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SACRAMENTAL
MEDITATIONS AND ADVICES,

GROUNDLED UPON SCRIPTURE TEXTS;

PROPER FOR COMMUNICANTS,

To prepare their Hearts, excite their Affections, quicken their Graces, and enliven their Devotions, on Sacramental Occasions.

AND LIKEWISE USEFUL

To promote gracious Dispositions and Resolutions in Christians, at all times, upon the remembrance of a Crucified Jesus.

TOGETHER WITH

A SHORT CHRISTIAN DIRECTORY;

AND A VARIETY OF

SCRIPTURE SONGS,

FOR ZION'S TRAVELLERS.

ALSO

AN APPENDIX,

Consisting of

A LECTURE concerning the institution of the Lord's Supper: on 1 Cor. xi.
17.—to the end.

A PREPARATION SERMON: from Josh. iii. 5.

An ACTION SERMON: from Cant. ii. 4.

To this edition is added,

THE YOUNG COMMUNICANT'S CATECHISM,

with

A PROPOSAL FOR PUBLIC RENEWING OF THE

BAPTISMAL COVENANT.

BY THE REV. JOHN WILLISON,
Late Minister at Dundee.

PHILADELPHIA :
PRINTED FOR R. PATTERSON, PITTSBURG,
By A. Walker, No. 24, Arch-street,
1816.

RECEIVED

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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Dear Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th inst. regarding the matter mentioned therein.

The matter is being given the consideration it deserves and you will be advised as soon as a final decision has been reached.

Very respectfully,
The Registrar

Yours truly,
The Registrar

RECOMMENDATIONS,

By the Rev. Dr. J. J. Janeway, the Rev. T. H. Skinner, and the Rev. Jas. Patterson.

DEAR SIR,

WILLISON'S "SACRAMENTAL MEDITATIONS AND ADVICES," contain a fund of most excellent theological thoughts, and a strain of evangelical piety. Any christian may read them with profit. Those whose minds are not sufficiently furnished to conduct their own meditations, would, by frequently perusing portions of them, find much assistance in preparing for the holy communion of our Lord's Supper.

THE CATECHISM prepared by this pious and judicious writer, for assisting young persons in making their first approach to the holy supper of our Lord, is peculiarly valuable. For several years I have been in the habit of recommending it to applicants for admission to that christian ordinance. Young persons should study this Catechism carefully; and indeed it is worthy of the attentive perusal of many advanced in life, whose minds are not sufficiently informed on this important subject.

Yours, &c.

J. J. JANEWAY.

Sept. 15, 1815.

Mr. A. Walker.

In the foregoing recommendation I cordially concur.

T. H. SKINNER.

I most cordially subscribe to the above recommendations.

JAS. PATTERSON.

PREFACE.

THE eternal Son of God, when taking his leave of an ungrateful world, instituted the sacrament of the Supper, as a lively resemblance and memorial of his bloody sufferings and death in the room of his people; and also to be a bright and lasting evidence of the amazing love of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to perishing sinners.

As God once sent his Son into the world in a lowly habit, clothed with human flesh, to save sinners, so now he sends him in a homely dress, clothed with the elements of bread and wine, to assure us of his love, and to engage us to come to him. Kings expect that their children will be respected, though their officers be neglected. Surely (saith God) "They will reverence my Son;" they will make him welcome, and hearken to him.

In this most august ordinance of the New Testament, the great God approaches very near to us, and we to him; and yet it is to be deeply regretted, that many who profess to believe this, come to it with so little thought and preparation, and with so much indifference and carelessness of spirit.— Oh, shall we venture so near the great God, who is infinitely holy, in whose sight the heavens are not pure, and in whose presence the sun and stars are dimmed, and the brightest seraphims do gather in their wings, and account themselves as little flies before him! and shall we, who are creatures so mean and so vile, be careless and unconcerned, when we make the nearest approach to this great and holy God, that we can make on this side heaven.

Ought we not to go blushing, ashamed, and deeply humbled on many accounts, and particularly for our ingratitude for redeeming love, that "love which passeth knowledge," and for our contempt of "God's unspeakable gift," the greatest sin in the world; yea, we should go wondering that we are out of hell, for many thousands are burning there who have not sinned so heinously, in making light of precious Christ, as we have done.

Moreover, reader, consider if you go to this ordinance unpreparedly, or with indifference, you not only make light of the Lord Jesus Christ, but you are "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," 1 Cor. xi. 27. Surely that word may cause you to quake and tremble; blood-guiltiness of any sort is a dreadful sin, and especially to be guilty of the "blood of the Lord." Murder is a sin that cries for vengeance on the actor, and gives God no rest till he punish it, Gen. iv. 10. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the earth." If it be a crying sin to murder a common person, what must it be to murder a king? "Who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?" 1 Sam. xxvi. 9. O then, what a crime must it be to murder the eternal Son of God, who is thy exalted King, thy everlasting Father, thy dear Redeemer, and thy God who gave thee a being. Child-murder is a heinous crime, but what Christ-murder is, no tongue can tell! If on him that slew Cain, (that wicked man) vengeance should be taken sevenfold, what vengeance will be taken on him that crucifies afresh the Lord of glory? This consideration should make all of us afraid of careless and unworthy communicating.

If we would communicate worthily, we must be earnest, not only for the life of grace, but also for the liveliness of grace; not only for the truth and sincerity of grace, but likewise for the activity and vigorous exercise of grace. So that the believer himself doth not eat and drink worthily, unless the grace that is in him be excited and exercised at this ordinance. There must be not only faith in the truth of it, but there must be faith realizing, applying, appropriating, and making use of Christ's death and purchase in this ordinance. Not only must there be a disposition of soul to be humbled for sin, but there must be actual mourning and melting of heart for sin, and for particular sins, when we look on him we have pierced by them. Not only must there be a principle of love to Christ, but also an exciting of love to flame out to Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us.

Worthy communicating being a work of such importance, the following Scriptural Meditations and Advices are humbly offered to Christians, as an help in their preparation for it.—Reading and thinking much on the subjects here proposed, may through God's blessing be useful to promote their habitual preparation for the holy supper. Christ's body and blood herein exhibited are pure and holy things, and should be received in prepared and cleansed hearts. His body never saw corruption in the grave, nor will be mixed with it in hearts where corruption is allowed. It lay in a virgin's womb, and in a virgin sepulchre, and will still be entertained in virgin souls and affections; in hearts purified and consecrated to God. In these Christ chooses to reside, and not in those where sin and the world, with the lusts thereof, are

harboured. Oh, had we grace to maintain and cherish the fear of God, and the love of Christ habitually in our souls, we might, without much pains, be prepared for coming to him at his table.

Did we always bear in our minds, that sacramental occasions are solemn appointments, and Bethel meetings with God, for renewing covenant, and entertaining fellowship and communion with him, we would guard more against formality creeping in upon us in our preparations for, and in our attendance upon this ordinance, than, alas, we do. Oh, such formality will provoke the Master of our solemn feasts to withdraw from them, and then what poor, dry, melancholy, and lifeless things they will be? What are sacraments without Christ's presence in them? O let us never be satisfied with communion Sabbaths, without communion with Christ in them.

On the other hand, if we would keep up communion with Christ in these ordinances, let us beware of relying on our previous pains or preparations, either for our right performing of our duty, or for our acceptance in it: For we are never more ready to miscarry, and to be disappointed, than when we are guilty of this resting. Many go to the Lord's table with great humiliation for sin, and yet come away without comfort: Why? because they make a Christ of their sorrow. O what worth can we see in our best preparations, confessions, prayers, tears, humiliations, &c. if we compare them with the law of God? We have more cause to be ashamed of them, than to lay any stress on them. Could we renounce all self-confidence, and disclaim all our provision in point of dependence, and cast ourselves wholly on Christ for strength, through-bearing, and acceptance, we would have better success at the Lord's table, than commonly we have.

We are never more fit for this holy table, than when we are most humbled, and most ashamed of ourselves, because of our unfitness for this solemn approach; and we are never less fit, than when we think ourselves most fit and prepared for the duty. A holy deniedness to all self-sufficiency, and a deep sense of unworthiness and unfitness, is the best preparation we can attain to for this solemn ordinance. Let us make holy David our pattern, when going to partake, Psal. lxxii. 16. "I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." And let us pray with the spouse, Cant. iv. 16. "Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof flow out." AMEN.

DUNDEE, August, 1747.

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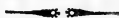
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SACRAMENTAL

MEDITATIONS.



MEDITATION I.

From Heb. xi. 7. By faith Noah prepared an Ark to the saving of his House.

THOUGH the flood that drowned the old world was at many years distance, yet Noah was moved with fear at God's warning him of it, and prepared an Ark for his safety: and shall not unconverted, unbelieving sinners, who have a far more terrible flood threatened against them, and may only be a few days distant, take warning, and provide with all speed for their safety? Oh! shall I, a wretched guilty sinner, take rest, while I am within the flood-mark of God's wrath, and not arise in time to provide an Ark to flee to for my safety!—But, O good news, I have not the Ark to provide, it is prepared to my hand; God, in his infinite wisdom and pity, hath made ready an Ark long ago for lost sinners of Adam's race to flee to, and now is completely furnished and finished, and all things are ready, so that I have nothing to do but go and take possession.

O what had become of me, and other perishing sinners, had we the Ark to build ourselves? Nay, the whole creation had not been able or sufficient for this purpose. How soon would the raging flood of divine wrath sweep away all the arks of men or angels' building! But thanks be unto God for ever, for the excellent well built Ark of God's devising, for the many spacious rooms and safe lodging places within it, for the suitable accommodation and plentiful provision laid up therein, and for the door opened in the side thereof for perishing souls to enter by. The salvation of sinners by a crucified Christ, is a well ordered scheme, a beautiful contrivance! Blessed be the infinitely wise contriver for it. I see all things in Christ crucified necessary for me: He is made of God to me, *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*. There is in him infinite wisdom to guide me, a spotless righteousness to cover me, precious blood to wash me, the Holy Spirit to sanctify me, his good word to direct me, his just laws to govern me, and his infinite fulness to supply all my needs: Safe and happy then would I be, were I found in him. O that, up-

on trial by scripture marks, I could conclude myself to be within the Ark, to wit, a crucified Jesus!

Can I say, I have been warned of God, and moved with fear, to fly to this Ark? Have I discovered my shelterless state by nature, the waves and billows of wrath rising and rolling against me? Have I seen my own inability to provide an Ark for myself, and the excellency and fitness of the Ark of God's providing? Have I been made willing to abandon all false arks, and earnestly inquisitive how to get into the true Ark? Have I been made willing to use all appointed means for this end, to read, hear, meditate, pray, repent, believe, essay to climb up the sides of the Ark, and press to get in at the door thereof? Have I been willing to venture my all in the Ark, like Noah, notwithstanding of the discouragements, scoffs, and hatred of the world for so doing? Have I willingly acquiesced, sheltered, and lodged my soul in God's Ark, and been made to say, *This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell?* Come what floods will, Christ shall be my Ark, his righteousness alone my refuge and hiding place.

Alas! upon impartial search, have I not cause to fear that I have not yet fled to the Ark, but am still exposed to the devouring flood? and can I be easy or quiet in such a case? Can I forbear crying, What shall I do to get into the Ark Christ? Nay, What would I not do to get into it? Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do? Wouldst thou have me to humble myself, confess, mourn, part with sin, close with Christ in all his offices? Prescribe, Lord, what thou wilt, I will not scruple what thou enjoimest me, but obey thee without reserve. I am resolved upon it, whatever it cost me, that the solicitations of the flesh, the temptations of Satan, the scoffs, reproaches or persecutions, of the world, shall not stop me from flying to the Ark; I would break through all these to be found in it; Lord, increase and strengthen my faith for that end, and help my unbelief.

O how suitable is the Ark Christ to my destitute and miserable condition: In myself I want all things, but I see supply for all my wants in the Ark. I am poor, but I see gold in the Ark to make me rich; I am wounded by sin, but I see balm in the Ark to heal my wounds: I am blind, but there is eye-salve in the Ark, to make me see: I am perishing with hunger, but I see bread in the Ark to satisfy me: I am naked, but in the Ark there is white raiment to clothe me: I am polluted, but in the Ark there is a fountain to wash me: I am exposed to more terrible floods than Noah was, but I see the Ark Christ can save me from them all. Noah's ark saved him only from a flood of water, but the Ark Christ saves from a flood of the curses of the law and the wrath of God, which will sweep away all the unbelieving world. This flood rose, swelled high, and dashed furiously against our Ark; but the Ark was proof against it, and sheltered all the elect world from

the flood, so that not one drop did light on them.—O how excellent is this Ark! for it can save me from being overwhelmed or carried away with any flood, and particularly it can save me from being carried away with a flood of Satan's temptations which sweeps away many, or with a flood of indwelling corruption, with a flood of error, with a flood of profanity, or with a flood of neutrality and indifferency about spiritual concerns; by which floods, multitudes are destroyed. Let me then by faith fly to this blessed Ark, where all believers are preserved from these destroying floods. Behold, I run, I fly: May Jesus draw me, and help me in!

Blessed for ever be the God of heaven, for providing such an Ark for fallen sinners upon earth. I desire to count all things but loss and dung, that I may be found in this Ark among the preserved in Christ Jesus, whom no flood can reach. However this Ark be slighted by the world, I'll prize it above all things, and count them for ever happy who get into it, seeing God declares it, that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.—The Ark was slighted by the old world, and Noah ridiculed for preparing it for himself and his house; but it soon appeared that Noah was the wisest man that then lived upon the earth. Few there were who entered with Noah into the Ark, and no doubt were reproached and mocked for their singularity; but soon was the world persuaded that they were the only wise and happy men in it. Better surely it was to have followed the eight persons that went into the Ark, than to have joined eight millions of those who were drowned in the flood. Should I be so foolish as to follow the old world in undervaluing the Ark, I must lay my account to be shut out and perish with them too: Wherefore I will not fear the reproach of men, for being singular in my esteem of glorious Christ.—May I be numbered among that happy company (however few they be) who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and will bless God eternally for providing this Ark for drowning men! May I be one that will ever bless my lovely and loving Jesus, that pitied me and took me in, when others were washed off from the sides of the Ark, as adhering only to it by a dead and formal profession!. May I be one that will ever sing to his praise, O amazing free love! that pitied and distinguished me, when the flood came; that graciously drew and determined me in such a manner, that I got into the Ark and was safe, when many others were washen off and perished for ever!

MEDITATION II.

From 2 Peter ii. 4. God spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell.

HOW admirable, free, and distinguishing is the love of God to mankind sinners, in pitying them in their low and lost estate? O how different is the case of fallen men upon the earth, from the case of fallen angels in hell, and that of damned souls there! Manna is rained down upon us, while an eternal shower of fire and brimstone falls down upon them. They are bound in chains of darkness, whilst thou, Lord, art drawing us with cords of love. Thou didst not spare angels, nor take on their nature; but thou hast spared us, married our nature, and exalted it to the heavens. They continue without hope under the deluge of God's wrath, while the pleasant Rainbow of the sacrament appears to us, as a token of God's covenant of grace, and of his willingness to secure us from that overflowing flood, by the interposition of his dear Son in our nature. O how welcome should we make that gospel Rainbow!

Lord, thy wrath soon broke out against the angels that fell; thou didst punish them immediately upon their sinning against thee. Thou didst not wait for their repentance, nor make any offer of mercy to them; but, presently upon their first offence, didst condemn them to everlasting chains of darkness. O how far different is thy manner of dealing with us! Long hast thou waited upon us after we have sinned; yea, thou hast followed us with thy mercy after many refusals of it, and even after our trampling the precious blood of Christ under our feet! Marvellous and peculiar is thy mercy to fallen men in respect to fallen angels! Glory to sovereign free mercy, that thou didst not cast us off for ever without a parley, as thou didst them; but waitest to be gracious to us, long stretching out thy hand, and calling us to repentance, saying, Turn ye, turn ye; why will you die?

Against the sinning angels God was so provoked, that he resolved within himself, and hath kept his resolution ever since the beginning of the world, and will keep it to all eternity, that he will not so much as enter into a parley with these creatures, however glorious they once were, nor be reconciled to them upon any terms; yea, that he will hear of no terms, but will revenge himself upon them to all eternity.—May not then the hearing of this cause us to quake and tremble? for why might not the Lord have dealt with us in the same manner, who were far more wretched and miserable creatures than angels? Surely if a king be so angry with an offending nobleman, that was once his special favourite, as to banish him from court, and afterwards hear of no terms of reconciliation with him; would not a footman, or mean servant, that had offend-

ed, when hearing of this, begin to dread, and say, O what will become of me a poor man, when the king treats his peers so severely? I may surely despair of remission or reconciliation with him. So, in like manner, we poor clay worms, upon hearing of God's severity to fallen angels, might have been overwhelmed with fear, if the Bible had not told us, that the Son of God's *delights were with the sons of men; that verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham*, Heb. ii. 16. and that he gave himself to be a sin offering and sacrifice for men! Astonishing news! Glory to God for these glad tidings of great joy!

O admirable love to Adam's rebellious offspring? Hast thou, Lord, past by angels, and remembered us in our low estate! and in thy infinite compassion become our surety, to appease divine justice for our heinous sins, when no other sacrifice could do it! O what shall we render to thee for this distinguishing love! Surely our condition in Adam was no better than that of the angels who left their first estate. By nature we were in a most dreadful case, lying, like Isaac, bound on the altar, to be a sacrifice to the justice of God, and the sword of justice lift up to give the killing blow, until the Son of God discovered himself as the ram caught in the thickets, and calling to justice, hold thy hand, loose them, and bind me in their room; I'll be the sacrifice for them. In choosing fallen men, and not angels, God gave an amazing instance of the sovereignty of his grace, that he would be merciful to whom he would be merciful; would pass by the superior nature, and choose the inferior; prefer vessels of clay to vessels of gold! What can we say? Nothing, but wonder at God's free grace!—Un-speakable love! Lord, it had been much if thou hadst provided an angel to mitigate our sufferings in hell, by giving us drops of water to cool our tongue; but that thou shouldst have condescended to come and change rooms with us, lie in hell for us, and suffer the very pains and agonies due to us, is love that passeth knowledge.

Lord, when I consider thy distinguishing pity, and low stoop, to purchase and recover such clods of earth and sin with thy blood and agonies, I am amazed at thy love, confounded at my own ingratitude, and ashamed at the coldness and hardness of my heart! Oh! was Christ willing to change rooms with the like of me, and shall not I be willing to change rooms with him, and at his command to part with the filthy rags of my sins, and take on the robe of his righteousness? O shall not this amazing love of Christ constrain me to love him again, and live to him that died for me? Shall it not constrain me to think on him? constrain me to close with and trust in him? constrain me to commend him? constrain me to hate and avoid his enemy, sin? constrain me to adhere to his truths and ways? to persevere in prayer, praise, and holy walking?

Are fallen angels left, and fallen men pitched upon to be the

monuments of free grace, to fill up the vacant rooms which angels fell from ! What shall I say to this, but, *even so Father, for so it pleased thee* ; let thy sovereign free grace be the eternal song of both men and angels. *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory.*—Blessed be God, that I hear this joyful sound of reconciliation with fallen men, and of a treaty of peace carried on with them : The devils never heard, and never shall hear such news.—But oh, if I come not in, and accept of the terms and offers made to me in the gospel, I'll put myself in a worse case than the devils : For it cannot be charged upon fallen angels, as on fallen men, that God was willing to be reconciled to them, and they would not. Now then, when the gospel treaty is proclaimed, God forbid I be found guilty of refusing his terms, scorning his offers, and defying his threatenings. *O how shall I escape, if I neglect so great and wonderful salvation as is tendered to me ?* Neglect it, Lord, I dare not, I will not. Lo, I come, I accept, I embrace, I take hold of thy covenant, and the seal of it tendered to me : I renounce the old covenant, I break league this day with all thy enemies, I proclaim war against them ; I close with Christ Jesus, both as my righteousness and strength ; I make a full and free surrender and resignation of myself unto the Lord, to be his and his only, in all I am, and in all I enjoy, to be ordered and disposed of for his glory and service. Lord, I am thine ; I will not be my own, I will not be the world's, but I'll be thine, thine only, and thine wholly ; thine to love thee, serve and obey thee without reserve ; since thou wouldst have no nature but mine, I will have no will but thine. I renounce my own will, and take thine for my rule. Lord, I am thine, O save thou me ; and I will trumpet forth the praises of free grace and redeeming love for ever. *Amen.*

MEDITATION III.

From Psalm cxlvii. 20. He hath not dealt so with any nation.

THE nation of Israel was singularly privileged above others ; they were taken into covenant with God, they had God's word and ordinances, the means of conversion and salvation ; they had the gospel revelation, the knowledge and promises of the Messiah.—But we under New Testament times, and in Britain, are yet more peculiarly privileged with clearer light and discoveries of the Messiah than the nation of Israel had. They lived under a darker and harsher dispensation of the covenant of grace by Moses, whose first miracle was the turning of water into blood ; but we live under the clearer and sweeter dispensation of it by Christ himself, whose first miracle was the turning water into wine, that cheers the heart. The nation of Israel were called a people near unto God ; but in gospel times we are allowed yet nearer access

to God than they had. The children of Israel were not allowed so much as to touch the mount on which the Lord came down; the men of Bethshemish had not liberty to look into the ark the place of his residence:—But, behold, we are allowed to take a near view and steady look of a crucified Jesus in the sacrament, *who is the image of the invisible God, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person*; yea, we have liberty not only to look to him, but also to touch him, handle his wounds, embrace his person, and lodge him in our hearts.

The advantage of a clear revelation of a crucified Christ in the gospel ordinances, and particularly in the Lord's supper, is an invaluable privilege. If the royal Psalmist admired the divine goodness in causing the sun, moon, and stars to shine in the firmament for man's behoof, and therefore cries, *what is man that God is thus mindful of him?* How far greater cause have we to say so, when we observe how God causes the Sun of Righteousness to shine so brightly in the firmament of gospel ordinances, and *the day-spring from on high to visit us* with the light of saving knowledge, and of eternal salvation through him?—Again, if the Psalmist exalts God's goodness so much in his giving the beasts of the field, fowls of the air, and fishes of the sea, to be food for man; what ground have we to admire and praise God's infinite mercy, in giving us the flesh and blood of his own dear Son, to preserve the lives of our souls? O what rare gospel feasts are these which God allows us in the land wherein we dwell! And, O! how wonderfully are they preserved and continued with us, from time to time, by the miraculous working of God's mercy and power? while others are visited with cleanness of teeth, and a famine of the word of God. He hath not dealt with every nation as with us.

And, LORD, how distinguishing is thy goodness unto me a most unworthy creature? By thy mercy I was born in a valley of vision; and I dwell in a lightsome Goshen, when multitudes of others, in Pagan and Popish nations, are covered with Egyptian darkness, and sit in the region of the shadow of death. I hear heaven's free market days of grace proclaimed, when others have silent Sabbaths; I am invited to a rich banqueting house, when others are starving for want of the bread of life. O that I could value my mercies aright!—It is a great privilege that I am allowed to speak to the great GOD in prayer, and to hear him speak to me in his word! But still he puts a greater honour upon me, by calling me to enjoy intimate communion and fellowship with himself; yea, inviting me to sit down with him at his table, and feast upon the fruits of CHRIST's death; and benefits of his purchase!—Oh, I am not worthy of the least crumb that falls from the children's table, and far less of being set down at the table with the children to eat of their bread, and share of the dainties provided for them by their heavenly Father. If Peter,

after having seen Christ's glory and his own vileness, judged himself unworthy to be in the same ship with Christ, and therefore cried, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man*; how should I, the chief of sinners, adventure to sit at the same table with him, and feed upon his flesh and blood? Amazing condescension!

O what distinction doth God make among nations, in sending the gospel to them, with clear views and pressing offers of a crucified JESUS to perishing souls! And what cause have we, in these nations, of admiring the distinguishing goodness of God to us in this respect beyond others! Would we not admire his goodness, if he caused the sun to shine only in our horizon, as he did on Goshen, when other nations were covered with darkness, as the land of Egypt was? yet surely the gospel sun is by far a greater mercy.—The gospel is, indeed, a joyful sound, Psalm lxxxix. 15. so called, with allusion to the silver trumpets made use of under the law to call the people to the solemn assemblies, and to intimate to them the feast of the passover, which represented the love and sufferings of the Messiah. A joyful sound the gospel is indeed, if we compare it with the sound of the law's curses and threatenings thundered from mount Sinai against sinners. But, behold, this joyful sound, bringing salvation, comes from heaven, even to heaven-daring sinners, who had openly rebelled against the God of heaven! Glad news! Blessed are they who know this joyful sound; know it so as to believe it, admire it, entertain it, and comply with it, so as to receive Christ offered therein to lost sinners.

Lord, I make this joyful sound welcome; it is music to my ear, and a cordial to my heart. I reckon their feet beautiful who bring such glad tidings to my soul. O how welcome would men make them, who should bring them an invention that would secure their estates from consuming, their houses from burning, or their bodies from dying!—But here we have the sure news of an invention that doth much more for us than all this, even a device that secures us from hell, and ensures us of heaven. Ought I not then cheerfully to comply with this joyful sound, and fall in with the call thereof? God forbid that I should stop my ears at it; it had been better for me then never to have heard of it at all: How dreadful would my case be at the judgment day! How would devils, Turks, Heathens, and my own conscience, upbraid me in hell to all eternity for my folly in slighting this joyful sound! Surely God may slight the mournful sound of their prayers in time of distress, who slight the joyful sound of his gospel in time of health.—But, Lord, I bless thee for it, I love it, I receive it, I welcome it, I fall heartily in with it, and will admire it for ever.

MEDITATION IV.

From 1 John iii. 1. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!

IN the amazing work of our redemption, we are called to behold and admire both the love of the Father, and the love of the Son. Unspeakable love of the Father, that contrived our redemption, pitched upon and gave the Redeemer. O how readily accepted he of the Son's offer to suffer and satisfy infinite justice for sin in our room! Upon our fall, he might justly have said, No, the soul that sins shall die personally, I'll admit of no surety. But, glory to the blessed Father, such was his love to us, that when the dear Son said, Father, I will be surety for the sinners of mankind, let my blood be shed for theirs, let the blow light on me, let me die in their room; such was the love and pity of the Father to us, that he presently accepted the offer, held our Redeemer at his word, saying, Be it as thou hast said: *Awake, O sword, against the Man that is my Fellow; smite the Shepherd, and spare the sheep.* I'll glorify my justice upon my own dear Son, rather than upon them. Amen, said the blessed Son of God: I will be the sacrifice.

O love unspeakable, both in the Father and the Son! Human love, angelic love, is nothing to it! O what is the love of creatures one to another, to this love of God to man! Astonishing love! that the eternal Son of God, intreated by no man, but hated of all men, should in his love and pity intreat for men: yea, undertake and die for them, when enemies to God and all that is good! *O the breadth, O the length, O the depth, O the height of this love of Christ, which passeth knowledge!* I may possibly feel it, but I cannot fathom it. The love of creatures is nothing to the love of Christ. It was great love that Jacob bare to Rachel, that he endured the heat of summer, and frosts of winter, for her: But all that was nothing to the winter storm which Christ suffered for us. It was extraordinary love that Jonathan had to David, that he would peril his life to avert his father's wrath from him: But, what was that to Christ's love, that took on his eternal Father's wrath, which was infinitely greater than Saul's, and actually laid down his life to avert that dreadful storm of wrath from us! What love was it that made him stand before the mouth of hell furnace, and suffer himself to be scorched with it in the most terrible manner, that he might stop the flame from breaking out on us! Behold him receiving the sword of justice into his bowels, to prevent its being sheathed into our hearts! Behold, when the sea of God's wrath raged and was tempestuous, threatening to swallow us all up, Christ came, and said, like Jonah, Spare these poor sinners; take me up, and cast me into the sea in their stead, that the storm may be appeased against them! Christ was willing to be cast

into the sea of wrath, to be a blessed plank of mercy for shipwrecked souls to grip to, and be saved.

Admirable love of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who would give his dearly beloved Son, out of free love and pity to man, to die and suffer wrath for him ! and would chuse rather to see his dear Son agonizing and struggling under infinite wrath for a time, than to see an elect world struggling in hell among devils for ever ! O who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord ! who can shew forth all his praise ! O Father of mercies, from all eternity thou foresawest our fall and misery, and, in thy wisdom and love, didst contrive a noble remedy for us : Thou even didst provide a surety for man before the debt was contracted ; a Saviour for him before he was lost ; and by this glorious surety thou hast found out a noble way to satisfy both the demands of justice and intreaties of mercy, and glorify both those divine perfections at once.—By this, Lord, we know thou lovest us, that thou hast not withheld thy Son, thine only Son from us, to be sacrificed in our room : and graciously callest us to commemorate thy love, in providing this sacrifice, at thy holy table.—Instead of this, thou mightest justly have called multitudes of us together, to make us a sacrifice to thy justice for our heinous sins and rebellions against heaven. But behold, thou callest us together to thy table upon quite another design, even to intimate to us a sacrifice of thy own providing, sufficient for us all ; and actually to behold the bleeding victim of the innocent LAMB of GOD, who willingly, at his Father's call, gave himself to be slain to take away the sins of the world ! LORD, what didst thou see in such creatures, to make thee love us after this manner ? Nothing, but much to make thee loathe us ; yet the time when we were most loathsome thou madest it the time of love ! Surely *thy thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor thy ways as our ways*. How astonishing was thy conduct in redeeming us when lost ? And worse are we than devils, if we be not ravished with the love of the Father in projecting our redemption, and with the love of his eternal Son, that made him leave his glory in heaven, and even wade through hell to save the dregs of the creation.

O what manner of love is this, that the Father did give his eternal Son, to die for those who deserved eternal wrath for their rebellion and treason against himself ! When notice was first given in this lower world, that the Son of God was coming down to it from heaven ; what could have been expected, but that his business here would be to condemn the world, and hasten the execution of those he found in arms against him ? But O ! who can think, and not wonder, that he should have sent him to suffer and die for such as forfeited their lives, and deserved to be slain ; yea, for such as were alienated from the life of God, and full of enmity against him, unworthy of any place of abode upon earth, and by their wickedness fully prepared for hell ! O how surprising it is, that God would, in

this our miserable state, send the Son of his love to die for us, to rescue us from deserved wrath, and purchase a new title for us to life and glory ! Behold what manner of love this is, that the Just should suffer for the unjust, the just Prince for the unjust rebels that were in arms against him, the King of Glory for the children of disobedience, the obedient Son for mortal enemies ? O this is such a manner of loving, that the highest transport of wondering cannot reach : *For scarcely for a righteous man will one dare to die ; but God commends his love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, Rom. v. 7, 8.*

O how am I able to hear, speak, or think of this love, and my heart not burn with an admiring sense of the freeness and riches of God's grace ; and with a vehement hatred and indignation against my sins, which contributed to pierce and crucify my glorious Redeemer ! Can I be but ravished with love to him, when he comes to communicate his love to me at his table, and say, Behold how I have loved you, and given myself for you ! *I was cut off, but not for myself ; I was wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities.* It was for you I was betrayed, reviled, condemned, and crucified ; for you my hands and feet were nailed to the tree, my head crowned with thorns, and my side pierced with a spear : And all this I suffered, that you might be saved from hell, and get sin forgiven, and God reconciled to you for ever.

MEDITATION V.

From Psalm viii. 4. What is man, that thou art mindful of him ?

WHEN David beheld the heaven, with its glorious luminaries, the sun, moon, and stars, and the mighty works of God in the creation, and considered what a mean figure man made amongst them ; he admired God's condescension and goodness in his concern and pains about him, in his works of providence and redemption. Lord, what is man, fallen man, that thou shouldst notice him so much ? a poor, vile, sinful worm ! And yet how singularly minded and honoured is he, in God the Son's undertaking to be his cautioner and ransom ! Had he done it for angels, it had not been so marvellous ; but what is man, that God should visit him in this manner ? should pay him a homely visit in human nature, to see what ailed him, to hear his complaints, and know feelingly his wants and miseries, that he might the better sympathize with him, relieve and supply him.

But, who is this that comes to pay this visit to man ? Even he, that is KING of kings, and LORD of lords, who is infinite in majesty and power, in riches and glory. How awful are the descriptions given us of him in the Bible ! *Great is our*

LORD, and of great power; his understanding is infinite. He calls the stars by their names. Whatsoever he pleaseth, that doth he, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and all deep places. And it is said of his coming to judgment, Dan. vii. 10. *A fiery stream issued forth from before him, thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.* And yet this almighty person, the Great God, condescends to clothe himself with our nature, and stoops to the very ground, in the most lowly manner, to pay a kind visit to his rebellious creature, man, even man that is a worm; and when he gets not access to him at first, he continues to stand and knock at his door.—O how marvellous is this, that he, who is OMNIPOTENT, that could, by a word, have annihilated fallen man, and created a more amiable creature, in all respects, in his room, should stoop so low to him! that he who is OMNISCIENT, and perfectly knew man's unworthiness, his enmity, his ingratitude, and what unkind returns he would make for the greatest kindness, should court him so earnestly! that the Judge of heaven should come down from the bench, and put on the pannel's clothes, that he might answer and satisfy the law for him! that the great General of the armies of heaven should put himself in the room of a poor condemned deserter, to suffer for him! that the Creator should stoop to die for the creature, even the Great God for a worm, man, is love that swallows up our thoughts and language! What can we think, what can we say of it! It is love that passeth knowledge! the most penetrating angel cannot fathom its height, its depth, its breadth, or its length! Why? For its height, it is infinitely higher than the highest heavens. For its depth, none can see its bottom, for it made him stoop as low as hell. For its breadth, it is as broad as the whole earth, and the whole heavens too; it comprehends all his people, even the poorest outcasts on earth, as well as the highest saint in heaven. For its length, it never ends, but continues without interruption, notwithstanding provocations; nay, it is drawn out parallel with the longest line of eternity.

