among the *Sichemites*, which was called *Berith* (or the God of a *Covenant*) because the People of that Place were wont, when they made *Covenants*, to eat and drink with their Confederates in the House of that God of theirs, as you find they did, when they entred into a League with *Gaal*, and made him their Head in Opposition to *Abimeleck*, Judg. 9. 27.

Humane Writers afford many Instances of this Nature, how People were wont antiently to make and ratifie *Covenants* between *Nation* and *Nation*, between *Party* and *Party*, and between *Man* and *Wife*, sometimes by eating *Bread*, sometimes by drinking *Wine*, and frequently by partaking of *both* together, Which shows, that it was the General Custom of *Mankind* to *Contract*, and *Covenant* with one another by the *Visible Rites* of *Feasting*, and *Banqueting* together. The *Old Heathens* had many *Religious Feasts* before their *Idols*, whereby they *Covenanted* with those *Imaginary Deities*. The *Israelites* are charged with *Idolatry*, for complying with such *Pagan Rites*, Exod. 32. 6. 1 Cor. 10. 7. When the *People* made an *Altar* to the *Golden Calf*, they bring their *Peace-offerings*, and Celebrate a *Religious Banquet* upon the remainders thereof. *They sit down to eat and drink*, (to *Feast* together before the *Golden Calf*) and *rose up to play*. This they did in Imitation of the

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the *Egyptians*, among whom they had lived so long. So by the Perswasion of the *Moabites*, they joyned themselves to *Baal-Peor*, entred into Communion with that *Heathen Deity*, that was Worshipped on *Mount Peor*, by eating the *Sacrifices of the Dead*, or \* such things as were offered in the *Memory of the dead*, Numb. 25. 3. Psal. 106. 28.

And the Apostle calls the eating of the Heathen Sacrifices a *Fellowship with Devils*, 1 Cor. 10. 20. There were some in the Apostles time did eat of those *Idol Sacrifices*, 1 Cor. 8. 7. To prevent which a Canon was made at the Council of *Jerusalem*, that *Christians* should abstain from Meats offered unto Idols, Acts 15. Because by sitting at Meat in the Idols Temple, they made themselves *partakers of the Table of Devils*. And the Apostle shews the Inconsistency of this with the participation of the Lord's Table, because this is a *Sacrificial Banquet*, proper and peculiar to us *Christians*, as the *Idol-Feasts*, were *Sacrificial Banquets* proper to the *Pagans*, and the *Mosaical* ones to the *Jews*, 1 Cor. 10. As *Jews* and *Heathens* were wont to feed upon a *Sacrificed Beast*, we *Christians* do feed upon a *Sacrificed Redeemer*, by eating and drinking in Commemoration of his Death and Sacrifice, and thereby Renewing our  
Covenant

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\* *Seiden de Diis Syris. Syntagm. 1. cap. 9.*

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*Covenant with him, as his Avowed, Sworn Servants, and Disciples.*

4. Another Design of this Feast may be, to wean us from the Vanities of this World, by tasting these Spiritual Provisions, and therein *how Gracious the Lord is*. That by eating of this Bread, and drinking of this Wine, we may hunger and thirst no more after Sensual Delights; That we may not care to feed on Husks, when we can eat of this Bread in our Father's House.

5. That our Thoughts of the Heavenly Glory, and our Desires after it, and progressive Meetness for it, may be excited and promoted. And no Institution of the Gospel is so proper for this, or so well Adapted for this purpose, as were easie to shew, and your own Meditations can sufficiently enlarge.

*Use 1.* Hath the blessed God his Feast, and Banquet to Entertain such wretched Creatures as we? Let us sit down, and Admire his Adorable Condescension, That the Lord of Glory should make a Feast for such Beggars, such Worms, such Vile Sinners as we! That we should be called to the Privileges of Children, to sit down at his Table; We that deserve not the Crumbs with the Dogs under the Table: That he doth not only richly Feast us, but stoops to Treat us in our own way, in a manner so sensible, and easie, and plain; that

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we may see, and taste, to our fuller satisfaction, that he is Gracious: That the outward Signs and Symbols are so plain, and obvious, when the great Things signified, and represented, are fit to employ the deepest Meditation, and surpass all that our most comprehensive Thoughts can reach.

2. Doth God make such a *Feast*? Then let him never Invite, but *be you willing and ready to come*. Take heed how you slight the Invitation, and Call of God. It is a dangerous thing, I grant, to come *unprepared*, and *unready*; and so is it to tarry away, and to refuse Obedience to the Command of our dying Lord; who *the same Night in which he was betrayed*, Instituted this Feast, and calls us to do it, *in Remembrance of him*. They that come without a *Wedding Garment*, they are said to be *Unworthy*, and *to eat and drink unworthily*: And they that refuse to come to the Gospel-Feast upon Christ's Invitation, they are said to be *Unworthy too*, Matth. 22. 8. You little mend the case, if, when you hear of the *Danger of coming Unworthily*, you will not *come at all*. For that Impenitence, and Unbelief that makes *Unworthy Communicants*, will not excuse your Neglect of the Duty. You must Repent and believe in Christ, and so come *Prepared*. *He that eateth this Bread, and drinketh this Cup unworthily, he eats and drinks Judgment to himself.* 'Tis certain he is guilty of a *Sin*, that *without Repentance*, will *damn him*; and he is in danger  
of

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of some Calamity, Sicknes, or sudden Death: Such as was inflicted on the faulty *Corinthians*: But he doth not so eat and drink *Damnation*, as that such a Sin is *Unpardonable*, and shall certainly be followed with *Hell*: For it is not the Sin against the *Holy Ghost*, which is never Repented of. If the fear of *Damnation* have Influence in the one Case, it should have in the other: because to neglect this Duty, is a Sin, as well as to come *Unprepared*. We ought to do neither.

You therefore who are to *Come*, look to it that you *Come Worthily*, lest you be Guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord; Lest you be Guilty of the Murder of Christ, and of *Self-murder* at once, by eating and drinking *your own Damnation*. Ignorant Persons, Scandalous Persons, Hypocrites, and false Pretenders to Religion; such as intrude rashly, and come impenitently, with the habitual love of Sin, without true Repentance; All who come ignorantly, or hypocritically; who cannot discern the *Lord's Body*, or come with a design to cover some secret Lust; Let these beware, for they come as it were, with a Knife in their Hand, to kill the *Redeemer* in his own House, to stab him at his own Table, and Crucifie him afresh. They are *Guilty of his Body and Blood*, which instead of pleading on their behalf for *Mercy*, will cry against them for *Vengeance*.

You will hereupon, I doubt not, be glad of a little Advice, and Direction, that you may *come Worthily*, and be *duly Prepared*, that you may avoid so great a hazard. And because you have many good Books on this Subject, that will Assist you in this Matter, I shall only put you in mind of a few Things ;  
As,

1. That you take Convenient Time for solemn and serious *Preparation*. They especially should do so, who have never *come till now*. And they who for some considerable time have neglected it, with whom several Months have past, since they have been at the *Lord's Table*. Either through their own Neglect, which they must Repent of, or for want of Opportunity. God expected and required *solemn Preparation*, for the *Passover Feast*, Exod. 19. 10. He doth so for *this Feast*, upon *Christ our Passover*, sacrificed for us. Therefore take some Time to consider, what you are about to undertake. Beg of God a *prepared Heart* ; and by *Reading*, *Meditation*, and *Prayer*, endeavour to bring your Spirits into a suitable Frame for such *solemn Work*. He brought me into his *Banqueting-House*. Christ himself, by his Spirit, must lead his own *Guests to his own Table*. He must awaken and excite all those *Graces*, that are to be exercised in *this Feast*. Therefore beg a *prepared Heart*, and do what you can, by other means to endeavour it.

2. Renew

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2. Renew your Repentance for all the Sins of your Life Do not come with filthy Hearts and Hands, to the Table of the Lord, no more than you would in filthy Rags, to a great Man's Table. Lay aside all Filthiness, and Superfluity of Naughtiness. Purge out the Old Leaven of Hypocrisie and Malice, of Ignorance, or Envy, and Wickedness of every sort; that you may come with humbled Hearts, and so with a thankful, receptive Frame, consenting to all the Claims, and Purposes of this Ordinance.

3. Therefore Examine your selves afresh that you may thus come. Review the State of your Souls, see how it hath been, and is with you, as to Heart, and Life, State, and Frame. Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat, 1 Cor. 11. 28. Examine your selves about your Knowledge, and your Faith, to understand the Meaning, and the Mystery of this Table; that you may firmly Assent to, and heartily believe, what is Represented, and exhibited here: And have right Apprehensions of those Doctrines, that Explain this Ordinance; as concerning our State of Apostacy, concerning the Method of our Recovery by Christ, and our Faith in him, as Teacher, Saviour, and Lord, in all his Offices. The like might be said concerning Repentance, or Godly Sorrow for Sin, hatred of it, and hearty forsaking of it; Whether you can penitently, believably, seal back your part of the Covenant, (when God sets the Broad Seal of Heaven unto his part;) when he says, I will be thy God, and I will remember thy sins no more; I will, with my  
Q 3 Christ,

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*Christ, freely give thee all things: This I promise, this I seal to every of you, says God, I here deliver it as my Act and Deed. Now can you seal back your part of the Covenant? Lord, I will be thine, henceforth I desire, and resolve to be entirely thine, thy sealed Fountain, thy sealed Garden; I engage henceforward to be the Lord's; This I deliver as my Act and Deed.*

In a word, *Examine your selves, Do you believe the Gospel of Christ to be true, and heartily consent to the Doctrines of it? Do you resolve to be Governed by Christ as your Lord, and consent to the Terms of his Gospel? Do you take him for your only Saviour, and look for all your Acceptance with God, and hope of Pardon, and Life, only for his sake, and upon his Account? Do you consider the Vow you made in Baptism, of Fidelity to Christ, and resolve to be true to it? Do you here seriously Renew it, and will you now again, promise Faithfulness to him, to your Lifes end? Do you value his Favour, and Grace above all things? and come to remember his dying Love, and receive the Communications, of the purchased Spirit, with this Desire, Design, and Hope, That you may love him, and obey him better, and that you may live in Love, and Charity towards your Brethren, and all Mankind, &c.*

4. Look to the Inward part of the Ordinance, and labour to *Appropriate, and Apply Christ to yourselves. Here is a Covenant confirmed by Sacrifice, by Blood, by the precious Blood of Christ; I am called, O my Soul, to feast upon it. This*  
Blood



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Blood was shed to Reconcile me to God, I will drink of it, in token of *such a Reconciliation* made, as a *Testimony* that I have Received the *Atonement* made by that Blood. *My Body was broken for you, says Christ, Take, and eat it. My Blood was shed for you, Take, and drink it. Apply it to your selves, every one to his own Soul, saying, He loved me, and gave himself for me.*

5. Endeavour to fix your *Purposes and Resolutions of faithful Adherence to Christ*, whatever it cost you. Tell him that you distrust your selves, and are afraid of *Temptation*. Tell him in Prayer, *You are almost ashamed to come to his Table, you are such vile unworthy Sinners, and are afraid you shall not keep the Covenant, that now again you desire to renew.* But bewail your selves, as sensible of your sins, and weary of them. Tell him, *that you hate them, and resolve against them, or else you durst not have the face to ask forgiveness, and receive the Seal of it.* Therefore *Relinquish* your selves into his Hands. Beg that the *Holy Spirit* would take possession of you, that you may not backslide, and wander as you have done. Tell him, *that you renounce all Confederacy with his Enemies, you would fain be more stedfast in the way of the Lord.* It is the desire of *your Souls*, that you may not violate this Covenant; but having sworn, that you may perform it, to keep his Righteous Judgments. And that you hope you are ready, through his Grace strength-

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ning you, to do, and suffer any thing for him.

Therefore *penitently*, and *humbly offer up your selves to be his for ever*; saying, “ Lord, I  
“ *present thee with what thou hast so dearly*  
“ *bought: And here without reserve, I give up*  
“ *my self to be Thine. O do not reject a*  
“ *broken, and contrite Heart, that desires to be*  
“ *employed, and used as may best please, and*  
“ *serve thee. Lord! I am nothing, I have no-*  
“ *thing, I can do nothing, I deserve nothing,*  
“ *I desire nothing; but to love thee better,*  
“ *to be more filled with thy Grace, to partake*  
“ *more of thine Image, to be enabled to honour*  
“ *thee now, and enjoy thee for ever. Grant*  
“ *me this, Lord, and do with me what thou*  
“ *wilt. Accept the Sacrifice I make of my self*  
“ *unto thee, of Soul and Body, of all I have, with-*  
“ *out any Exception or Reserve, to thy holy Will*  
“ *and Pleasure, Amen.*

*Lastly*, After all this, Remember that *Thanksgiving* and *Joy*, is a principal part of our Work at this *Table*. Let our Souls, and all that is within us, then *praise the Lord*, giving Thanks to the Father of Mercies, for this unspeakable Gift: Blessing the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for all the Riches of his Grace in him. The very Name of this Sacrament, *the Eucharist*, imports this, That *Thanksgiving* is our principal Work. He took the Bread, and he took the Cup, and *he gave Thanks*, say the *Evangelists*, indifferently of the one, and of the

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the other, *Blessing*, and *Giving of Thanks*, being the same. Thus Food is hallowed by *Thanksgiving*, and if ever the High Praises of God should be in our Mouths, it ought to be so upon this Occasion. Praising God for parting with his only Son, not sparing him, that we might be spared. Thanking our Lord Redeemer, for leaving the Right Hand of his Father, and the Glory of Heaven, to come and Tabernacle amongst us, and take our Nature, and Die for us.

“ Lord Jesus! Who are we? What am I?  
 “ that thou shouldst part with the Glory of  
 “ Heaven, and part with thine own Life, upon  
 “ the accursed Tree, for such a Wretch as I  
 “ am? Was I dearer to thee, than thine own  
 “ Heart-Blood, that thou didst freely shed it  
 “ upon the Cross for me? How Amazing is  
 “ thy Love! How do I rejoyce in it! With  
 “ what Thankfulness do I remember it! How  
 “ am I ashamed of myself, that I Love thee  
 “ no more! O that I might feel the Constraints  
 “ of thine Endearing Love! to warm, and  
 “ quicken my cold, and dead Heart; that so I  
 “ might speak thy Praise? And let Heaven and  
 “ Earth, and Angels and Men, for ever Extol  
 “ thy Matchless Grace, and Love, which pas-  
 “ seth Knowledge, but calls for Everlasting  
 “ Thanksgiving.

With such a Frame as this, let us endeavour to Come, and we shall find, that His Banner over us will be Love.

T H E E N D.

T H E



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*The Eighth Discourse,*  
AFTER THE  
**L O R D ' S   S U P P E R .**

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From St. JOHN XX. 27, 28.

*Then said he unto Thomas, Reach hither thy Finger, and behold my Hands; and reach hither thy Hand, and thrust it into my Side, and be not faithless, but believing.*

*And Thomas answered, and said unto him, My Lord, and my God.*

**A** Strange and surprizing Spectacle, to see an *Apostle* of our Lord carry it like an *Infidel*, an *Unbeliever*! To behold one of the *Twelve*, that was to spread the *Faith of Christ* throughout the Universe, to want that Faith, which he was to perswade Others to! To hear the great Article of the *Resurrection*, one of the most deeply Fundamental Articles of the *Christian Religion*, to be obstinately denied by those Lips, that were to Publish the Gospel of Christ! And this as the Summ of it, *That he is Risen from the dead,*

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*dead.* What more likely to scandalize the Weak, to stagger the Faith of many, not yet confirmed Disciples, and to hinder the belief of Christ's being Risen, than such an Example of Incredulity in one of his *Apostles*?

But the permission of such Falls, and the raising a Revenue of Glory to the Redeemer by them, is one of the Secrets of *Predestination*, that will be *Eternally Adored*. This is sufficiently manifest in this very Passage, relating to the Apostle *S. Thomas*; whose *Infidelity*, as one of the *Ancients* observes, has proved as serviceable to Christianity, as the *Faith* of the other Apostles. His *Incredulity* strengthens our Faith in the Resurrection of our Saviour, as it gave Occasion to his Appearing another time, for the Cure of his Unbelief. And because, after so much Obstinacy, and pertinacious Doubt, he at last yields, and acknowledges the Truth of Christ's Resurrection, and makes a Glorious Confession of his *Faith*. Whereas, if only a few credulous Men, Men of an easie and hasty Faith, had assured us of it, their Testimony had been more liable to suspicion.

The *Wisdom* of God has Recorded the *Faults*, and *Miscarriages* of the Apostles, for our *Instruction* and *Use*. These *Suns* enlighten us, not only by the *Lustre* of their *good Examples*, when they shine in *Grace* and *Holiness*; but even by their *Eclipses* too. Their Cowardize, their Rashness, their Presumption, their Unbelief,

is of use to be considered. Our *Heavenly Physician* Extracts some of the *best Medicines*, out of the *most deadly Poison*: To caution, and warn, and instruct, and edifie us, by the *Miscarriages*, and *Faults* of *David*, of *Peter*, of *Thomas*, and the like.

Let us threfore view this Passage, and consider what *Reflections* may be made upon it. And the whole may be comprehended under these *Four Heads*.

1. *The Incredulity of this Apostle*, he could not believe, without seeing, and feeling, and having the Testimony of Sense. *Except I shall see in his Hands the print of the Nails, and put my Finger into the print of the Nails, and thrust my Hand into his Side, I will not believe,* Verse 25.

2. *The Condescension and Kindness of Christ*, in appearing to him another time, and granting it, Verse 26, 27.

3. *The Cure of his Unbelief, and the Excellent Confession of Faith*, which thereupon he makes, Ver. 28. *And Thomas answered, and said unto him, My Lord, and my God.*

4. *The useful Admonition which our Saviour gives us concerning Faith*, that though *Thomas* having seen him, had believed, yet *Rather blessed* are they, that have not seen, and yet have believed.

1. Concerning *the Incredulity* of this *Apostle*, the *Evangelist* gives us an Account, that on the *First Day of the Week*, towards *Evening*, our Lord being Risen from the Dead, early in the *Morning*, when the Disciples were met together, and had shut the Door for fear of the *Jews*, *Ver. 19.* He suddenly presents himself amongst them, saying, *Peace be unto you.* He assures them of his being Risen from the Dead, imparts to them the *Holy-Ghost*, and gives them a Charge and Commission, to act as *Apostles*, in Remitting, or Retaining *Sins.* But *Thomas*, whose *Greek Name* was *Didymus*, both signifying *Twins*, was not present at this Assembly. But as soon as the other Disciples met him, they tell him, *They had seen the Lord*, that *Mary Magdalen* had seen him, that *Peter* had seen him, and *the two Disciples going to Emaus*, and then *all the Ten*, and had full Assurance, that he was *Risen.* This makes little Impression in order to his believing it; for no Eyes will serve him but his own. Though *Faith* comes by *hearing*, he professes he would *not believe*, except he saw; *Except I see in his Hands the print of the Nails, and put my Finger into the prints of the Nails, and thrust my Hand into his Side, I will not believe.*

O suspicious, incredulous *Man!* Who will be the Loser, if thou wilt not believe? But wherefore dost thou doubt? How is it, that so many *Eyes* and *Tongues* are not as credible, as thine own *Eyes* and *Hands!* Shall the World



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be Profelyted to the Faith of Christ, upon the Testimony of these Witnesses, and wilt not thou Assent? Did not thy Lord foretel his own Death, and Resurrection? Didst thou not hear him declare, that he must be Crucified, and that afterwards on the *Third Day he would Rise again*? Is there any thing we Attest concerning his Resurrection, but what was promised, and foretold? Why may not we be credited in our Report of a Matter of Fact, whereof we have so plain and full an Evidence? What ground is there to disbelieve so many Eye-witnesses: If there had been none but *the Women*, who saw him, yet having themselves seen him, their Testimony in that case might have been credited: But here are *Ten Disciples* that say, *We have seen the Lord*. Had they been *Ten Strangers*, there were little reason to Reject the Testimony of *Ten Persons*, to one Point, which they had the Testimony of Sense to assure them of: But here are *Ten of thy Companions*, and *Brethren*, and *Apostles*, of whose Capacity, and Probity, and Faithfulness, thou canst not doubt: And they all agree in this Testimony, *We have seen the Lord*. Shall every Word be established in the Mouth of *two or three Witnesses*, as says *Moses*, and wilt thou not believe, when the Number is so much greater? *No, except I see the print of the Nails, &c. I will not believe.*

In this *Unreasonable Distrust*, and *Sullen Unbelief*, he continues for a whole week; obstinately

nately professing, *That, without such an unreasonable Condescension of Christ, to convince his very Senses, that he will not acknowledge his being Risen.* It is strange, that one of the *Twelve*, an *Apostle* of our Lord, after Three Years Conversation in his Family, should be so *Incredulous*, as to believe nothing but what he saw; and that he should refuse to believe on such ample Testimony; especially when it was an *Article*, that *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Job, and David*, believed concerning the *Messiah*, whom they never saw.

It is the more surprizing too, *in this Apostle*, because he had not only been eminently called by *Christ*, and long conversed with him, been brought up in his Company, and was one of his House; but on a former Occasion, this *Apostle* had declared more Zeal than the rest of them. When they Hesitated concerning the Proposal *Christ* made, of his going into *Judea* to raise *Lazarus*, upon the account of the hatred of the *Jews* against him, *John II. 16. Then said Thomas to the other Disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.* Tho' some think he spake this with another Air, and in another Sense, than is commonly thought. As if he would say. *Since we cannot persuade him, let us even go and perish, if it must be so; Perish we must, and there's an end.*

But, to take the words of this *Apostle* in the most Charitable Sense, he professes his Zeal  
for

for his Master beyond his Fellows, and a Com-  
mendable Forwardness to suffer with him:  
But now the *Death of Christ* seems to have swal-  
lowed up his *Faith and Courage*; now he will  
not believe *except he can see*, nor then neither;  
unless he can *thrust his Finger into the print of the*  
*Nails*. Which was a bold prescribing to God,  
and contained a great deal of Absurdity, and of  
mischievous consequence in it. For it intimates,  
as if we were not obliged to believe *Christ is*  
*Risen, and Alive*, nor any such matter of Fact,  
upon the Testimony of Others, unless we our-  
selves may touch and see, and have the *Evi-*  
*dence* of our own *Sense*. Whereas, How then  
could *Thomas* himself believe the *Scriptures* of  
the *Old Testament*? How could he be satisfied  
that there was such a Man as *Moses*, or *David*,  
or of the Truth of any of those things related  
concerning the *Ancestors* of the *Jews*, in *Egypt*,  
the *Wilderness*, or *Canaan*, which he himself  
did not see?

This is further aggravated, by considering  
the *Nature*, and *Import* of *this Article*, which he  
refuses to *believe*: Not only as that which was  
*foretold* concerning the *Messiah*, by the *Scriptures*  
of the *Old Testament*, but as the *Basis*, and  
*Foundation* of our *Religion*, as that wherein the  
*Glory of Christ* is *principally concerned*; as that  
which *removes the Ignominy* of his *Cross*; And  
therefore the *Jews*, who *set themselves to oppose*  
*the Belief* of his *Resurrection*, were thereby, in  
some respects, more *Injurious to Christ*, than by  
R. their

their *Crucifixion* of him. For they do what they can to *deprive him* of that *new Life* he had, when he was *Risen*; and they *kill him* a *Second Time*. This therefore aggravates the *Fault* of *Thomas*, that by his *Unbelief*, he *Subscribes* to the *Calumnies* of the *Jews*. He takes their *part*, and *joins* with them. He *disowns*, *condemns*, and *denies*, that which *Heaven* and *Earth*, *Angels* and *Men*, had *testified* and *published*, and *born witness* to, even the *Resurrection* of *Christ* from the *Dead*.

Before I proceed to his *Cure*, and *Recovery*, let us consider what *Instructions* may be learn'd from the *Incredulity* of this *Apostle*. As,

1. That *Faith* is no such *Easie Matter* as some perfwade themselves. *Unbelief* is *strangely Rooted* in the *Hearts* of *Men*, and very *difficultly cured*. *I will not believe, except I see*; nay, *I will not believe my Eyes*, unless *I touch*, and *thrust my Finger* into the *print* of the *Nails*, and *my Hands* into his *Side*. Our *First Parents* *Sinned* by *Unbelief*; *Adam* fell by *Incredulity*, and hath left the *Fatal Impression* of that *Poison* upon all his *Posterity*. But where is the *Eve*? Where is the *Apple*, and *Serpent*, in this case? There need no other *Eve* to tempt to the *Sin* of *Unbelief*, than the *Sin* of *our own Flesh*, and any kind of *Temptation* is enough to draw us to it. The *Devil* does not tell *Thomas*, as he did our *First Parents*, *You shall be as Gods, You shall not die*; But rather on the contrary, *You shall be as Beasts, You*

*You shall die, and never Rise more.* For if *Christ* be not Risen, we in vain expect to Rise; his *Resurrection* being the *Cause* and *Pattern* of ours:

Now under this *Temptation*, this *Holy Apostle* fell; and if he, who had *true Love to Christ*, and was a *true Disciple*, was yet so *Incredulous*; it is less strange that the greatest part of the *World*, as to *Divine Things*, are so *Unbelieving*; when the *Corruptions*, and *Passions*, and *evil Inclinations* of Men, have such a *Power* and *Influence* upon their *Minds*. There needs therefore the *Exercise* of a *mighty power* to produce *Faith in the Heart*; And accordingly we read of the *exceeding greatness* of that *mighty Power*, which raised *Christ from the Dead*, *employed toward them that believe*, Ephes. 1. 19, 20.

It is observable, that nothing but the *Presence of Christ himself* could cure the *Unbelief* of this *Apostle*: Till then, the *Testimony* of *Mary Magdalen*, and all that *Peter*, and *Johæ* could say, all the *Discourses* of the *other Apostles*, had no effect. And so it is still, that without the *Presence* and *Power of Christ*, to Accompany the *Ministry of the Word*, they who are *Unbelievers* will continue in their *Unbelief*. But a few plain words, accompanied with the *Power* and *Efficacy* of the *Spirit of Christ*, shall make the most *obstinate Unbeliever* fall down on his Face, and cry out with this *Apostle*, *My Lord, and my God*.

2. In that *his Unbelief* is attributed to *his Absence from the other Disciples*, when they *Assembled* together, We may learn to value *the Assemblies of Christians*, in hopes of the *Presence of Christ*, and the *Manifestation of himself*. 'Tis true, it is said, that the *Two Disciples* returning from *Emaus* to *Jerusalem*, found the *Eleven* gathered together, *Luke 24. 33*. How then if *Thomas* were absent, are they called *Eleven*, after the *Death of Judas*, and before the *Choice of Matthias*. I Answer, \* When the *Eleven* are mentioned, we must not suppose it exactly meant of the *Number of the Apostles* then Present, but of *the present Number of the Apostles*. By his *Absence* from them, he not only missed the good News that *Mary* brought of the *Resurrection of Christ*; But he lost the comfortable *Sight of Christ* himself, and so was left in *Doubts and Unbelief*, which they were delivered from. The *Apostle*, *Heb. 10. 25*. cautions against † *Forsaking the Assembling our Selves together, as the manner of some is*. Not only that which is *Total*, which is the *Fruit and Evidence of Absolute Apostacy*; but that which is *Partial* only, in the want of *Diligence, and Conscientious Care, in a Constant Attendance on Christian Assemblies*, according as the *Rule, and their Institution* do require: Whether it proceed from *Fear of Suffering*, or from *Spiritual Sloth, with the Occasions and Affairs*

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\* Dr. Lightfoot. † See Dr. Owen on *Heb. Chap. 10. Vers. 25.*

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*fairs of this Life, which come in Competition: This is the first way, for the most part, whereby an Evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God, doth evidence it self unto others. Forsaking of Church-Assemblies is usually an Entrance into Apostacy.*

Believe it, *Christians*, you cannot but be Losers by your Absence from *the Publick Assemblies*, especially on the *Lord's Day*, as this was, when the *Disciples* met together, and *Christ* was with them. And if *Thomas* had not come amongst them the next *Lord's Day*, he might have continued longer in his *Incredulity*. He had met with the Presence of *Christ*, if he had not forsaken *the Assemblies of the other Disciples*. You must not expect to have *the same Presence of Christ in Solitude*, or alone, as in the *Publick Assemblies*, where his *Special Presence* is Promised, and usually Found. They who pretend, for the better Enjoyment of *the Divine Presence*, to retire into *Desarts*, or *Hermitages*, to *Monasteries* and *Cloisters*; they greatly mistake and deceive themselves: For instead of retiring out of *the World*, they retire out of *the Church*, and forsake the Company of the *Saints*; They quit *the Presence of Christ*, and lose the Opportunties of beholding the Wonders of his Grace, and of receiving the Influences of his Presence, and Spirit.

Therefore do not discontinue your Attendance on *Publick Worship*, when you have Opportunity. Do not say, **We can read as good**

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a Sermon at home, or *Pray* as well at home. If you absent from *the House of God*, you must not think that *Christ* will follow you to *your own Houses*, while you refuse to visit him in *his*. If you are not with your Brethren, when they Assemble together, you will not find such Manifestations of *Christ* to you, as others Experience. You displease him by imitating the Example of *Thomas*, and may expect to be assaulted, and staggered by Temptations to Infidelity, and all other Sins, which only the *Presence of Christ*, and his *Grace* can cure: For where two or three are met together *in the Name of Christ*, he has promised to be *with them*. It is in *the Assemblies of his People*, that he manifests himself; it is *there* he makes known *the Power of his Death*, and the *Glory of his Resurrection*; it is *there* he dispences the Gifts and Graces of his Spirit; And they that absent themselves out of Choice, they are voluntarily deprived of these Blessings.

Suppose you should spend your time on the *Lord's Day* at home, in *Prayer, Reading, and Meditation*, yet there is little Reason to expect God should accept you therein, while it signifies a Neglect, if not a Contempt of Publick Worship, which is more for his Honour, and is expressly required, by the Institution of such Assemblies, and *Apostolical Practice* agreeable thereunto. You cannot reasonably hope for such Effusions of the *Divine Grace and Spirit*, in a *secret Corner*, as in the *Congregation of the Faithful*. There is *room and time enough* for  
*Private*



*Private Devotions*, without the neglect of the *Publick Worship*. And God hath promised to be present in *Christian Assemblies*: And his Institutions are never without a Blessing, when there are Subjects capable of receiving it. You should therefore be glad of an Opportunity, and Call, to Meet your Brethren in the House of God.

3. I observe further, that what we have found of the Presence and Manifestation of *Christ*, we may *Communicate* in order to the Conviction of Others, and the Assistance of their Faith. All the *Disciples* endeavoured to persuade *Thomas* of *Christ's Resurrection*, they All told him, *We have seen the Lord*; and no doubt they urged him, with all the Circumstances of it, to convince him of the Unreasonableness of his *Obstinacy*, who would not believe, except he could see. “ How unreasonable was it, might they tell him, that *Christ* should appear again upon his Account, merely to comply with his Curiosity? And if he should appear again, how unlikely it was that he should be privileged more than they, who had only a bare Sight of him; Why should he have more? Why should he be permitted to thrust his Hand into our Lord's Side, and his Fingers into the print of the Nails? He might expect rather that he would say to him, as to *Mary*, Touch me not, for I am not yet Ascended: And so, if he should appear, and be seen of him, he might still continue an *Infidel*.

This kind Office they did for him; thus doubtless did they endeavour to convince him, though without success, they tell him, what they have *seen*. And they that have any sight of *Christ*, or Experience of his Presence, as they cannot but be willing to impart it to Others, so they may, and ought to do it, in order to their Conviction. Only let us take heed, that such Communications be done with all possible *Wisdom*, and *Humility*.

4. That it is Unreasonable, and Provoking, to refuse to Believe the Truth of any thing, merely because we have not *the Testimony of Sense*, to confirm it. This was the *Apostle's* Fault, *I will not believe, except I see, and feel the print of the Nails*. This is to make Terms with the Blessed God, to *limit the Holy One of Israel*, and unreasonably to Expect, that what is the Object of *Faith*, should come under the View of *Sense*.

5. I may observe further, that *S. Peter* was one of these *Witnesses*, that had *seen* the Lord; and yet *Thomas* does not hearken to *Him* neither, nor regard what *He* says, more than what the other *Apostles* said. What little ground is there to think then, that *He* had any *Supremacy* above the rest of *the Apostles*, and that *He* was *the Prince* of them? If *He* were so, Why did *He* not do his Office? Why did *He* not shew his Authority? Here is a fair Occasion for *Him*

to make use of the Authority of *His Keys*, to stop the Mouth of *this Unbeliever*, who says, he will *not believe, unless he see*. Why does not *St. Peter* define, and determine the Matter that was questioned, doubted, and denied by *Thomas*? There is nothing of all this, however: proper the Occasion might have been.

6. In that *this Incredulity* of the *Apostle* was over-ruled to so much good, for the further Confirmation of the *Great Doctrine of Christ's Resurrection*, let us admire *the Divine Wisdom*, and *Goodness* in the *Government* of the *World*; who, though he cannot be the *Author of Sin*, does yet over-rule it, to his own *Glory*. He hath done so in many *Eminent Examples*, and he did so in *this*?

Hereby the *Honour of Christ* is the more advanced by his *open Confession* of him afterwards, as *Lord* and *God*: and the *Truth* of his *being Risen* is the better confirmed, and so the *Faith* of others assisted by his *Fall*. It was well for *the Apostle*, and it was well for *Us*, that he did not believe presently: He was afterwards brought to the most admirable Exercise, and Declaration of his *Faith in Christ*, not only of his being *Risen*, but of his being *the Eternal Son of God*, and of his happy Interest in him, and Relation to him, as his *Lord*, and his *God*: And we have a greater Evidence thereby of the *Truth of Christ's Resurrection*.

Doubtless this Fall of *Thomas*, was also a *Motive* to his greater *Diligence* in the Service of *Christ*, and *Zeal* for his *Glory*; as it was with the Apostle *Paul*, and *Peter*, and others.

7. *Let us not rashly judge of Men by a single Act.* *Thomas* had true Faith, notwithstanding this *Fit of Doubting*, and *Unbelief*; which revived upon the Sight, and Presence of *Christ*, within a few Days. Many, that in a *Fit of Temptation*, we may think, have no *Truth of Grace*; yet if we stay a while, do soon discover it: Some special Ordinance, or Providence brings them to themselves, and suddenly shows the Reality of that, which did not appear, but the contrary Corruption.

2. Having thus considered *the Unbelief* of this *Apostle*, let us now observe *the Compassion, Condescension, and Kindness of Christ*, to this *Incredulous Apostle*. Eight Days after, the *Disciples* being together, and *Thomas* with them, *Jesus* came and stood in the midst of them, saying, *Peace be with you*; and says to *Thomas*, Verse 27. *Reach hither thy Finger, and behold my Hands; and reach hither thy Hand, and thrust it into my Side, and be not Faithless, but Believing.*

What *Injustice*, if our Saviour had left him to his own *Pertinacious Incredulity*? Whom could he have blamed, but himself, if he had continued in his *Unbelief*? But our Lord came  
and

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and shewed him his Hands, and Feet, and bids him do what he desired, for his Conviction. How mercifully doth he pity us, in our Errors, and Infirmities? With what Tenderness and Compassion doth he reclaim us? And this when he was *Risen from the Dead*, after he was declared to be the Son of God with Power, when he was to receive the Recompence, and Reward of his Death, and Suffering; when his State of Humiliation was over. And yet How low does he stoop for the sake of this *Apostle*? When so unreasonable a thing too was demanded, as the Condition of his Believing? But such is the Admirable *Bounty* and *Condescension* of *Christ*, that he will not refuse him, even *this*.

“ *Since you will not believe otherwise, O my*  
“ *Apostle, I consent; Behold my Wounds!*  
“ *Behold the print of the Nails! And if the*  
“ *Sight of them be not enough, to cure thine In-*  
“ *fidelity, Come, Reach hither thine Hand,*  
“ *thrust thy Finger into my Side; I care not*  
“ *what I do, or how low I stoop, rather than not*  
“ *convince, and heal thee: If the Evidence of*  
“ *one Sense be not enough, I will yield further,*  
“ *and let thee have more.*

Our Lord might have convinced *Thomas* by the *Powerful Influence* of his *Spirit*, without all this: But he condescends thus far for *our sakes*, that We, and Others, *might have a clearer Evidence and Proof of his Resurrection*, and like-  
wise

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*wife of his Divinity*: For his *fixing* upon *Thomas* in *this Assembly*, and speaking to him such Words, doth plainly manifest, that *he knew his Heart*, and understood what Discourse he had had, and what Objections he had made, and what was the *Inward Sense* of his Soul; which he could not have done, without his being *Omniscient*. Little did this *Apostle* think, his *Lord* had heard him, or believe that he *knew his Sin*. But, *Come hither*, says *Christ*, *behold my Hands*, *Reach hither thy Hand*, and *thrust it into my Side*. He condescends to grant that, which it was the *Apostle's Fault* to *Ask*.

We see, by these Words, our *Risen Lord* retained the *Marks* of the *Wounds*, the *Prints* of the *Nails*, and *Spear* in his *Body*, after the *Resurrection*, to manifest, with greater Certainty, the *Truth* of it. It is likely he preserved them at his *Ascension* too, as the *Evidence* of his past *Sufferings*, and the *Ensigns* of his *Victory*. And let us not imagine, if he retains them in *Heaven*, to the *Admiration* of *Angels*, and the *Joy* of the *Redeemed*, that it will be any *Disparagement* to the *Beauty*, and *Splendor* of his *Glorious Body*, but rather contribute to it, in the *Day* of his *Appearing*, when *every Eye* shall see him, and they also which pierced him.

3. Let us Consider *the Faith* of *Thomas* here-upon, *ver. 18*. He answered and said, *My Lord*, and *my God*. He not only *believes with the Heart*, but *confesses with the Mouth*: He owns both the *Divinity* of *Christ*, and his *Dominion*,  
and

and that with *an Appropriating Faith, My Lord, and my God.* There is a great Sense in these few words, for,

1. Here is an *Evidence* of the *Truth* of his *Repentance*, of his *Love*, and of his *Zeal*. The very *Sight of Christ*, and the *Print of the Nails*, and the *Mark of his Wounds*, shames him for his *Sin*, and makes him sensible of his *Incredulity*. Behold, says *Christ*, the *print of the Nails*; *Think what I have suffered for Thee, for the Expiation of thy Sin: Think how I have lov'd Thee, to die for thee, And wilt thou not believe that I am Risen?* This awakened his *Repentance*, and made him abruptly cry out, *My Lord, and my God.* Two words sometimes are more significant than an *Hundred*, and express the *Desires* of the *Heart*, more than a large *Discourse*.

The *Kindness* and *Condescension* of his *Lord* overcame him, and by these words he proves the *Cure* of his *Infidelity*. Before, he would *not believe Christ to be Alive*; now, he *confesses him to be God*. Before he reckoned him under the *Power of Death*, now he acknowledges him as the *Lord*, and *Prince of Life*. Before he believed *less* than any of the *other Apostles*, now he *confesses more* than *All* of them.

“ *My Lord, my God.* Thou art the *Anointed*  
 “ of *God*, the *King*, the *Head of the Church*,  
 “ the *Expected, Promised Messiah*. If thy  
 “ *Death* had staggered my *Faith*, thy *Resur-*  
 “ *rection*”

" *rection* hath established it. *My Lord, my God.*  
 " I adore thy Compassion, and Condescension,  
 " that thou wouldst Appear to me, who so  
 " justly forfeited such a Favour. I implore  
 " thy Grace, I beg thy Pardon, I now un-  
 " feignedly acknowledge, own, and avow  
 " Thee, for my Saviour, my Lord, my God.

Though he professed his Unbelief in larger Words, *Except I see the print of the Nails, and thrust my Finger, &c.* Yet this Expression of his *Repentance* is equally significant. He only stammers out two or three words, *My Lord, my God*; But such as prove his Conversion, and his Cure: As the Voice of the Patient, will sometimes discover the Cure of a Disease in the Head. When the Heart is full, the Expressions are many times short and abrupt. The *Groans, Desires, and Inward Affections* of the Soul, are unutterable. He had much more to say, but he could not bring it out; His Penitent Shame on the one Hand, and his Zeal, and Admiration on the other, *stopt his Mouth*. But the *little* he doth say, is much to the purpose: He calls him *Lord, and God*; which upon the *Resurrection* of Christ, every Tongue was to Confess.

The Truth of his *Repentance, Love, and Zeal*, he afterwards more abundantly proved, by *labour, and diligence*, and travelling up and down



down the World to spread the Gospel into \* *Parthia*, and afterwards among the *Medes* and *Persians*, passing through the *Asian Ethiopia*, says *Chrysoftom*, and, at last, came to *India*, persuading them to *Renounce their Idolatry*, and receive the *Faith of Christ*; Some Remainers of this, there are in some parts of *India* to this day. And at last was thrust through with Lances, by the Command of an *Indian King*.

If we may believe the Account of some of the *Jesuits*, † and other *Missionaries* of the *Roman Church* into *China*, and those parts, they do ascribe the Preaching of the Gospel there to this Apostle, and his *Followers*. And the *Chaldee Books* concerning the *Indian Christianity*, Cultivated by his Means, are mentioned to this Purpose, and Preserved to this Day by an Archbishop of *Granganour*, or *Della Serra*, and Translated into *Latin* by a *Jesuit*. One of those Books is a *Breviary*, wherein are these words, *By the Means of St. Thomas, the Errors of the Idolatry of the Indians were scattered: By the Means of St. Thomas, the Chinese, and the Æthiopians were converted to the Truth: By the Means of St. Thomas, they obtained the Vertue of Baptism, and the Adoption of Sons; and kept the Faith, which they promised to God. By Means of St. Thomas, the Beams of the Knowledge of Life enlightened*

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\* See Dr Cave's *Life of St. Thomas*. † *Relazione dell' Cina del P. A. Se nejo*, 126. F. 118. Parma, 6 p. 27.

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*enlightened all India: And the Kingdom of Heaven entred into China. And presently there follows an Antiphona, which saith, The Indians, the Chineses, the Persians, and other Islanders, those of Syria, Armenia, Grecia, and Romania, in Commemoration of St. Thomas, do offer their Adoration unto thy Most Holy Name, O Great God.*

2. Let us Consider the Reality of his *Faith*, in this short Confession of it. For, upon these Words, *My Lord, my God*, our Saviour owns, in the next Verse, the Truth of his Faith. *Blessed art thou, who hast seen, and hast believed: Though a more ample and abundant Blessing, be pronounced on such as did also believe, without that help of Sight and Sense.*

But here is an Excellent Faith, and all the Essential parts of it, comprehended in this Expression, *My Lord, my God.*

1. An Assent to this Truth, that *Jesus is the Christ*, the true *Messiah*, who had Risen again as he foretold.

2. An acknowledgment that *this Jesus is the Lord, and God*: that absolute Supremacy, Power, and Dominion belong to to him, that he is *true God*.

3. An Appropriation of him to himself, as *his Lord, and his God*; which following upon the  
the

the former two, contain the *Essentials* of true *Faith*:

4. In this Expression, we have an Evidence of the *Two Natures of Christ*; the Reality of his *Humane Nature*, and the Truth of his *Divine*.

1. *The Reality of his Humane Nature.* The Method our Lord uses to prove his Resurrection to this *Apostle*, doth suppose he was *true Man*, Partaker of Humane Nature; that his Body was of such a kind, that our Senses might judge of it; for else he would not have bid *Thomas* behold him, and reach hither his Hand:

This may easily be improved to overthrow the *Popish Fancy of Transubstantiation*, that the Body and Blood of *Christ* are in the *Lord's Supper*, under the Accidents of *Bread and Wine*. For at that rate *Thomas* might have still objected, That what he saw and touched was *not the Body of Christ*, but the Accidents of it, and that he was not obliged to believe on the Testimony of his Senses, *that the Body of Christ was present*. But his Obligation so to believe, is implied in our Saviour's Words, *Reach hither thy Hand, and be not faithless, but believing*. And on the same Testimony of Sense; we are bound to believe, that *it is Bread* after Consecration, and *not Flesh*; that it is *Wine*, and not *Blood*.

2. The Truth of *his Godhead* is also evident, that he is really, and *truly God*. This Title, *My God*, as well as *My Lord*, is very observable, because it hath *the Article* before the Word, *God*. And it is commonly granted by the Adversaries of the Deity of *Christ*, that wherever the Word *God* is used with the *Article* before it, it there imports *the True and Eternal God*. So is the Expression here, which our *English Translation* does not reach; for it may rather be read, *The Lord mine, the God mine*.

*My Lord, My God*. From his Office, as *Lord*, and *Christ*, he Riseth to his *Divine Nature*, and *the Dignity of his Essence*. He had reason to own him *to be Christ the Lord*, by his Resurrection, and other things which he had observed before; and from that *Dignity* he owns him to be *true God*, worthy of *the Highest Homage and Adoration*.

Had it been otherwise, the *Apostle* would not have given the Title of *God*, unto *Jesus Christ*, nor would he have received it: For the Greater any Person is, the greater Danger there is of giving him such Titles as belong not to him. As to give to One that is next to the *King*, the Title of *King*. Especially to ascribe *Divinity*, and *Godhead* to a *Creature*. What can be more provoking to him, who is *Jealous of his Honour*, and will not give his *Glory to another*, Isa. 42.

It cannot well be supposed that \* *Thomas*, who was brought up in the *Jewish Religion*, could be ignorant of the *Doctrine of the Unity of the Godhead*; He must needs know what *Moses*, and the *Prophets* teach concerning it; *Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord*, Deut. 6. 4. This was one of the Sentences written on the Fringes of their Garments, and quoted by *Christ*, as a known thing, *Mark* 12. 32.

Neither can it be imagined, that our Saviour would have permitted such a thing, without Rebuking him, if he had not been *true God*, as well as *real Man*. But so this *Apostle* does acknowledge him, and so must we: And every † *Office of Christ*, as our *Prophet*, *Priest*, and *King*, doth suppose and require that he be *true God*, as well as *true Man*; or he could not discharge those Offices to any Saving Purpose for us.

4. Let us then *Imitate the Faith of this Apostle*, in contemplating the *Death and Resurrection of Christ*, that we also may say as he did, *My Lord, and my God*. And that will include both a *Claim of Interest*, and *special Propriety* in him, and imply the *Dedication of our selves to his Use, and Service*. The one of these will follow upon the other. When

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God

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\* See *Placæi disput. in loc. Tom. 3: 4to.* † *Dr. Manton, on Colof. 1. 19. p. 202.*

God says, *I am thy God*; we cannot but answer, *That we are his Servants*, and resolve to be so: And if we are *his*, and Devoted to him, we may infer that he is *Ours*, for the Covenant is mutual.

But if we cannot, as sometimes we cannot, so clearly, and comfortably say, *My God*; We may yet humbly, and resolvedly say, *My Lord*, that is, *I am thy Servant, I am Devoted to thy Fear, I am resigned and given up to thee; I have chosen thee for my Portion, and I have dedicated and devoted my self for ever to be thine, &c.* The more serious we are in this, the more likely are we to come to this *Claim*, and *Appropriation*, and *special Interest* in God, and Christ, as *ours*: And till we arrive to some Degree of this, we are Strangers to the most comfortable part of the *Christian Life*: For this is a great ground of our Confidence, and a main Spring of our Joy. *My Beloved is mine, and I am his. He loved me, and gave himself for me.* This attracts our Love, this wins our Hearts, and fills us with Joy unutterable, and full of *Glory*.

If Christ, by the Presence of his Spirit, would visit our Souls; we should then be able to use such Language of *Faith*. If he will visit us, as he did the *Disciples*, when *Thomas* was with them; his Presence and Power can produce such a *Faith*; And if he please, he can enter, and do this, though the Doors be  
barred,

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barred, and shut never so close. For he can open them, as he did *the Heart of Lydia*. Tho' they be of Stone or Iron, he can break, he can soften, he can make them *Hearts of Flesh*. Let us beg he would so visit us, by his Spirit.

Though we have not the Privilege to *touch him* on Earth, as this *Apostle*, yet we may *behold him*, as the holy Martyr *Stephen*, in Heaven. We may Contemplate him by *Faith*, as at *the Right Hand of God*: And so we may behold the print of his Nails, and thrust our Hand into his wounded Side, and hear his Voice, yea *taste*, as well as *touch* his very Body and Blood, and feed upon him. We have some  
“ of us so done this Day. And after such a  
“ *Sight*, and such a *Taste*, shall we not cry out;  
“ *My Lord, my God! O my Lord, what have I*  
“ *done? O my God, What shall I do? O my Lord,*  
“ *my dear Lord Jesus! who am I, that thou hast*  
“ *loved me, so as to die for me, so as to give thy*  
“ *self a Sacrifice for me? O my God, What shall*  
“ *I render to thee? How shall I express my Grati-*  
“ *tude? What shall I do to honour thee? O my Lord,*  
“ *thou hast Redeemed me at a costly Price. O my*  
“ *God, give me of the Spirit of Grace, to re-*  
“ *new thine Image, subdue my Lusts, and assist*  
“ *mine Obedience. My Lord, my God! the King*  
“ *of Saints, the Prince of Peace, the first Be-*  
“ *gotten from the Dead, the First Born of every*  
“ *Creature, the First Fruits of them that sleep,*  
“ *the true and only Potentate, the Great Im-*  
“ *manuel, God, with us, true God, and true*  
“ *Man: Whom have I in Heaven but thee? &c.*

Let us labour after *such a Faith*, and beg it of the God of all Grace; and never desist, till in the use of that, and other means, we are brought to use such Language too.