Lord, what is man that thou shouldst have minded him, visited him, and loved him so! A creature most unlovely, ugly, and black as hell; that had got the image of GOD razed out, and the image of Satan pictured in its room.—A creature lame and impotent, that could not rise but as CHRIST lifted him, could not stand but as he upheld him, could not walk but as he led him, nor move but as he drew him.—A rebel that was in league with hell, that hated his Sovereign, and was plotting with the devil to pull the crown off his head.—A creature made loathsome by sin in God's sight: yea, more loathsome than a new born infant wallowing in its blood, than Job when full of boils, than Lazarus full of sores, or a dead carcase crawling with worms.—A creature that was undesirous of God's visit or help, and unwilling to accept of it; that said

to him, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* A creature that contemned his love, rejected his offers, and trampled his blood—Who would have pitied such a creature? one so poor, so vile, so miserable! It had been much to have given him alms; but for the Son of God to give his life for him, may strike men and angels with astonishing surprise for ever. **LORD, what is man!** a poor feeble crawling worm, *that thou shouldst be mindful of him* after this manner? And, what are we, that we should still have the offers of this love continued to us? Oh, shall we ever make light of this love any more? *I believe, LORD, help my unbelief.*

There is a parallel text, Psal. cxliv. 3. **LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him!** or *the son of man, that thou makest account of him!* What a poor little thing is man, that thou shouldst make so great account of him, put such respect upon him above all other creatures, so as to condescend to stand in a nearer relation to him, than to any other, as that of a father, a brother, a husband, a friend, &c. yea, more, thou hast dignified this poor thing, a man, so much as to assume his nature into an ineffable personal union with the second person of the ever glorious Trinity, whereby the nature of man is exalted above the angels of heaven. It is not the angelical, but the human nature which God hath chosen to tabernacle in; and now it is honoured so far as to be set on the right hand of the Majesty on high.—The great account God hath of this little thing, man, appears further in the great cost he hath laid out for him. Why? God not only gives his creatures to die for man, to yield him food, but he also gives his Christ to die for him, to procure him eternal life. Again, how great is the goodness which God hath laid up for him hereafter? Eye hath not seen it, ear hath not heard it, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive how great it is? O what a favourite of heaven must this little creature, man, be!

LORD, who can but wonder at the honour thou hast already put upon man, and at the favours thou still designest for him! Great things hast thou laid out, and great things hast thou laid up for man. I admire thy low stoop in the visit thou madest man, in the incarnation of thy dear Son, and in thy visit in the gospel proclamation, and offer of pardon through him! but let me still plead for another visit in the effusion of thy Holy Spirit: This other visit thou knowest is necessary to make the former effectual to my salvation. May then thy Holy Spirit work faith in me, to fall in with thy glorious device for the redemption of man in all points, to accept of thy love-offers, and rest upon thy free promises of salvation through Jesus Christ, and his most perfect righteousness. Amen.

MEDITATION VI.

From 1 Cor. x. 4. And that Rock was Christ.

HOW useful was that rock in the wilderness to the Israelites sojourning there, after it was smitten by Moses' rod : When they were ready to perish in that dry desert, the rock sent forth streams of water to them in great abundance ; streams that followed them up hill and down hill, in all their turnings and windings, marches and counter-marches through that weary land. That rock was to them a lively type of Christ, who being smitten by the rod of the law's curses, whose minister Moses was, sends forth plentiful supplies to his people, while travelling in the wilderness of this world. There are two principal streams of blessings which he sends forth, most useful to us, to wit, a stream of blood for our justification, and a stream of the Spirit for our sanctification. The channel or conduit pipes, for conveying these streams to us, are the ordinances and promises of the gospel ; and through these pipes these blessed streams run freely to all true believers, from the Rock Christ, which was broached for them.

Oh, how costly was our redemption to our dear kinsman Jesus Christ ? dear did our souls cost him ! The rock of our salvation was cleaved asunder, rent and pierced to the very heart, to let out the waters of life to us, by which only we can be preserved from eternal death, and obtain eternal life. How costly and precious are the streams of Christ's blood and Spirit, his mercy and grace, which flow from the smitten Rock, and follow us through the wilderness in the free offers of the gospel ? They are life-giving streams, fire-quenching, heart-softening, soul-cleansing, healing, and fructifying streams : Welcome then should we make these streams to our souls in this dry and thirsty Land.—Likewise the rock was to the Israelites a shadow from the heat, and a covert from tempests and storms : So Christ, our Rock, screens us from the scorching heat of vindictive justice, and from the waves and billows of God's wrath.—How necessary and useful is the Rock Christ to the souls of fallen men ! Oh, let me never, Jeshurun-like, lightly esteem this Rock of our salvation. O let me never go to false rocks, or false streams, for shelter or supply in straits, when the true Rock is so near, and the saving streams run close by my door ; yea, follow me daily in the channel of the word and sacraments : Streams appointed by Heaven to answer all the cases and ailments of lost sinners.—O shall God in his tender mercy provide such a wonderful remedy, set the Rock abroach for me, and cause its streams to follow me ; and shall I be so foolish as to turn my back upon them, and refuse to apply or make use of them ? O save me from such cursed ingratitude and madness ; *I believe, Lord, help my unbelief.*

O how much should my heart be affected at thy holy table, when I see the Rock of my salvation smitten by the rod of justice, and behold the bloody spear pierce into his heart? O Rock of ages, what made thee to rend and cleave so? O Brightness of thy Father's glory, who has disfigured thee so? O River of life, clear as crystal, who hath troubled thee so? Oh, it was my sins, my pride, my passion, my unbelief, my worldliness, my hardness, impenitence, &c. These were the cause of my Redeemer's sufferings. The iniquities of sinful men were laid upon him. When he was pierced, it was I that should have been smitten. When he groaned and sweated blood, I should have howled and roared in hell. Harder than the rock is my heart, if I can see my dear Saviour smitten and pierced, and not mourn. O can I see his side and heart streaming out blood, and mine eyes not pour out tears! Can I behold the Rock smitten for the sins of men, and not adore the holiness and justice of God manifested therein? Can I see my innocent Saviour wounded and slain for my sins, and my soul not hate them? yea, shall I not be filled with horror and trembling at temptations to sin?

Let me, at my Saviour's call, approach to his table, and come near to the Rock of my salvation, and hearken to the raging billows of infinite wrath, dashing against the Rock for my sins, and even making the Rock to groan, sweat, and tremble under the pressure. O what a dreadful hurricane of wrath did he endure, to keep the swelling ocean of divine wrath from overflowing guilty men! Surely my glorious Emmanuel's groaning and sweating blood under the strokes of God's vengeance, is a greater evidence of the implacable wrath and indignation of God against sin, than if he had hurled all the rocks of the creation into the midst of the sea, yea or a thousand worlds of men and angels into hell. O that while I am beholding this sight I may tremble at sin, come by faith under the shadow of this Rock, and run into the clefts of it for safety. Here I would be out of the reach of the law's curses, and threatenings of wrath; and though I hear the roarings and dashings of the sea upon the Rock, yet a drop of it could not touch me.

O that I could imitate Moses, when I am at the table, and smite the Rock by the rod of faith, that the streams of Christ's blood and Spirit may flow out to me. What was his error will be my wisdom, to smite the Rock oftener than once, to put forth many acts of faith on Jesus Christ, such as the discerning, assenting, approving, deriving, receiving, closing, embracing, trusting, pleading, applying, and appropriating acts of true faith. May I, like Israel of old, Deut. xxxii. 13. be helped by faith to suck honey out of the Rock, and oil out of the flinty Rock: Honey and oil, sweetness and fatness, quickening and comfort.—How shall I come at this honey and oil? Only by sucking: And how shall I suck, but by the mouth of

faith? There is no sucking without it. Neither can I suck by faith, unless God make me do it: for it is said, Deut. xxxii. *He made them to suck honey out of the rock.* It is God that must give me both a mouth and strength to suck, faith in the habit, and faith in exercise. It is only the blowings of the north and south winds on the garden, that make the spices to flow out: *Awake O north wind, come thou south, blow upon my garden*; bring faith to life, that I may suck honey from Christ in the sacrament. Christ's breasts are now full; O let not faith be wanting, for if it be wanting, I can suck nothing: Blessed be God, Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, is the author of faith. Lord, increase my faith, that I may suck honey from the Rock. But what honey may I expect from it? Ans. The honey of pardon of sin. O how sweet is this honey! —The honey of peace and reconciliation with God;—the honey of a law-biding righteousness;—the honey of access to, and communion with God;—the honey of enlargement of heart, and loosing of bands, &c. O let me ever suck from this Rock, the Rock that answers all my needs, and richly supplies all my wants.—Let me also, under all my straits, support myself with the Psalmist's cordial, Psal. xviii. 46. *The Lord liveth, and blessed be my Rock.* Why should believers in Christ droop in any condition, or look like dead men, while their Lord liveth, and their Rock standeth? Blessed be God, my Rock is a living and lasting Rock; my hopes may die, my comforts die, my frames die, my gifts, my wealth, and my relations, they may all die; but I rejoice in the news that my Lord will not die, nor my Rock fall. He once died for me, but he is risen again: Good news! Now he is alive, and will die no more.

MEDITATION VII.

From Zech. xii. 10. They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn.

THIS promise hath a respect, not only to the Jews when converted, but to all sinners when brought to repentance. We have all pierced Christ, in as much as our sins were the cause of his death; *He was wounded for our transgressions.* Now a believing sight of a pierced Saviour, is the best spring of sorrow for sin; it is faith's look to a crucified Christ, that will set us a mourning after a godly sort. O that this promise may be made good to me at this time, that I may be helped to look believingly upon Christ as pierced for my sins, my pride, my passion, my unbelief, my carnality, my disobedience, my impenitence, my sins of the heart, of the tongue, and of the life, that I may confess and bewail them, mourn and weep over them before the Lord. Oh! when shall I mourn and weep if not now, when I am called to look upon my dear Lord and Surety at his table, all red with blood for my red

and scarlet coloured sins? I will not now stand afar off, and look to my Saviour on the cross, as those women who followed him from Galilee, Luke xxiii. 49. No, I will come close to him, take a near look, and a narrow view of his wounds and piercings by my sins, that I may see how wide and deep they are, that my eye may affect my heart with godly sorrow for sin.

When I look on him, I'll consider the dignity of the person pierced by and for me: he is the Almighty Creator, the glorious Emmanuel, the Plant of renown, the Prince of the kings of the earth, that is pierced and nailed to a cross. Jeremiah laments in the captivity, that princes were hanged up by the hands, Lam. v. 12. But what were the princes of Israel to the Prince of Peace, the King of Glory, whom I see hanging nailed through the hands on the cross, and his blood poured out like water upon the earth! O it is royal blood, the blood of God, that I see running down to satisfy justice for my sins; and will not such a sight cause me to mourn for them? Can I look on my lovely Redeemer, stript naked, mounted up, and fixed with nails to a tormenting cross? Can I see his head pierced with thorns, his back pierced with scourgings, his hands and feet pierced with big nails, his side pierced with a spear, and his heart pierced with sorrows for my sins, and my heart not mourn for them? Yet all the piercings and wounds of his sacred body were but small, to the piercings and agonies of his soul, when he drank the cup of his Father's wrath for me, which made him cry out, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death; my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Can I behold this loving JESUS, standing in my room, bearing the wrath of a Deity for me, and my heart not bleed? Can I see him, when the sword of justice was drawn to smite me, opening his breast to receive the stroke into his heart, and my heart not melt within me? LORD, grant me such a sight by faith, of a wounded, bleeding SAVIOUR, as to make me a melting and mourning sinner.

How can I leave this subject until my heart be more affected? Had I been personally at mount Calvary, and with my bodily eyes had seen my dear Redeemer racked and nailed to the tree? Had I seen him lifted up between heaven and earth, that the nations might behold him, with his arms stretched out to embrace sinners? Had I beheld his dying looks, and heard his dying groans? Had I seen his precious blood for many hours run from his wounded hands and feet to the earth? Could I have stood by with dry eyes, or an unconcerned heart, especially when I had thought he was suffering all this out of love to me, for my sins, and in my room?—Why then should I not be as much concerned, when I come to his table to celebrate the memorial of that fearful tragedy, and look upon the outward signs which represent the same! Lord, give me faith's eye to behold the things signified thereby, even the

bleeding and dying of the glorious Emmanuel.—And what kind of blood is it I see running down? It is innocent blood! precious blood! royal blood! heart blood! Nay, the blood of the eternal Son of God, one drop whereof is worth an ocean of our blood, and is of infinite value; and yet behold all this blood is shed for such worms as I am! O can I think long upon this subject, and not find my heart pained with love, and be ready with Joseph, to seek a secret place to weep in? Had an ordinary man been executed for my crime, it would have affected me all my days; how much should it touch me to see the Son of God put to death for me! The sun fainted, the heavens mourned in black, the earth quaked, and the rocks rent, when this black tragedy was acted; how much more should my heart rend and mourn at the representation of it before my eyes! Surely my mourning should be great, deep, and bitter mourning, as in the text, like the mourning of a parent for the death of an only son; or like the mourning of Haddadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo! O what was the death of king Josiah to the death of King Jesus, the eternal Son of God! O my dear slain Lamb, shall I not mourn and weep over thee!

Oh! can I see his blood run down in streams, and my eyes not pour out some drops! Did Christ sweat blood, and weep blood for my sins, and shall not I weep tears for them! Shall I not give drops of water for streams of blood! Alas! I am more sparing of my tears for Christ, than Christ was of his blood for me! How fast did the blood trickle down Christ's cheeks in the day he wore the crown of thorns for me? But how slowly do the tears fall from my eyes when I commemorate his dying love? Can I shed tears in plenty for a dead child! and have I reserved none for a slain Saviour? Yea, slain by my sins! How sad is it to see so many weeping eyes at a funeral, and so many dry eyes at a communion table? Alas! this is a sad sign of few looking by faith to him we have pierced; few sensible of the evil of their sins, that were the hammers which drove the nails into his body. O for a realizing act of faith, representing all that the Lamb of God suffered, in the greatest certainty and clearest evidence, that it is no devised fable. O for an applying and appropriating act of faith, to bring all home to myself, and say, *He loved me, and gave himself for me!*

What a hard heart is this I have beyond others! Can I see others weeping and mourning over a slain Saviour, that sit at the same table, eat the same bread, and drink of the same cup with me, and cannot I get one tear! Is God come with his bottle, waiting for my tears? Do others pour into it plentifully, and have I not one tear to drop into God's bottle? LORD, what means the hardness of my heart, and the dryness of my eyes, at the sight of my Saviour's bleeding and dying for my sins? When should I mourn and weep, if not now? Was there ever such an occasion for tears? Oh! doth God intend to reserve

weeping for me in hell, where tears shall never be dried up! this is what I deserve, if I be hard hearted and dry-eyed now. But, Lord, pity my hardness, and give me such a look as thou gavest Peter, that may cause me to weep, and weep bitterly, at the remembrance of my sins which pierced thee.

MEDITATION VIII.

From Luke xxii. 61, 62. The Lord looked upon Peter.—And Peter went out and wept bitterly.

LORD, since my looks to thee are so slight, so wavering and inconstant, that they make little or no impression upon my hard heart, do thou vouchsafe to look upon me with pity and with power; for thy looks are efficacious, and melt down the hardest heart. O give me such a look as thou gavest Peter, when he denied thee, and began to curse and swear: A look that may bring me to myself, and cause me to weep, and weep bitterly at the remembrance of my sins, my unbelief, my pride, my passion, my disobedience, which pierced thee, my dearest Lord and Saviour. *Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, Psal. cxix. 132.* Christ's look to back-sliding Peter was merciful, and full of compassion; his bowels yearned for his poor disciple, when ready to fall into the devil's arms by total and final backsliding, and prevents him speedily. He would not let him lie long in that dismal state he fell into, as it were on the very brink of hell, but presently plucks him back, and recovers him. In like manner, Lord, look on me, and recover me speedily when I fall into sin, lest my next step be into hell.

Christ's look to Peter was a preventing look; he looked on Peter before Peter looked to his Saviour for mercy, and before he looked on himself, or upon his sin, and the danger he was exposed to by it. Glory to my Redeemer that watches over his people, sees and minds their danger, when they themselves are little thinking upon it; he is more careful of them than they are of themselves. How marvellous is Christ's love, that would be so concerned about Peter at such a time, when he himself was amidst his bloody enemies, and upon trial for his life? Even then, as it were, he forgets his own danger, and takes notice of the danger of his servant: He being *the great Shepherd of the sheep*, ventures all to rescue one of his flock out of the *mouth of the lion*, and *from the paws of the bear*. O who would not desire to belong to the flock of such a faithful, loving, and compassionate Shepherd!

The look Christ gave Peter was a convincing look; it laid open his sin to him with all its aggravations, which made it very bitter to him. It spoke such language to him as this; "O Peter, what hast thou done! Hast thou cast off thy Saviour? And hast thou said, thou knowest not me, who knew thee from the womb, and am going to die for thee? Dost

“thou not know me that called thee from thy nets, that
 “empowered thee to preach the gospel, and work miracles;
 “that kept thee from sinking in the waters? Am not I he thou
 “sawest shining on mount Tabor? Even he thou saidest thou
 “would rather die than deny?” O for such a convincing look
 from Christ, that would pierce and melt my heart, and make
 me weep bitterly both now and at his table, for my base ingrati-
 tude, in disowning and piercing my dear Redeemer.

Christ's look to Peter was a powerful and overcoming look; it conquered his will, loosed him from the world and sin, and made him yield presently to Christ: he was not able to hold out a moment longer, but, like Joseph, seeks a secret place to weep in. O how powerful is a look from Christ! It is sufficient to bow the most stubborn will, and melt the hardest heart; it can turn *the rock into standing water*, and *the flint into a fountain of water*, Psalm cxiv. 8. How powerful was the look he gave to poor Jerusalem, when lying in their blood; a look that caused them to live, Ezek. xvi. 6. How powerful was the look he gave to Zaccheus on the sycamore tree, Luke xix. 5. O for such a look as would bring me presently down, in like manner, from the sycamore of my self-conceit and self-righteousness, and from my best beloved sins and idols, and cause me receive Christ joyfully into my heart, and go with cheerfulness to his table, and receive the seal of his covenant, saying, *My Lord, and my God!*

Christ's look to Peter was a peculiar and distinguishing look; the power and grace of God went along with it to change Peter's heart, and bring him to his right mind. Christ looked on many thousands that were never the better of it. He looked on Judas after he betrayed him, and when he presumed to kiss him, and reproved him too for his base treachery: But neither that look nor reproof melted his heart. As the beams of the very same sun hardens clay and softens frozen earth; so a look from the same Jesus, *the Sun of righteousness*, left Judas hard and impenitent, whilst it softened Peter's heart. The one went on in his villany, whilst the other relented, and melted into tears. Why? he looked but on the face of Judas, but he looked on the heart of Peter. He looked upon the one with a frowning judicial look, but looked upon the other with a recovering and drawing look. Christ's look to Peter was accompanied with the inward influences of his Spirit on his heart, otherwise it had not been effectual. Oh, if he would vouchsafe such a gracious look to my frozen heart, and soften it? I would fain bring my hard heart and lay it before this blessed sun, and wait until he draw by the cloud, look through and shine upon it. Lord, I tremble to go to thy table with this hard heart, lest thou shouldst look on me with anger, as thou didst upon these, Mark iii. 5. upon account of the hardness of their hearts. Lord, I desire to be grieved for my heart hardness, and to look to thee whom I pierced by it. Give such

a look to my heart as thou gavest to Peter's, melt it down into penitential tears, and cause me to go aside and weep bitterly.

Christ's look caused Peter to remember and think upon his words to him. It is in and by his word that he works upon sinners' hearts. O ! if the Spirit would bring the word to my mind, set it powerfully home upon my conscience, and so give the happy turn to my soul. Lord, help me to lay up thy words, and ponder them in my heart : and, O bring them always seasonably to my view, that when I fall I may not lie long under sin, nor continue in a state of backsliding from thee. May I have such a look from thee, as shall look all my idols out of countenance, and look my wandering heart into a right frame for covenanting and communicating work : A look that shall put new life in all my drooping graces, and kindle such a flame of love to Christ in my heart, and of indignation against sin, as all the devils in hell shall never be able to quench. A look that shall make me weep, while I live, for piercing Christ the Lamb.

Oh, shall others shed tears in plenty for sin, and my eyes remain dry ? Shall others get their hearts broken, and mine continue hard ? Lord, thy grace is free : O how easy were it for thee to melt my heart, and moisten my eyes : One touch of thy hand, nay, one look of thy countenance, one cast of thine eye, is sufficient to do it. O turn unto me, and give me one merciful look : for thy ordinance will be lifeless, and lost unto me, if thou look not on me. How can I go to the table to behold Jesus, my surety, all red with blood for my red and scarlet coloured sins, while my heart doth not mourn, nor my eyes run down ? Surely the streams of my Saviour's blood deserve to be lamented with tears of blood, and shall I not do it at least with tears of water ? Was he wounded for my transgressions, and shall not my heart bleed, and eyes weep for his wounds, given him for my sins ?

MEDITATION IX.

From Matth. xv. 27. And she said, Truth, Lord ; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs.

THIS woman was a Canaanite, and lived among heathens, yet she had greater knowledge and faith of the Messiah than the most of the Jews. Her faith, humility, patience, and resolution, amidst the greatest discouragements, are here recorded for a pattern and encouragement to desponding believers in all ages.

This woman was so sensible of her misery, that she addresses Christ with great earnestness for help : She doth not speak calmly or coldly to Christ, but she cried unto him, and followed him with her cries, ver. 22, 23. Surely, if I were duly affected with my spiritual wants and miseries, I would speak to God in no other language than that of cries and tears. O what

cause have I to bewail my coldness and indifferency in prayer, and the little sense I have of my dangers and necessities, which are great beyond expression.

This woman, notwithstanding her great earnestness and strong faith, met with very great trials and discouragements in her addresses to Christ.

1. Her first trial is Christ's silence to her, when crying to him for mercy, ver. 23. *He answered her not a word.* Strange! not a word from a meek and merciful Saviour, that never put a poor sinner, seeking mercy, away from him before; but still invited all to come to him for it. That is a sore temptation, Lam. ii. 8. *When I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer.* Believers are apt to think that God shuts out their prayers in wrath, when it is not so. Christ heard this woman, accepted her, was pleased with her, and strengthened her to hold on in prayer, though he did not immediately answer her. He entertained her with silence to draw her on to be more importunate, and to try her faith, patience, and perseverance, and thereby to teach us to be followers of those who through faith and patience do now inherit the promises. Christ keeps the door bolted for a time, that we may knock the harder, Matth. vii. 7. *Ask, seek, knock.* The choicest mercies come to us after the greatest wrestlings. Likewise I see here, that there is love in Christ's heart to wrestling souls, even when frowns appear in his looks; wherefore let me take encouragement from him, though he slay me, yet to trust in him.

Second. Another sore trial the woman met with, was the answer Christ gave his disciples when interceding for her, whereby he seems to exclude her out of his commission, ver. 24. *I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* The Jews were called sheep, but the Gentiles, dogs. The Jews were indeed to have the first offer of Christ's grace and purchase. Though the woman might have taken Christ's words as a plain repulse, yet she studies to put the best sense on them she can, and continues her importunity. Which teaches us never to leave the Throne of Grace for any discouragement.

Third. She gets a repulse yet more sharp than the two former, even after she had come close up to him, and fallen down at his feet, saying, *Lord, help me.* Then it is Christ ranks her among the dogs, these that were without the covenant, profane and unclean. Now, one might think she is cut off by that word, and will insist no more after it. Nay, she takes hold of that word of reproach, and pleads upon it in the text, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog, vile and unworthy;* yet let me humbly ask the dog's room and privilege, even to creep beneath the children's table, and gather some crumbs of mercy. O how much is contained here for our instruction and imitation?

First. What cause have we, O Lord, to bless thy goodness,

that we Gentiles, of dogs are now become children, and allowed to come to thy table! And, at the same time to fear thy justice, since the Jews, of children are now become dogs, and shut out as unclean! If they were cut off who crucified thee in thy low estate, what may we expect, if by our sins, we crucify thee in thy glory? Let us not be high minded but fear.

Secondly. Christ puts the strongest faith of his people upon the sharpest trials: He thinks fit, for his own glory, where he gives much grace, to try grace much.

Thirdly. Those who are eminent in faith are most humble: this woman was so. O how humbly did she plead with Christ? She threw herself on the ground, lay low at his feet, and from the dust, cried for help; she claimed nothing, only begged for mercy. And when Christ spurned her from his feet, called her a dog, she doth not murmur nor complain of his harsh carriage, but humbly takes with the charge: *Truth, Lord, thou dost not miscall me, nor call me so bad as I am; I am a dog, a most vile and unworthy creature, and have no right to the children's bread, and must starve if thou hast not mercy upon me. She can bear any thing, the worst frown or chastisement from Christ, only she cannot bear being excluded from his mercy and grace; she would have some token of it, though never so small: She claims not a Benjamin's meal, nor a child's portion, only let her have a dog's crumb. Lord, I take patiently the stripe from thee; give me but a crumb after it, and I will go away satisfied. Surely the more humble any supplicant is at a throne of grace, he comes still the better speed; for the Lord resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*

Fourthly. God's usual method of dispensing his mercy and grace to sinners, is first to cast them down before he raises them up; he first humbles and lays them low in a sense of their unworthiness and vileness, before he advances them to his favour. We must first see ourselves to be as dogs, *less than the least of all God's mercies*, before we are fit to be dignified with the privileges of children.

Fifthly. When unbelief draws dismal conclusions from every thing, and tempts us to quit our grips and hopes, upon any dark dispensation, and to say with that wicked king, 2 Kings vi. 33. *This evil is of the Lord: What should I wait for the Lord any longer?* Behold, faith is a valiant and importunate grace, it puts the best constructions upon all Christ's actions; it is sharp sighted, to see and take hold of all advantages to strengthen itself, and finds encouragement even in that which is discouraging. That which seemed to cut off this believing woman's hope, she improves it as a ground of hope, and an argument in prayer, *Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat, &c. q. d. Even the worthless dogs belong to the family, and though they may not feast with children at the table, they*

may creep under it and gather crumbs, these off-fallings that would be swept to the door: this will not wrong the children. Let me stand in relation to Christ, though in the meanest station, even that of his dog; I will be thankful for it, or for any thing, if he do not turn me out of the house.

Sixthly. When our discouragements are greatest, we should learn from this woman, never to give over the exercise of faith and prayer; but to look on all our disappointments in the success of prayer, as excitements to greater earnestness in prayer. Faith will not set limits to the Holy One; though speedy answers be not given to our prayer, it becomes us to wait God's time, who is the best judge of the fittest season. *He that believeth will not make haste.* Why? he knows his extremity is God's fit opportunity.

Seventhly. A resolute adhering to Christ by faith under trials, is most pleasing and acceptable to him; as when we persevere in the use of means, when success is small, when we depend upon his promise, and look to his power; when under the darkest dispensations we watch over our hearts and steps, that they do not decline from his ways, as these in Psal. xlv. 17, 18. And glory to him that gives us such encouragement for this resolute adherence to him, as the mercifulness of his nature, and his faithfulness, which assure us, there is more good-will in his heart, than is visible in his dealings; and that his providence will never give his word the lie. He gives in secret strength to his people to adhere to him, when he seems most opposite to them, as he did to this woman. He loves to bring about his people's mercies by means improbable and contrary, to glorify his wisdom. He delights to bring light out of darkness.

Eighthly. Great will the reward at last be of the believer's faith, humility, and perseverance in prayer; for, saith Christ at length, v. 28. *O woman great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*

MEDITATION X.

From 1 Cor. ii. 24. This do in remembrance of me.

O MY soul, here is a solemn ordinance, instituted for keeping up the remembrance of a crucified Jesus: and behold it was appointed by himself, when he was just a going to do more for us than all the angels in heaven could have done, even to make atonement for our sins by his death and sufferings: and he twice repeats his dying charge to us, v. 24 and 25. *This do; this do ye.* Men use to regard the commands of their dying friends, and perform their wills religiously: and shall not I with pleasure obey the will and command of a dying Redeemer, when the thing is so easy and agreeable, to eat and drink at his table in remembrance of him? If I for-

get thee, O friend of sinners, let my right hand forget its cunning, &c. Our loving Redeemer well knew the treachery of our memories, the worldliness of our hearts, and inconstancy of our affections, that we would be ready to let his death and love slip out of our thoughts, and therefore he would have the signs of his sufferings frequently presented to our eyes. Alas! for the cursed ingratitude of my heart, that is so apt to forget him that remembered me when there was none to pity me; but glory to him that takes such pains to cure my forgetfulness, by setting forth Christ crucified so evidently before my eyes in the broken bread and poured out wine in the sacrament.—I look upon this ordinance as a visible representation and commemoration of my Saviour's death and sufferings for his people, which he will have continued till he come again to judgment. It is like a marble pillar set up upon his grave, with an inscription bearing account of his glorious achievements and mighty deeds, his glorious sufferings, conflicts, and victories, for his people.—Wherefore, as oft as he calls me, I will go thither, and put all the honour and respect I can upon my kind benefactor: I will remember his love, proclaim his worth, and publish his praises. I will hereby own myself before the world to be one of his disciples, and a follower of the Lamb. I will declare my abhorrence of sin that pierced him, and my gratitude to the Lamb for the atoning sacrifice he offered up for me upon the cross, I will triumph in this as the only ground of my hope. I will put the crown on his head, and cast all my crowns down at his feet, and cry, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed me from my sins by his blood; worthy is he to receive all honour, power, glory, and dominion, for ever and ever.*

Glory to my dear Saviour, that seeks no greater return for all his labour of love, than a thankful remembrance of it at his table. Oh, should I grudge to give such a small return to him that suffered the pains of death and hell for me! Had he bid me sacrifice my first born, and give all I have to the poor, or go in pilgrimage to the Holy Land to visit his sepulchre, or go to the top of Mount Calvary where the cross stood, as a token of thankfulness for his love, could I have refused it? But he puts me to no such hard task.—Lord, thou bids me not go to a bloody scaffold to remember thee, but to a well covered table to do it. Thou bids me not go there to bleed or burn for thee, but to eat and drink: not the bread of affliction, or water of adversity, but bread that strengthens the heart, and wine that cheers the drooping spirit, bread and wine which thou hast sanctified and blessed for me—Surely, O dear Saviour, I owe my life to thee, nay a thousand lives if I had them; but it is not my life, but my memory and thoughts thou art calling for; it is not to die for thee, but to remember thee. Didst thou drink the cup of wrath on the cross for me, and will not I

drink a cup of blessing at thy table for thee, nay for myself, and for my eternal salvation?

Let me go then to this holy table, with faith, love, and thankfulness, to remember Christ and his dying love; as he commands me. And while I remember him, let me also receive and embrace him as my bleeding High Priest, in the arms of my faith, and at the same time throw my guilty soul into his wounded arms, for saving me from wrath.—Let me go and remember the woundings and piercings of my Redeemer, with a pierced and wounded heart for these cursed sins, which nailed and killed the Prince of Life. Let me henceforth be the death of sin, which was the death of my dear Saviour. Oh, shall I suffer sin to live any longer in me, that would not suffer my Redeemer to live in the world?

But let me consider my High Priest before hand, and what of his sufferings I should remember at his table.—I will remember how the glorious heir of all things denuded himself of his riches and glory, how he left his throne of majesty to lodge in a virgin's womb; yea, to be born among beasts, and cradled in a manger, for such a worm as me! I will remember how he was attacked by the devil, contradicted by sinners, and reproached by the world for my sake!—I will remember how sorrowful his soul was in the garden, when the bitter cup was put in his hand; and how he sweated, how he prayed, how he fell to the ground, till he was quite overwhelmed with wrath, and covered with blood, for my sake!—I will remember how he was sold for a small price, and basely betrayed by Judas; how he was taken by the soldiers, tied as a malefactor with cords, denied by Peter, forsaken by all his disciples, and left alone among his cruel and insulting enemies.—I will remember how he was blindfolded, mocked, spit upon, buffeted, and affronted by ruffians a whole night, and patiently suffered all for my sake. I will remember how his lovely countenance was disfigured with blows, and the plucking the hair off his cheeks; and how the sweetest face ever the sun saw, was all besmeared with blood and spitting for my sake.—I will remember how he that clothes the lilies of the field, was himself stripped naked, bound to a pillar, and cruelly scourged, till the pavement of Pilate's judgment-hall was all bedewed with his precious blood.—I will remember how the crown of thorns was plaited with the sharp points turned inward, put upon his head, and driven into his temple, with a reed, till they pierced his skull in many places, and a shower of blood run down his blessed neck.—I will remember how the heavy cross-tree was laid upon his scourged and bleeding shoulders, and he made to carry it through the streets of Jerusalem, forth of the gates, and up mount Calvary, to the place of execution, until his strength was spent, and he foundered under the burden.—I will remember how the cross-tree was laid down and my Saviour stripped naked, and stretched out upon

it as a rack ; and how he was fastened to it with four big iron nails through his hands and feet, and the cross lifted up and let fall into a deep hole digged for the foot of it, to the violent rending and widening of his sacred wounds, by which he hung, until all his blood streamed forth at them, and he expired amidst the most exquisite tortures.

I will remember also the sufferings of his soul at that time, when the Lord ran upon him as a giant, and made his soul the butt of his envenomed arrows, the poison whereof drank up his spirits, until his strength was dried up like a potsherd.—I will remember how his soul was troubled and nonplussed at the distant prospect of this cup ; and how sore amazed he was soon after when it was put into his hand.—I will remember how the tasting of it cast him into a bloody sweat and agony, which died his garments red, and bedewed the ground where he lay.—I will remember how he was broken with breach upon breach, till all the sea billows of divine vengeance went over him, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah was made to roar under the strokes and bruises of the flaming sword, Psal. xxii. 1.—I will remember the dreadful hidings of God's face he lay under, until he was made to cry, *My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?*—I will remember the inexorableness of divine justice, that would not spare him one stripe, abate him one farthing of the debt, nor one drop of the cup, so that he drank till he cried, *It is finished*, and gave up the ghost. Glory to him for his love in finishing the work.

MEDITATION XI.

From Philip. i. 23. For I am in a strait betwixt two.

AS the Apostle was in a strait whether to choose to die or to live, so am I in a strait whether to go to the Lord's table, or to stay back. Now, thou callest me, Lord, to celebrate the memorial of thy death, yea, to feast with thee at thy holy table, and I know not what to choose ; I am in a strait betwixt two. My heart is so unholy, and my unworthiness so great, I tremble to go forward to feast with a God so holy, and whose purity is infinite ; and yet my wants are so many, and my necessities so great, that my case is hopeless if I stay back : Lord, I can go to none else in all the world to supply my needs, but to thyself alone.—But oh, when I think of going forward, my guilt stops my mouth, and fills me with blushing. Lord, if the holy angels, those pure and unspotted seraphims who burn in zeal for thy service, must even cover their faces before thee, how shall I venture into thy presence ; I whose zeal is so languishing, whose love is so cold, whose mind is so earthly, and prayers so dull ? Shall I approach so near a holy God in such a case ? But what then shall I do ? Shall I join with

these worldlings who were bidden to the feast of the great King, refuse, and make my excuse? Then I fear the King will be angry, declare me unworthy to taste of his supper, yea, swear in his wrath that I shall never enter into his rest.

Lord, I abhor myself for my unworthiness and vileness, my guilt and pollution; but where shall I go to get help and remedy for it, but unto thee alone? Hast thou not bidden me come, though my sins be red as crimson? Have not many such come to thee, and found relief and help? Surely, O Lord, thy goodness is greater than my sinfulness, and thy mercy surpasseth my misery; for though my sins reach even to the clouds, yet thy mercy is above the heavens. O merciful Father, extend thy free, boundless mercy to a miserable, helpless sinner: Surely misery is the proper object of mercy. Holy God, if thou help me not for the sake of my miseries which I have deserved, yet help me for the sake of thy mercies which thou hast promised in Christ, thy dear Son. Wherefore I plead for Christ's sake, that thou wilt hear the cry of my miseries, and not the cry of my sins. O doth not his precious blood cry louder for pardon, than my sins for punishment? Lord, hear the cry of that blood, and let it not be as water spilt upon the ground. For the sake of that prevalent blood, pity, pardon and accept a poor unworthy creature, that desires to obey thy call, and prepare his heart to seek thee though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.

O Lord, though I may be ashamed to come to thee, my needs are so pressing and pinching that I cannot stay away. *To whom shall I go but unto thee, for thou hast the words of eternal life?* The whole creation cannot supply my wants. Thou only art my sun, from whose beams I must receive saving light! Thou art my Head, from whom I must get spiritual life; thou art the root, from which I must receive sap and growth: Thou art the fountain, from which I must draw living water: Thou art the treasure, from which I must obtain the riches of grace. So that without thee I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing.—To thee then must I go for all my supplies, and out of thy fulness receive grace for grace.—Lord, thou hast enough to supply many worlds of needy souls; for the sun is not so full of light, nor the sea so full of water, as thou art full of grace and mercy to needy creatures: And as thou art full, so I am assured thou art free, and willing to communicate thy fulness. In spite then of all objections and difficulties, forward to thee I will go, and cast myself down at thy feet; *If I perish, I perish.* Oh! did ever any perish at mercy's door?

Lord, I have heard of thy mercy to the very chief of sinners, and cannot this mercy reach the like of me? Surely the viler sinner I am, thou hast the fairer opportunity to shew the riches of thy mercy, the freeness of thy love, and the efficacy

of thy blood; and if I be allowed to share therein, the sweeter and louder will the eternal hallelujahs be, that will be sung to the Lamb of God on my account. O that he would glorify his mercy, his love, and blood, in my relief. O where shall a poor heavy laden sinner go, but to him that can free him of his burden? Where shall I go with a multitude of sins and miseries, but to thee who hast a multitude of tender mercies? Where shall I go with my deep and heinous guilt, but to thee who hast a deep fountain to wash it away? Behold one deep calleth to another, the depth of my misery to the depth of thy mercy! My wound is great, but thy balm is excellent! My sore is broad, but thy plaister is answerable! *O Lord, be merciful unto me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.*

Lord, is not the gospel-feast I am invited to a feast of charity, to which thou callest not the rich but the poor, maimed, halt, and blind, who cannot make any return for thy bounty? And may not such a miserable object as I am take encouragement from such a free, extensive invitation, Luke xiv. 21.— My blessed Redeemer, while he was on earth, did not disdain to eat with publicans and sinners, nor to dine with Simon a leper. And though he be now exalted in the highest heavens, yet he still retains the bowels of a man, and all the pity and charity to perishing sinners, he had while here in this state of humiliation. Wherefore, sensible of my unworthiness, loathing myself for my vileness, and trusting to my Saviour's compassion to the miserable, I desire to go forward to his holy table: O that he would direct and strengthen me to go about such a weighty work! Let not that ordinance, which God hath instituted for a blessing, be made a curse to me through my unworthy partaking. Lord, rebuke all unseasonable thoughts and wanderings that would mar the duty; excite and actuate in me every proper grace, and enable me to manage so, that I may not dishonour, but glorify thee; I may not increase my guilt, but augment my grace; I may not bring more hardness, but softness into my heart. Lord, descend thou into my heart by the influences of thy Spirit, that I may ascend up to thee by the actings of grace; and when the King sits at his table, let my spikenard send forth the smell thereof. Lord, I look to thee for strength, conduct, and through-bearing, in every strait. I trust not in my preparations, but in thy free mercy, for acceptance; I trust not in my faith, but in thy faithfulness, who hast promised to give power to the faint; I trust not in my repentance, but in thy free pardoning mercy; I trust not in my doings, but in Christ's doings. O take away my filthy garments, and clothe me with the best robe, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.** *I will go in the strength of the Lord God, I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south, blow upon my garden,*

that the spices may flow out. If thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence.

The Lord made a breach upon the Israelites, for not seeking him after the due order, 1 Chron. xv. 13.—He smote 50,000 of the Bethshemites for an irreverent look into the Ark, which typified Christ; and what cause then have I to fear a stroke, should I rashly touch the symbols of his body and blood!—Seeing this ordinance is intended for doing honour to the King of Zion, O save me from doing indignity to him by betraying him with a kiss, or by throwing his picture, or great seal, into a puddle.—May I so prepare for this feast, that the blessed master of it may see I am watchful of his eye, tender of his honour, and fearful of his anger. Lord, awake my heart, stir up my graces, and prepare me for a meeting with my Saviour; and let not my soul, whose only hope is to be saved by Christ's blood, be sent away from his table with the guilt instead of the benefit, of that blood upon it.

MEDITATION XII.

From Philip. iv. 19. But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.

HEAVENLY Father, out of thy rich bounty thou wast pleased once to lay up a great stock for me in my progenitors' hands, but they very soon squandered it all away, so that I am become extremely poor and needy. O! what can I do in this indigent condition, but come back to thee for pity and new supplies?—For ever blessed be thy name, for the reviving news thou hast published in the gospel; that thou hast now laid up a new stock for bankrupt sinners in the hands of a surety that cannot fail, and hast erected a throne of grace for such as I am, to come to in time of need, where Christ Jesus my surety sits as commissioned by thee, with glorious riches to supply my wants.—Many are the needs which thou thinkest fit to leave upon me, that I might have the more errands unto this throne, and that thou mayest the oftener hear my voice. O pour out upon me a spirit of grace and supplication, and cause me to delight in approaching to thee, and pouring out my wants before thee.

Behold, Lord, a needy creature, an object of pity, approaching to a liberal Saviour, whose fulness is infinite! O how suitable is it to my wants, which are great and innumerable! I am starving, and have no bread; I am naked, and have no clothing; I am wounded, and have no cure; I am in debt, and have no money; I am polluted, and have no fountain; I am burdened, and have no rest; I have destroyed myself, and can find no help in myself.—But yet there is help for me elsewhere; I have heard of the mercy of the King of Israel, and of the remedy he hath provided for those who are helpless,

lost, and miserable. Wherefore, though I be poor, I will not despair, for thou art the Lord of the whole world, and hast opened thy treasures to the needy: Though I be polluted I will not despond, for thou hast the fountain of salvation: Though I be naked, I will not with Adam run from thee and hide myself, nay I will run to thee to cover me with the wool and fleece of the Lamb of God, even the spotless righteousness and innocence of my Saviour: Though I be hungry and starving I will take encouragement from the glad tidings thou hast proclaimed in the gospel of a rich feast for the poor and needy.—Lord, I come to thee as the hungry to be fed, as the naked to be clothed, as the wounded to be healed, as the cold starving creature to the fire, as the unclean to be washed in the fountain that is opened, not to the house of David only, but even to the poorest inhabitant in Jerusalem. Glory to God, that it is so free and open to the poor and needy.

Lord, I come not to thy table because I am worthy; but because thou art rich in mercy, and dost promise that *the needy shall not be forgotten, and the expectation of the poor shall not perish? And that when the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, thou the Lord wilt hear them, and open rivers in the wilderness, and fountains in the midst of the valleys.* O come, do as thou hast said; pity a poor, needy, perishing creature, and fill my narrow vessel out of the ocean of thy mercy, where it will not be missed.—Come to the feast of thine own appointment, and display thy fulness and liberality. Cast open the doors of thy treasures, and allow me access to Christ's unsearchable riches.—Thy word, Lord, assures me, that in all ages thou hast bestowed these riches upon the poor and needy, without money, and without price. And this doth warrant me to plead with thee to come to thy house, where many needy beggars are gathered, and scatter thy bounty among them, and admit me to gather with them.—O let not such a miserable object go from thy door without an alms, without a crumb of the children's bread, seeing there is bread enough in thy house, and to spare. O let none return ashamed from the fountain who come expecting water. Thou hast promised to pour water upon the thirsty and floods upon the dry ground. Oh, is there any more dry, more poor, more needy, than I am? Lord, make me as thirsty as I am dry, as humble as I am poor, and as sensible as I am needy. Alas, that I have so little sense of my wants! Oh, deal not with me, according to my sense of need, which is small, but deal with me according to my real need, and thy royal bounty, which is exceeding great.

O that I were poor and needy in my own eyes, and truly sensible of my own wants; that I am drowned in debt to the law and justice of God, owe many thousands, and have not one farthing to pay; that I am destitute of every thing that is good, can do nothing to please God, and am unworthy of

the least of his mercies. O that I were made willing to quit all confidence in my own righteousness, duties, frames, or attainments; and well content to go entirely out of myself to Christ, for righteousness to justify me, and for his Spirit or grace to renew and sanctify my nature.

Lord, I am poor, but I see God has treasured up unsearchable riches, and infinite fulness in Jesus Christ to answer all my needs:—I am naked, but I see in Christ a robe of righteousness, that is sufficient to cover me, and a whole elect world;—I am a starving creature, but in Christ there is the bread of life, and the waters of life for my soul;—I am foolish and ignorant, but Christ hath infinite wisdom to teach and guide me;—I am loaded with guilt, but Christ's sacrifice is sufficient to atone for it;—I have strong lusts and corruptions, but Christ hath a kingly power to subdue them;—I am under much darkness, but Christ is *the light of the world*;—I am under fears and discouragements, but Christ is the consolation of Israel;—I am wounded and sick, but Christ, my physician, hath excellent balm for me;—I am under a burden of debt, but Christ, my surety, is rich, and fully able to pay it;—I am in prison, and under bonds, but Christ opens the prison doors, and looses them that are bound;—I am fatherless by Adam's fall, but Christ is the Everlasting Father, *in whom the fatherless find mercy*;—I have many enemies to pursue and accuse me, as law, justice, Satan, and conscience; but Christ my advocate can answer them all:—Therefore I flee to him for refuge, I close with him in all his offices, and put my whole confidence in him.

It gives great encouragement to my poor needy soul, that I have a Saviour so full of goodness and pity to look to, a mighty Agent in heaven to plead my cause, and to present my bills, petitions and supplications, to the Father. I put all my requests and concerns in his hand, and commit them to his care and management; he knows the fittest time to present them, and to send me an answer. In the sacrament I swear allegiance to thee, as my Sovereign Lord and King, over thy broken body, and shed blood, I engage to be a true and faithful soldier in thy army, and to take the field against thy enemies. Many pieces of furniture do I need for this warfare; I need the girdle of sincerity, the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, the sword of the Spirit, the breast-plate of righteousness, and to have my feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. But glory to thy name, my Redeemer and captain of salvation hath provided a noble armory and storehouse to answer all these my necessities and wants. Lord, supply all my needs out of thy infinite fulness, and furnish me with every thing requisite and necessary for the work and warfare thou callest me unto. Oh, my enemies are lively, and they are strong: But I look to my glorious Captain to gird me with strength for the battle, and to teach my hands to war.

MEDITATION XIII.

From Eph. iii. 19. And to know the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge.

WHERE shall I begin my thoughts upon this subject of the love of Christ to men? And when begun, how shall I make an end? It hath a breadth and length, a depth and height that passeth knowledge. If the apostle Paul, that had the brightest discoveries of this love, owned this, much more may I. I may sooner find out the height of heaven, the breadth of the earth, or the depth of the sea, than measure Christ's love. It is an unfathomable ocean that hath neither bank nor bottom. O whither did his love carry him! From the height of glory to the depth of misery. How low and deep was our fall, that nothing could recover and raise us up, but the low abasement of the Son of God, the King of glory? How low was the step he made to help us up; even to put on our nature, and suffered himself to be pierced for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities! Blessed Lord, thou tookest not on thee the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham; these are fast bound up from thee with chains of darkness, whilst thou drawest us to thee with cords of love! How distinguishing was thy love to man, that brought thee from heaven to earth, from the throne to the manger, from the manger to the wilderness, from the wilderness to the garden, from the garden to the judgment-hall, from the judgment-hall to the cross, from the cross to the grave; yea, from the glory of heaven to the very torments of hell, and all for creatures that were black and ugly as hell! How wonderful is the sight thou callest me to see at the Lord's table! Even to see him suffering for sin that never committed sin! To see him *made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we, who knew no righteousness, might be made the righteousness of God in him!* An amazing sight indeed!

Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him! O what is he that thou shouldst magnify and set thy heart on him! And what am I, the worst of men, and vilest of sinners, that thou shouldst stoop so low to exalt me! That thou shouldst endure the poverty of this world, that I might enjoy the riches of heaven! Be content to live in the form of a servant, that I might have the adoption of a son! Be willing to bow thyself unto death, to raise me to eternal life! Be content to be numbered among transgressors, that I might have a room among the blessed! To be crowned with thorns, that I might be crowned with glory! To be condemned before men, that I might be justified before God! To drink the bitter cup of wrath, that I might drink the pure river of life! To cry out in sorrow upon the cross, that I might triumph with joy upon the throne! To stand before the mouth of hell furnace, to keep its flames from breaking out on me! O Lord Jesus, thy love hath overflown all banks, and thy compassion knew no

bounds ! Can I think on it, and my heart not burn ? Can I speak of it, and not be overcome, so as to seek, with Joseph, a secret place to weep in ?

O love that passeth knowledge ! How shall I think of it and not stand amazed ! That the general should die for the soldier, the physician for the patient ! That the righteous Judge of Heaven should come to the bar, put himself in the malefactor's clothes, and be condemned for him ! That the blessed Son of God should interpose his innocent breast to receive the mortal stroke for us ! That God all-sufficient should be exposed to hunger and thirst, to grief and weariness, and the vilest reproaches and indignities, for worms like us ! Behold the CREATOR of the world wounded, mangled, and killed, by ungrateful creatures, whom he came to save ! behold his bowels yearning towards them who raked in them with their bloody hands ! Behold his heart burning with affection towards them that cruelly pierced it ! Surely a believing view of this love of Christ is sufficient to mollify a heart more cold and frozen than ice itself ! O love unfathomable ! Who can measure its dimensions ! It hath a height without a top, a depth without a bottom, a breadth without a side, a length without end ! Astonishing love ! that my exalted Lord should stoop so low as to become a man ; nay, a poor man, a man of sorrows, a deserted man, a dying man, and also a dead man, for such a wretch as me ! Nay, more, that he should stoop to be made a curse, and lie under a dreadful load of wrath upon his innocent soul, infinitely more heavy than what is laid upon any damned soul in hell !

O what a sea of wrath did my loving Jesus swim through to save me from perishing ! Behold how that raging sea wrought and was tempestuous, roared most terribly, and threatened to swallow me up with the rest of the elect world ; till once my Redeemer stepped in, and undertook to be the sacrifice for calming the sea ! Take me up, (said he, like Jonah) and throw me into the sea, and ye shall be all safe. In this Red sea our blessed Jonah was content to swim for thirty-three years, without seeking deliverance, till once the sea was perfectly calm, and every elect soul out of danger. Marvellous loving-kindness ! Oh that I could, with a suitable frame of heart, both remember and admire redeeming love, and redeeming blood, when I go to sit down at my Redeemer's table. O that I may there get faith's sight of the various instances of his love, that passeth knowledge. Let me there view Christ in the womb, and in the manger ; in his weary steps, and hungry bowels ; in his prostrations in the garden, and clotted drops of bloody sweat. Let me view his head with a crown of thorns, and his face besmeared with the soldier's spit. Let me view him in his march to Calvary, and his elevation upon a painful cross, with his head bowed down, and his side streaming blood ! O unparalleled love ! It had

been wonderful love to have sent one of the lofty seraphims to suffer for us: but to give him whom all the seraphims serve and adore, *is love that passeth knowledge!* Let me view the Scripture designations and titles of *him that loved us, and gave himself for us*, that he might wash us in his blood.

He is our *Emmanuel, the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, the Prince of the kings of the earth, the Lord of glory, the rose of Sharon, the plant of renown, the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person, the bright and morning star, the sun of righteousness, the light of the world, the head of his church, the beginning and first born from the dead, the appointed heir of all things.* This is *he that loved us, and gave himself* to die for the redemption of a crew of rebels, grace-abusing, and gospel-slighting sinners! Oh, what am I that thou shouldst spare, yea, ransom and feast me in such a manner! Long ago mightest thou have shaken off the hand of thy Providence such a viper as I am, into fire unquenchable; and there made me to know, to sad experience, what it is to abuse free grace, by the loss of eternal glory.—But, instead of that, thou hast pitied me, loved me, become my surety, to appease justice for my heinous sins by thy blood, when no other sacrifice would do. Lord, I welcome thy love-feast; I lay my hand on the head of the sacrifice, and rest upon it; *I believe, Lord, help my unbelief.* O that I may henceforth live under the continual sense of my infinite obligations to my glorious surety, that would make *his soul an offering for my sin.* O what return shall I give him for all his soul-travail and agonies for me? O that I could spend my whole life, and each day of it, in magnifying his love, and living to his praise. Now, *blessed be his glorious name for ever and ever; let the whole earth be filled with his glory.* Amen, and Amen.

MEDITATION XIV.

From Luke xxii. 44. And being in an agony—his sweat was as it were great drops of blood.

O MY soul, this text affords thee great subject of thoughts, when thou goest to remember thy dear Saviour at his table. Here I see him in a bloody agony! And first, let me observe the place where his agony began, the garden of Gethsemane, which lay in the valley of Jehoshaphat, on the east side of Jerusalem, at the foot of the mount of Olives. Now, it was in the valley of Jehoshaphat that God did plead with the nations in Christ their surety, Joel iii. 2. The word Gethsemane signifies a mill or press for olives, as being probably the place where they pressed the olives that grew on the mount, and

there squeezed the oil out of them. In this place, it pleased the Father to bruise Christ our true olive, that so out of his fulness the fresh oil of his merit and grace might flow out abundantly to needy souls. Never was there such an olive pressed there before, since the first planting of that mount! Never was there such precious oil seen as Jesus' blood! O that I may partake of the root and fatness of that good olive which was pressed here, and of that oil, which will make my grace to grow and my face to shine?

As it was in a garden that man's sin and misery first began, so it was in a garden that our blessed Surety began his last expiatory sufferings for sin, which cast him into a fearful agony. As the garden of Eden produced man's misery, so the garden of Gethsemane provided a remedy. O that when I walk and retire myself in a garden, I may have grace to think seriously, and with suitable affections, upon the sins of men, and the sufferings of my Saviour for them; and, at the same time, to send up my ejaculations to God, for an interest in his agony and atonement, and for the comfortable intimation thereof to my soul. When my dear Redeemer was in his agony of soul, I read of his offering *up prayers and supplications to God, with strong crying and tears*, Heb. v. 7. and have I no prayers or tears to offer up to God at the remembrance of his agony! especially, when I consider how much my sins contributed to throw him into it.—O how strong and bitter were my Surety's cries at this time, when God bruised his soul, and poured down a flood of his wrath upon him? He cried, till he was spent with crying; he grew hoarse with it, and his throat so dried, that he could cry no more, Psal. lxxix. 3. Now was his soul in travail, and great cause had he for his strong crying and tears. He was silent under all the pains of his body, and under his sufferings from men; all that time *he is dumb, as a sheep before her shearers*: But, behold, when fierce wrath from God alighted on his soul, he cries vehemently; and he prayed most earnestly and importunately for support and through-bearing under this terrible storm. O that, from my Saviour's example, I may learn, when under soul-trouble and inward distress, to make my prayers to God more earnest and fervent, and to persevere without fainting; which I have encouragement to do from this, that my Saviour's fervent prayers and tears have made way for mine.

I observe also in this passage, that the agony of Christ's soul increased so much, that it produced a sweat of blood over his body; yea, great drops or clots of blood, which, by his violent agony, burst through his very clothes, and watered the ground where he lay. O what trouble and anguish, pangs and sorrow, desertions and strugglings, must his soul have endured at this time, under the burden of God's wrath for his people's sins, which put his sacred body and blood into such

a dreadful commotion and ferment! O what a prodigious and preternatural sweat was this! Never was the like heard of since the world began! According to the course of nature, Christ lying in the open air, in a cold night, upon the cold ground, with the greatness of his consternation, should have drawn all his blood inward from the external parts of his body: But Christ's sweating and bleeding was altogether preternatural. He sweated without external heat, he bled without external wound. The fire of divine wrath, now kindled in his soul, was so very hot and raging, that it made the blood about his heart to boil, and burst through both flesh and garments.—He had received at this time, no wound nor external violence from any hand; no Judas, no soldier, no tormentor, had yet attacked him; no spear, no nail, no thorn nor scourge had yet touched his sacred body, and yet he bleeds most plentifully! Oh, but the sword of Justice had reached him, and made a deep wound and wide gash in his soul; at which breach a sea of wrath brake in with such violence, that it overwhelmed him; made him fall first on his knees, and then flat on the ground, where he lay agonizing and crying, till all the waves and billows of divine vengeance went over him. Oh, what a dreadful pressure was my Saviour's soul under at this time! What squeezing anguish had he about his heart, that made his body to struggle, and sweat in such a manner, that every pore of his body became a bleeding wound! O how awfully should I be affected with this tragical sight! How thankfully should I remember my Redeemer's love, when he calls me to do it at his holy table!

In my Saviour's agony I may see, as in a glass, the malignant evil and cursed nature of sin, that no less could atone for it, than the soul-travail and agony of the dear Son of God! Can I ever make light of sin, when I view the great drops of blood standing about his garments, while he lay grovelling on the earth in the anguish of his soul! Shall I not henceforth abhor sin, and stand in awe of offending a just and holy God, seeing it is such a fearful thing to fall into his hands: *If such things were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* Was the cup of wrath so terrible to the innocent human nature of Christ, when presented to him, that he shrank and cried? O! what will it be to guilty sinners? Here I may see how costly the redemption of souls is; ere this could be compassed, God must be made man, Eternity must suffer death, the Lord of angels must weep in a cradle, the Creator of the world must hang like a slave! He must lie in a manger at Bethlehem, cry in an agony at Gethsemane, die on a cross at Calvary! Unspotted Righteousness must be made sin, and unblemished Blessedness must be made a curse! O did Christ value souls at so high a rate, and shall men be so foolish as throw them away for a thing of nought!

Here I may see the great difficulty of making peace with God, when once his law is broken; no less could do it than the blood, and soul-agony of the Son of God: even an infinite ransom must be paid ere God would be reconciled to man. O how much am I beholden to Christ that undertook the reconciliation, that prevented my ruin, by taking the cup out of my hand! O the cup he drank for me was mingled with wrath and curses, a cup full of vengeance, pressed down, heaped up, shaken together, and running over; a cup, which if men or angels had but tasted, they had reeled, staggered, and fallen headlong into hell: Yet, said Christ, ere any of my elect ones drink it, I will do it for them; reach it hither to me, bitter as it is.—O how ready was Christ to engage for men! and how willing was he to perform! how ready, full, and free was the fountain of his blood to wash the defiled! Behold how freely it issued forth before a wound was opened; all his veins and pores poured forth, without waiting for the tormentors. Lord, make me as willing and ready to apply it. Did Christ wrestle in an agony to obtain the redemption of us t sinners, and shall not I wrestle as in an agony to get an interest in this redemption, and the evidences thereof cleared up to my soul! O for faith and fervency, in prayer, that I may wrestle without ceasing for assurance of his love, that I may go with joy to his table.

MEDITATION XV.

From Isa. liii. 7. He opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter—

IT becomes me to read and consider these words with great attention, seeing they were the occasion of the Ethiopian Eunuch's conversion; for it was while he read and thought on these words, that God sent Philip to join him, Acts viii. 29. O that God would, in like manner, send his Holy Spirit to join me while I am meditating on them.

First. I observe that Christ is the great sacrifice provided by God to make atonement for our sins: He is the great antitype and substance of all the lambs and beasts that were offered up in sacrifice under the law, and therefore he is often in the New Testament called *the Lamb, the Lamb of God, and the Lamb slain*. The Spirit of God seems to have a peculiar delight in dwelling upon this type of the Lamb; more than on any other of the Old Testament types; and should not I delight in it too, and often with pleasure make mention of the Lamb, the worthy Lamb, that will be the object of the praises of saints and angels through all eternity?

Second. Christ is represented by a lamb to point out the innocence of his person, the meekness of his nature, the usefulness of his benefits, and patience under sufferings.

How patient is the lamb under injuries? It is silent both before the shearer and butcher; it parts with its fleece in shearing time, and with its life in slaughter time, without any noise or resistance. Dogs and swine howl and cry when violence is offered to them, but the lamb is quite silent. So Christ the Lamb of God opened not his mouth, under the greatest revilings, mockings, buffetings, spitings, piercings, and the most cruel death, which he suffered from men, 1 Pet. ii. 23. and hence it is said in the text, when he was led to the slaughter, *he opened not his mouth*: He opened not his mouth, unless it was to bless, teach, or pray for those who injured him; yea, he not only did pray, but also pled an excuse for them, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*. And after his resurrection, how ready was this meek Lamb to forgive all that wronged him! When giving orders to preach remission of sins to a lost world, he bids *begin at Jerusalem*, Luke xxiv. 46. where they mocked and pierced him, because there they had greatest need of his blood to wash them from guilt. How meekly did our blessed Lamb carry to Peter, when he denied him in his own hearing? He did not turn and frown upon Peter, as he well deserved, though he might have frowned him into hell; it is said only, *He turned and looked on Peter*, Luke xxii. 61. not with an angry look, but with an affectionate melting look, which recovered him to a penitent frame: Neither did he afterwards upbraid him with his carriage. O meek Lamb of God! Can I remember thee at thy table, without being filled with remorse and grief for my impatience under injuries, and the proneness of my heart to resent them? Shall I not be ashamed of my unchristian temper, when I see my meek and loving JESUS willing to be the sport and derision of men and devils, that he might be the author of salvation to perishing souls? Oh, how astonishing is it to see the CREATOR affronted by the creature, the potter by his clay, the King of glory by worms of the earth, and yet hold his peace! Now, is the head so meek and patient, and should not the members be so too? O how unseemly is it to see a company of fierce lions following a meek lamb! O that I could learn more of him that is meek and lowly in heart.

Third. Here I see the greatest instance of divine love that ever the world saw. Behold an offended God willing to spare wretched criminals, and take satisfaction from a surety in their room! and he himself finds out the lamb to be the sacrifice, even his eternal Son, who willingly undertook to assume a body for that end. How astonishing are the Lamb's words, Heb. x. 5. *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me*: as if he had said, "Father, since all the legal sacrifices are insufficient to satisfy thy justice, atone for sin, and ransom precious souls; even take the body thou hast prepared for me, let that be

“ the sacrifice to justice ; it is more valuable than any other, “ being the tabernacle of my divine person ; it will bring glory to thy offended justice, and satisfy it to the full. I yield myself willingly to be the prisoner of justice, and go quietly as a lamb to the slaughter ; not dragged to it as an ox or bullock, but meekly and pleasantly like a lamb.”—When, according to this agreement, justice required the Lamb to be sacrificed, O how patient and silent was he under all the accusations laid against him, though he were wholly innocent ; he would say nothing in his own defence, at which Pilate (not knowing the cause of his silence) marvelled greatly, having never seen the like before. But our Lamb considered that he stood not only at Pilate’s bar, but also at the bar of God’s justice, as our Surety, bearing our guilt ; and though man had nothing to lay to his charge, yet he knew what divine justice had to charge upon him, and therefore he is silent, and answers nothing, that he might not hinder our redemption, nor stop the payment of our debt. When justice charged him with our sins, our “ unbelief, pride, covetousness,” &c. he might have said, “ O Father, these transgressions are not mine, I never offended thee ;” but he will do nothing to rescue himself. Therefore, when the fearful charge of the whole sins of an elect world was exhibited against him, and the sword of justice drawn, ready to strike, he opened not his mouth, but takes with the charge, as if he had been guilty of all. Glory to the silent Lamb for ever, that would not hinder our release from punishment, but meekly took the stroke for us.

Fourth. Behold this meek Lamb before he was brought to the slaughter, led up and down from place to place ; from the garden to the high priest, from the high priest to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, from Herod back to Pilate, from Pilate to Calvary. Behold him mocked, abused, and disgraced by them, buffeted and spit upon, crowned, scourged, and pierced, and yet never resists nor complains. He willingly *gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not his face from spitting.* Now, the meek Lamb is content to be as the ram caught in the thickets, to be slaughtered and sacrificed in our room, who were lying bound like Isaac, to have been the sacrifice. Oh, it was our sins that platted the thorns ; they also were the reed that drove them into his temples, yet he opened not his mouth.

Fifth. Now this slaughtered Lamb is set before my eyes in the sacrament, and God’s call to me is, *Behold the Lamb of God*, John i. 29. Now let me behold with an earnest and steady look, with faith and expectation, that I may get healing to all my diseases. As no stung Israelite got healing from the brazen serpent, unless they looked to it, so none can get benefit from Christ unless they behold him. May I never look away from this Lamb, to my tears, convictions, prayers,

reforms, or any thing else; seeing the best duties will make bad saviours. If I expect salvation from other things, I am undone, for there is no other name given under heaven whereby men can be saved: But if I look to the Lamb of God, my salvation is secured by his promise, Isa. xlv. 22.

Sixth. There was no house in Egypt safe from the destroying angel, but those who had their doors sprinkled with the blood of the Paschal lamb; so there is no soul safe from the sword of revenging justice, but those who by faith put themselves under the protection of the blood of this slain Lamb: Let me therefore take the bunch of hyssop, faith, and dip it in the bason of the New Covenant, and sprinkle this blood on my guilty soul, and so I shall be safe.