*Lastly*, As to you, *my Brethren*, who have been at *the Table of the Lord*; Consider, what have you been doing? Your great Business hath been, or should have been this Day, solemnly to Renew the Covenant between God and you; in such Appropriating Language of Faith, as these words of *Thomas*: For *Christ*, and all his Benefits are offered to you, by the Distribution of the Elements. *Behold me, I am yours; Accept me, Take me*, says *Christ*. You by Receiving them, say, *Lord, I am thine, Accept me, Possess me for thine own*. The *Lord's Supper*, is the *New Testament*, or *Covenant in the Blood of Christ*; you there Ratifie the *Baptismal Covenant*; he saith, *I am thine*; and you say, *You are his*. This inward, personal Covenanting between *Christ* and you, is the Great Thing to be minded, and this amounts to the same, with *My Lord, my God*, acknowledging *his Right*, by the one Expression, and professing *your own Interest*, by the other.

This was Virtually done in *our Baptism*, this was actually done at *our first Turning to God*, when we entered into *Covenant to be the Lord's*; And this we professedly Repeat, and publickly Renem, every time we come to *this Table*. We have



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have this Day acknowledged him to be *our Lord*, we have entered into a *solemn League of Subjection*, and *Fidelity* to him; we have taken on us a *solemn Bond*, and *Obligation of Duty*, and *Service*; And if we are *Unfaithful*, every *Communion* will come in against us, as so many *Oaths* that we have broken. For by Feasting on *this Sacrifice* this Day, we have again *Sworn at the Altar*, we have said it in our Hearts, *My Lord, my God*; And we have professed it by our *Actions*. We have played the *Hypocrites*, and acted the part of *Children*, and *Fools*, if we did not mean it. And if we do not stand to it while we live, we are *Rebels*; and add *Perjury* to our *Rebellion*, by violating our *Bond*, *Covenant*, and *Oath*. And if we do so, we have imprecated a *Curse* upon our selves, even all the *Curses* of a *broken Covenant*, and so have sworn to our own *Condemnation*.

You therefore who have this Day Avouched the Lord for your God, and have said to *Christ*, *My Lord, my God*; Remember that he is *both*: And don't expect he should be *thy God*, *thy Portion*, *thy Happiness*, *thy Heaven*, if he be not *thy Lord*. Don't think he will be *thy Jesus*, *thy Ransom* to save thee from Hell, if he be not *thy Lord*, to govern thy Heart, and Life. He is the Author of Eternal Salvation only to those that obey him: an Everlasting *Saviour* to them only, to whom he is a *Lord*. Don't expect that the saying *Lord, Lord*, either now,

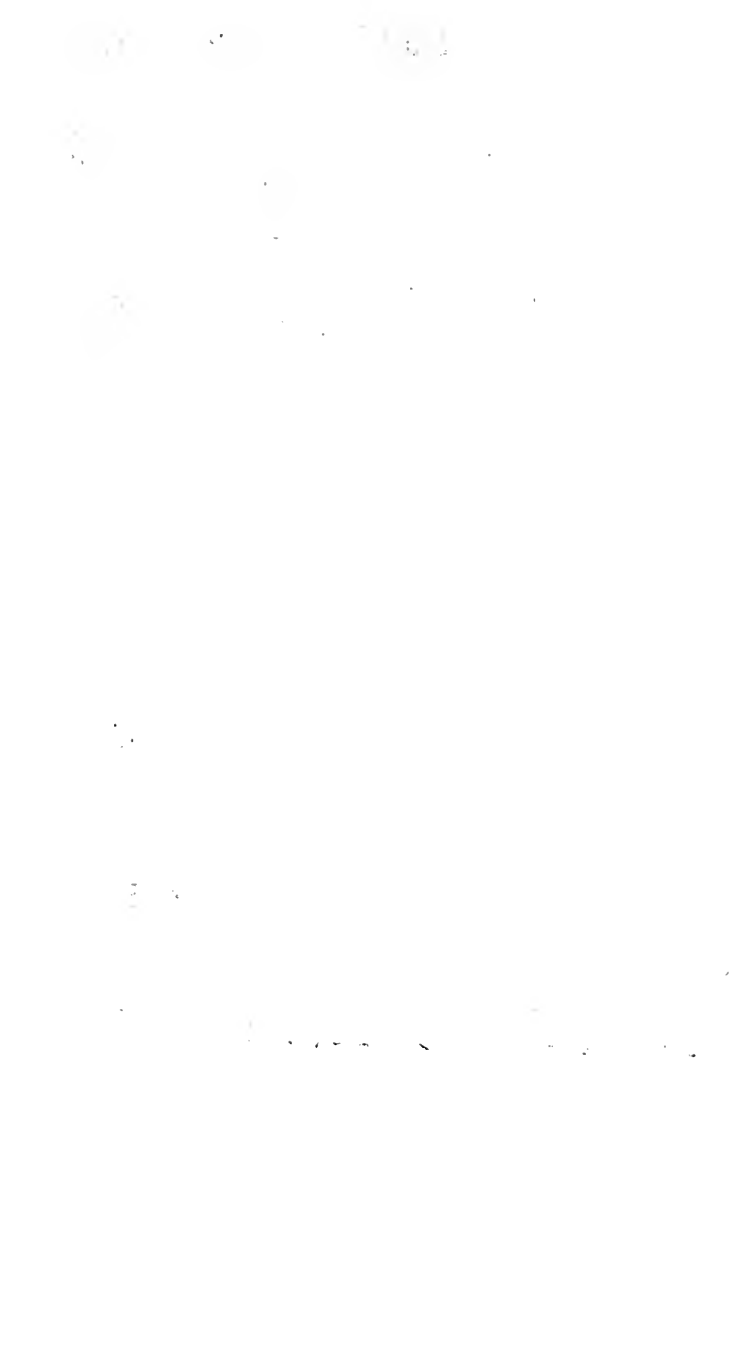
or hereafter, will be enough, if thou be a *Worker of Iniquity*, and do not what he Commands thee. If his Interest in thee, and Authority over thee, will not prevail more than the Entreaty of a Friend, or than the Gain of a little Money, or the Allurement of a little Pleasure, or the Inticement of a Lust, or the Temptation of a Devil.

But if you sincerely, and unfeignedly take him for *your Lord*, he will then be *your God*: And all Blessings, Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal, are comprized in that. You are then his *Jewels*, his *Treasure*, his *Portion*, his *Inheritance*, his *peculiar People*: If he be *your God*. O how dear, how valuable, how precious are the *Relations*, *Privileges*, and *Blessings*, that this contains! What need you fear? What can you want? What can you ask more? What can dismay, afflict, or trouble such a Soul? *Why art thou cast down, O my Soul? Why art thou disquieted within me?* May you say: If you can say with *David*, in another place, *The Lord is my Portion, and the Lot of mine Inheritance*. Or if you can say with *Thomas* here, *My Lord, my God*. All things then are yours; his *Spirit*, his *Providence*, his *Attributes*, his *Promises*; *Life*, *Death*, *Things present*, *Things to come*; *Grace* here, *Heaven* hereafter; *All things yours*, if you be *Christ's*, and he be *your Lord*, and *your God*.

Blessed

Blessed then are you, though you have *not seen him* with your Bodily Eyes, or *thrust* your Hand into his Wounded Side, or *felt* the print of the Nails in his Crucified Body: Yet having now by *hearing*, believed on him, and *loved him*, you shall see him hereafter in Glory, and Triumph, and *be for ever with him*, to behold his Glory, and to partake of it. *Amen.*

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A  
PARAPHRASE  
OF THE  
Lord's Prayer.

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Our Father.

**O** Most Merciful, and Gracious Father, who hast made us out of nothing, by thy Powerful Word, and form'd us after thine own Image, but we sought out Sinful Inventions, and might justly have perisht in our Apostacy. We owe Thee Homage as the Father of our Spirits, as the God of our Lives, as the Author of our Beings; much more as thou hast called us into thy Family, and Favour, by *Jesus Christ*;  
as

as Redeemed by him, and Regenerated by thy *Spirit*, and Privileged with the Dignity of Children, and may call Thee, *Our Reconciled Father*.

Oh what manner of Love is this, that such Rebellious, Miserable Creatures, as we, should be called the Sons of God, and treated as such! *Holy Father!* we have sinned against Heaven, and before Thee, and are utterly Unworthy to be entertain'd as thy *Servants*, much more to be cherisht, and spared, and pitied, and provided for as thy *Children*, and have the promise, and hope of the Heavenly Inheritance. As the *Children* of the *First Adam*, we are Children of Wrath, and Heirs of Hell, in Bondage to Sin, and serving divers Lusts; the Works of our Father the Devil we have done. But by thy Redeeming Love and Grace, through *Jesus Christ*, we are set Free from that Slavery, and partake of the Liberty and Privilege of Sons in thy House and Family. Oh let the *Spirit* of thy Son, breath continually in our hearts, and teach us to cry, *Abba, Father*, as created by thy Power and Goodness, and reconciled, and saved by thy Mercy, after we had undone our selves. Give us that Faith, and humble Confidence in Prayer, by the *Spirit* of Grace and Supplication, that we may go to thee in all our Necessities, as Children to a Father, and come with boldness to a Throne of Grace. We beg the *Holy Spirit* of Grace to that end, which thou art more ready to give to them who value it, and ask it earnestly,

nestly, as sensible of their need of it, than any Father on Earth is to give Bread to his Children that ask it of him.

O let this Name of *Father*, and our consequent Relation to thee, be our Glory, and our Refuge, our Defence and Guard, the Principle of our Obedience and Love to thee, and of Charity, Kindness, and Affection to all our Brethren, who are Children of the same Father, and Adopted Heirs of the same Inheritance. And let all those, whom thou wilt own for thy Children, *most Gracious Father*, be united to thee, and to one another, in holy Bands of Love and Concord; bearing with one another wherein they differ, let them heartily joyn together to advance the Honour of thy Holy Name, to celebrate thy Praise, and promote thy Truth and Worship. Grant unto them and us, the help of thy Spirit, that we may so Pray, and Live.

O God of the Spirits of all Flesh, the Father of Glory, the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, teach us so to ask, as thou mayst please to grant: teach us to Worship thee in Spirit and in Truth, that our Persons may be well pleasing in thy sight, and our Prayers be accepted, through the Great Mediator. We would ask nothing but in his Name, for the manner, so nothing but what he hath advised and taught us to Desire, and Seek.

## Who are in Heaven.

And since thou dwellest in Heaven, (though the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thee, ) that is thy *Throne*, and the Earth thy *Footstool*; thou beholdest whatsoever we do, or say, or think, and wilt call us to an Account; Let us reverence thy Glorious Majesty, Thine All-seeing Eye, and thy Sovereign Power. And raise our Affections above Earthly Things, that we may seek Heaven as our Country, where our Father is, and our Redeemer, and where we hope to possess the Inheritance prepared for us by Everlasting Love, through the Purchase and Merit of thine Eternal Son, who owns himself *our Elder Brother*; and who, when he was on Earth, was concerned for nothing more, than for the Glory of Thy Name. Therefore in Imitation of his Example, in Conformity to his Counsel, and Obedience to his Command, we beg Thy Name may be Sanctified.

## Hallowed be thy Name.

Thou hast proclaimed thy Name unto the World, and they who know it, will trust in Thee, to be a God Gracious and Merciful, slow to Anger, and of Great Kindness, Abundant in Goodness, and in Truth, keeping Mercy  
for



for Thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin, and that will not utterly destroy his People, though he do correct. Thou art worthy of all our Honour, Homage, and Obedience, and that all the World should Adore thee, and Glorifie Thy Holy Name; that every Creature in Heaven and Earth should tremble at thine Irresistible Power, admire thine Eternal Wisdom, and love thine Infinite Goodness. O that the Glory of thy Holy Name, may extinguish in us the Desire and Love of Worldly Honour, and Interest; that we may reckon it our highest Dignity, to advance and serve the Purposes of thy Glory, as the Ultimate End of all Things. Let us be deeply sensible of thy Dishonour in the World, by our own sins, and the sins of Others. Let us Grieve and Mourn to observe the Propagation of thy Name, and the Violation of thy Authority; when thy Laws are transgressed, thy Institutions despised, thy Orders contradicted, thy Majesty Affronted, thy Glory bespattered, and trampled on.

The Desire of our Souls is to thy Name, and the Remembrance of Thee. In thy Name we Rejoyce, and put our Trust. O let us not dishonour it by unsuitable Affections, and Actions! Let our Lives be answerable to the dignity of our Relation, and to what we know, and profess to believe of thy Adorable Perfections; that we may so Glorifie thy Name in the Eyes of the World, that others seeing our  
Good

Good Works, may Glorifie Thee our Father, who art in Heaven. To this End, *Let thy Kingdom come.*

## Thy Kingdom Come.

O Thou who Reignest among the Armies of Heaven, and over all the Inhabitants of the Earth, rule in our Hearts by the Power of thy Word and Spirit: Subdue every Lust, and inordinate Affection in us: Mortifie all the Rebellion of our Wills, and the Enmity of our Carnal Minds and Hearts; that we may no longer be in Slavery to the Devil, and to foolish, Criminal Passions, but our Understanding, Will, Affections, Conscience, and Conversation, be more intirely Conformed to thy Holy Pleasure, and Precept. And after the Establishment and Advancement of thy Kingdom of Grace in our Souls, perfect it in due time, by admitting us to thy Kingdom of Glory.

And let all the Kingdoms of the World submit to the Scepter of our Lord Redeemer; that he may Rule to the Ends of the Earth: Let all the People praise thee, and Worship thee! O God, let all the People Praise thee! Let not Satan, the Usurping God of this World, Tyranize over so great a part of this Earth: But let the Kingdom of thy Grace be enlarged, and thine Authority be more generally submitted

ted to all the World. Let the Everlasting Gospel of the Blessed God be publisht, understood, believed, and obeyed, from the Rising of the Sun, to the setting of the same. And as the Effect of the Coming of thy Kingdom in Power,

*Let thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

## Thy Will be done.

Thy Will, O God, is the Measure of Holiness, and Peace, the Rule of Justice, Truth, and Perfect Wisdom; Oh that it may be the Rule of our Desires; that our Will may be intirely conformed to Thine! All thy Works are *Wisdom*, and all thy Ways of Providence *Judgment*: Let us adore thee as Infallible in all the Revelations of thy Mind, and as Wise, and Good, Just, and Holy, and True in all Thou do'st. Let us acquiesce in thy good Pleasure, as knowing, nothing can be better done, than what thou orderest. In Fulness, and in Want, in Joy and Sorrow, in Life and Death, thy Holy Will, *O Lord!* be done.

Let us obediently comply with thy Preceptive Will, in all thou hast commanded, and humbly submit to thy Providential Will, in all thou shalt appoint; and be satisfied with our Portion, Station, and Condition here on Earth. Let us be govern'd in all things by thy Holy Will with Cheerfulness, and Readiness, and

T

Faithfulness,

Faithfulness, and Zeal, without Deceit, Delay, or Murmuring Complaints. That we may observe, and please thy Will on *Earth*, as the *Angels* do in *Heaven*: where thou art loved, delighted in, and obeyed in Perfection. And let all the World, we beseech thee, joyn with us and them, to praise and glorifie thee, with one Heart, and one Voice, and one Consent, and be the Servants of thy Holy Will forever. But our Satisfaction in thy Declared VWill doth not hinder, but we may Ask the necessary Supports of Life, VVe pray thee therefore,

### Give us this Day our Dally Bread.

Thou takest Care of our Souls, provide also, we beseech thee, for our Bodies. Prolong our Lives, till we have finisht the VVork of Life, and answered the Ends of Living. Continue a suitable and convenient Supply for the Necessities of our Nature: Give us that Health, Protection, Peace, and Plenty, which may best assist us in our present Duty, and tend to our Comfortable Accompt in the Day of Reckoning. Thou hast directed us not to Chuse either *Poverty*, or *Riches*, because of the Temptations of either Extreme: Give us therefore *Food Convenient*, according to that Rank, and State, and Condition thou hast plac'd us in, or may'lt hereafter do. That so the Temptations

ons

## Of the Lord's Prayer. 275

ons of the Right Hand, may not make us VVanton, Secure, and Proud, forgetful of Thee, and our Selves, and the greater Concerns of Eternity, or our Hearts be set to make Provision for the Flesh, or fulfil the Lusts thereof. And that on the contrary, by the Snares of Poverty, and pinching Straits, we may not be tempted to doubt, or deny Thy Providence, or quarrel with it; that we may not be exposed to Contempt, and Misery, and thereby to Impatience, Distrust, and Despair. Keep us from undue Solitude about these things, and give us Contentment with our present Condition. Grant us that measure, and proportion of Temporal Blessings, which may enable us the better to serve and glorifie thee. And whatever thou do with us, let us be Calm and Quiet, and Thankful, and never admit any dishonourable Thoughts of thy Rule, and Government. Let us own Thee, as the Original and Fountain of all our Good, and faithfully depend on Thee for the Supply of all our VVants. But whatever thou give us of Earthly Good, *Lord*, what will it avail us, when our Sins are so many and great, unless thou Forgive and Pardon us? Therefore we beseech thee, *O Lord*, to

**Forgive us our Trespases, as  
we forgive them that Trespas  
s against us**

Look upon us with a Merciful Eye, for we are here before thee *in our Trespasses*. Forgive our Sins of Ignorance, and of Wilfulness, those of Presumption, and those of Infirmity, secret and open, in heart, and word, and deed; the Vanity of our Minds, the Carelessness of our Spirits, the Wickedness of our Hearts, the Irregularity of our Affections, the Folly of our Lips, and all the Omissions, and Commissions of our past Lives, from our Birth, and Infancy, to this very hour. Look not upon our Offences, but cast our sins behind thy Back, Remember 'em not against us, to our Punishment, and Condemnation.

We beg this, for the sake of our Blessed *Saviour*, who hath made Expiation for Sin by his Cursed Death. For his sake, be Reconciled to us, and remember our Iniquities no more, and seal to us the free, and full Forgiveness of them, by the Witness of thy *Holy Spirit*, that we may Rejoyce in God, through *Jesus Christ*, as having received the Atonement.

Enable us by a large and Evangelical Charity, heartily to forgive all those, who have any way troubled, or injured, or offended us; lest our Prayer be turned into Sin, and thou deny us that Pardon, which we deny to our Fellow-Creatures. That having, by thy Grace, this Character of thy Disciples, and Children, we may reap the Benefit of thy Pardoning Mercy here, and in the other World. But because, tho' we should be forgiven for the Time past, we shall run into the like Sins again, and contract

tract New Guilt, and fall an easie Prey to Temptation, we beseech thee, O Lord, preserve us from being tempted, or overcome when we are.

## Lead us not into Temptation.

Lord, we are VWeak, and Ignorant, and Inclined to that which is Evil; and our Adversary the Devil goes about like a Crafty Serpent, and a Roaring Lion, seeking whom he may deceive, and destroy; let us never be Careless, Secure, and Confident of our selves. He is a Malicious, Experienc'd, VWatchful, Envious, Unwearied Enemy, let us not be Ignorant of his Devices; Enable us to Mortifie the Love of Sin, and Inward Lust, and diligently avoid the Occasions, and Appearances of Evil, the Incentives, and Provocatives to Wickedness. And suffer us not to be Tempted above what we are Able. Order our Conditions, and Affairs, so as we may be free from Great, and Dangerous Temptations. Help us, that by taking to us the whole Armour of God, we may be able to withstand the Wiles, and Assaults of Satan: that by the Protection, and Guidance of thy Providence, the Ministry of thine Angels, and the Aids of thy *Good Spirit*, we may not enter into *Temptation*, and yield to it: That *Such* as we cannot avoid, may not prevail against us to thy Dishonour, and our Eternal Ruin. Deliver us from the Evil of  
every

every Temptation, and from the Evil One, the Tempter, and from other Evils, to which we are Incident.

### But deliver us from Evil.

Forgive what is Past, Remove what is Present, Prevent what may otherwise be to come: From Sin, and Shame, from the Malice of the Devil, and the Falshood and Treachery of Men, from open Enemies, and unfaithful Friends, from the Deceits of the World, and the Lusts of the Flesh, but above all, from thy Wrath and Vengeance due to our Sins, VVe Beseech thee to deliver, and save us. Pardon us so freely, that all the Sufferings of this Life may be turned from Evil to Good; that if thou smite us here with the Rod of a Father, thou may'st spare us hereafter; That all things may work together for our Advantage, and that in every Condition, we may be kept from Sin.

To that end Deliver us from the *Evil One*, the Great Enemy of thy Glory, and our Salvation. Let us resist him stedfastly in the Faith, that he may Flee, and we may Conquer. We acknowledge our own VWeakness, and desire to be sensible of it, and therefore humbly Invoke thine Aid and Help. O save us from an Impenitent, Hard Heart, while we live; and let us Finish our Course in thy Fear and Love; let



let us die the Death of the Righteous, and not have our Portion to all Eternity, in that Region of Darkness, and Torment, which thou hast prepared for the Devil, and his Angels.

**For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever.**

Thou art able to do all this for us, as the All-mighty, VVise, and Holy Lord, and Governour of the VVorld, whose Glorious Perfections are displayed, and honoured in all thy VVorks. VVe hope the granting these our Supplications, will advance the Mightiness of thy Kingdom, and Manifest thy Power, Mercy, and Truth; For, *of Thee, and to Thee, and through Thee, are All Things: To Thee be Glory, for ever, and ever.*

**Amen.**

As Thou sayest, so it is. As Thou hast Promised, So it shall be. And as we have Prayed, we Beg it may Be,

*Amen, and Amen.*

**T H E E N D.**

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A Sacramental-Question, concerning ASSURANCE,  
How far necessary to Worthy Receiving.

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I COR. XI. 28.

— *But let a Man Examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread.* —

**I**N this Verse you have it plainly suppos'd; That 'tis a Christian's Duty to partake of the Lord's-Supper. The manner of the Performance is regulated, but the substance of the Duty is presuppos'd, *viz.* to *Do this in remembrance of Christ.* He ought to eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup, and shew forth the Lord's Death this way; only take heed not to rush hastily, without previous Self-Examination.

That solemn Preparation is necessary to the right performance of this Duty, may be argued from the Instance given of one special part

## 2 A Sacramental-Question,

of that Preparation, The due Examination of our selves. *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread.* — 'Tis a Christian's Duty to partake of this Solemn Ordinance: He must not do it rashly and unpreparedly: And it is one special Part of necessary Preparation, to Examine himself.

*Quest.* But some will be ready to say, *I have Examined my self, and endeavour'd to know the true State of my Soul, but I cannot come to a Determination; Whether I have Sacramental Graces in truth, and am partaker of Life from the Spirit of Christ, or no; and consequently, how is it my Duty to come to this Ordinance for Spiritual Nourishment? After all my Examination, I cannot positively conclude, that I am in a State of Grace; at least, I have many Doubts and Fears; I have no Certainty, no Assurance of my good Estate towards God. May I nevertheless come? Is it my Duty, while I have so many Doubts and Difficulties unresolv'd, and am so far from full Assurance and Joy? This I shall endeavour to Answer, by considering how far Assurance is necessary to our Worthy Receiving: You will have my Thoughts of it, in the following Particulars.*

*Answer.* First, That in the diligent use of God's appointed means, it may ordinarily be known, Whether you have truly Repented of your Sins, and do unfeignedly Believe on  
the

## Concerning Assurance, &c. 3

the Lord Jesus Christ: And so, whether you are sincere in your Christian Profession, or no. By Self-Reflection, and comparing your selves with the Word of God, endeavouring to prove your selves, and making use of the Assistance of Books, and Ministers, with Prayer to God, to enable you to discern the true State of your Case, you may ordinarily come to the knowledge of your selves, and your Spiritual Condition. I speak not of the grossly Ignorant, or of such as live at that rate of Licentiousness, that they cannot but know they are Impenitent, or may easily know it on a little Reflection, but of such as doubt, and have some reason for it.

*Secondly*, He that endeavours not to know the true State of his Soul, that with a prepared Heart he may joyn with his Brethren and Fellow Christians, at the Table of the Lord, liveth in continual Sin. He that will not endeavour to come Worthily, and accordingly Examine himself, that he may be dispos'd, and fitted for this Ordinance, he continueth to disobey an Order of Christ. 'Tis not enough to say you have no Assurance, or are afraid to come without it; that will not excuse you from Sin. Many keep off, on such pretences, lest they should Eat and Drink Unworthily, and so Sin: But consider not the Sin and Danger on the other hand, of staying away, upon such grounds as will not excuse them before God. Consider therefore

#### 4 A Sacramental-Question,

what is the faulty cause of your Ignorance of your selves, and of your true State towards God? Is it not Sloth and Carelesness, Negligence and Remissness, Earthly Cares, or the Hurry of Worldly Business? And if the doubts of your Sincerity arise from a faulty Cause, you must not plead those Doubts, as a sufficient Excuse for not coming to the Lord's Table.

There is a faulty Carelesness in some good Christians, that they do not observe, and record the Working of God's Spirit upon their Hearts, and so *the time of His Love* is not taken notice of, nor remembered. To allude to what God says to *Ephraim*, Hof. xi. 3. When *Ephraim* was a Child, I taught him to Go, taking him by the Arm, but *he knew it not*, did not observe it. You must reflect, enquire, and consider what God hath wrought in you, and done for you: Whether you have been brought, humbly to acknowledge your Sin with Shame and Sorrow, and Self-aborrence, seeing your need of Christ, and His Grace, have been perswaded thankfully to take hold of the Covenant, to accept the offered Mercy of the Gospel, and yield your selves to be the Lord's. We lose much of our Comfort, for want of bringing our Doubts to a Determination; and this through Laziness, Sloth and Carelesness. 'Tis true, the want of *Assurance* will not argue a Man under the Power of Unbelief, but it shews the Weakness of Faith; and we ought diligently to clear it up, whether

## Concerning Assurance, &c. 5

ther we are in the Faith, and whether Christ be in us, or no; and whether with all our Hearts we love Him? Which, for the most part, may be known, as well as our Love and Affection to Persons and Things, in other Cases. If we reflect and bethink ourselves, we may ordinarily know, that we Love.

“ Are you not willing that Christ should  
“ be your Saviour, and bring you to Hea-  
“ ven, in God’s appointed way? Do you  
“ not make Religion your great Business in  
“ this World? Is not your being accepted  
“ of God, in Christ, your great Concern?  
“ Is there any thing in all the World your  
“ Hearts are set more upon, than that you  
“ may be Saved by Jesus Christ, and not  
“ be found Hypocrites at last? Would you  
“ not account the Certainty and Assurance  
“ of this, a greater Privilege, than to be  
“ Owner of all the Riches and Treasures of  
“ the Earth? Is it not your heaviest Burden,  
“ that you fear you shall fall short of Heaven?  
“ And you dread nothing more, than to be  
“ mistaken about your Interest in the special  
“ Love of God? Whence have you these  
“ Apprehensions, these Desires, this Choice?  
“ Can the Devil ever perswade you this is  
“ from corrupt Nature; or, that you  
“ don’t love God, when you would give all  
“ the World to be assur’d of His Love? You  
“ abhor every thing that you think will dis-  
“ please him; There is nothing he requires,  
“ but,

## 6 A Sacramental-Question,

“ but by His Grace, you are willing to comply with: You would fain love, and serve, and enjoy Him better: There is nothing would better please or more rejoyce you, than to please Him more, and to be more conform'd to His Image, be fill'd with His Spirit, and live to Glorifie Him more in the World: There is no Lust that you would indulge, but desire to mortifie; and are accordingly diligent in the use of Christ's appointed Means, to subdue Corruption: 'Tis your Trouble and your Complaint, that you are not more Dead to sin and the World; you feel the remainders of Ignorance, Pride, Selfishness, Carnality, Unbelief, Deadness, Dulness, &c. You groan under 'em, as a continual Burden; and would rather be rid of 'em, than of any outward Affliction whatsoever. Doth not all this argue true Love to God and Holiness; true Love to Christ, and Hatred of Sin? And can you not infer from hence, What he hath done for you, and wrought in your Souls? Oh bear not false Witness against your Selves! Put labour, by such Reflections, to know your State, that you may come to the Table of the Lord, with Joy and Praise.

*Thirdly,* As it is ordinarily some Sin that keeps a Man unresolv'd, and in the dark (which doth not excuse him from the Duty) so for a Man to mistake his true State, and  
doubt



## Concerning Assurance, &c. 7

doubt and question his Integrity towards God (if he be *Sincere*) even that Doubt is his Sin.

He ought to endeavour to know himself, and make a right judgment, and then come to receive the Seal of the Covenant. His mistake in judging of his own Cause, is faulty, and will not excuse him from the Obligation of judging more truly and justly of himself. Upright Christians are oblig'd to judge of themselves according to Truth, what really they are, and so to receive what belongs to them, as the Children of God, and Members of Christ, within the Bond of the Everlasting Covenant.

*Fourthly,* 'Tis a common and dangerous mistake (by which many are deceived) to place the nature of Saving, Justifying Faith, in the Assurance of God's Love; and the Knowledge and Perswasion that we are Pardon'd, and Justify'd and Accepted of God: Whereas, many truly Believe, and have Faith unfeign'd, and shall inherit Eternal Life, who yet doubt and fear, and dare not say all this; and others may be perswaded that is their Case, who did never yet Believe in Christ, with all their Hearts: The one shall be ashamed of their Fears, as the other of their Hopes.

To place Faith in a meer Assent to the Doctrine of the Gospel, is one Extreme; to place it in assurance of my good Estate to-

## 8 A Sacramental-Question,

wards God, that's another. There is a Blessedness pronounc'd to such as Mourn, and are Poor in Spirit, and Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness: They may do so without Assurance. The Unbelief that Condemns, is not the not Believing we are already Justified; therefore the Faith which Saves Men, is not the believing that we are Justified. He that believes he is Justify'd and Pardon'd, must be so, before he can believe it. *By him all that believe are Justified, Acts xiii. 39. We have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified, Gal. ii. 16.* Assurance follows Faith: *In whom after ye believed, you were Sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise, 1 Eph. 15.*

All that hear the Gospel Preach'd are commanded to Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; but all are not commanded or obliged to believe their Sins are already pardon'd, and that they are in a justify'd State; then many would be commanded to believe what is not yet true. And to believe my Sins are forgiven, that they may be forgiven, is very absurd: And yet, if Faith be necessary to Justification, this will follow. To believe I shall certainly be Sav'd, is not justifying Faith. I must be so justified before I can believe it, or be assured of it. The Scripture makes a plain difference between these two, *1 Job. v. 13. These things have I written to you, who believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know ye have Eternal Life; that is, have it in the Seed, and Root, in the Earnest, and Beginning*

## Concerning Assurance, &c. 9

ginning of it. They might have said, we do this already, if Faith consist in believing, I am Pardon'd, and shall be Saved. And many that have had Assurance, have lost it, as well as many, who have true Faith, may not have reached Assurance. I say, many have lost Assurance, who have not lost their Faith; unless a Man may be a Believer and no Believer several times in a Year. There are several States, Ages, and Ranks of Believers; some whereof are yet short of Assurance. And must not the Child be allow'd to be a Child, before he can speak for himself, and say he is one? How many of the Children of God must we then turn out of Doors, whom he receives and loves?

Some of the first Reformers, who fell into this Mistake, were Eminent for Faith, and Holiness, and Joy; and by what they found in themselves (speaking what they felt) they described *Faith*, by such a full Persuasion of the Love of God, as many real Christians have not attain'd; by such Assurance and Joy of Faith, as they themselves experienc'd: But the Lord knoweth who are His, when many of them do not know it themselves. 'Tis the Reality and the Sincerity of our Faith that is necessary to Salvation, not the certain Knowledge of that Sincerity.

I dare not come, says One and Another, to the Table of the Lord, because *I can't Believe*. I have not true and saving Faith. *I can't Believe*; But I would ask such, What is

## 10 A Sacramental-Question,

is it you can't Believe? " Don't you Believe  
" the Witness given by Christ, in the Holy  
" Scriptures, to be true? Don't you Believe  
" Him to be the true Messiah, the only Sa-  
" viour of Sinners? That he hath Ability  
" and Willingness to save to the Uttermost,  
" All that come to God by Him? That He  
" is Constituted and Impower'd, by Office,  
" to do this, as the Christ of God? Don't  
" you Believe, from your Hearts, that he is  
" able to Reconcile you to God? That His  
" Blood can Cleanse from all Sin? That you  
" are lost and undone without Him? That  
" if ever you are Reconcil'd, Pardon'd and  
" Sav'd, it must be by Him? Don't you de-  
" sire this above all things? Are you not  
" willing to take Him as your Saviour and  
" Lord in all His Offices; to be taught by  
" His Word, to be guided by His Spirit, to  
" be govern'd by His Law, to depend on His  
" Righteousness, Sacrifice, and Intercession,  
" for all your Hopes of Acceptance with  
" God? Don't you look for all your Supplies  
" of Grace and Strength, to conquer Tem-  
" ptation, and perform every Duty from His  
" Spirit, as the Purchase of His Blood? Don't  
" you Believe all the Promises He hath made,  
" shall be fulfill'd? and desire nothing more  
" than that you may have a Share and Inte-  
" rest in the Blessings of the New Covenant,  
" purchased and promised by Christ? And  
" from your very Souls, are willing to be  
" His, upon any Terms; so that, there is no  
" Sin

## Concerning Assurance, &c. 11

“ Sin but you would be free from, rather  
“ than keep; and accordingly are faithful  
“ and constant in following after Holi-  
“ nefs.

You can't deny this; and yet, after all, you'll say, you have no *Faith*, because no *Assurance*. Doth not all this argue true Faith? You want the Knowledge of your true State; but you don't want true Faith in Christ. Therefore you ought to come to the Table. Nay, tho' you have not conquer'd all your Doubts about the great Truths of the Gospel; and the Life to come; and the Mediation of Christ; if yet you have such a prevailing Perswasion of those Truths, as brings you to consent to the Covenant of Grace; to take God for your God, and Christ for your only Saviour; and the Holy Ghost for your Sanctifier and Guide; His Law for your Rule, His Promise for your Security, and the Heavenly Glory for your Rest and Happiness; resolving, by the Grace of God, to forsake all that stands in Competition; you are *True Believers*, and ought to come, to Eat of the Children's Bread.

*Fifthly*, There is a vast difference, as to the Lord's-Supper, between the Case of an *Hypocrite*, who does not know himself to be one, and the Case of a sincere, real Christian, who doth not know himself to be *Sincere*. You must not imagine these two Cases to be alike: The one has true Grace, tho' he discern

## 12 A Sacramental-Question,

cern it not, and consequently hath a right to the Blessings of the Covenant, and is bound to know and discern his Title, and so come and partake of the Privileges that belong to his State. But suppose another Professor comes to the Lord's-Table, who hath no true Repentance, or Faith, and so his Heart not right with God, but he is under the Reign, Power, and Dominion of Sin. He hath, as yet, no Right to the Blessings of the Covenant; but is bound to know his true State, that he may be brought to Repentance; 'tis a greater Sin for him to demand, and take what doth not belong to him, than to tarry away for a while, in order to his Recovery and Preparation: For if such a one comes, he Hypocritically professes that Repentance, Faith and Devotedness to God, which he hath nothing of, but is secretly an Enemy to God and Holiness: He comes and claims the Childrens Bread, with a Lye in his Mouth and Heart, against the Holy Ghost: and he takes the Name of God in vain. There is a great difference, in this Case, from that of a doubting Christian, who truly Believes, and cannot say he is assured of it. There is a further difference, in point of Comfort; for a real Christian, tho' he come with many Doubts and Fears, yet there are some secret Testimonies of the Love of God; there is some Influence of the Holy Spirit to bear up his Hope; which is much better than all the groundless Joys of Hypocrites, in a false perswasion of the Goodness of their State.

The

## Concerning Assurance, &c. 13

The penitent, Upright Believer, who wants Assurance, hath a Right to the Ordinance, and is accepted with God, tho' he can't affirm it; or say, that he unfeignedly Believes in Christ, and Loves God with all his Heart, yet he hopes 'tis true: He is willing to be the Lord's on his own Terms. 'Tis the Favour of God in Christ that he values, and seeks above all things: This he aims at; nothing else will content him; he would rejoyce in it, more than in any Earthly Prosperity, if he could attain more certain knowledge of it. Is not such a one accepted of God? And supposing a competency of knowledge about the nature of the Sacrament, (to understand his Work, and to discern the Lord's Body,) he hath a Right to come; tho' his timorous Scruples may keep him off a while, yet they can't deprive him of his Right, or disoblige him from his Duty, to shew forth the Lord's Death this way. He doth truly consent to the Covenant, and should come to signify that Consent, and receive the Seal of the Covenant.

And remember this, That the Covenant of Grace is mutual between God and You; so that, from your Consent to be the Lord's, you may infer that He is *Your God*: Your choice of Him is an Evidence of your Interest in Him by a Covenant-Relation. The Relation is mutual, *equally*, and at *once*, on both sides; therefore, as *soon*, and as *long*, as you can, say, " Lord, I am *Thine*, and I desire to abide,

" continue

## 14 A Sacramental-Question,

“ continue Thy Servant, I would not depart  
“ from Thee. As soon, and as long as you  
find within you such a Disposition of Heart,  
you may be assur'd that *God is your God*, and  
will be your God for Ever, and Guide unto  
Death.

*Sixthly*, There is a true discerning of our  
Faith and Repentance, which is short of Af-  
surance, upon which we may act, tho' we  
are not fully certain. There is true Love to  
Christ, that is short of delighting and rejoy-  
cing Love; even *desiring* and *mourning Love*:  
Tho' there be not the Witness and Seal of the  
Holy Spirit to give Joy, there may be so much  
knowledge of our good Estate attain'd in a  
way of Duty, as to prevent Trouble and Ter-  
ror of Mind; even *a good Hope*, *through*  
*Grace*, short of Certainty, and full of Perswa-  
sion.

And, if a Man may not act upon some  
good Hopes (tho' he have not an assured  
certain Judgment concerning his State) a  
great deal of God's Service in the Christian  
Church would be laid aside. For Instance,  
He only that's Penitent, should profess him-  
self Penitent; only he that truly desires Christ  
and His Grace, should say he doth desire it;  
only they that have received Saving Grace,  
should give God Thanks for having received  
it: And yet, if none should confess Sin, and  
profess Repentance, but such as knew cer-  
tainly, and with Assurance, that they are  
truly



## Concerning Assurance, &c. 15

truly Penitent; and if none should beg Grace, with a Profession that they desire it, till they have Assurance of the truth of those Desires; if none should give Thanks to God for Redemption, Effectual Calling, Justification, Adoption and Sanctification, but such as have full Assurance, that they have received all these; there would be little Confession, Prayer, and Thanksgiving in the Christian World. Is it unlawful to say, I Believe, while there is a mixture of Unbelief? We must let alone a great part of our Religion, if we may not act upon Hope, short of Assurance. And if all doubting, trembling Christians should be debarr'd the Lord's Table, till they have Certainty and Assurance, there would not only be very few to partake of it; but we should exclude some of the fittest, the most acceptable, and most welcome Guests at this Feast of Love. Therefore we may have many Fears, and Scruples, yet if Conscience, enlightned by the Word of God, do not positively condemn us, (tho' upon Self-Examination, it doth not clearly and fully absolve us,) we may come in Hope.

*Seventhly,* Tho' you have not yet attain'd Assurance of the Love of God, and of your reconciled, justified State; yet, by waiting on God, in the use of His Holy Ordinances, you may expect and hope to attain it. You may and ought to wait for, the Communications of His Grace and Love, in the use of all  
His

## 16 A Sacramental-Question,

His Appointed Means; and 'tis one End and Use of *The Lord's Supper*, to strengthen weak Faith, and to help doubting Christians. You have there a Sign, and Seal of the Righteousness of Faith: The Blood of Christ is there represented as shed for the Remission of your Sins: The Benefits of Redemption are offer'd to you in particular; and you are called to apply them to your self, as if your Names were mention'd. You are there call'd to profess your Acceptance of Christ, and the offer'd Salvation of the Gospel; and to surrender, and give back your selves entirely to be the Lord's. This Feast was not appointed only for those, who are the most perfect Christians, and highest in Grace; but for the Relief and Supply of your Spiritual Wants: You come there not only to be Thankful for what Grace you have received, but to receive more. What would you think if one should tell you, You must not eat, till your Hunger be first satisfy'd; or not come to the Fire, till you are first Warm; or not take Physick, till you have recover'd your Health? The Seals of the Covenant are appointed for our greater Confirmation, that the Heirs of the Promise might have more abundant Consolation and Joy: And, in this Ordinance, our Saviour Speaks more solemnly, more particularly, and more pathetically to us, for the help of our Faith, than by the Ministry of the Word. What is spoken in general, by the Preaching of the Word, is here particularly apply'd to individual

vidual Persons; to support Weak and Doubting Christians, as well as to confirm the Joy of their Stronger Brethren. You may as well neglect hearing the Word, and pray and hope for Faith, as expect Assurance, and neglect the Lord's Table. The Primitive Christians, who walked in the Fear of God, and in the Comforts of the Holy Ghost, continued in the practice of breaking the Holy Bread (partaking of this Ordinance,) and so could Eat their common Meat with gladness of Heart, praising God. It may be you'll find, as *Jesus* made Himself know to the two Disciples, *in breaking of Bread*, (to allude to that Expression, for I think it not meant of Sacramental Bread,) so you may find, by waiting on God in this Ordinance, your Doubts scatter'd, your Jealousies remov'd, your Difficulties clear'd, your Objections answer'd, and the goodness of your State, which before was doubtful, made manifest and evident, to the Joy of your Souls.

Therefore refuse not to pay Homage to your Crucify'd Saviour, by partaking of this Ordinance, believing that you shall not do it in vain: It may be, e'er you are aware, your Souls shall be, as the Chariots of *Aminadab*; you can't tell but your Attendance on this Institution, shall be the happy means, which God will make use of to scatter and cure your Doubts. And, by your neglect of this Ordinance, you not only take the most likely course to increase and continue your Doubts

## 18 A Sacramental-Question,

and Fears, but are in danger to lose that Seriousness of Spirit, and Sense of Religion, which you now have, by denying your self those Helps, by which it is preserv'd and maintain'd in other Christians.

*Eighthly*, Consider, that after Self-Examination, you may sometimes find one Grace more evident than another. A Christian can say sometimes more hopefully, that he lives by *Faith*; sometimes that he has true *Repentance*, and Godly Sorrow for Sin; sometimes he can say more concerning the Truth of his *Love to Christ*; sometimes Concerning his *Hunger* and *Thirst* after Christ, and the Spirituality and Earnestness of his *Desires*: And if you can discover Truth and Integrity of Heart, as to any of these, you may so far take Comfort. But especially, as to *Faith* and *Love*, the two Radical Graces, which do influence and strengthen all others; and by which you may make the best judgment of your self.

And a difference you must allow, for different Times and Seasons. Tho', it may be, you cannot *now* say so much, concerning this or the other particular Grace; yet, at such a time, upon serious Reflection, you could say a great deal to the Glory of God, and to your own Consolation; you think that it is much better *now* with others than with you; but it may be the last Month, at the last Sacrament, you could say truly, concerning your Communion with God, and the Evidence of His  
Love,

## Concerning Assurance, &c. 19

Love, and the Expression of your own, and the Exercise of other Graces, a great deal more, than any of those Christians and Brethren, whom you apprehend to be so much above and before you.

Remember, how at such a time, according to such a Scripture Character of an Upright Christian, your Hearts could bear witness, and God did bear witness, by his Spirit, that you are not Hypocrites. Did you not record it? Did you not promise to remember it, and improve it? Call to mind what hath pass'd between God and your Souls, as to such things: And, if there be no notable declining to the World and the Flesh, or commission of gross Sins, or wilful Carelessness or Remissness, (which must be particularly repented of, and reform'd, in order to Pardon, and Peace,) you may take comfort in former Evidences, and Experience. If a Father have forgiven a Child that had offended him, and told him so; must he be every day telling him again and again, that he hath forgiven him, or he won't believe it? If God hath comfortably resolv'd your Doubts, tho' some time since, you may be encourag'd by it; for you have not always the same Opportunity or Help, outward or inward, to discern aright the State of your Soul; not alway the same clearness of Mind, or Assistance of God's Spirit, to determine and resolve the great Question. 'Tis unreasonable, on every turn, to

## 20 A Sacramental-Question,

expect a new Answer from God; as if he had given you none before.

*Ninthly*, As to the Apostle's Expression, which is frequently objected in this case, *Rom. xiv. 24.* *He that doubteth is damned, if he eat, because he eateth not in Faith; and what is not of Faith, is Sin.* You ought to consider, that the Word we render *Doubting*, is διακρινόμενον, making a difference between *Clean*, and *Unclean Meats*: 'Tis not meant of Eating at the Lord's Table, but of Eating those Meats, which were forbidden by the Law of *Moses* to the *Jews*; or such as had been offer'd to Idols, and afterward sold in the Market: Meats to be Eaten at an ordinary Table, concerning which, one who believ'd the Obligation of the Law of *Moses* thought to be *Unclean*. He was perswaded of the Unlawfulness of Eating, but he knows he may Lawfully forbear. This is quite another matter, than the case of an ordinary doubting Conscience; where a Man only doubts on one side of an Action. 'Tis there but reasonable to chuse that side, where he hath no doubt, rather than the other, where he suspects he may transgress some Law of God, tho' he be not certain. While the Doubts lasts, till a Man be better inform'd, (supposing he be mistaken,) he should forbear acting against his present Opinion, and Judgment: *Whatsoever is not of Faith, is Sin*, i. e. Whatever a Man doth, without being perswaded of the Lawfulness of

## Concerning Assurance, &c. 21

of it, tho' it be not a Sin in it self, it is so to him, who doth it against his Conscience. But as to matter of *plain Duty*, such as, Doing this in Remembrance of Christ, and shewing forth His Death, by coming to His Table, it is otherwise. The Doubt will not excuse him in the neglect of his Duty: His Doubt is double, whether he be not bound, by the Command of Christ, to Communicate; And on the other side, he doubts whether, by some other Law of God, he ought not, *as yet*, to forbear, as not thinking himself duly qualified. In such a case, What should a Man do, but endeavour to fit, prepare, and qualifie himself, as soon, and as well as he can; that he may not continue to offend God, by the neglect of Obedience to an Order of Christ. And can such a one say, he is *as certain* he is not qualified to come, as he is certain, in the general, that it is his Duty to come?

As to the Expression, *He is Damned if he Eat*: The meaning is, He is Self-condemn'd, his Conscience condemns him; for he knows 'tis lawful to forbear; and he believes it to be unlawful to Eat: If he do Eat, he acts against his own Judgment, and so is Self-condemn'd. As to matter of Duty, an Erring Conscience, be sure, will not cancel the Obligation of the Law of God: If we doubt concerning that, which God hath made our Duty; our Doubt will not excuse us from Sin; for God hath bound us to know our Duty and do it. Whatever our Opinion and Perswasion be, the Obligation

## 22 A Sacramental-Question,

to obey the Command of God remains: Our doubting whether it be our Duty, doth not make it cease to be so.

However, some Melancholy Persons, under great Conflict and Temptations, may suspend and stay away for a while, lest they should run into Despair, on the Apprehension of having Eaten and Drank their own Damnation. They ought not to cherish such Doubts and Fears, but endeavour to overcome them, and ask Advice and Counsel, and use all other fit means in order to it; that, being better acquainted with themselves, they may come with Peace and Comfort. If your Hearts consent to be the Lord's, according to the tenor of the Covenant of Grace, you ought to come, and Declare that Consent, with your Fellow Christians.

*Tenthly*, Consider that there is a *Scrupulous Conscience*, which tho' resolv'd and satisfy'd, in the main, concerning Duty, when it comes to act, is perplex'd and hindred by unaccountable Fears. Tho' there be no just, rational, Scripture-Grounds of Fear or Doubt, yet a Person of weak Parts, little Knowledge, and of a timorous Disposition, is easily disquieted with general Jealousies and Fears, as to himself, and his State towards God. He fears (tho' he can't tell particularly from the Holy Scriptures why) that he is not qualify'd, that he shall receive unworthily if he come, and eat and drink Judgment to himself: Ask why  
he



he thinks so, He has only some conjectural Suspicions, some uncertain Surmises of his own Condition, arising from some mistaken Notions of the Qualifications, and Preparation, necessary to a Worthy Communicant. These general, unscriptural Doubts, Jealousies, and Fears, if countenanced and indulgd, will increase, and, like Circles in the Water, continue and beget one another. But a good Man would not deal with his Neighbour, after this manner, as with himself: He would not, he ought not, to judge hardly of a Neighbour, by general Rumors of Accusation, or every idle Objection, and imaginary Supposition, that may be made to his Prejudice, if, when particularly Enquired into, solid and positive Proof is wanting. You must not judge hardly of your selves, any more than favourably, but according to the Word of God, the Rule of Judgment.

*Lastly*, If you have not Assurance, yet if your Hearts accuse you not of Hypocrisie, and double Dealing; if you can say, As far as I know my own Heart and Life, I think I do sincerely consent to the Covenant of Grace, and am really chang'd as to my Principles and Ends; I am unfeignedly willing, without reserve, to be the Lord's; You may come, to renew and seal your Covenant. Can you say, "I believe the Gospel to be true; I am willing to have *Christ* for my *Saviour* and *Lord*," and absolutely to resign my self to Him;

## 24 A Sacramental-Question,

“ to be rul’d by His Laws, and fav’d by His  
 “ Righteousness : My Imperfections I bewail,  
 “ my Corruptions I strive against, and endea-  
 “ your to Mortifie ; and, as far as I know  
 “ my self, am willing to part with every  
 “ known Sin : I am not certain, I am a true  
 “ Believer, but I would fain be deliver’d, by  
 “ Christ, from the Dominion of Sin, as well  
 “ as the Condemnation of it. Now, where  
 the Case is thus, what should be a bar to your  
 coming to the Lord’s Table ? Such a sense of  
 Sin, and striving against it, and desire to be  
 rid of it, is your very Fitness. And in this,  
 as well as other cases, we may act according  
 to the best of our Judgment, notwithstanding  
 some considerable Doubts.

*Christians*, You may come with Humility  
 and Reverence, paying Homage to a Cru-  
 cify’d Saviour, having found *your Sins*, and be-  
 ing humbled and penitent, judging and con-  
 demning your selves for ’em ; tho’ you have  
 not so clearly discover’d *your Graces*, as to be  
 able to Rejoyce. You may come with broken  
 and contrite Hearts, as *Penitent Sinners*, if  
 you can’t come with Assurance, that you are  
*Pardon’d Sinners*. You may come, sensible of  
*your need of Christ*, if you can’t come with  
 the clear knowledge of *your Interest in Him*.  
 Come with the Humility and Contrition of *Re-  
 turning Penitents*, tho’ you can’t come with  
 the Joy of Faith, as *Assured Believers*. Come  
 with Hunger and Thirst after Christ, and His  
 Righteousness, tho’ you dare not yet say, *My  
 Belov’d*

## Concerning Assurance, &c. 25

*Beloved is mine, and I am His.* Come humbly, and Apply your selves to Him as you can, if you can't Apply Him to your selves as you would. Honour Him as *your Lord*, when you can't appropriate Him to your self, as *your Saviour*. Own His Propriety in you, tho' you are not assured of your Interest in Him. Come, and say, *Lord, I Believe, help my Unbelief!* If you can't triumphantly say, *He Lov'd me, and Died for me:* You can't, with *Certainty*, say, *He is mine*; but you can say it, with *Sincerity*, that you desire to be *His*: You resolve to be so, and accordingly give up your selves to Him. Lord, help me; Lord, save me; Lord, strengthen me; Lord, deliver me, for *I am Thine*, as the *Psalmist* frequently speaks. You may use such Language; *Lord I am Thine, Devoted, Dedicated, Resigned, Willing to be Thine*, tho', I can't say, with present Joy and Comfort, (what that truly infers,) That *He is Mine*. You can say, *Lord, If I am rejected, refus'd, cast off, and left to Perish, there shall One Perish, who did heartily and unfeignedly Desire to be the Lord's:* But, you may be certain, that such shall never Perish, if they follow on to know the Lord, and seek him.

Let me therefore bring this home to *Doubting, Trembling Christians*, who are afraid to tarry away from the Lord's Table, and yet, for want of *Assurance*, are doubtful, whether they should come or no. You have Examined your selves, and found out your Sins, so as to  
be

## 26 A Sacramental-Question,

be humbled for them: You are among such as *Hunger* and *Thirst*; you can't deny it: And is not *Blessedness* promised to such? *Matth.* v. 6. You are in the Number of such as are *wearry and heavy laden* for Sin; and is there not *Rest* promised to the Souls of such? *Matth.* xi. 29. The Blessings of the Covenant have been offer'd to you; you consent to the Terms on which they are propos'd, and desire to trust in Christ, to do all this for you, which he hath promised: Why should not you come, and Seal this at the Lord's Table, and profess this to be the Sense of your Hearts? Is all this no Evidence of Faith? You may have true unfeigned Faith, tho' you don't know certainly that it is true. If Sin be a Burthen, and you are weary of it, and would fain have it more subdu'd, and you long for more Conformity to Christ, that the same Spirit may be in you, that was in Him; If you long to have the Love of Christ rule and reign more in your Souls; If it be thus, you may come in Hope, and plead his Word, and pray for His Grace, and devote and give up your selves to be the Lord's. You may do this Acceptably at His Table, without a certain Perswasion, and assured Knowledge, that you are passed from Death to Life, and made an Heir of Heaven. Tho' you have some Fears of Hypocrisie, you dare not say, but you have some Hopes that you are Sincere; and a mixture of some Fear with your Hope should not discourage you. Doubts  
concerns

## Concerning Assurance, &c. 27

concerning the Truth of your Faith, are very consistent with the Reality of it: The shaking of a Tree, will not argue it is not a Tree, or not Alive.

Our Lord hath told you, He is willing to be your Saviour; I tell you again, that He is Willing to be *Yours*, in all His Offices, as *Prophet, Priest, and King*: He hath done and suffer'd enough (one would think) to testify His Willingness, to declare His Love, and express His Kindness and Good-will. Can you think of His Bloody Death and Sufferings, and question His Willingness to Receive, and Pardon, and Save Sinners? Now, dare you deny, that you are *willing to be His*? To forsake all Competitors and Rivals, and accept Him for your *only Saviour*? If you are *heartily Willing*; you are Accepted, you are united to Christ, and interested in Him; And will you not lift up your Heads in Hope? Will you still cherish unscriptural, unreasonable Doubts, that have no Foundation in the Word of God? Will you continue to doubt of His Love, tho' you can't deny the Evidence of it? Do you not love Him so, that you can part with All, in this World, to be assur'd of His Love; and the want of this Knowledge and Assurance, is the daily Burden of your Hearts, and the Matter of your continual Complaint? If He should ask you as He did *Peter*, this Evening, or to Morrow Morning, Soul, *Lovest thou me*? What Answer could you make but this; *Lord, I cannot say, Thou lovest me, (O that I could!)* but

## 28 A Sacramental-Question,

but, as far as I know my own Heart, *I do love Thee, I desire to love Thee, I would fain love Thee!* I approve, esteem, and judge Those to be the happiest Souls, that love Thee most, and live in Thy Love. Oh, what would I not give, or do, or part with, if I might be One of them!

The *Reflections* I would make on what has been said, will concern two Sorts of Persons, of a very different Character.

*First*, I would Caution some, not to abuse, or mis-improve this Discourse, by emboldening themselves to come to the Lord's Table, in their Hypocrisie, and under the reigning Power of Sin. Let them not think, that 'tis enough, if they can but make themselves uncertain, whether they are Hypocrites, or no. There are some who have no Assurance of their Salvation; and it is impossible they should; their State will not admit it. They are under the Dominion of Sin, and live in the Impurities of the Flesh, and under the prevailing power of an Earthly Mind, destitute of Love to God, and Strangers to Faith in Christ, and yet will adventure to come frequently to the Table of the Lord. 'Tis a terrible Passage, *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself.* (Temporal Judgments and Calamity in many Cases, Spiritual in others, and, without Repentance, Eternal,) which frightens *Some* from Communicating at all, which it should not; but doth not deter *Others*, from coming unworthily, which it should. There

## Concerning Assurance, &c. 29

There are divers such, who thro' Sloth and Negligence, and Inconsideration, for want of Enquiring into their true State, are ready to flatter themselves, from some little things (as transient Affections in the publick Duties of Religion, &c.) that their State is good, but they do not allow themselves leisure, to think what they are. And with many, the hurry of their Earthly Business will hardly permit them to retire, for Self-Examination: And yet they will come, they will do as others; and, without further Search, take it for granted, that they may and ought to come to the Table of the Lord. Sometimes they have checks of Conscience, and if they think of Dying, are afraid; and well they may; there is reason for it. Such Professors should take heed of abusing what hath been said to Others, who need it. They like to hear, that many who have Doubts and Fears, concerning their State, may yet come to the Lord's Table; 'tis good News to them; for they have sometimes Doubts, and *no Assurance*, (nor will their present State allow it,) and yet they will adventure. Oh, beware how you misapply, and misimprove, to your own Destruction, what hath been said for the Encouragement and Support of Sincere Christians, under Doubts, and Scruples, Weakness, and Temptations.

Let such consider the Guilt they contract, and the unspeakable Hazard they run, by professing to belong to Christ's Family, and

## 30 A Sacramental-Question,

So partaking of His Supper, as Living Members of His Body, while they are secret Enemies unto Christ, in Heart and Life, and hate to be reform'd. Such are *Guilty of His Body and Blood*, they joyn with the Murderers of JESUS, whose Death they pretend to shew forth; His very Blood will cry for Vengeance against their Hypocrisie, and sink 'em under more dreadful and intolerable Wrath. They of all others, *Eat and Drink their own Damnation*, who thus wilfully prophane the Ordinance, and take the Name of GOD in vain, by pretending Love to CHRIST, (to serve some little Secular turn, and be thought better than they are,) while they Live in secret allow'd Wickedness; in stated Enmity and Rebellion against Him.

I may say of the Worthy or Unworthy Receiver, as *Soloman* did of *Adonijah*, 1 Kings 1. 25. *If he be a Worthy Man, not a Hair shall fall from his Head; but if Wickedness be found in him, he shall Die.* If you come to the Lord's Table humbly and penitently, in Obedience unto Christ, in such a manner, and for such holy Ends, as He hath appointed, you shall meet with Welcome, you shall be feasted with the fat things of His House, you shall partake of the Treasures of His Grace, and receive of His Fulness. But, if you come without Sorrow for Sin, and without Resolution against it; if you come Impenitent, and Unreformed, without Desires, and Purposes, and Endeavours, to forsake Sin, and subdue Corruption, and be de-  
voted



## Concerning Assurance, &c. 31

voted to God, &c. You increase your Guilt, you harden your Hearts the more, you receive a Curse instead of a Blessing, and will be more under the Power, and in the Possession of the Devil. And *You shall die for't*, unless Sovereign Grace do timely prevent it, by your Repentance and Conversion. I cannot speak with too much Terror to such. But,

*Secondly*, There be Others, Humble and Sincere, Weary and Heavy-laden, Contrite and Broken in Heart, who have many Doubts, and yet much Love, who Fear and Tremble if they come, and yet fear to tarry away. There are many Such who need this Encouragement. They have the Call of Christ, to remember His Dying Love; their Duty is plain; They ought to make an Adventure of Faith, as *Peter* (when unlikely to take any Fish) yet, at Christ's Command, let down the Net with astonishing Success: Or, as the Disciples said to the Blind Man, *Be of good Comfort, Arise, for the Master calleth thee*, Mark x. Let Faith in the Authority of Christ, bring you to Remember His Death, this way: If you obey the Precept, you don't know the Success as to Comfort.

Is there no Encouragement in the Invitation, *Let him that is a Thirst come, and Who Ever will, let him come, and take of the Waters of Life freely*, Rev. xxii. "Are not sensible, "weary, thirsty Sinners invited? Therefore, "Lord, I'll not exclude my self; I am one  
" of

## 32 A Sacramental-Question,

“ of them; surely there may be Mercy for Me,  
“ among the Rest, however Unworthy and  
“ Vile I am. The Invitation is not to such  
as are *Worthy*, but *Thirsty*. We come to  
Him that we may partake of His Grace, and  
receive more of the Spirit of Holiness, accord-  
ing as we need it.

And here, I would not forget the Case of  
Those, who are in Doubts, because they have  
had a *Religious Education*, and by the Restraining  
Grace of God, and the Precepts instill'd  
into them, by their Parents and Ministers,  
they have liv'd unblamably in the World, as  
to their outward Conversation: They are a-  
fraid, all their Religion is the Fruit of *Educa-  
tion* only, and not of *Special Grace*: And they  
are further doubtful concerning themselves,  
for want of feeling those Pangs of Sorrow,  
and Bitter Repentance, which they hear, and  
read others have had, in their Conversion  
to God, who have been reclaim'd from a  
Profligate Life. They apprehend, on that  
account, that they may be still Strangers to  
the great Change, by Regeneration and the  
New Birth. On the one hand; I wish they  
would look to it, that it be not really the  
Truth of their Case; that they have indeed  
proceeded no further, than a *good Education*  
may carry a Man; which too many, I fear,  
do Rest in. Yet Others there are, who have  
had a *Religious Education*, and, by God's Bles-  
sing on it, have had Early Experience of the  
distinguishing Grace of God. They can't say  
precisely

precisely when they were Born again, but can discover the Effects of it in Heart and Life: These should not be discouraged on that account; Nor for want of those Terrors, which the Repentance and Conversion of Some is accompany'd with. Early Converts, who seek the Lord, and serve Him from their Youth, commonly escape such Terrors: We find not, that 'tis true of All.

If the Spirit of Christ hath wrought such a Change in your Judgment, Choice, Affections, Conscience, and Life, as will make up the Character of those that are Sanctify'd; you should not be uneasy and perplex'd, for want of knowing *when* this Change was *first* made; you may know a Man is *Alive*, tho' you know not when or where he was *Born*. And what if you cannot say those things, concerning the Time, Manner, Antecedents, and Concomitants of your Conversion from Sin to God; that Others, it may be, can say, who had great and presumptuous Sins, scandalous and notorious Abominations, to Repent of, which God never suffer'd you to fall into! Such are not sufficiently sensible of the Blessing of a good *Education*; and what a Mercy it is to be sav'd from such Terrors. It may be, some of the Best Christians in all this Nation, are of this Sort: who may sometimes fear they have gone no further than *Education* (without the saving Grace of God) may lead 'em. But if you can prove your Sanctification, by the real, genuine Fruits of it, and that there is

D

such

## 34 A Sacramental-Question,

such a Change of Heart and Life wrought, it matters not that you know not *the exact Time*. You are certain, Corrupt Nature could never incline you to love God, and be devoted to Him; to hate Sin and watch against it; and to take Heaven for your Portion, and Christ for your Saviour: This Change must be from the Divine Spirit, however Early, Gradual, and Insensible it seems to have been Effected. If you find the Image of God upon your Souls, and the real Fruits of the Spirit in Heart and Life, (tho' you never were acquainted with the Throws, and Pangs, and Terrors, that introduce or accompany the Conversion of others) you have Reason to be Thankful, and not be discourag'd on that account.

Your great Business now, should be to walk Circumspectly, and to live more a Life of Faith and Love: And as your Faith in Christ, and Love to God, and Care to please Him, doth increase, Comfort, and Peace, and Joy, will ordinarily follow. *The First Live by Faith, not by Assurance.* Without *Faith* 'tis impossible to please God, not without *Assurance*. You ought to observe God's Influence by His Holy Spirit upon your Souls; and be much in Prayer, and in acts of Dependance and Resignation; and labour to know your selves better: To Record what God doth for you, and how you carry it towards Him; and what Progress you make in Practical Godliness,  
and

## Concerning Assurance, &c. 3

and Inward Religion; by comparing your Selves with your Selves, at different Times.

Be thankful that you have good Hope, through Grace, and resolve to follow on to know the Lord, and to know your Selves better. Tho' it be our Duty to give all Diligence to make our Calling and Election sure, and to use Means in Expectation of Success, it is not at all strange, that but *few* do attain to *Certainty* and *full Assurance*. There must be more than a little Grace to make it clear and discernible; and 'tis Grace in Exercise is best discern'd: There must be a good understanding of Spiritual Things, and of the Tenor of the Covenant of Grace; some good Acquaintance with our own Hearts, and with the Wiles of the Devil; and some Cure of that confusion and disorder of Thought which most complain of: There must be Diligence, Resolution, and Patience, in the Trial of our Selves, with earnest Prayer to Heaven: There must be upright Walking, a Pure Conscience, and great fear of Sin, &c. Such things as these being necessary, in an ordinary way, is it any wonder that *few*, very *few*, attain it? When Grace is so weak, where it is true: and Knowledge of our Selves so little, and most are so backward to Self-Examination, or so little skill'd in it: and so little acquainted with Satan's Temptations, and their Minds so confus'd, and their Thoughts so ungovern'd, and their Consciences have so little Tenderness, and are so often wounded by wilful

## 36 A Sacramental-Question,

Sin, no wonder if the generality of Christians have not *Assurance*, even of such as are Sincere, and accepted of God.

There are many things to be known and understood, concerning the Nature and Application of the Promises of the Gospel, which every real Christian hath not attain'd. And besides the discerning of their own State and Condition to be such, as that they may apply the Promises to themselves, there must be the Influence of *the Holy Spirit*, or there will be no Comfort. You must therefore continually beg the Light and Influence of the Holy Spirit, which is promised to Believers, that they may know the things freely given 'em of God. The Holy Spirit himself Witnesseth with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God. " *Lord!* I have endeavour'd to  
" search my Heart, and examine my Ways,  
" according to thy Command; I have some  
" good Hope, but am not Certain; Oh en-  
" lighten me to discern, and understand the  
" Truth of my Case. Let me know, by Ex-  
" perience, the meaning of that Scripture,  
" *Eph. 1. 13, 14.* *After you believed, you*  
" *were sealed by the Spirit of Promise, which is*  
" *the Earnest of our Inheritance, until the Re-*  
" *demption of the purchased Possession.* This  
*Earnest*, this *Seal* (for Distinction, and for Certainty) God gives to Believers. 'Tis by the Holy Spirit we know the things freely given us of God; by His witness with our Spirits, we have Confidence towards God;  
we

## Concerning Assurance, &c. 37

we discern His Work upon our own Souls, and are enabled to judge concerning the great Change he hath made, and with Comfort to conclude, we are passed from Death to Life. The Testimony of the Divine Spirit, added to that of the Conscience, enables us to cry *Abba Father*, and fills us with Peace and Joy in Believing. *He that believes, hath the witness within himself,* 1 John v. 10. He hath that *in him* to which the Promises are made; he hath the Seal of *Sanctification*, by which he is distinguish'd from Unbelievers; but the Holy Spirit must discover and witness this, or we shall not feel any thing of Joy. 'Tis, in part, because we do not understand, or value, or pray for, this Influence of the Holy Spirit, as we ought, that so few have Assurance.

And now, for the Close of this Discourse, let me ask you a few serious Questions, which in many Books you may find more largely insisted on.

*First*, How stand you Affected to Sin, deliberate Sin, against God? Don't you dread and fear it more than formerly? Are you not more ashamed of it, of the Baseness, Iniquity, and Disingenuity of it, as against the Holiness, against the Grace, and Love of God? Would it not be a harder matter to draw you to a deliberate Sin against God, than heretofore? or to persuade you to omit a known Duty, such as Closet Prayer?

## 38 A Sacramental-Question,

*Secondly*, What is your Judgment and Opinion concerning God, and Christ, and Holiness, concerning the Holy Scriptures, and the Gospel-way of Salvation, by Faith in Christ? Is it not more your Desire, and Choice, to have your Portion, in both Worlds, with those that Believe on Christ, and follow Him, as their only Saviour? Being Resolved, let *Atheists* and *Infidels* talk as they please, and venture as they will? Are you not endeavouring with some success, to be more establish'd in the great Foundation Truths of Christianity?

*Thirdly*, Don't you find some Growth, Progress, and Improvement in Holiness, by being more confirm'd and establish'd in the Truth of the Principles of Christian Religion? And don't you desire and endeavour, more to know, and do the Will of God? To please, and serve, and obey Him better? Is it not your Comfort and Pleasure, to honour God, and be kept from Sin; to Worship and Adore Him, and have Communion with Him? To be found in the way of your Duty, and to keep an undefiled Conscience? And is it not your Grief on the Contrary, when, by Temptation, you neglect your Duty to God, and fall into Sin?

*Fourthly*, As to the Church of Christ, and the Interest and Honour of God in the World; are you not Rejoyc'd, when you hear that  
real



## Concerning Assurance, &c. 39

real Godliness is any where promoted? That the Oppressed, or Defiled Churches of Christ, are deliver'd and reform'd? That Truth and Holiness, Pure Worship, and Holy Conversation, does prevail and spread, and get ground, in any part of the World, or of the Nation? That open Wickedness is suppress'd, and the Mouth of Iniquity stopp'd? &c. And, on the contrary, don't you mourn for other Men's Sins, as well as your own, and for God's Dishonour, by National Provocations, and Publick Crimes? And are ready to give what Assistance you can, to promote Reformation?

*Fifthly*, How are you affected toward such as are truly Serious and Religious, tho' of different Sentiments, in several things, from you? Do you love the holy Image of God, where-ever you can discern it? Can you heartily embrace All that love the Lord Jesus in Sincerity? But for such as Defie God, and Dishonour Christ, and the Gospel, and live in open Rebellion against Him, don't you, from your very Hearts, dislike such? you would not live or die with them? You have made another Choice, as to your Portion, Way, and End.

*Sixthly*, Can you bear to have your Consciences search'd? Are you content, to have your closest Lusts discover'd, your most bolov'd Sins struck at, by the Ministry of the Word?

## 40 A Sacramental-Question,

So that, there is no Iniquity but you would know, and hate, and part with? And are most of all desirous, to mortifie and overcome the Sin which you did once most love; and that did, or doth most easily beset you: But 'tis your daily Burthen, that your Victory is so imperfect, and your daily Care is to watch against it?

*Lastly,* Is it not the Desire, Purpose; and Resolutions of your Souls, tho' you have not *Assurance*, (and supposing you never had it, and never should,) that yet, by the Help of God, you will be true to your Baptismal Covenant, to be faithful Followers of Christ, as long as you live; to deny all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, to live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly, in this World, seeking Glory, and Honour, and Immortality by Jesus Christ, in hopes of Eternal Life; depending on no other Saviour; looking for Acceptance with God no other Way, but only by the Merit, Blood, Sacrifice, and Righteousness, of our Lord Jesus Christ? This you unfeignedly Resolve and Purpose, and accordingly, (notwithstanding your Doubts and Fears) you have held on for some time in such a Course; and, by the Grace of God, do intend still to hold on, whether you have Assurance or No.

To such of You, *my Brethren*, who can truly say, this is your Case: That all, or any

## Concerning Assurance, &c. 41

any thing considerable of this, is a true and real part of your Character : I may say, that Peace and Comfort belongs to you. The breathings of Faith argue the Reality of it, as much as the loudest Voice. To be able to creep, is as true an Evidence of Life, as to be able to run. You may lift up your Head with Hope, and avouch the Lord to be your God; you may come to the Lord's Table with Cheerfulness and Thanksgiving. I do, in the Name of my Great Master, invite you: I doubt not, but He will bid you Welcome.

O let us All joyn, in begging His Gracious Presence ! That He would meet us Here, and in every part of the City and Country, where this Holy Feast, on the Sacrifice of Christ, shall be celebrated to Morrow !

“ O that He would display the Banner of  
“ His Love towards Us ! and Seal His Cove-  
“ nant-Promises, with all the Sweetness, and  
“ Joy of His Salvation, unto our Souls ! O  
“ that He would speak by His Holy Spirit,  
“ to our Spirits, with such a Powerful Voice,  
“ as shall make us hear, and feel it, that it  
“ is *His own* ! saying, Son, or Daughter, be  
“ of good Cheer, thy Sins are forgiven thee.  
“ I A M T H Y G O D, I have loved  
“ thee with an Everlasting Love, I have ac-  
“ cepted thee for mine ; I have blotted out  
“ all thy numerous, hainous Transgressions,  
“ and

## 42 A Sacramental-Question,

“ and will remember 'em no more ; *I enter'd*  
“ *into Covenant with thee, and thou becamest*  
“ *mine ;* and I am not ashamed to be called  
“ **T H Y G O D :** *I will never, never, never,*  
“ leave thee nor forsake thee, but Guide thee  
“ by my Counsel, and afterwards receive  
“ thee to Glory. *Amen.*

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**F I N I S.**

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A  
SACRAMENTAL-QUESTION  
CONCERNING  
ASSURANCE:

How far Necessary to a

WORTHY COMMUNICANT,  
Practically Answered, in a SERMON,

Preparatory to the

Lord's Supper.

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By John Shower.

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The Second Edition.

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L O N D O N:

Printed for *Tho. Parkhurst* at the *Bible and Three Crowns*, near *Mercers-Chappel* in *Cheapside*, and *J. Robinson* at the *Golden Lion*, in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*, 1702.





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TO THE  
READER.

**H**AVING reason to believe the following Discourse was of some Use to Several who heard it, to comply with their Desire, and in hope of doing good to Others, it is now Publish'd. If it be objected, That the Stile is too Negligent and Copious; and the same things express'd over and over, in different Phrases, and sometimes the same repeated, which may be well enough in Preaching to a mixt Auditory, but more Exactness should be used in Printing; I have only to say, That I apprehend the same Pulpit Stile will best answer my End, as to the Service of those, for whom I principally intend it.

May

## To the Reader.

*May I find Mercy of the Lord to be Faithful, whose I am, and to whom I am devoted! If any are brought upon their Knees, seriously to bless God, for what they Heard, or shall now Read, I shall more heartily Rejoyce in it, than to have the Approbation and Applause of all the Witty People upon Earth, who have not Wisdom enough to know themselves, and consider their latter End, and prepare for Death and Judgment, which cannot be, without seeking to Jesus Christ as the only Redeemer and Saviour of Sinners, to reconcile us to God, and save us from Wrath to come. His Grace, and Mercy, and Love, is above all we can think. Ob be Humble and Thankful; adore Him, and admire His rich, free, and glorious Grace, and abuse it not!*

J. S.

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*The Second Discourse,*

O N T W O

SACRAMENTAL QUESTIONS.

---

1 C O R. XI. 28.

*But let a Man Examine himself, and so let him eat  
of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.*

There are two Sacramental Questions, I  
would now consider, *viz.*

I. Quest. **W**Hether All baptized Chris-  
tians, are bound to partake of the Lord's-Supper? Or whether it be  
the Duty of All Christians, who are enter'd into the Christian Church by Baptism, to be partakers of this other Sacrament also:

E

II. Quest.

II. Quest. *What should be the reason why so many Good People, as we hope they are, do yet live in the neglect of this Ordinance of the Supper?*

*Ans.* *As to the first Question, Whether All, &c. Several things may be replied, as First, That Baptism as an Initiatory Institution and Rite, is to precede the Lord's-Supper: According to what we Read, 1 Cor. xii. 13. By one Spirit we are baptiz'd into one Body (and it follows) have been All made to drink into one Spirit: First baptiz'd; and then made to drink: Not admitted to eat of this Bread and drink of this Cup, till after Baptism. Which order the Church of Christ hath held from the Beginning. The one Sacrament is for our Implantation into the Body of Christ. And the Other for our † Spiritual Nourishment and Growth. As none uncircumcis'd were admitted to the Passover, according to the Old Testament Dispensation: So none without Baptism are to be admitted to the Lord's-Table, under the New.*

*Secondly, Christian-Baptism alone is not sufficient, unless the Baptismal Covenant be understood and own'd: Unless there be the Answer of a good Conscience, upon Self-Examination. For 'tis possible that after Baptism, Men may turn Atheists, Sadduces and Infidels, and live in known and notorious wickedness.*

ness. The Sacraments are Symbols of the Church, as 'tis differenc'd from the World. And Christ will have them to be a distinct Society.

As to the Baptism of *Infants*, Qu. Whether that doth immediately give them a Right to the Lord's-Supper, as Several of the Ancients thought, and did very early give the Sacrament of Bread and Wine, to baptized infants. I can't see how such a Custom can be justify'd; for they cannot Examine themselves; therefore must be excluded by the Apostle's Rule; *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat.* Otherwise not: \* many in the Primitive Church believ'd it necessary to the Salvation of Infants. That without both the Sacraments, no Man could partake of the Kingdom of Heaven. St. *Austin* himself was of this Opinion. And for above 600 Years, down to the time of † *Charles* the Great, the Church of God did give the holy Communion to newly Baptiz'd Infants.

He that comes to the Lord's-Table, should examine whether he hath been true to his Baptism; Whether he heartily consents to the Covenant; sealed in that Sacrament; Whether he be in the Faith, And whether he have true and unfeign'd Repentance towards God for all his past Sins: This ought to be done before we come to the Lord's-Table. We are call'd to Repentance and Faith, by the preaching of the word. They

\* *Bp. Taylor's Worthy Communicant*, Chap: 3. Sect. 2.

† *Capit. Caroli. Mag. l. 1. cap. 161.*

that refuse to obey that call, are not to come to the Lord's-Table, while they continue Impenitent Unbelievers. Without Faith and Repentance, they are not Guests qualify'd for that Table. How can they have Right to the Seals of the Covenant, who have not heartily consented to the Terms; who are not willing to come under the Bond of it. And what Communion can they have with Christ in this Ordinance, when there's no Union to him by Faith? What Exercise of Grace, by such as are dead in their Trespases and Sins? How can pardon of Sin be Seal'd to those who are Impenitent? They are not capable of performing the Duties of the Lord's Supper, before, at, and after, nor of receiving the Mercies of it. 'Tis true, a Good Man for want of Examination and the proper Exercises of Grace, by unsuitableness of Frame, by Sloth and Negligence, or indulg'd Sensuality and Worldliness, in some late Instances, may receive *Unworthily*, for want of actual Readiness and Fitness at that time: But there's a vast Difference between the Unfitness and Unworthiness of a Believer, as to present *Frame*; and an Unworthiness as to *State*, which is the Case of All the Ungodly, who are yet in their Sins, *alienated from the Life of God*. They can neither Remember Christ aright, nor discern him, nor receive him, nor feed on him. They can't attain the Ends of the Sacrament, for encrease of Grace and Comfort. They can't Seal a Covenant, into which They never enter'd:

ter'd. Nor have the Assurance of Eternal Life, being none of those to whom it is promis'd.

There needs not only a competency of Knowledge, as to the Principles of Christian Religion, (which very many amongst Protestants do want,) and some Competent Knowledge concerning the nature of that Ordinance in particular, without which They can't discern the Lord's Body, and know their Work. (Tho' Ministers should be very tender how They exclude People on point of meer Ignorance, if They can give a tolerable account of the Essentials of Religion: Or when you ask Them by way of Question, can answer so, as to show that They understand it.) But besides Knowledge, there must be a Suitableness, a Savour, and a Relish of those great things by Faith and Love, that we may behold a Crucify'd Saviour, Humbly adore him, Thankfully receive Him, Affectionately praise and admire Him; and firmly trust Him; surrendering our Selves to be intirely His. There must be likewise an answerable Conversation becoming the Disciples and Followers of Christ. So † one of the most Ancient Writers after the Apostles time, expresses it. It is lawful for no Others to partake of the Lord's-Supper, but such as particularly believe the Doctrines taught in the Gospel, and are baptized for the Remission of Sins; and so live as Christ hath requir'd and commanded.

E 3

*Thirdly,*

*Thirdly*, All the visible Members of the Christian Church, capable of Self-Examination, are bound to prepare Themselves for the Worthy Receiving of the Lord's-Supper; that They may obey the Order of Christ, to do this in Remembrance of Him, and show forth His Death this way. They are bound First to receive Christ as their Teacher, Saviour, and Lord; and heartily to repent of all Their Sins: And then to profess this *Faith* and *Repentance*, at the Lord's Table. They are bound to make a true and sincere Profession of Faith and Repentance before They come, otherwise They take what doth not belong to them. They are bound First to be habitually fit and worthy, and then actually prepare, and so to receive: As every Jew was bound to be circumcis'd and purify'd, and so to eat of the Pass-over. If not circumcis'd and purify'd, They were not at that time to eat. Sinful Unpreparedness, either habitual, or actual, will not excuse from the Obligation to the Duty, Because we ought to endeavour to be both habitually and actually prepar'd.

However there's a difference to be made between real, inward Worthiness, and visible, outward, appearing Worthiness. A Minister of Christ, and a Society of Christians may admit such to come with Them to the Lord's-Table, who profess Themselves to be sincere Christians, when yet God knows their Hypocrisie; and They should not yet have come, being as yet destitute of the Grace necessary to  
the



the Ordinance: And it may be, They know that They live secretly in such Sins, as are inconsistent with a State of Salvation; and that They can have no Right, before God, to this Ordinance. There may be some such, who may yet make such a Profession of Faith in Christ, and Universal Subjection to Him, who may thereupon be admitted to this Feast by the Servants, when yet They may be rejected by the Master, for want of a Wedding-Garment. He that professes Faith and Repentance, and desires to communicate; And doth not contradict such Profession by gross Ignorance, or a disorderly Life; He may be admitted, tho' He may be a Hypocrite, and know that against Himself, which for the present should have stopt him, till He had repented. Doubtless Heaven's Gates will be shut against many, who will be disown'd by Christ at the last-day; and yet may pretend and plead that They have eaten and drank in His Presence. *Luke xiii. 26.* But if they are dead in Their Sins, unreconcil'd to God, Destitute of any Spiritual Life; They can no more receive Christ in the Sacrament, than a Chicken that should come into the Assembly, and pick up some of the Crumbs of the Bread on the Ground, can be said to receive the Body of Christ: nay the case is much worse, for They are guilty of His Body and Blood. They profane the Ordinance, Eat and Drink Judgment to themselves; and provoke God to punish Them in this World and the next.

*Fourthly*, All They that partake of this, and other Ordinances ought to remember, they are to be us'd with Faith and Obedience. There is in every Divine Institution, a Command and a Promise, we must give Obedience to the Command, in Belief and Hope of the Blessing promised. We have the Commandment for our Rule: And the Promise of the Covenant for our Reward: We must come in Obedience to the Command, and Order of Christ, we must look to the Promise of His Presence and Blessing, as knowing and believing that He's able to make good all that He hath promised: As desiring and waiting for the Accomplishment of His promised Mercy; and not be discourag'd, tho' we find not the Benefit and Blessing presently, which we believe is promised, and Others partake of. But that will be spoken to more largely under Another Question.

*Fifthly*, The Resemblance between this Feast of Love, This Feast, upon the Sacrifice of Christ, and the Jewish Passover, will help us to understand our Obligation as to this Ordinance. That we are not to neglect it: And at the same time, that we are carefully to prepare for it. It is expressly said: *Numb. ix. 19. A Man that is clean, and is not in a Journey; and forbeareth to keep the Passover, even the same shall be cut off from his People.*

\* The Passover is call'd the *Corban* of the Lord: Because it was to be kill'd, and the Blood sprinkl'd, which shows it to be a proper Sacrifice; and then eaten, by God's Commandment, in thankful Remembrance of Their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, which Shows it to be an Eucharistical Sacrifice. For tho' the First Sacrifice in *Egypt* was to procure Deliverance to Them, from the Destruction that fell on the *Egyptians*, by the destroying Angel: yet everafter, it was a Thanksgiving for the Deliverance then wrought, and of God's Special Favour to them, of which there was a short Commemoration, *Exod. xii. 25, 26.*

The like Threatening is against him, that did not keep the Passover in a right Manner: He was liable to the like Penalty; *Exod. xii. 15.* The Danger was great both ways. If He did not keep the Passover at all; and if He did not observe it in a right Manner. The same Punishment is threaten'd for the neglect of Circumcision, and the Hebrew Doctors differ in their Opinion about the meaning of it, what it is to be *Cut off from his People?* In some cases 'tis plainly meant of being put to Death by the Magistrate, and is so explain'd *Exod. xxxi. 14.* Or if that be neglected by the Magistrate, and the Crime be conceal'd; and the Guilt known only to God, then to be Cut off by his immediate Hand, Shortening the

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\* *Bp. Patrick, Gen. 17. 14,*

the Life of Such a Person. It can't be understood of *Excommunication*, as Some would carry it, because such a Person was never a Member of the Jewish Church: He was to be made so by Circumcision. Whether this *Chereth*, or cutting off, belong to the Magistrates, Execution of Justice; or to some Punishment inflicted by the immediate Hand of God Himself, must be determined by the Matter unto which it is joyned.

The Neglect of the Passover was a Neglect and Contempt of God Himself; and a tacite Renunciation of that Religion, and of the Covenant of God with them; and of Their Interest both in that past Deliverance out of *Egypt*, and in a Future, much greater Deliverance, promised by the *Messiah*.

The Punishment was very severe; and God would look to the Execution of it Himself.

The like Punishment is threatned, *Deut.* xviii. 17. Against those who will not obey the *Messiah*, God will require it of him: Or as the Apostle *Peter* renders it, *Acts* iii. 32. He *Shall be destroy'd from among the People*, The same Expression which the Septuagint use for cutting off, *Numb.* xv. 30. Every Soul that will not hear that great Prophet; who will not believe and obey the promised *Messiah*; and own the Commands of this great Prophet, one of which is to show forth His Death at His Table; and *to do this in Remembrance of Him*; *He shall be cut off*.

There is Danger on either side, not to eat the Passover at all; or not in a due manner; the like Penalty is threaten'd for both. There is Danger in receiving Unworthily: And I wish it were remember'd, that there is Danger also in not receiving at all. Many are apprehensive in the one Case, who make very light of it in the other: But if there were no such Danger as to our Selves, methinks our Regard to our Blessed Saviour should be enough, our Regard to His Authority; and to His Love, His dying Love: This being just before His Passion; and how did He long for that Bloody Baptism! How was he straitn'd till it was accomplished! yea He even thought the time tedious, till He was betray'd and Condemn'd and Scourg'd, and Tortur'd for us! With what earnest Desire did He long to eat that Last Passover, before He suffer'd? If it had been but *the Request* of such a dying Friend, the night before He suffer'd, How could we forget it, or slight it? But 'tis an *Order*, and a *Command*, to do this in Remembrance of Him, repeated three or four times, by three Evangelists; and afterwards by the Apostle St. Paul. *I have receiv'd of the Lord, that which I have deliver'd unto you.* So that Christ hath not left us at Liberty, to do it if we will; but hath commanded us to do this in Remembrance of Him. *Now ye are my Friends* (saith He) *if ye do whatsoever I Command you:* And how are we His Friends, without expressing our Love and Obedience in such Instances?

stances? *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, ( may He say to many Professors ) and yet will not do what I require you.* “ Never pretend that you are  
 “ my Friends ; if ye disobey me in so plain  
 “ a Command: If ye will not publickly ho-  
 “ nour me, by showing forth my Death in that  
 “ Ordinance. If then we have any sense of  
 Shame, One would think we *would not* forget  
 it ; and if we had any Sense of Duty, that we  
*dare not* ; any sense of Love that we *will not* ne-  
 glect , but as we have Opportunity, *do this in*  
*Remembrance of Christ.*

*Lastly* , Let me add , or rather explain ,  
 what was intimated before, Concerning Mini-  
 sters admitting Persons to the Lord's-Supper ;  
 That if Such as are baptiz'd , will own that  
 Profession of Christianity They were baptiz'd  
 into ; and are not guilty of plain Ignorance ;  
 or a disorderly, Scandalous Life, to contradict  
 their Profession ; if such desire to be ad-  
 mitted, by what Power can we refuse them ?  
 What can we desire, or demand more, than  
 a serious, visible, credible Profession of Chri-  
 stianity? Numberless Inconveniences will fol-  
 low, if positive Evidences of Grace, must be  
 requir'd of every One, that's to be admitted to  
 the ordinances of the Gospel, as the only thing  
 that can give Him a Right. For what certain  
 Ground can a Minister have, that the Person  
 He admits, has such a Right, unless He have  
 an Infallible Knowledge of another Mans Spi-  
 ritual State: A visible, Credible, Profession of  
 Christianity,

Christianity, is sufficient to give Him a Right, as to what concerns the Minister, or Pastor; and that Church and Society of Christians with whom He desires to joyn. For how can we see further, or require more, than a professed Consent to own the Doctrine of the Gospel; and a willingness of Subjection to Christ, according to all the Rules and Commands of it? What is there more in Scripture that can be urg'd: Only let the Persons who come to the Lord's-Table, look to it that They be sincere in this.

II. *Quest.* *What should be the Reason, so many Good People, as we hope They are, do yet live in the Neglect of the Lord's-Supper? Put it off a great many Years; and are hardly perswaded to dispose Themselves for it? The Example of such has a very ill Influence on a great many Others. Young People are encouraged to hope that They may be in the Favour of God, and shall run no Hazard or Danger of Their Salvation, if They never concern Themselves about preparing for the Lord's-Supper; because They see Others, who are reckon'd very good Christians by, all that know Them, who yet never come to the Table of the Lord.*

*Answ.* First, It ought to be consider'd, that They who make these Examples an Encouragement, or Excuse, for neglecting this Ordinance, would not think it sufficient in any other Case. They would not think it a proper,

per, or justifiable method, to come to the Knowledge of their Duty, by regarding the Practise of Other Men, rather than the Order of Their Sovereign ; as to such things wherein He has made known His will. For if Others neglect their Duty, it is not a sufficient Warrant for you to neglect yours.

And have not the Generality of Serious Christians in all Ages, made Conscience of this, as a principal part of Divine Worship? If we indeed believe in Christ ; If we are sensible of His Kindness, in giving Himself for us, and if we are affected with His Love, in laying down His precious Life for us, We ought to come, and openly profess this, with our Fellow Christians. We ought publickly to declare this, by remembering Him and His Death in this way, which He hath appointed : If we truly repent of our Sins, if we unfeignedly renounce the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and if we desire, and resolve to forsake every known way of wickedness, we should come to renew and exercise Repentance at the Table of the Lord: And there to behold a Crucify'd Saviour, whom we have crucify'd, will greatly assist us in the Exercise of Faith and Repentance. In the mean time, if Others neglect this ; let us pity and pray for Them ; but not imitate 'em, when we have an Order of Christ, for *doing this*.

*Secondly,*



*Secondly*, May not one Reason for the neglect of this Ordinance arise from a slight Opinion (which too many have) of Sins of Omission? They would be startled at great Commissions, contrary to Negative Precepts: But make less difficulty of violating Affirmative ones, as if they were only Proposals and Overtures, which we might observe if we please, or let alone: as if they were not Injunctions and Orders, that at our Peril we must obey. But the Guilt and Danger of Sins of Omission, is so plainly express'd in *Matth. xxv.* and Other Places, that methinks None should dare to make light of it.

What is there can give us a Dispensation from obeying such an express Command, as *Do this in Remembrance of me?* What can we say for our Selves as to this Omission, tho' Others be guilty of it? The practice of the Apostle and the First Disciples is plain; and the Presence of Christ is promis'd to continue in this work, to the End of the world. And the Death of Christ, which is there remembred, is as great a mercy to us, as to the First Christians. There is not the plainest Duty in the whole New Testament, but we may as well elude as this. Yea Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, are the two distinguishing Institutions of Christian Religion, which They who would own Christianity, and go beyond Deism and Natural Religion, ought to make Conscience of: In some Ages of the Christian Church, when  
this

this Ordinance was more frequently administered, he could hardly be reckon'd a *true Christian*, who turn'd his back upon it, and was no Communicant. And how can any be serious and conscientious in praying, and hearing, and sanctifying the Lord's-Day, who neglect this part of their Duty? For if They intend to get Spiritual Strength, and to mortifie Sin, and Subdue Corruption, to grow better, and be made more meet for Heaven, by Other Helps, then this Duty, this Ordinance, which Christ hath appointed, as a Help and Means to these Ends, should be minded too.

*Thirdly*, But with many, it may be suppos'd, that this Neglect proceeds from an extraordinary Reverence for this Ordinance, arising from some mistaken Apprehensions concerning the Nature of it. They think They durst not make so bold; 'tis not for them to adventure upon it: They durst not presume so far. But is it Presumption to obey the Command of Christ? If you durst not venture, because you are not yet Fit, when do you intend to be so? You are afraid of Presumption if you come: But if you refuse to come, do not you slight the Invitation, contemn the Ordinance, affront the Kindness, and Condescension of your Saviour; and refuse Subjection to His Authority? If you do not understand your Baptismal Covenant; or are not true to it, and willing to renew it; the longer you neglect it, the more *unfit* you will still be: you  
ought

ought to desire it ; you ought to endeavour to prepare for it ; and to advise with those, who are fit to be consulted about it, to direct you in what manner you ought to come : And not set this Ordinance at too great a Distance, from other parts of Christian Worship, when you are commanded to show forth the Lord's Death, this way : It doth not look like Respect, Awe, and Reverence, so much as Disobedience and Contempt, to keep off from Year to Year.

*Fourthly*, I wish as to many the Preparation for it ; and the Consequent Obligation to walk strictly, as becomes serious Christians afterwards, don't lie at the bottom. That many neglect to observe this Precept of Christ, that They may take the more Liberty to transgress some Others: Doubtless, He that makes Conscience of preparing Himself to come in a due manner from time to time to the Lord's Table, must needs be more affraid to commit Sin, which He hath lately repented of, and engag'd against ; and which He knows He must repent of shortly, if He do's commit it, than such as want this Help : They want those Assistances of the Spirit of Christ, to mortify Sin, and resist Temptation, which we may hope for, by obeying our Saviour in this Ordinance.

*Fifthly*, Divers are scar'd by the terrible Words, of *eating and drinking Damnation to Themselves*, if They receive *unworthily*. In-

stead of admiring the Love and Grace and Mercy, which in this Feast of Love, we are call'd to consider; They spend Their Thoughts upon the danger of Wrath and Judgment, Vengeance and Damnation; and so overwhelm Their Minds with Terrour; when They should be ravish'd with the Contemplation of Divine Love and the Unsearchable Riches of the Grace of Christ. That Passage of the Apostle 'tis certain, is an awful and terrible Truth; and ought to be consider'd more than it is by careless, lukewarm Professors, and such who contradict Their Profession by secret wickedness: Yet the Sin and Danger of Unworthy Receiving, is no Argument for the neglect of the Ordinance: But for the greater Seriousness in the performance. We must not neglect Praying, or Hearing, or the Lord's Supper, because of the Sin and Danger of trifling with God in such Duties. Eating and Drinking Unworthily, is not to be understood of the want of Assurance, when we come; or of coming with many Imperfections: For this is a means to encrease Grace. Nor doth all Deadness and Darkness in Duty, make a man an Unworthy Receiver; *If we do not regard Iniquity in our Hearts*; but are set to please God, 'tis a less Offence to keep on, and continue in the performance of our Duty, (tho' with some Dulness and Indisposition;) than wholly to neglect it. Sometimes the Services we perform of this kind may be acceptable to God, when they

they are not pleasing to our Selves, and even when we lament that it was not as we would wish; but are humble under the Sense of it: we may be more accepted of God, than when the Sails are fill'd with lively Affections; because the Principle from which that proceeds is Spiritual, the Sense of our Duty; and an Awe of Christ's Authority, makes us pay Him this Homage, when we have not that Quickening and Comfort, that it may be Others meet with. Some of the most devout, heavenly, and serious Christians, who adorn Their Profession by a most strict and exemplary Life; and have liv'd and dy'd with the deserved Character of Eminent and Excellent Saints; Have freely own'd that for many Months, and for some Years, They had not such Quickening and Vigour, Affection and Joy at the Lord's Table, as some Younger, and more Affectionate Christians. Their Bodily Temper, Their Age, and Experience, and great Improvement in Knowledge, make Them less need such Helps; and They have been able to act Faith and Love, in a more Spiritual and Judicious manner, without the Assistance of such sensible Affections, as Many I fear lay too great a Stress upon.

Take heed therefore of the two Extreams, in your preparatory Work. You must not come without Preparation, with a Common, Careless Frame of Spirit, as to Common Work; lest by forgetting to sanctify God in your

Hearts, you eat and drink Judgment to your Selves, not discerning the Lord's Body. And yet on the Other Hand, Take heed that you do not disorder, and discompose your Spirits, by such unbecoming Fears of the Sin and Danger of Unworthy Receiving, as may unfit you for the exercise of Faith, and Love, and Thanksgiving. See that you mistake not that, for Unworthy Receiving, that's meerly from your Unwilling Infirmitie: You may not (as several do) Condemn your Selves as Unworthy, and believe that you cannot receive in Faith; if you want full Assurance.

*Sixthly,* 'Tis observ'd of many, that do come, as well as of Several who do not: (And for that very Reason.) That They place too much Religion in poring on Their Sins; and mourning for Their Corruptions; and desiring to mourn more. They do not study the Love of God in Christ, so much as they ought, nor spend so much of Their Time and Thoughts in Praising God, as They should, nor Consider how much the very nature of Practical Godliness consists in our delighting in God. In Blessing and praising Him with joyful Thanksgiving, for His manifold Mercies. The Work of Praise and Thanks for Divine Mercy, do's not take up so much Room in Their daily Devotions as it should: This especially concerns Such as are enclin'd to Melancholy, by bodily Constitution; Or by Pain and Sicknes; or  
by

by outward Afflictions and Disappointments in the World. Who suffer themselves to give way to a melancholy, Timorous Temper, to Their Unspeakable Loss, both as to Grace and Comfort.