Seventh. How blessed is their character who follow the Lamb, Rev. xiv. 4. May I follow him as my physician to cure me, my righteousness to justify me, my life to quicken me, my husband to supply my wants, my guide to conduct me, my pattern to direct me in my steps. Let me learn from his example, to be patient without murmuring, when I am under affliction.—Let me learn meekness towards men, when I meet with reproaches or injuries from them.—Let me learn a readiness to obey God's call to every duty. O did Christ go willingly to the slaughter for us, and shall I be backward to pray, communicate, part with sin, or do any thing he requires of me? Let me, in all duties and ordinances, seek after the Lamb's presence, seeing my eternal happiness lies in being ever with the Lamb, and to be fed and led by him, Rev. vii. 16.

MEDITATION XVI.

From Eph. i. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood.

HOW dismal is our case by nature! We are slaves to sin and Satan, and prisoners to the justice of God, being sentenced to die, doomed to wrath, and reserved to public judgment and execution. In this miserable condition were all mankind, until Christ came to ransom us! And, O how difficult and costly was our redemption to Christ! no less could be the price of it than his precious blood. The glorious Son of God, who created heaven and earth, must become a creature, be born of a woman, and pour out his blood on an ignominious cross, before we could be redeemed from sin and wrath. O how valuable must the blood of this infinite person be! What is the blood of earthly kings and princes to this blood? Surely one drop of it, is of more value than an ocean of theirs! and yet every drop of this blood was poured out upon the ground for our redemption. In this blood I see sundry things:

First. The amazing love of Christ in shedding his blood for

the redemption of such creatures as I am ; creatures most ugly, that had lost the image of God, and got Satan's image pictured in its room, and were thereby become black as hell. Creatures loathsome as dead carcases, being dead in trespasses ; and yet these he loved so as to shed his blood, and bleed to death for them. For as lovely as Sarah was, while alive, yet when dead, Abraham could look on her no more, but would have her buried out of his sight. But Christ said not so of his elect spouse when dead ; no, said he, let me bleed and die for her to bring her to life ; though, at the same time, she was more loathsome than Job with his boils, Lazarus with his sores, or any dead carcase with vermin. O what cause could be given for the love of a bleeding JESUS ? well might he say, " I loved you, because I loved you ; and I love you freely." And O, with what sorrow, pain, and agony, was his bleeding love attended, while his dear soul was overwhelmed with the terrible billows of his Father's wrath ? Christ knew well beforehand all these sufferings, and all the ingredients in the cup, yet he would needs drink it for us : He foresaw the poison of God's arrows that would drink up his spirits ; the burning thirst that the heat of divine wrath would create in him ; yet willingly did he go to bleed and die, like a lamb to the slaughter. *O love that passeth knowledge.*

Second. In Christ's blood I see the glory of infinite wisdom displayed : Who could have found out a way to reconcile justice and mercy, and satisfy both their demands about Adam's fallen race ! A general council of angels could never have thought of the Son of God's being made flesh, and shedding his blood. How shocking would the suggestion have been, if God had not made it ? But, behold, hereby infinite wisdom hath discovered a way to gratify both justice and mercy ; to punish sin, and yet pardon the sinner ; to maintain the honour of the law-maker, and yet preserve the life of the law-breaker : Hereby mercy is satisfied in sparing the rebel, and yet justice more glorified, and sin rendered more odious, than if the sinner himself had been eternally demned for it.—Nay, though all the men on earth had been cast into hell-fire for sin, and the angels with them, it had been no such instance of justice, as Christ's bleeding and dying for sin : For what is the punishing of creatures, to the suffering of the Creator !

Third. This blood being the blood of God, hath infinite virtue and efficacy ; it hath purchased the church of God, and all grace and glory to her, Acts xx. 28. ; it protects all who come under the covert of it from the wrath of God, Exod. xii. 13. *When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.*"—This blood, which is the price of our redemption, hath marvellous effects ; it pleads for the guilty, and obtains pardon of sin, peace with God, nearness to and communion with him. It cleanses, heals, satisfies, and beau-

tifies perishing souls; it seals the New Testament, overcomes our enemies, liberates the prisoners, opens heaven's gates, and gives boldness to enter in: The person of our Redeemer being preferable to a million of worlds full of men and angels, his blood alone might well serve for an elect world. What sins can be so heinous or so numerous, but the blood of God can wash them away! This was famous Cranmer's support, that day he suffered martyrdom; when his heinous sin of renouncing the truth stared him in the face, and he was greatly dejected for it; he brake out, "Surely God was made flesh, and shed his blood, not for lesser sins only, but for great, great sins also." This relieved him, and made him die with courage. This blood can help in all straits, deliver from all fears, and is able to save to the uttermost. It hath saved many who have condemned themselves, and thought their salvation impossible. It hath eased many consciences, when the terrors of the Almighty have surrounded them, and his arrows have stuck fast in them. It hath unstunged death, and carried many safe through its darkest vallies. This blood hath cleansed many whose hearts were filthy as the mire, and whose lives swarmed with the most abominable lusts, such as the Corinthians, 1 Cor. vi. 11. and three thousand of those who had embred their hands in shedding of it, Acts ii. 36. Nay, it is able to take away the sins of a world, John i. 29. and much more the sins of any one soul, though like a mountain for weight, or the sand for number.

Fourth. I see this redeeming blood to be a suitable remedy for all maladies: O that I could look to it by faith, apply it to my sores, and plead it with God: "Lord, I am an unrighteous creature, but here is justifying blood; my heart is unholily, but here sanctifying blood; my soul is wounded, but here healing blood; my lusts are strong, but here mortifying blood; my heart is hard, but here softening blood; my affections are dead, but here quickening blood; my love is cold, but here is heart-warming blood.—When I am at the holy table, I am near this blessed remedy: O let me not miss a cure when the Balm of Gilead is among my hands; let me not perish in my guilt beside the open fountain. Oh, this blood hath healed thousands, and shall I remain under my plagues?—Lord, let that innocent blood, which run from thy hands, heart, and side, drop on my guilty soul, and cleanse me from all sin. O my glorious bleeding Lamb, *if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* O say to me as thou didst to the leper, *I will, be thou clean.* Surely thy blood is more able to save me, than my sins are to destroy me."

Fifth. How just is it that I should commemorate the shedding of this blood in the way that Christ appoints? Lord, help me to go to thy table, and realize the shedding of this blood to myself, as much as if I had stood by the cross, and seen it with my eyes flowing from his wounds. Let my faith be

the evidence of things not seen, and let it realize the shedding of Christ's blood as evidently to me as if I had actually seen it. Ah, I cannot say it is so, while my eyes are so dry, and my heart so hard; alas for my stupid unconcerned heart, that doth not burst into love and tears at the sacramental view of this blood-shedding! How can I see these hands, that sway the sceptre of the heavens, nailed to the tree of reproach, and not mourn? How can I see these feet, that trample on the powers of hell, nailed to a tree, and not weep? Did the earth tremble, rocks rend, sun hide, and heavens darken, and will not my rocky heart rend for sin that caused all?—Since thou, Lord, comest to me, in streams of blood, let me go forth and meet thee with streams of tears.—Oh! shall I be more sparing of my tears for Christ, than he was of his blood for me? Can I see this precious blood run down in streams, and my eyes not pour out some drops? Can I refuse drops of water for streams of blood? Can I see the blood of the King of kings spilt like water on the ground, and the earth drinking it up, and my heart not rend for shedding it? Oh that *my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night* for the slain Lamb of God!

Sixth. How dreadful must the crime be to tread this blood under foot by unbelief, or unworthy communicating!—*Had Zimri peace that slew his master?* And can I have peace if I be guilty of the blood of him that is my master and Redeemer both? How sad will my case be, if that blood, which alone can procure my pardon, shall cry for my eternal punishment? *Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God.*—O that I could value and esteem, plead and apply this precious blood more! Lord, accept of it as a full satisfaction for all my sins, and an all-sufficient price for my soul's redemption. Is not one drop of thy Son's blood of more value than a sea of mine. My sins, alas! have shut me out of Paradise, but, O let this blood open Paradise to me again; and let me, through this Red sea, enter into the heavenly Canaan; I know I can have no other passage into it. Lord, impute not the guilt, but the merit of this blood to me.

MEDITATION XVII.

From Psalm lxxii. 6. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth.

THIS is spoken and promised of Christ, and serves to teach us, that Christ coming to his church and people, by the gracious influences of his Holy Spirit, is most useful and refreshing to their souls, like showers of rain to the dry ground, or a meadow newly cut to make it spring again.—Christless souls are like the dry ground; without the moisture of saying,

grace, their hearts are hard ; neither rods, mercies, nor sermons, make any impression upon them : Why ? they are without Christ, the fountain of grace, and spiritual influences. — Before the fall, man's soul was like a well watered garden, beautiful, green, and fragrant ; but, by his apostacy from God, in Adam, our first head, the springs of grace and holiness are quite dried up in his soul ; and there is no curing this drought but by the soul's union with a new head, to wit, Christ our second Adam, who has the Spirit given him without measure for the use of his members. Now, when we are united by faith to Christ, our head of influences, *the dry land is turned into water-springs* ; Christ comes down as the rain by his spirit of regeneration, and brings the springs of grace into the soul. He is the first and immediate receptacle of the Holy Spirit, and all regenerating and sanctifying influences, and out of his fulness we must by faith receive them. And, when at any time the springs of grace are interrupted in the soul by sin or unbelief, so as the ground turns dry, the plants wither, and the things which remain are ready to die, the soul hath need to look up to Jesus Christ to come down with new showers upon the thirsty ground, and decayed plants.

1. As the rain is the free gift of God to the dry ground, it comes free and cheap to poor and rich, small and great, and costs them nothing : So Christ, with his blessings, is God's free gift to a dry perishing world, for which we should continually be thankful. 2. As nothing can stop the falling of the rain, so nothing can hinder Christ's gracious influences, when he designs to awake, convince or soften a hard heart. When these showers do fall on sinners, the most obstinate will must yield, and cry, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?* 3. As the rain is most necessary and suitable to the dry ground, and to the various plants it produceth, and also to the different parts of every plant or tree : such as the root, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, and fruit : So Christ is absolutely necessary, and his influences most suitable to all his people's souls, and to every faculty of them, the understanding, will, memory, and affections ; and to all their different graces, faith, love, repentance, &c. to root and establish them, strengthen and confirm them, quicken and increase them, cherish and preserve them. 4. As the rain comes down in diverse ways and manners to the earth, sometimes with cold winds and tempests, thunders and lightnings, and at other times with calmness and warmth : So Christ comes to sinners, sometimes with sharp convictions and legal terrors, and sometimes with alluring invitations and promises. 5. O how pleasant are the effects of rain to languishing plants, to make them green and beautiful, lively and strong, fragrant and fruitful ! So the effects of Christ's influences are most desirable to drooping souls, for enlightening and enlivening them, for confirming and strengthening them, for comforting and enlarg-

ing them, for appetising and satisfying them, transforming and beautifying them. A shower from Christ would soon make the church, though withered, turn green and beautiful, and to send forth a smell as of a field that the Lord hath blessed; and likewise some drops of this shower, falling down upon the languishing graces of communicants, would soon make them vigorous and lively in shewing forth their Saviour's death at his table.

Here I may see the reason why many souls continue as dry ground in their parched natural condition, while others near them are flourishing and fruitful; Christ's shower hath come down upon the one, and not upon the other; one piece is rained upon, and another piece is dry and withered, according to that word in Amos iv. 7.—Oh, what cause is there to bewail the evident symptoms of this continuing natural drought in multitudes of souls! Why? their hearts are hard, impenetrable, and unaffected with the miserable state they are in by nature, and with the woful plagues of their hearts. They have no sense or feeling of the evil of sin, notwithstanding of all the reproofs and threatenings of the word, or the rods and strokes it brings upon them; or of the sufferings of Christ for sin. And though God assures them, that the end of dry ground is cursing and burning, they are impenitent and unconcerned under all.—O if parched souls in their natural estate were made sensible of their misery, and brought to bewail their case, and say, “Oh, I am as the heath in the desert that sees no rain: I am a dry tree; if I continue in this state, I will be cut down as cumbering the ground, and made fuel to hell fire. I see the ax of justice laid to my root; every hour I am in danger of the blow. O if Christ would interpose to spare me, and come down upon me as the rain, and bring the moisture of grace into my soul.”

How lamentable also is the case of those who once seemed to be watered by this heavenly rain, and now are parched by a long consuming drought and withering wind! They have lost their former greenness and moisture, their spirituality and liveliness, and their duties are quite dwindled away into a lifeless carcase and dead formality. They have lost their wonted freedom and enlargement in prayer, and are fallen under sad bonds and straitenings of spirit, which make them count holy things a weariness, and frequently neglect secret prayer. Surely such have great need of Christ coming down upon them as the rain, to make them spring up as the grass, and revive as the corn.—Alas, we have a sinful hand in bringing on such a spiritual drought, by quenching the motions of the Spirit, indulging fleshly lusts, giving the world Christ's room in the heart, and neglecting to live by faith on the Son of God, who is the rain and dew of Israel.

How happy are those who live under the droppings of this rain! They are like trees planted by the waters, their roots

spread forth, and their leaves are green, Jer. xvii. 8. Have I the signs of such persons? "Is my heart ready to melt at the sight of a crucified Jesus set before me in the sacrament? Do I mourn for my sins that pierced him? Am I ready to think worse of myself than any other person can? Is my heart soft and pliable to the will of God, both in his precepts and providences? Do the world's good things bulk but little in my eye? Is it my desire to meet with Christ in every duty and ordinance? Do I still look on sin as Christ's enemy? Am I afraid of provoking him by sin to withhold the showers, and make the heavens as brass to me? Am I desirous to bring forth fruit answerable to the waterings he graciously allows me?" O may I find these marks in my soul!

O that I could earnestly plead for the fulfilling of this promise in the text, that Christ would come down as the rain; that he would send the showers he hath merited and promised, send them to myself, to the church, and to the whole land; to the present age, and to the rising generation! O what glorious effects would these showers produce! They would beautify the church and her assemblies, make both ministers and professors to shine in holiness, and congregations to be lively in worship. They would open prison doors, loose bonds, enlarge hearts, revive drooping souls, turn their water into wine, their sorrows into joy, their complaints into praises, and make them sing in the ways of the Lord.—By these showers God would be glorified, the church cemented, and her distempers healed.—Ordinances would be successful, communions more pleasant, the godly more valued, religion more esteemed, and the way to heaven more delightful.—Lord, look on the dry ground and present drougthy season with pity, open the windows of heaven, and send down showers as in former times, and as in other parts of the world. Send a shower to young communicants, and to those who have not seen thy goings in the sanctuary; a shower to stony hearts and withered hands; a shower to soften the clods, loose the roots, and open the springs. O how much good would one of Christ's showers do to a poor dry land! what wonders would it work! what prisoners would it loose! what cloudy minds would it brighten, and what doubting souls would it resolve! Come down, Lord Jesus. Amen.

MEDITATION XVIII.

From Matth. viii. 8. Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof.

FAITH and repentance do still go together; every believer is a true penitent: He that puts on the Lord Jesus is also clothed with humility. The higher thoughts a man hath of Christ, the lower thoughts will he have of himself. When

the man's eyes are open to see the holiness and excellency of Christ, he is made to own his own nothingness before him, and his infinite distance from him, and to say, like the Centurion in the text, *I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof*; q. d. It is too great an honour for such a guilty and filthy creature to entertain a Saviour of infinite purity: my heart is more unworthy than my house. I have nothing to commend me to thee.—The lowly soul abhors himself as vile in the sight of a holy God; he says, I am all as an unclean thing, and all my righteousness is as filthy rags; in me dwells no good thing; I am insufficient of myself to do any thing that is good, or even to think a good thought: It is God that must work in me, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. He is under no obligation to pity or help me, it will be absolute free mercy in him if he do it. The lowly man hath undervaluing thoughts of himself, and of all his own doings and attainments: He renounceth all confidence in his own righteousness, and humbly submits to the righteousness of God by faith: He is content to be stript of all his own garments that Christ may be his clothing. He looks not to his own performances to recommend him to God, but only to Christ his surety. He is willing to go out of himself, and live wholly upon borrowed righteousness and borrowed strength, even to live upon Christ crucified, and to derive daily and hourly from him strength, both for duty and difficulty, for work and warfare.—The man that is lowly in heart, submits to the will of God in all his dispensations, is content with every condition he thinks best for him; he is patient in affliction, and silent under God's rod, without answering again. He is sensible that he justly deserved hell, and therefore is very thankful for the least mercy; like the woman of Canaan, he owns himself unworthy as a dog, and will be thankful for the crumbs that fall from the children's table. He will be thankful for a word from Christ, for a look, for a smile, for the least token of his favour, or the smallest influence of his Spirit.

Wherever faith is in exercise, it is a soul-humbling and self-emptying grace, and lays the soul very low before God; and God always hath respect to such faith, and to such lowliness, Psal. cxxxviii. 6. Christ put great respect upon the lowly Centurion, ver. 10. 13. *I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel; go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.* He also put great respect upon the humble publican, Luke xviii. 13, 14. and declared him justified; for (saith he) *he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* He put great honour upon the humble woman of Canaan, that owned herself vile as a dog, Matth. xv. 27, 28. *O woman, great is thy faith,* (said he) *be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* And he saith of himself, Isa. lvii. 15. though he be *the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, yet he*

dwell with the humble spirit. And thus he sets himself before us, as the great pattern of humility, and bids us learn it of him. When he appeared unto Moses, it was not in a lofty cedar, but in a low, mean, humble bush. And when he would appear in our nature, it was not a great exalted woman he takes up with, but a low, humble virgin, as Mary herself observes, Luke i. 48, 52. May I be helped then to appear before him at his holy table, with a humble spirit, and lowly frame, that he may vouchsafe to dwell and hold communion with me!

O that I had the marks of a lowly heart, and could say, that I blush, and am ashamed before God in prayer, because of my sinfulness and pollution! that I am made to wonder at free grace in sparing such a vile unthankful wretch, in keeping me out of hell, in offering me Christ and pardon through his blood, and calling me to his table.—That I disclaim all righteousness by the law, and expect nothing but wrath and ruin from that airth; that I look only to Christ, and have admiring thoughts of him and his law-biding righteousness. That I have a deep sense of indwelling sin, and of the corruptions of my heart, and think more meanly of myself than any other person can.—That I am jealous of my wicked heart, and afraid lest I betray or wound the Son of God, and contract blood-guiltiness; and therefore I adventure to his table with much fear and trembling. Lord, bestow upon me such a humble heart.

O can such an ill-deserving creature appear before God, and expect mercy, who hath so long abused mercy! Lord, instead of stretching forth a sceptre of mercy to invite me to thy table, thou mightest, with the rod of thy justice, justly dash me in pieces as a potter's vessel. Instead of entertaining me with the bread of life, and the cup of blessing, thou mightest give me the bread and water of affliction; yea, cast me into that pit, where I should cry in vain for a drop of water to cool my tongue. O shall such a wretched dog as I presume to come to thy table, and eat of the children's bread, who am not worthy to gather the crumbs that fall from it! But I have heard of the mercy of the King of Israel, that he delights to shew it to the unworthy that humble themselves before him. Oh, I am vile and unfit to appear before thee; but, surely they are undone that keep away from thee, I am come to thee, not because I am fit or worthy, but because thou art rich in mercy, and hast contrived a way for saving the like of me.—Lord, I am not worthy to come within sight of thee, but far less that thou shouldst come under my roof to lodge with me! *Will God in very deed come and dwell with men!* This is a wonder, though all men were as innocent and righteous as once Adam was? But will he lodge or feast with me that am a leper? Will he come under the roof of my soul, a house so ruinous, smoky and defiled, where he has not a fit

place to lay his head? But, O my humble, condescending Saviour, did not disdain to lie in a manger among beasts, nor to dine with Simon a leper? O Lord Jesus, come in thyself and furnish the house, prepare an upper room in my soul, large, swept, and garnished, and there abide, and keep the passover with me.

Lord, I am not worthy to eat the crumbs that fall from my own table, much less those that fall from thine. I deserve not a room to stand among thy servants, far less to sit down with thy children. I am unworthy of my daily bread from thee, and shall I be allowed to eat of the bread of life? Shall I, who deserve not the bread of men, be admitted to eat the bread of angels? Shall I sit down with him, at whose feet they fall? If John the Baptist (one of the greatest that was born of women, who was filled with the Holy Ghost from the womb) thought himself not worthy to loose Christ's shoes, how unworthy am I, the meanest of creatures, a transgressor from the womb, to be admitted to touch, nay, feed upon Christ's broken body and shed blood? If Peter, after seeing Christ's glory, and his own vileness, judged himself unworthy to be in the same ship with Christ, and cried, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man*; how shall I, the chief of sinners, adventure to sit down at the same table with him in a familiar way? If the woman with the bloody issue were afraid to come and touch the hem of Christ's garment, how much more may I, who am full of running issues of sin, fear to touch the symbols of his body and blood, or put my hand into his side? If the purest angels must cover their faces when before him, how shall I, who am so impure, appear openly in his presence? But glory to God for the blessed covering provided for my guilty soul, under which I may appear and be accepted. I come to thee wrapt in it, Lord, accept of me.

O how distinguishing are thy favours to me an unworthy creature! Thou mightest justly have put in my hand a cup of trembling and unmixed wrath, a cup filled with horror of conscience and fearful despair: But, instead thereof, thou givest me the cup of blessing, filled with the hope of pardon and eternal life. I might have been in hell, drinking the damned's cup of wrath, into which justice is still pouring in as fast as they drink out: But, glory to free grace, thou callest me to drink the cup of salvation, which my Saviour hath purchased with his blood, and sweetened with his blessing. Thanks be to God for it for ever.

MEDITATION XIX.

From 2 Cor. ix. 15. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

MANY give thanks to God for meat and drink to their bodies, which indeed is the duty of all; but alas! few give thanks to God for Jesus Christ, the only food of precious souls, and God's unspeakable gift to men! Many are fond of temporal gifts and earthly riches, which are nothing but vanity; but ah! they are easy about this pearl of great price, this matchless gift, whose value no tongue can express, nor open up what is contained in it. The apostle tells us a great truth, Eph. i. 3. that *God blesses us with all spiritual blessings in Christ*. In this gift of God we have innumerable gifts bestowed on those who believe on him, such as the gifts of spiritual illumination, pardon of sin, a law-biding righteousness, reconciliation with God, adoption into his family, restoring of his image, sanctifying influences, spiritual strength for work and warfare, loosing of bonds, witnessings of the Spirit, unstinging of death, conduct through the dark valley, and a title to the mansions of glory, and the eternal enjoyment of God. Christ is the most necessary and most enriching gift ever was given to the world. God gave him to be a plank of mercy, to save our souls when shipwrecked. He gave him to be our physician and balm, to heal us when our wounds seemed incurable. He gave him to be *the Lord our Righteousness*, when we had no righteousness. He gave him to be our Advocate to plead for us, when we had many accusers, and none to take our part. He gave him to us to be, *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*. In this gift there is infinite fulness, and unsearchable riches. Well may the Spouse call Christ a *bundle of myrrh* and a *cluster of camphire*, Cant. i. 13, 14. because so many gifts and blessings are bundled up in this one gift. Oh, what can I conceive, or what can I express of this gift? He that would describe or speak of this gift, would need to have his tongue dipt in heaven.—Should an angel come down from it to tell us of this gift, he would outspoke all the men on earth: yet when he had said all he could, the gift would be far above his expression: Why? because he is *unspeakable*.

Thanks be unto God that gave us not a servant, not an angel, not a friend, but his Son. Not an adopted son, but his own Son by eternal generation; a Son, who is *the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person*. Yea, he gave us his only Son, to die as a sacrifice in our room! How bitterly did Jacob bewail the parting with one son, when he had eleven behind? But God gave his only begotten Son, and the Son of his love for us! It is recorded as an admirable instance of Abraham's obedience, that he was willing to part with his only son at God's command, Gen. xxii. 12. *Now E*

know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. But what was Abraham's son to God's eternal Son, the second person of the glorious Trinity ! a Son that was his equal ! a Son in whom his soul delighted ! a Son that never displeased him at any time ! How bitterly did David mourn at parting with a rebellious son ! *O Absalom, my son, my son, would to God I had died for thee,* &c. But what are all the sons of men, or ten thousand worlds full of men, or as many heavens full of angels, to the beloved Son of God, whom all the angels worship and adore ? And yet this is the gift that God gives us. In giving this gift, divine bounty hath stretched itself to the uttermost : He could have created a million of heavens more bright, and millions of angels more glorious for us ; but a more glorious SON he had not, nor could have ; a greater gift he had not in all his treasures, than his own co-eternal and consubstantial Son, yet he makes a free gift of him to us ! O who would not give thanks unto God for this his unspeakable gift ? And, who would not part with all the world to have an interest in this gift sealed to him at the Lord's table ?—This is the gift that sweetens all other gifts, and without which nothing in the world hath any sweetness in it.

This gift of God is most free ; it was impossible that the world could have Christ any other way than as a free gift. A man, like old Jacob, may be bereaved of his children, but it was not possible that God could be bereaved of his dear Son. Neither could we have him by purchase ; we were so poor, we had not wherewith to purchase the least blessing. And, what though all the riches of the world had been ours, though all its mountains had been gold, pearls, or diamonds, they would not have been sufficient to purchase one sight of this gift, far less a right to it. Nor could ever any motive be found out for bestowing this gift, but the mere free love of God, John iii. 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son :* As if he had said, since the world hath no merit nor price, worth or motive, to obtain this blessing, I just make a free gift of him to the world ; take him freely, poor beggars of Adam's family ; take him, and he will enrich you all ! And O how seasonably and unexpectedly was this gift given ! Adam, when he came trembling before God after his fall, looking for his final doom, did little expect such a gift, until God himself, to the astonishment of angels and men, promised the seed of the woman. Who could have thought that the great God would have gifted his dear Son to such vile wretches, sinners that were not seeking him ! Nay, who of mankind could have desired such a gift ! Indeed when we had been perishing, we might have looked up, and cried, O God, have mercy upon us : But who would have said, O give the Son of thy love to bear the wrath due to us ! We neither deserved, nor desired this gift ; but God gave it most freely and sur-

prisingly! When Adam broke God's covenant, he was pursued with a cry, *Adam, where art thou?* Doubtless, Adam expected a terrible blow from the sword of justice: but, behold, he is pursued with a cry, and the unspeakable gift in the crier's hand! O how surprising was this to poor, trembling, guilty Adam! What cause had he to cry, *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift! What shall I render to the Lord for such a gift?* And the same cause have we.

O wonderful love! this free gift is offered freely to the poorest creature of Adam's family; so that such an one as I, am warranted to accept and embrace it, and make sure my interest in it: *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.* Many covet other gifts, but I covet this best gift, this enriching gift: this is a lawful covetousness: I receive this gift of God into my bosom, into my very heart. O that I had the marks of those who possess this gift, and are truly thankful for it! Can I say that this gift is truly precious in my eyes, and that I esteem it far above all temporal gifts whatsoever: That I am often thinking upon his matchless excellency, his low stoop and condescending love; and do I frequently break out with the Psalmist, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee.*—Have I low thoughts of myself, as unworthy that Christ should come under my roof, reckoning myself with Paul, *the least of saints, and chief of sinners?* Do I renounce all Christ's rivals and competitors, such as my beloved lusts, and beloved righteousness? Do I count all my doings and duties *but loss and dung, for the righteousness of Christ?* Do I take the crown off every head, and put it upon Christ's head, and give him all the glory of my salvation, and say, that *in the Lord Jesus only have I righteousness and strength?* Am I careful to avoid every thing that would dishonour Christ? and do I say to every temptation that offers, *How shall I do this wickedness, and sin against God,* or bring a reproach upon Christ and his ways? Do I rejoice when Christ is honoured, his throne raised, his glory advanced, and his subjects increased; and when strangers and young ones are drawn to love and admire him? Am I often saying, *What shall I render to the Lord for his unspeakable gift?* I am at a loss how to express my thankfulness: I have nothing to give him; but I'll render all I have to him, my soul; my body, my love, my praises, my time, my talents, my walk and conversation. Lord, accept of my two poor mites, soul and body, in token of my gratitude for God's redeeming love and free gift; and make me fit for giving thee thanks eternally for this unspeakable gift: O that I could apply these blessed marks to myself.

And O what thanks do I owe my dear Saviour, that submitted willingly to be heaven's gift to the children of men; yea, frankly offered, and gave himself to be a sacrifice for them, to drink of the brook in the way, even the cup of God's

wrath, that we might drink the cup of God's blessing! O how low was our fall, that nothing could raise us up again but the low abasement of the Son of God! And O how low was the stoop that he behoved to make to recover us. The Son of God must be tread upon as a worm. The Almighty physician must come from heaven, and let his heart be pierced, to prepare a medicine to cure our disease. He that *thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, must be made equal to robbers and murderers. He must not only suffer death, but desertion also, from God, from man, and the whole creation. He gave himself not only to suffer the pangs of death, but the pains of hell; not only the sorrows of dying men, but the sorrows of damned souls. O unspeakable gift!

MEDITATION XX.

From Luke ix. 22. The Son of Man must suffer many things.

OUR LORD oft spoke of his sufferings to his disciples, because he would have them deeply imprinted upon the hearts of all his people, that they might always think upon them, and carry about with them the dying of the Lord Jesus. As Christ foretold his sufferings before hand, so they came exactly to pass. He said he must *suffer many things* for his people, and accordingly he did so: Let me view his sufferings before I go to commemorate them at his table.

First. I must consider him that suffered many things for us; the Spirit of God requires us to consider the High Priest, who he is, Heb. iii. 1. Though he calls himself in the text the Son of man, as to his human nature, yet he is also the Son of God as to his divine nature; yea, God equal with the Father, the great God our Saviour: This God-man, the WONDERFUL, is our high priest, that suffered many things for us. He is our glorious Emmanuel, the innocent and immaculate Lamb of God, that had not the least spot or crime of his own to suffer for.—He is the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person; he is the King of kings, and Lord of lords. He that suffered is he that went about always doing good to persons of all sorts, and deserved well of those who persecuted and crucified him. He is the great lover of mankind, and friend of sinners; our glorious benefactor, who remembered us in our low estate; one that comes under the most endearing characters to us, as that of our father, our brother, master, physician, ransom, &c. Now, will not a son be sensible of the sufferings of his father, or a wife of the sufferings of her husband? Or one brother touched with the sufferings of another? This is the great High Priest that suffered *many things* for us.

Second. I am to consider the *many things* he suffered. Ah, they are so great, so various, and manifold, I cannot recount

nor comprehend them ! I may say, he suffered in both natures : Though his Godhead could not properly suffer grief or pain, yet it suffered an eclipse for thirty three years, except a short time it shone forth at mount Tabor.—He suffered many things in his human nature, both in soul and body ; he was persecuted, tempted, calumniated, betrayed, bound, mocked, spit upon, buffeted, scourged, wounded, crowned with thorns, and crucified.—He suffered in all his offices, he was mocked as a Prophet, and bid prophesy who smote him ; as a Priest, he was bid save himself, seeing he pretended to save others ; as a King, he was mocked with an old purple robe and thorny crown.—He suffered in his honour and reputation, being disgraced and reproached by men, called a Samaritan, one possessed of the devil, a blasphemer, a glutton, a drunkard, a seducer, &c. He was even overwhelmed with calumny.—He suffered as a blasphemer against God, as a traitor to Cæsar, and an enemy to Moses' law, though he were entirely free from them all.—He was wounded and pierced in all parts of his body, in his head, hands, and feet ; in his cheeks, back, and side.—He suffered in his outward goods, being spoiled of all things, and even stript of his clothes to his very skin, and nailed to the cross naked.—He suffered in all his five senses ; his sight, with the spiteful carriage of those that passed by, wagging their heads ; his hearing, with their blasphemous talk ; his smell, with the noisome savour of the skulls of the dead ; his taste, with vinegar and gall ; his feeling, with thorns and nails piercing his head, hands, and feet. He suffered in the most tender and sinewy parts of his body, by the tormenting nails, especially being violently stretched out, and probably disjoined, to make them reach to the holes ; therefore he saith, Psal. xxii. 16, 17. *They have digged my hands and my feet, I may tell all my bones, they look and stare upon me.*—He suffered most of all in his soul, and its noble faculties : How great was the agony and travail of his soul, when he sweated blood in the garden through all the pores of his body ! O how great was the anguish of his mind upon his heavenly Father's deserting him, which made him send forth a dreadful cry to heaven for relief, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?* Then it was he cried and groaned under his pressure, but no relief appeared ; there was no answer, every door was shut against him : For at this time his own sun, his own heaven, his own Father, his own Godhead, did all hide their faces and consolations from him ! O the many things he suffered for us, they cannot be numbered !

Third. I am to consider from whom the SON of MAN suffered. He suffered from all hands, from earth, from hell, from heaven ; from men, from devils, from infinite justice. He suffered from all sorts of men ; from king Herod and his men of war, who mocked him, and set him at nought ; from the Jewish priests and rulers, who did cruelly use and prose-

cute him to death ; from governor Pilate, who scourged and condemned him to be crucified : He suffered from the Jews and from the Romans, from the clergy and from the lawyers, from soldiers and servants, from great ones and commons, and even from those he had done much good unto.—He suffered from those whom he came to save and wash by his blood ; for there were three thousand of those who crucified him, or were active in his sufferings, that were converted to him by Peter's sermon, Acts ii.—He suffered not only from enemies, but from professed friends and disciples ; one of these betrayed and sold him, another of them denied and abjured him, and all the rest forsook him, and left him alone to suffer in the midst of devils and ruffians insulting over him.—He suffered from devils, and all the powers of hell ; these *dogs*, and *bulls of Bashan*, were all let loose to tear and gore him in his last sufferings ; *for this*, he said, was their *hour and power of darkness*.—But, which was worst of all, he suffered also from heaven ; for he being substituted in the room of sinners, a just and holy God acted as an inexorable judge towards him, he frowned terribly upon him, smote him with the sword of justice, and withdrew all the feeling of his loving-kindness from him, and all those divine influences which might any way refresh his troubled soul in the hour of his greatest need : And thus he fell a sacrifice to incensed justice for our heinous guilt and provocations. At this time a fearful black cloud was spread over the glorious Sun of Righteousness ; never was there any such eclipse seen or heard of as this ! For a candle to be put out is no great matter, but for the sun to be darkened is very uncommon : But though sun, moon, and stars, had all been blown out at once, it would be no ways so amazing as the darkening of the eternal Sun of Righteousness upon the cross—A strange and marvellous sight ! What meant the heat of this great anger ? Must even the Creator himself suffer for the creature's sins ? Must he suffer such a load of wrath, as make him cry out to the astonishment of angels and men ?

Fourth. I am to consider the High Priest, and for whom it was he suffered those great and many things. He suffered not for himself, for he never offended either against God or man, and deserved no punishment. He suffered none for fallen angels ; they must all suffer for themselves : It was only for men of Adam's race, that were debtors to justice and prisoners of wrath ; he suffered for creatures most undeserving, for rebels, and for many that were his greatest enemies ; and even for those who were his murderers and executioners, for he both prayed and was heard for them, when they were pouring out his blood.

Fifth. Let me consider with what affection he suffered all those things for us. It was his ardent love to perishing souls, which many waters could not quench ;—with fervent wishes and longings for the hour of his passion. *I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened until it be as-*

accomplished?—With great liberality: It is not the blood of his finger, or a part of his blood, that he would shed for us; no, he would needs pour out all his blood, and even his heart-blood too, and with that he poured out his soul also, Isa. liii. Why would he be so liberal?—that with him there might be *plenteous redemption*, Psal. cxxx. 7. He suffered with great meekness, patience, and resignation: when he suffered he threatened not, but was led as a sheep to the slaughter, dumb, not opening his mouth:—With great humility and self-denial, content to be as *a worm and no man*, to bring glory to his Father:—With a thirsty zeal for the salvation of souls, and for completing the work of our redemption; and hence it was he cried on the cross, *I thirst*, and glad when he could say, *It is finished*.

O what cause have I to obey his dying charge, to go to his memorial feast, and to think upon and wonder at the matchless love of Christ, that made him willing to suffer so many things for such wretched creatures as I am. He knew well enough before hand what our salvation would cost him, yet he willingly undertook it, saying, upon the very first motion of it, *Lo, I come*. But saith God to him, If you will engage in this work, you must bear my wrath, and be handled as if you were the sinner in law: Well, saith Christ, *I come to do thy will, O God*; I am satisfied with the terms: Let the cup be never so bitter, I will drink it, ere these miserable creatures do it. O loving High Priest, how shall I think of thy sufferings without raptures of love and admiration! I had been in hell if thou hadst not been in an agony here; I had been for ever scorched there, if thou hadst not sweat here; yea, not only I, but all the posterity of Adam had perished, if thou hadst not suffered those many things for them: Surely the weight of wrath which made thee heavy, and caused thee to fall to the ground, sweat, groan, and cry, would have sunk all mankind into hell for ever.—O what ingratitude must it be to refuse Christ's offers and terms of salvation, after what he has suffered to purchase it! Was he at so much pains to obtain redemption for us, and will we be at no pains to get an interest in it? Did he shed blood, and will not I drop tears? Lord, pity this heart of mine.

MEDITATION XXI.

From John xviii. 4. Jesus knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, &c.

CHRIST foreknew all his sufferings, with all their ingredients, before they came upon him; yet he willingly and resolutely went forth to meet them. He will not flee, nor hide himself from his persecutors, but cast himself in their way. He saw the cup of wrath mixed and ready for him, and now,

as it were, he reaches forth his hand to take it. When the people would have forced him to a crown, he hid himself from them, John vi. 15.; but when they would force him to a cross, he offered himself to them, knowing that his hour was come to fulfil his suretyship for us, and complete our redemption. Upon this account he made his sufferings welcome, and the passover that introduced them, Luke xxii. 15. *With desire have I desired to eat this passover.* He abhorred all counsels that tended to hinder him, and rebuked Peter as smartly for dissuading him from suffering, as he would have done Satan himself, Matth. xvi. 23. And though all his disciples would have dissuaded him, John xi. 8. he marched with great forwardness to Jerusalem, where he foretold the bloody tragedy was to be acted; he hastened to the field of battle, and place of suffering: Yea, he went so fast to it, that his disciples were amazed at it, and afraid to follow him, Matth. xx. 18. Mark. x. 32. They were behind him, and would have fallen behind altogether, had it not been for shame, and let him go alone; they were amazed to see a man hasten so fast to a bloody death. But he would not stop, though they had all left him, as they did afterwards. And when his time was come to be apprehended, he would neither let Peter defend him, nor angels rescue him, though there were twelve legions at his call: One angel would have been sufficient to do it, or one word from his own mouth; but, saith he, *The cup my Father hath given me to drink, shall I not drink it?*—Wherefore, when they accused him of blasphemy against God, and of enmity against Cesar and Moses' law, and things he was perfectly innocent of, he would make no legal defence to save his life before Pilate, but held his peace, inasmuch that Pilate marvelled greatly. He might think it was easy for him to answer all they said, but he knew not the reason of our Lord's silence, viz. that he would do nothing to hinder the elect's redemption, which he had undertaken. And, as he was silent before Pilate, so was he before divine justice, and would do nothing to divert the stroke: Soon might he have rescued himself when justice drew the stroke, by saying, "Father, these sins are not mine:" No, he is silent, and takes with the charge, as if he had committed them all. On me, saith he, be the curse; I will be the sacrifice for these lost sheep. O love unspeakable!

The reasons of my Saviour's willingness to suffer are obvious: he knew it was his Father's will he should suffer, and therefore he said, Psalm xl. *I delight to do thy will, O my God.* He knew it would greatly display the glory of the divine attributes, that was sullied by our sins; it would highly magnify his love to his sheep, John x. *I lay down my life for my sheep;* I do it of myself, freely, without compulsion: It was necessary, to make his sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing unto God. The heathens would not offer a sacrifice to

their gods that came struggling to the altar; so every sacrifice offered to the true God must be a free-will offering, if we would have it of a sweet smelling savour unto him. This Christ hath taught us by his example, and upon this account God hath twice proclaimed from heaven, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

O, was Christ's willingness to suffer for sinners so well-pleasing to the Father, and shall it not render him most amiable and lovely to us? Surely the Mediator's frank and cheerful undertaking to suffer so much for us, when unrequired by us, is a favour infinitely kind and obliging, and doth command raptures of love and praise from us when we celebrate his holy supper. What a moving sight is it to the eye of faith, to behold our glorious EMMANUEL voluntarily stating himself in our law room, without the soliciting of any creature, and engaging cheerfully to go through Satan's buffeting, death's pangs, and hell's flames for us! With what elevated thoughts and raised affections, should we admire, love, and praise a crucified JESUS, who did all this willingly and unrequired for us! Oh, he never had so good will to eat when hungry, as he had to suffer and satisfy justice for us! Hence he said, *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work,* John iv. 34. Here is food most delicious for faith to feed upon at the Redeemer's table.—Again, from this willingness of Christ to suffer for us, I have good ground to conclude his willingness to receive us, when we come to him by faith to partake of the fruits of his sufferings. O how can any believer, or sensible sinner, question or doubt of Christ's willingness to help and save them, who was so willing to offer himself a sacrifice to justice for them? Surely he is far more willing to save, than any sinner is to repent or believe. And from this I will take my encouragement to come to him: Since my loving JESUS came willingly as a lamb to the slaughter for sinners, I will venture, with humble confidence, to go to this meek, compassionate, sweet natured Lamb, for pity and help in the time of my need, trusting he will not reject me, nor any that comes to him upon his call in the gospel. *I believe, Lord, help my unbelief.*

O, did Christ suffer the pains of death and hell so willingly for us, and shall not we be willing to suffer the reproaches or revilings of men, or any other persecution for him? And when any such injuries are done us, shall we not bear them with meekness and patience after Christ's example, who submitted cheerfully to every thing he knew to be his Father's will? Though he was perfectly innocent, and met with the greatest provocations from wicked men, yet he patiently bore them; taking all as out of his Father's hand, who had mingled the cup for him. Therefore, when he was reviled, he reviled not again; he could have told Pilate, Caiaphas, and his other persecutors, what sort of men they were, yet he

opened not his mouth, but went willingly as a lamb to the slaughter. O that we could imitate the meekness, patience, and willingness of the Lamb of God in all the sufferings he calls us to.

O did Christ delight to do his Father's will, and go willingly through the most hard and difficult task of sweating, bleeding, and dying for us? and shall we find so little delight in doing his will, and performing the duties which lead to communion and fellowship with him, as prayer, praise, reading, hearing, or communicating? Did Christ come so cheerfully to die for us, and shall we go so backwardly and unwillingly to his table to enjoy fellowship with him, when he invites us to it: O what a shameful requital is this. May not Christ say, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend?* When the Father called me to suffer, and drink the cup of trembling for thee, how readily did I echo back, *I come, lo, I come, to do thy will I take delight!* But when I call thee to pray or communicate, how backward and dead hearted art thou in that work? I did not weary so soon in the garden, as thou dost in the church! I did not so soon weary on the cross, as thou dost in thy closet! I was longer in my agony, wrestling under the wrath of God for thee, than ever thou wast in wrestling in prayer for thy soul.

Did Christ offer his sacrifice so willingly for us, O then let me go to God my Saviour, with the sacrifice of myself and my duties, with a ready and cheerful heart: *God loveth a cheerful giver.* As Amaziah offered himself willingly unto the Lord, 2 Chron. xvi. 16. and David saith, *Accept of the free will offerings of my mouth,* Psal. cxix. 108. O that with the like willingness I could offer myself, my heart, and my sacrifices of prayer and praises, unto the Lord: And when I feel any reluctancy and backwardness of spirit to duty, let me still call to mind how willingly Christ offered himself a sacrifice to God for us, and chide my heart for its unwillingness.—Surely it is much for the honour of God, and the credit of religion, as it is most just and reasonable in itself, to serve God with joyfulness, who has willingly given us the unspeakable gift of his dear Son to die for us. The wicked and profane are ready to reproach religion as a sour and melancholy thing, when we serve God in a dead hearted manner; and God himself is highly displeased with us for it, as is evident from that long and terrible chapter, the 28th of Deuteronomy, that is full of curses and threatened judgments, ver. 47. where the cause of all is given, *Because thou servest not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and gladness of heart.* Since the sacrament is called the Eucharist or Thanksgiving, let me go to it with a joyful and thankful heart, blessing God for Christ. *O thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.* Amen.

MEDITATION XXII.

From John xvi. 7. It is expedient for you that I go away—

NO wonder that sorrow filled the disciples hearts at the intimation of Christ's departure from them: They had enjoyed a sweet time with him at the communion table; his presence with them was their heaven, and they cannot think of parting with him: They are greatly troubled, that he will neither stay still with them, nor take them away with him: *Nevertheless*, said he, *it is expedient for you that I go away*.—Lord, saith the soul, how is it expedient for me to be left behind thee in a state of corruption, with indwelling sin that darkens my mind, deadens my heart, disorders my affections, and indisposes me for spiritual work?—How shall I stay behind thee, amidst Satan's temptations and fiery darts, flying thick about me? Must I abide in that place where that enemy hath his circuit, and still rargeth about, devouring many thousands? Could I win away with Christ, I would be quite out of the reach of his shot. Lord either stay with me or take me up with thee.—Oh, must I stay behind thee amidst the infectious defilements and ensnaring examples of an ungodly world! When I open mine eyes here, what will meet them but multitudes wallowing in pride, sensuality, covetousness, injustice, malice, envy, drunkenness, gluttony, uncleanness, contempt of God and religion? Must I stay to see this horrible sight, the whole world lying in wickedness? Must I stay to hear God daily dishonoured by the tongues of the ungodly? Must I stay to see Christ slighted, wounded, and crucified afresh by wicked men? O what danger will I be in of being infected by their examples! But, Lord, If I could win away with thee, I would be quite out of hazard, and out of sight of the wickedness of the world.—How shall I stay behind thee in such an earthly tabernacle, to be burdened with bodily distresses, sickness, pains, and manifold complaints, and amidst innumerable losses, crosses, and disappointments from the creature! How shall I stay to see such melancholy divisions, contentions, debates, and separations, as fall out among the people of God in Christ's absence? Must I stay behind thee to suffer injuries, reproaches, cruel mockings, bad usage, and persecutions, both from the tongues, and hands of men? and sometimes to be torn as with the teeth of wild beasts? Hence this world is called *a den of lions and mountain of leopards*, Cant. iv. 8. Oh, could I win away to heaven with Christ, I would see no lion nor leopard there. There is none to hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain above.

Have I seen the King in his beauty, and must I be left behind him? Hath the communion table been like Mount Tabor, where he was transfigured before my eyes, with his

countenance shining, and his raiment white as light? And must I go down from the Mount again to a land of darkness, of drought, and of perplexing doubts and fears, where I shall sometimes go mourning without the sun; yea, neither sun nor stars appearing to me for many days? Must I be put to walk without the light of God's countenance, and without the food of my soul, communion with my God? After I have been lifted up must I lay my account with being cast down again, perhaps into depths like those of Asaph, Psalm lxxvii. or like those of Heman, Psalm lxxxviii. with fears of sinking in them, and of falling short of heaven for ever? Could I win away with Christ, I would at once be delivered from all these fears.—Here my knowledge of God is small, and oft obscured with darkness; my faith is weak, and oft in hazard of being overcome with unbelief; here my love is cold, and oft like to be chilled with frost and winds from Satan and the World; my prayers oft are formal and wandering, my praises low and flat; here my best wishes are attended with many short-comings and defects: But, O! if I could win to heaven with Christ, where grace and holiness are in perfection, I would praise him without wandering, and serve him without sin for ever! Here sin still cleaves to my nature, mixes itself with my services, and defiles my best duties. Here I still carry about with me a deceitful and treacherous heart, whereby I am in hazard of backsliding from God, and miscarrying for ever, should I be left to it: But, O! were I with Christ, I would be free from all these anxious thoughts and fears. Lord, stay here with me, or take me up to thee.

But thou sayest, It is expedient for me to stay behind for a time. Why, Lord? Must I stay that my travelling graces, my faith, hope, and patience, may be tried and exercised here below, and thereby gradually strengthened and ripened for the perfect state? Must I stay that I may be conformed to my head both in serving and suffering; and that thy wisdom, power, and mercy, may be glorified in conducting and preserving me through all the difficulties and dangers of this wilderness? *Thy will, Lord, be done*, only leave me not alone; *but for thy name's sake lead me and guide me*—Or, is it thy pleasure to suspend my heaven for a while; that I may promote thy glory on earth, be useful to the souls of others, and recommend my dear Redeemer to those who know him not, which is a work I cannot do in heaven? O fit me for it by thy grace, and fill me with zeal for thy glory. O let thy kingdom come upon earth, that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

Thou sayest, it is expedient for thee to go away. Why, Lord? must thou thyself be thy people's forerunner, to carry tidings to heaven of their complete redemption, and of their coming after thee in their several generations? Must thou go to open the passage and pave the way for access to their

persons and duties, and prepare rooms and lodgings for them against the time they come home? Must thou go away to be a public agent and intercessor for thy people under all their trials and tossings here below; and likewise to provide and furnish a rich and glorious communion table for them in thy Father's house above? Lord, send thy Holy Spirit to fit and prepare me and many others for that blessed entertainment. —Lord, when thou saidst, *It is expedient for you that I go away*, thou didst add, *for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you!* Why? it was so agreed in the council of the Trinity, that the sending of the Spirit in his plentiful effusion, which was to be the purchase of Christ's death, should be given in answer to his intercession, when he entered within the vail, John xiv. 16. And the Spirit was to make use of it as an argument for convincing the world of the perfection and acceptableness of Christ's sacrifice, that Christ was now received and welcomed into heaven. Likewise the Spirit was to be given only upon Christ's ascension, to supply the want of his bodily presence to the church, as being far better for them, seeing Christ's bodily presence could be in one place only at once, but the Spirit is in every place, to animate and put life in ordinances. May the church have this fruit of Christ's ascension still more and more.

Lord, though thou hast gone away for necessary ends, yet thy marriage contract with thy people, and the love-tokens thou givest them in the sacrament, are a sure pledge of thy returning to pay them a comfortable visit at last, according to that sweet word, John xiv. 3. *If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.* O that I may be one of those to whom Christ's visit, at his second coming, will be joyful and comfortable. Let me examine myself before the sacrament, if I have the marks of such.—Am I espoused to Christ? Have I a high esteem of the bridegroom? Have I subscribed the marriage contract and gone into Christ's terms? Do I heartily approve the whole contrivance of redemption, through the suretyship and righteousness of Christ? Have I renounced my own righteousness, my beloved sins, and all Christ's enemies?—Do I mourn for the injuries done to Christ by myself and others, and rejoice when his interest and kingdom prosper in the world? Do I mourn for Christ's departure and the withdrawing of his Spirit from ordinances, or from my own soul? Do I thirst for more holiness in heart and life, and for greater conformity and likeness to the glorious bridegroom? Then I may expect his visit and return will be comfortable to me, and I may rejoice in the view and expectation of it, and answer Christ when he saith, Rev. xxii. 20. *Surely I come quickly. Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus.*—Is my forerunner now gone away? Let me follow him as closely and speedily as I can; let me follow him in the way of

faith, in the way of obedience, in the way of suffering, in the way of patience, prayer, resignation, deniedness to the world, heavenly mindedness, &c.

MEDITATION XXIII.

From Hos. ii. 19. I will betrothe thee unto me for ever.

ABIGAIL thought herself highly honoured, by David's proposing to match with her: But much more honoured are we, apostate sinners of Adam's family, by the eternal SON of God proposing to match with us, and courting us so earnestly; when he neglected angels, that seemed to be a fitter match for him in respect of the superior dignity of their nature. Yet all these he would pass by, and match with worms!—O how amazing is this step, that the heavenly Bridegroom, whose kingdom is mighty, his riches infinite, and his beauty surpassing: that he should choose a bride naturally polluted, deformed, uncomely and black as hell! and that he should seek her through a sea of blood, through the pains of death, the horrors of the grave, and torments of hell! And after many slights and refusals, that he should follow her in her wanderings through the wilderness of sin, with his charming invitations, and alluring offers in the gospel, presenting her with the rings and bracelets of his precious promises and Spirit's consolations; and all to win her heart and gain her consent to him.—How astonishing is it to see this glorious person coming over all objections from the blackness, guilt, poverty, and unworthiness of the bride, saying, Though she be black, I will make her comely through my comeliness put upon her! Though she be mean, I will make her noble! Though a slave, I will make her free! Though a fool, I will make her wise! Though bankrupt, I will pay all her debts! Come here, law, justice, and all her creditors; here is full satisfaction for all that is due to you, take it, and write her discharge! Now, *who can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect*, Christ's bride?—Behold God displaying his free love here to the utmost! He never displayed his other attributes to the utmost, for infinite wisdom could have contrived ten thousand worlds more beautiful than this, and infinite power could have produced them. But here infinite love and mercy hath gone to the utmost: a greater demonstration of his love Christ could not give, than by leaving heaven, assuming a body, and giving his life for the bride, nay, wading through hell for her, and in face of all discouragements, courting and betrothing her to himself for ever!

After many meetings, treaties, and broken trysts with some, the bridegroom is come again to court a bride, and has sent his friend in his name to demand her consent, saying, as they did to Rebekah, Gen. xxiv. 58. *Wilt thou go with this man?*

Poor woman, lad, lass, wilt thou yield to this glorious EMANUEL; many former treaties have been broken off by the devil, the world, unbelief, and an ill heart! Oh, will not the long spoken of match hold at length! Ministers, the bridegroom's friends, are doing their best to draw on another meeting between the parties.—Christ, I see, is content to hold another, and it may be the last tryst he will set with many. To shew his earnestness, he hath convened his friends, angels, saints, and ambassadors, to witness the sincerity of the parties: he hath put on his scarlet robes, his garments dipt in blood, to win sinners' hearts; he hath brought the marriage contract, and spread it before them, saying, "What think ye of its articles and terms? Are ye pleased with them? Are ye content to break with sin and all my enemies? to renounce the world, self-righteousness, and all other lovers? to fall in with the self-denying way of salvation through a borrowed righteousness? to accept of me in all my offices? to live wholly upon your husband, borrow all from him, and be an eternal debtor to him? to make a surrender of your soul and body to him, and seal a covenant with him at his table? Are you resolved to be faithful to your husband, cleave to him all the days of your life, and be oft looking out for his second coming? And in the mean time to be oft commemorating his sufferings, conflicts, conquests, and achievements, and for that end to be frequently looking on his picture in the sacrament, with a believing, penitent, and thankful heart? Now, what is your answer? Lay your hand to your heart."

Lord, unworthy as I am, I desire to go forward through all difficulties, impediments, and discouragements, and say with Rebekah, when called to answer, *I will go with the man*: And with Esther, *I will go in to the king*: Though I be not worthy of him, yet he that calls me is worthy to be obeyed: Though he hath no need of me, yet I have great need of him: Though my distance be great, he allows me to creep nearer to him: Though I cannot move of myself, yet he is able to draw me, be my clogs never so great: Though my motion be small, yet I will not turn back; but keep my face towards him, and fix my eye on him. As a look hath brought healing, so a look hath brought strength; yea, though he should seem to frown on me, and chide me away from him, yet, like Jonah, *I will look again towards his holy temple*: Though I have no worthiness in myself, yet he hath worthiness enough for me: Though I be a black and uncomely bride, my glorious husband can beautify me with his perfect comeliness put upon me. Therefore I do, with all my heart, accept of him as my lord and husband: Lord, I make choice of thee, and all that is thine; for richer, for poorer; for better, for worse; for well, for woe; for prosperity, for adversity: I make choice of thee for all times and conditions, to love, honour, and obey thee above all. I renounce all other

lords and lovers, and will have none but Christ: I renounce my own will, and take thy will for my law. I esteem thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and will hate every false way: I submit to all thy providences and dealings with me, and am content to take up my cross and follow thee, whithersoever thou goest: I take thy Spirit for my guide, thy word for my rule, thy glory for my scope, thy testimonies for my counsellors, thy promises for my encouragement, thy Sabbaths for my delight, thy people for my companions: Lord Jesus, I take thee for my life, holiness for my way, and heaven for my home.—And, as I accept of thee, and all that is thine; so I give up myself to thee, and all that is mine, soul and body, with all my faculties and affections, senses, and members, to be thy agents and instruments; with all my enjoyments, to be employed for thy use and service.

I will go with the man, though I see him all over wounded, mangled and bleeding, and his visage marred with the wounds, stripes, and blows which he got from men and devils. Nay, I see him even in this mangled condition, to be fairer than all the sons of men, and all the sons of God too; for I see him, *wounded for my transgressions, and bruised for my iniquities, that by his stripes I might be healed*; I see him a match every way suitable for me, that can supply all my needs: I am a poor dying worm, but he is a living head that can make me live for ever: I am a needy creature all made up of wants, but in him doth all manner of fulness dwell: I want grace, but he hath all fulness of grace suitable for me: I want grace to believe, but he is the author of faith: I want grace to repent, but he is a Prince and Saviour exalted to give repentance: I want grace to pray, to hear, to communicate, to mortify sin, bear the cross, resist temptation, &c. but my husband hath all grace to bestow. O let me be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

O that I had the true marks of those who are divorced from the law, and married to Christ as their husband; that I could say, I look upon all my doings in point of acceptance with God as old rags; I live wholly and freely upon my husband, and take all I want from him for nothing; I clothe myself with his righteousness, and essay the performance of every duty in his strength; I desire to live entirely upon his cost—I have a heart-love to my husband, and every thing that belongs to him, and a heart-hatred to sin, and aversion to every thing that is injurious to him: I am desirous to please him in all things; and out of regard to his dying command, I go to his table to remember his dying love, and renew my marriage-vows: I delight in my husband's company, and press for communion with him in all ordinances. His honour is always dear to me, and I am easy about my own honour and interest in respect to his; “let me decrease, but let him increase.” And in regard the devil reigns here, sin abounds, error and corruption prevail; I am well pleased with the

thoughts of Christ's second coming to pull down Satan's kingdom, and to consummate the marriage with me, and all that are espoused to him, and say, *Why tarry the wheels of his chariot? Make haste my beloved; even so, come Lord Jesus.* O that all the world would love him, exalt him, and submit to him. Many in different places admire him, and see matchless charms in him; his name to them is as ointment poured forth, his garments smell of aloes, myrrh, and cassia, they have beheld his stately goings in the sanctuary: O that all the world might so admire him, and submit to him also.

MEDITATION XXIV.

From Isa. liiii. 8.—For the transgressions of my people was he stricken.

OUR sins and transgressions are great and various, and therefore our surety's sufferings for them were heavy and manifold; he endured many wounds, bruises, chastisements, and stripes, which should still endear him the more to us; *for he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we were healed.* ver. 5. O who can think on that verse without sorrow, or speak of it without tears! He was wounded and bruised to death, to save us from deadly wounds and bruises: And when dying, he left us his portraiture, with the marks of his wounds, that we might look upon it at his table, and mourn for our sins which gave him these wounds. Oh, can I see my dear Saviour all wounded and mangled by my sins, and not be deeply affected for the transgressions for which my dear JESUS was stricken! Stricken he was many ways, by many hands, by many rods, by many stripes. He was stricken by the hand of God, by the hand of men, by the hand of devils: Stricken by the rod of Moses, the rod of justice, the rod of the Jews, &c. O how early was he stricken by the ill usage he met with from men, being thrust out, to be born in a foul stable, and laid in a manger; and soon after was he stricken by the rod of persecution and banishment, being made to flee his native country for safety from Herod. All this he suffered for us, because we deserved to be deprived of all earthly accommodations and comforts, and to be banished from God and heaven for ever.

He was stricken by the rod of poverty, and pinching straits. Though he was the King of the universe, and possessed all the riches of it, yet *for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich,* 2 Cor. viii. 5. He was not born of a rich empress, but of a poor virgin; not in his own house, but in another man's: He had no house nor foot of ground of his own to live or lodge in: Though the *foxes had holes, and the birds nests,* yet he that created them *had not where to lay his head.* His diet was oft a seeking, and commonly very mean, barely bread and small fishes. He

had no money to pay his tax, but must borrow it of a fish of the sea. He travelled still on foot, except once he rode to Jerusalem to fulfil a prophecy; and then he had neither horse nor ass of his own, but must borrow another man's ass. He had no fine mounting, but the clothes of them that followed him. He had no burial place of his own, but was laid in another man's; and all this he submitted to for our sakes.—He was also stricken by the rod of sore labour and toil, by working at a mechanic trade, till he was thirty years of age; therefore they said, Mark vi. 3. *Is not this the carpenter?* Man having eaten the forbidden fruit, was doomed to sore labour, that he should eat his bread with the sweat of his brow, Gen. iii. 19. and to this doom our surety submitted for us. Man broke God's covenant by eating of the tree, therefore his surety must die on the tree. Man idolized a tree, and preferred its fruit to God's favour, therefore his surety must labour in cutting and hewing trees most of his time.—Man lived a life of sinning, and therefore Christ must live a life of labour and sorrow; he even became a man of sorrows, Isa. liii. 3. that we might obtain everlasting joy and consolation.

He was stricken by men's reproachful tongues, scoffs, and mockeries, being called a glutton, wine-bibber, deceiver, Samaritan, blasphemer, a devil, and one in compact with Beelzebub, the prince of devils. They derided him in all his offices; as a prophet, by bidding him prophesy who smote him; as a priest, bidding him save himself, since he pretended to save others; as a king, by putting on him a purple robe, a crown of thorns, and giving him a mock sceptre. Yea, he endured the most cruel mockings, and, that in the midst of his sharpest sufferings and soul-agonies, when he cried out on the bloody cross, *Eli, Eli, &c.* O, say they, this man calls for *Elias*, playing on the word *Eli*. It was not out of ignorance or mistake they said so, but out of malice and derision; for they understood the Hebrew language well enough, and knew he called on God, and that *Eli* signified, my God. But, in their spite, they would represent him as an idolater; and, when dying, that he prayed not to God, but to saints for help.—He was stricken by the most open affronts and indignities from men, by spitting in his face, condemning him to die for blasphemy against God, and treason against Cæsar: By preferring *Barabbaſ*, a murderer, before him, and posting him between two thieves. Thus the King of Glory was despised and rejected of man for us, Isa. liii. 3.

He was stricken by the scourges of plaited cords on his back, and with the thorns they drove into his head: That thorny crown was designed for torture, as well as derision; for, if it had been only to mock him, a crown of straw would have served the purpose as well as one of thorns.—He was stricken by the pincers that plucked the hair off his cheeks; and by the heavy cross tree laid on his bleeding shoulders,

which he must carry to Calvary.—He was stricken with four big iron nails through his hands and feet, on which his whole weight must hang.—He was stricken with a burning heat and thirst, which the wrath of God for our sins created in him, and dried him up like a potsherd: This made him cry out, I thirst, yet no wine, no fountain, no creature that he made must relieve him at this time.—He was stricken by a spear thrust into his side to let out his heart-blood, to be sure that no life remained. Well, (said our dying lamb) let my dearest blood, my heart-blood, go for these lost sinners, that their souls may live and sing for ever.

He was stricken by the ungrateful behaviour of his own disciples to him: By Judas's betraying and selling him for a small sum, the price of a slave: By Peter's denying him, and swearing he knew him not, at the temptation of a poor damsel: By all of them forsaking him, and leaving him in the midst of his enemies. Besides all this, he was stricken in his soul, by the terrible glittering sword of justice, by the curses of the law, by desertion from God, by the vials of his wrath poured out on him, which made fearful bruises, deep wounds, and wide gashes in his soul.—Oh, our dear surety was stricken till he fell to the ground; was overwhelmed with wrath, and covered with blood. With these strokes our mighty Redeemer was thrown down, and broken with breach upon breach, till all the sea-billows of divine vengeance went over him. Oh, never was there any sorrow like my dear Saviour's sorrow, which he suffered when stricken for my sins!

Lord, I am ashamed of the hardness and unconcernedness of my heart at this moving spectacle! O did the dead earth tremble, the hard rocks rend, the graves open, the heavens turn black at the sight of a dying Jesus, stricken by the sword of justice? And shall not my rocky heart tremble and quake, rend and melt for my sins, that were the cause of it? Shall the history of Joseph in the pit move me more than that of Christ upon the cross? Shall the news of the tragical death of a friend, or the sufferings of an acquaintance among the Turks, move me more than the death and sufferings of the innocent son of God on my account? Alas, my heart of stone will neither break nor melt, till Christ turn and look on me as he did on the backsliding Peter. Lord, one look from thee can turn *the rock into standing water*. One blink of the Sun of Righteousness can melt the most frozen and icy heart in the world.

O how lovely is my stricken and bleeding Jesus! Even when bleeding and mangled by my sins, I see him to be *white and ruddy*, and *the chiefest among ten thousand*. Every wound and stroke he got doth still beautify him the more to me, and make my soul to cry, O my loving and lovely Jesus! O how can I see him substituting himself in my room, and

making himself the butt of the envenomed arrows of justice, and not be ravished with his love to me, and with the warmest affection to him! And at the same time filled with sorrow for my sins, which brought on all his strokes and wounds! Oh my sins were the thorns that pierced his head, the nails which pierced his hands, and the spear that pierced his heart. My sins pressed him down, and made him sweat blood in the garden. My soul being exceeding sinful, made his soul exceeding sorrowful. May I always hate sin, and sorrow for it.

MEDITATION XXV.