*Seventhly*, Many Receive no where, because of the Divisions and Differences among Protestants. They know not where to joyn: And because of the want of Charity and Love, and Mutual forbearance amongst Those, that differ somewhat about the manner of Administration. If They joyn with a Congregation, or Church of such a Denomination, They shall be blam'd by some of Their Acquaintance and Relations: And if They Communicate with Another, They shall be censur'd by as many of a different Opinion. Whereas the Difference as to the manner of Administration is not so great, but you may, and ought to chuse what you think most agreeable to the Word of God; and yet maintain a very Favourable, and Charitable Opinion of Other Christians who differ somewhat from you, as to the manner of Administration: And why should you not sometimes Communicate with them also? One would think it hard, that you should find none, with whom you can be satisfy'd to joyn: And live in the total neglect of the Ordinance. Have you discours'd your Scruples and Objections (after serious Prayer to God) with Any, that may be thought able to answer them? If you have not, you are the more to blame,

to sit down in Despondency, and pretend to be still waiting for more Light, about such a Question as this. And if you do not diligently endeavour to have your Doubts resolv'd, it seems little better than to pretend to tenderness of offending, while you continue willing to offend. Therefore consider it seriously, that our Lord has appointed such means of Grace to strengthen our Faith, and Love, and Hope, and Joy; and to make us progressive in the Spiritual Life; as by virtue of His own Institution we may expect a Blessing upon: And if He appoints such helps, He knows we need 'em; and His Institution makes it fit and needful for us to observe them. Let us not despise what He hath mercifully appointed: And besure He's too wise and kind to appoint them in vain. So that we cannot be without 'em, but to our own Loss and Detriment.

*Lastly,* There is one Plea more, which Some Good People make, for keeping off from the Lord's Table, which I wish Every Communicant would endeavour to remove (to wit) That They don't see that such as come, are better than Others that keep off. They don't perceive that Such as communicate often, are more Humble, Heavenly, Charitable, less Covetous, less Censorious, less Proud and Conceited than Others; or more publick Spirited.

They



They see not, that They are either better Men, or better Christians than Others.

*Ansiv.* I hope it is not altogether true; nor true as to the Generality. Doubtless there are Several, that have come to the Lord's-Table, who were under such hopefulnes in Their Youth as to matters of Religion; that neither Their Relations, nor the Ministers who knew Them; but must think the Spirit of God hath begun a good Work on their Souls: But afterwards by Evil Company, by the Lusts of the Flesh, and the snares of the World, They have lost that seriousness They once had; and are sunk into a Carnal, Earthly Frame. They may possibly be kept from great and scandalous Transgressions, yet keep up but a Form of Godliness, while They are vain and Earthly, Proud and Uncharitable; and don't seriously mind Religion in Their Families or Closets, or keep up the Power of it, in the Temper of Their own Spirits. Such Communicants as These, who have a Name to live and are Dead, are an Offence and Stumbling-Block to many who observe Them. They are a Shame to Their Profession, and are expos'd to the Spiritual Judgments of God: And if He have any Kindness for Their Souls, He will awaken them by His Word and Spirit; and it may be, make use of sharp Afflictions, or Terrours of Conscience, to bring them home, If the Root of the matter be in them: Other-

wife They'll still be more hard'n'd, through the Deceitfullness of Sin; and are like to perish, with higher Aggravations of Guilt and Vengeance, than Any whatsoever.

Woe to the World, because of such Offences: But woe to Such, by whom they come. They come to the Lord's-Table under the Profession and Character of Serious Christians; and yet live no better than such, who should be debarr'd from Coming: They claim the Privileges of Believers, who are in Christ; and yet show nothing of the Temper and Practice of such, as partake of His Spirit.

They come amongst the Faithful, when They should not: And because They do so; Others who should come, tarry away. I wish They would consider the mischief They do to others, as well as Their own Souls; and how much They hinder the Honour of God; and the Edification of Their Brethren; and the Credit and Beauty of the Christian-Church, by such ill Examples. And what a dreadful Account They will have to give another Day. But yet remember, by what we see of Others not walking regularly and becoming the Gospel, we should not so take Offence, as to neglect our own Duty and Privilege. We should endeavour in our Places to admonish and reform Such: or to have Them debarr'd from that Privilege, they walk

walk so unworthy of; And having done our Duty, we should then Consider, that *every Man shall bear His own Burthen.* I may be accepted and edify'd, strengthen'd, and comforted; and attain all the Ends of that Ordinance, for my own Soul; tho' Another plays the Hypocrite, and dishonours Christ, and eats and drinks Judgment to Himself.

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*The*

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*The Third Discourse,*  
 O N F O U R  
 S A C R A M E N T A L Q U E S T I O N S.

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I C O R. XI. 29.

*He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth  
 and drinketh Judgment to Himself not discern-  
 ing the Lord's-Body.*

**T**H E R E are other Sacramental-  
 Questions to be considered, as First,  
 whether the Lord's-Supper be a Con-  
 verting Ordinance. 2. Concern-  
 ing the Admission of Unworthy Persons.  
 3. What it is to Communicate Unworthily.  
 4. What is the Danger of eating and drinking  
 Unworthily at the Lord's-Table : To these I  
 shall now speak, and close with some Coun-  
 sels and Directions.

I. Quest.

I. Quest. *Whether the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper instituted by Christ, be the Means for the Conversion of Souls, as well as the preaching of the Word; and consequently whether all manner of Persons should not be admitted; as doubtless they ought to be, if it be appointed by Christ as a Converting Ordinance.*

*Answ.* To which I answer in these following Particulars.

*First*, I grant there is so much of the Word of God recited, and made use of in the Administration of that Ordinance, that it may prove a means of the Conversion of a Hypocrite, this is possible, and more than possible, with Reference to the Spectators who come; or to some Hypocrites who Communicate. There is somewhat proper, and likely to awaken Conscience, and persuade to Repentance in the Solemnity of the Ordinance it Self and in the things there mention'd, and call'd to Remembrance concerning the Deat'h of Christ and his Sufferings for our Sins. The Love of God in giving his Son to die for us, and many other things spoken by the Minister in Prayer, or Instruction before and after, and the Spirit of God may make use of some of those things for Conversion; Consideration of the Love of Christ there represented, may make the first saving Impression upon the Soul of a Communicant

municant or Spectator; But the preaching of the Word is the usual means. *Faith cometh by Hearing.*

*Secondly*, I grant likewise that many have been awak'ned to serious Impressions, and it may be to a through Change, by the Fears of unworthily receiving, by the Dread of that Judgment and Damnation threat'ned to unworthy Receiving. They have been so much awak'ned in their Preparations for that Ordinance, from fear of eating and drinking Damnation to themselves, that it may have proved a means of their Conversion.

*Thirdly*, However that may have some times been the Event; It will not follow, that it was the Design of Christ in the Institution: For then it would be the Duty of Ministers to give Infidels the Lord's-Supper; and to give it to the most notoriously Profane, as a means for their Conversion, even to such as make no Profession of Saving Faith and Repentance. The Preaching of the Word is appointed to turn Men from Darkness to Light; and from the Power of Satan unto God; and therefore All should hear. And if this Ordinance were instituted for that Purpose, All should Communicate. We may look for such an Effect from the Preaching of the Word, because of God's Institution of it to that End: But this can't be said as to the Lord's-Supper. It is not as the Word preached, the seed of the New Birth,  
but

but the Food of the New Born, We must be born before we eat, and feed before we can be nourish'd. 'Tis appointed for our Spiritual Nourishment and Growth in Grace: Tho' it may prove a means of Conversion, It doth not appear, it was instituted for that Purpose. A Minister may be converted at his Ordination, yet the laying on of Hands is not instituted for the Conversion of Ministers.

There have been many other things besides the Sacrament, have been the Means of Conversion unto some: The Holy Lives and Patient Sufferings, and Couragious Deaths of good Men. Fervent Prayer of Near Relations. Gods terrible Judgments on some Notorious Sinners, and many other things. I have read of One who gave a Young Prodigal a Ring with a Death's Head on it, upon this Condition He should spend one hour every Day looking on that Ring, thinking on it, which produc'd a mighty Change in his Life. And yet who will say these are converting Ordinances and so intended by God. Our own Sicknes; or the Sicknes of a Friend, by the Grace of God may help to convert a Man: Yea falling by Temptation into hainous Sin, hath affrighted some to leave their Sins. But these are not Means to be chosen, or us'd to such an End. No nor is the Lord's-Supper to be us'd by Infidels, and Impenitent ungodly People as a means to convert them. They are not allow'd to claim it, nor are Ministers commanded to give it them: Nor can it be given them  
without



without Impiety : much less should Force be us'd to constrain them to take it. (tho' it may accidentally prove the means of their Conversion: As a Thief may steal a Bible, or Sermon-Book and be reformed by it : ) But this is not the End of this Sacrament.

*Fifthly*, The Qualifications of a Communicant are not the same, with the Qualifications of a Hearer of the Word, there must be more. What is requir'd of the worthy Receiver in that Ordinance, cannot be done by the Impenitent and ungodly, and therefore they are not to come to it as a means for their Conversion : To discern the Lord's Body, To shew forth the Lord's Death, To do this in Remembrance of Christ's Love with the Faith and Hope of his coming again, To feed on him by Faith, To have Communion with him and his Church, as Partakers of one Bread ; And to exercise those Sacramental Graces, to which the Benefits of that Ordinance are promised. The Unconverted are incapable of these things, There is the Pardon and Forgiveness of Sin Sealed : Can such have a Sealed Pardon for Sin that never repented of Sin? If the Promises of the Gospel Covenant do not belong to the Impenitent and Ungodly, the Sacrament cannot Seal those Promises to them.

*Sixthly*,

*Sixthly*, This Ordinance, being appointed for our Spiritual Nourishment and Growth in Grace, supposes that we are Living Christians, as spiritually alive through Faith, Repentance and Love to Christ: And that which is appointed as the means of Health and Strength to the Living, cannot be thought to be intended to give Life to the Dead. Sacramental Bread and Wine, are not given to enliven a Soul that's Dead in Trespasses and Sins: But to nourish and strengthen one that is alive. There can no Nourishment be intended, without a Supposition of Life: It is the Communion of Christ's Body, and supposeth Union to him by Faith. 'Tis for the Friends of Christ, who have received the Atonement, and for them only to be feasted at his Table.

*Quest. II. But what if there be Unworthy Communicants admitted, such as I think unfit to come: Am I defiled by communicating with Such? How far is my Sin or Duty concern'd, as to that matter?*

*Ansiv.* Ministers and private Christians, must every one in their place, do what they can, that their Brethren and Fellow Christians, who eat of the same Bread, may walk as becomes the Gospel; and if they doe not, after private Admonition, They are to be suspended and deny'd that Privilege. But let a Man examine himself, judge himself,  
and

and condemn himself, let him look to himself in the first place, for every man shall bear his own Burden, *Gal. v. 6.*

You are faithfully warn'd to look to it, Every one that comes to the Lord's-Table, that you truly repent of Sin, and heartily believe in Christ, accept him, love him, trust him, obey him; and that you come with Charity, and a forgiving Spirit towards All that have injur'd you, as Ever you hope to have the Seal of God's Forgiveness: That you come with fixed Resolution, and Purpose of Heart, to follow Christ, and take up his Cross; denying your Selves and engaging to be faithful to his Interest, and persevere in the Faith, Worship, and Obedience of the Gospel, to your Lives End, in Hope of Eternal Life: This you are often exhorted to mind, *as to your Selves.* And then as to *Others,* The Guilt and Danger of eating and drinking unworthily is so great, that in our Several places we should do what we can to prevent it, that we may not partake of other Mens Sins, by our Neglect of Duty. And therefore when particular Members see, or hear that, (concerning any of their Brethren) that's fit to be reprov'd, admonish'd, and complain'd of, They must follow the Scripture Rule: Having mourn'd for Such Offence towards God, and pray'd for the Persons Repentance, They must first make use of private Admonition; and if that be without Success, afterward complain to the Church; *Matth. xviii. 17.* They must  
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give timely Information of Such Offenders, that they may accordingly be proceeded against: And if you have done your Duty, there is no Defilement on you, by the Company of Any Such, who continue to Communicate; tho' you think they ought to have been suspended. The Master of the Feast was justly offended with him, that came without the Wedding Garment; but did not reject the Rest that came in his Company. Our Lord was not defiled by coming to the Baptism of *John*, tho' there was a wretched Generation of Vipers, that came to it likewise. Neither was Christ, and his Apostles, defiled by the presence of *Judas*, at the Passover Supper.

And if Christians should keep off from the Ordinances of the Gospel, because some unworthy Persons are admitted, for Fear of Communicating with such, They may *never Communicate* while they live. For some may have truly repented of their past Sins, Whose Crime you have heard, but nothing of their Repentance: And since you have not a Key to their Hearts, you ought to hope the best, esteeming others better than your Selves. And tho' the greatest Care be taken, there always has, and will be a Mixture in the visible Church, *1 Chron. xxx. 18, 19.* The Passover was kept, and there were many that had not cleans'd themselves, according to the Purification of the Sanctuary, who did eat of it; and for whom *Hezekiah* prays that God  
would

would forgive them. However, *Verse 21.* the Rest that were cleansed, they kept together with great gladness, and to them it was a Feast of Joy: But I have said more of this Question, in answer to another, *viz.* Whether *Judas* was present with Christ, and his Apostles, at the Institution of the Lord's-Supper?

Quest. III. *What is it to be an Unworthy Receiver? To eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup unworthily, so as to hazard Damnation, and Judgment from God?*

*Ansiv.* To do this *Unworthily*, is to receive the Lord's-Supper, not in such a holy manner, nor to such an End, or with such a Spirit and Affection, as the nature of the Ordinance calls for: As on the contrary, To receive *Worthily*, is to do it in a Spiritual Manner, with such Spiritual Graces and Affections, as are suited to such an holy Institution. *Worthiness* sounds high and great at first; but you must take care to understand it aright; so as to comprehend Humility, and Repentance, Godly Sorrow for Sin, Hunger and Thirst after Christ, Prizing his Blood, Breathing after his Spirit, Sense of your many wants, Earnest Desires of a Supply, with an Apprehension of your Unworthiness of the least Mercy, &c. This is call'd your *Worthiness*, and so *He may be most worthy, that is most sensible of his own Unworthiness.* Therefore

(as one saith) Let not the Pride of any Worthiness of our own, bring us to the Lord's-Table; nor any sense of our Unworthiness keep us off.

To receive unworthily, is to do it without Sacramental Graces in Habit and Excercise: To do it Ignorantly, without a competent Knowledge to discern the Lord's-Body. He cannot but come unworthily, to the Table of the Lord, who knows not what he doth in coming, To do it Impenitently, without unfeigned Sorrow for Sin, and Hatred of it, and resolved Endeavours to forsake it. To do it Carelessly and in Unbelief, without Faith in Christs Death, Resurrection, Ascension and Glory: Without a Serious, thankful Heart, warm'd with holy Love to a Crucify'd Saviour: To receive Hypocritically, \* pretending to be what we know we are not. To receive uncharitably, without hearty Love to all our Brethren: To come with Bitterness and Rancour, Revenge and Malice in our Hearts, against any Man whatsoever. To receive Customarily, and out of Form, only because we are wont to do so, without that Devotedness to God, and Resignation of our Selves, and all we have to him, which is our proper Business at that time: To receive Rashly and unpreparedly, not considering before hand what we do, nor endeavouring to dispose  
our

our Selves, with a suitable Frame for such solemn work. To receive irreverently, without any Awe on our Minds and Spirits, of the Holiness and Justice of God, of his Majesty and Greatness, of his Adorable Condescension and Goodness, to pardon such guilty Sinners, to cleanse such polluted and defiled Creatures; To vouchsafe such a mighty Privilege and Honour, to such unworthy unthankful Rebels. In short, *to receive Unworthily*, is to come without due Preparation for it, and to behave our Selves Unsuitably when we come, without serious Thoughts of our Saviour, and of his Love, and of his Death, and of his Resurrection and Glory: Without serious Thoughts of our Selves, and our Sins past, and the Ingratitude, and Baseness of them, and Resolutions against them, for the Future, &c. And then afterward, not to take care to walk becoming the Obligations we have laid upon our Selves. In these three, consists the nature of *this Unworthiness*, Want of Preparation before we come, want of Suitableness of Spirit when we come, and want of Circumspection and Care afterward.

But as to Actual Communicating, we do it worthily; if there be a Suitableness in the Behaviour of our Body, Temper of Spirit, and Government of our Thoughts, or the Motion and Employment of our Affections. These things are more largely explain'd in many Sacramental Treatises.

Quest. IV. *What is the Danger of Unworthy Receiving?*

*Ansiv.* Such Eat and Drink Judgment to themselves. The Bread and Wine shall be so far from being Spiritual Food to them, or The Body and Blood of Christ to them, that it shall prove their Bane and Poison: 'twill be hurtful and prejudicial. 'Twill bring them under greater Guilt, and give the Devil an Advantage against them, expose them to the Judgments of God in this World, and without Repentance, to Eternal Wrath.

Bodily Sicknes, and Weakness, and Temporal Death, are expressly mention'd, 1 Cor. xi. as the Consequence of this Unworthy Receiving. God may, and often doth punish these Faults with Temporal Calamity, by bodily Sicknes; and other Afflictions, and sometimes by Death: But if we escape in this Life, we are in Danger of the Damnation of Hell. It is no ordinary Offence; Such are said to be guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ, to offer an Indignity and Affront to our Crucify'd Saviour. They make themselves Partners with Judas, and the Wicked Jews, who crucify'd the Lord of Glory. They Despise his Authority, and at the same time contemn his Love, and set at nought his precious Blood, the Price of our Redemption.



We may well expect, that God, who would be sanctify'd in all that draw nigh to him by their holy suitable Affections, will be sanctify'd upon them in his righteous Vengeance, *Lev. x. 3.* It is spoken, on the Occasion of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, being struck dead in the place for offering strange Fire. There's another Passage will help explain this, *Ezek. xxviii. 22.* *Then will I be sanctify'd in her.* God doth sanctify himself upon men for unworthy receiving, by inflicting Temporal Calamities, or by leaving them to Spiritual Judgments, and at last, by Eternal Punishments: But the most are little terrify'd with the one or other. They escape for a while as to Sickness and Calamity, and they feel not the Increase of hardness of Heart, Formality, and Security, Worldliness and Earthly mindedness, and such Spiritual Judgments, and they believe not, or consider not, the Danger of an Everlasting Hell. Surely to be guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ, can be no small Guilt; and to eat and Drink Damnation, can be no small Punishment.

I know very well, there are Extreams in the Explication of this passage. Some are Frighted too much from what is their plain Duty, by these Words of *eating and drinking Damnation to themselves.* Others understand it in such a manner, as to Interpret away all the Terror that is contain'd in it.

*First*, It must be granted that the unworthy Receiving, that the *Corinthians* were guilty of, was such as None of us, I presume, ever were, or will be charged with: That is, They made no Difference at all between the Lord's Body, and common Food; and under a Pretence of meeting to celebrate the Lord's Supper, They used the Church of God as if it were an ordinary Eating-house or Tavern, Some of them going away drunk from the Assembly.

*Secondly*, I believe likewise, that the Judgment and Damnation threat'ned in that place, doth especially, and primarily mean Temporal Judgments. *For this Cause many are weak, and sickly among you, and many are fallen asleep.* However,

*Thirdly*, The Danger of unworthy Receiving is very great. God hath always declar'd himself Jealous of his Honour, as to matter of Worship, and assur'd us that he will punish such, as do not sanctify his Name in the Duties of his solemn Worship. And the Expression of being guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ, (to be a Murderer of the Son of God,) must imply so dreadful a Guilt, that we ought in Faithfulness to warn you of the Danger of Unprepared, Careless, Unsuitable, and Sinful Approaches

Approaches to the Lord's Table ; for every time you receive unworthily, you know not how dear it may cost you.

*First,* As to Affliction and Sufferings in this World. It may cost you a Fit of Sicknes or hazard your Life by it. I did but taste a little honey with the End of my Rod, (saith *Jonathan,*) and I must die for it. You think it a small matter to taste a bit of Bread, or a little Wine ; But if you doe it unworthily, in an undue Manner, you may die for it. And doubtless,

*Secondly,* As to Spiritual Judgments, there is great Cause to fear, these are more common than is generally consider'd. For when once Professors have overcome the Difficulties, and Objections they once had, of coming to the Lord's Table, and accustomed themselves from Month to Month, to partake of that Ordinance, but do it slightly and carelessly, so as to eat and drink unworthily, they must needs sink and decline, and by Degrees fall into Formality and Worldliness, grow careless, and proud, and secure. And as they are the Worse, and not the Better, by coming to the Lord's Table, They are hard'ned against the Influence of the Word preached. What is spoken unto Sinners, to awaken Such, they think doth not concern them: They hope as to their State, that they are Saints, Believers, and Members of Christ: They are within the Bond of the Co-  
venant,

venant, have often received the Seals of it! and so sleep on under dreadful Security, and never apprehend their Danger, till they die, and find themselves Rejected of God, among the Workers of Iniquity.

*Thirdly,* The Condemnation of such Christians in another World, as are guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ, must needs be terrible. Of All that perish under the Gospel, None are like to have so miserable a Portion hereafter, as They who continu'd in the Love and Practice of their Sins, who liv'd and dy'd under the Reign and Power of their Lusts, and yet were wont to come to the Table of the Lord. How should the Hearts of Ministers be affected in giving the Bread and Wine to Such, and Such, who after they have eaten and drink in the Presence of the Lord here, shall yet be shut out from the last great Supper of the Lamb in Glory. God forbid it should be *thy Case* who readeth this. But it ought to be consider'd, and laid to Heart by every Communicant, how great the Sin and Danger is of unworthy receiving, that so we may not eat and drink Damnation to our Selves. To this End, let me give two or three Counsels, and Directions.

*First,* I would advise Those, that come to the Lord's Table, when visited with Sickness, as to their Persons, or Families, to sit down, and bethink themselves, what their Carriage and Behaviour

Behaviour has been as to this Ordinance, and how far they have provoked God, by coming carelessly and rashly sometimes; or by tarrying away when they might, and ought to have come. And how often they have refus'd to be at any pains, to prepare themselves; and tho' that were the true Reason at the bottom, have made little Excuses, and other Pretences, to stop the mouth of Conscience for the neglect of that Duty. Review your Selves, whether you have not been Faulty as to these things, that if you find you have, you may humble your Selves, and use greater Care and Circumspection, if it please God to recover you, and bring you again to that Feast of Love.

*Secondly,* Let All of us consider, the dreadful Guilt of continuing in Sin, notwithstanding our coming to the Lord's Table. Such he sure *receive Unworthily*: Such of all others are guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ. They crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to open Shame: They pretended to love him, because he dy'd for their Sins, yet they continue to live in Sin, notwithstanding their coming to shew forth his Death. Such a one is suppos'd to consent to the Murder of Christ, he crucifies the Lord of Glory again, he approves it, he is not sorry for it, nor for the Sins that caus'd it,

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There is a virtual, interpretative Crucifying of Christ, and being guilty of his Murder. We read our Lord was crucify'd at *Rome*, *Rev. xi. 8.* And you know he, dy'd without the Gates of *Jerusalem*, at *Golgotha*: The dead Bodies of the Witnesses shall lye in the Streets of the great City, which Spiritually is *Sodom*, *Egypt*, where also our Lord was Crucify'd. You may know the great City, that for Filthiness, and Corruption, and Cruelty, is like *Egypt*: And who so like as *Rome Papal* and *Antichristian*. And if that be said to be *Sodom* in a Spiritual Sense, for the likeness of the Sins of *Sodom* and *Egypt*, our Lord may be said to be Crucify'd there, upon the Account of the likeness of those Sins committed there, unto that Sin of the *Jews*, in putting him to Death. And 'tis very plain, how they dishonour Christ, and vilify him, by their abominable Doctrines and impure Worship, as much as the *Jews* did, when they hang'd him on a Tree.

Now consider a little, to whom the Apostle speaks these Words, that by receiving unworthily, they were guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ. He charges the *Corinthians*, with this Guilt, (not the *Jews* but) Christians at *Corinth*, Gentiles that owned the Christian Religion: They are charged as guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ, tho' neither they, nor their Fathers, had any hand in Crucifying him. They were not present in the High-Priest's-Hall, when Christ was Condemn'd,

when

when the People cry'd, Crucify him, Crucify him. Nor present at *Golgotha*, to approve his Execution. They were not Partners with the *Jews* or *Romans* in his Blood; and yet by unworthy Receiving, they are charged with the like Guilt: By coming to the Lord's Table without Repentance, without Faith in Christ, without Resolution to obey and follow him, you partake in the Guilt of the Jewish Murder of our Lord. Instead of sharing in the Benefits of his Death, you despise the Blood of the Covenant, as if it were the Blood of a Malefactor, you do as it were Nail him to his Cross again, you thrust the Spear into his Heart again, you Crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame. \* You are guilty of his Body and Blood.

Let us Consider, that he dy'd for our Sins, He was wounded for our Transgressions, That his false Accusers spoke our Sense. They who condemn'd him, scourg'd him, crown'd him with Thorns, fast'ned him to the Cross: They in Effect acted in our Stead. And can we look upon him whom we have pierced, and live in Sin still? Which in Effect, is to crucify him again. Would we pull him from his Throne of Glory, to hang upon a Gibbet as a Malefactor once more! Is this the Recompense, and Requital of his dearest dying  
Love

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\* Heb. 6. 6.

Love, that we act over the Tragedy again! That we again put him to open shame! Yea wicked Christians, Carnal Professours, unworthy Communicants they out-do the *Jews* in cruelty and unkindness. For we Sin against the Son of God, with greater Light and Knowledg by far then the *Jews* had: For had they known, they had not crucify'd the Lord of Glory. And he was then in a State of Humiliation, but is now upon a Throne: and hath all Power in Heaven and Earth committed to him. Besides we Sin against more Promises, Professions, and Engagements to the Contrary; and against greater Obligations, and so with a baser Ingratitude, than their putting him to Death could be charged with. What shall become of such wicked Christians, such unworthy Communicants, in the day of reckoning? Shall it be more tolerable for *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, than for *Jerusalem*; more tolerable for Ignorant Heathens, than for unbelieving *Jews*; more tolerable for Those, that never heard of Christ, than for those that kill'd him; how much worse then will it be for such as crucify him again! The wicked *Jews* who put to Death the Lord of Life and Glory, will have a cooler place in Hell, than some Christians that have shown forth his Death at his Table.

*Thirdly*, Let not what hath been said be abus'd by any, to keep them off altogether  
from



from this Sacrament, because of the Danger of unworthy Receiving. There is Danger in coming in an undue manner: But 'tis a Christians Duty to come: There are *unworthy Non-communicants*, as well as *unworthy Receivers*. There is equal (if not greater) Danger by not coming at all. If you desire to please God, and obey Christ, and hate Sin, and leave it, and would grow in Grace, and are willing and desirous to use all God's appointed means to these Ends, you ought to come with Cheerfulness and Courage, with hope and Love, with Thankfulness and Praise, to testify to all the World, that you rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and glory in his Cross, and are not ashamed to look for Pardon, and Righteousness, and Life, by a Crucify'd Saviour. You have the more Reason to do it now, than at other times, because of the Insolent Attempts that are made, against the Authority of our Lord, his Crown and Dignity, against his God-head and against his Satisfaction, and against his Kingly Office: And as to all the Order and Institutions of the Gospel, especially as to the Sacraments.

That which I have said to awaken the Secure, to startle the Hypocrite, to convince the Worldling, and to make the sleepy, careless, Nominal Christian feel the Terrouers of the Lord, should not dishearten the Humble and Contrite, the Weary and heavy laden, the Mourner

ner and Penitent, and such as groan under the Burden of Sin, and prize Christ above all the World, and love his Cross, his Gospel, his Day, his Table, his Ministers and Ordinances; They shall eat and drink, and find Spiritual Strength and Vigour by it: They shall be as welcome as the other are unwelcome. They shall be feasted with the fat things of God's House, and shall magnify the Lord Redeemer: He will Seal to them the Pardon of their Sins, He will speak to their Soul's, with the Voice of Love and Sweetness: He will kiss them with the kisses of his Mouth, and display toward them the Banner of his Love. All these Threatnings; Thunderbolts, and Terrors, shall not touch the head of an humble, upright, serious Christian, that doth this in Remembrance of Christ, in the best manner he can, and desires every time to do it better. Who longs to be more conformed to the Example, and Life of Christ.

Let not such a one be disquieted, or cast down. What is a Cup of Trembling to Hypocrites, shall be a Cup of Salvation to thee, a Cup of blessing to thee, and the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. All the Unsearchable Riches of Christ, all the Benefits and Priviledges of Justification, Adoption, Increase of Grace, Perseverance therein unto the End, Hope in Death, and afterward Everlasting Life, shall all *be Thine*, confirm'd and sealed

sealed to thee, by the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant, and the Inward Witness of the Spirit, applying all this as thy Portion, and thy *Inheritance*. Let Others, who are not willing and resolved to part with their Sins, be afraid to come, (and well they may.) You that are of the contrary Temper and Character, ought to be afraid to keep from the Table. 'Tis good to be in the way where Jesus pass th by: It may be, he will give thee a kind Look, and speak a Word of Power to thy Soul, that shall scatter all thy Clouds, and make thee know, what inward Joy, and Peace of Conscience, (by the Witness of the Spirit,) means. He shall make thee feel it, at thy very Heart, that 'tis He, and could be none else but He, even thy Saviour, thy *Beloved Jesus*, who loved thee, and gave himself for thee, on the Cross: Who hath loved thee, and pleads thy Cause in Heaven. Who hath loved thee, and gives himself to thee, in the Sacrament.

He hath loved thee with an Everlasting Love, and will perfect what he hath begun, and keep what thou hast committed to him, even to the Great Day. And then shalt thou see him, whom thy Soul loves; see him come in Glory, to be glorify'd in his Saints, and admir'd in all them that believe. We love him *now*, we admire him *now*; in whom believing, tho' we see him not, we rejoyce. We are asham'd we love him no more: But how shall we love him, when we shall see him, *as he is*? How shall we love him, when we shall be made like

him? VVhen Christ who is our Life shall appear? VVhen he shall show, how much he hath loved us, and raise and enlarge our Capacities, and fill them with Light, and Love, and Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory? Let us try to let our Thoughts run out in this, or the like manner on Christ Jesus; that we may come to his Table, with a Heart full of Love to him, who loved us, and gave himself for us, and will never reject a Soul, that unfeignedly loves him.

For a Conclusion, let me Exhort you to two things, from what hath been said, in order to your Preparing for the Lord's Supper.

*First*, Humbly own before the Lord, this Evening, your *utter Unworthiness* to partake of his Feast. However,

*Secondly*, Most earnestly beg the Spirit of Grace, to enable you to partake of it *Worthily*.

*First*, Own your Unworthiness: Be Humble and Vile in your own Eyes, judge your Selves, abase your Selves, condemn your Selves, and you'll be the more welcome Guests to that Table. The sense of Unworthiness, should not deter us from a plain Duty. It is no Argument of Humility, to keep off in such a Case,

Case. VVe are *Unworthy* of the least Mercy, Spiritual or Temporal: Unworthy of the Bread we eat, and of the Cloaths we wear, and of the Mercies of Providence, every Day: And will you starve your Selves, and go naked, because you are Unworthy of Food and Rayment? 'Tis true you run a great Hazard, if you receive *Unworthily*; but do you not do so, by performing other Duties in an undue manner? May not your Prayers be turned into Sin? May not what you hear, rise up in Judgment against you? You are *Unworthy* of the Priviledge to make your Requests known to God: Unworthy that God should speak to you by his Word, or send his Ministers in his name, to instruct you, and beseech you to be reconcil'd: *Unworthy* to lift up your Eyes to Heaven: *Unworthy* to have Liberty of Access to the Throne of Grace. You are invited to hear his VVord, and commanded to seek his Face, and should not neglect it for being *Unworthy*. In like manner may I not say; Are you not invited, call'd, and commanded, and expressly requir'd to do this in Remembrance of Christ? To show forth his Death this way, tho' it be a Priviledge, we are altogether Unworthy of?

The deeper sense of your Unworthiness, the more welcome may you hope to be at his Table. Remember the Centurian, who said, *Lord, I am not Worthy thou shouldst come under my Roof.* Nevertheless he accepted of our Lord's Offer, and receiv'd the Benefit of his Mi-

raculous Assistance ; and was honour'd with this Testimony, that the Son of God had not found so great Faith as His. You may heighten the Sense of your Unworthiness, as a part of your Preparation for this Table. To this End, think what a Gracious God you serve, what a kind Saviour invites you, what he hath done and suffer'd for you ; while you think also, what you have done against him, what you have deser- v'd by Sin ; and yet what Dignity and Privi- ledge, you are call'd to partake of by Christ.

*Secondly*, Beg the Spirit of Grace, to enable you to receive Worthily. That you may not be guilty of Christ's Body and Blood, that you may not eat and drink Judgment to your Selves. Beg the Holy Spirit to fix your Thoughts, to prepare your Hearts, to excite your Repentance, and Godly Sor- row, to quicken your Desires after Christ, to kindle, encrease, and excercise your Love to him, with Thankfulness for his Love to you, and Charity to All that have injur'd you. Don't disorder, and discompose your Spirits, by such unbecoming Fears of the Sin and Danger of *Unworthy Receiving*, as should unfit you for the Joyful Exercise of Faith, and Love, and Thankfulness. Look to Christ, and beg his Grace; don't think him to be a hard Master, unwilling to receive you. He will not break a bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax. You may

may receive *Worthily*, notwithstanding your unwilling, Lamented Infirmities; if you are resolved, and diligent in the Use of God's appointed Means, for the Mortification of Sin, and the Encrease of Grace.

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*The Fourth Discourse.*

**Whether Judas were present, &c.**

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1 COR. XI. 28.

*But let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.*

Another Question I would now consider, is this.

Quest. **W**Hether Judas were present at the Institution, and first Celebration of the Lord's-Supper." For  
 " many are ready to say, what need you make so much  
 " ado, about examining your selves before you come?  
 " Surely all sorts of People may come as well as  
 " Judas: And Ministers need not be scrupulous  
 " whom they admit, when our Saviour at the first  
 " Institution admitted Judas, though he knew  
 " him to be a Thief, and a Devil,

H 4

Ans.

*Anſw.* There are ſo many, Wiſe, Learned, and Good Men, of different Opinions about this Queſtion, that I ſhall endeavour fairly to repreſent, what may be ſaid on either ſide; and then make ſome Reflections for our Inſtruction from it.

It is urged by many, and with very plausible Arguments, confirm'd by very great Authorities of Ancient, and Modern Divines, that \* *Judas* did receive the *Lord's Supper* with the other Apoſtles.

There was another Supper which accompany'd the *Paschal-Supper*; or immediately follow'd the eating of the *Paschal Lamb*. In which they eat Herbs, and Unleavened Bread; the Maſter of the Family firſt dipping his Morſel, and then the reſt of the Family; after which a Collation, or *Post-Supper*, where he brake Bread into Pieces, and diſtributed a part to every One of the Gueſts: And firſt drinking Himſelf, gave them the Cup fill'd with Wine, according to the Age and Dignity of the Perſons, adding to each Diſtribution a Form of Bleſſing proper to that Myſtery, which was Euchariftical, and Commemorative of their Deliverance out of *Egypt*. This laſt our Bleſſed Lord being to Celebrate, the Night before he was betray'd, chang'd the Form of Bleſſing, and turned the Ceremony

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\* *Cyprian, Auſtin, Jerom, Chryſoſtom, Theodoret.* Many Schoolmen and Romaniſts; and of the Reformed. \* *Beza, P. Martyr, Zucer, Dr. Hamond, Dr. Lightfoot, &c.*

remony to an higher purpose; and gave us Bread and Wine, in Commemoration of His Body and Blood, commanding His Apostles to perpetuate this Rite, in the Christian Church, till his Second Coming. The Question is, \* *Whether Judas was now present at this Supper?*

Some think that the Supper mention'd in the XIII of *John*, at which *Judas* was present, is not to be understood of the *Paschal Supper*, at the End of which our Lord Instituted this Sacrament. But of some Ordinary Supper, before the Feast of the Passover, v. 1. At which Supper *Judas* receiv'd the Sop, and went out, and the Devil entered into him. And we read he did so enter, before the Passover was fully come, when it only drew nigh, 22 *Luke* 1. 3. At this Supper, they say, He washed his Disciples Feet, which might well enough be performed at a Common Supper; but not so well at the Passover-Feast, where They must needs be straitened for Time. And for one that had the Bag, to go out from a Common Supper, to buy Necessaries for the Passover-Feast, might well be accounted for: But it would be thought very strange, and contrary to the Custom of the *Jews*, for to go out from the *Paschal-Supper*, to go to Market, and buy Provision for another; much less to provide for that Feast.

It cannot be denied, but that as the Evangelist *Luke* delivers the History, *Judas* seems to be present, not only during the *Passover-Supper*,

*per,*

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\* See Dr. *Edwards*, *Exercit. Crit. & Hist.* 8vo. 1722. *Exerc. V. on Luke* 22. 21.

per, but at the Lord's Supper which followed. If the right Order of things, as they came to pass, be there laid down: For he says the hand of the Traytor was with him on the Table, after he relates, how the Bread and Wine were distributed. 'Tis also said by one Evangelist, that *he sate down with the Twelve; and while they were eating, took Bread*, Matth. 26. 20, 26. and that after Supper, He gave the Sop to Judas, saith Another, *He that dippeth His hand with me in the Dish*, Mark 14. 17, 20. *Behold the hand of him who betrayeth me, is with me on the Table*, Luke 22. 21. mention'd after the Institution of the *Lord's-Supper*, &c. And then the Devil enter'd into Him, Luke 22. 14. and He went out immediately. And our Lord said, *What thou doest, do quickly*. And the Disciples understood it, as if He was to buy something against the *Passover - Feast*: \* That Feast therefore was not yet come, if this Supper was some Days before the *Passover-Supper*: And then our Lord's saying, *He that dippeth his hand with me in the Dish, shall betray me*, might be understood not to refer to his present Act, but to his Custom of feeding with him. *He that dippeth his hand with me*, that is, He that is wont to eat with me; And so it would not particularize Judas: But only signifie, that one of the Twelve should betray him: And it ought to be consider'd, that

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\* See Bishop Kidder's *Demonstration of the Messiah*, Part III. Cap. III. Sect. 9.

that if All the Disciples had understood it, of the present Action of *Judas's* dipping his hand with our Saviour in the Dish, at that Time; there would have been no room for saying, *Lord, is it I?* some Days after this. And the Greek word ἐμψόπασας in the Preter Tense, and not in the Present, doth favour this Sense. So that notwithstanding this, they say, He might be present at the *Passover-Feast*, and *Lord's-Supper* too, not be discovered by those Words of his Master.

Others say, That *Judas* staid till *the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper*, was administred to Him, and the Rest of the Disciples: And then immediately went out. And if it be objected, That some of the words used by Christ at that time, could not be apply'd to *Judas*: *This is my Body given for you. This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood, shed for you. I'll drink no more of the fruit of the Vine, till I drink it new, with you,* Luke 22. 18. 19, 20. They say, That the Apostles sometimes address themselves to a whole Church, where may be supposed many Hypocrites, and false Christians, and yet apply the general Promises of the Gospel, in which only true Believers have a special Right, 1 *Thess.* 1. 3, 4, 6. *We know, saith the Apostle, your work of Faith, and labour of Love, and patience of Hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God, and our Father: knowing beloved Brethren, your Election of God. And ye became followers of Us, &c.*

They

They say farther. If Christ call'd *Judas* a Devil : He calls *Peter* by the Name of Satan and Devil, because He so far comply'd with the Devil, as to oppose His Sufferings. Moreover They say Christ did this to tell His Ministers how it would be with Their Congregations. That there would be Wolves as well as Sheep present Themselves among Them : And to let us know the Tares and the Wheat, must grow together till the Harvest. And to convince Us, that another Man's Unworthy Receiving, can't make us Unworthy : Therefore would our Lord permit *Judas*, to receive. He was known to be a Wicked Man, yet admitted by Christ ; He did not pollute the Communion to Him, and to the Rest of the Disciples, either at the *Passover*, or the *Supper*. After this manner some argue for his being present.

Among Our Divines, \* many Men of Note, and of Different Persuasions, do agree that it is hard to make it out clearly, whether it was the *Lord's-Supper*, that *Judas* receiv'd, or no.

2. On the other hand. It is urged that *He was not present at the Lord's-Supper*. That the Sop was no part of the Sacramental Supper, upon his receiving whereof the Devil entered into him, and he went out from Christ and his Apostles, but of the Common Supper which follow'd : And that was † before the Institution of the *Lord's-Supper*. 'Tis

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\* Gillefpy's, *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, p. 461. Mr. R. Vines, *on the Lord's-Supper*, 8vo. Chap. XX. p. 271. Mr. J. Burroughs *Gospel Worship*, p. 238. † Dr. Edwards, *Exercit. V.*

'Tis certain *Judas* was Excepted by Christ in several kind and comfortable Expressions, which He used to Them, while He was present. But there's no such Exception of Him, as to what our Lord said at the Institution of the Supper. He told them, *John VI. 70. I have chosen Twelve, but One of you is a Devil.* And in the XIII Chap. 10. *Now are ye clean, but not All. V. 18. I speak not of you All, I know whom I have chosen; But that the Scripture might be fulfilled. He that eateth Bread with me, hath lift up His Heel against Me.* If he excepted *Judas* in such Expressions, one would think He should much more at this Supper, if *Judas* had been present. Did he that was a Devil partake of Christ's Body and Blood? *St. Matthew XXVI. 29. St. Luke XXII. 28. 29, 30. I will not drink of the fruit of the Vine, till I drink it New with YOU, in my Father's Kingdom.* If it be understood of the Kingdom of Heaven Hereafter, or the Kingdom of Glory. It is not applicable to *Judas*: Neither is it so, if understood of Christ's Eating and Drinking with Them, after His Resurrection, for *Judas* was dead and gone to His Place before. *Drink ye All of It,* saith Christ, That is, All that were present, and then adds: *YOU are They that have continued with me in my Temptation; and I appoint unto YOU a Kingdom: As my Father hath appointed unto Me, that YOU may Eat and Drink of my Table, in my Kingdom; and sit on Thrones, judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel.* Besides, our  
Lord,

Lord, One would think, should be far from saying to *Judas*: My Body, broken for You, My Blood, shed for You; when he excludes him by Name out of his Prayer, *John XVII. As the Son of Perdition*, whom he knew was lost.

And therefore, though the Evangelist *Luke* saith; *The hand of him that shall betray me, is with me on the Table*; and mentions this, after He had related the Institution of the Supper. It is likely that the Evangelist there observes not the exact Order of Time; but only relates the Substance of the Matter, as he heard it from the Apostles; it may be at several times. He was not an Eye-witness, as *St. Matthew* and *St. John* were. And after the History of the Sacrament, He only adds what Christ said of the Traytor: And if we will keep to the strict Order of the Words in the Gospel of *St. Luke*; Christ did not tell His Disciples of the Traytor, while They were eating the *Paschal Lamb*; But afterwards, after They had done.

As to the Expression of Christ's sitting down with the Twelve; there can be little argued from it, for we read *1 Cor. XV. 5*. That Christ rising from the Dead, was seen of *Cephas*, and then of the *Twelve* (though that must be understood of the *Eleven*) for *Judas* was gone to His Place, before our Lord was Crucify'd.

*Grotius* expressly declares in his *Anotations* on *XXVI Matth.* and *XXII Luke*, That the Supper in which the Sop was given to *Judas*,  
and



and on which he went forth, was the Common-Supper, and not at the Lord's Supper: And that St. *Luke* doth not place the Words of Christ, concerning *Judas*, in their proper Order; The Sop given to him seems not to be *Sacramental Bread*, for this reason, because *that* was broken, but not dip'd in any Liquor that we read. Which might be at *Common Supper*.

In short, One would hardly think; That our Saviour who whipt the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, should admit one whom He knew to be a Devil, to be Partaker of His Body and Blood. The Evangelists, *Matthew* and *Mark*, relate the Discourse of Christ at the Table, about Him that should betray Him, to be *before* the Institution of the Supper, whereas St. *Luke* places it *afterwards*: Either they two, put that *before*, which should be *after*; Or He puts that *after*, in his Relation, which should precede. Here is not only Two against One; But in several other Particulars, That Evangelist does not observe the exact Order of Time in his History. But without positively determining this Matter, wherein so many Learned Men differ, Let me observe,

*First*, That they who grant *Judas* to have been present at the Lord's-Supper, Do yet generally deny that Any Known, Scandalous People, of Wicked Lives should be admitted. \* *Chrysostom*, grants *Judas* to have received the Sacrament, and yet Discourses largely against the Admission of Scandalous

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\* *Hom on St. Matth.*

dalous and Profane Persons. The Wickedness of *Judas* was not then known in Publick; not till after He had the Sop, and left the Disciples, and went to betray His Lord. The Evangelist *John* says exprelly, It was *in Secret*, that he bargain'd with the Enemies of Christ, and *no Man did know of it*, XIII *John*, 28. 29. And though, when *Judas* said, *Lord, is it I?* Our Saviour Replies; *Thou hast said*; yet He only, in His own Conscience, might understand the meaning of those Words. He was not a known Scandalous Person, If he did receive the Lord's-Supper. Scandal arises from a Sin committed by a Professor known and divulg'd. *Judas* had not yet betray'd his Master, any more than *Peter* had deny'd him: And so he only foretold his future Treachery.

*Secondly*, They that are secretly guilty of great Crimes and hainous, should be afraid of coming to the Lord's Table, upon Supposition that *Judas* did receive, lest They run the same Hazard, and incur the same Fate. Lest the Devil enter into Them, and take Possession of Them, as He did of *Judas* upon his Unworthy Receiving, If he did receive; and so hurried him to the vilest Crimes, the Murder of Christ, and Self-murder.

*Thirdly*, Our Lord, in the Administration of the Lord's-Supper, supposing *Judas* was present, acting as a Minister, could not be Witness and Judge too. The Sins He knew that  
that

that *Judas* would commit, were not yet committed; and so not yet Scandalous. We must be careful how we urge an Imitation of what Christ knew; and did in his Divine Nature, upon Ordinary Ministers. Had our Saviour here acted as Judge and Witness too, it might have been an ill Precedent to Ministers, to take upon them, by their own Power, to deny the Sacrament judiciously, to whom they pleased; or upon Suspicion, and Jealousies without Proof, where neither Ignorance, or Scandal can be objected.

*Fourthly*, All must grant; that it is Rare, if Possible, to find any part of the Visible Church upon Earth, where the Ordinances of the Gospel are Administred, that is, not mixt with good and bad. You may as soon find a Body without any Blemish, Spot, or Wrinkle, or Imperfection; as a Church without some Corrupt Members; and yet the Body may be beautiful, and the Church too for all that. The Gospel-Net will gather good and bad, as to visible Profession; *All are not Israel, that are of Israel*. The Rules of Faith and Love, are pure and perfect in the Word; But not so observ'd by all visible Christians: As the *Hebrew; Greek; and Latin* Languages, may be pure in Books; but hardly found to be purely spoken, by any Nation in the World.

*Fifthly*, Though some unworthy, wicked Persons should be admitted; we are to endeavour

deavour they should be separated, and are not to separate our selves, till that be regularly try'd, and is not done. A particular Member is not to usurp the Power of the Keys, to Suspend, or Excommunicate: There must be Proof, by sufficient Evidence, of Matter of Fact, to convince any Man or Woman before they be suspended. 'Tis true, Thieves and Robbers, and other Vile Offenders should be reform'd and purg'd out of the Nation and City, but it must be done regularly, and in Course of Law, or the Mischief will be greater. Particular Members must do their Duty first, if they know any unworthy Communicant, and can prove it; they are by the Order of Christ to admonish such in private, to tell him of his Fault: And if you can't gain him that way, get two or three Witnesses and endeavour to bring him to Repentance, by due Conviction; if after this he be obstinate, and stand out in his Sin; tell it to the Church, acquaint the Minister, or Pastor, and by him (if needful) the whole Society; and when Persons have done their Duty, then 'tis time to talk of Publick Censure: Till then, they can blame no body but themselves.