From Gal. ii. 20. I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

O HOW desirable an attainment is the exercise of true faith upon the great Saviour JESUS CHRIST, with an appropriating persuasion, or special application to a man himself, so as to say, "I believe and admire his love to the elect in general, and to me in particular; I trust him with my soul, and my eternal salvation; I embrace him, and put my whole confidence in him, *who loved me, and gave himself for me!*" Surely this is the faith, that every one that desires to obey that great commandment, 1 John iii. 23. should aim at, and press for, as a thing of the last moment and consequence: *O Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.*

Lord, I will not rest in a general belief and persuasion of the mercy of God in Christ, and of Christ's ability and willingness to save all that come unto him; but I will apply his blood and righteousness to myself in particular, and rest on him as one that *loved me, and gave himself for me.* This appropriating faith is necessary to my justification; for every justified person applies Christ's righteousness to himself, saying, as in Isa. xlv. 24. *Surely in the Lord have I righteousness.* As the church in general calls him *the Lord our righteousness*; so I, in particular, call him the Lord my righteousness. I make it my daily practice to wrap up my naked soul in this robe, and live by faith upon it. I make personal and particular application of the remedy to my soul's maladies, and draw virtue from it.—This particular appropriation in the actings of faith, is most needful for clearing up a believer's evidences, and for filling the soul with joy and peace in believing; for overcoming the fears of death, and giving comfort at a dying hour. And particularly, it contributes greatly to the soul's comfortable approach to the holy table of the Lord, when it can say, "I receive a crucified Christ as my Saviour; I go to him as one who loved me, and gave himself for me; I take the symbols, and feed upon his body as broken for me, and on his blood as shed for me;

“and I accept of these as an earnest and pledge of my living
“and feasting with my Saviour for ever.”

A crucified Christ, with all his purchase, is offered to all the hearers of the gospel: For Christ in the word, and by his ministers in the gospel-offer, speaks to all and every one of them; yea, speaks to every sinner, man and woman in particular, as though he called them by name and surname. And every man is bound to take the call and offer home to himself, as if he were so named, and believe that Christ stands at his door and knocks, saying, if you or any man will open to me, I will come in. *The promise is to you, and to all that are afar off*; even to all the ends of the earth, and to the stout-hearted; to all the sons of men, to every creature, to them that have no money, to the poor, maimed, blind, naked, wretched, and miserable, and to whosoever will come, *To you is the word of this salvation sent*. Christ doth beseech you to be reconciled, and to beware of coming short of the promise, by unbelief; such a promise as that, *Whosoever believeth in the Son shall not perish, but have eternal life*: And that, *Him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out*: Besides many others; John iii. 16.—vi. 37. Rev. iii. 17, 18, 20.—xxii. 17. Prov. viii. 4. Isa. xlv. 22.—xlvi. 12.—lv. 1. Mark xvi. 15. Luke xiv. 21, 22, 23. Acts ii. 39.—iii. 26.—xiii. 26, 47. 2 Cor. v. 20. Heb. iv. 1.

Now, seeing the gospel-call and offer is given to every one, faith, which is the echo of the gospel-call, must needs receive an offered Christ, and salvation through him, with particular application to the soul that believes. As Christ offers himself and his purchase, to every soul in particular; so faith appropriates Christ to the soul itself in particular. And indeed, the life and sweetness of faith lies in this appropriation and applicatory act, when the soul is helped to say with Thomas, *Thou art my Lord, and my God*: and with the spouse, *My beloved is mine, and I am his*: and with David, *Thou art my rock, and the God of my salvation*.—Unbelief would tempt me to put away the gospel-offer from me, saying, it doth not belong to me, I am not elected, nor designed to share of Christ's purchase: he did not love me, nor die for me.—But in regard to secret things, they belong to God; my salvation is at stake, my need of a Saviour is unspeakable, and the offer is made to me; I have no time to lose in disputing with the devil and unbelief, but I will go to Christ on the ground I have. He tells me he came *to save sinners*, I am sure that is my name; he loved enemies, that is my name; he received gifts for the rebellious, that is my name; and now I hear the master calling and inviting me in particular: Therefore, in spite of the devil and unbelief, and all my guilt, I will go forward, and accept of Christ as *my Saviour and my King*; I will trust him with my salvation, and believe *he loved me, and gave himself for me*, vile and guilty as I am. This essay to

believe, Lord, I make in thy strength, and in obedience to thy command : But, oh ! my mints are weak and feckless ! It is only the Spirit enlightening my mind, and opening up the gospel-call and promise to me, saying, *To you is the word of this salvation sent* ; that determines me to make particular application of thy love-offer, by an acceptable appropriating faith : Let my help come from thee.

O Lord, my sins are great and numerous ; but, should I add to them this sin of refusing the remedy, and putting away Christ's love and blood offered to me in the gospel, this would be greater than all the rest ; for so I would bring not only my own blood, but the guilt of the blood of God upon my head. This I dare not do : now my soul is at the stake, now the remedy is in my offer, my need of it is great, I cannot delay closing with it ; yet a little while and my opportunity is gone, and I must change my dwelling for ever ; and how can I go any where without my Saviour ? Christ I must have to teach me, to justify and sanctify me, none else can do it, on him all my help is laid. How will I go to a communion table without him ? How will I go to death without him ? How will I go to a judgment seat without him ? Lord, my case is desperate without thee ; wherefore I accept of thy offer, I believe thy love, I trust in thy merits, I apply thy blood, I appropriate thy purchase, and cry, *My Lord, and my God*. I confide in a sin-pardoning God, and rest on his promise to me, through Christ's blood and merits, for life and salvation. And though clouds arise, and he should threaten even to slay me, yet I will trust in him, as one *that loved me, and gave himself for me*.

Object. But doth not the calling sinners to such appropriating acts of faith, encourage the presumptuous confidence of hypocrites to call God their God, like Balaam, Numb. xxii. 18. and to continue in sin ? *Answer.* No ; these gospel calls do encourage sinners to love God, to repent and leave their sins ; for, till we believe, and taste something of God's love to us, we cannot love him, nor turn to him, 1 John iv. 19. *We loved him, because he first loved us*. And the abuse or presumption of hypocrites must not hinder the publishing of free gospel-offers and promises.

Again, the appropriating faith of believers humbles the creature, destroys self-confidence, purifies the heart, draws forth the soul in love to God, and hatred to sin : Whereas the presumption of hypocrites has no such effects.

It is the duty then of every man, that hath Christ's love-offers tendered to him, to repent and believe the gospel, to see his lost state in Adam, and his need of Christ, to be well pleased with his gospel device, receive Christ in all his offices, to trust in him as his Saviour, and thereupon believe that his sins are forgiven through Christ's blood ; and so persuade and assure himself that Christ is his, that he died for him,

and that he shall have life and salvation through him. This persuasion and assurance being most necessary to the spiritual life, it is the great duty of every one to press forward in the acts of faith, until they attain it, faith being still weak and lame without it. But seeing many believers have it not always, through prevailing doubts and unbelief, it must surely belong more to the perfection of faith, than to the essence of it: Their case is like that of a shipwrecked man that has got hold of a plank, he believes the plank is sufficient to bear him up, and keep him from sinking, but the blowing storm, and his own weakness, make him doubt if his grip be fast enough to hold by it.—Indeed, Lord, if thou didst not take faster grips of me than I do of thee, my weak and slippery fingered faith, would soon let thee go; but I trust not in my faith, but in thy faithfulness; I trust not in my promises to thee, but in thine to me; that thou wilt never leave me, nor forsake me. Lord, do as thou hast said; be it to me according to thy word.

MEDITATION XXVI.

From 1 John iv. 19. We love him, because he first loved us.

NO reason can we give why God loved any of Adam's race, but only because he loved us: But good reason can be given why we love God; both because he is infinitely lovely in himself, and because he first loved us, and before we had any thoughts of love to him. O what is our love, but a small stream that flows from and returns again to the ocean of his love! God's love to us is the source, the incentive, the motive, and moral cause of our love to him. We can never love God, until some rays of his everlasting love break out to us; for conscience of guilt, and fears of wrath, do rather incline us to hate him, and flee from him as an enemy, than to love him, and draw near to him: But the breaking out of the beams of God's ancient and preventing love to us in Jesus Christ, makes way for breaking the enmity of our hearts, and bringing in the heavenly fire of love to him. The serious consideration of God's eternal free love to us, poor, wretched, and unlovely creatures, and his loving us at such a rate, as to seek and court our love at the expense of his Son's blood, is the most powerful motive in the world to engage and draw out our love to him; and the more we have of the faith or feelings of this love, the warmer still will our love to him be. God's redeeming love displayed to men doth obscure all the seeming glories of this world, as much as the meridian sun doth darken candles or smaller fires; and soon convinces us, that there is nothing that deserves our affections but God and Christ. No man that ever tasted the sweetness, but finds his heart warmed with love to him again.

A forgiven soul cannot read his pardon but with tears of love and joy ; and still there is much love where much is forgiven. *We love him, because he first loved us.*

Lord, at thy call, I go to thy table to admire and give thanks for God's preventing love vented to man in the councils of peace, the covenant of redemption, in the incarnation, the death, the blood, and righteousness of our God Redeemer. O amazing love ! I admire it in the antiquity of it : God's love is from all eternity ; his thoughts were long set upon man before he had a being. I admire the freeness and undeservedness of this love ; there was nothing in man to engage his love ; he saw nothing in him but poverty, debt, impotency, and deformity ; yea, man was so far from deserving any love from God, that he deserved all hatred, as being loathsome and full of enmity ; having razed out the image of God, and got Satan's set up in its room ! Yet, even then, God loved him so, as to give his dearest beloved Son to die for him ; O, did God love man when utterly unworthy of his love ! and shall not we love God, who infinitely deserves all our affection, as being in himself entirely amiable, and altogether lovely ; and likewise as affectionate to us, as he is lovely in himself !—Lord Jesus, I admire the strength and ardency of thy love ! Many waters of affliction did not quench it, and the floods of wrath that went over thee could not drown it ! Strong was that love that made thee engage, and carried thee through in suffering the pains both of the first and second death in our stead ! Oh, I am ashamed and afflicted for my little love to thee !—I marvel at the constancy and steadfastness of thy love, that it continues firm to thy people from everlasting to everlasting : and that it is never altered by all the unkind returns, provocations, and ingratitude thou meetest with from them.—I wonder at the fruits and effects of thy love ! O how great ! how sweet ! how numerous ! Who can value or set them forth : Such as, “ quenching the fire of justice, disarming the law of its curses, bruising the serpent's head, paying believer's debts, obtaining for them regeneration, pardon of sin, peace with God, peace with conscience, peace with angels, adoption into God's family, justification, sanctification, all the graces of the Spirit, audience of prayer, growth in grace, comfort in affliction, a blessing on all providences, perseverance in holiness, the ministry of angels, victory over death, a happy resurrection, acquittance at the tribunal, the beatific vision, and everlasting life !” Who can declare the loving kindness of the Lord ? Who can utter his mighty acts ? Who can shew forth all his praise ? I may sooner fathom the depth of the sea, the breadth of the earth, or the height of heaven, than measure the love of God in Christ, for it passeth knowledge !

O, how little do we love him, that loved us first, and loved us at such a rate ! Nay, how unthankful are we for all the in-

stances and fruits of this matchless love! How unkind are the returns we make to him for it! *Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid*, at the ingratitude of men. How little do we think on redeeming love, and upon the propitiation provided by God for our sins! How little do we speak of this love, or recommend it to those who know it not! How do the small trifles, and little nothings of this world get more room in our hearts, than Christ's glorious purchase! How little pains are we at to secure an interest in the blessed fruits of his love! How unwilling are we to go into the terms of redeeming love, to renounce a covenant of works, self-righteousness, darling sins, beloved idols, &c. How averse are we to renounce the world, deny self, and to be debtors wholly to free grace! How inclinable are we to satisfy conscience after commission of sin, by our own doings, confessions, mournings, resolutions, &c. without going to the propitiation provided by the love of God! How great is the liking we have to sin, that killed the Lamb of God! How can we say, we love God that loved us first, when we hug his enemy in our bosom! *O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears*, that I might weep day and night for the ungrateful requitals of the sons of men for the preventing love of God in Christ, and the amazing instances of it!

O that I could say on good ground, and from the bottom of my heart, I love him that first loved me. Surely a sincere love to God and Christ would be a sure evidence of God's eternal love to me! O that I had the marks of this love, and could say, "My meditations of him are sweet:" I place my happiness in his favour, and the comfort of all ordinances in his presence: I rejoice in the flourishing of his kingdom, and abhor every thing that is injurious to him: I esteem Christ the Mediator, and gift of God, as most precious, with every thing that belongs to him; I fall heartily in with the device of redeeming love for saving sinners, and study the life of faith on the Son of God.—I renounce my own righteousness and strength, and desire always to say, *In the Lord Jesus have I my righteousness and strength*. Were this the language of my heart, I might appeal to himself, and say, *Thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee*, and desire to render thee love for love.

It would be a great shame for believers, if they did not love him that first loved them, when they were enemies to him! Surely they cannot be believers without love to him. O for greater and warmer love to him that first loved us! Love is the great qualification of the saints above; the more love we have, the liker heaven we are, and the meeter to dwell in it. Were it possible there could be a man in heaven without love, he would reckon the place a hell, and the work a torment to him. It is love that makes a spiritual and heavenly work delightful; hence love is said to be the fulfilling of the law.

If the love of God be in the heart, the law of God is there also, and the soul is inclined to all holy obedience. O may the love of God in Christ constrain me to live to him that died for me. Have I seen the astonishing love of God in parting with his dear Son to save me? O let that love constrain me to part with all my sins and idols for him.—Have I seen the dear Son's amazing love in bleeding to death on the cursed tree, to save me from lying in hell for ever? O let me never again wittingly walk in the road that leads to it.—Have I seen him struggling in an agony to open heaven's gates for me? O let me never turn my back on heaven, and tell him thereby he might have saved his labour. O let his boundless love warm my heart more and more with love to him! May the charms of his love triumph over all the charms of sin's pleasures and Satan's devices, and kindle such a fire of love in my heart, as will burn up all my lusts like stubble. Amen.

MEDITATION XXVII.

From Psalm cxxvi. 5. They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.

THE sowing time of God's people is all here, but their reaping time is but partly here, and far more fully hereafter. Here they sow very much in tears; there is need for it: This seed-time is the most promising of any. Men love a dry seed-time, but God loves wet seed-times best; a wet sowing-time doth promise a harvest of joy, whereas a dry one portends a harvest of sorrow. *Wo to them that laugh now, they shall weep.* If men do not begin with tears, they shall end with them; if they weep not now, they shall weep and wail, and gnash their teeth hereafter.—Godly weeping is a good sign of spiritual life. If a child, when born, was heard to cry, it is reckoned a legal proof of its living: but if not, it is accounted still-born or dead. Alas, the number of still-born children in the church is great! few are heard cry or seen weep, in a godly sort, if compared with those who do not. There be many who pour out tears on worldly occasions, but few on spiritual accounts. If a child die, we can mourn and weep over him, but who mourns for Christ as for an only son? Who weeps for sin that pierced him? Oh, how little are we affected with the sufferings of our dear Redeemer! Our ears are so accustomed to the hearing of Christ's love, his agonies, his wounds, his blood, his death, that they are become words of a common sound, and make little impression on us, though they be the most awful and moving things that ever the world heard of.—Thou, Lord, art present at sacraments, thou observest our tears, and comest with thy bottle to receive and preserve them; but, oh, how empty is it of tears, for the most part, of gospel hearers! and how few are the tears which are dropt in it by communicants themselves!

Lord, I am ashamed of the hardness and unconcernedness of my heart, and the woful dryness of my eyes? Shall the rocks about Jerusalem rend sooner at Christ's sufferings than my rocky heart? Shall others weep and sow in tears, when Christ's wounds and blood are set before them, and I continue stupid and hardened? Shall the history of Joseph in the pit, move my heart more than that of Christ upon the cross? Lord, look upon my stony heart with pity, look it into streams of penitential tears; give me such a look as thou gavest Peter when he denied thee; a look that may cause me weep, and bitterly, at the remembrance of my sins that pierced thee. If I have not openly denied my Saviour, surely I have shamefully forgot him, and forsaken him in my heart: I have had a deep hand in all his sufferings. When my dear Lord was in the garden sweating blood, neither Jew nor Gentile, Judas nor Pilate, were there to cause it; but oh, my unbelief, my pride, my carnality, my hypocrisy, my sinful words and actions were there, and with their weight pressed him to the ground, and brought that fearful agony and sweat upon him. My dissimulation was the traitor's kiss, my ambition the thorny crown, my drinking up iniquity like water, the portion of gall and vinegar; my want of tears caused him to shed both tears and blood: my forsaking God made him to be forsaken of God; my soul's being exceeding guilty made his soul exceeding heavy! Oh, what means then the hardness of my heart, and dryness of my eyes, when these things are set before me! Is it that weeping is designed for me hereafter, where tears shall never be dried up? Lord, save me, for Christ's sake, from hell's tears, and give grace to prevent them by sowing tears now in the proper season.

So long as I am in the valley of tears, there are many reasons for sowing the seed of tears. I see many grounds for them, may a glance of them be a means of melting my heart, and filling my eyes with tears.—Tears for my woful apostacy from God in Adam, whereby I am banished from God, have lost his image and countenance, and am fallen under his wrath and curse.—Tears for the woful corruption of my nature, my enmity against God, and the manifold plagues of my heart, as atheism, ignorance, pride, unbelief, hardness, hypocrisy, formality, &c.—Tears for the sins of my life, open and secret, of omission and commission, of light and ignorance, which are more in number than the hairs of my head, and many of them very heinous because of several aggravations; of all which I may have an affecting view, by reading our Larger Catechism upon the ten commandments.—Tears upon the remembrance of Christ's love, in suffering and dying in my room, to wash away my sins and save me from hell. Surely the thoughts of this love may inflame the coldest breast, melt the hardest heart, and make the driest constitution run down with tears. It was this that made Mary Magdalen's

eyes gush out so plentifully with tears of love and joy, as were enough to wash her Saviour's feet.—Tears for the abuse of God's fatherly goodness, mercy, and patience towards me, a sinful hell-deserving creature. This consideration, melted the Prodigal's heart, and made him cry, *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.* David's undeserving kindness made even a hard hearted Saul to lift up his voice and weep, and will not God's kindness, which is infinitely greater and freer, make me drop some silent tears at his holy table?—Tears, because of the frowns of my heavenly Father, the tokens of his displeasure, his chastisements, and even his chidings, and shaking the rod at me: These will melt the heart of a child, whose nature is kindly and ingenuous, while the stubborn will stand it against many strokes. David, though a man of the greatest valour against his enemies, yet, when he saw God was angry with him in Absalom's rebellion, he wept like a child before the enemy while going up Olivet, 2 Sam. xv. 30. and seemed to have no courage at all.—Again, I ought to sow in tears for the dishonours done to God by the sins of others, and especially when damnable heresies and blasphemies are vented against God. And likewise tears for the miseries and perishing condition of others. And especially tears of sympathy with God's people in affliction. For I read of Christ himself, David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Jeremiah, and other saints sowing such tears. Well then may this world be called a valley of tears.

Besides all these, it is well pleasing to God when Christians sow tears of tenderness in renewing covenant with him, in prayer, in hearing the word, in communicating and commemorating the death and sufferings of Christ for their sins. This last is a special season for sowing tears, according to Zech. xii. 10. O shall Christians be more sparing of their tears for Christ, than Christ was of his blood for them? We cry out against the Jews and Romans as hard hearted men for piercing Christ, and being unconcerned at his sufferings. But what softer are our hearts, if we can see how our sins put him to death, and not be grieved nor weep? Lord, send thy Spirit to touch my heart, and then it will melt into a stream of tears for sin, that cursed thing that butchered the Lamb of God. O let this be my weeping-time, and seed-time of tears, that hereafter I may reap in joy. Alas, my seed-time is scrimp and insignificant, O let not my harvest be proportioned to it.—Lord, though I have not tears enough with Mary to wash thy feet, yet thou hast blood enough to wash my feet, my heart, my hands, my tears, and all my duties, and to make me and them acceptable and savoury to God, so that I may reap in joy with his people above, and stand there as a monument of free grace for ever.

Many after sowing the precious seed of tears at commu-

nion seasons, have even had their reaping times here below, as an earnest and first fruits of the full harvest above. Lord, make me acquainted both with the sowing and reaping of penitent believers in this world, that I may have good hope, through grace, of sharing with them in the harvest of glory hereafter, even the full enjoyment of God in heaven, eternal communion with the glorious Trinity, with the saints and holy angels. Let me know what it is, after a seed time of tears, to reap even in ordinances here below, the clearing of my evidences of grace, and the evidences of my interest in Christ, and in the well ordered covenant. Let me reap the lifting up of the light of thy countenance upon me, which will put more joy in my heart than worldlings have when they reap corn and wine in the greatest plenty. Let me see my name written in heaven before I go thither, that my passage may be joyful in the midst of tears.—Let me reap even here new supplies of grace, strength to bear crosses, and resist temptations; give me gracious returns of prayer, and victory over my corruptions, that I may sing with the Psalmist, Psa. cxxxviii. 3. *In the day when I cried thou answeredst me; and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.*

MEDITATION XXVIII.

From Rev. i. 5. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

THE love of Christ in becoming man, and shedding his blood to ransom and save sinners of mankind will be the eternal song of the redeemed above, and why should they not begin this song here below! Never was there such matter for songs of praise as the unfathomable love of JESUS. His name is love: and therefore it is to me as ointment poured forth. I will remember his love more than wine. His nature is love, his words and actions were love, he preached and practised love; he lived in love, was sick of love, and died for love.—O what thoughts should I have of this free and undeserved love of the glorious Son of God, who was intreated by no man, and even hated of all men; yet in his free love intreats and undertakes for man; saying, Though he be my enemy, I will be both his surety and sacrifice, I will drink the cup of wrath, be made sin and a curse for him. I will pour out all my blood and die for him.—O how shall I speak of this astonishing love to thy enemies! To have spared our lives had been great mercy, but to give thy life for ours is love unspeakable!—Oh! Lord, thou hast found me in my enmity, and loved me! When my hand was lifted up against thee, thy arms were open to embrace! Nay, thou hast opened thy loving heart to shelter rebels who trod thee under foot! Thy heart burned with love to them who cruelly pierced it! Thy bowels yearned towards

those that raked in them bloody hands ! Surely eternity itself will be short enough to celebrate the praises of our glorious EMMANUEL, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Worthy is our slain, bleeding Lamb, of eternal Hallelujahs from men and angels. Lord, fit my heart for these new songs.

O never was there such a miracle of condescending love to the sons of men, as this of the eternal Son of God ; his becoming man to suffer hell for them, and pour out his blood to wash them from sin, that kindles hell fire against them. Glory to the Lamb for fire-quickening blood, and for his preventing love that kept me from feeling of this fire ! O how would this love have affected me, if justice had sent me to hell, and kept me there one year, or one month, or but one day ! Surely, one day in hell would have made me prize and praise redeeming love and redeeming blood at another rate than now I do.—Or had I seen the damned in their misery, despairing and without hope ! Or had I seen my agonizing Saviour in the garden sweating blood for me ; or seen him dying on the cross, pouring it out at five big wounds to the very last drop, to wash away sin ! O would not I then have valued the great remedy and salvation he now tenders to me !—And is not all this which I now hear in the Word, and see represented in the sacrament, as true, as real, and certain as if I had seen it with my eyes ?

And now when I go to behold Christ dying and bleeding in this holy representation, even the Lamb of God sacrificed and slaughtered for my sins ; Lord, touch my heart that it may be suitably affected with the sight, so as intensely to love my blessed Saviour, and to hate my cursed sins—O how should I, at this occasion be covered with shame and loathe myself, who have both procured the death of Christ by sin, and sinned against his death, by slighting his blood and neglecting his great salvation—Oh ! I am chargeable both with the guilt of Christ's blood, and of murdering my own soul.—O pardon and *deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation.*

My sins have indeed shed the blood of Christ, but, Lord, impute not the guilt, but the merit of this blood to me.—Lord, what profit is there in my blood ? Surely the least drop of thy dear Son's blood is of more value than a sea of mine. A whole sea of it cannot wash away one sin, but, Lord, thou callest me to look into the Lamb's blood that taketh away the sins of a world.—Oh, is not this blood more powerful to wash me, than my sins are to defile me ? Is not its virtues as fresh still as when it dropped from his wounds on the tree, or in the day when it cleansed 3000 at once ? Is not thy Son's blood a sufficient satisfaction for all my sins, a full price for my redemption ?—O my soul, thou art now near the blessed remedy for thy guilt and pollution ; this is the only well of salvation, and

fountain of life ! O canst thou see Christ's blood running, and not desire to be bathed in it ! Now the cleansing and healing streams run on both sides of the table ; now let me apply and live, let me bring all my sores and plagues to the streams, my blind eyes, my deaf ears, my weak hands, my feeble knees, my hard heart, my cold affections, my unbelieving and doubting mind, my leprous and unclean soul. Lord, this blood has washed away the plague-spots, and stains of many thousands, who are now praising the Lamb for it : Oh, let me be joined to the number, that I may also sing to him, that loved and washed me.

O bleeding Lamb, *if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean* : O let that blood, which gushed from thy heart and side, but drop on my soul, and it will cleanse me from all sin.—And when thou art pleased to come to me in the sacrament in streams of blood, O raise me up, that I may meet thee with streams of tears, tears of repentance, love, and gratitude. O let me not be more sparing of my tears for Christ, than he was of his blood for me. David's kindness made even a hard-hearted Saul lift up his voice and weep, and will not Christ's kindness, which is infinitely greater, make me drop at least some silent tears.

O how dreadful a thing must it be to reject this remedy ! Surely justice will not spare them that trample under foot the blood of the Son of God : If justice was inexorable when he himself prayed, *if it be possible, let this cup pass* ; how will he spare me, or hear the cry of those who reject his blood and sacrifice ? How is it possible that the cup of wrath can pass from them who do it ? No, they must drink it for ever themselves ! Lord, save me from rejecting this blood. *I believe, Lord, help my unbelief.*

MEDITATION XXIX.

From Luke xv. 18, 19. Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

Father : Ah, I may be ashamed to call thee so, considering what a disobedient and unthankful child I have been. I am a most wretched prodigal, I left thy house and presence, and went into a far country ; far from thee, my bliss and happiness. But now, Father, behold me desiring to come back as a poor penitent, mourning, and returning prodigal. I come from a far country indeed, I come from the land of sin and darkness ; I come from the frontiers of hell, from the very borders of the burning lake ! Ah, foolish creature that I am, How have I forsaken thee the fountain of living waters. How fond have I been of broken cisterns, and in love with filthy puddles ? O the baseness, the disingenuity the ingratitude that I have been guilty of. I have resisted thy power, despised thy

wisdom, undervalued thy goodness! Father of mercies, I now see what an evil thing, and how bitter it is to forsake the Lord: Holy Lord Jesus, I now see what indignities I have done against thee! Thy blessed body was dreadfully torn with nails upon the cross, and thy precious blood inhumanly spilt by thy crucifiers! But oh! have not I occasioned more grief and sorrow to thee by my manifold sins against light and love? They crucified thee but once, but I have crucified thee day after day! They crucified thee because they knew thee not; but I have known thee, what thou art in thyself, the Lord of glory, and what thou art to me, a tender and merciful Father; yet I have continued to crucify thee afresh.—O Holy Spirit, I have resisted thy strivings, quenched thy motions, demolished thy work, and put thee away grieved. But, Lord, I condemn my folly, and see my misery. Oh, what have I gained by offending thee? nothing but shame and confusion, fear, trembling, and horror! O what fruit had I in those things whereof I am now ashamed!

But, Father, I have heard of thy compassions to the guilty when they confess, and forsake sin, and turn to thee: Wherefore, though I am ashamed, like the publican, to lift up my eyes to heaven; yet, let me with humble Magdalen, come behind thee weeping, and wash thy feet with my tears, and kiss them. And let me hear the news of pardon from thy mouth. Thou camest, Lord, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; and of these I am chief—Lord, I am full of diseases, full of wounds, full of plague-sores, full of weakness and infirmities, full of sins and pollutions. Here, Lord, is work for thy strong hand, work for thy wonder-working blood: O stretch out thy hand and save.—*Father, I am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hired servants*; and thou knowest no hire, no wages will satisfy me but thyself; Lord, give me thyself, be thou my exceeding great reward.

Lord, I am so vile a creature, that I may fear to come and present a petition to thee upon the knee, and far more to come and sit down with thee at thy holy table: If John the Baptist, a saint of the first magnitude, thought himself not worthy to stoop down and loose the latchet of thy shoes, shall I, who am laden with sins, adventure to that holy feast, where angels wait as ministering spirits? But, Lord, in thy compassion receive me, that cometh not to excuse, but to accuse myself, with eyes cast down, smiting on my breast with the publican, *Lord, be merciful to me a sinner*. Thou didst graciously accept of the publican's prayer, of Mary Magdalen's tears, the faith of the thief on the cross, the repentance of Peter, and of those that crucified thee. By these instances of thy mercy, I am encouraged to draw near to thee: O send me not away empty, lest I faint by the way; but satisfy my needy soul with

the food of thy heavenly banquet, that I may receive spiritual strength and nourishment to eternal life.

Lord, hear my cry, and hide not thy face from me : When Manasseh cried to thee, thou hadst respect to his prayer : When the Ninevites humbled themselves before thee, thou wast entreated ; yea, thou invitest the crimson and scarlet coloured sinners to come and reason with thee, and assurest them, thou wilt cast out none that come.—Many thousands, who have experienced the truth of thy word, are, at this hour, singing thy praises, and exalting thy free grace. Lord do thou make me also a monument of thy free grace to all eternity.

Ah, I may be ashamed to speak of mercy and grace, who have so long abused thy grace, and trampled on the blood that should save me. O that I could mourn and weep all my life for it. Oh, what shall I do with my stony heart, that will not break and melt for abusing God's mercy and trampling Christ's blood ! Oh, shall I mourn and weep for a dead corpse, or departed friend, and not mourn for a dead heart, or for God's departing from me ! Shall the dear Son of God weep, sweat, and bleed for us, and we not weep for ourselves, or for our sins, that pierced his head with thorns, his hands with nails, and his side with a spear, and his heart with sorrows. Lord Jesus, I look to thee for a penitent heart, seeing thou tellest me, thou art exalted for this very end, to give repentance to Israel.

Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him ? and what am I, the unworthiest of men, that thou shouldst call me to sit with thy children at thy table, who am unworthy as a dog to creep under it ; yea, callest me to eat the bread of angels, who am not worthy to eat the bread of men ?—Amazing love ! that God should court those to obedience, whom he can peremptorily command to it ; and, in case of disobedience, punish instantly in hell ; that he should take poor slaves, condemned to the prison of hell, and make them crowned kings in heaven, that he should not only be willing to dwell in flesh, but also to give us this flesh for our food ; that he should not only save us from hell, but even leave his throne in heaven, and lose his life on earth, to enthrone us in his kingdom ! these are prodigies of love, which should engage us to love our Saviour, and mourn for sin while we live.—Lord Jesus, pity a relenting, returning prodigal ; take him home, and make him thy servant for ever. It is highly just, that I should offer up myself a living sacrifice to my Redeemer, who offered up himself a dying sacrifice for my redemption.

MEDITATION XXX.

From Song i. 4. We will remember thy love.

I GO, blessed Jesus, at thy call, to remember thy love at thy holy table; thy words have an awful sound in my ears, *Do this in remembrance of me.* I see much in them; in obedience to them I will do this in remembrance of thy dwelling in flesh; in memory of thy love that carried thee to the manger, to the garden, and to the cross, for me; in memory of the infinite price of thy blood which thou didst shed: in memory of the victory obtained by it over the enemies of my soul; in memory of the deliverance from wrath, and the immortal glory thou hast purchased by it for me: Though thou didst die, and lie in the grave, yet thy love shall ever live in my heart. Glory to thee, thou art now alive in heaven; O come and live with me; let thy love never be one moment out of my view. I bless thee for this lasting memorial of thy love.

I look on this sacrament as no real or proper sacrifice, as many do, but only as a representation or commemoration of the real sacrifice Christ offered on the cross. I do no more at the Lord's table, than what Christ did at it: Since he offered no sacrifice at the table, neither do I. He only did commemorate that sacrifice he was going to offer; and the same, and no more, do I. If any should say, that Christ offered a real sacrifice, when he instituted this sacrament, then the oblation on the cross would have been superfluous, because sinners would have been redeemed by that of the supper which went before.

Now is the time for a solemn commemoration of thy love: Oh, shall I be unmindful of thy love at this feast, when thou wast so mindful of me at it, made thy testament, put me in it, and left me precious legacies to cause me remember thee; such as, life and light, pardon and peace, righteousness and strength, grace and glory. O how heroic, how generous and free, is thy love to sinful worms! We had done nothing to oblige thee; nothing sawest thou in us to engage thy love to us; but much didst thou see in us to incense thee against us. When we were without strength, ungodly sinners, and enemies, thou lovedst us, and diedst for us. *Greater love hath no man than this, to lay down his life for his friends;* but far greater love hath God-man, who laid down his life for his enemies! O what shall I think of this love! It had been wonderful love in an angel to have stooped to be united to a lump of earth, and therein suffered for us, though it could not have paid our debt. But, O my soul, here is one more valuable than all the angels in heaven, that has stooped to do it! *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us!* When I was, like Isaac, bound on the altar, he freely offered himself to be made a sacrifice to satisfy justice for me: Father, said he, *Lo I come to do thy will I take delight!*

Remember this love, O my soul, the Son of God is become the son of man for thee, that thou mightest be raised to the dignity of the sons of God ! He that was infinitely rich, for my sake became poor, that I, a poor naked creature, might become rich and well clothed. How can I look on the incarnation and birth of my Redeemer, and not remember his love with wonder ! Can I behold the manger his bed, and not adore the love that brought him to lie in it ? O how low were the circumstances of the heir of heaven, when he came to sojourn on earth, who had neither a house to live in, nor an estate to live upon, but must be subsisted by the hospitality of others, and frequently his fare was very mean. Amazing prodigy of divine love ! God stoops to dwell in flesh, and gives us his flesh to feed upon in the sacrament ! He not only pardons our sins, and saves us from hell ; but leaves his throne in heaven, loses his life on earth, and wades through hell to enthrone us in his kingdom, and make us crowned kings for ever.—Blessed be the Lord that gives me a communion-sabbath to remember this love. What shall I render to thee for it ? A day of glad tidings ! Thou hast often on such a day, visited the earth and watered it, and made it rich with thy showers. May thy grace and Spirit drop on us this day, like rain on the mown grass.

Lord, I am not worthy to touch the threshold of thy house, and yet thou callest me to thy table—Not worthy to stand among thy servants, and yet thou wouldst have me sit with my Redeemer—Not worthy to lie at thy footstool, and yet thou wouldst make my heart thy throne—Not worthy to eat the bread of men, and yet thou callest me to eat the bread of angels ! O love worthy to be remembered to all generations ! Lord enlighten my eyes, and give me a clearer view of thy love, than ever I got ; and while I am musing on it, let the fire burn ; O make my heart burn within me with love to him that loved us.

O my soul, consider the greatness of Christ's love in the cup he drank for thee ! How legible is it in his tears and prayers, his groans and cries, his agony and sweat, his wounds and blood, and all for us ? O let this matchless love beget in me the warmest love and affection to him that loved us !—O let the fire of Christ's love burn up my lusts and worldly love like stubble ; and remove the coldness of my heart to him ! Oh, that I could weep bitterly, that I cannot bring this vile heart of mine to love the Lord Jesus more ! Oh, shall I throw away my affections upon every worthless object, and yet have none for the loveliest object of the whole creation of God ; and yet one that would needs die for me, to become my ransom, sacrifice, and atonement ? is it the character of those who are Christ's spouse ? is it the character of the whole army of martyrs, and of every believer, to love Christ ? and shall not I love him too ?—Oh, the virgins love thee, the upright love

thee ; and every one of them cry, *O thou whom my soul loveth* ; and shall not I join those chaste lovers ? Or shall I be exposed to the terrible fate of those who want love to Christ ? 1 Cor. xvi. 22. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha.*—O that I could express my love to him in adorations and praises, in desiring his presence, loving his members, promoting his kingdom on earth, and longing to be with him for ever.

MEDITATION XXXI.

From Isa. liii. 5. He was wounded for our transgressions.

HOW amazing is the love of God to fallen man, in taking a body to be pierced and wounded for him. Man did cast off the image of his Maker, and became a rebel and run-away from God : And, behold, his Maker takes on him man's image, to restore him again to favour : Yea, he assumes our nature, when at the lowest, that so he might sigh, groan, grieve, weep, sorrow, sweat, bleed, and die for undone man ; and he did this, to raise him from his miserable state, to a happier condition than he was in before his fall.—Had not God become man, we could not have enjoyed him so nearly, so familiarly as we may do now. The enjoyment of God as a Redeemer, a husband, a brother, is another manner of enjoyment of him than of God as a Creator. Though we ruined ourselves, and fell under wrath, yet God, by the incarnation, has recovered us, and made us up far above all we had to lose. But, ere this be done, he must not only be man, but he must be wounded for and by man's sins ; yea, wounded to death, and crucified, before man could be raised up to live with God.

Many, yea innumerable, were the wounds my God Redeemer received for me ; as by the thorns that pricked his head, by the pincers that plucked his hair, by the scourge that tore and furrowed his back ; besides the five big wounds made in his hands and feet by the four nails, and in his side by the spear ; and the many wounds given his soul by the curses of the law. Now, all these wounds are opened as so many mouths to call us to flee into them for safety from the sword of justice.—Now these wounds were unspeakably painful, being envenomed by our sins. Crucifying, in itself, was an exceeding painful death ; the four big nails whereon the body hung, pierced the most sinewy and nervous parts of the body, and consequently most sensible of pain : And hence the Romans expressed torments by a word borrowed from the cross ; and make *cruciate* signify to torment. Thus was our innocent Saviour wounded on the cross, cruciate or tormented, and all to save us from eternal torments.

Astonishing sight ! The eternal Son of God, whom all the angels worship, wounded to death, hung by nails on a cross,

tortured and racked for several hours, and, in the mean time, loaded with reproach and scorn from those he died for ! Never such a sight as this ! it struck terror in the whole creation. The sun hid its face, and could not behold it, the vail of the temple rent in twain, the earth quaked, the rocks rent, the dead were moved, and their graves opened : And even his enemies were struck with amazement, and made to shrink, and say, *Truly this was a righteous person ; this was the Son of God.* O my soul, employ all thy faculties, all thy thoughts, to study, pore, and penetrate into this awful subject ; it deserves the profoundest regard and closest attention : Hence the great apostle determined to study and know nothing but it.

This amazing tragedy ought to create in me the greatest abhorrence of sin, the cause of it. Never can sin appear more exceeding sinful, and hateful, than in the wounding and crucifying of the Son of God. Our transgressions were the nails and spear that wounded his sacred body, and the sword that pierced his soul. These were the Judas that betrayed him, the soldiers that bound him, blindfolded, and mocked him, the Pilate that condemned him, the executioners that nailed him to the cursed tree : It was our sins that put the sword in his enemies' hands. He became a curse for us. All the derision, mockery, and contempt ; all the pain, suffering, and sorrow he endured, did proceed from our sins : these brought him to the cross, and to the grave.—Let us then turn our hatred, and discharge our fiercest indignation against our sins, let them be our aversion and dread for ever ; let me always look on sin, that crucified Christ, with horror and trembling. Never such an instance of the strictness and severity of God's justice, and of his abhorrence of sin, as here. He would not spare his dear Son, when he stood in the room of sinners, nor spare him one stripe or wound, when he cried ; but let him bleed and die, till sin was fully atoned for. Can I see this and not cry, O cursed sin ! murderer of the Son of God ; away with it, away with it ; crucify it, crucify it.

O my soul, see the evil of sin in the glass of Christ's wounds and sufferings in his body and soul. Say, O sin, what hast thou done ! Thou hast provoked the God of heaven to fiery indignation : Thou hast killed the Prince of life, turned angels into devils, filled the earth with troubles, and hell with precious souls ! If any body had killed my father, would I embrace the murderer, or love the dagger that was besmeared with his blood ? But what are all my relations to my Lord, my love, that was crucified ! O that my eyes were fountains of tears, that I might weep day and night for my sins that slew my Saviour. Oh, stony heart, for shame, become now like wax, and be melted in the midst of my bowels. Woes me, that I can grieve no more for my sins. Let me at least

revenge my Saviour's death upon my sins, and suffer them no longer to live in me.

How dreadful must the guilt of those be who willingly harbour sin, and delight in the murder of the Lord. It is no less than to kiss the nails, or hug the spear that pierced him. They make that their joy which made Christ a man of sorrow. They make light of that which made his soul heavy unto death. Oh, have I seen my Saviour bleeding to death by sin, and shall I live any longer in sin that wounded him? When a temptation to sin is presented, shall I ever dispute any more, whether Christ or Barabbas shall be preferred? My lusts denied, or my Lord crucified? Whether these sins shall be forsaken by me, that made Christ to be forsaken of God? Whether that shall be sweet to me, that was so bitter and deadly to him? Oh, was my lovely Jesus a man of sorrows all his life, and sometimes made to say, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful*; and shall not I be sorry for, and abhor those sins that caused all his sorrows?

O may the believing view of Christ's wounds and sufferings which he endured for my sins, and to save me from that wrath which they deserved, kindle the fire of love in my soul to Christ.—Lord, thou art the God that was wont to answer thy people by fire; O pity me, and answer my meditations and prayers, by kindling the holy fire of love in my heart, and let that fire put out the impure fire of lusts and corruptions, and inspire me with holy zeal and activity in thy service. O did Christ freely give himself to be a sin-offering for me; and shall not I give myself a thank-offering to him? Surely it is highly reasonable that I should offer up myself a living sacrifice to my Redeemer, who offered up himself a dying sacrifice for my redemption.

MEDITATION XXXII.

From John vi. 51. I am the living bread that came down from heaven: If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.

CHRIST crucified is our manna, our heavenly bread that preserves the life of the soul, and only by faith it must be received and eaten.—Bread is a comprehensive word, including all things necessary for this life; so Christ, our spiritual bread, is a most comprehensive blessing, including all we want, seeing *he is made of God to us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*.—Again, bread is the most necessary thing for our life, and the want of it brings the greatest misery; so Christ is the most necessary blessing to the soul, and the want of him makes a man miserable in time, and through eternity. It is a greater misery to have no Saviour for the soul, than to have no bread for the body. Christ alone is the bread that preserves us from soul famine, and

nourisheth us to eternal life ; he is the bread of life, the living bread. *Lord, give us evermore this bread.*

Bread is called the staff and stay of man's life ; so Christ is the staff and stay of our spiritual life, he upholds our souls in life. He is the staff that faint and weary souls must lean to, in going up through this wilderness : Yea, Christ our living bread is a staff to defend us, and to beat off our enemies, and to put all the hellish host to flight. That was a strange dream of one of the Midianites, Judg. vii. 13. *Behold, a cake of barley bread came tumbling into the host of Midian, and smote a tent.* Strange ! a piece of bread to overturn a tent ! Behold this dream made good in the sacrament. The bread there which represents Christ, when received with faith upon him, will tumble into the host of Satan and his lusts, these Midianites who vex us with their wiles, strike down their tents, and put them all to flight.

Christ is the bread that came down from heaven, of which the Israelites manna, that God sent miraculously from heaven, was an eminent type. That manna was God's free gift to the murmuring and rebellious Israelites, to preserve them from starving in the deserts where bread could not be had. This manna was a curious grain, that made fine bread, with which God furnished them plentifully every morning from the clouds, sufficient to satisfy six hundred thousand men. But Christ, our spiritual manna, doth far excel theirs, though he was resembled by theirs in some things. Manna was first grinded and beaten, and baked in ovens, before it was bread to them ; and so the grain which makes our ordinary bread must be threshed, and grinded betwixt two millstones, and baked by the force of fire, before we eat it : So Christ the antitype, was threshed and bruised, and grinded betwixt the millstones of divine justice and our sins, and also roasted by the fire of wrath, that he might be fit bread for saving the lives of our souls ; and all this we should call to mind, when we see and make use of the bread in the holy supper.

The Israelites' manna came down to them with the dew ; so Christ, with the benefits of his purchase, comes to us by the dews and influences of the Holy Spirit.—Their manna fell round about their tents, and every man was free to gather it ; so every man is at freedom to gather our heavenly manna.—The Israelites behoved to go out of their tents to gather theirs ; so God will have us go forth, and be at pains to get our spiritual food. God, who rained manna about their tents, could have rained it into their mouths ; but he loves not to encourage sloth in his people, but would have them at all pains to make sure of Christ for their portion. As the Israelites gathered daily, so we must be daily going to Christ, and making use of him. As they gathered early in the morning, so God would have us seeking Christ in the morning of our lives.

O how far doth our heavenly manna excel that of the Israelites ! Theirs but fed the body, and could not preserve them from death at last ; but our manna feeds the soul, and nourishes to eternal life, and preserves all that eat of it from eternal death.—Theirs fell not on the Sabbath day ; nor durst they go to seek it on the Sabbath ; but ours falls every day, and double on the Sabbath ; and therefore God calls us to double our diligence, in gathering it on the Sabbath.—Their manna continued only in the wilderness, and ceased when they came to Canaan ; but ours continueth for ever, and our fullest enjoyment of it is in the heavenly Canaan ; and therefore all true Israelites long to be there.

O how lamentable is their folly, who spend all their time and thoughts in seeking bread to their bodies, and are careless and indifferent about the bread of life to their souls ! All their care is to support the clay house, but let the soul starve that inhabits it. Oh, it is but a short time they can enjoy the bread they are so concerned for ; the bodies they mind so much must be meat for worms, and the souls they neglect a prey to devils !

But, whatever others do, may I be wise to provide the living bread for my soul, and learn to eat it, and make use of it by faith, and especially when I go to the Lord's table ; for without faith we can get no nourishment, no life, nor strength from this heavenly bread : Faith is the mouth that eats the bread of life, and sucks honey out of the rock. Now, the Spirit of God calls faith or believing, an eating, because by it we taste the sweetness and excellency of Christ, and have great satisfaction in partaking of Christ and his benefits. As by eating, our bodies increase in strength and stature ; so, by believing, our souls grow in grace and spiritual strength, to run in God's ways.—As by eating, the bread incorporates and becomes one with us ; so, by our receiving and applying Christ's broken body by faith, he is made one with us, and we one with him. As by eating bread, men live upon it, and get support and strength for working or journeying ; so believers, by looking to, and trusting wholly in the righteousness of Christ, and the merit of his blood, they feed and receive spiritual nourishment, and strength for their work and warfare, and so make a progress in their journey to Canaan.

O that I had a spiritual hunger and sharp appetite for this bread of life, and were desiring and longing for it, for the support and nourishment of my soul, more than a hungry man doth for bread to his body. A hungry man perishing for want of bread, would prefer a piece of bread before many bags of gold, if both were set before him, and be allowed to make his choice : So the awakened soul that sees his need of Christ, prefers him to a whole world ; give him never so much of the world's comforts, he is still dissatisfied without Christ, and

says, What will all these things avail me, if my starving soul perish without Christ the bread of life?

I have many arguments to plead with God for this bread; Lord, do not thy free calls and promises bind thee to give me it? Thou hast said, *The needy shall not be forgotten.*—Is not Christ, the bread from heaven, the free gift of God to perishing souls? And dost thou not invite those to come and eat of it, that have no money nor price to give for it?—Lord, thou hadst compassion upon the bodies of men, when they had no bread to eat, and didst provide bread for five thousand of them, by a miracle; and hast thou not as much compassion to starving souls, that are far more precious?—Lord, thou givest natural affections to earthly parents, and makest them pitiful to their children, when they cry for bread, so that they cannot shut up their bowels against them when hungry, nor will they give them a stone instead of bread: And will my heavenly Father, who is infinitely more compassionate than the most tender parents, refuse the bread of life to starving souls, who cry earnestly for it?—Lord, I trust in thy mercy, and depend on thy promise, I believe thou wilt not let a poor hungry beggar starve and fall down at thy door, when there is bread enough in thy house, and to spare. O cause me to sing with the Psalmist, Psal. xiii. 5. *But I have trusted in thy mercy, my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.*

END OF THE SACRAMENTAL MEDITATIONS.

SACRAMENTAL ADVICES.

ADVICE I.

From Gen. vi. 1. 'Come thou and all thy house into the ark.

AS God, in his mercy, called Noah to come into the ark prepared for him and his household, to save him from drowning in the great deluge, so God, by the gospel, calls you, O man, to come into the ark, *Christ crucified*; which he hath provided for perishing sinners, to save them from the deluge of wrath that is coming. God hath long forewarned you of it; nay, the flood is beginning to rise, it is time for thee to flee to this ark; believe it, there is no other way for thy safety: The ark of thy prayers, or of thy tears, convictions, or reformations, will not save thee from it; nothing will do it but the ark Christ.

As all who were out of Noah's ark perished in the flood, so will all perish who are out of Christ.—Those of the old world, who only came near to the ark, or touched the out-side of it, they perished if they did not enter into it; so in like manner will those perish, who only come near to Christ by an outward profession, and are not found in him by a true faith.

As the ark gave a good account of all that entered into it, not one of them was lost in the flood; so will Christ give a good account, at the last day, of all that fly to him by faith: None shall pluck them out of his hand, not one of them shall perish in the deluge of wrath; Christ will present them all safe to his Father—*Behold here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me.*

As Noah's ark was accessible, and had a door in it for people to enter, so in a crucified Jesus there is a door of access opened, even a door of faith, whereby poor sinners of the Gentiles may have access to Christ, and to God in him, Acts xiv. 27. As Paul and Barnabas rehearsed it as glad tidings to the church, that *God had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles*, so we Gentile sinners should gladly receive the news. Glory to God in the highest for opening this door of faith, and keeping it still open to perishing sinners.

Come then, O Gentile sinner, enter in by this door to the ark, and lodge thy soul within it, that thou mayest be safe from the flood of wrath that is coming upon the ungodly world. God forbid you be found hovering without the ark, until the flood come and wash you off from the very side of it. O how dismal and cutting will the thought be to you through all eternity, that you were so near Christ, and within a step of the ark, and sometimes touching it, and yet never entered into it ! How sad will it be to perish, like the thief upon the cross, with a Saviour at your side, and to sink into hell betwixt the arms of mercy stretched forth to save you ! Now, poor soul, the ark is near you, flee to it with speed ; behold, for your encouragement, there is a window opened at the side of the ark, and mercy's hand is put forth to take in shelterless doves who come to it. Now is the time to bestir yourselves, to come into the ark without delay, and so prevent your perishing in the flood for ever.

Q. What shall I do to get into the ark, *viz.* a crucified Jesus ?

A. 1. Be like Noah's dove, which he sent forth, see that you find no rest for the soul of your foot any where else ; turn your back upon all other arks of man's devising, they are all insufficient to save you from the flood : Make not an ark of the absolute mercy of God out of Christ, seeing he declares a crucified Jesus to be the only channel of his mercy.— Make not an ark of church privileges, as your good education, admission to sealing ordinances, &c. for the ark did not save Shiloh, nor the altar's horns save Joab, nor the temple save Jerusalem. Make not an ark of your gifts, knowledge, prayers, duties, moral honesty, or self-righteousness, for the flood, when it comes, will dash all these in pieces. Suppose those of the old world had built other ships as like the ark as possible, or had fled to high towers of their own contriving, the deluge would have destroyed them all ; there was no safety for them but in Noah's ark alone. So whatever arks you devise to save you from wrath, if a crucified Christ, the ark of God's building, be slighted, the flood will sweep away all your own arks, as the *refuge of lies*, Isa. xxviii. 17.

2. Labour to be thoroughly convinced of your misery while out of the ark ; and in a deep sense of your necessity of getting into it, break presently over all the bars and hindrances which the devil casts into your way to stop your entry into the ark, as unbelief, sinful pleasures, worldly cares, presumptuous hopes, carnal company, diversions, &c. break resolutely through all these to the ark, as David's three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines to the well of Bethlehem ; surely your arguments for so doing are far stronger than theirs.

3. Approve heartily the whole contrivance of God's ark in all its rooms and stories : Approve Christ crucified in his

person, natures, offices, and relations, in his state of humiliation and exaltation : Accept of him in them all, subscribe to the whole new covenant scheme, as a device worthy of God and of infinite wisdom ; consent to the great end and design of it, namely, that self be debased, and free grace eternally magnified.

4. Be frequently essaying faith's flight into the ark, and to the window in the side of it ; make earnest mints, like Noah's restless dove, to get in ; say oft, like David, Psal. lv. 6. "*O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away, and be at rest.*" I would hasten my escape from the flood, and lodge my soul this minute in one of the rooms of the ark. Believing is a work you should be often essaying, and though you cannot believe with saving faith, yet believe as you can, looking to God for more strength. You cannot pray, praise, or sanctify the Sabbath aright, yet you aim at these duties as you can ; so, in like manner, make honest mints at believing and flying to Christ ; and aim, in his strength, to apply his blood, every man to his own soul in particular, by an appropriating faith (corresponding to the free gospel-offer) and taking home the remedy as his own ; depending still upon the Spirit's grace, who will not fail those who trust in him, but assist them in making saving application.

5. Be willing to part with every thing that would compete with God's ark, however specious or plausible a shew it may have. Renounce the old covenant, and all lurking places about mount Sinai, for in none of these you can find safety.— Abhor your own righteousness for an ark, whatever shape it may appear in, and embrace him alone for it, who is *the Lord our Righteousness*. His Righteousness only is spotless, perfect, and law-biding.

6. Make a surrender of yourself, and all you have, to Jesus Christ, to be disposed of by him as he pleaseth : Be willing to suffer the loss of all things for him, yea, count all things loss and dung that you may win to the ark, and be found therein when the flood cometh.

ADVICE II.

From Rev. iii. 20. Behold I stand at the door and knock.

LOST sinner, I bring you good tidings ; the eternal Son of God hath undertaken a long journey, and endured great sufferings to purchase salvation for thee ! A dear purchase it is, dear hath it cost him to obtain it ! and now he hath brought it the length of thy door, and there, O man, Christ is standing knocking, and saying, *This day salvation is come to this house-door*, open and take it in. Now, can you refuse, O sinner, to take in Christ's purchased salvation ; when Christ

hath come with it to thy very door, even the door of thy heart? Behold he stands at it, and knocks for entrance! Open, open, &c.

The arguments for your opening are strong and many :

1. Consider at whose door Christ doth stand, even at the door of a creature infinitely below him. Oh, it is at a beggar's door, that hath nothing to entertain Christ with when he enters ! yet saith he, Open to me, and I will bring in provision with me, and make thee a rich feast. It is at the door of a poor Lazarus, that is all full of ulcers and sores ; yet, saith Christ, Open and I will bring in the balm of Gilead, a plaister of my blood for healing all your sores, and for as costly as it is, it shall cost you nothing. It is even at the door of an enemy, a mortal enemy, that Christ stands ; you have spoken ill of him, thought ill of him, and done ill to him ; you have affronted him, wounded him, and lodged his traitors and murderers ; yet, saith Christ, Open, and hearken to the offers and terms of reconciliation which I have purchased for you with my blood ; they are most surprizing and safe, easy and honourable. It is at the door of Satan's slaves that Christ stands, those who have been long drudging at his work and feeding upon his husks ; yet, saith Christ, Open, open to me, and I will set you at liberty, and make you God's free men and children. Why then will you not open and receive him joyfully? O sinner, stand amazed at Christ's condescending goodness, in standing at the door of such a smoky cottage, so ill swept, and out of order ! Good reason have you to cry out, *Lord, I am not worthy thou shouldst come under my roof* ; but, seeing thou humblest thyself to visit the unworthy in such a manner, come in, and but speak the word, and the house shall be cleansed, diseases healed, grievances redressed, and the soul made happy. It is highly your interest then to open the door, and welcome in your Saviour, who stands and knocks for access.

2. Again, consider who it is that stands at your door :— It is even the King of Glory, a King of infinite power and majesty ! And will ye not lift up the gates of your souls to this king ! Were it but an earthly king that knocked at your door, you would soon open and receive him, yea, count it a great honour that you had such a person in your house ; but, what are clay kings to *the King of Glory* ? To *the Prince of the kings of the earth* ? To *our great Emmanuel, the glorious Plant of renown*, the Head of the elect world ?— Who then would not cast the gates wide open to such a glorious King ?—Again, he is *the everlasting Father*, and the Father of all believers, that stands and knocks ! A Father full of pity, that follows after his prodigal children and invites them to return to him ! And will not a child open the door to his father ? Can you find in your heart to keep your compassionate Father, standing at your door ?—*Nay, fur-*

ther, it is your husband that knocks, a loving husband, that hath suffered much more for your cause: And will not an affectionate spouse open and let in her husband?—Moreover, it is your physician that knocks, who brings healing medicines for all your diseases, by which he hath cured many thousands, before now! And will not a sick and dying man let in such a physician? Open, O sinner, why will you die.

3. Consider Christ's patience and long suffering at your door, he doth not knock and then go away as one indifferent whether you open or not; no, he knocks and stands still; he stands and knocks again, and that after many repulses! No beggar wanting an alms would stand so long at our doors, as Christ stands at a beggar's door, not seeking to take from him, but wanting to give unto him.—O wonder at his goodness and long patience! Behold he that hath a throne of glory to sit upon, and ten thousand times ten thousand to bow before him, is willing, O sinner, to stand at thy door! yea, he stands whilst thou dost lie in the bosom of thy lust. He stands without, whilst his enemies are let in and allowed to possess the best seats!—He stands at the door, while Satan is let in, and gets the easy chair? O wonderful patience!—That Christ after so many affronts and repulses, and after seeing enemies preferred before him, should continue to stand at your door and knock! But, O sinner, do not try his patience too much, nor provoke him too long; for, observe the text, he now stands, he is on his feet ready to go away; the knock will be given that will prove the last, and thou knowest not but the present knock may be it, do not then delay to open one moment longer.

4. Consider Christ's earnest desire to be let into your heart. He not only stands at the door, but he knocks: yea, knocks loud and knocks often, to convince you of his earnestness. Many a loud knock doth he give, by his calls and invitations in his word, *Come unto me, open unto me, look unto me*. Many a knock gives he by his promises to you, I will come in, I will sup with you, I will ease you, heal you, enlighten you, manifest myself to you, &c.—Many a knock gives he by his threatenings of wrath and vengeance against those who shut their doors against him. Many a knock gives he by your own conscience, and by his own Spirit, raising convictions, inclinations, desires and purposes within your heart, to bring you to a Saviour. And many a rap and knock doth he give at your door on sacrament occasions.—Then it is he knocks aloud with his nailed hands and pierced feet, and stands at your door with his wounds open, his blood streaming, and his garments died with blood: And all this to shew his earnestness to be let into your heart.—Open then to Christ, O sinner, while he is knocking; be assured he will not knock always; this may possibly be the last day of the Spirit's knocks and strivings with thee: so that if you refuse

to open at this present knock, God may strike you dead and senseless all your life, clap a seal on the door that it shall never open; you may hear ministers knock after this, but never hear God's Spirit knock again; and, *Wouunto you if he depart from you.* Remember, O man, for as many knocks as God gives at your door, he keeps an exact account of them all, and will reckon them up all at the judgment-seat. And can you think he will open heaven to you then, who will not open your heart to him now! No, no, his ear will be as deaf to you hereafter, as yours is to him now. Read and believe that terrible word, Prov. i. 24, &c.

ADVICE III.

From Rev. iii. 20. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him.

GREAT and precious are the promises which Christ makes to them who hearken to his voice in the gospel-offers, and open their hearts to receive him, as offered to them in all his offices; I will come in, and bring all the benefits of my purchase with me, to entertain and feast that soul, even pardon, peace, light, life, grace, and glory.

1. Observe, the duty called for, is to hear Christ's voice, and open the door to him, that is, to accept and embrace his free gospel-offers, and heartily to acquiesce in the gospel-method of a sinner's reconciliation and justification through the righteousness of our glorious EMMANUEL, and willingly receive and submit to him as our prophet, priest, and king. What is the preaching of the gospel, but Christ's charming voice calling lost sinners home to himself?—What is it, but Christ's following them with invitations and intreaties to come to him and live? 'This is Christ's voice which he would have sinners to hear, come and live: though they generally refuse to do it' Oh, what condemned malefactor would refuse to hear the voice of his sovereign offering him his life, as condemned sinners do? John v. 40. *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.* Yet behold, after many refusals, he follows his offers with arguments, strong arguments to prevail with sinners, and after the greatest obstinacy he is loth to break off his treaty with them, Hos. xi. 8. *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? Why will ye die? What reason can you give for refusing life, or for choosing death?*

2. Observe, who it is that Christ calls to hear his voice, and open their doors to him; it is not this or that man only, or any particular sort of men; it is *any man*, every one that sits under the gospel. *If any man will hear my voice, and open the door, saith Christ, I will come in. If any will open, be he old man or young man, I will come in.* If the greatest

sinner, the most crimson-coloured sinner will open, *I will come in.* *Any man*; if the swearer will open, if the sabbath-breaker, if the murderer, if the drunkard, if the unclean, if the thief, if the cheat, if the liar, if the mocker, if the prayerless man, if the man that hates God and godliness will open to me, *I will come in and sup with him.* O what encouragement doth this word, *If any man*, give to every sinner to fly to Christ! If any man, whoever he be, whatever he hath done, if he will welcome me, receive me in the gospel-offers, I will come in to him.

3. Observe, Christ requires sinners to open the door, that he may come in to teach them; however unable they be, this is their duty, they must mint, and use all means to do it, and look up to him for strength. He will have the sinner's consent, and the soul made willing to receive him. O then cast open the door, open it wide, receive Christ wholly, receive him without reserve, open before him the two-leaved gates, not the wicket, or one leaf only, but both leaves of the door. Let Christ have the full and free consent of the soul, and abundant entrance into it. There are some resolving to open the door to Christ, others, perhaps, are beginning to open it: O let them not halt in doing. With some the door is half open, and there they stop. They are almost, but not altogether, Christians. O almost Christians, why do you halt? Why would you lose all the pains you have been at? A little more would cast the door wide open, and make you an altogether Christian. Go then a little further, O sinner, to save your soul. Open to Christ all the powers and faculties of your soul. Open to him fully here, as you would have him to open freely to you hereafter. Oh, what mean you to open to Christ only by halves! the half open door will be ready to go to again; and, alas! if so, it may never open for the future. Let it be your concern then to go a little further than the almost Christian, and rest not in fair beginnings.

4. Observe, how great the advantage is of opening the door to Christ? Why? I will come in to the house, saith he, even the friend of sinners, the King of Glory will come in, the best guest that ever came in to a poor man's house: How honourable, how profitable, how happy and blessed must such a visit be!—Q. For what end will Christ come in? A. He will come in to enlighten the house: for the soul is a dark dungeon while Christ is shut out. He will come in to adorn and enrich the soul with the ornaments and treasures of his grace; he will come in to reign in the soul, and pull down the tyrant that hath long opprest you. As in the text, he will come in and sup with you, and cause you to sup with him: And because you have no fitting provision in the house, he will bring it with him. And O how rare are Christ's dainties, his hidden manna, the fruits of the tree of

life, the grapes of Canaan, the bread that comes down from heaven! How excellent is the water of life? One drop of it would be an everlasting spring in thy soul, that would keep thee from thirsting after the creature any more. What a rich feast are the graces of the Spirit quickened to a lively exercise! What blessed feast is pardon of sin, peace with justice, peace with the law, an interest in Christ's purchase, intimations of Christ's love, gospel-promises applied, communion with God, views of eternal life, well grounded hopes of immortal glory! &c. Oh how precious and delicate are these gospel rarities which are set before you on the communion table, and freely tendered to every one that opens the door to Christ! Who would not welcome such a guest that brings such glorious provision with him? Had poor sinners spiritual appetites sharpened for Christ's feast, there would not be so many shut doors against him.

5. Observe how solemnly Christ offers these gospel-blessings to you, with a *Behold I stand*, &c. Christ takes witnesses upon it, witnesses against the refusers: Behold ye angels, and witness for me how kind and bountiful my offers are to Adam's rebellious children! Behold, ye ministers, and witness against those who shut me out. Behold, ye stones and timber of the house, ye elements and communion tables, bear witness for me and against them! Behold, ye fellow communicants and hearers, bear witness one against another, that I knocked, I called, I knocked loud, I knocked long, but ye kept your doors bolted against me. It is a melancholy thought for those who are ministers to entertain, that they will one day be brought in as witnesses against those who shut out their Saviour; but when called, they must witness against such, though never so dear to them now, that Christ called, but they refused; he made kind and large offers, but they regarded them not. O then let every soul set about sweeping and washing all the rooms, and cast open all the doors as wide as they can, to the King of Glory, and receive him with acclamation and praise. Take the crown off the head of self, and put it on the head of Christ, ascribing all the glory of your salvation to him, and nothing to free-will or your own doings.

ADVICE IV.

From Prov. ix. 5. Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine, &c.

CHRIST is the wisdom of God, who hath made rich provision for entertaining his people, and hath set it before them in the ordinance of the Lord's supper, even Christ crucified, with all the fruits of his purchase. *His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed.* The fruits we feast upon are *pardon and peace, righteousness and grace, the*

assurance of God's love, the consolations of his Spirit, the promises of the gospel, and all the earnest and pledges of eternal life. To this feast starving souls are invited, to feed by faith upon these provisions Christ hath prepared for them, applying them to themselves, and taking the comfort of them.

Bread and wine are chosen as fit resemblances of his spiritual feast. As bread and wine serve to preserve our natural life, and to strengthen and cheer us when weak or fainting; so Christ crucified, apprehended by faith, preserves our spiritual life, and procures eternal life, strengthens weak believers, and cheers drooping souls. As bread and wine incorporate with our bodies, so Christ by his Spirit dwells in us, and we by faith and love dwell in him.—As bread and wine satisfy our hunger and thirst, so those, who by faith lay hold and partake of Christ's flesh and blood, shall no more hunger or thirst after earthly things. Bread is the most necessary thing in the world, hence called the staff of life, it upholds our lives; so Christ is the mercy of mercies, the most useful and necessary blessing to preserve our starving souls. Christ is the staff of life indeed to believing communicants, a staff that supports you, a staff that defends you, a staff that will beat off all your enemies: If you will take hold of this staff by faith, it will rout and put all your foes to flight. There is no bread like this! *I am the bread of life,* saith Christ.