\* Mr. *Burroughs* saith expressly, *If by Revelation, I knew such or such a Man to be a Hypocrite, yet I might Communicate with him still, and not be at all defiled, except I could prove by Witnesses what I know.* And he says farther,  
*I must*

*I must look to it, to examine my self; but for Others, I am only so far bound, as to keep my self Clean.*

I therefore add, If there be any such, as are wicked, and unworthy Receivers, that Communicate with me; If I be not Accessory to their Sin, it doth not pollute me. It is my Duty, and my Right to come to the Lord's-Supper; if another come unworthily, he shall bear his own Burthen: *He eats and drinks his own Damnation.* Shall I keep away because he Sins in coming? Or because the Minister and the Church Sins, in not excluding him? If I have done my part towards it, I may be satisfied. Must not I go, and offer my Gift to the Altar, because another should not come, till he first go, and be reconcil'd to his Brother? There was a *Cham* in *Noah's* Ark; shall I leap out of the Ark for that? I am not bound to go and pry into another Man's Life and Conversation, so as to give an account of things secret; but if any thing offend me, I am bound by the Rule of Christ, to admonish my Brother; and if he appears to be wicked, I am bound to endeavour he should be purged from the Congregation: If I neglect what is my Duty, I am so far defiled; but not otherwise. 'Tis true 'tis said, *if any Man be called a Brother, and is a Fornicator, Idolater, Rater, Drunkard, or Extortioner, with such a one, no, not to eat,* 2 Cor. 5. 11. This is to be understood of Common Meals, and Ordinary Familiarity: However the Consequence

quence is good. If not to eat with such, at Common Meals, we are not, at the Lord's-Table: But then we must have a Mark set on them, by their Suspension, to avoid their Company; otherwise, if the Minister and Church neglect their Duty, or are not sufficiently informed of such Faults, a Private Christian may be a worthy Communicant, notwithstanding some such be admitted: If according to the Law of Christ, he hath endeavoured his Conviction and Reformation by private Admonition, and if that be not effectual, have imparted it, in order to more publick Censure: Without this, there may be endless Separations, and you may run through all points of the Compass, till you have separated through the whole Circle, and never know where to fix.

What work would it have made in the Corinthian Church, if you may suppose the Communion of one Incestuous Person had polluted all the rest, and had been a ground of Separation. If Hypocrites and Wicked People will joyn with us, *in our Profession*; we don't therefore joyn with them in *their Sin*; we can't be infected and defiled, but by our own Consent, and the neglect of our Duty. Nor do we profess our selves to be one Body with Them, any further than They profess Themselves Members of Christ. And yet if They be not what they profess, 'tis not *Our Profession* is *false*, but *Theirs* that is so. *Unto the pure all things are pure; But unto Them*

*Them that are defiled, and unbelieving, nothing's pure.* By which 'tis plain, That what's *Impure* to them that are defiled, is not made *Impure* to them that are pure.

*Lastly,* Let us Consider, and Learn, from the Case of *Judas*, (leaving it undetermined whether he did receive or no ; So as not to be obliged to maintain either Opinion) not to rest in external Privileges, in being one of the Family of Christ, as visibly related to Him. We are so by Baptism, and by coming to the Lord's-Table. If he did not eat of the Supper, as many believe he did : Yet 'tis certain he did eat of the *Passover*, and Preach in the Name of Christ, and might work Miracles, and cast out Devils, as well as the other Apostles. And was no more suspected of Treachery against his Lord than any of them ; They All said, *Lord is it I?* And yet the Devil entered into him, and he proved an Hypocrite, a Murderer, and a Devil. Let us not therefore rest in any External Privileges, as being visibly related unto Christ. Remember the Case of *Judas*.

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

From the earliest times of the settlement of the continent, the people of the United States have been distinguished by their love of liberty and their attachment to the principles of justice and equity.

The first settlers of the United States were the Pilgrims, who came to the New World in 1620, and the Puritans, who came to the New World in 1630.

The Pilgrims and the Puritans were both Englishmen, and they both came to the New World in search of a better life.

The Pilgrims were the first to establish a self-governing community in the New World, and the Puritans were the first to establish a self-governing community in the New World.

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*Of the Ends we should propose,  
in Receiving the Lord's Supper.*

**I** COR II. 28. *But let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.*

**I** Have considered several Sacramental Questions, and resolv'd, and answer'd them in the most practical manner, to assist your Preparations for this Ordinance. That which I would now speak to, is, concerning *the Ends we should propose to our selves, in coming to the Table of the Lord.* Hereby you will be help'd to Examine your Selves, and be able to judge whether hitherto you have come with right Ends, or no: And, consequently, whether you did receive worthily, or unworthily: And from thence may be able to judge, what you have to Repent of, and what to be Thankful for, as to former Communion: And will also be assisted, more worthily to Communicate hereafter, by fixing your Ends right, when you come. *Let a Man examine himself,*

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*himself, and so let him eat; particularly, as*  
*to his Ends and Design, in coming to this Or-*  
*dinance.*

Among several things, which might here be proposed, the Principal Ends of a Christian, in coming to the Lord's Table, are such as these :

I. To profess his Relation to Christ, as one of his Disciples, and his Communion with his Fellow-Christians, as a Member of the same Body. By eating of that Bread, and drinking of that Cup, we declare to all the World, that we are *Christians*, and not ashamed of our Baptismal Covenant. That we reckon it our Honour, to be accounted the Followers of a Crucified Saviour, and glory in his Cross. We openly acknowledge our Faith in him, and Hope of Salvation by his Death. We distinguish our selves from Atheists, and Infidels, and Hereticks, who deny the Lord that bought them. We profess to belong to the Family, and Kingdom of Christ, by partaking of the Childrens Bread: For, as the Apostle speaks, *1 Cor. 10. 17. We being many, are one Bread: For we are all Partakers of that one Bread.* And therefore the Lord's Supper is called *the Communion*, whereby we have Fellowship with one another. One Bread, being made up of many Corns; and one Cup, or the Wine in it, of many Grapes. So we being many, are one Bread, and one Body.

And

And *the Bread*, and *the Church*, are called by one Name, *the Body of Christ*.

Hereby we take upon us the Badge, and Livery of our great Lord and Master. We wear his Colours, and own him to be our General, and the Captain of our Salvation. As Circumcision, and the Passover, distinguished the Jews from the rest of the World; so do Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, distinguish Christians. And they that kept the Passover, are said to keep it *unto the Lord*, as a Profession of their Allegiance to *Jehovah*, in opposition to the Service of Idols.

II. We come to this Ordinance, to testify our Obedience to Christ, and our Regard to his Authority. He has bid us do this in Remembrance of him, and shew forth his Death this way. We show our Reverence for what He hath appointed, and commanded; and that we dare not live in the neglect of what He hath enjoined. Especially considering how kindly he instituted this Rite, a little before his Death, the Night before he was betrayed; and commanded us this way to remember his Love, in dying for us. Which Command is repeated three times by the Evangelist, and again by the Apostle *S. Paul*, that it might not be thought an unnecessary, or a trivial Matter. It's true, we should never have thought of this, if he had not appointed it: But by our Obedience, and careful Observation of it, we show a respect to our Lord's Authority.

Authority. Did He give such a positive Order about this, and shall we disregard it? We are no more left at Liberty as to this, than as to any other Parts of Christian Worship. And it is very bold and arrogant, for the Disciples, to pick and chuse which of their Lord's Commandments they will obey, and which not.

III. We come to the Lord's Table to renew our Covenant with God in Christ, to engage our Fidelity to him, and to receive the Seal of his Faithful Promises unto us. For all the Privileges which Christ has purchased, all the Mercies he has procured, all the Blessings and Favours he has promised in the Gospel, are sealed in this Ordinance to the Worthy Receiver. And therefore called *the New Testament*, or Covenant, *in his Blood*. We here receive a sealed Pardon for all our past Sins; and for those in particular of the last Month, which we remember, and confess in our preparatory Work. We give up our selves again to God, as his Covenant-Servants, professing that we are so, and engaging that we will be so: That this God shall be our God. And if we be sincere, and unfeigned, He at the same time assures us, *that he is our God*, and hath blotted out all our Transgressions, and will remember them no more.

As Sacrifices formerly were one way of Covenanting with God, so to feast upon a Sacrifice is one way of sharing in the Benefit of it. It is to partake of the Sacrifice: It is  
to

to give our Consent to the Covenant, that is confirmed and ratified thereby. This is a Fœderal Rite between God and a Believer, signifying Friendship, Reconciliation, and Kindness. We feed on the Sacrifice of Christ, at his Table, as those who have received the Atonement; as those who are in a Covenant of Friendship with God; whose Peace with Heaven is made, by the bloody Sacrifice of Christ.

If we be humble, and sincere, in renewing this Covenant with God in Christ, on our part, we may consider for our Comfort, that it is a Seal on God's Part too, of his being in Covenant with us: And a Confirmation of our Faith, that he will be our God, and fulfill all his Promises to us. It is one part of our Design in coming, to show we are a People in Covenant with God: And by taking and eating the Bread, and drinking the Wine, we testify that we are such, and we bind ourselves to continue so. In the Eastern Countries, Leagues and Covenants were ratified by Feasting together. And as they who did eat of the Sacrifices offered to Devils, had thereby *Fellowship with Devils*; And as the Jews, by eating a part of their Sacrifice to *Jehovah*, held Communion with God, and professed Subjection to him, as you read, *1 Cor. 10. 16, 17.* So by the Lord's Supper, we renew that Covenant with God, that we entered into by Baptism; *viz.* To take God the Father for our Creator, Preserver, Ruler, and

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and Sovereign, and to place our Happiness in his Love; And to take Jesus Christ for our only Saviour; through whom, we hope for all our Acceptance with God, and Ability to serve and glorifie him; And the Holy Ghost for our Sanctifier, to renew us after the Divine Image, and to be the Author of all Grace, and Comfort to our Souls; And to take the Holy Word of God, to be the Rule of our Faith and Life; and hereby renouncing the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, are engaged to follow Christ, and be faithful to him, as long as we live; in hopes of Eternal Life, which he has purchased, promised, and is gone to prepare.

IV. Another End in coming to this Table, is, to express our Thankfulness to God for giving his Son to die for us; and our thankful Admiration of the Love of Christ, in giving himself as our Ransom. Herein hath God commended his Love to us, that when we were Sinners, he sent his Son to die for us. And herein we express our Thankfulness to God, when we remember his Love this Way. We ought therefore, to excite and stir up holy Love and Thankfulness, when we come to this Table, as the proper Season of the most lively Exercise of these Graces. And there is that in View before us, that is proper to raise, and encrease the Flame. How great a part of our Work Holy Thankfulness is, may be gathered from

from the Name of the Institution, so often given it by the Christian Churches, *Εὐχαριστία*, an Action of Thanksgiving. We here solemnize the Remembrance of the greatest Blessing, that ever God bestowed on the World: And if we consider how Great, and Glorious, and Excellent a Gift that was, and how low the Condescension on God's part, and how high the Provocation, and Privilege, on Ours; And how wretched and unworthy Creatures we are, that are so favoured; And with what unspeakable Kindness and Affection, He did and suffered all for us, when he submitted to take the Form of a Servant, and die the Death of the Cross for our Redemption, &c. We shall easily perceive, that this must be one great End of our coming, *To express our unfeigned Thanks, and ascribe Blessing, and Glory, and Praise, to him that sits upon the Throne; and to the Lamb, who hath loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood.*

Let us hereupon Recollect with what ardent Desire, with what a zealous Love, with what Forwardness and Resolution, our Lord died for us. When he was entering upon his Passion, when he speaks of his own Crucifixion, says he, *I have a Baptism to be baptized with, and how am I strained till it be accomplished!* Luk. 12. 15. He longed to suffer and die for us. He seems to think the time long, ere he was Betrayed, ere he was Condemned, ere he was Scourged, and Mocked,

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Mocked, and Tortur'd; ere he was Crucified, and shed his Blood for us. And this he said at the beginning of that Supper, after which he Instituted this Sacrament. *With Desire have I desired this.* With the most earnest, ardent Desire, have I longed to eat this Passover with you, before I suffer, *Luk. 22. 15.*

Let us always make this one great End of our Coming, to express our Thankfulness for the Love of God, and his Dear Son to us; That we may praise the Lord for his Goodness; That our Souls, and all within us, may bless his Holy Name. Let us, to this purpose, assist our Meditations, by considering, from what a State of Sin and Misery we were redeemed; and to what a State of Blessedness, and Glory, we are advanced, by the Lord Jesus. Let us consider, what it cost the Redeemer to save us from Wrath to come, and to procure our Reconciliation to God, and Eternal Salvation. O come with Love and Thanksgiving to this Feast of Love! A Feast of Fat Things, full of Marrow, of Wine on the Lees, well refined; where he leads us into his Banqueting-House, and displays his Banner of Love before us. Our Souls therefore should magnify the Lord, and our Spirits rejoice in God our Saviour.

V. Another End of coming to this Table, is, to profess our Love to all the Saints, and  
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our Charity to all Mankind; and, in particular, our Forgiveness of those, who have injured us, and hearty Reconciliation to them.

We there profess our Love to all Good Men, as bearing the Image of God, as Lovers of God, and Beloved by him; As Members of Christ, and Part of his Family; As int'rested in the Fruits of his Death, and Heirs of the Heavenly Inheritance. And therefore *be kind to one another, tender-hearted, and forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you, Eph. 4. 32. Not rendering Evil for Evil, but overcoming Evil with Good.* And if a Brother trespass against us Seven times, that is, very often; yet if he repent, forgive him. Yea, if he do not, you must forgive him, so as not to retain any Malice or Rancour in your Hearts against him. You must be willing to be reconciled; you must endeavour it, and seek it. And if you are not in the Fault, but are the Person injured, you can the better seek for Reconciliation. You should endeavour this, before you come to the Lord's Table, according to our Saviour's Advice, *Matth. 5. 23. If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, or art about to do so, and rememb'rest thy Brother hath ought against thee; go thy way, first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then offer thy Gift.*

This Charity of forgiving Injuries, is an excellent Imitation of our Heavenly Father, who forgiveth us our Trespases; And it is a

Piece of Charity to thy Brother's Soul, and will be found very much to promote the Peace of thine own.

I cannot but take notice here, That many keep from the Lord's Table upon this Account, Because of the Animosities, and Quarrels, and Contentions, between Families and Persons; Whereas if Christians made Conscience of obeying this Order of Christ, they would soon find themselves obliged, to seek for Peace and Reconciliation; and rather than tarry from the Lord's Table, would make up all such Breaches, that they might come, to profess their Charity, and Forgiveness of Others, and receive the Seal of God's Forgiveness. But the many grievous Contentions among Christians, the sad Quarrels between Families, the Multitude of perplexing, uncharitable Law-suits, that make the Christian World Miserable, are very much owing to the neglect of this Instrument of Charity, or not understanding the Nature and End of it, or not coming often to it in a Due and a Serious manner. When I come to the Lord's Table, I must consider what God hath done for me, who have done so much worse against him, than any Man hath, or can do against me. I consider how many thousand Talents he hath forgiven me, through the Blood of Jesus; and shall I be unwilling to put up a Reproach, or Calumny, an Injury, or Wrong, an Act of Injustice, Unkindness, or Unfaithfulness, from

from my Fellow-Creature? Can it be so; especially, when I consider, that without this Forgiving of others, we cannot be forgiven our selves? To profess, and increase our Charity, should be remembred, as *Another End* of coming to this Supper; and therefore we must endeavour to purge out the old Leaven of Malice, and Revenge, beforehand.

There is another sort of *Charity* to be express'd, when we come to the Lord's Table, that is, Relieving the Poor, leaving somewhat to supply the Necessities of the Poor Members of Christ. And what more fit, more necessary Season, than when we have just remembred the Love of *Christ* to us; *who, when he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his Poverty might be made rich?* What fitter time, to feed, and refresh the Poor Members of Jesus, than when we our selves, have his Body and Blood given to feed us, and to nourish our Souls to Eternal Life?

VI. *Another End* is, to strengthen our weak Graces, to promote our Improvement and Growth in Grace, in Conformity to Christ our Great Example. To be sure, the Graces that are here to be exercised, may by that very means be improved; and our Faith, and Love, and Repentance, and Hope, and Charity, which have here such proper Employment, and Exercise, may thereby be

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increased. And by preceding Self-Examination, we may find out where we are weakest, and most defective, where we need most Assistance and Supply, and accordingly beg it, at the Table of the Lord. We should go to Christ, as the Fountain of all Grace, in whom all Fulness is lodged, and beg that he would not be a sealed Fountain to us, but vouchsafe what we need, out of his Treasure. And are any of us so fat, and flourishing in the Courts of the Lord, that we do not need this Nourishment from time to time? Are we grown up to the Stature of Angels, that we can live without Food? Doth our Faith never shake, our Hope stagger, Love to God decline, Holy Desires abate, &c? Would you not fain have Corruption more subdued, and Grace strength'ned? Would you not have your smoking Flax blown up into a Flame? Would you not get more above this World, and be more intirely conformed to the Spirit, and Life of Christ? Would you not live more in Communion with him, and Dependance on him? Is there no Increase of Spirituality, and Heavenly-mindedness yet needful? What! no further Strength, Progress, and Improvement in Grace to be desired? Tho' we may be cured of the deadly Wounds of Sin; yet we are not so thoroughly healed, but some Sores, (tho' not Mortal,) do yet remain; And how can we but long for a perfect Cure, while

while we are sanctified but in part? One End of Communicating, must be Growth and Progress in Holiness, by feeding on a Crucified Saviour, by more Acquaintance with him, by nearer Union to him, and more serious Consideration of his Dying Love, and of his Holy Life. The former may constrain, and engage us to imitate the latter. And here we must remember, that larger Communications of the Spirit of Grace, may be expected in this Ordinance, than ordinarily at other times. The Holy Ghost was poured out in an eminent manner on the Primitive Christians, who were more serious and constant in their Attendance on this Ordinance, than we are in the later Ages of Christianity. By feeding in a due manner at this Table, you may hope to grow in Grace. These Provisions of our Father's House are designed for it, that we may not look meagre and ill-favoured, by the abounding of ill Humours, such as Pride and Worldliness, Uncharitableness and Impatience, and the like. These Corruptions will be purged, these Lusts will die, by Influence from the Cross of Christ, in a due Attendance upon this Ordinance; And the contrary Graces be increased, enliven'd, and acted: Our good Purposes will be confirmed, our Souls more rooted, and established against Wavering; and more fortified against Temptation, by renewing our Covenant with

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God, after the Violation of it in some particular Instances. The Assistances of the Holy Spirit in order to it, are here communicated more abundantly, to every thirsty Soul : Of his Fullness we may all receive, according to our Capacities and Wants. One Reason why our Lord continued the Use of Bread and Wine, in this Institution, instead of the Passover, might be to signify that Variety and Abundance of Grace, that he gives us in a due partaking of this Ordinance : For Bread and Wine are the most Principal and Substantial sorts of our Nourishment : One to strengthen Man's heart, and the other to make it glad. And the designation of them to this use, may import the plentiful Assistance of the Spirit, given to the Followers of Christ ; Not only so much as is necessary for their Support, but such a Portion of the Spirit, as is productive of Cheerfulness and Pleasure. The Bread is eaten, and Wine drunk, to promote our Growth, as well as to maintain our Life. This was verif'd in the Primitive Christians, whose Charity, and Zeal were active, their Love to Christ vigorous, their Courage and Constancy unshaken : And we may reasonably think it was much owing, to their frequent and serious Attendance upon this Sacrament.

And the Experience of Christians in every Age will confirm it : That hereby our Minds are more fixed on Heavenly Things, and our Hearts more set against Sin : We have a bet-  
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ter Sense of the Love of Christ, and a more lively Hope of his Mercy. Our Charity to others is increased, and we are better able to bear, and to forgive Injuries. We never see the Evil of Sin, so much as in this Ordinance; and the View of a Crucify'd Saviour opens the Springs of Godly Sorrow and Repentance for it. If that, or any other Grace, be Weak, we may here receive Strength; and go away with Increase, by Exercise. A real Christian not only maintains that Spiritual Strength that he has, but here he receives more than he had before. It is of use to prevent the Decay of our Spiritual Strength, and to renew and recover it, after any Decay. By thus waiting upon God, we find the fulfilling of his Word, *Psal. 84. 7. They shall go from strength to strength, each of them appearing before God in Sion.*

And one means of its promoting our Spiritual Growth, is, by helping our Recovery from Backslidings, when we have fallen into Sin through Temptation, contrary to our Solemn Engagements and Promises, at the Lord's Table. We are then to Consider, that though such a Case be sad, it is not desperate: There is Forgiveness with God for the Penitent, that will cease to do Evil, and reform as well as be Sorry. The Blood of Jesus cleanses from all Sin. If therefore we have fallen into Sin, and been overcome by Temptation, after we had renewed our

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Vows at the Lord's Table, of Fidelity to Christ, What must we do? We must heartily repent, we must humble and abase ourselves before God, particularly confess and aggravate our Sins, pray more earnestly for God's Grace, be sensible of our Weakness, and depend upon his Strength, watch more carefully against Temptation for the future, and beg the Sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus, and apply it. And then, upon renewed Repentance, and Faith, we may come to the Lord's Table. For we must not decline the Remedy, because we are loth to promise that, which we fear we shall not perform. Your promise to a Physician to take more care of your Health hereafter, doth not imply that you shall never be sick again, or that he will never help you if you are; But it implies, you will not wilfully bring Diseases upon your selves, but use all due Means to preserve your Health for time to come.

VII. In order to this, another End we should have in our coming to the Lord's Table, is, to be progressive in the Mortification of Sin, to increase our Hatred of it, and strengthen our Resolutions against it. Never does Sin look so ugly, abominable, and hateful, as when we consider it in view of the *Cross of Christ*; Especially Pride, Covetousness, Vain-glory, Love of the World, Envy, Uncharitableness. As long as we bear  
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about us a Body of Sin and Death, As long as In-dwelling Sin remains, As long as Corruption is not quite destroyed, As long as evil Inclinations are not quite cured, As long as the Root of Bitterness is not quite withered, we shall need this. And therefore as we should consider before hand what Grace needs Strength; so before we come, we should examine our selves, what Lust and Corruption in particular to pray against, to confess, to bewail, to repent of, to resolve against, and to beg Supplies of the Spirit to mortifie. And whoever considers the State of his own Soul, and is tolerably acquainted with himself, will find, that a Watch, or a Clock, doth not more need to be wound up, and set right at certain Seasons, than we do to review our selves, our State and Frame, and renew our Engagements against Sin, and get fresh Sprinkling of the Blood of Christ for Pardon; and new Supplies of his Holy Spirit, to heal the Disorders of our Spirits, and recover us from our Backslidings, and carry on our Victory over Sin and the Devil. And by Faith in Prayer, we may look up to our Great Advocate, and plead his Cross, his Death, his Merit, his Purchase, to send down the Holy Spirit, and soften a hard Heart, and cure an Earthly, unbelieving Heart, and subdue such, or such a powerful Corruption, &c.

VIII. Another End in our coming to the Lord's Table, is, to obtain Clearer Evidence of our Interest in the special Love of God, and greater Consolation and Joy by the Proof of our Adoption, and Covenant-Relation. We come to obtain the Seal, and Earnest, and Witness of the Spirit of Christ with our Spirit, that we are his. 'Tis here especially, that Pardon, and Eternal Life, are Sealed and Assured to us. Every individual Communicant, that takes and eats that Bread, and drinks of that Cup, If he be what he professes to be, may apply it to himself, when a Minister of Christ, in his Name, and by his Authority, says, *Take, eat this Bread in remembrance of Christ's dying for thee*; Take and eat, Take and drink, Take it as from Christ; Take it, with a sealed Pardon of all thy Sins; With a sealed Covenant, comprehending all the Promises of the Gospel, and all the Purchase of the Blood of Jesus, if you consent with your Hearts, and yield your selves to be the Lord's. The great Question that troubles a doubting Christian, is this, Are my Sins pardon'd, and my Transgressions blotted out? God has instituted this Sacrament to resolve this to the weak in Faith: *Behold the Sign, and the Seal.* If Remission of Sins be an Article of the Covenant, of the promised Benefits of it, the Seal must reach to them: And all that come Penitently and Believ-

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ingly, have here a sealed Pardon for Sins past. Because we are jealous and suspicious to believe, that such Wretches as we should be forgiven, God has granted us this abundant Assurance, He has received us to his own Table. He gives us, under the Symbols of the Bread and Wine, the Body and Blood of his Son, that died for our Sins, as a sure Pledge of his Favour in the Forgiveness of them.

And is not this the way to Assurance and Comfort? Can there be any Institution more proper to give us Peace, more likely to fill us with Joy? We can hardly suppose in a numerous Assembly of devout and serious Communicants, but here and there are many instances of such a Joy. Many there be, who adore and praise, admire and extol the Free Grace of God, and whose Hearts are ready to speak such Language as this.

Lord! What a Priviledge is this! That such an unworthy Sinner, such a vile Creature, such a Worm, such a Wretch as I am, should be called to eat of the Childrens Bread! Lord, Who am I, that I should be so favoured of the King of Glory, who had resisted thy Grace for many Years, and lived in Rebellion against thee, have disobey'd thy Call, and slighted thy Love; who have carried it so frowardly and faultily, slothfully and untowardly, since I gave up my Name to be thine! That I should have so many  
Sins

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Sins forgiven, such Spots cleansed, such Backslidings healed, such forfeited, surprising Mercies bestowed! If there be no Heart or Tongue in all the World to speak the praise of Free Grace, I must avow it, profess and own it, That he loved me *freely*, and received me *graciously*, and forgave me sooner than I could forgive my self. Blessed be God, that I may avouch thee for the Lord my God. I do it gladly and joyfully, with an Heart fuller of Love, and Joy, and Praise, than any words can reach. O my God and Saviour, Redeemer and Sanctifier, What hast thou done for my Soul! O matchless Grace! O incomparable Love! O amazing Condescension! I was ignorant of thee, and at enmity against thee, and might have been left to perish, but thou hast rescu'd me from the Pit of Destruction; Thou hast opened mine Eyes, and conquer'd mine Heart, and called me by thy Grace to the Blessed Hope of the Gospel. Thou didst mercifully soften my hard Heart, and make me willing in the day of thy Power, and drew me by the Cords of Love. Thou didst chuse me out of this lost World, Sanctifie me for thy self, turn my Heart from Sin, pluck me out of the Snare of the Devil, adopt me into thy Family, display the Riches of thy Grace, and Seal thy Love, and entertain me at thy Table with the Comforts of thy Spirit, and shed abroad thy Love in my heart;

heart; and so let me know that God's Thoughts are not as ours, nor his Ways as ours, but as high as the Heavens are above the Earth, so are his Thoughts and Ways above ours.

IX. I might add another End, To get Ability and Strength to resist such and such Temptations, as we are burdened with, and sometimes overcome by, and find it difficult to withstand. God has promised, as the God of Peace, to tread down Satan under your feet, *Rom. 16. 20.* Yet for many Years you have, Some of you, been struggling against such and such Temptations; but neglect to come to the Lord's Table, to plead That, and other Promises there, As, That he will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able, &c.

X. Under the pressure of Afflictions, under Disappointments in the World, under Bodily Weakness and Distempers; Under Poverty and Disgrace, Unfaithfulness of Friends, Malice of Enemies, and Death of Relations, &c. Whatever your Burden be, come to the Lord's Table with this End, to cast your Burden on the Lord, to spread your Case before him, and to beg a Supply of all your Wants, and Support under all your Tryals, and gracious Improvement by them; and such a sanctify'd Deliverance, as shall manifest that all things are working together for good. For such Ends as these

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134 *Of the Ends we should Propose,*  
we should come to the Table of the Lord.

*Use 1.* How dreadful is it, that so many come to the Lord's Table, Ignorant of the true End they ought to have in coming. I confess there are some Young People, ripe in Knowledge; but many, both Young and Old, extremely Ignorant of the Nature, Ends, and Uses of the Lord's Supper. And it can hardly be imagined by any, except Ministers, who have Experience of it, what strange Answers they will give to very plain Questions, even about the Principles of the Doctrines of Christ; and especially about the Sacraments, and the Covenant of Grace. Who is in fault? You will say, Ministers in part, for want of Catechising in publick, as well as People for want of reading and learning their Catechism. But if Ministers should be never so careful, and constant in publick Catechising, except, (first,) Parents, and Masters of Families, will do their part in their several Houses, it will signifie little. Secondly, except particular Persons, whether Elder or Younger, will be at some Pains to attain to the Knowledge of Christian Religion, as they will be, and are, about any other thing, that they profess to have a value for. And therefore such as desire to come to the Lord's Table, will do well to read several Books, that may inform them concerning the Nature of the Ordinance, and discourse with such of their Friends as  
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can instruct them about it. And it may be some help, to be Spectators of the Administration, though they be not as yet actual Communicants. 'Tis principally for these, that such a Liberty is admitted in any of our Congregations; for Such, I say, as desire and intend to prepare themselves to come to the Lord's Table; and not for Others in common, who have no such Thought or Design.

2. How sad is it, for any to come without such Ends as these! Especially if it be only to appear Good, and to be thought better than we are; or if there be some secular, carnal End in View. To receive upon such base, mean, or ill Principles, must needs be highly provoking. No wonder therefore, if many come for the worse, and not for the better, when their Ends are not right. God will be sanctified in all those that draw nigh him; But he cannot be so, by those who come for a wrong End. No, he is dishonoured, and the Ordinance profan'd, and it may be expected, that he will some way testify his severe Displeasure: For they are guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ, they eat and drink Judgment to themselves. They hazard Sickness, Calamity, Personal and Family Afflictions. It may be, Death of Relations; It may be, their own Death, by displeasing God in Communicating without right Ends. For this Cause many are Sick,  
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and weak; and some fallen asleep, and are cut off by Death. Nay, it looks as if this may be the Case of such, as may be good Men as to their State, and shall not be condemned with the wicked World; but are thus severely judged by the Lord here, for want of Examining themselves, and coming in a right manner, which can never be without right Ends in coming.

3. Let me beg you therefore to look back, You that have been often at the Lord's Table; What have *your Ends* been? Can you say they have been such, as I have now mentioned?

4. If such should be *our Ends* in coming to that Ordinance, and such Ends may be attained and reach'd; How are they wanting to themselves, who live in the Neglect of it, or make very little of that, which is a proper Means to such excellent and valuable Ends!

5 Let us then resolve, and endeavour to come to this Feast, with such Desires and Ends as have been named: Upon such Principles, from such Motives, with such Views and Designs. And let us seriously examine our selves as to *our Ends* in desiring to come. Let me briefly recollect the Sum of them. To profess our Relation to Christ as his Disciples, and our Communion with our  
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Fellow-Christians. To yield Obedience to the Authority of our Lord, who commands us to remember his Love and Death this way. To renew our Covenant with God in Christ, by feasting on this Sacrifice. To express our Thankfulness to God for giving his Son, and to our Lord Jesus, for giving himself to die for us. To profess our Love to all the Saints, and our Charity to all Mankind, and our Forgiveness in particular, to those who have wronged and injured us. To strengthen weak Grace, and promote our Sanctification and Improvement in Holiness. To get more Victory over Sin, and to be Progressive in subduing of Corruption. To obtain clearer Evidence and Assurance of our Interest in the special Favour, and Covenant-Love of God. That we may live a Life of Joy, and have the Witness of the Spirit. To be better enabled to resist, and overcome particular Temptations to Sin, which it may be with great difficulty we have long struggled against. And, Lastly, to bring our Wills to submit to the Divine Will, to bear the Burdens and Afflictions of Humane Life, and reap the Benefit and Advantage of all our Tryals; 'Tis here, at this Table of the Lord, we may obtain Grace and Strength to be so. With such Ends and Designs, let us all endeavour to come, and God will Accept us in the Son of his Love; and our Coming together shall be for the better, and not for the worse.



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## The Cross of Christ a Christians Glory.

GAL. VI. 14.

*God forbid that I should Glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**I**T was foretold, that the Humiliation and Sufferings of the *Messiah*, should be a Stone of Stumbling, and a Rock of Offence. That *Christ Crucify'd* should be for the Fall, as well as the Rising of many. That almost every body should be offended at his Cross: That it should be a Scandal to the *Jews*, and reckon'd Foolishness by the *Gentiles*: And yet this is less strange, than that our Lord's own Disciples, who liv'd in his Family, and for a good while convers'd with Him; who had seen His Works, and heard His Divine Discourses; That They should be so offended, when he speaks of going to *Jerusalem* to Suffer, XVI. *Matth.* 21. For upon such a Discourse S. Peter said, *Be it far from thee, O Lord;*

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*this*

*this shall not be.* (To which our Lord reply'd) *Get thee behind me Satan,* &c. And 'twas owing to these Prejudices, that They forsook Him at His Death, as out of all Hope; And that They were so hardly persuaded to believe His Resurrection; till after the Descent of the Spirit at *Pentecost*: Whereby Their Minds were enlightened, to understand the Truth of the Ancient Prophecies concerning him, and so were brought to Glory in His Cross, and Rejoice in it. But when the Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit began to cease in the Christian Church, the Prejudices against the Cross of Christ began to revive. Insomuch that we read in Ecclesiastick History, that some of the Ancient Christians were so loath to acknowledge His cruel Death, that they turn'd the whole History into Fable: And would not own *the Reality of his Sufferings*: Saying, that he only appear'd, and seem'd to Suffer, but did not really feel any pain. And the *Mahumetans* to this Day, have that foolish Opinion concerning Christ, that he escap'd and did not, suffer the Death of the Cross; because they knew not how to reconcile it with his Glory, that He should be Crucify'd. They were asham'd to own themselves to be Disciples of such a Master. Whereas a Christian who is rightly instructed in the Knowledge of Christ's Cross, is so far from being asham'd of the Crucifixion of his Saviour, that 'tis the Matter of his Joy and Glory, and nothing more so. *God forbid* (says the Apostle) *that I should Glory, save in the Cross of Christ.* God

God forbid, that I should glory in any thing else. *It must not be, that I should: Or let it not be. I ought not to glory in any thing else.* And, further; Not to glory in this, would be most Abominable, a thing to be abhorr'd. Such an Expression is never used, but in reference to something very Wicked, or very Pernicious. As *Rom. III. 5. Is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance? God forbid! Shall we sin that Grace may abound? God forbid! Rom. VI. 15. Is the Law Sin? God forbid! Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid! Rom. VII. 1.*

God forbid that I should Glory, save in the Cross of Christ, that is, let who will be offended and stumbl'd at the Sufferings, Humiliation, and Death of Jesus Christ, I rejoyce in it, and boast of it, living and dying, I trust to it. Let who will be asham'd to acknowledge themselves the Disciples, and followers of such a Master (who dy'd upon a Cross, and was ignominiously hang'd upon a Gibbet, and put to Death as a Criminal, between two Malefactors) *I can glory in my Relation to Him,* and comparatively with that; in nothing else. God forbid I should glory in any thing beside, He rejects with extream Indignation, any other thing, as the Matter of his Glory, and the Cause of His Happiness.

There's a *Threesfold Gradation* in this Expression, which is very significant.

First, That he was so far from being scandaliz'd at the Cross of Christ, as a Matter of Shame, that he owns it, and glories in it.

Secondly, That He knows of nothing in all the World, so fit to be glory'd in as this.

Thirdly, That it is so necessary to have this Persuasion, concerning the Cross of Christ, so necessary to entertain this good Opinion of it, that we ought to detest and abhor the contrary Opinion and Practice; *God forbid, that I should glory, &c.*

These shall be the Three Heads of my Discourse,

First, That the *Cross of Christ*, is the Matter of a *Christians Glory*.

Secondly, That there is nothing else, *in Comparison with it*, to be gloried in.

Thirdly, That not to glory in this; Or to prefer any thing else, is *Wicked and Detestable*. Which will make way for a serious Application, by inferences of Truth, and Duty.

First, That the *Cross of Christ*, is the Matter of a *Christians Glory*, and Rejoycing. And here I must consider,

First, What we are to understand by the *Cross of Christ*. Secondly,

Secondly, What, by Glorifying in it.

Thirdly, Prove that it is a fit Matter of a Christians Glory.

First, As to the *Cross of Christ*, We are not to limit it to the Tree, to which he was nailed. The Gibbet, to which he was fast'ned. The Wood on which he hung and suffer'd We are assur'd that he did die that sort of Death, the Death of the *Cross*: But the Spirit of God hath taken no Care to satisfy our Curiosity about that Instrument: And learned Men don't agree about the Shape and Figure of it. The *Romanists* make a great stir about the Wood of *Christ's Cross*, and have many pieces of it, preserved as Relicks, which are devoutly worshipped. The *Cross of Christ*, They tell ye, was buried for Three hundred Years under ground, and found by *Helena* the Mother of *Constantine*. And to discover that this was the true *Cross*, Miracles were wrought by it, and not by the other two *Crosses* of the Malefactors, who suffered at the same time. But I leave these Stories to such as will believe 'em.

By the *Cross of Christ*, I mean his Passion, and Suffering on the *Cross*, His Death and *Crucifixion*. I take in all the Pain, and Shame, and Curse of that Death, considering at the same time, the Dignity of the Person who suffer'd that Death; The necessary Antece-

dents of it, in His Incarnation, &c. and the excellent Consequents and Fruits of it, for our Advantage: The glorious Design and End of it: The gracious Covenant that was confirm'd by it, &c.

And then the Doctrine of *the Cross*, will appear no Matter of our Shame, but Glory. As the great Object of our Faith, the Basis of our Hope, and the Spring of our Consolation.

It is not unusual in Scripture for the Suffering, or Punishment to be express'd by the Instrument of it. As what *shall separate us from the Love of God? Shall Famine or Sword?* Rom. VIII. 35. That is Death by Famine, or inflicted by the Sword. So *the Cross of Christ* here, that is, *His Death on the Cross*. So the Apostle speaks of *Onesimus*, to *Philemon*. *He was not ashamed of my Bonds*. That is, of the Reproach of my Imprisonment. He was not ashamed to own me, though I were a Prisoner.

II. As to the Expression of *Glorying in the Cross of Christ*. The same Word is used sometimes for Rejoicing, *Rom. V. 2. Rejoicing in the Hope of the Glory of God*. Sometimes for Boasting, *Rom. II. 17. Behold thou art called a Jew, and restest in the Law, making thy Boast of God*. And it often signifies something yet more, (*viz.*) *Exultation, Triumph*, a preceding Satisfaction in some great Privilege, and Blessing obtained, or Benefit enjoy'd. As when the Apostle expresses his

Triumph,



Triumph, *Rom. VIII. 31.* *What shall we say to these things? If God be for us who can be against us?* So that to glory in the *Cross of Christ*, must imply our open acknowledgment of a Crucify'd Saviour. An open Profession, to believe in Him, as dying for our Sins, and suffering Divine Justice, by the Sacrifice of Himself, as saving us by His Death; and sanctifying us by His Blood. It implies that we own our Baptism, being baptized into His Death. That we look for Life and Salvation by His being Crucify'd for us; And are so far from being stumbl'd at the Method of God's Grace, in bringing about our Salvation this way: That we are fully persuaded of the Wisdom and Righteousness of God herein glorify'd, and accordingly desire to be more and more enlighten'd in the Knowledge of Christ Jesus, and Him Crucify'd. Determining with the Apostle to know Nothing in Comparison of this, *1 Cor. II. 2.*

And indeed this Doctrine of the *Cross*, or of *Christ Crucify'd*, is the greatest thing we are to Study. 'Tis to this, that the Rites and Ceremonies of the Law refer. This the Prophecies and Promises of the *Old Testament* do all Center in. This the two great Ordinances, and Institutions of the *New Testament* do exhibit, and commemorate. We are baptized into the Death of Christ, by the one Sacrament, and we show forth the Lord's Death by the other, and thereby have Communion with Him. All the Verrue of the Baptismal

Water comes from the *Cross of Christ*. And in the other Ordinance, we feast upon his Sacrifice. The Bread we there eat, is the Communion of His broken Body on the *Cross*. And the Cup we there drink, represents His Blood shed for the Remission of Sins. And well may we therefore Rejoyce and Glory in the *Cross of Christ*, which I come in the next place to prove, *viz.*

Thirdly, That this is a fit Matter of a *Christians Glory*. And here are three sorts of Persons especially concern'd:

First, *The Jews*, who were scandaliz'd at the Ignominy of the *Cross*. And *the Gentiles* who reckon'd it Foolishness to expect Life and Salvation that way. And then *Professing Christians*, who generally despise this *Cross of Christ*, or don't glory in it as they should.

First, As to *the Jews*. The mean Appearance of our Saviour, especially His Suffering and Death did mightily stumble the generality of the People, being misled by the Notion they had of the Temporal Dominion and Kingdom of the *Messiah*; for in that low and earthly Sense they understood those Scriptures, that speak of His Glory, and to this Day They are hardned in their Unbelief by reason of that prejudice. 'Tis certain, that in our Saviour's Time, They pleas'd themselves with the Hope of Temporal Salvation by the *Messiah*. But They mis-  
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took His Character. They look'd for a fighting Prince that should overcome the *Romans*, and make all the World subject to their Nation, imagining their *Messiah* should have the Pomp and Magnificence of an earthly Monarch. They did not dream of a Saviour who should Suffer and Die. If He would come down from the *Cross*, They might Believe in Him; but they could not imagine the promised *Messiah* should be brought so low, as to die on a *Cross*: The Disappointment of their Expectation in this particular, enrag'd them against our Lord Jesus Christ. He appear'd to them as a Root out of dry ground, without Form or Comeliness; and therefore all His Discourses, and all His Miracles could not persuade them to receive Him as the *Messiah*; but they resolv'd to destroy Him for pretending to it. If He would not be their Prince and Captain in their own Sense, He shall be their Martyr!

But how unreasonably did they object against a Suffering, Dying *Messiah*, when there are so many Types and Prophecies to that purpose in the *Old Testament*: And why should it be thought strange, that the Glory and Grandeur of His Spiritual Kingdom, over the Souls of Men should be set forth in such a lofty manner, by Terms of Temporal Dominion and Greatness? But there they stopt; and understood not the Heavenly, Spiritual Sense and Meaning of it.

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They consider'd not that his Dominion and Empire was to be over the Souls of Men; And his Throne to be in Heaven. That He was to sit down at the Right Hand of God, and his Kingdom not to be of this World. The great Victories He should obtain over the World and Satan were to be, by the Power of his Doctrine, by the Efficacy of his Spirit, by the Merit of his Death, by the Patience of his Followers, &c. This they might have learnt from the Scriptures of the *Old Testament*, for the Veil on the Face of *Moses*, was not so dark, The Cloud that cover'd the Mystery of Christ's Spiritual Kingdom, was not so thick, but they might have seen through it, had there not been another Veil upon their Hearts. Do not the Prophets very frequently promise, and represent *the Messiah*, as preaching the Gospel to the Poor, Restoring Sight to the Blind, and setting those at Liberty, who were under the Bondage of Sin and Satan? We meet with Expressions that plainly prefigur'd a State of Humiliation and Suffering. And would it not have been unworthy the great Design of the Son of God, to come into the World only to avenge the *Fems* of their Enemies, to fill the World with Blood and Slaughter, only to raise that People above all others on the Earth, and to have ruin'd and destroy'd all other Nations of the World.

Had they not plain Types and Figures of a Suffering, *Dying Messiah*? They can't deny but *Isaac* was an eminent Type of the *Messiah*; and

and bare the Wood on which he was to Suffer, as a Sacrifice, by God's Command and his Fathers Intention: And this was the Custom of such as suffer'd on the Cross, to carry the Wood; and some think it was very near the place, where our Lord afterward suffer'd; and when the Knife was at his Throat, you know he was Redeem'd by the Substitution of a Ram, to intimate that the offering of the Promised Saviour, was as yet suspended, and Beasts for a time accepted, as a Pledge of that Expiation, he should one Day make.

Moreover, as to *the Paschal Lamb*, not a bone of him was to be broken, to intimate that the *True Paschal Lamb*, who should take away the Sin of the World, was to suffer that Death to which breaking of Bones did belong, (*viz.*) *Crucifixion*; But God, for the fulfilling of the Scriptures, prevented that particular, as to Christ, *and not a Bone of him was broken*, as was usual. Besides the Prophecy of *Zachary*----- *Looking on Him, whom they pierced*, compared with that of the *Psalmist*, *They pierced my Hands and my Feet*.

Besides the Many Types, There are express Prophecies, That *the Messiah shall be cut off*, Dan. IX. 26. Where the Prophet dates his Account of Time, not from his Birth, but from his Death. And in *Isai. LVIII.* there are so many express Passages concerning the Sufferings, Humiliation, and Death of the *Messiah*, that the *Jews* have no way to evade the force of those Scriptures, but by a Tale  
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of Two *Messiahs* that should appear in the World, the one to be Afflicted and Kill'd, and the other to Triumph and Reign. Nor can any of the Enemies of the *Cross of Christ* among the *Gentiles*, evade the Proof from that Chapter, but by supposing that Chapter to have been written, after the Crucifixion of Christ. But as to the *Fews* themselves, they all Witness the contrary: The *Fews* therefore were inexcusable in being offended at the *Cross of Christ*.

Secondly, As to the Gentile World: *Christ Crucify'd is foolishness to them*; and yet the Sufferings and Death of the *Messiah* are unreasonably urg'd by them, as a prejudice against his Saving Power and Design. For how often do they reckon it the Portion of the Best and Greatest Persons, that have ever been in the World, to Suffer and be Afflicted? How usual is it for them to Glory in the extraordinary Death of some of their Worthies, *Socrates, Regulus, Anaxarchus, &c.* As Examples of greater Vertue than ordinary. And what Encomiums do they make on those that lost their Lives by Tyrants, and dy'd for their Country. But those that know any thing of the Pagan Worship, must needs be convinc'd that the Heathens had little Reason to be asham'd of the *Cross of Christ*, who had so much Reason to be asham'd of the Follies, Dotages, and Impurities of their own Religion. Their Idolatrous Worship was made up  
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of such a bundle of Fooleries, mixt with so many Impious and Impure Rites, that they can't be mention'd without Abhorrence. For they could not be like the God's they worshipped, without being Incestuous, Adulterers, Drunkards, and most Profligate Villains; for such they acknowledge their very Gods to have been, whom they worshipped: And yet these are the People, that count the *Cross of Christ* Foolishness.

Thirdly, As to us *Christians*, who have the Badge of Christ's Disciples by Baptism; Let us consider his Cross, as the Matter of our Glory, and what abundant Reason we have to rejoyce and glory in the *Cross of Christ*, and in nothing else: To which End consider it;

I. As it was appointed and order'd by God the Father, as the great Means to accomplish his Glory, in the Salvation of Sinners. For, however he was slain by wicked Hands, he was yet delivered to Death by God's determinate Counsel. *It pleased the Father to Bruise him.* It was God's Appointment that made the Cross of Christ meritorious for us, his Sufferings and Death having this Design, to bring about the Glory of God in the Redemption and Recovery of lost Sinners. On which Account, when he was in the sorest Agony, and his Soul troubled, tho' he prays to be delivered from that Hour, he doth not insist on it, in Consideration

deration that his Sufferings were to be the Means of God's Glory; *For this End came I unto this Hour, Father, glorifie thy self,* John XII. 28.

Now the Glory of God, or the Glorifying of his Name, consists in the Discovery and Manifestation of the Divine Perfections. God's Glory, is the Lustre, the Radiancy of the Divine Perfections; 'Tis the Beauty, The Loveliness, of what is designed and done by God, agreeable to the Infinite Excellencies of his Being and Nature. This is *his Glory*, which is observable, and ought to be taken notice of, by Intelligent Creatures, capable of it, that so he may be actually Glorified. But whether it be observed, and taken notice of, or no, there is a perfect Restitude and Beauty in all that he doth, as conformable to his own Infinite Perfections. This is his End, as the first supreme Being, and in this he takes Complacency. Now the Death and Sufferings of Christ, and particularly his being Crucified, did thus Glorify God; *that is*, He herein did Act suitably to Himself, becoming the Excellencies of the Divine Nature. *It became him, of whom are all things, and to whom are all things, that the Captain of our Salvation, should be perfected by Sufferings.* There is a Lustre on the Perfections of God, that issues from this.

II. It is the matter of our Glory, if we consider *the Person suffering this Death.* And here we



we may take notice, both of the Dignity of the Person, and of his Willingness to suffer: Consider that he was the Eternal Son of God, the Brightness of his Fathers Glory; who is far above Angels, Principalities and Powers; The Great *Emanuel*, who was in the form of God, and counted it no robbery to be equal with him; He that filleth and Cloatheth all Creatures, and is the Fountain or Living Waters; 'Twas, He, who hung naked upon a Tree, and cry'd out, *I thirst*. The Eternal Wisdom of the Father was treated like a Fool, scorned, reproached, derided and mocked; 'Twas the Beloved Son of God, who complain'd of his being forsaken of him: Besides the Dignity of his Person, let us consider his Readiness, and Willingness to suffer and die for us: His Eternal Readiness for this Work is described, *Prov. VIII. 31*. Rejoicing from Eternity in the habitable Parts of the Earth, considering what Work he was to do for the Children of Men. We may likewise run over in our Thoughts the Greatness and Extremity of his Sufferings, as to his Body and Soul. As to the former, they were exceedingly height'ned by the Tenderness and Delicacy of his Constitution; his Body being immediately framed by the Holy Spirit in the Virgins Womb. None of the *Martyrs*, therefore, could be so sensible of their Sufferings, as he must be of his. Besides, his Sense of the Evil of Sin, and his particular Knowledge of all our Sins, and the Aggravations

tions of them; and their Contrareity to God; and his perfect Love to God, joined with the clear sense of his Displeasure against Sin, must needs make his Sufferings Extraordinary, beyond that of the Martyrs. Had there been only the Common Apprehension of Pain, our Lord, who was perfectly Innocent in his own Person, Sanctified by the Spirit, Supported by the Deity, and assured of Success, would not have stagger'd, and groan'd, and been sorrowful unto Death, sweating Drops of Blood in the Garden, and crying out on the Cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* But he was to answer for our Sins: He beheld the Indignation of God Flaming against Sin; The Father, as Sovereign of the VWorld, not sparing his own Son, who undertook to make Expiation and Atonement. No wonder that He was amazed, and terrified, even to an Agony, so as to utter such Expressions in the Garden, and on the Cross. And so extraordinary was this, that at the same time the whole VWorld was troubled too, The Heavens mourned, the Sun was darkned, The Eye of the VWorld was covered with Sackcloth, when the Sun of Righteousness was thus eclipsed; which being at Passover-Time, always at Full Moon, must needs be miraculous. The Earth trembled, the Rocks rent, the Graves opened, the Veil of the Temple was rent from top to bottom.

But

But because it is *the Cross of Christ*, that is particularly mentioned, let us consider that He humbled himself to *the Death of the Cross*, which was,

I. A most painful and violent Death: wherein the Hands and Feet, the most nervous, and most sensible Parts, were nailed and pierced, after they were extended and rack'd. Besides, it was a languishing Death, of some Hours space: It was to die by slow degrees, and in great Torment; the weight of the Body lifted up from the Earth, hanging upon his pierced Hands. And this was *after* his Agony and Bloody Sweat in the Garden. It was *after* his being Whipt and Scourged, whereby He was so weakned, that he could not bear his own Cross. His Death therefore was more painful, than that of Those, who were Crucified with him. He complains his Strength was dryed up like a Pot-sheard, and they might teil all his Bones. But much more terrible was the Suffering of his Soul, when he bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree; when he made his Soul an offering for Sin, and bore the stroke of that Justice that we deserved.

He had a particular Knowledge of all the Sins committed in the World, past, present, and to come, which was so much the greater, Trouble, by how much the more he prized the Honour of God, and lov'd him. No wonder

if none of the Martyrs complain'd as he did, because none of them felt what he did: His Suffering and Sorrows made his Heart Melt like Wax, Burnt up his Bones like an Hearth, and made his Tongue cleave to the Roof of his Mouth. Many of the Martyrs had Courage and Joy of Soul, under the most Exquisite Torments their Enemies could inflict, by all their Engines of Cruelty, and Artificial Instruments of painful Dying: But our Blessed Saviour felt more than they. The Sorrows of his Soul were more than all his other Sufferings. His Heart had sharper Nails to Pierce it, than his Hands and Feet. His Soul was more Crucified than his Body. He endur'd the Pains of the Second Death, for substance, so far as was consistent with the Perfection of his Nature. Tho' the Personal Union was not dissolved, the sense and effects of the Divine Love and Favour were for a time withheld, which he Complains of on the Cross. 'Tis true the Worm of Conscience did not touch him. That is an effect of Personal Guilt, (with which he could not be tainted,) not of Imputed Sin, when he undertook to answer for Sinners, and make Atonement. And his Temporary Sufferings were equivalent to Eternal, from the Dignity of his Person. His Suffering for a time was of more Weight and Value, than the Eternal Sufferings of Sinners, or of all Creatures. We must not say, He was seiz'd with the Despair and Horrors of

of the Damned, for his Father was ever well pleased with him, and never more than *when he Humbled himself, and became obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross*; And this our Lord knew, for he assur'd the Thief that confessed him, *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* But God retir'd from him for a while, and as it were hid his Face from him, and left him to tread the Wine-press of God's Wrath alone: the Wrath of God, not against his Son, but against the Sins of men, he was to make Atonement for; which he now sustain'd like a Victim, and bore in his Body on the Cross. Otherwise, why could not He, who might have commanded Legions of Angels to rescue his Body, have commanded more than a Common Strength, and Assistance to rescue his Soul too. But he was willing to drink the very Dregs of the bitter Cup for our sakes. He was wounded for our Transgressions, bruised for our Iniquities. He bore our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows, and was made a Curse for us, a Propitiation for our Sins.

II. Consider *the Shame and Ignominy of the Cross.* Crucified without the Walls of the City, and *Barabbas* a Murderer, a Thief, prefer'd before him, and released. And the Crucified were stript naked, for the greater Disgrace. And he suffer'd in company with the Vilest Malefactors, between two Thieves; and was first scourged, after the manner of Slaves, with a reproachful Taunt at

every blow. And they put on him a Scarlet Robe in derision, a Crown of Thorns on his Head, and a Reed in his Hand for a Scepter, crying, *Hail King of the Jews*. For the greater shame of such as were Crucified, the Cause of their Punishment was Written over them in Capital Letters, that it might appear just and equitable; And this Inscription was set over him, *This is Jesus the King of the Jews*; and that in three Languages, that it might be taken notice of by all. And then they derided and reproached him, If he were indeed a King, and the Son of God, that he should come down from the Cross, and they would believe him. Now tho' nothing be more contrary to *Glory*, than *Shame*; yet in his *Shame* we *Glory*, we do not lament and bewail it; no, we celebrate the Triumph and *Glory* of our Lord's Ignominious Passion: We adore the Majesty of his Abasement. All the contumelious Addresses of Honour, the Mock Purple, the counterfeit Scepter, the bloody Diadem, and Thorns, they were Mystical Representations of his real Kingdom, and declared him to be *the Messiah*, according to the Types and Prophecies of him.

III. It was an *Accursed Death*. Hanging on a Tree, being lifted up from Earth: This had a Ceremonial Curse annexed to it: Tho' Crucifixion was not usually a Capital Punishment among the Jews, but the Romans. But even among the Jews, great Malefactors, when they

they were put to death, were sometimes exposed to the Ignominy of a Gibbet; and so, being hang'd on a Tree, were *curst by the Ceremonial Law*. Now tho' the Jews had lost the Supream Power, and were under the Romans, and so Christ was not condemned to Death, strictly according to the Law of Moses; Yet the Providence of God so order'd it, that the Death he underwent from the Romans, contained in it that Ignominious Peculiarity, to which the Legal Curse belonged, *viz. Hanging on a Tree*. And he is said to bear the Curse, and to be made a Curse for us, including all the Punishment of our Sins, which he endured for us.

IV. Next to the Consideration of the Death of Christ, and the Kind of it, let us consider how much *we needed all these Sufferings of the Son of God*, and what are *the Benefits and Advantages* we receive by it, that so we may make it the matter of *our Glory*. You know they are such as these, Reconciliation with God, Deliverance from Hell, Victory over Satan, the great Enemy of our Souls. He is conquer'd and overcome by the Seed of the Woman; He received a fatal blow on his Head, when he bruised the Mediators Heel, by the Death of the Cross.

Moreover, the confirming the Covenant of Grace, the sealing of all the Promises, and the Assurance of their Accomplishment, because God spared not his own Son. All the preci-

ous Legacies and Blessings, that he bequeathed to us, had been of no value, unless sealed by the Death of the Testator. And consequently the Heavenly Glory is purchased for all Believers, Death is sweetned, and the Sting of it removed, and our Resurrection assur'd, and Heaven is the purchased Possession, as the fruit of his Death; and a Meetness for it by the Sanctification of our Natures, in order to Communion with God here, and hereafter, is another fruit of his Dying for us. 'Tis to this we owe our freedom of Access to God; his Throne being a Throne of Grace, as sprinkled with the Blood of Christ. It is the purchase of his Death, that we have support under all Afflictions; Assistance, Comfort and Deliverance as to all our Crosses; Especially in suffering for his Names sake, being assured that he will strengthen us, and that we shall not lose our Reward, and that all things shall work for good. If therefore the Apostle gloried in his Sufferings for Christ, much more may we in the Cross of Christ, whence is all our Support, Succour, Assistance, Strength, Victory, Acceptance, Reward, &c.

Use, I. If we *now* Glory in *Christ Crucified*, and ought to do so; let us remember he is *Risen*, and *Ascended*, and *Glorified*, and the Ignominy of his Cross removed by his *Exaltation*. If His Cross is the matter of our Glory, his Heavenly Crown should much more be so.



so. 'Tis this that makes the Contemplation of his Death to be matter of Joy, because we are assured, that He that was Dead is Alive, and behold he lives for ever, and shall come again for other Ends, and in another Manner, than he came at first. He is risen, and ascended and sat down at the right Hand of God, All the Angels of Heaven Worship him : All the Heavenly Host are Subject to him : Every Knee bows to him : Every Creature pays him Homage : He is Head over all things to his Church. He is appointed Universal Judge of all. All the World of Mankind shall be summoned before his Bar, and receive their decisive, final, Everlasting Sentence from his Mouth. 2 Theſ. I. 9, 10. *He shall come again to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.* We see Him now but as in a Picture ; He is represented and set forth Crucified before our Eyes ; But what is such a Sight of him, by shewing forth his Death now, to what we expect, and hope for, when we are brought to be with him, and behold his Glory ! We now admire him, we love him, we trust him, and hope in him ; we glory in him, by the little knowledge of him as Crucified for us, and as dying for us, tho' it is but through a Glass that we see, and a very little that we know at best : But when we shall see him Glorified, when we shall see him Face to Face, when we shall see him as he is, when the Veil shall be removed, and our Faculties enlarged, and we shall behold

him in his Glory, and all his Holy Angels and Glorified Ones about him; Then shall we admire his Love indeed, by considering *who He was*, how Great and Mighty a Person he was, who stoop'd so low for us, to be Incarnate for us, to be Scorned and Scourged for us, to be killed and Crucified for us, to bear the Curse, and be made Sin for us. Is he now the Chiefest of ten thousand, as seen by an Eye of Faith, as at his first coming to die for our Sins? How much more Glorious, How much more Lovely, Beautiful and Desirable, will he be at his Second coming, when he shall appear without Sin unto our Salvation! *We are now the Children of God, but it doth not appear what we shall be; But this we know, that when He shall appear, we shall be like him.* We now rejoice by Believing in him, and Loving him, whom we never saw with our Bodily Eyes: We rejoice in a little Glympse of him: We rejoice in the Hopes of the Glory of God: But what Thoughts shall we have of Christ: What a Sight of him will that be, when his Triumph, and Dignity, and Beauty, and Glory, in his Exalted State, shall be such as to make amends for the Reproach of his Cross! If his Bloody Cross be lovely, what will his Triumphant Throne be, unto which his Cross was the way! For he humbled himself and became obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross; *Wherefore* God hath highly exalted him.

II. Let us apprehend our Obligation to manifest this our Glorifying in the Cross of Christ. Partly by an unfeigned Love to Christ, and Zeal for his Glory, in the Defence of his Name, Truth, Word, Worship, and Followers, when they are ill treated, or spoken against. Partly by showing forth the Lord's Death, according to his Order and Appointment, at his Table: Partly by being crucified to the World by the Cross of Christ, and endeavouring more and more, in Spirit and Practice, to be conformed to him as our Head. And further, by a readiness to suffer for him, to take up his Cross and follow him, whenever we are called to it. And in the mean time, to be suitably affected towards our Brethren, who suffer for his Names sake, to sympathize with them, to pray for them, to justify their Cause, and to assist them to our utmost.

III How much are they to be reproved, who count the Doctrine of the Cross Foolishness, when the Apostle here Glories in it! Who either judge it to be false, by denying the truth of the History; Or charge it with Absurdity, as not agreeing with their Notions, and Schemes of things; That the Pardon and Salvation of Sinners should be brought about this way: And that we should expect to be saved by a Crucified saviour: As if there were no Rational Connexion between Believing in Christ, and Eternal Life. These are to be reproved,

reproved, and pitied at once: for the Gospel must needs, to them, be the Saviour of Death unto Death.

IV. How much doth it Concern us to seek after an Interest in this Death of the Cross! The Lepers, under the Law, were not cured by the Bare shedding of the Blood of the Sacrifice, that was offered for them; but by the Sprinkling and applying of it. Nor were any healed by the Brazen Serpent, who did not look up to it. Christ, and his Cross, are the great objects of our Faith; but we must take care, that by Faith we receive and apply them. We must receive and own him as a Prophet, and as a King; But it is Christ Crucified, Christ as a Priest, Christ dying on the Cross, bearing the Curse, and making Expiation for Sin, that is the principal Object of Justifying Faith: And therefore we read so often of *Faith in his Blood.*

*Lastly.* Be perswaded to study the Cross of Christ more than ever, if we must Glory in nothing else. He calls to us, as from his Cross, “ *Behold me, Behold me; Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the Earth!* You among the Isles of the Gentiles, he calls to “ All of you from his Cross, come unto me “ Sinners, and behold the Price of your Re- “ demption; Come unto me weary and hea- “ vy laden, and I will give you Rest. Tho’ “ your Sins be as Scarlet and Crimson, come “ unto

“ unto me, and I will make them as Snow  
 “ and Wool; My Blood cleanseth from All  
 “ Sin. He calls to his profess'd Followers and  
 Disciples, He calls to them *from his Cross*, to  
 behold his Sorrows, to behold his Love, to  
 consider how low he humbled himself for us,  
 and how highly he expressed his Affection by  
 it, to us Miserable, wretched, Unworthy  
 Creatures.

Let us study the Cross of Christ, with Applica-  
 tion to our Selves. “ O my Soul, did he love me,  
 “ and give himself for me? Did he humble  
 “ himself to the Death of the Cross for me?  
 “ Did he tread the Wine-press of his Fathers  
 “ wrath for me? Did he bear the Curse that  
 “ belong'd to me, and that must have fallen  
 “ on me? Did he give his Soul a Ransome for  
 “ me? Was he wounded for my Transgressi-  
 “ ons? O Admirable Mystery of Divine  
 “ Grace and Love! O how little is it believed!  
 How seldom considered! How unthankfully  
 neglected, undervalued and made light of!  
 How few thoughts do we employ in a Week,  
 or Month, about it! And yet this is the Prin-  
 cipal, and the Greatest thing we are to study.  
 All the other parts of the History of Christ,  
 were but preparatory to this, or but the Fruit  
 of it. For Instance, his Incarnation, his Birth  
 his Life, could not avail us, without his  
 Cross. And, without that, we could have  
 no part in his Resurrection, and Heavenly  
 Glory. It is by his Blood, as the Blood of  
 Atonement, that we are justified, and have  
 Peace

Peace with God. It is by that Blood that we are Sanctified too, and recovered to the Divine Image, by the Spirit of Holiness. By the power of his Death, we are enabled to die unto Sin, and Live unto Righteousness. It is by the Death of the Cross, that our Redemption is compleated, a sufficient Sacrifice offer'd, full Satisfaction made, Satan overcome, the World baffled, Death Slain, the Grave buried, by Christ's Dying and Rising again: And therefore we should Glory in him.

This is the great Spring of our Comfort. Who now shall accuse? Who shall condemn? Who shall separate us from Christ, since he hath dyed for us? Hereby he has taken away all our Scruples, and answer'd all our Doubts, solv'd all our Objections, and routed all our Fears: The Cross of Christ, or *Christ Jesus Crucified*, answers all. Therefore let him be the Object of your most Frequent, Serious, Delightful Thoughts. Let his Image be engraven on your Hearts. Think on him oftner than ever. Let him be the guide of your Youth, and the Stay of your Age: Your Glory in Prosperity, your Support in Affliction, your Refuge at all times. For all our Prayers, Tears, Services, without the Sprinkling of his Blood; All our Sorrows and Sufferings without his Suffering, will not make Atonement for the least Sin, will not answer the Justice of God for one evil Thought; we must look to  
Christ

Christ and his Cross for all. Let us resolve therefore to Value nothing, to Rejoice in nothing, to Esteem nothing, to Love nothing, to Glory in nothing, in Comparison of *Christ Jesus*, and Him Crucified.

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## A Sacramental Discourse, of the Promise and Oath of God.

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Heb. VI. 16, 17, 18.

*For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.*

*Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath.*

*That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.*

**A**MONG the many Eminent Examples of the Ancient Worthies, who by Faith and Patience have inherited the Promises, there is mention made of *Abraham*, v. 13. who having waited long for the Accomplishment of what God had promised;

promised; yet had the highest Assurance that could be, that he should not wait in vain; for the Promise which God had made him, was confirm'd by the Oath of God. And *because he could swear by no greater, he Swore by himself, v. 16. Saying, in Blessing I will Bless thee, &c.* But lest it should be Said, that *Abraham* was an Extraordinary Saint, and a Special Favourite, which is not so much to our Comfort, our Case is so very different from his, that 'tis strange that from his Example, we should be exhorted *to the full Assurance of Hope to the End*: That he was Peculiarly privileged, and what reason have we to expect the like? The Apostle obviates such an Objection in the Words I have read: Declaring how this Oath concern'd all the Heirs of the Promise: That all Believers have the same Ground of Certainty, *by the Promise, and the Oath of God, as Abraham had, v. 17. Wherein (or in which Oath spoken of before) god willing more abundantly to shew unto the Heirs of Promise the Immutability of his Counsel, confirm'd it by an Oath, &c.* In which Promise made to *Abraham*, all that Believe in Christ are concern'd, as *Abraham's* Seed; Heirs according to the Promise. *Gal. III. 29.* And the Promise was this; *In Blessing I will Bless thee*, referring to, or at least including Spiritual Blessings, upon his Spiritual Seed: For the same promised Blessing unto *Abraham*; is said to come upon the Gentiles, that should afterwards Believe, *Gal. III. 14.*

These

These promised Blessings, the Blessings of the new Covenant, God assures us of by *his Oath*, the highest Security that he can give; to obviate all Misprisions; to remove all Doubts, left after the declaring of his Will; we might think he should alter the Event: Lett we should suspect there may be some Tacit Condition, that should hinder the Performance; he tells us God Annex'd *his Oath*: Which two things, *the Promise*, and *Oath of God*, are the most undoubted Evidence of his Immutable Counsel.

'Tis Concerning *the Oath of God*, the Nature of it, and our Comfort by it, that I would speak to from this Scripture. And here I might Consider something in general, of the nature of an Oath, as relating both to God, and us: And then speak of the particular manner, mentioned in Scripture, of God's swearing: And afterwards consider the Signification and Design; the Intention and meaning of *the Oath of God*, with respect to us; and conclude with some Practical Reflections, by way of Use.

*First*, In the General, As to the Nature of an *Oath*: It is a special kind of Confirmation of what is less Certain, by that which is more Certain; or of what is less Evident, by that which is more Evident. If we swear, it is by the Blessed God, his Being and Perfections; which are more Certain, than any thing that we can Affirm. In an Oath we appeal to

God, as the witness of what we say. 'Tis an Invocation of the name of God, for the greater Certainty. If God swear by himself, by his own Eternal Life and Being, that is more Certain than that he will do this, or that in Particular for his Creatures. So that the Oath of God consists, in his express Engagement of his Holy Attributes and Perfections, whereby He is known to be **GOD**, for the Accomplishment of what he Promiseth or Threatneth: Or for the Truth and Certainty of what he declares. And it is Said he swears thus *By Himself*, and Engages his own Being and perfections, because he could swear by no Greater. For in an Ordinary Oath, there is an Invocation of some Nature Superiour to our own, in whose Power, or at whose Disposal we are, expecting Protection if we Swear truly; Or Punishment on the contrary, if we do not, with a kind of Imprecation or Execration, express'd or imply'd.

You will the better Understand this, if you Consider the Particular Manner of God's Swearing by Himself, and his Perfections, as the Scripture gives us an Account.

In an Oath there is a Positive Engagement of what is sworn by. Thus the Being and Attributes of God are engaged, when he swears by himself, or by any of his Perfections, *Gen. XXII. 16. By my self have I sworn saith the Lord, that in Blessing I will Bless thee;* and by his Holiness, *Psal. XXXIX. 35. I have sworn by my Holiness. Amos IV. 2. the Lord*

Lord God hath sworn *by his Holiness*: In other places he is said to swear *by his Right Hand, and by the Arm of his Strength, Isa. LXII. 8.* He is brought in, *laying his Hand on his Throne*, and swearing to Root out *Amaleck, Exod. XVII. 16.* In other places, he Engages the Immutability of his Being; Pledges his very Godhead; as if he were willing to Forfeit it, if he did not perform what he Promises, and make good what he says. Sometimes he stakes his very *Life*: *As I Live saith the Lord.* That is don't take me for a living God, if what I say be not true. In other places we read, that the Lord hath sworn *by the Excellency of Jacob, Amos VIII. 7.* That is, by himself, of whom *Jacob* and his Posterity Boasted and Gloried, as *their God*, and there was no Nation so great, that had God so nigh unto them.

Sometimes he only Affirms, *that he hath Sworn*, for he is Abundantly his own Witness: The same thing is call'd God's Decree. *The Lord swears and will not Repent*, concerning Christ's being a Priest for ever, Saith the Apostle. *The Lord said unto my Lord*, saith the Psalmist, *Psa. CX.* When God will unveil his own Decree and Purpose, so as to testify it to be *Unchangeable*; he doth it in the way of *an Oath* or Affirms that that he hath Sworn in the Case. (For by the Oath of God, his Purpose is declar'd to be unalterable) that there is no Reservation or Exception, as we find there hath been in the Declaration and Threatning of Temporal

ral Judgments. But whatever be the manner and form of Expression; or whatever of God's Perfections, Properties and Excellencies be mentioned, yet he is still swearing *By Himself*. He must therefore deny himself, and cease to be God if, he do not make it good.

As to that part of an Oath, which refers to *Imprecation*, or *Execration*, which is suppos'd to be in all Swearing, 'tis observable that in the Hebrew Language it is always conceal'd and hidden. *I swear unto David by my Holyness, if I lye unto David*. Here's something understood, but restrain'd, that is, *if it be so*, then let me not be trusted or obey'd. So our Saviour, *Matth. VIII. 12.* gives a like Instance in the New Testament, when the Pharisees tempted him, and demanded a Sign, he Sighed in Spirit, and said, *Why doth this Generation seek after a Sign, verily I Say unto you, there shall no Sign be given, &c.* So we read it, but in the Greek it is, *if there be a sign given to this Generation.*

*Thirdly*, Let us consider the Reason, and End of God's swearing to any thing, that he declares what it intends and signifies as to us, and that in these Four Particulars.

*First*, The great Importance of that which is attested by Oath. (*Secondly*) the Strangeness and Difficulty of believing it. (*Thirdly*) That we might be better satisfy'd, and assur'd of the Certainty of it. (*Fourthly*) That

we might have the more abundant Consolation and Joy.

*First*, The great Importance and Consequence of the thing, so asserted and declar'd upon Oath. An Oath is not to be taken upon every trifling Occasion. 'Tis a Seal that ought not to be affixt, but only where the Matter is of great Weight and Moment. Where ever you find in Scripture the Oath of God is added to his Word; it is in some solemn and weighty Business, where the Honour of God, or the Happiness of man is very much Concern'd. As that every Knee shall bow to Christ, and all the World Acknowledge him as their Lord and King, *Ifai.* XLV. 23. *Rom.* XIV. In this both God's Glory and our own Interest are concerned, and therefore the Oath of God is prefixt. An Oath among men must be taken in Judgment, as well as in Righteousness, *Amos* IV. 2. There must be a Just and Serious Occasion for it; Otherwise we take God's Name in vain; and profane a part of his Worship; and he will not hold such guiltless. Doubtless the Blessed God would not Swear, and add his Oath, but where the matter is of great Consequence: The Apostle gives us an Instance in that great Article of the Christian Religion. *The Eternal Priesthood of Christ*, *Heb.* VII. 20. compared with, *Psa.* CX. 4. He proves the Excellency of Christ's Priesthood, by which it was confirm'd and ratify'd, in so much, that *not without an Oath*, was he made *Priest*, (saith

the Apostle.) *The Lord hath Sworn, and will not Repent, thou art a Priest for ever after the order of melchisedeck* (says the Psalmist.) The Levitical Priests were by God's Appointment; they had a Divine Constitution and Call: But no Confirmation by the Oath of God. He used not an Oath about any thing that belong'd to them. This Advances the Honour and Excellency of Christ, and of his Mediation and Priesthood, above that under the Law.

And Having mention'd this, of God's confirming the Eternal Priesthood of Christ by an Oath; It ought to be consider'd, *when* we may suppose this to have been done: For he saith, *I have Sworn and will not Repent, thou art a Priest for ever.* Some suppose it at the Ascension of Christ into Heaven. But will not this confound the Kingly, and Priestly Office of Christ? Is it not Reasonable to think, that this Oath of God should precede any Solemn Duty of his Priestly Office; at least the Principal part of it, in his Sacrifice and Death? Will it not take off the force of the Apostles Argument in this? (*Heb. VII.*) for it would then follow, that the Principal Discharge of Christ's Priestly Office (*viz.*) *The Sacrifice of himself on the Cross,* was Antecedent to the Oath of God, whereby he was made a Priest. Either he was made a Priest, and discharg'd his Office, as to that great part of it, his Sacrifice on the Cross, without the Oath of God, Or else the Death of Christ did not belong to his



his Priestly Office. And wherein hath he then any Preference before the Levitical Priest's, as to his being made so, *by the Oath of God*, if this were not before his Ascension into Heaven? May we not therefore suppose, the Decree and Council of God, in the Eternal Transactions between the Father and the Son, Concerning our Redemption, and the Revelation and Discovery of it, which God made unto *David*, to amount to the Oath of God, or his having Sworn it, for *in these two things*, the Unchangable Purpose of God, and the Declaration of it, seems to consist this Oath: Hereupon God Affirms he had Sworn in the Case.

We may Certainly depend upon it that where ever the Oath of God is affixt, it is not a slight and an ordinary Matter. To Imagine otherwise, is to reflect upon the Wisdom of God. He hath given his Oath that he delights not in the Death of a Sinner; *what can be of greater Moment for us to know and Believe!* And that if we will take Sanctuary in Christ, as the Refuge of Hope, that we shall be Eternally sav'd. This we are assur'd of in the Text, by the two Immutable things, in which it were Impossible for God to lye, having his Word and Promise and Oath affixt thereto: We may thereof not only Believe that He will Faithfully perform his word; But wherever we find his Oath, we may be assur'd the Matter is Important, as well as Certain.

Secondly, The Oath of God is added upon the Account of the Strangeness of the thing, and it's Difficulty to be believed. No Wise Man will Swear to what is Obvious and Plain: To what is readily acknowledged, and cannot be Deny'd. There needs no Oath to prove, that the whole is greater than a part; or that the Sun is risen, at Noon day. The Use of an Oath is when there is some Obscurity, and Doubt, or some Controversie or Dispute, some Difficulty to Believe what is so attested; as in the foremention'd place, *Isai. XLV.* Concerning the Kingly Power and Dominion of Christ, and the Universal Subjection of all to him: This is declar'd by the Oath of God, because it might well be lookt upon as a Strange and Incredible thing; considering the Natural Averseness of Mankind to Faith in Christ, and Subjection to him: Considering the Depth of his Humiliation, when he appear'd in the Form of a Servant, with all the Ignominious Circumstances of his Cross and Passion, It is no easy Matter to Believe, that this was the Christ of God, who had all power in Heaven and Earth Committed to him. That he hath a Name given him above every Name; and that every knee shall bow to him. We find to this purpose, *Matth. XXVI. 64.* When our Saviour told the High Priest, and the Sanhedrim, that *here after they should see the Son of man Sitting on the Right hand of Power, &c.* The high Priest Rent his Cloaths, and cryed out, He hath spoken Blasphemy,

Blasphemy, and deserves to die. It could not enter into his Thoughts that the despised *Jesus*, who stood before him as a Criminal, should be ever so exalted, as to sit at the Right-hand of God, and have Power over all Flesh. The Promises of Grace and Glory, of Pardon and Eternal Life by Christ, are hard to be believed. The Privileges of our Redemption by him, the Blessedness that we expect from him, are things in themselves so great that we need to have them confirm'd by an Oath.

We are apt to question the Truth of God, and by our Unbelief, to make him a Lyar we raise Objections against every Word and Promise, of such great and Glorious things; we are ready to Suppose some Reserve and continue some secret Distrust now God would remove all our Suspicion and Jealousies, by the Addition of his Oath, to his Covenant Promise. Because the things reveal'd in the Gospel, are so Difficult to be believ'd, and our Salvation by the Death of Christ, and Faith in him is a Riddle to Reason, without Revelation; God Doubles his Promise, and adds *his Oath*, that *by two Immutable things*, wherein it is Impossible for him to lye, we might be encouraged to Believe: And therefore some of the Ancients have said that every Oath of God is, *Exprobratio quadam Infidelitatis Nostræ*, God upbraids our Unbelief, whenever he gives us his Oath, for the Confirmation of any matter. Not that we might Justly except against his Promise, or Doubt of his Word, for his Promise

Promise and Oath are both Unchangable, But in Condescension to our weakness he adds his Oath; because the things are so great, that we are backward to Believe them. A Declaration, or Promise confirm'd by Oath is the Highest Testimony among Men: And yet we may be therein deceiv'd, and many that trust to the Promises and Oaths of men are so. But the Apostle tells us here, that *'tis Impossible for God to lye*, having once Engag'd his Faithfulness, by his Promise, and his Oath; which leads us to Consider.

*Thirdly*, The Infallible Certainty of that which is assur'd us by the Oath of God, when he saith, *I have Sworn by my Self*; 'Tis added *the Word is gone out of my Mouth in Righteousness, and shall not return*, Isai. XLV. 23, 24. There are several Declarations God hath made, that admitted of an Alteration, as Concerning the Destruction of *Nineveh*, within 40 days, which yet upon their Repentance, was not executed. And in the Case of *Hezekiah*, that he should die, and not live; and yet upon his Prayer, fifteen Years are added to his Life. And there is a general Declaration, *Jer. XVIII. 7, 8, 9, 10.* But wherever the Oath of God is annexed, his Immutable Counsel, his Unchangable Purpose is there declar'd. And it is observable, that notwithstanding the Threatning of Temporal Judgments, to a sinful Nation or Person, may admit a secret Reservation and Exception in Case of their Repentance;

penitance; yet the final Rejecters of Christ and his Salvation, have *the Oath of God* affixt to ascertain their Destruction, *Heb. III. 18.* *To whom Sware he, that they should not enter into his Rest, but to them that Believe not?* Predictions concerning Future Events, which are confirm'd by an Oath from God, express the Immutable Determinations of his Will: Whereas there are many Predictions and Declarations in Scripture, without the Oath of God, that Imply a Tacit Condition. It seems needful in those things, where God declares the Irrevocable Purposes of his Will, that there should be some mark, and Character set upon them, to confirm his Peoples Faith; and this he hath done by annexing an Oath to his Promise. Not that an Oath lays a greater Obligation on God to perform, than a Declaration of his Will by Promise: But God's Oath respects us, and not himself: 'Tis a Testimony to us, that God's Will declar'd therein, is an Unchangable Will: And the Mercies promised are such, as shall be without any Repentance on God's part, *Isai. LV. 3.* The matter Sworn to shall never be recalled.

If we Consider the Sacredness of an Oath among Men, we find it the highest Ground of Faith and Assurance that can be. All that own a God and a Providence, have thought this Solemn Appeal to Heaven the best Way to put an end to Strife, and decide a Doubtful matter: And there is nothing more Infamous, or a greater Disgrace to Humanity, than

than a Perjur'd Person. If men would give Credit to a Controverted, or Doubtful Matter they confirm what they say by an Oath. It is the last Result of Truth and Confidence among Men; for if that will not oblige Men to speak truth, we can suppose nothing will. When Men Appeal Solemnly to God, as a Witness to the Truth of what they say; and a Judge and Avenger if they Swear falsely, and do not speak the Truth: What can we have more? For an Imprecation and Execration is Imply'd, or Express: *The Lord do so to me, and more also,* 1 Kings II. 23. *Ruth I. 17.* So that 'tis not possible for men to lay a more Solemn Obligation on their Consciences, than by the Religion of an Oath, *Numb. XXX. 2. If a Man Swear an Oath, to bind his Soul with a Bond.* By Swearing, he doth in Effect pawn his Soul for the Truth of what he saith.

The Promise is Certain and Unchangable to which God's Oath is annexed: The Sentence is Irevocable, that is hereby confirm'd: no greater Security can be given; all Tacit Conditions are cut off. If it be a Threatning; The Sentence is Absolute, no Entreaties can alter it: If it be a Promise confirm'd by the Oath of God; what greater Certainty or Satisfaction can we have? *Once have I Sworn,* saith God. *Psa. LXXXIX. 35, 36.* There needs no Repetition of it, as Sometimes amongst Men. God is said to Swear, when he binds himself Absolutely to the Performance; And thus he condescends for our fuller Certainty,

*Fourthly,*

Fourthly, 'Tis for our greater Consolation and Joy; *that we might have strong Consolation,* (saith the Apostle here.) That without Doubt or Scruple, we may apply the Promise, and Rejoice in it. Many of the Saints of the Old Testament, have Encouraged themselves against Fears and Dangers by the Consideration of God's Oath. *Thou wilt perform the Truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast Sworn to our Fathers of Old,* Micah VII. 20. *Thy Bow was made quite naked, according to the Oathes of the Tribes: Even thy Word.* Selah, Hab. III. 9. God's Oath to them, not theirs to him. So we find God himself minds the Jews, of the Reason of his continued kindness to them as his Chosen People, Deut. VII. 7, 8, 9. *Not because you were more in Number, for you were the Fewest of all People, But because the Lord loved you; and would keep the Oath which he had Sworn to your Fathers: Therefore hath he brought you out, by a mighty hand, &c.*

This encourages our Faith, to trust in the Promise; and Rejoice in the Covenant Mercy of God, Isa. LIV. 8, 9. *With Everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee,* (Saith the Lord) *This is as the Waters of Noah unto me, &c. for as I have Sworn, that the Waters of Noah shall no more go over the Earth, so have I Sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, or rebuke thee.*

Doubtless there was wickedness enough in the World, to have drawn another Flood after that of *Noah*: The same reason that caused one might have brought Another. But

God's

God's Oath engag'd his Mercy; he adds his Oath, that our Hearts might be comforted, and Established; that we might have strong Consolation; and not be disquieted with Fears; not hurried with Solicitous Thoughts; or discouraged by Threatning Dangers; but have assured Peace and Comfort. God is so kind, he would not have us live in Suspence, in Doubts and Uncertainties; but Rest Steadily upon his Word and Oath, and fix the Anchor of our Faith and Hope, that not a Tittle shall fail of all that he hath promised. The Ever Living and Unchangable God hath Seal'd his Covenant by an Oath. He gives word upon word, Promise upon Promise, and adds his Oath, to assure and confirm our staggering, unbelieving Hearts. Is it therefore Presumption to seek after and endeavour to rise up to *Assurance*? No, 'tis matter of Duty, and the Design of God in affixing his Oath to his Promise: The Apostle often prays for this Abundant Consolation, *2 Thes. II. 16, 17. Rom. XV. 13.*

But all our Comfort and Joy depends upon our Certainty, the Oath of God confirming, and Establishing the word of Promise. Therefore Let us not despise the Consolation of God as small. Let us not undervalue the Provision he hath made for our Comfort and Joy, which is built upon the surest Foundation that can be: Particularly in the Pardon of many and great Transgressions: His Oath is added to his word, that we might have *strong Consolation*. And what



what strong Comfort could there be, if only little Sins might be forgiven? The End of an Oath, is to *take away strife*. We do not strive with God, or doubt of his Mercy, to forgive little Sins. This strong Consolation is for those who fly to Christ for Refuge, after great Crimes. As we cannot have greater Blessings and Priveleges, than we have by the Gospel of Christ. So we can expect them on more sure and certain Grounds. Let us then lift up our Heads, and Rejoice in God our Saviour, considering that the Oath of God has confirm'd his Covenant; and confirm'd the Everlasting Priesthood of Christ, to Accomplish all that he hath promised; and nothing that he hath said, or Sworn, shall ever Fail. And this will lead me to some Practical Reflections, as the Use, and Application of what hath been said.

*Use I.* How Admirable is the Divine Condescension in this Matter, to Succour and Assist the Weakness of our Faith! Is the Immutability of God's Counsel, the Ground and Support of our Faith. Should we not think his declared Word and Promise Sufficient? But behold he stoops to give us his Oath, for fuller Confirmation. He pawns his very Life, his Holiness, his Excellency, his very Being; for our greater Satisfaction, and Assurance. How Admirable is his Goodness herein! For the great Lord of Heaven and Earth; Freely to declare his mind to such Worms as we are; To tell us before hand what he

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he would have done; and what he will do; were great Condescension, and Kindness: But to add his Promise and Repeat it, and to treat us in a Way of Covenant: This is more. And to all this, to add *his Oath*, is a Condescension we cannot Sufficiently Praise him for.

*Secondly*, If with such Seriousness and Solemnity, and for such Weighty Reasons, God himself is pleas'd to Swear, How Abominable and Provoking is the needless Rash Swearing *by God*, that many are Guilty of in Common Conversation? What Profaneness? What Contempt of God? And of all that is Awful and Sacred, is Imply'd in it? When upon Slight and Trivial Occasions, men will make use of Oaths; (which are only fit in weighty Matters, to determine Controversies,) it argues a Contempt of God, and of Religion; as well as a Distrust of a man's Reputation, that his bare word is not sufficient, and will not be taken. Not to mention the Incivility of it, in the Company of those, who have any Reverence for God.

*Thirdly*, Is God upon his Oath for greater Certainty, and in Weighty Matters for our Sakes; to assure us the thing shall be Certain. How Dreadful is the Guilt of *Perjury*? How vile and abominable a thing is it, to violate an Oath, either to God or Man? Not to perform and make Good what we have Sworn to. 'Tis not Possible to lay a more Sacred Obliga-  
tion

tion upon Conscience, then when we bind our selves with an Oath; And yet how little is the Guilt of Perjury regarded? How many make light of it; Forget their Oaths, and Contradict them daily, make no Conscience of performing what they have Sworn to God or Man? 'Tis Certain there is a great deal of Guilt upon this Nation, with Respect to *Perjury*. The multiplying of Oaths was never a Blessing to any Nation. Ill men will swallow any Oath for Advantage and Interest; or to avoid an Inconvenience; and the most Conscientious will be most Scrupulous, because the Guilt of Perjury, in violation of an Oath, is so hainous.

*Fourthly*, Take heed of Making God a Lyar, as to any of those things, wherein you have not only his word, but *his Oath*. He that Believeth not the Record and Testimony, God hath given in so Solemn a manner, he makes him a Lyar, 1 *Job*. V. 10. And there seems to be more in it; you not only accuse him of a Lye, but of Perjury. You will say, you don't doubt of God's Promise, but of your Interest in it? But why do you doubt of your Interest in it? But because you Believe not what God hath said; That the worst of Sinners if they Forsake their Evil Ways, and return to him, and Believe on his Son; and accept his Free Grace offer'd in the Gospel, they shall find Mercy? You don't Believe, that *it is a Faithful saying, and Worthby of all Acceptation; that Christ came into the World to save*

*the Chiefest of Sinners.* If you did you would accept it, and apply it. And if you do not give Credit to the Declarations of his Grace; and the Promises of his Mercy by Christ; and to his Faithfulness to that Covenant, which is established by his Oath, you make him a *Liar*; and worse. So if you distrust him, and despond upon every little Difficulty; as if his Truth fail'd, and his Promise should not be made good, and cannot put so much Confidence in him, as you would in the Promise and Oath of one of your Fellow Creatures.

His Promise consider'd alone is of Eternal Verity; for the Blessed God doth not Promise one thing, and intend another: But he adds his Oath, to remove all Controversie; and Cure all Doubts, that might arise in our Minds. 'Tis Uncharitable not to believe the Solemn Oath of a Man, if we do not know Certainly, or Strongly presume, that he Swears falsely. But not to believe God, Speaking and Affirming, Promising and Assuring us, over and over, is a Greater Affront. Much more not to believe him Swearing: when he calls all his Perfections, and his very Being, as a Testimony to the Truth of what he Saith.

*Fifthly,* Is God Graciously pleas'd thus to condescend, to bind himself to us by an Oath; How reasonable is it we should bind our Selves to him, in the most solemn manner that can be? *I have Sworn, and I will perform it* (saith the Psalmist) *that I will keep thy Righteous Judgments,*  
Psa.

*Pſi.* CXIX. 106. By Baptiſm, by the Lord's Supper, by renewed Dedication of our Selves to him, we Swear Fealty and Allegiance to him, we Ingage our ſelves by a Sacred Oath, to be the Lord's: It is Juſt and Reasonable we ſhould do ſo; when God binds himſelf to us. And how dreadful will it be to break thoſe Bonds, and not perform our vows? To be Guilty of Perjury againſt God and Chriſt?

*Sixthly*, How hardened are Impenitent Unbelievers, who will not give Credit to the Oath of God? And How inevitable is their Damnation? They are blinded and hardned indeed, who will not Believe God's Readineſs to receive returning Sinners, when he hath Sworn by his own Life, that he delights not in the Death of him that dieth; but rather that he ſhould turn and live. We have the Security of the Divine Perfections and Being, to invite us to Faith and Repentance. But Woe be to us, if this Condeſcencion of God be ſlighted, and we continue in our Unbelief.

God hath Sworn in his wrath againſt thoſe that believe not, that they ſhall not enter into his Reſt; and we do not find the Oath of God engaged againſt any Sin, or Sinners, as it is againſt Unbelief, and Unbelievers: Other Sins may have greater Provocations in them, but this hath ſuch Agravations, that God enters a Particular Caveat againſt it, by an Oath: In this ſence. 'Tis true, that Unbelief is the only damning Sin, becauſe all others may be pardon'd upon believing in Chriſt.

*Seventhly*, How Sure is the Everlasting Covenant of Grace, that is confirm'd by the Oath of God? He might have reserv'd a Power of Revocation; but it is Unchangeable. Christ the surety of the new Covenant, hath an Everlasting Unchangeable Priesthood, seal'd by the Oath of God. And these two things are certain, on which we may Absolutely depend; that there shall never be *any other way*, and method of Salvation, for fallen Men, but by Jesus Christ; and that *This* shall never lose it's Efficacy and vigour, through all Ages and Generations of Men. We are secur'd by the Promise of God, and Satisfaction of Christ, so that he is both *Faithful*, and *Just*, to Forgive us our Sins. By his Oath he hath engag'd his Holiness, his Power, his very Life, and Being, to make good his Word. On these two depend all our Hopes and Comfort; Christ being a Priest for Ever; And the Covenant of Grace being Unchangeable and Everlasting, Whether our House be made to grow, and our outward Affairs prosper in the World, or not. *This is all our Hope, our Desire, and our Salvation*, 2 Sam. XXIII. 5. The Oath of God affixt to his Covenant, shows it to be Irreversible and Unchangeable. The Jewish Law and Covenant was given *without an Oath*, and therefore might be alter'd: But the New Covenant, and the Promises of the Gospel, God intending they should be Unchangeable; hath confirm'd them by an Oath.

*Eighthly*,

*Eighthly*, How shameful are the Unbelieving Doubts of Good men, who have the Lord for their God? If God hath made with us an Everlasting Covenant, order'd in all things and sure; and we have the Promise and Oath of God, to Satisfy and Secure us, and this intended for our greater Consolation and Joy, What a shame is it, that we are so Wavering and doubtful? As if God were as a weak Man that he should Repent, or which is worse, as a Wicked one, that he should break his word, falsifie his Promise, and violate his Oath too. We pretend, when we distrust the Promise, or Grace of God, that we are afraid of presuming, and making too bold with the promised Blessings of the Gospel; but God hath declar'd again and again the Riches of his Grace, his Promise repeated over and over; and he hath added *his Oath*, and sworn to it, that we might believe, and that his Joy may remain in us, and our Joy be full. Surely after all this, he cannot be pleas'd with our Hesitancies and Distrust; when he hath so kindly engag'd himself, not only by Promise but by *Oath*. Whereby in a sense, He lays down his Godhead as a Pawn, never to take it up again, if he fail in the performance. How justly may the Blessed God Upbraid us, saying what would you have me do, to convince you that I am in earnest, and Faithful? Will ye not take my Word? Here is my Oath, that ye may no longer Doubt. I Swear by my Holiness, my Honour, my Excellency, by my Self, my very Being, that if you fly to

Christ for Refuge, and Believe and Obey the Gospel, you shall be saved.

*Lastly*, Improve God's Oath to strengthen Faith in Prayer, for all the great things yet to be done, which he has assur'd us shall come to pass. As to all that concerns your Selves, in your Passage through the World to Eternal Glory. As to all necessary Assistance and Support, under all the Troubles of this Life, and in the Agonies of Death; and for the Reception of your Souls when they leave the Body; and for the raising of the Body again, and for your being Acquitted and Absolv'd, in the day of Judgment, and put into Possession of Perfect and Everlasting Blessedness.

You may also believe upon the Oath of God, That *Christ Jesus is Lord and King*, and that every Knee shall bow to him; That he shall take to himself his great Power and Reign, in this World, and that all his Enemies shall be made his footstool: That he who hath Spoil'd Principalities and Powers and Triumphed over them; That he who hath a Name given him, above every Name, and is crown'd with Honour and Glory; will come again at the last day as our glorious Judge, when all the World shall admire him, &c.

In the mean time, we may pray in Faith for the Victory of Christ over all the Adversaries of his Kingdom: For the Preservation and Enlargement of his Interest in the World: For the Spreading of the Everlasting Gospel to the

Ends



Ends of the Earth: And for the pouring out of his Spirit in the latter days, to accomplish the many Gracious Promises relating to that time: Because the Oath of God is concern'd to make them Good. *Once have I sworn by my Holiness, (saith the Lord,) that I will not lye unto David, His seed shall endure forever, and his Throne as the Sun before me, &c. Psa. LXXXIX. 35, 36.* God hath set his King on his Holy hill of Zion; and he hath all Power in Heaven and Earth committed to him, and all his Enemies shall be made to stoop to his Scepter; or be broken in pieces as a Potters Vessel; *The Lord hath Sworn by himself, and the word is gone out of his Mouth in Righteousness, and shall not return, Isai. XLV. 23. Rom. XIII. 11. That every Knee shall bow to Him, and Every Tongue Confess him.* Not a Title of any Promise can fail, to which the Oath of God is annex'd. *Lord increase our Faith! Amen.*

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## Christ's Love to Us Like the Father's to Him.

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JOHN XV. 9.

*As the Father hath loved me ; so have I loved you :  
Continue ye in my Love.*

**W**HAT greater, or more useful Subject, for our serious Meditation : Especially when we think of approaching the Table of the Lord, than this of the Father's Love to the Son ; and of Christ's Love to us ; and of the Return of our Love to him. And here you have *all three* in one verse. The *First* made the measure of the *Second* ; in order to enforce the *Third* : *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you* ; therefore it is but Just and Reasonable, that you *Continue in my Love*.

You

You may Consider these Words either,

*First, As a Similitude* between the Father's Love to Christ, and his to us. That 'tis not more, certain that he is beloved of the Father; than that he loves all his Sincere Disciples. As truly as the Father loveth me, Even so have I loved you: And in several Respects, after the same manner: Tho' not equally, be' sure. The Greek Particle καθὼς doth not imply an Equality always; but a Similitude and Likeness: As in such Expressions; *be ye Holy, as I am Holy*; and *be ye perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect*. But Others think,

*Secondly,* That it may be understood of *Causality*, as well as Resemblance. That is, because the Father hath loved me, I have loved you. You are Beloved and Accepted, because I am. The Father's Love to Christ is the Spring, Root, and Principle of all the Love of God and Christ to us. We are Chosen in him, Adopted, Justify'd, Sanctify'd, and Glorify'd, in and through him; for his sake, in his name, by his Spirit, on his Account, &c. And so it shall run thus, *because* the Father hath loved me, I have loved you. But 'tis of the Likeness and Similitude between the Love of the Father to Christ, and Christ's Love to us, that I am now to Treat. And there are three Particulars observable in this Passage.

*First,*

*First*, Here is a Declaration of the Love of Christ to all his Faithful Followers. *I have loved you*, tho' I don't need your Love; not you deserve mine.

*Secondly*, This Love of Christ to us is heightened. by the Consideration of the Father's Love to him; and the Likeness and Agreement between these two. And here be sure *is a Likeness*, with a *Difference*: for in some Respects, the Father Loves the Son, as the Son could not Love us; In some others, Christ loved us as the Father could not Love him.

*Thirdly*, From both these, is a Duty press'd upon all Christians, to Continue in the Love of Christ. The Greek words are more Emphatical; *Continue in this Love of mine*. If you are made Happy by this Love, labour to preserve, and maintain it; do not easily hazard, lose, or lessen it; but continue in my Love; keep your selves in my Love, and the sense of it; and don't do any thing that may alienate my Heart from you. And in order to this, be as careful to continue in your Love to me; and all the fit Expressions of it. My Love to you continues firm, why should yours to me cool, and languish? O continue in my Love! for *as the Father hath Loved me, so have I loved you*.

Observe, *The Love of Christ to Believers, is like the Love of the Father to him; And doth therefore challenge their utmost Care, to continue in his Love.* I might First Consider this Excellent Subject of the Love of Christ, as *in it Self*, most admirable, and glorious, and without a Parallel amongst Men; But shall more largely compare it with the Fathers Love to Christ. As to the Former, *the more absolute Consideration of the Love of Christ, I might show you,*

*First.* How *Freely* he hath loved Us: We were poor vile Worms of the Earth, and had no Loveliness, but what was given us by the Father's Love, and the Son's Love, and therefore it is so often exprest by the Word *Grace*; because every Act of Divine Love to us, was an Act of Grace. *You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who when he was Rich, for our sake became Poor, &c.*

What Motive was there for him to Love us First? What Inducement on our part, but the Depth of our misery? And What is there *now*, that should Engage him to Love us still? His Love had no other Cause or Motive, but his own Compassion and Grace. To Love another for some Excellency, Usefulness, and Worth; though we have no Special Benefit by it, is the most Candid and Generous Love amongst Men: But that's not the Case here, for we have no Excellency or Good, but what is the Effect of the Love of Christ, while we  
were

## Like the Father's to Him. 199

were Sinners, and ungodly; Guilty and Deformed, Christ Died for us.

*Secondly,* How dearly he hath exprest his Love, at what a costly Rate he loved us. None ever gave Demonstration of the Reality of his Love, at the Rate as Christ hath done, by giving Himself to be a Sacrifice for Sin. To be made a Curse for us; 'tis above the thoughts of Men and Angels to conceive of the Greatness of this Love: and how low he Stoopt, and what he suffer'd, to give Testimony of it.

*Thirdly,* How Tender and Fervent was his Love. While he was on Earth, He loved his Disciples notwithstanding their Ignorance, Weakness, Cowardice, and Unbelief. And now he is in Heaven, he bears us upon his Heart, He carry's our Names (as it were) on his Breast, for a Memorial before the Lord continually, He doth not forget us, now he's upon the Throne, at the Right hand of his Father: But is gone thither on our behalf, to plead our Cause, and to obtain for us what our Souls need. And because his Love is thus tender; he Pitties us, and Pardons us, he bears with us; and notwithstanding many Provocations, doth not cast us off. What Multitudes of Sins, doth he Forgive? What Stains and Spots doth he cleanse us from? How many Infirmities and Failings doth he overlook? And heal us of our Backslidings; and by Fresh supplies of pardoning, and Sanctifying Grace, Continue and Evidence his Love?

*Fourthly,*

*Fourthly*, This Love is most Fruitful and Active, in many gracious Effects. We may Love our Friends and Relations very tenderly, and not be able to help them : We may Love and Pity one that is Sick, or in Prison; and not be able to heal, or deliver him : We may suffer with them by our Affection, when we can't Succour them. But the Love of Christ is Fruitful and Effectual, to produce all that Good, which he wills us.

*Fifthly*, His Love is Constant and Abiding. Before he was Incarnate, while he was upon Earth, when he dyed, and now he is risen, and ascended to Heaven. He Loved you in his State of Humiliation; and doth so now, he is in Triumph, above. In the Depth of his Misery; and in the Heighth of his Glory. Our Love to him would quickly be extinguish'd; if his Love to us were not lasting; But his Love is like his Life, for ever. It did not end with his stay on Earth: But he lives for ever to express his Love, by making Intercession for us; till he hath brought us to be with him, *Job. XVII. 24.*

I Close this Head with the Words of that Excellent Man Mr. *Joseph Allen*, in one of his Letters. “ \* *If the Pens of all Men, Saith he, were employ'd to write Volumes of Love. If the*  
“ *Tongues*



## Like the Father's to Him. 201

“ Tongues of the Living were Exercised in no-  
“ thing else, but in talking of his Love. If  
“ all the Hearts that be, were made up of  
“ Love, fill'd with Love: And all the Pow-  
“ ers and Affections of the mind, were turn'd  
“ into one! *viz.* the Power of Love: This  
“ were no less than Infinitely too little, either  
“ to Express, or conceive of the greatness of  
“ Christ's Love.

But 'tis the *Comparative* Consideration of the Love of Christ; as like unto the Love of the Father to him, which I would now speak of. Tho' it will not Import an Equality, yet there is a *Resemblance*, as the Father hath Loved me, So have I loved you.

*First*, I shall show, that most really and ardently the Father Loved Christ. (2) In what Respects Christ cannot Love us, as the Father Lov'd him, or strictly as the Father Loved Christ, so he neither did, or could love us. (3) Wherein there is a *Resemblance*, between the Father's loving the Son, and the Son's loving us; And then Apply it, by the Exhortation in the latter part of the verse, *to continue in his Love.*

*First*, The Eternal Father most really and ardently loved the Son. He doth, and ever did primarily and principally Love him: He speaks of him as *his Beloved Son*, in whom he is well pleas'd, Matth. III. 17. The Kingdom of Christ, into which the Father translates us, is call'd the Kingdom of *his dear Son*, Col. 1.

13. Be sure he lov'd him as his Eternal Son, and the Express Image of his Person: He is said to be brought up with him, and to have been dayly his Delight, rejoycing always before him, *Prov. VIII. 30.* And as our Incarnate Mediator, he also Lov'd him. *It pleas'd the Father, that in him should all Fulness dwell, Col. I. 19:* And upon his Obedience, besides the Excellency of his Person, he Merited the Fathers Love. Therefore the very Love of Christ to us, in dying for us, is Represented to us as a New ground of the Fathers Love, *John. X. 17.* *Therefore doth my Father Love me; because I lay down my Life, that I may take it up again.* He gave the clearest Evidence of his Love to Christ the Mediator, by many gracious Promises made to him, upon his undertaking the Work of our Redemption, *Isa. XLIX. 8, 9.* *Isa. LIII. 10, 11, 12.* *Psa. LXXXIX.* And not only so, but by the Excellent Qualifications, and Endowments, where with he was Furnished, to discharge his Office; and by the Peculiar Assistance, that he gave him, in his Actual undertaking it; by the Holy Spirit, without Measure; by the Heavenly Host of Angels; and by owning him from Heaven again and again, with a glorious Approbation; *This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:* And likewise by the Excellent Reward which Crown'd his Performances, *Heb. II. 9.*

Now 'tis said the Ground of the Fathers Love, was his laying down his Life: To make that Manifest, we might Consider Several Things

things, in our Saviour laying down his Life, as the Ground of his Fathers Love.

For Instance, Here was a most absolute and pleasing Obedience unto the order and Command of his Father : This was the Commandment, that he had from him ; *to lay down his Life*, Joh X. 18. And he readily says, *Lo I come to do thy Will*, Psa. XL. And here was the highest Zeal, and Concern for the Interest and Honour of his Father, which must needs be pleasing to him. By this our Lord Accomplish'd the great Design, and Purpose of the Father from Everlasting, in the Recovery of many Sons and Daughters, out of this lost World to Glory. And by laying down his Life, he declared the most Astonishing Love and Compassion, to the Work of God, to poor miserable fallen Man: Upon this the Scripture seems to Intimate, that *the Heart of God was quieted*, Zac. VI. 8. That the Controversy Started between his Mercy and Justice, upon the entrance of Sin might be taken up ; and the most Gracious Combination of Grace and Justice he brought about, by the Harmony of all the Divine Perfections, in the punishment of Sin in such a way, as was Consistent with the Salvation of the Sinner. Upon all which Accounts, he might very well say, that the Father loved him, *because* he laid down his Life.

*Secondly*, There are Several things to be Consider'd wherein the Father did *not Love Christ*, as Christ hath loved us. The Father Loved the

Son, but this is Natural and Necessary: 'Tis like the Love of a Father to himself; the Son of God partaking of the Same Essence with the Father. But Christ's Love to us, who were Strangers and Enemies, may be Consider'd as voluntary, as a free Dispensation. The Father Loved the Son; but he never Offended him, he was Essentially Holy, he never displeas'd him. But we are Rebels and Sinners: And yet notwithstanding our Enmity and Rebellion, Christ loved us, so as to die for us. The Father loved him: But he highly merited and deserv'd his Love; this cannot be said of Christ's Love to us; for we were utterly Unworthy of it. The Son of God deserv'd the Fathers Love; and was loved for his own sake: But Christ loved us, upon the Fathers Account; as given to him by the Father. And the Father loved us for Christ's sake. *The Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me,* Joh. XVI. 27. The Eternal Father loved Christ, but was not capable of expressing his Love in such a manner, and by such Effects, as Christ hath Evidenced his Love to us: Who became Man for our sakes; and died for our Sins. Who loved us and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood. By his Incarnation he became our Brother, that he might be our Sacrifice. He was Born for us that he might live for us: And he liv'd for us, that he might die for us: And he dy'd for us, that he might do all the rest, that was needful for our Salvation. The Father lov'd the Son; and yet when he was to suffer for our Redemption, did not spare him,

## Like the Father's to Him. 205

him, tho' he pray'd that the bitter Cup might pass from him: But Christ hath loved us and Freely Forgiven all our Debts. The whole Work of Satisfaction to Divine Justice he undertook, and perform'd for us: He trod the Wine-press of his Fathers Wrath alone; and of the People there was none with him, that had any Hand or share in making Satisfaction, or bearing the Curse, &c. How then is it true, that as the Father loved the Son; So he hath loved us? Which is next to be considered.

*Third,* The Resemblance, and Agreement between them. The Father loved the Son from Everlasting; So hath Christ loved us. *Thou hast loved me before the Foundation of the World,* Saith our Lord to his Father, *Joh. XVII.* And all the members of Christ were chosen in him before the Foundation of the World, *Ephe. I. 4.* *He hath saved us,* Saith the Apostle, *according to his Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the World began,* *2 Tim. I. 9.*

The Ground of the Fathers Love to the Son, is Nearness and Likeness: And after Regeneration and Union to Christ; all his Members are loved by him upon the like Account: When renewed after his Image and made Partakers of his Nature. Christ the Beloved of the Father, is call'd God's Fellow: And every Saint hath something of this Title, with Reference to Christ; for God hath anointed him with the Oyl of gladness *above his fellows,* *Psa. XLV. 7.*

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The Father's Love to Christ, and his to us agree likewise in this, that both are unchangeable. Nothing shall separate us from the Love of Christ; as nothing could Separate and Divide Christ from the Love of his Father. The Love of God to his Son is Immutable and Everlasting: And the Love of Christ to His, His all his living Members is such. They are *betrothed to him, in Loving-kindness and Faithfulness*, that is for ever, *Hos. II. 20. The sure Mercies of David, are promised by an Everlasting Covenant, well order'd and in all things sure.*

The Father loved the Son, and there is a Likeness between the Fruits of his Love to him; and those of Christ's Love to us. For Instance, The Father loved Christ; and always hears him, and accepts him; So are our Persons and Prayers accepted with Christ; and what we ask in his Name; we are promised we shall receive. The Father loved him; and *put all things into his Hands, Joh. III. 35.* And unto Believers, the Apostle Says, *all things are yours, and ye are Christ's, 1 Cor. III. Ult.*

As an Evidence of the Fathers Love to the Son, He delights in his Company; *he Rejoyc'd before him from Everlasting.* He is the Father's Foy, and Believers are his: When he had finish'd his Work on Earth, he return'd to the Father, and is sate down at his right hand: Christ loved us, and his Delight was with the Sons of Men, in the habitable parts of the earth. 'Tis not Improbable but that he appear'd as the Angel of the Covenant, in Hu-  
mane

## Like the Father's to Him. 207

mane shape; to the Patriarchs of Old, and that he is to be understood, by *the Man among the Myrtle Trees*, Zac. I. 10. It is Certain he convers'd Familiarly with us in the Days of his Flesh; when he went up and down doing Good. And when he left this World, he says it was with a Design to prepare a Place for his Followers: and he promises to come again, and take us to himself: And in the mean time has promised by the Presence of his Spirit ever to dwell in our Hearts, and continue with us to the end of the World, in all Successive Ages and Generations; till he hath Finished his great Design: And then he will come again in Triumph.

His Delight in his Saints is exprest in the tenderest manner by a *Bridegroom rejoicing over his Bride*, Isa. LXII. 5. And the Day of his Espousal, is call'd *the Day of the Gladness of his Heart*, Cant. III. 11. *Ye the Lord thy God in the midst of thee*, (Says the Prophet, which many understand of the Son of God tabernacling in our Flesh,) *He is mighty, He will Save thee: He will rejoyce over thee with singing*, Zeph. III. 17. *Christ is the Father's Delight*, Isa. XLII. 1. *Believers are His*, Psa. XVI. 3.

The Father loved Christ, and *always hears him*, *John I. 42*. Christ loves his Disciples, and assures 'em of the like Privilege, *John XIV. 13, 14*. The Father loved Christ; And he Loves all those that Love him, *John XVI. 27*. *The Father himself Loveth you, because ye have*

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loved me, and believe that I came Forth from God: And Christ loveth us, if we love them that are his Disciples. Hereby we manifest and Express our love to him. *This is my Commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you* The Father loved Christ, and reveal'd his Mind, and most Secret Thoughts and Purpose to him. This is always reckon'd an Argument of Love, an Evidence of Affection: So *Dalilah* urged *Samson*, when he conceal'd from her; wherein his Strength lay. *How canst thou say thou lovest me?* Judg. X. 15. Now all the Secret will of the Father is made known to Christ: And he, the only begoten Son in the Bosom of the Father, hath revealed him, *John* I. 18. We have this Evidence of his Love to us, *John* XV. 15. He tells his Disciples, *I have loved you, and Called you Friends; and not Servants; for all things, that I have heard of my Father; I have made known to you.* All things that were committed to me as Mediator to reveal. And again he tells us, *John* XIV. 24. *He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father; and I will Love him; and will manifest my self unto him.* All the great things of God are reveal'd to us by Christ: Therefore we read of *the Light of the knowlege of the Glory of God shining into our Hearts, in the Face of Christ,* 2 Cor: IV. 6. These great and deep things of God, he hath reveal'd to us by his Spirit: For we have received him, that we might know the things Freely given us of God, 1 Cor. II. 10, 11. All the Secrets of his Covenant, Purposes



Purposes of this will, Methods of his Grace, the Rule of his Scepter, the Misteries of Faith, the Paths of Obedience, all that concerns us to know. Especially concerning his Person and his Kingdom. He loveth us, and hath made them known to us by his Word and Spirit.

Moreover, The Father loved the Son, and Qualify'd his Human Nature with the most Excellent Gifts of Grace, with the Spirit without measure: So Christ loveth us; and hath sent his Holy Spirit, as a Spirit of Light, and Love and Power; of Grace and Comfort; to Sanctify and Assist us, in his Service here, and make us Meet for the Heavenly Glory.

The Father Loved the Son, and Protected and upheld him in his whole Mediatory Undertaking. *I am not alone, saith our Lord; the Father is with me. Behold my Servant whom I uphold and strengthen, saith God of the Messiah:* Christ loveth us, and hath promis'd us his continual Presence, to preserve, Guide Support, Assist, and Direct us; and he will never Leave us nor Forsake us.

As the Father loved the Son; and did most Gloriously reward him, after his Death and Resurrection: So hath Christ loved us, and Promis'd us a Kingdom; Promis'd us to be with him, to behold his Glory and Partake of it; And that even our vile Bodies shall be chang'd and made like his own glorious Body; He calls us *his Brethren*; and when he Ascended, he said, *I go to your Father and mine, to your God and mine.* And that he goes but to prepare

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a Place for us, and will come again, and take us to Himself; that we may live with him; Reign with him, and sit down on his Throne; as he having overcome, is set down on his Fathers Throne.

The Father loved the Son, and continued to love him, when he was most afflicted: In his deepest Humiliation, he was with him, to support him, and loved him still. Tho' the comforting Influence of his presence, was for a time suspended; yet in his bitterest Agonies, and when dying on the Cross he loved him, yea because he died, and laid down his Life. While he had the Face of a Judge to Christ, *as our Sacrifice*; he did not put off the Heart of a Father to him, *as his Beloved Son*. So Christ loveth us, notwithstanding any Afflictive Rebukes for Sin: He Loves us still, notwithstanding any of our Sufferings. Tho' we must distinguish between Christ's Sufferings and ours: They are not on the same Account, to the same Purpose, with the same Design, or for the same End; yet both consistent with Love, in the Root of it; however the Actual sense, and Apprehension of his Love may alter. Our Lord may say, my Father loved me, and yet I was Afflicted: May he not Love you; and yet Rebuke and Chasten you? If it may be true, as to the Eternal Son of God; It may be so as to his adopted Children. His Love is Unchangeable, nothing shall separate from it, *Rom. VIII. 35, 36.*

*Lastly,*

Lastly, As the Ground of all this Likeness, between the Father's Love to Him, and Christ's Love to us; we may Consider the Union between them; that as the Father and the Son are one, So Christ and Believers are \* *One*. And therefore before he left the World, he prays to his Father, that he would keep through his own Name, those that he had given him, *that they may be one, as we are one,* John XVII. 11. The Union between the Father and the Son is most Holy and Spiritual, well ordered, without Confusion of Persons, and Inseparable and abiding: And such a Union, there is between Christ and Believers; that hath some Resemblance between that of the Father and the Son. We grant it is a Mystical, or a mysterious Union, and not to be too boldly treated of in Human Phrases; but there must be some excellent meaning of those words of our Lord, *John XVII. 21.* where he prays for his Disciples. *That they may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may Believe that thou hast sent me.*

III. I now come to the Third thing, The Duty infer'd from both these; *Continue ye in my Love.* And this of all things is most Reasonable, considering that he hath so loved us, as the Father hath loved him. They who are  
Favoured

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\* See more concerning this Union. *First Sermon. First part of these Sacramental Discourses.*

Favoured with such astonishing Love, ought to continue in his Love. If he hath loved us at this Rate; we ought to Love him, and continue to Love him.

*First*, Continue in his Love, and delight in his Presence, and in the Communications and Effects of his Love; and Mourn when 'tis otherwise. He is to Believers, their Crown, and their Glory, their Life and Strength, and their Salvation; without him they have nothing; in him they have all. *God forbid*, saith the Apostle, *that I should Rejoice, or Glory in any thing, Saving in Christ, and the Cross of Christ*, Continue in his Love, desire the Continuance of it; watch against what may abate, lessen, or Intercept the Communications of his Love. There can be no Joy and delight without Love: Where I Love not, I can take no Pleasure: But when I Love; I can Rest, and Rejoice: And if I feel, and know my self to Love Christ; I know I am Beloved; And what then is wanting, but to preserve and keep it. *O set me as a Seal upon thine Heart*, saith the Church, *and as a Signet upon thine Arm, for Love is Strong as Death*, Cant. VIII. 6. And you can't but bewail the Loss of that which you Love, in the Enjoyment whereof you Delight. Therefore did the Church so bitterly Lament his Absence and withdrawing, Cant. III. 1. *That she sought him, whom her Soul loved, and found him not*; This is, and should be the constant sense of a Christian with  
Respect

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Respect to Christ; O, lift up the Light of thy Countenance; and my Heart shall be glad; Thou didst hide thy Face, and I was troubled.

Secondly, As Consequent to this, by continuing to value and Esteem Him, above all Persons, above all things; *whom have I in Heaven but thee! Thy Loving kindness is better than Life.* Yea the Reproach of Christ, is reckon'd greater Riches than the Treasures of Egypt; that were then Accounted some of the greatest in the World. You must love and value Him above your Dearest Relations, above all your Earthly Possessions; Above all your Spiritual Privileges; above your very Lives; And be willing to part with all that's dear to you, rather than displease him. *To them that Believe; he is thus Precious; the Chiefest of ten Thousand.*

Thirdly, Continue in his Love by Faithfulness to him; and Care to please him, hearkning to the voice of his Word, and the Conduct of his Spirit, in all things. *If ye Love me, keep my Commandments: If ye keep my Commandments, ye shall abide in my Love; as I have kept my Father's Commandments, and abide in his Love,* Joh. XV. 10. Watch diligently over your Hearts; that nothing creep into your Affections, to the prejudice or dishonour of Christ, Cherish the Holy Spirit, the Comforter whom he Sent in his Room, to supply his Absence. Take heed of grieving the Spirit; either as a Spirit of Holiness,

Holiness, or of Consolation: The Spirit of God is griev'd, *as a Spirit of Sanctification*, by our loose, careless, and negligent walking: And he's griev'd *as a Comforter*, by our Excess of Joy in other things; and by our refusing the Consolations of God, which are tender'd us by the Gospel. Love to Christ will make us watchful on both Accounts; it will make us Study to please him, and find out what's Acceptable to him, *Lord*, what would'st thou have me to be, or do? I will be nothing, but what thou willest. I would be anything thou would'st have me be. O that my ways were directed to keep thy Statutes! O that I might always continue in thy Love! Is there any thing thou would'st have; tho' *my Dearest Isaac*, *Lord*, enable me to Surrender it! I'd be willing, I hope, to give it up. How do we Love him, if we can't deny our Selves, as to Ease, or Pleasure, or Company, for him? Do we Love him, and yet do no more to please him?

*Fourthly*, Continue in his Love, and be Restless in your Desires of nearer Union to Christ, and Communion with him.

To this Purpose are the Expressions of *Thirsting for him*, *Following hard after him*, &c. To a Soul that loves Christ in Sincerity, there's nothing grieves him, but what keeps him from the Enjoyment of Christ, what doth naturally and necessarily keep from the full Enjoyment of Christ, Even our present State in the Body, Even that it groans under: Because by being present in the Body, we are in some Sense ab-

sent

sent from the Lord That which doth so morally, and Penally, *viz.* Sin, that the Soul loath's and abhors it self for. Now Continue in his Love; and let the Sole Tendency of your Souls be after the Enjoyment of him. O Lord! *the Desire of our Soul, is to thy name, and to the Remembrance of thee! My Soul thirsteth for God, for the Living God, when shall I come and appear before God? Make hast my Beloved, and be as an Hart, and as a young Roe upon the Mountains of Spices.* Are there any such restless enquiries, and desires after him? Is it the Language of your Hearts? "O Lord, be thou *mine*, or I am " undone; nothing else will serve me; and I " need no more; and Lord let me be *Thine*; " let me be to thee, or for thee: *Thy Servant*; " or if thou call to, and enable me for it; *They* " *Sacrifice.* What thou wilt. And let all I " have be *Thine*; my Heart, my Head, my " Tongue, my Time, my Interest, my Life. " Thou hast showed me thy Love; thou hast " taken Possession of my Soul: O abide with " me! dwell here! forsake me not! Thou hast " entered on thy Habitation, O never leave it; " let it be thy dwelling for ever.

*Fifthly*, Continue in his Love, and endeavour more and more to be like him, and conform'd to him. There is a Principle in Love to stir up our Endeavours after likeness to him whom we Love. By beholding his Glory we are transformed into the same Image: And so the Heart of every Believer is habitually inclin'd

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clin'd to be like unto Christ: Both as to the Internal Holiness of his Humane Nature; And as to his Example, in the Duties of Obedience. We are predestinated to be conform'd to the Image of Christ, *Rom. VIII. 29.* We must Endeavour that the same mind be in us as was in him. *He that saith, he abideth in Christ, ought also to walk as he walked, 1 John II. 6.* O continue in his Love; and let his Pattern be continually in your Eyes: Be Humble; Be Meek and Lowly; condescending towards all, Obliging and Useful unto all, Diligent and Zealous, Charitable and Patient, and self-denying, *as He was.* Endeavour to be like him, in watching against all Sin; like Him, in the Improvement and growth of every Grace; and so Follow him, in all the Fruits of Righteousness, to the Praise and Glory of God.

*Sixthly,* Continue in his Love; and Evidence it by loving all whom he Loves. *If you Love me, Love my Brethren:* In as much as ye did it to them, ye did it to me, will our Lord say. Without this neither the Love of the Father; nor of the Son, can be in us: *This is the New Commandment,* that he hath given us; of loving one another; which is *new,* in regard of the Patern and Motive, that is set us by the Love of Christ: Before it was, Love thy Neighbour as thy self; Now it is Love one another, as I have loved you. And the Moral Law that commanded Love, had never such a powerful Motive affixed to it before, as the Example of Christ's Love to us: We must Love them, because of their Relation to Christ, because



cause of his Love to them, and his Image upon them.

And Certainly the more the Love of Christ is shed abroad in our Hearts; the more of Love and kindness, will appear in our Temper and Practice towards all the Members of Christ; Yea towards all Mankind. And may it not be Thought, that the Unkindness, and hard Heartedness, the Frowardness, and Perverseness; the Stinginess, and Straitness of Spirit, that Christians discover one toward another; That as to many, it doth arise from this; That they do not live in the sense of the Love of Christ. They have lost that; and made Breaches between God and their Souls by Sin: They have no inward Peace, Comfort, and Joy in the Love of Christ. And so having lost the Sweetness of their own Spirits, they are Angry and Fretful, they are Peevish and untoward towards Others. If you were fill'd with the Holy Ghost; if the Divine Spirit dwell in you; it would be a Spirit of Love; and kindness, and Gentleness. You will be ready to do Good to All, Especially to the Household of Faith. You must Love All that you know do Love the Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity, notwithstanding their Difference in lesser things from you.

*Seventhly,* Continue in his Love; and as an Evidence of it, take all Occasions to meet and visit him; In the use of those Means, which he hath appointed for it, by the Word and Ordinances

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Ordinances of the Gospel, as the Chariots of God. Christ comes to visit us, by engaging our Souls in Suitable Exercises of Grace, in those *we visit him*. And if we Love him, we can't live contentedly without this. Where is our love to Christ if we can be satisfy'd with the external performance of Duty, without any thing of his vital presence? Communion with Christ is the Spirit of divine Love, and Love to Christ is the Sweetness of all Communion. *Tell me, O thou whom my Soul Loveth, tell me where thou Feedest; where thou makest thy Flock to rest at Noon, Cant. I. 7.* To this Christ replies, and returns the Invitation, *Chap. II. 4. O my Dove, that art in the Clefts of the Rocks, let me see thy Countenance; let me hear thy voice; for Sweet is thy voice, and thy Countenance is comely.* And again in the 4th. Chapter the Church says, *Let my Beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleasant Fruits;* and Christ accepts the Invitation, and replies, *Chap. V. 1. I am come into my Garden, my Sister, my Spouse: I have gather'd my Myrrh, with my Spices; I have eaten my Honey Comb with my Honey. I have drunken my Wine with my Milk: Eat O Friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O Beloved!*

*Eightly,* Continue in my Love, and put the best Sence upon all that I do. When things are at the worst; one that's fill'd with Love to Christ, will put the best Interpretation on every thing: If he be afflicted, he will place  
the

the Affliction on the Faithfulness of God; and believes that he intends him Kindness and Good. But till we Love him, we shall never put a good Sence, and Construction on what he does. The more we Love him the more Quiet will our Spirits be, under all his Providences: We shall not allow any hard Thoughts of God, under our Sorest Tryals, but say, " Let him smite me, and Chasten me, so he do but Love me: Let him make me, or keep me Poor, so he will not Frown; so he will but Love me: Let him take from me whom, and what he will, that was the Object of my delight; so I may but abide in his Love: Yea Lord will such a one say. Life it self is as the shadow of Death, without thy Love; *Let me rather die, in thy Love, than live, in thy Displeasure!*

*Ninthly,* Continue in my Love; and be Jealous of my Love, and of my Honour. Be Jealous, lest any thing steal away your Love; or Rival, or Rob me of it. When any Earthly Comfort or Temporal Blessing is delightful, and is like to Ingross the place of Christ; your Love to him should make you say, I fear I shall displease *my Lord*; my Heart is Engaged for *Him*, I have given it him; let him take it *wholly*, and keep it to himself. For want of this Holy Jealousie over our selves, the World often prevails, and Sin doth easily beset us; and our Foot is taken in the Devils Net, before we are aware; and so Conscience is defiled;

and Grace withered, and Comforts wasted; and our Peace broken.

So with Respect to the Honour of Christ. Let us Continue in his Love; and be concern'd for his Glory in the World, and griev'd for his Dishonour, by whom soever it is occasion'd. He that loves and Honours Christ most, will be most tenderly affected with what relates to his Interest, and Glory, and the Honour of his Name. And on the Contrary, 'tis undeniable, that he that cares not, what becomes of the Honour and Interest of Christ in the world, is destitute of unfeigned, and prevailing Love to Him.

*Lastly*, Continue in my Love, and don't take wrong Measures in Judging either of *my Love to you*; or of *your Love to me*. Some conclude their Love to God and Christ, from such things as will not argue it: Others conclude the want of Christ's Love to them, from such things as will not Infer it.

Continue in my Love, and don't Judge you Love me, when you do not; or that you discover your Love by such things, as are no Evidence at all of a prevailing Superlative Love. There may be a general Common Love to God and Christ, upon Principles of Education only, or a little Flashy, sensitive Love, from what you read and hear of his Excellency, and of his Kindness: When the Heart is not Effectually won to prize him, to consent to him, to receive him, to choose him, upon a Compari-  
son

## Like the Father's to Him. 221

son with all things else, against all Competitors. And that appears, because it is not Active, and Effectual to produce any Suitable Fruit.

Would you likewise Judge of his Love to you; You can't argue against it, from your Afflictions; because whom he Loves, he Rebukes and Chastens. If ye endure Chastisement, God deals with you as Sons, *Heb. XII. 7.*

But the great thing you would be resolv'd in, and by which you may resolve the other, is concerning *your Love to Christ*. Recollect then what hath been said of continuing in his Love. Do you doubt whether you Love him? Ask your Souls, whether you don't delight in his presence, and mourn for his absence? Do you not value and Esteem him above all things? Do you not Endeavor to please him? Are you not restless in your Desires after Union to him, and Communion with him? Do you Endeavor more to be like him? Do you not Love all his Members, all that he Loves, all that relates to him, and bear his Image? Do you often visit him; and Love to be where you may meet him? Do you Love him, so as to put the best Sence upon what he doth with you, and towards you? Are you Jealous of any thing that may Rival him, in your Love? Are you concern'd for his Honour? Are you careful not to take

## 222 Christ's Love to Us,

wrong Measures of his Love to you, or yours to him? By such things you may prove your Unfeigned Love to Christ, though you do not at present rejoice and triumph in the Assurance of his Love. O beg the Witness of the Spirit, that you may do that also!

Love is a Sensible, stirring Affection. You know what it is to Love in other cases? Are your Hearts set on him? Are your Thoughts of him the Freest, and Sweetest Thoughts? What pleasure have you in speaking of him? Do you bemoan your selves, when you fear that he does not Love you? Do you recommend Him unto Others, and persuade them to Love him? Do you Consider often what He is, and hath done, and suffered to deserve your Love? Do you Resist and Conquer Temptation, by the Thoughts of his Love? Are you ready to part with any thing for him, that may express your Love? *In short*, you may Judge of your selves by this: *Whether in the Esteem of a Believing mind, in the Choice, and Adherence of a Resolved Heart, and in the careful, Serious Endeavours of your Loves, you prefer God and Christ above all things.* Before the Pleasures of Sin and Sensuality, before the Riches, Profits, and Honours of the World. To know, love, obey, please, and praise Him, is that next your Hearts, the Principal and Chiefest thing in your Eye?

To Conclude, Let me press you to this Love of Christ, and Continuance in it, by the Consideration of his Matchless Love to us. There are such Miracles of Divine Love in Christ, as may pose the Understanding of Men and Angels. He is the King of Love: The great high Priest of Love: And the Teacher of Love: The Love of God shines forth in Christ, with all its Strength and Beauty: Love in all Estates, preventing, assisting, and finishing Love. Love of all kind's, and of all Degrees, sufficient to relieve the Soul against all the Difficulties of Life, the Darkness of Death, and the Dreadfulness of the Day of Judgment. And all our Love to God must be return'd back through *Jesus Christ*. God's Love of Bounty to us, is through Christ: Our Love of Duty and Thankfulness to God, must be return'd through him. And how Worthy is He of all our little Love? *His Love* pitied us, when we were in our Blood. *His Love* had Compassion on us, when we were wounded and left for Dead; and pour'd in Wine and Oyle into our Wounds. *This is the Love*, that Repriv'd and spar'd, and Pardon'd us; when we were condemned by the Law. Justice would have had us Deliver'd up; and our Guilty Consciences Fear'd it, and gave all for lost. *This is the Love*, the expensive costly Love, that Fed us when we were hungry; Cloath'd us when naked, and relieved us when Poor, and sav'd us from Hell, when we were ready to Perish.

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*This is the Astonishing Love of Christ;* that received those who had Forsaken him: That hath drawn those that fled from him: That kiss'd those that Scourg'd him: That Crown'd those that wounded him: That reviv'd those, that kill'd and Crucify'd him: And by Incomparable Condescension, chargeth those that hated him, to Love him, with all their Hearts, and enableth them to do so.

If all this Love and Compassion be Attractive of Love, how much beyond all Expression, are we bound to Love him? And how shameful is it that we Love him no more? If we can't say with the Apostle, *Lord, thou knowest that I Love thee*, yet who would not say, *Lord, thou knowest that I would Love thee*. Let us then resolve, and Endeavor, that our Life in the Flesh may be a Life of Faith and Love. Let our works be Labours of Love. Our Sufferings, Seals of Love. Our Sorrows, the Sorrows of Love. Our Prayers, Cry's of Love. Our Praises and Thanksgivings Songs of Love. Let every Work we do, every Duty we perform, every Power of Soul and Body, be all one Sacrifice of Love. Let us Look steadily and continually, by Faith, on *Jesus Christ Crucifi'd* if ever we would be fill'd with Love. Let us behold his Hands and Feet: Let us come, and put our Fingers into the Print of the Nails; And thrust our Hands and Hearts into h's Side; till we are warm'd with his Love; and feel the constraining Power of it.

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## Like the Father's to him. 225

There is nothing like the Sence of this Love; and constant Communion with God, in the Exercise and Return of it, that will make us Thriving, Lively, Chearful, Joyful, Established, Persevering Christians. *Now to Him that loved us, and washed us from our Sins, in his most precious Blood, To Him be Glory, Honour and Praise for ever, and ever. Amen.*

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The Strict

# OBLIGATION

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## Sacramental VOWS:

In Three Sermons,

*From JUDGES XI. 35. I have open'd my  
Mouth unto the Lord, and I Cannot go back.*

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The First Sermon.

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**T**HAT Men should stand to their Words, and be faithful to their Promises, is of mighty Advantage to humane Society, and necessary to the Support of it, There is scarce any Vice more Reproachful than Treachery and Falshood, when

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when Men make Promises, and never intend to keep them; or, notwithstanding a present Intention, take no care about the performance: The fence that we have of the common Interest of mankind, has put a mark of Infamy upon such a Crime: because no man who is guilty of such a Falshood towards others, would be willing that other men should treat him in like manner. But whoever views the State and Character of the Christian World, and observes the Lives of Christians who are baptized into the Name of Christ, and obliged by a Sacramental Oath, (which they have often repeated) faithfully to follow and obey him; Whoever considers this, will think that we have a double measure of Proceeding, one for *Men*, another for *God*; That while we reckon it Reproachful to be perfidious to one Another, not to stand to our Agreement, not to perform what we have solemnly promised, and are ashamed to deal falsely *with Men*; yet nothing is more common than such Falshood, in our Carriage towards *God*.

We may now make light of such Unfaithfulness; but hereafter it will lie heavy on the Conscience, when awakned, to remember and reflect, how, by the Covenant of Baptism, and by the renewing of it at the Table of the Lord, “ I was devoted, dedicated, obliged, “ and bound to be the Lord’s; I gave up my “ self to his Service, I promised Fidelity to “ him: But, Wretch that I was, I presently “ went back. I have eaten and drunk in the “ Presence

“ Presence of Christ, and thereby owned my  
 “ self to be in the number of his Friends and  
 “ Followers ; and yet, after that, I have lived  
 “ to his Dishonour. I did covenant and  
 “ ingage with the greatest Solemnity, but I  
 “ soon burst all these Bonds asunder. I have  
 “ been treacherous to my Saviour, false and  
 “ perfidious to my God ; I have sworn, but  
 “ have not performed it, to keep his righteous  
 “ Judgments ; to mortifie every Lust, to spare  
 “ none of the Enemies of my Soul, to neglect  
 “ nothing that should be made known to be  
 “ my Duty, &c. It is the Guilt and Danger  
 of such Unfaithfulness to God and Christ,  
 which I would mind you of from this Scrip-  
 ture, as suitable to a *Sacramental Solemnity*.  
 Whereby many of us have again engaged our  
 Selves, by Promise and Covenant to be the  
 Lord’s : And therefore, when we are tempted  
 to any kind of Unfaithfulness to him, we may  
 henceforward use the words of *Jephtha*, concern-  
 ing his Vow, *I have opened my Mouth unto the*  
*Lord, and I cannot go back.*

As previous to what I more especially de-  
 sign, something must be spoken. 1. Concern-  
 ing this famous Person, *Jephtha*. 2. Concern-  
 ing his Vow, with reference to his Daughter ;  
 for to that the Expression in the Text doth refer,  
 that *he had opened his Mouth unto the Lord*. 3.  
 Concerning his doing to her according to his  
 Vow, or *his not going back from his Vow*. Where  
 the Inquiry will be, whether he did really of-  
 fer

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fer his Daughter in Sacrifice, or no ; and if he did, whether he did well or ill in it.

I. As to the Person, *Jephtha*, he is one of the antient Worthies, who by Faith obtained a good report, \* So the Apostle tells us: He manifests himself, by what we read of him, to be a good man ; for when he undertook to appear in Arms for his Country-men, and to fight their Battels, he applies himself first to ask counsel of God : † And withal, he offered Peace to the *Ammonites*, before he proceeded to any Act of Hostility against them ; He endeavors to convince them, that he was ingaged in a lawful War, and therefore might appeal to God as Judge in the Quarrel. Having thus begun well, we read that || *the Spirit of the Lord was upon him*, which filled him with an extraordinary Courage and Resolution, and made him despise Danger ; and thereupon we find his Character is that of a *Mighty Man of War*:

Before he ingages the Enemy, he makes a solemn, but a strange Vow unto God, 30. and 31. Verses, *And Jephtha vowed a Vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the Children of Ammon into mine hands ; then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the Doors of my House to meet me, when I return in Peace from the Children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.*

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\* Heb. 11. † Judg. 17. Chap. 7. 11. || Verse. 29:

## Of Sacramental Vows. 231

*fering.* “ That is, The Honour of the God of  
“ *Israel*, and the Success of this Battel, are so  
“ very considerable to me, so very precious  
“ and valuable in my account; that I am  
“ willing to obtain a Victory, though with  
“ the loss of that which is dearest to me in the  
“ World; If the Lord would give me Success  
“ against the Children of *Ammon*, and grant me  
“ Victory over the Adversaries of his Name  
“ and People, Whatever shall meet me com-  
“ ing out of my Doors at my Return, shall  
“ be the Lord’s, and I will offer it to him for  
“ a Burnt-offering.

Accordingly we read in the History that God grants his Desire; he delivered the Children of *Ammon* into his hand, yea gave him a compleat Victory, for they are said *to be subdued before the Children of Israel*. The News of it quickly spreads, and reacht to *Jephtha’s* House, before his Return: Whereupon his Daughter, his only Child, came out to meet him. But instead of a joyful Welcome, the sight of her strikes him to the Heart, and awakens the most surprizing and vehement Sorrow; makes him rent his Cloaths, and cry out, as a miserable Person, v. 35. *Alas, my Daughter! thou hast brought me low, thou art one of them that trouble me: For I have opened my Mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.* “ That is, I have  
“ vowed to the Lord, that whatsoever com-  
“ eth out of my Doors to meet me, shall be  
“ the Lord’s, and shall be offered in Sacrifice;  
“ and how dear soever it cost me, my Vow  
“ must

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“ must be performed, as I now perceive it  
“ will cost me dear indeed. My Affection,  
“ as a Father, would make me do any thing  
“ to spare the Life of an only Child, if I were  
“ at Liberty; But I have opened my Mouth  
“ to the Lord, I have bound and ingaged my  
“ self, that whatever comes out of my Doors  
“ to meet me, shall be devoted to Death, and  
“ I will offer it a Burnt-offering. I must not  
“ be guilty of Perjury against the most High  
“ God; My Child, it is true, is very dear to  
“ me, but my God is more. I had better  
“ be cruel to my Child, in shedding her Blood,  
“ than be false to the Lord of Heaven and  
“ Earth, by the non-performance of my Vow;  
*I have opened my Mouth to the Lord, and I cannot  
go back.*

And therefore, after giving her leave for two Months to retire, with some of her Companions, to a place of Solitude on the Mountains, to lament her unhappy Condition, to be cut off in the prime of her Youth, without the Blessing of Marriage and Children, (the want of which was then reckoned a Curse:) After this, we read, that *he did unto his Daughter according to his Vow*; and she knew no man, being thus cut off in her Youth. Whereupon it was a custom in *Israel*, that the Daughters of *Israel* went yearly to lament the Daughter of *Jephtha*, four Days in a Year: Not to visit her, or to confer with her; but to talk with one another about her, to discourse of this unhappy Virgin, and lament her deplorable Circumstances.



## Of Sacramental Vows. 233

This many think to be the plain meaning, of his *doing to her according to his Vow*, having opened his Mouth unto the Lord; That he devoted her to Death and put her to *Death by Fire*, Which he vowed to do as to whatsoever he should meet coming out of the Doors of his House. That he did not shut her up as a Nun for the rest of her Life, but offer'd her to God, as a *Burnt-offering*. Very many of the Ancient Greek and Latin Fathers have been of this Opinion, and many of the greatest Name amongst the Modern, I shall not need to mention \* Authors. And they argue thus, what could he think should come out of the Doors of his House to meet him, but his Child, or one of his Servants, some Man, or Woman, or Children, of the Family? It were very strange to suppose, that he expected an Oxe, or a Lamb, or a Ram, or a Goat, coming out of his House to meet him. It cannot well be imagined, that the Sacrifice he intended, could be any other than a *humane Sacrifice*. And therefore most Versions do render it, not *whatsoever* cometh out of my House, but *He that cometh out of my Doors to meet me, I will offer up in Sacrifice*. What a poor Business had it been, for so great a man as *Jephtha* to vow, that if God would give him the Victory, at his Return, he would offer the First Ram, or Lamb, or Bullock, that he should meet with  
at

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\* See Dr. Edward's *Inquiries into diff. texts.* 8vo p. 87.

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at his coming to his own House, if no more than that were meant.

“ ’Tis plain that *Josephus* and *Philo*, the  
 “ Two famous Jews understood his Vow,  
 “ and the Execution of it, in this sense, of  
 “ offering to God in Sacrifice, *the first Li-*  
 “ *ving Creature* he should meet with, after he  
 “ came home, which happen’d to be, his on-  
 “ ly Virgin Daughter, just coming out of the  
 “ Door, big with Joy to receive and bid him  
 “ Welcome. This Encounter struck him to  
 “ the Heart, and Exceedingly troubled he  
 “ was, at her Officiousness to come out and  
 “ meet him, telling her the Story of *the Vow*,  
 “ by which he had oblig’d himself, upon such  
 “ Terms, to offer her to God for a Sacrifice.  
 “ She was not at all dejected at the Tidings,  
 “ but told her Father with a generous Con-  
 “ stancy, *That she should never think much to*  
 “ *part with her Life, upon the Condition of securing*  
 “ *her Father’s Honour and Success, and the Liber-*  
 “ *ty of her Country; only she beg’d two Months*  
 “ *time first, for a parting Lamentation with her*  
 “ *Companions, and after that he might be pleas’d*  
 “ *to perform his Vow.* Her request was grant-  
 “ ed, and at the end of the Two Months,  
 “ this Innocent Devote was made a \* Sacri-  
 “ fice, without any Reverence either to Re-  
 “ ligion, Law, or Common Faith; so far  
 “ was *Jephtha* transported with a blind Zeal  
 “ into

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\* *Josephus Jewish Antiq.* lib. V.

“ into a Contempt of all other Considerations.

But that which is most considerable to favor this fence, is his Extraordinary Trouble at the meeting with his Daughter; which there were no room for; if he had not vowed to put her to Death. What meaneth his Transport of Grief, his excessive Sorrow, and passionate Concern, that he rent his Cloaths, and bitterly exclaims, that he was brought low and troubled?

However on the other hand, many deny that he put her to Death, and explode it as a most absurd Opinion, that a fond and indulgent Father should burn the Fruit of his own Body; execute his only Child, a dutiful and obedient Child too, the object of his present Comfort, and future Hopes. They urge, that Humane Sacrifices were hateful to God, and provoked him utterly to destroy the *Canaanites*; &c. *Deut. XII. 31.* And kindled his Indignation against *Israel*, when they brought the King of *Moab*, to the sad Necessity of offering his *Eldest Son*, for a Burnt offering on the Wall of his City. And that the words, *shall be the Lord's*, may more properly be rendered, *shall be Consecrated to the Lord*, i. e. dedicated, and set apart for his special Service, as the *Nazarenes* were. Or, *I will offer it up for a Burnt Offering*: Or not *And*, \* the particle *Vau* is often used

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\* *Gen. 2. 6. Ex. 1. 10. Deut. 27. 9. Isa. 7. 6.*

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in a disjunctive Sense. And in such a sense as that, *Jephtha* is said to do to her according to his Vow. And the rather, because it follows, and *she knew no Man*: which Expression were Superfluous, if she was Sacrific'd as soon as she came down from the mount, where she had been for two Months, to bewail her Virginity. And the word rendred to *lament* in the following Verse, signifies to *talk with*. And that the Being without Children, was reckon'd a Curse and a Reproach, and therefore he was so troubled that his only Child was so to live and die, under this Reproach, when he saw his Family almost extinct, and himself excluded from all Hopes of Posterity. Thus some argue.

But supposing he did Sacrifice her, it will be difficult to resolve, whether he did well or ill, in doing to her according to his Vow. Some think it was a very lawful and commendable Action, others Condemn it as most barbarous, and most inhumane. The substance of what is said on both sides, is this. First, They who plead for the Lawfulness of this Fact of *Jephtha*, desire it may be considered, that God is Absolute Lord of the Lives of all his Creatures; he may call for them, and dispose, of them as he pleases, and in what manner he thinks good; And therefore they suppose that the Spirit of God, which came upon him, and filled him with such an Heroick Courage, did likewise put him upon making this Vow; and that he was certainly obliged to perform it, by the special Law of God about

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bout Vows, Levit. 22. 28, 29. *No devoted thing, of Man or Beast so devoted, shall be sold, or redeemed, every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord; and none devoted, which shall be devoted of men, but shall surely be put to Death.* Now this kind of Vow, must be distinguished from another sort spoken of, 2d. and 3d. Verses, where there was a Liberty, to exchange or redeem for a sum of Money, which could not be in this Case of *Jephtha*, at least he thought so; otherwise he would not so passionately express himself, upon the meeting his Daughter, if a little Money might have saved her Life, and fulfilled his Vow.

They say moreover, that by this Vow of *Jephtha*, it is probable God intended to prepare both Jew and Gentile, for entertaining the Doctrine of a Crucified Saviour: For you know the Son of God, the only begotten of his Father, was devoted by his own Father unto *Death*, and so is said to be made a *Curse*, and by that Death the most glorious Victory is obtained over Sin and Satan: And as the *Intended Sacrifice of Isaac* by his Father *Abraham*, did shew forth the real, actual Sacrifice of the Redeemer; This actual Sacrifice of *Jephtha's* Daughter might refer to the same thing; Nay they tell us, it is one of the most lively Representations of the Death of Christ, in the whole Scripture: They urge the Purity of the Sacrifice, that she was a Virgin, which is answered by the Character of our Lord's perfect Innocency: And that 'twas only and a beloved Child, agrees to the same purpose: And the

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Submission of this Innocent Sacrifice to the Will of her Father, answers the Disposition of Christ's Soul, to the Order and Command of God, that he should lay down his Life: And the little time she desires to prepare for such a solemn and important thing, is not inconsistent with the readiness of her Obedience; for our Lord himself retired to the Mount of *Olives*, by Mediation and Prayer, to prepare himself for his being a Sacrifice, and yet said, *Father glorifie thy self, thy Will be done.* As *Jephtha's* Daughter said, *Let it be according to thy Vow*, only desired two Months time to bewail the loss of her Virgin Life; Which is mentioned, to represent the Purity and Innocency of that Sacrifice, which this prefigured. And to this End the Daughters of *Israel* Yearly met, to discourse of her, to perpetuate the Memory of *this* \* *Sacrifice*, and thereby raise their Expectations and Hopes of *that greater one*, which our Saviour was to offer for the Recovery of fallen Sinners. And therefore *Jephtha's* great Concern, if he expected to make a humane Sacrifice, and his Vow designed it, was, to meet with his only Child: He knew not till then, that *She* was to be the Victim: Nevertheless, *he did unto her according to his Vow*,

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\* The Samaritans honour'd the Daughter of *Jephtha* with divine Worship, as their Country Patroness: And in the time of *Epiphanius* kept a Yearly Feast in Memory of her. The same it may be with that, *Judges XI. 40.* *Epiphanius ad. Hæret. l. 3. Tit. 11. Her. LXXVIII.*

Now, he Sacrificed his most tender Affections to the Interest of his Country, and the Deliverance of his People.

However all this may be plausibly enough urged, to excuse and justify this Fact of *Jephtha*, and we ought to be very unwilling to charge him, with the Murder of his Child, having the Character of a good Man, and being one of the Antient Worthies; yet, acknowledging his Repentance, as in the Case of *Gideon*, *Solomon*, *Manasseh*, &c. it seems most likely, that this Vow of *Jephtha* was rash, and the Performance of it unlawful: That he could not lawfully Vow the Death of one, that did not deserve to be put to Death, without an exprefs Order from God, which doth not appear: The Law of *Cherem*, or *Anathema* among the Jews, gave no such leave unto Parents, to cut the Throats of their own Children: And it is upon that account that some learned Men think, he *did not* offer his Daughter in Sacrifice; whereas that will only prove that he *should not*. But the Case in short was this, *Jephtha* was a well disposed Man, had a great deal of honest Zeal, but was Rash and Indiscreet in framing his Vow; and so was drawn into a Snare, as verily believing, that he ought to perform it; And accordingly he did, but considered not, that *no Vow can oblige where the matter is not in our own Power, or where the matter is not lawful*. The Life of his Daughter, was not in his Power to dispose of, nor lawful for him to take it, he had no such right.

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It was in it self unlawful for him to kill his Child, his Vow could not dispense with the former Obligation he was under. The very Heathens acknowledge the Unlawfulness of this, and this Fact is remembered in Pagan History, under the name of *Agamemnon's* sacrificing his Daughter *Iphigenia*, or *Jephthigenia*. There are many Parallel Circumstances, and the Chronology of *Jephtha* and *Agamemnon* the same, but that I shall not need to insist on.

However, having once vowed and promised, and so opened his Mouth unto the Lord, he reckon'd himself so bound that he could not go back. If it had been about a thing the matter whereof was lawful; much more, if it had been a Duty antecedent to his Vow, and solemn Promise, the Obligation had been unexpressibly Strengthn'd by his solemn Vow. That therefore which I would observe, and learn from it, is this,

*Obs. That when we have opened our Mouth unto God, in a way of solemn Vow, Covenant, or Promise, we are under such an Obligation, that we cannot go back. Or, Whoever doth bind or ingage himself to God, (as we have done at the Table of the Lord,) no Considerations whatsoever can dispense with, or free him from that Ingagement.*

Here are two things to be inquired into, in order to the practical Application of this Truth, *viz.* 1. When may we be said, to bind and ingage our Selves unto God, by solemn



solemn Promise, Covenant, or Vow? 2. The Indispensible Obligation that there is upon us, not to go back, but accordingly to perform it.

I. What is to be understood by opening our Mouth unto God in a way of solemn Promise, Covenant, or Vow. Of such a promissory Oath it must be meant. It is well known, we may bind our selves to men by our Words; and it was the first way of making Contracts and Agreements: for Writings and Seals are of later date, and came in upon the Jealousies men have of the Falshood and Unfaithfulness of others. So we read, Prov. VI. 1, 2. *If thou art Surety for another, and hast stricken thine hands with a Stranger, thou art snared by the Word of thy Mouth.* That is, thou art as fast bound, as any Writing, with an annexed Seal, can tie thee.

Now concerning a Religious Promise made to God, the Matter of it is considerable, and the Manner.

I. The Matter. Which is either of such things as are not already determined, and expressed by our Rule; Or of such as are. Of the former kind was *Jacob's Vow*, Gen. XXVIII. and *David's Promise*, of finding a place for the Ark. Under the clearer Revelation of our Rule by the Gospel, such Promises and Vows have neither so much Warrant, or Necessity, as formerly. And therefore whenever we

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open our Mouths to God in such Cafes, by a solemn Promise, we must take heed, *First*, that the matter be very grave and serious and weighty; *Secondly*, that it be of something in our own Power to dispose of; *Thirdly*, that it do not contradict any part of our express Rule. Most of the Popish Vows, about which there is a Controversie between us and the Church of *Rome*, do offend against one, or all these three Limitations.

II. We may open our Mouth to God, in a way of *solemn Promise* of such things, unto which by the Christian Rule we are antecedently obliged.

As either, First, in the General, to the Constant Service of God, and Fidelity to him, Isa. XLIV. 5. *One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the Name of Jacob: and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the Name of Israel.* And there can be no true Repentance, or Conversion to God, without such a Resolution, Ingagement, and Promise of Fidelity to God. “*Lord, I have cast off my*  
“*Yoke, and thy Authority, and for so many*  
“*Years have rebelled against thee; but now*  
“*I chuse thee for my God, and call Heaven*  
“*and Earth to witness, that I consecrate and*  
“*devote my self to be the Lord's; I will not*  
“*live to my self, as my End, or Rule, any lon-*  
“*ger; I will yield my self unto Christ, to take*  
“*upon me his Yoke, and to take up his Cross,*  
“*and follow him as my Teacher, Saviour, and*  
“*Lord.*”

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“ *Lord.* This the baptismal Covenant doth import, and therein we thus promise, and ingage, and bind our Selves. This we renew *at the Table of the Lord*, by eating and drinking in his Presence. The delivery of the Elements of Bread and Wine by a Minister of Christ, doth virtually express the Act of God, and Christ, saying unto All *the Communicants*,

“ You are the professed Disciples of a Crucified Saviour; You have promised and ingaged by Baptism, to be his faithful Servants to your Lives end, and I have promised and ingaged, says God, to be a *God in Covenant* to you, and to give you all the Blessings of *the New Covenant*. I call you here, to know whether you are of the same Mind, whether you own this Covenant, and will stand to your part of it: I declare my Faithfulness to my Promise; and by giving you this Bread to eat, and this Cup to drink, I openly profess and avow it, that I am, and will be faithful to all that I have promised, in the Covenant of Grace. Do you by taking this Bread, and drinking of this Cup, declare your stedfast Resolution to continue faithful to me: Let there be this mutual Sign between us, that the Covenant is owned on both sides. *I give you this*, says Christ, in token, that I do not Repent of my part; And *I take it*, says the Penitent, *Believing Christian*, who takes the Bread, and drinks the Cup, *I take it, Lord!* to declare and profess, that I do not repent of my

“ Ingagement

“ Ingagement to be the Lord’s. *Lord, I am*  
 “ *thine! I am devoted, resigned, given up*  
 “ *to thee; I come here to own it, to make a*  
 “ *profession of it, and to receive the Seal,*  
 “ *and Pledge of thy Covenant Faithfulness;*  
 “ *begging further Grace to enable me to per-*  
 “ *severe, and to answer the Ends, the Claims,*  
 “ *and Obligations of Redeeming Grace, and*  
 “ *Covenant Love. This is the true mean-*  
 “ *ing of our Work at the Table of the Lord.*  
 But,

II. Besides this in the general, there may  
 be an opening of our Mouth unto the Lord  
 by particular Promise and Ingagement against  
 such or such a Lust, or to abstain from such or  
 such a Sin, that hath been your own Iniquity, and  
 formerly most prevailing, to the Dishonour  
 of God, and the wounding of Conscience,  
*&c.* Or for the performance of such or such a po-  
 sitive Duty in particular, which is already  
 required and commanded; yet you may bind  
 your self in particular, because of the Difficulty  
 of the performance, or manifold Temptations  
 to discourage, or the Sense and Shame of for-  
 mer Neglects, *&c.* We have an Instance in  
 the Jews in *Isai. 10. 29. They entered into a*  
*Curse and an Oath, to walk in God’s Law,* that  
 was given them by *Moses;* and then follow  
 some particulars of their Duty, *Ver. 32. Ver.*  
*35. to bring their first-fruits every Year into the*  
*House of the Lord.*

This is proper and advisable for many Persons, to resolve, and promise, and ingage themselves to God, for the performance of such and such a particular Duty. As, for Instance, *Secret Prayer*, if it hath been neglected; or *Family Worship*, if it hath not been set up in any of your Houses; or to Endeavor the better sanctification of *the Lord's-Day*, or be more Careful in *Catechizing*, and instructing of Children and Servants, or to avoid such and such Injuring Company, &c. A Christian may ingage and promise, some such things as these in particular; and when he hath opened his Mouth to the Lord about these Matters, he must not go back. Only take heed that you do this with Understanding, and with Deliberation, in order to your better Performance of such Duties.

Now there are three ways in particular, whereby such a Promise or Ingagement may be made to God, when it may be truly said, that *we have opened our Mouth to the Lord*. 1. By inward Purpose and Resolution of Soul. 2. By formal Express Words. 3. By Significant Actions.

I. By Inward Purpose and Resolution of Soul. I know an inward Purpose of Mind, cannot oblige me to my Neighbour, there must be some Declaration of it, or else I am as free as ever. But God sees, and searches our Hearts, he knows our inward Thoughts; and is a constant Witness to all our Desires, Purposes, and Resolutions:

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Resolutions: If there be *an inward Resolution*, there is a Bond upon us *before God*. As *Hannah's Vow*, 1 *Sam. I. 11.* Which was only an inward Resolve of her Heart, did really bind her, though she did not speak a word. We speak to God by internal Acts of the Soul, and converse with him by the language of the Heart, as by words with men. And so we may promise to God by a Purpose, 1 *Kings 5. 5.* *I purpose to build an House*, is in Effect to say, *I will build*. Purposes are Express by *cleaving to the Lord*, *Acts XI. 23.* So that not to fulfill our Purposes, is to falsifie our word to God.

If any of you have not proceeded so far, as express Covenanting with God, by Word and Action, and yet have said in your Hearts, *I will return to the Lord, the Lord shall be my Portion, and my Ruler; though I have made mention of other Names, I will now make mention of thine only; though I have followed other Lovers, I will now return unto the Lord; though I have served divers Lusts and Pleasures, and been long deceived by the World and Sin, I will now give up my self to God in Christ; Lord, truly I am thy Servant, I desire to be so, I resolve to be so!* Even this Language of the Heart, though not express in Words, is heard and understood by God, and is binding upon you; so that you cannot falsifie, and contradict such a purpose and Resolution, without a great Aggravation of your Guilt.

II. You may bind and ingage your selves to God, by *express Words*, as here in the Text. And it is hardly possible, that where the former inward Purpose, and Resolution is sincere, but it will be declared by words; to make the deeper Impression on your selves, and to let others be Witnesses of it. So the People of the Jews, *Josh. XXIV. 24.* They said unto *Joshua*, *The Lord our God we will serve, and his Voice we will obey. And he set up a great Stone, and said, this Stone shall be Witness unto us, lest you deny your God.* So doth every one say, that is baptized at Age, and every Parent that hath his Child baptized, and almost every one in Sicknes, or danger of Death, or under Convictions of Sin, when Conscience is awakened. O what Resolutions, and Promises, and Ingagements to God, have many of us at such times made! Let us remember, how we have opened our Mouths unto the Lord, and cannot go back.

III. We may do it by *some Action*, though we say nothing with our Lips. As the giving of the hand did ingage in Suretiship, and testifie Consent, though the Person said nothing, *Prov. VI. 1.* As submission to the Ordinance of *Circumcision* amongst the Jews, made a Man a Debtor to the whole Law, without Speaking a Word, *Gal. V. 3.* The like is done by *Baptism*, to the whole Law of Faith. Whoever is baptized, is under an Obligation of  
this

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this kind: Especially if it were at Age, or if he have owned his Baptism, by the other Sacrament: For *the Lord's Supper* is a Covenant Rite, the very Nature of the Act doth oblige a man, as much as if he should sign and seal a thousand Bonds and Writings, wherein he promises to be faithful to Christ.

Now, who of us but have opened our Mouths to the Lord, by some way or other, if not by all these ways? Let us resolve not to go back. When we are assaulted by Satan, when we are inticed by Sinners, when we are sollicitated by our own Lusts, when staggered by a multitude of ill Examples; when discouraged by Reproach, or Difficulty, or Suffering, upon the account of our Obedience to Christ; Let us remember, we have sworn, and we must perform it; The Vows of God are upon us. *We have opened our Mouths to the Lord, and we cannot go back, from that which our Mouths have uttered, and our Lips have spoken.*

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Of the Strict

# OBLIGATION

O F

## Sacramental VOWS.

*From* JUDGES XI. 35. — *I have open'd my Mouth unto the Lord, and I Cannot go back.*

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### The Second Sermon.

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**T**HOUGH this Vow of *Jephtha* were rash and hasty, and the Matter of it unlawful, because it was not in his Power to dispose of his Daughters Life; Yet, by reason of his Vow, he thought himself obliged to offer her in Sacrifice. From this

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this Passage I discoursed of our solemn Vows and Promises to God, whereof the matter is supposed to be, not only lawful, but a Duty; and collected this, as the Ground of my Discourse, *That when we have opened our Mouths unto the Lord, we must not go back.* Or; *That Whoever doth bind or ingage himself to God, no Considerations whatsoever can dispense with, or loose him from that Ingagement.*

Having shewn what it is to open our Mouths to God, by any such solemn Vow or Promise; I come now to consider the Indispensible Obligation of it.

*I have opened my Mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back.* This must not be understood of a Natural, but a Moral Impossibility. He had a Natural Power to alter it; He was the supreme Magistrate at that time, and had none to compel him. But, I cannot go back; that is, I cannot lawfully do it, I cannot with Honour and Conscience revoke my Word. So, Gen. XXIV. 50. *We cannot speak unto thee good or bad,* says *Laban to Jacob*; that is, the hand of God doth so interpose, that we durst not. So the Apostle *Peter*, when forbidden to preach in the Name of Christ. Act. IV. 20. *We cannot but speak, the things that we have seen and heard*; i. e. We are bound in Conscience and Duty, to publish the Doctrine of the Gospel, though all the World should oppose, and strive to hinder it. I shall endeavour to prove this.

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*First*, By laying down the Grounds of this Indispensible Obligation, consequent to such an Ingagement. Secondly, by denying whatever can Pretend to have power to free us from the Obligation, after we have promised. And take notice of some Instances that may be alledged.

I. We are bound by the great Law of *Justice*, and *Righteousness*, not to go back, when once we have opened our Mouth to the Lord. We are sensible of Injustice towards one another; and when Conscience is awakened, we shall be more so, of our Unrighteousness in our Carriage towards God. As was *Judas* of his unjust Behaviour towards his Master, on which he comes, and indicts himself.

God hath an Antecedent original Right to us, and to all we have, and can do; It is therefore a piece of Justice that he have our Service and Obedience, whether we ingage or promise it or no. He hath an antecedent Right; but there is a new Title by our own Promise and Vow, frequently renewed: And it is one of the First Rules of Justice, to render to every one his own.

Upon this Principle did *Jephtha* proceed as to his Daughter: That after his Vow she was not so in his Power, that he might dispose of her according to his Affection, but he must do to her according to his Vow. By a solemn Vow or Promise to God, we may additionally bind and oblige our selves, though as to the Matter of the Vow, we were antecedently, it may be,

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bound to God, and to him only. That Man hath Power to bind and oblige himself, is manifest by the Light of Nature; it is the Ground of the Law of Nations, and of all humane Converse. Now by such a Promise or Vow to God, we bring a new divine Obligation upon our Selves, and so are under a *double Obligation*, and both may be called *Divine*; The one to the Matter of the Duty, by an antecedent Rule and Order of God; And the other to perform our Vow. And were it not thus, a greater Penalty would not ensue upon the non-performance: If there were no additional Obligation by the Vow, there would not be a greater Penalty for the breach of it. What is there amongst Men, or at least should be, more solemn and awful than an Oath? A promissory Oath appealing unto God? and how often has he severely punished the breach of it, Psa. LV. 20. *God shall afflict him, says the Psalmist, because he has broken his Covenant.* To this purpose is *Tyrus* threatned, *Amos I. 9.* for being false to her Covenant with *Judah.* *For three Transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away the Punishment thereof: because they delivered up the whole Captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly Covenant.* God is angry with mens breaking Covenant, even with their Enemies, *Ezek. XVII. 18, 19.* And calls it *His Covenant*, and *His Oath*, that they despised; and threatens to recompence it upon their Heads, and he did so. Yea though the Covenant that the *Gibeonites* made with *Israel*, was by

## of Sacramental Vows. 253

by Fraud; yet God was displeas'd at the breach of it, 2 Sam. XXI. *It is better, says Solomon, not to vow, than after Vows not to pay,* Eccles. V. 5. As he that forsakes his Colours, is more criminal, and shall be more severely punished, than he that refused to lift himself, tho' it was his Duty to do so.

Let us therefore remember, that by our Baptism, we are under the Oath of God, to renounce the World, Flesh and Devil, to be devoted to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our Portion, and as our Sovereign Lord; We have promised to be faithful to the Covenant of Christianity, so that in point of Justice, we are oblig'd by such an Ingagement to God. *And will a man rob God? Says the Prophet, and defraud him of his due? Mal. III. 8.* It is Theft added to our Perjury, if after we have vowed our selves to the Lord, we do not perform it. What Injustice, Perjury, and Unfaithfulness to God, have some of us been guilty of! O let us take heed, upon entering into new Vows, that we be more faithful!

II. Another Bond whereby we are oblig'd to the Performance of what we solemnly promise to God in this kind, is *Gratitude* and *Thankfulness*. *I have opened my Mouth to the Lord, and how can I go back? i. e.* "God hath graciously answered my Request, he hath granted me that which I set so great a Value upon; he hath crown'd me with Victory, and subdued mine Enemies before me; How shall I falsifie my Promise, after such an Ingagement

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“ upon me on the part of God? How shall I  
 “ brand my self with the black Character of  
 “ the vilest Ingratitude?

There needs little to urge the Obligation of this Bond, it is deeply engraven in our very Nature. And of all the evil Actions of men which have been pleaded for, and excused, yet never any went about to make an Apology for *Ingratitude*.

This ought to be of great Consideration here. For under what Bonds of Gratitude, do we all stand obliged to God! Could we ever lay any Obligation upon him, any further than his free Mercy by Promise does sometimes oblige us? Is not all his Kindness undeserved, and forfeited? Are we not loaded with the Multitude of his Benefits? *Who hath first given to the Lord, that it may be again rendered unto him?* And the more free and undeserved any kindness is, the stronger and firmer is the Obligation thereby “ We may therefore say, I have opened my Mouth to the Lord; He is the “ God of my Life, he hath compassed me about with Mercy all my days; what gracious Provision has he made for me, as to Time “ and Eternity! What hath he done to preserve me, to redeem me, to save me, and “ make me happy? Especially by giving Christ “ to dye for me! And shall I falsifie my Word “ to this gracious God? Can I return any thing “ answerable to that, which I have received “ from him; And shall I go back from what “ I have ingaged? This is another indispen-  
 ble

ble Bond, obliging to the Performance of what we promise. And some of us are under *Special Obligations*, of Gratitude and Thankfulness to God, by eminent and distinguishing Mercies, of various kinds, beyond Others.

III. There is yet another Bond, which is *Interest*, and *Advantage*. Of this *Jephtha* was also sensible in his Vow. He could not but have tender Affection for his only Child; but what was that to the Favour of God, which he hazarded by breaking his Vow? If a Man doth bargain and covenant with his Neighbour, and it prove to his Loss and Disadvantage; yet he is not to change, *though he has sworn to his Hart*. This is part of the good mans Character, *Psal. XV.* But here the Advantage in point of Interest, is in keeping our Vow, and Promise. Never any went back, or falsified his Ingagement to God, but it was to his unspeakable Damage: For what can more directly tend to break all Intercourse and Commerce between God and us? *They are a froward Generation, Children in whom is no Faith*, says God of his antient People; *therefore I will hide my Face from them*, *Deut. XXXII. 20.* i. e. I will not smile and be favourable to them, as I have been; for they are not true to their Word, they do not stand to their most solemn Ingagement: If we are faithful to God, we may expect his Presence and Favour. *I said, they are Children that will not lye, and so he was their Saviour*, *Isai. LXIII. 3.* But the *unfaithful, the*

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*false*, and *the treacherous*, however they may be saved and delivered as to temporal Salvation, they shall have a Portion with Unbelievers in the other World: For so the \* Greek word signifies, *Luk. XII. 46*. It imports such as have not kept their Word with God, and their Promise to him. So that, not only Justice, But Gratitude, and Interest, do oblige us, when we have opened our Mouths to God, not to go back.

II. Let us consider what can pretend to loose, or dispense with such an Obligation to God. Can any Length of Time, think you, set you free from your Obligation? Are you not as much obliged *now* by your Baptismal Covenant, as some Years ago? And will not the like be true hereafter, some Years hence? Can any Humane Authority dispense with your Engagement? Can a Magistrate, A Parent, a Master, oblige you, not to do what God commands, or to do any thing which he forbids? Must you not in all such Cases rather obey God than Man?

Can any temporal Advantage do it? Remember the Case of *Abraham*, as to the King of *Sodom*, when he was offered all the Spoil and Booty: *No*, says he, *I have lift up my hand*



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*hand to the Lord, that I will not take any thing that is thine,* Gen. XIV. 21. Can any fore Temptation, Difficulty or Danger, excuse our Unfaithfulness to God? Read the Language of the afflicted Church, Psal. XLIV. 17, 18. *Tho' we are killed all the day long, and all this be come upon us; yet have we not dealt falsely in thy Covenant.* Can any natural Obligation to our dearest Relations dispense with us? No, for this was the Case of *Jephtha*; he thought himself bound not to go back, though to save the Life of an only Child. And will you break your Promise to God, to please a Friend, or comply with a Relation? If the matter of *Jephtha's* Vow had been right, he had proceeded upon good Grounds, whatever Violence he had offered to himself, and his own Bowels. Let not men therefore plead the Strength of natural, corrupt Inclinations, when they are engaged by Baptism, and other solemn Engagements, to renounce the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. God has told us by the Prophet *Michah*, that no Sinner but loves his Sin as well as a Father does a Child; yea they would offer their first-born to God, sacrifice their own Children, that their Sin might be spared. *The Difficulty* of any Duty will not dissolve the Obligation; We must pluck out right Eyes, and cut off right Hands, be Charitable to our worst Enemies, be meek and patient under domineering Injuries, and Affronts; forgive, pity, and pray for those that reproach;

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us, and despitefully use us; be humble in the midst of Honour, be chaste and temperate in the heat and vigour of Youth, though surrounded with Temptations to the contrary, &c. We are under such Bonds to this, that no Difficulty will excuse us.

Neither will the contrary Examples of Others. We must be Singular, and swim against the Stream; and it may be shall be pointed at as *Precise*, if we will not do as others: But having opened our Mouths to the Lord, we must not go back, notwithstanding this. We are not to follow a Multitude, to do evil; no, how desirable soever it be, to have many join with us in serving and pleasing God; yet where it is not so, we must resolve to be faithful, though the whole Earth should corrupt their way, though we think we are left alone, and very few of our mind. Therefore, *if Sinners intice thee, consent thou not*, remembering thou hast opened thy Mouth unto the Lord.

*Use I.* God calls us this day to recollect our selves, and consider how often, and how many ways, and at what special Seasons, we have vowed and resolved to be *His*, and have not been faithful. How many of the Vows of God are upon us unperformed, after eminent Deliverances, in extraordinary Danger at Sea or Land, or on a Bed of Sickness, or at the Table of the Lord, or when convinced of Sin by the Word, or in particular Repentance after some great

Great Back-sliding? &c. We did open our Mouth to the Lord, but we have gone back. We have protested and covenanted against such or such a Sin, but we have not kept our Word. We have vowed against such and such a Temptation, to resist it, to strive to our utmost to do so; but we have let go our Watch, and fallen again and again by the same, and not kept our Word a Month, or a Week, or a few days. We engaged for the Performance of such, or such a Duty, that formerly we neglected; and yet it is not practised to this day. May I not instance in Family-Prayer, as to some; constant secret Prayer, as to others, coming to the Table of the Lord, &c. Would we not have better kept our Words to one of our fellow Creatures, than we have done to the Blessed God? Notwithstanding the unalterable Law, *That if you vow, you must pay?* Psal. LXXVI, 12. and Deut XXIII. 21, 23. *That which is gone out of thy Lips, thou shalt keep and perform, the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee,* Eccles. V. 2, 4, 5, 6.

Besides Vows of Obedience to God in general, think how you have falsified some solemn Engagements, as to particular Duties, and against some particular Lusts. Think, in some pinching Distress and Trouble, what Thoughts you have had, what Purposes, and Resolutions, and Promises you then made, if God would deliver and save you, or if he would do this or that, which you then prayed for; When you were poor and low in the World, or entering upon

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upon a Calling, if God would prosper you and give you Success, remember what you ingaged to do for him, how much of your Estates, and Time, and Interest should be employed for his Honour; what you would do for the Poor, what you would give to this, and the other charitable Use, if God should inable you: But where is the payment of these Vows? They that have been at Sea in a Storm, or that have been in prospect of Death on a sick Bed, they that have had their Houses burnt, and escaped with their Lives, or their Neighbours Dwelling consumed, and theirs spared; had need reflect seriously what Promises and Vows they made to God, which are yet unperformed. How often has the Drunkard vowed Sobriety, the Aulterer promised Chastity, and the Worldling ingaged himself to mind God and Heaven more, and the Lyer, or Unrighteous, the crafty Dealer in his Trade, ingaged hereafter to keep a good Conscience? *Here is the Bond*, may God and Conscience say; *but where is the Payment?* This is just matter of Reproof, and Humiliation, and should be applied by every one to his own Case.

II. We exhorted then to greater Fidelity, in the Performance of what you have promised and ingaged to God. Several things I might offer by way of Motive, and then I shall add several Directions and Counsels.

I. Consider how faithful God is in the Performance of every thing he promises unto us. We were undone for ever, if God should falsifie his Word to us; but Heaven and Earth shall sooner pass away, and the Covenant of the Day and Night shall sooner cease.

How faithful was *Jesus Christ*, in his Ingagement and Undertaking for us, notwithstanding all the Difficulties in his way; Notwithstanding all the Discouragements he met with, all the Opposition and Contradiction of Sinners that he indured, yet he finished the Work that his Father had given him to do, and which he freely undertook in the Covenant of Redemption. He is our Pattern and Example, let us imitate him in his Fidelity.

II. *How* constant are other men in their sinful Ingagements. *Herod* would not deny the Head of *John Baptist* to his Daughter-in-Law, though he were loth to grant it, because of his Oaths sake. *Salvian* speaks of some in his time, that vowed they would not relieve such a one, or which was worse, they would not restore, what they had gotten from such a one, and by all means they would be true to their Vow, which they ought to have repented of. And shall not we be more Careful and Constant in the Performance, of what we have ingaged to God, which is according to his Will?

III. *Consider*, he is willing to give you Strength, to keep what you have ingaged. He is Faithful, to what he has promised, and he is able to establish you, and keep you from falling. He calls you to nothing, but what his Grace shall be sufficient to enable you to do, if you will follow his Counsel, and seek his Grace, and observe his Method.

IV. *How* foolish and dishonourable is it, not to perform to God that which we have ingaged! Doth he not know our Treachery? Can he not punish it? What reproachful Folly is it, to be so unconstant! What a vain and trifling Humour doth it argue, thus to dally with the Blessed God! *To say, and unsay*; to make Vows and break them; to resolve for God with the greatest Solemnity, and the next day so shamefully to forget him! What a Dishonour is it to our Profession, when those who are not serious Christians, know our Promises and Ingagements to God, and yet observe our base Unfaithfulness!

V. *What* complicated Wickedness is there in such a Proceeding! As, what vile Hypocrisie, to be false to that God to whom you have sworn Allegiance! What abominable Sacrilege, to alienate our Selves from him, who hath so undoubted and manifold a Right in us, and to all our Services! What Falsehood and Treachery, to recall what we have devoted to him!

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to rase out what we have subscribed, and written with our own hands! to revoke what our Lips have uttered, and our Mouths have spoken, and that in the most serious time of our Lives! To violate the Faith, which we have solemnly plighted in the Presence, of God, and sometimes before Witnesses! And by how much the oftener this has been renewed, so much the greater Guilt. What an unworthy Reproach of God's Service, and Contempt of his Favour, doth it imply, to undervalue all the Blessings of Heaven, and the Love and Favour of God, for a little Money, or Honour, or Pleasure, or the Gratification of a Lust!

VI. ~~How~~ unspeakable is the Misery and Danger of such Unfaithfulness! Is not this the God, in whose Favour our Life and Happiness is bound up? By whom we must be saved if ever we are saved? Who alone has the Words of eternal Life? Is there any, but He, can supply all our Wants, relieve our miserable Souls, forgive our aggravated Sins, succour us in a dying Hour, absolve us in the day of Reckoning, and make us blessed to all Eternity?

~~Moreover~~, Let your own Experience tell you, how much better it was with you formerly, when you walked in some Measure of Uprightness and Fidelity to God, than since your Back-slidings and Revolt. Since you have broken your Vows, and run from God and Christ, to the World and Sin and Vanity; have

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have you any such Peace, and Calmness, and Quiet of Mind and Conscience, as before? Are not some of you almost distracted with the Terrours of the Lord, and the Gripes of an accusing Conscience? Do you not fear, lest you may draw back to Perdition, and that God's Soul will have no more Pleasure in you? And who can express how dreadful that man's Case is, that Unfaithful, Treacherous, Backslider's Case, concerning whom the God of Love, and Life, shall say, *I have no Pleasure any more in such a one, i. e.* I abhor him, and reject him! Do you not hereby also lose all that you have formerly wrought; all your Profession of Religion, all the Convictions you have ever had, all the Prayers you ever put up, all the good you have ever done? And after having begun in the Spirit, you must now end in the Flesh, and perish by your own unfaithfulness and Treachery; because, when you had opened your Mouths to God, you would go back. *O remember whence you are fallen, and repent*: And if you return with all your Hearts, he will yet receive you graciously, and heal your Back-slidings; he will not remember your former Treachery, or upbraid you with it: for this is the tenour of his merciful Covenant. And though you may sometimes fear, that by *Unworthy Receiving*, you have Eat and Drunk your own Damnation, fear, lest you have *sealed* your Damnation many a score times this way; yet the Lion of the Tribe of Judah can break, can cancel these  
Seals:



## of Sacramental Vows. 265

Seals: if you afflict your Souls before him, and seek his Face, and loath your selves for your Iniquities, and ingage your selves afresh to be the Lord's. You need not sit down in sluggish Despair, there is Mercy for such as you, though you have been false to God formerly, if you will be true to Him for the time to come. Plead therefore the Promise of his Covenant, to put his Fear into your Hearts, and to give you his Holy Spirit, that you may be inabled to walk in his Way, and may not finally depart from him.

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Of the Strict

# OBLIGATION

O F

## Sacramental VOWS.

FR O M

JUDGES XI. 35. ——— *I have open'd my  
Mouth unto the Lord, and I Cannot go back.*

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### The Third Sermon.

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**T**H A T which remains, is to assist you with some Directions, that you may not go back.

I. Take heed that you be not rash and hasty in making Vows to God: For what is  
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slightly

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slightly and easily undertaken, will be as easily violated. Many, under a Pang of Conscience, especially if they be sick, when they are a little sensible of the Guilt of Sin, and afraid of being damned for it, will vow and promise any thing: And when that is done, think all is well without considering whether they like the terms of Christ's Service, and can resolve to deny themselves, as he expects; They consider not what they bind themselves unto, and therefore what they do in an hasty fit is not like to hold. We have an Instance in the Jews, *Deut. V.* and afterwards in *Josb. XXIV. 15.* *If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, chuse you this day whom you will serve.* He puts them upon making a Comparison between *Jehovah*, and the God's of the Heathen, to awaken their Indignation against so abominable a Choice, as preferring dumb Idols before the living God. And without some such consideration of the Reasons of our Choice, and the Obligations of our Duty, we are not like to make good our Vows and Purposes of Obedience: Such is the Fickleness of our Minds, the Treachery of our Hearts, the Subtilty of Satan, the Deceitfulness of Sin, the Dangers that surround us, the Variety of Temptations, from within and from without, that lie in wait for us; that without *Consideration*, in order to a fixed Choice, we shall soon revolt, and our Goodness vanish like the Morning Cloud, and as the early Dew that passeth away.

If you have smarted a little for your Sin and Folly, and the Hand of God hath touched you,

or

## of Sacramental Vows. 269

or Pain and Sickneſs hath brought you to think of Death, and the fear of not recovering makes you apprehend your danger of Hell; no wonder if then, and thereupon, from that Motive, you vow to be the Lord's: But ſuch a haſty Vow is ſeldom kept, if the Perſon recover, and his Circumſtances alter; it laſts no longer than that which gave riſe to it; the Foundation, as one ſays, is too narrow for the Superſtructure: For there can be no more ſtrength in the Conclusion, than there is in the Premiſes; and therefore if the Cauſe and Motive be removed, your good Purpoſes and Holy Vows will die away. We have ſad Inſtances in Scripture and Experience of the ſhameful Apoftacy of many ſuch, who raſhly and haſtily ingage themſelves to God, without due Conſideration of what they undertook and promiſed, and of the Diſcouragements they might meet with.

II. Fix deeply upon your Minds the ſenſe of God's Mercies and Benefits: For if any thing will hold us firm to our Duty, after we have ingaged our ſelves, the Cords of Love are moſt likely to do it. This had force upon *Jephtha* with reference to his Vow; *For as much as the Lord hath taken Vengeance for thee on thine Enemies, God haaving done ſo much for thee, thou art obliged to perform thy Promise to him.* Think often of the manifold Bleſſings we receive from God, outward and inward, ſpiritual and temporal;

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Mercies to our Souls and Bodies, Personal and Relative, past, present and promised. This would make us feel the force of the Apostles Exhortation, when he beseeches us *by the Mercies of God, that we present our Bodies to him as a living Sacrifice, which is but our reasonable Service.* But if we forget his Works of Kindness to us, we shall soon forget our Promises of Obedience to him, as was the Case of the Jews.

III. Take special Notice of the Beginnings of your Declensions from God, and Unfaithfulness to your Vows. It is that which undoes us all, that we neglect the Examination of our Selves, till things are so very bad, that we are ashamed to look inward, and afraid to look back. How many have neglected Prayer so long, that they grow shy of God's Presence by disuse, and are ashamed to go to him in Prayer! He that is sensible of his first Warring, will be more easily recovered, than he that has wandered far and long.

Observe whether you are not declining. Can you mourn for Sin, as formerly? Are you sincere and conscientious in every Duty, as formerly? Do you not offend oft'ner, and with less Remorse and Difficulty, than formerly? Are not the Thoughts of God, and Heaven, and the other World, more cold and lifeless, than formerly? Are not you and the World better Friends, so that you like a Portion in it better than heretofore? Can you  
not

not bear to have God dishonoured by others, and live without honouring him your selves; and not lament it, or be uneasie under it, as you were wont to be? Take heed of the Beginnings of such Declensions.

IV. Endeavour to possess your Hearts with a Sense of the Evil of Sin, that you may hate it, and resolve universally against it, and not be partial in your Obedience. Our Vows of Obedience to God, must be of equal extent with our Duty; It is intire Christianity we must resolve upon, our Hearts must be set against all known Sin, resolve to comply with the Divine Orders in every particular. Then shall I not be ashamed, says the Psalmist, when I have respect to all thy Commandments. I hate every false way. I refrained my Self from every evil way, that I might keep thy Word, *Psal. CXIX. 6, 101, 128.*

There are many little Motives that make men abstain from some Transgressions, set upon the external Performance of some Duties; when they are yet partial in Obedience, as *Jehu*, and *Herod*, and others, who were rejected of God. You may abstain from some Sins, by the Influence of Education, the Power of Example, Shame of the World, particular Temper and Constitution, the Fear of temporal Punishments, the Terrours of an affrighted Conscience, the advancing of our Reputation with Others, the Inconsistency of one Sin with another that we love more,

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*&c.* But such Vows and Promises against Sin, as will consist with the Dominion and Reign of any one, can never be acceptable to God, or will be lasting. Christ will have no Disciples that will not part with all for him, who will not accept him absolutely upon his terms, without the Exception of any Lust to be spared, or any other Reserve to be made.

V. Remember that there are some special Seasons, when it is fit to renew our Vows and Resolutions, to repeat and strengthen them. As, when we are to draw nigh to God in any such Ordinances, wherein he seals his Promises and Covenant to us, or upon the receipt of any new, more than ordinary Mercy from Heaven, or any peculiar manifestation of God's Presence with us; As *Jacob* at *Bethel*, after his Communion with God in Prayer, and successful Wrestling with the Angel of the Covenant; he then vowed a Vow, that the Lord should be his God, *Gen. VIII. 21.* Thus *David*, when God delivered his Soul from Death, and his Eyes from Tears, and his Feet from falling, resolves to walk before the Lord in the Land of the Living, *Psa. CXVI. 8, 9.* Natural Reason will instruct us in this: For even the Pagan Mariners, when God appeased the Tempest, made Vows to him, *Jonah I.* After any special Favour of Providence, to your Persons or Relations, you may renew your Ingagement to be the Lord's, saying, This God, who has thus heard my  
Prayer,



## of Sacramental Vows. 273

Prayer, and dealt bountifully with me, he shall be my God for ever.

It may be proper also after any considerable Defection from God, and great Back-sliding; when you renew your Repentance, and cry for Forgiveness, as a Testimony of Sincerity, you should renew your Resolution to be the Lord's, *2 Chron. XXXIV. 31, 14. Hof. I. 2.* In times of Difficulty and Danger for owning the Truth of Christ; when our Brethren are persecuted abroad, or a threatening Cloud hangs over us at home, it is seasonable to renew our Covenant, and fortifie our Resolutions of Fidelity to Christ. *Paul and Barnabas* went about confirming the Churches, exhorting them with full purpose of Heart to cleave to the Lord; when at the same time they told them, that through manifold Tribulations they must enter into Heaven, *Act. XIV. 22.* So in a time of general Profaneness and Apostasy from God, when his Name is dishonoured by the Scandals of professing Christians, *John VI. 66.* When several of Christ's Followers were offended at him, and walked no more with him; he says to his Apostles, Will ye also go away? Will not you be more faithful, and more resolved? We should at such a time look to our Stedfastness, and renew our covenant Engagement; that when others make Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience, we may preserve both; That though a great part of *Israel* should play the Harlot, the Remnant of *Judah* may not thus Sin.

It may be proper for those also who are entering into any new Condition, or Employment, or State of Life, to begin it with a Solemn Resolution, and serious Promise of Fidelity to God; as a Means to ingage his Presence with us, on which depends all the Comfort of our Lives, and of all the Success of whatever we undertake. Moreover it is seasonable for those, whose lawful Affairs call them abroad; who are travelling to such Places, where they must expect to meet with more Temptations to Sin than formerly, and to see more of God's Dishonour. So when our Condition, or Affairs give us the Prospect of more than ordinary Danger, that we shall carry our Lives as in our hand, when there is like to be but a step as it were between us and Death; As, for Women that draw near the time of their Travail, and for Men called to hazard their Lives in the high Places of the Field, or upon the mighty Waters, either for the safety of their Country, or the Service of their Prince; or as Merchants and Tradesmen, who are about to undertake long and dangerous Voyages, &c.

VI. Another Direction may be, That you carefully look to it, that the whole Heart be ingaged in making such Vows to God, and in endeavouring to keep them. Do it with the greatest Seriousness, Sincerity, and Concern. *Who is he that ingageth his Heart to seek after God?* Jer. XXX. 21. It is easy to utter a few good Words, and to use the Expressions and Phrases  
wherein

wherein our Ingagement to God is comprised ; but God looks to our Hearts. A cold Will, a faint Purpose, a few formal Words, with a few lazy Intentions, will be rejected by God as a Mockery of him, and will betray us to Apostasie. *They were not stedfast in thy Covenant, because their Hearts were not right with God,* Pſal. LXXVIII. 37. All the Powers of our Souls should be ingaged, that we may set to our Work as resolved Persons, who make Religion our Business; and will prosecute in good earnest, with suitable Indeavours, what we have resolved: For *if our Heart be divided, we shall be found faulty,* in this, and other particulars, *Hof. X. 2.*

VII. Take heed of supposing, that if you break your Vows and Ingagements, it is but to repent and renew them again, and all will be well, and so you may please God and the Devil too. Labour therefore to come under the Conviction of the New Bonds you are under, by every renewal of your Ingagement to be the Lord's, Deut. XXVI. 17. *Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his way, and to keep his Statutes, and Commandments, and Judgments, and to hearken to his Voice.* Be ashamed of being false to such a solemn Ingagement, and let that help to keep you stedfast.

VIII. Do this with a deep Sense of your own Weakness and Insufficiency, without  
Divine

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Divine Assistance, to perform what you engage. We are of our Selves treacherous, and unstable as Water; it is God must make us to stand; if we are strong or constant, it must be in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might. We never make any Holy Vows, but the Security of their Performance depends upon Divine Strength, and not upon our own. *I will walk in the way of thy Statutes,* says David; and it follows, *O forsake me not utterly,* Psal. CXIX. 8. He that would be safe, must *fear always*; and he that trusteth in his own Heart, and is confident in his own Strength, is a Fool; and Experience will prove him so, *Prov. XXVIII. 14, 26.*

How many Promises have you violated, which you verily thought you should never have broken! Am I a Dog, says *Hazael*, that I should do this? And yet afterwards he did it. How confident was *Peter* of his Perseverance, and yet how soon did he deny his Master? Let us therefore beg the Grace of God to confirm our Minds and Hearts; that we may be faithful to our Vows, and not wilfully yield to Temptation: And as long as we are unwilling, all the Devils in Hell cannot force us upon a Sin; Temptation may knock at our Hearts, but cannot enter, unless we open the Door. And if we are sensible of our need of God's Grace, and value it, and seek it, he will not be wanting to give us his Holy Spirit.

IX. After a General Vow and Promise of Obedience to God, it may be convenient sometimes to fix a particular Resolution against some particular Sin, for such a determinate space of time. You know the Temptations you are like to meet with, you know the Sin that does most easily beset you, you know where the Devil has the greatest Advantage against you, and in what Circumstances you are least able to resist him: Now resolve for to morrow, or for this next Week, that by the Grace of God you will watch more narrowly, and be more careful to perform your Vows; and afterwards you may proceed to a longer time.

X. Forget not to Review your State and Frame, but frequently call your Selves to Account, how you perform your Promises to God. How many make Vows of Reformation, and never think any more of 'em, as if the meer Promise and Vow were all; when in its own Nature it con-notes a relation to somewhat that is to follow. If you inquire not whether you have been faithful, and true to your Ingagements, it is a sign you were not serious and sincere at first. And by reviewing our selves as to this, we shall take notice of our broken Vows, so as to be humbled, and excited to Watchfulness for the future. Considering that at such a time, and at such a time, we did thus and thus resolve and promise, but God knows how unfaithful we have been; we shall thereby

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thereby discover by what Steps we fell, by what Occasions we were drawn away, how we came to be insnared, and where we ought to set our strongest Guard: And so this will help to establish us, and keep us hereafter.

XI. If, in the way of our Duty, we meet with a great Temptation; let us call upon our Souls to a speedy and resolute Resistance, and summon all our Strength to repel the Temptation. In some Cases you should not give the Devil so much as a patient hearing, but leave the place, and flee the Snare. I confess in some Cases we may argue the matter, and give Reasons for our Refusal of a Temptation; As when it is about things doubtful and disputable, concerning which we are not fully determined in our own Minds; Or when it is to a Sin that hath already taken hold of our Affections, and all our Reasoning will be little enough to withstand the Assault; Or when the Temptation is brought us by the Discourse and Perswasion of other Men. But in other Cases, when tempted to manifest Wickedness, and known Sin; especially such as are notoriously infectious and defiling; we are not to parly, or hazard a Dispute with so subtile an Enemy as Satan: such a Conference with the Devil is never like to issue to our Advantage, and will encourage him to assault us with more Violence. Yea there are Cases, wherein we should not so much as frame in our Minds and Fancies all the tempting Circumstances, lest the working of a corrupt Imagination upon  
the

the Greatness of the Temptation, should prove it self a direct Temptation to that Sin.

XII. When ordinary Resolutions, and General Promises and Vows to God will not do; you may bind your Selves by *a solemn particular Vow*. Only take heed you do it not rashly, but with Deliberation; and that you use all other Means, and consider the Guilt of Perjury if you break it. For there is a double Guilt in Sins after Vows; A man obliges Himself, who was before obliged by God only, and so there is a new obligation upon us. Yea such a one comes under a new Divine Obligation, by making Himself the Subject of it. As, when God says, *Honour the Lord with thy Substance*; I am obliged by that, whether I make a Vow or no. The same God hath said, *Pay thy Vow to the most High*; This latter lays no Obligation upon me till I have vowed, but when I have vowed, it doth; so that then, and thereby, I am under *a double Divine Obligation*, One to the Matter of the Duty by vertue of the divine Command, and another to keep my Vow: I am under a divine Obligation, and under a *Self-Obligation*, by my Vow, whence a greater Penalty will be due, than otherwise would have been.

We have many Examples of good Men, who have made Vows of doing something Holy and Religious, in an uncommanded Instance, or the doing of a commanded Duty more frequently, or in a more excellent manner, with some more noble Circumstance; or adding *a*

## 280 The Strict Obligation

*new Promise and Vow* to the old Duty, to make it the more necessary, and the better to secure the the Performance of it. But great Prudence and Caution must be used in these and such like Vows, otherwise they will prove a Snare. See therefore as to your Vow, that it be holy in the Matter, and prudent in the Manner, and useful in the Consequence, and safe in all the Circumstances of it as to the Person. We must not vow any thing that may not *lawfully* be fulfilled, or what we are not *Able* to fulfil, is not in our Power. Or *rashly* and *indiscreetly*, what might be better, and more prudently let alone. As if for a long time to come, or our whole Life, when we can't judge at present of our future Capacity to make it good. Nor should we accustom ourselves to Vow *frequently*, lest we hazard the not performing what we have vow'd. These Cautions Observ'd, we have Instances in Scripture of very Useful and Acceptable Vows; In the Old Testament, by *Jacob, Hannah, David, &c.* and there are Rules and Cautions about them in the Law of *Moses*: And our Saviour seems to leave the matter of Vows in the same Condition he found it. And we find by Practice of the Apostle *S. Paul* at *Cenchrea*, something to this purpose; not to insist upon the Instance of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, who vowed their Possessions to the use of the Church; and Death inflicted for their Miscarriage herein. Some think the like of the Widows in the Apostolical Age, who some of them promised a Life of Widowhood



hood and Chastity: and that 'twas concerning the Mariage of some such, that the Apostle says, they *had broken their first Faith*, &c.

It is doubtless lawful, in some particular Cases, when we find our selves indangered by such and such Temptations and Occasions of Sin, to interpose a *Vow*, or Promise as to that particular, besides the general one of Obedience to God. This may be some Help to our Safety; but we must use other Means also, and take heed that we do not unreasonably destroy our Christian Liberty, so as to occasion a Snare to our Souls. Especially take heed that you be punctual and strict in the Observance of your Vow, it being *better not to Vow, than after Vows not to perform*: Whereas many, when Conscience flies in their Face for some late Guilt, will Vow and Promise to come no more to such a place, or into such Company, to play no more at such a Game, &c. But these being Bonds of their own making, they think they may discharge themselves again whenever they please. Without a due sense of the general obligation of Obedience to God, antecedent to these particular Vows, we shall never be able to keep them.

XIII. Endeavour to live in the Exercise and Increase of Faith in the Cross of Christ. This will assist you to be faithful to what you have engaged: For the Cross of Christ will represent to you the evil of Sin, so as to deaden the force of Temptation; This will keep alive the sense of his Love and Kindness to us, and so engage us out of Gratitude to live to him. And it is by the

Cross of Christ that the Holy Spirit was purchased, to enable us to please God and obey him. Therefore live in the Exercise of Faith on a Crucified Saviour, live by the Faith of the Son of God.

*Lastly*, Be much in Prayer, especially secret and Closet Prayer. All the other Counsels that can be given, will not avail without this: The Experience of all Christians will attest it, and some of our own in particular, that according to our Neglect or conscientious Performance of this, our solemn Promises will be kept or broken, Sin or Grace will prevail, the House of *Saul* or *David* will get Strength. You know the common Complaints of those that have fallen into Sin, and under God's Displeasure, by Back-sliding; Oh I neglected Prayer; or I was careless, customary and formal in it; and so I lost my Strength, and fell from God, and yielded to Temptation; I broke my Vows, wounded my Conscience, and dishonoured my Profession, here was the beginning of my Fall. The neglect of this Duty, or Remissness in it, is a certain Sign that you are declining, and in part declined, and already entered into Temptation; and if not prevented in time, will be the Cause and Root of further Apostasie. And therefore to all the other pieces of the Armour of God; necessary in the Christian Warfare, this is added, Eph. VI. 18. *Praying always, with all Prayer and Supplication, watching thereunto with all Perseverance.*