We read, Judges vii. 13. of a dream of one of the Midianitish host; he dreamed, when Gideon was coming upon them, that a cake of barley bread came tumbling into the host of Midian, and smote a tent that it fell to the ground.—Strange! a piece of bread overturn a tent! Behold the interpretation of that dream in the holy sacrament! Here is a piece of bread, if eaten by faith, that will invade the Midianitish host of the devil, and the lusts of the flesh, strike down all their tents, and put them to flight. Come then, eat of this bread believingly, and take faith's view of Christ's body represented by it, as bruised and broken by your sins; this will weaken their power, and turn your heart against them, and make you resolve that these enemies of Christ shall not live in your soul. If the sight of Cæsar's bloody robe incensed the Romans against the murderers who slew him, much more a sight of Christ's wounds and bruises in the sacrament, should excite you to hate and kill sin, and revenge Christ's death upon this cruel murderer.

Again, would you have strength for your wilderness journey, and for the temptations and trials you meet with, before you have occasion of another sacrament? come, eat of this bread that strengtheneth the hearts of men. Here is food more substantial, durable, and nourishing, than Elijah's cake baken on the coals, and his cruse of water provided for him

by the angel ; and yet it is said, he *went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights*, until he came to Horeb, the mount of God, 1 Kings xix. 7, 8. There we find Elijah twice wakened by the angel, that he might take a double meal : *Arise and eat, for thy journey is long* : So God may be saying to thee, O Christian traveller, arise and eat ; awake, O faith, awake, O spiritual appetite, thy journey may be long : take a good meal, you know not what hills you have to climb, what winds and storms may blow in thy face, before another occasion of this sort : Satan's storm may blow, and death's storm may blow, so that you may not see another table like this, till you come to the mount of God above. This is the same bread the glorified saints do feed on in heaven. Christ is the manna that came down from heaven to feed perishing souls. The Israelites' manna was a type of Christ, and hence called spiritual bread, 1 Cor. x. 4.

The manna was freely given to them, and fell every morning round their tents, and all of them were at freedom to gather it, and there was enough for the whole camp ; so Christ is God's free gift, and in him is fulness of grace for the whole believing world, and every gospel hearer is free to gather it, though indeed the morning of our lives is the most proper gathering time. There was a memorial of this manna preserved in the ark ; so is there of Christ in the Lord's supper, as the food of our souls. Manna was ground in a mill, or beaten in a mortar, and baked in an oven, before it was fit for food ; so Christ was bruised and ground by his sufferings, and scorched in the fiery oven of his Father's wrath, that he might become a fit Saviour and fit food for our souls.

But Christ crucified infinitely excels the Israelites' manna : theirs was peculiar to themselves, but Christ is free to both Jews and Gentiles ; theirs ceased when they came to Canaan, but ours continues for ever, and is enjoyed most fully in the Canaan above ; theirs only preserved a natural life, but ours gives a spiritual and eternal life. O come then, eat of this heavenly bread, when set before you in plenty, with hunger and desire, blessing God for it, saying, *Lord, evermore give us this bread* : Come, with spiritual appetites and purified hearts. The Israelites' manna was laid up in the ark, and kept in a pure golden pot, to teach you to cleanse your hearts from sin and corruption, that they may be fit to lodge Jesus Christ, our heavenly manna. If the vessels which contain the sacramental bread were foul or polluted, you would censure it as most indecent ; but much more unbecoming is it, to receive Christ into a foul heart.

Come to this table with humility, and a deep sense of your ill deservings, acknowledging, that the least crumb of this bread, will be a great mercy to such an unworthy creature !

Truth, Lord, I am a dog, vile and polluted, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the children's table! May I plead for a crumb for thy free mercy's sake. Oh, I am unworthy of the common bread that is set upon my own table, much more of the heavenly bread that is set upon thine! Instead of bread thou mayest give a stone; instead of a smile, a frown; instead of the cup of the New Testament, thou mayest put a cup of wrath and trembling in my hand: But thy free grace and large offers, encourage me to wait and hope, that the needy shall not be forgotten, and the expectation of the poor shall not perish.

Come with a lively faith to receive and eat, not only of the bread of life, but also to receive the bread, the Lord, your Emmanuel in person, and make use of him in all his offices. Come eat with love and thankfulness, to him that was willing to be beaten, bruised, ground, and scorched, that he might be bread for nourishing of starving souls. Receive this bread of heaven thankfully as a distinguishing blessing, which is not granted to all indifferently; for as God rained down manna from heaven upon the Israelites, so he rained down fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

ADVICE V.

From Gen. xlv. 4.—Come near to me, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold.—

JOSEPH was an eminent type of Christ; though he was hated, sold, and cruelly used by his brethren, yet he still loved them, forgave them, and laid out himself for their preservation and happiness. Though Christ be Lord of heaven and earth; yet, O believing communicants, he owns himself as your brother, *bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh*; nay, he is not ashamed to call you brethren. *Go tell my brethren*, said he, to Mary, Matth. xxviii. 10. Though you be mean and low, and Christ highly raised, yet his exaltation doth not cause him forget his poor friends below; he still owns them as his brethren. He is, indeed, the elder brother, and heir of all things, yet he is pleased to adopt his younger brethren into his right, and make them joint heirs with him of the inheritance above. As Joseph was most condescending to his poor brethren, though he was lord over all the land; so is Christ. As they did not know Joseph, until he told them, *I am Joseph your brother*; so neither do we know Christ, until he discover himself to us. As Joseph seemed to deal roughly with his brethren at first, to make them remember the injuries they did him; yet in the mean time he loved them, gave them food, and afterwards spoke kindly to them: So Christ at first takes ways to humble his

people, and make them sensible of their sin; yet at the same time he secretly supports them, and at length brings in consolation to them, saying, *I am Jesus your brother; it is I, be not afraid.* Come near to me, said Joseph, in a kind and familiar way to his brethren; so Christ saith to you, draw near to me with a sincere heart, and I will manifest myself unto you, as a loving brother.

But if you would have the gracious intimations of his favour, you must first be humbled for the wrongs you have done him. You have dealt treacherously and inhumanly with Christ, as Jacob's sons did with their brother Joseph! These sold their brother for twenty pieces of silver; but, ah! have not some of you sold Jesus, your brother, for less, even for some vile lust or filthy pleasure? Nay, have you not murdered him by your sins? As Cain slew his innocent brother openly in the field; so your sins have openly nailed Jesus to the cross, in the fields without Jerusalem, and shed his blood like water on the ground. O how can you answer for such horrid cruelty to your innocent brother? How can you look him in the face, after all you have done against him? What feeling have you of the injuries you have done him? Are you deeply humbled, and heartily grieved for them? Then I have good news to tell you, you have to do with a most loving and forgiving brother; though you have betrayed him, sold him, wounded him, murdered him, yet he is willing to forget and forgive all to the humble penitent: *Come near to me*, saith he, *I am Joseph your brother*; stand not at a distance, but come near me by faith and prayer, embrace me in the sacrament, and I will give you a sealed pardon of all your crimes; I will give you all the good things of the land, far excelling the richest fruits of Egypt, even my own body and blood, with all the spiritual and eternal blessings purchased thereby.

Object. But alas! I have dealt so basely and treacherously with my brother Joseph, I have no confidence to go and meet him, I am afraid he will frown on me. *Ans.* He has indeed good ground to do it, but he is full of bowels, tenderness, and pity to penitents, and most ready to forgive. Let me advise you to imitate Jacob when going to meet his brother Esau, whose wrath he very much dreaded: He carried presents along with him to his brother. In like manner do you take presents along with you, such as, 1. A broken, contrite, and humbled heart; *a broken heart he will not despise.*—2. Take faith with you, and the stronger it is, it will be the more agreeable present to Christ; put a firm trust and confidence in his blood and bowels, bode and threap kindness on him, like the woman of Canaan, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog*; but dog as I am, I may plead for a crumb, seeing thy faithful word warrants me to do it; this present from that poor creature was so acceptable to Christ, that he immediately answered, *O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt,*

Matth. xv. 28.—3. Take with you a firm purpose and resolution, in the strength of your brother, not to betray or wound him any more, and seal a covenant with him upon these terms.—4. Take with you a sincere heart and purpose of imitating your brother, and studying conformity to him. *Learn of me*, saith he, *for I am meek and lowly in heart*. These presents would be most acceptable to your grieved and offended brother. But seeing you have nothing of your own, cry, Lord, give them first to me, and I will offer them unto thee.

What condescension is this, that CHRIST, the King of kings, should say to all believers, *Ye are my brethren and sisters*: Who would not desire to stand in this honourable relation to an earthly king, and far more the King of Glory! Would ye have him then for our brother to own us, succour and sympathise with us in all our troubles, let us forthwith embrace and close with him by faith, as he is tendered to us in the rich, large, and free offers of the gospel, and then the relation is presently made up. O how inviting and alluring is that word, *I am Jesus your brother*! It should conquer the most stubborn will, and make every unbelieving heart to receive him like Thomas, and say, *My Lord and my God*.

Let every believer in distress come like the bee, and suck honey from this flower, *I am JESUS, your brother*; *Be not afraid, it is I*. Do not mistake me for an enemy in any of my dealings with you; it is I, your brother, that means you no harm. It is I that loves you, and laid down my life for you; it is I, who by my blood purchased and sanctified afflictions to you, to work for your good. It is I that doth all things well, and hath infinite wisdom and love to order and direct every dispensation for your interest and benefit. It was I that sweated blood for you in the garden, was spit upon and buffeted in the high priest's hall, and nailed for you to the cross, and all to purchase eternal happiness and glory for my afflicted brethren. *I am JESUS your brother, Behold my hands and my feet*. It is I that died and rose again for you, and have ascended to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God; and have gone up to prepare a place for you. It is I that sit at the helm, and have all power given to me. It is I that am faithful and true, I have the same tender heart and yearning bowels for you I had on earth. It is I that never failed any that trusted in me. It is Jesus your brother, who am still the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Be not afraid in troubles, it is I your dear friend and brother; come near to me in the daily exercise of faith. Come near and close to me at my table, and take a narrow look to my five big wounds, and draw consolation from them. Behold the two wounds in my hands, and the two wounds in my feet, which were made to bring you back from hell to heaven. Behold a fifth wound in my side, and look into my heart, and see it panting with love, and do not question your brother's love to you any more.

ADVICE VI.

From Matth. xxii. 2. A certain king made a marriage for his son.

THE gospel-covenant, or covenant of grace, is a marriage covenant betwixt Christ and believers; a surprising marriage this is, and yet a marriage of God's making. Wonderful! The great God is content to give his dear Son in marriage to fallen Adam's daughter, that was become a slave to the devil! Yea, he hath drawn up the contract, and all the articles of it. Christ the bridegroom hath cheerfully subscribed the contract, he dipt the pen in his own blood on the cross, and put his hand to it in the view of God, angels, men, and all the world. Now the bridegroom wants your consent to the marriage-contract, and he hath long been courting you to subscribe it: Some of you have often been purposing to do it; yea, taken the pen in your hand; but, upon some small temptation, have stopt and thrown by the pen. This day Christ hath set a tryst with you to conclude the bargain, and his ambassadors are come, in his name, to spread the contract before you with all its articles. Well then, *Will you go with this man?* Will you put your hand to the contract?

O sinners, you have no reason to be shy in this matter, you have nothing to be vain of, you are mean born, of low extract; you are loathsome lepers, you are deformed, black, and have no beauty; you are cripples, cannot walk, unless Christ lift you; you are drowned in debt, many old scores hath Christ to clear for you, if he match with you. O, who could make love to such a wretched creature. Yet, behold, here is one that is fairer than the sons of men, of the blood-royal of heaven, the heir of all things, courting you. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this match! One infinitely rich with a beggar, the heir of heaven with the heir of hell, the beauty of heaven and earth with a deformed negro! But if the bridegroom be content, why should you stick? Can you give any reason for your refusal or delay? Now the God of heaven is setting tryst with you to conclude this blessed bargain with you at his table, and calling you there to sign and seal a marriage contract with his Son, and that before all the persons of the glorious Trinity, before the elect angels, before Christ's ambassadors, and before all the congregation, witnesses thereto. There have been many meetings heretofore, about this grand affair, to no effect: The world, Satan, and the flesh have formerly broke off the treaty; forbid it, Lord, that they do it this day. O, that the long spoke-of match, betwixt a crucified JESUS and lost souls, may hold at last. This may be the last tryst, the last offer Christ will make; it may be now or never with you. Lay your hand to your heart then, and consider well before you refuse.

Come, take another view of this beautiful bridegroom, that is in your offer. Behold how delicate his complexion is, *He is white and ruddy*; white, in regard of his innocence, ruddy in his bloody passion. O how peerless is his person! how ravishing his beauty! how charming his voice! how stately his goings! how fragrant his garments! They smell of aloes, myrrh, and cassia! Search all the world, you cannot find his equal. One glimpse of him is enough to ravish men and angels: *His locks are black and bushy as the raven, his lips are like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh; his legs as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold; his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; yea, he is altogether lovely!* Now, can you refuse such a lovely person, especially when you think he loved you, so as to suffer a cruel and bloody death for you, and to send his portraiture with the marks of his wounds to be put in your hands at his holy table, and all to win your heart! Come view, and remember the many wounds he received from you, by the thorns which pierced his head, by the pincers that plucked his hair, by the scourges that tore his back, by the nails that pierced his hands and feet, and by the spear that opened his side! Surely these wounds do not mar his beauty to the eye of faith; nay, though he be all over wounded, mangled, and bleeding, yet to a believer he is still *white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand, fairer than all the sons men, nay, and all the sons of God too.*

Certainly the bridegroom must be in earnest, when he comes in his marriage robes to win backward hearts; when he puts on his dyed garments, and is red in his apparel: when he displays his glory, brings the marriage contract in his hand, spreads it on the communion table, and calls all who love him to sign it. O that many were made willing in a day of his power, to go into all the articles of this marriage covenant, saying, My heart is now content to go with the man Christ, that wonderful man; I consent to all his terms, he is *my Lord, and my God; my glorious Emanuel; my beloved is mine; and I am his.*—Quest. I would know particularly what he requires on my part of the contract, that I may distinctly close with him? Ans. He would have you, 1. Convinced of your sinking and perishing state, while you stand upon the old bottom of a covenant of works, and willing to leave it, and leap from it, and cleave to a covenant of grace, and a borrowed righteousness, for all the ground of your hope. 2. He would have you humbled and grieved for your long slighting his kind offers by your unbelief, and for your preferring Satan's drudgery to his service. 3. Give up with all other lovers, and those that would rival it with Christ, such as sin, the world, and the law; self-righteousness must be renounced and parted with; you must break league with all Christ's enemies. 4. Accept of Jesus Christ as your husband, receive

him in all his offices, rest and depend on him alone for righteousness, strength, and salvation. 5. Give away yourselves, soul and body to Christ, resign your will to his will, and surrender all you have to his disposal. 6. Resolve and vow, in Christ's strength, to crucify sin, and walk with him in all the ways of new obedience. 7. Engage to be true and faithful to your husband, and never to retract. 8. Keep up the remembrance of your husband's coming at the last day, to solemnize the marriage and take you home to himself; and be always in readiness to go forth to meet him. The bridegroom is ready long since, and will soon rend these clouds to meet you in the air, and send his angels to bring you up to him: *Therefore, be ye also ready.*

O why doth he delay his coming? What stops the wheels of his chariot? Surely it is not because he is unready, but because you are not ready. All the elect are not yet brought in to him, and he is determined not to want one of them. O then be providing for the marriage day all proper furniture, robes, jewels, rings, and ornaments, against the time that Christ and you take up house together in heaven. Be sure to go to Christ for every bit of your plenishing, for righteousness, and for all the graces of the Spirit.—In the mean time, take home with you the marriage contract, the precious promises which Christ hath subscribed with his blood. Be often looking into it, and viewing your bridegroom's hand-writ and engagement. His writing is fair and beautiful; let not Satan or unbelief cast blots upon it to deface it; keep it fair and legible, and draw all your comforts from it; your husband is faithful, and will keep his word.

ADVICE VII.

From Lam. i. 12. Behold and see, the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.

WITH far better ground may Christ make use of these words of his church, and call us to behold his sufferings for us under the fierce anger of God, in the day when *it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief* in our stead, Isa. liii. 10. Many things did he suffer from men and devils; but his afflictions and bruises from the immediate hand of God, taking vengeance for the elect's sins, were far more heavy. His soul-sufferings were the most afflicting of all others. Let every communicant behold, see, and consider these with suitable affections.

Behold not only the buffetings, scourgings, woundings, and cruel mockings your lovely Jesus endured from men, the instruments of God's justice, but especially what he suffered in his soul by the desertion or dereliction of God the Father, whereby the gracious influences and comforts from the divine

to the human nature of Christ were suspended for a time, and a black cloud of wrath overwhelmed him, so that no light appeared to him; which made him cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*—Nay at this time he had a torrent of wrath flowing in upon his soul, and the most dreadful impressions of his Father's anger, and the law's curse, which fell upon him for man's sin, when he was made a curse for us, that it cast him into a fit of sore amazement, consternation, and terrible agony, and into a sweat of blood. The fire of wrath raging in his soul affected his body so, that it dried up his strength and moisture as a potsherd, and made his tongue cleave to his jaws. He held his peace under all his sufferings from men, and opened not his mouth: but when God's immediate wrath fell heavily on him, then he cried out. It is said, *He put up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears*, Heb. v. 7. Yet God would not spare him, nor abate him one stripe or farthing of the debt; let him cry never so loud, justice was inexorable; he must satisfy to the full.

O! can you see the great EMMANUEL substitute in your room or stead; God acting against him as an inexorable judge; JEHOVAH running upon him as a giant; not only withdrawing his countenance, and all feeling of his love and kindness from him, but making him the butt of his envenomed arrows, and not be filled with admiration at Christ's love, and sorrow for your sins, which brought such a storm of wrath upon him! — O how sad were the bruises! how deep were the wounds! how wide the gashes! and how heavy the blows he got from the sword of justice for our sins? The sword was not dull or sleepy, but furbished and awakened by justice to the execution.—O how heavy were the blows our Surety got from this awakened sword in the garden of Gethsemane, which made his *soul exceeding sorrowful*, and put him in a dreadful agony and bloody sweat!—Behold and see how patiently he drank the bitter cup of God's wrath for you, *the poison whereof drank up his spirits*, and made his blood to boil in his veins, and burst through his body, clothes and all! He sweated without any outward fire or heat, and bled without any external wound!—Behold his garments dyed red, and the ground and grass where he lay all bedewed with his precious blood!—behold him broken with breach upon breach, till all the sea billows of divine vengeance went over him, so that he fell to the ground, was covered with blood and overwhelmed with wrath! Behold and see, if there be any sorrow like his sorrows!

It is said, Mark xiv. 33. *He began to be sore amazed and very heavy!* Which shews what a load and pressure of wrath his soul lay under, that put him in an agony that still increased more and more, like the waters in Ezekiel's vision, still deeper and deeper, from the ancles to the knees, till they became

waters to swim in ; yea, swelled into an ocean that would have overwhelmed the whole elect world. Into this ocean our blessed Jonah was willing to be thrown for our sake, and in it he continued to swim until he brought every elect soul safe ashore. —It is recorded of Abraham, when offering his sacrifice, Gen. xv. 12. *That in the evening, lo ! an horror of great darkness fell upon him.* This was verified much more of Christ in the evening before his passion in the garden : There a terrible horror of great darkness fell upon Christ's soul, which made him exceeding heavy and sore amazed, at the prospect of the sea of wrath that was coming rolling upon him, while the Father was hiding his face from him. O how great was the anguish of Christ's mind at this time, when he found himself pressed and bruised betwixt the millstones of God's justice and our sins ? Which pressure made him sweat without heat, and bleed without wound ! Ah ! the fire, the heat, the wounds were inward, even in his soul ! O communicants, behold and see Christ's sorrows for you, nothing can be more acceptable to Christ than often to meditate thereon with admiration and love. If any of you had lost a hand, or even a finger, in defending or rescuing your friend from an enemy, you would expect he would be ever mindful of the favour, and never forget you. But, O ! what is that to the sufferings of the SON of GOD for you ? He hath lost not a hand, but his heart's blood ; yea, the favour and countenance of God for you for a time. He left his glorious throne in heaven, and stooped to become a man, a poor man, a man of sorrows, a deserted man, and a dead man for you. Nay, he was willing to be made a curse for you, and to take on a dreadful load of wrath upon his innocent soul ; yea, infinitely more than any damned soul in hell can bear ; and to swim long in a sea of wrath, to save you from perishing in it. Let the surprising love of Christ fill your soul with wonder, and kindle a flame of love in your soul to him.

Again, meditate on Christ's sorrows, with deep sorrow for sin the cause thereof. Believe that amazing word, Isa. liii. 6. *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.* Let the sound of it never go out of your ears ; say, Oh ! my sins were the thorns which pierced his head, the nails which pierced his hands, and the spear which pierced his side. My cursed sins put the Lord of life to a cruel death, they wounded him more than all his other enemies. When my dear Lord was in the garden, no Judas, no Pilate, no Jew nor Centile was there, to cause his amazing horror of soul, and his fearful sweat of blood ; but, Oh ! my unbelief, my pride, my carnality, my hypocrisy, and other sins were there, and with their weight pressed him to the ground, and brought that agony and sweat upon him. Oh, that my head were waters, that I might weep a flood of tears for my sins.

Lastly, Abhor sin as the greatest evil, and never have slight thoughts of it any more ; can you behold your agonizing Saviour under a burden of wrath, and hear him complaining of the burning heat and thirst which the fire of justice created within him ! Can you see the great drops of blood standing above his garments ! Can you hear his cries and roarings under the bruises and anguish of his soul, and not be convinced of the evil and demerit of sin ! Can that sit light upon your soul, which sat so heavy upon Christ's soul ? O what desperate malignity must there be in that, which could not be expiated without such a costly sacrifice ! Look on them as fool who make a sport of sin, which cost the SON of GOD so much soul travail and inward horror : Never yield any more to the temptations of sin, which cost so dear before it could be forgiven.

ADVICE VIII.

From Matth. xxvi. 22. They were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one to say, Lord is it I ?

IT was a commendable exercise of Christ's disciples, before partaking of the holy supper, to be searching themselves, and looking inward with a holy suspicion upon their own hearts, especially when Christ had told them there was a traitor among them, and at the same time looking up to him that is omniscient, to assist them in the search, saying Lord, is it I ? Am I the traitor ? Will I betray my dear Lord and Saviour ? Ah ! every one of us have within us traitorous hearts to Jesus Christ, and have reason to suspect ourselves as they did, and acknowledge we have many enemies of Christ lodged in our bosoms, such as, unbelief, hypocrisy, pride, malice, envy, ambition, worldliness, atheism, wanderings from God, backwardness to duty, &c. by which we have betrayed Jesus Christ. And as the disciples when searching themselves, were exceeding sorrowful, so ought we before we partake ; and good reason have we for it, when we reflect upon our former guilt and treacherous dealing with God, and when we consider the present deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of our hearts, and that they are as ready to betray Christ as ever ; yea, that there is hypocrisy and treachery in our hearts against Christ, which we have not discovered. Upon all which accounts, we have ground with the disciples to be exceeding sorrowful.

Now is the time, O communicants, to search and examine yourselves, and to be exceeding sorrowful for the many traitorous wounds you have given Christ by breaking both tables of the law, and every command thereof, by sinning against light and conscience, against mercies and judgments, warnings and reproofs, confessions and prayers. By unthankful-

ness for redeeming love, neglecting gospel-offers, not loving and resting upon a crucified Jesus, not accounting all things loss and dung for him ; not delighting in attending his ordinances, and in remembering his love in the holy supper.—O how treacherous have your hearts been to Christ ! how blood-thirsty have your sins been against him, in pressing him down in the garden, in nailing him to the cursed tree ! How are you able to look to Gethsemane or Golgotha, with unconcerned hearts or dry eyes ! Were not your sins the principal actors in that horrid tragedy ? These, to be sure, were the traitors, which, by the hands of Judas, delivered up Jesus to be crucified : What were Pilate, the Jews, or Romans, but the executioners of your sins ? Who put the sword in justice's hands ? Who raised the tempest of wrath against your Surety ? Oh ! it was your sins. Blame none so much as them ; they were the Judas that betrayed him, the Herod that mocked him, the Pilate that condemned him, and the soldier that pierced him ; will you not then be exceeding sorrowful for your traitorous heart, and bloody sins ? Could they ever been guilty of a more horrid crime than murdering the Lord of Glory ? O shall the rocks about Jerusalem rend asunder, the earth tremble and shake, the sun veil its face, and the whole heaven put on a mourning habit, when Christ suffered for your sins ? And shall you, the criminals, who deserved all the punishment, stand unaffected ? O what stupid hearts must you have, if they do not mourn for your sins, which brought on such agonies upon the Son of God, before they could be expiated. Had you in your passion given a deadly wound to any poor innocent man, your heart would have bled for it all your days ; and will not your hearts much more relent for slaughtering the innocent Lamb of God ! One that never wronged you, but was always interposing for you, and doing you good !

Remember what David said to the Lord, when he saw the people destroyed for his sin, 2 Sam. xxiv. 17. *Lo, I have sinned and done wickedly, but as for these sheep, what have they done ?* In like manner, say you, Lord, I have sinned, I have done wickedly, but as for this spotless Lamb, what hath he done ? I have eaten the sour grapes, but his teeth were set on edge. O when will your hearts melt, and your eyes weep, if not now ? Never was there such a moving sight set before your eyes, as the Lord of Glory pierced and slain by your sins. Now it is, that *deep calleth unto deep*, deep sufferings in Christ for deep sorrow in thee.

O saith one, I desire to be grieved for my hypocrisy and treacherous dealing with Christ, and for sin that crucified him, but how shall I know if my sorrows be of the right sort ? Ans. Examine it by such marks as these :—1. Godly sorrow is accompanied with some view of the mercy of God in Christ, which supports the soul, and keeps it from despair.

Judas' sorrow, however deep it was, wanted this necessary ingredient.—2. If true, it will be universal, both for your own sins, and the sins of others: for the sins of the place where you live, and for those of the whole land.—3. If it be right sorrow it will bring you to consider the aggravations and heinous circumstances of your sins, as being against light, against love, and against solemn engagements and professions of friendship, so as to mourn and cry how traiterous hath my heart been to so kind a master!—4. It will produce these seven happy effects mentioned, 2 Cor. vii. 11. There it is said, godly sorrow for sin works,—1. Carefulness, that is, a care to recover peace with God for what is past, and to please God for the time to come, by amending what is amiss, and avoiding all temptations and occasions that lead to sin.—2. Clearing of yourselves, by mourning over the sins of other men, dissenting from them, and shewing your detestation of them.—3. Indignation against sin, as the abominable thing which God hates. The heart of a true penitent, rises, swells, and boils against sin. Then it is you are angry and sin not, when you are angry at sin, and at yourselves for sin.—4. Fear; the true penitent fears to offend God as he hath done; and that he may not do it, he nourishes a holy fear and awful impression of the holiness of God, and also a fear of holy jealousy and watchfulness over himself, lest sin surprise him at any time.—5. Vehement desire, to wit, after reconciliation with God through Christ, and after reformation of every thing amiss, and to be entirely rid of all sin. 6. Godly sorrow produceth zeal, which is an affection or grace compounded of love and anger, to wit, love to God and duty, and anger against sin, and every thing opposite to God.—7. Revenge, by seeking the utter extirpation of sin, by fasting, mortifying the flesh, and denying yourselves in some things lawful for a time. A good way to execute this revenge against sin, is for penitents to take frequent views of the deep and bloody wounds which sin hath given to your dear Redeemer. It is written of the emperor Julius Cæsar, that after he was murdered in the senate, they brought forth his robe all besmeared with his blood to the market place, exposed it to open view, in order to awaken his friends, to take revenge upon his enemies. This is surely one design of the holy sacrament to awaken your zeal against sin, which murdered the Lord of Glory. Lastly, Godly sorrow for sin, will drive you to Christ for help against sin: it will make you flee to Christ for deliverance from an ill heart, as well as from the wrath that sin deserveth: hence the Apostle cried, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Rom. vii. 24.

ADVICE IX.

From Heb. vi. 18. Who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

WE have here a two-fold description of true believers, which come to one :—1. They are such as have fled to Christ as the true city of refuge, to shelter them from avenging justice. 2. They are such as have by faith laid hold on Christ set before them in the gospel-promise, as their only hope of salvation.

Christ is our refuge city from the curses of the law which hang over us, from the avenger of blood, divine justice that pursues us, and from the devils which lie in wait for us.—The cities of refuge under the law were six, but under the gospel we have one better than them all. Theirs only protected the body from the wrath of man, but ours doth protect both soul and body, from the wrath of an angry God.—The way to it is made plain and patent, pillars are set up, Christ's ministers to direct sinners in the way to it. In this blessed city there is protection, instruction, provision, and fulness for all that flee to it. Here is all our hope of salvation, and it is in vain to hope for safety any where else. Now, communicants, this blessed hope is set before you ; come lay hold on it, and cleave fast to it. Now the city is set on a hill, the way to it prepared, and the gates open : The gospel-trumpet is sounded, and proclamation made, whosoever flies to the city, be his case what it will, shall in no wise be cast out.

Under the law he that saw his danger, and fled to the city of refuge, did firmly believe there was safety and security for him by public authority in that privileged place, if he could but get into it in time, before the avenger of blood did overtake him : Therefore he earnestly desired to be once within the gates of it, and for that end put forth his utmost vigour in running. He did not linger, halt, nor sit down by the way ; nor would he turn aside to any crooked by-path that might lead him about, but kept the straight and nearest way to the city, as the pillars set up directed him. No persuasion of any man could make him look or flee to any other city, castle, or hiding place for safety, but to the city authorised by law. In like manner let every convinced sinner, learn from this to flee to Jesus Christ our safety from wrath, as the only refuge appointed by God for him. Look, desire, and pant earnestly to be within the gates. O sinner, run with speed, now the gates are wide open in the word, and in the sacrament. Put forth your utmost vigour, and escape for your life : Do not linger nor delay, but flee as one that sees justice close at your heels. Avoid all other shelters and by-ways for relief ; away with carnal company, sinful pleasures,

worldly mirth or diversions: Nay, take no shelter in your own duties and performances; believe that none of these can screen or protect you from the sword of justice, and that none else can, but he who is *The Lord our righteousness*.

Of old, nothing could stop the man when flying to the city of refuge: Had his wife and children hung about him, or his own heart suggested to him, will you leave your house, your garden, land, relations, and many accommodations, and go to a strange city and spend your days? He would have flung them all from him, and taken flight, saying to wife and children, better part with all things than part with my life; if you will not follow me, I must leave you all behind. So let awakened souls flee with speed and resolution to Jesus Christ; say to the world's profits, sins, pleasures, Satan's allurements, and whatever would tempt you to stay behind, *Get you hence*, away with every thing that would hinder me from Christ. My Saviour and my soul are more precious to me than all the world; take all things from me and give me Christ. How great was Jerome, one of the ancient fathers, his love to Christ; how strong was his resolution, when he said, "If my father was weeping on his knees before me, my mother hanging about my neck behind me, my brethren, sisters, and kinsfolk howling about on every side to retain me from Christ, I would cast my mother to the ground, run over my father, and despise all my kindred, tread all under my feet, and run to Christ."

O awakened soul, behold how Christ displays his love to thee in the sacrament, he opens his wounds to be a refuge and hiding place to thee, and calls aloud to thee to come and flee in thither, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* To whom will ye flee for help, when the avenger of blood is at your heels, if ye flee not to Christ the only refuge from wrath? Hills and mountains, seas and depths, heaven and earth, cannot hide thee from the storm, if Christ do it not. Now you have a noble opportunity, while the clefts of Christ's wounds stand open, and the blessed hope set before you in the sacrament, and Christ stretching out his hand, and waiting to see who will rise and flee to him. O to see souls rising in flocks, and flying as doves to their windows: What a pleasing sight would this be.

O, saith one, I cannot rise, my wings are clipped, my soul clogged, I cannot mount up. Answ. If you cannot mount up as with eagle's wings, see if you can run to Christ, and kneel before him, like that young man, Mark x. 17.—Object. I find myself so burdened and heavy laden, that I cannot run. Ans. Then shew a willingness to run to Christ, and cry, *Draw me, and I will run after thee*; even a desire to run will be accepted, as of those in Nehemiah, i. 11. Object. But, saith one, my heart is so dead and sluggish, I

have neither strength nor will to turn to Christ. *Answ.* If you cannot run, then see if you can but go towards him; for we read in Jeremiah ii. 2. those who went after him in the wilderness, were accepted of him. *Object.* Alas, saith one, I am so weak and feeble, I cannot go. *Answ.* Then endeavour to creep and move towards him as you can.—*Object.* But I am so lame and impotent, both in hands and feet, that I cannot creep or move. *Answ.* If you cannot move to Christ, then look to Christ, as the Israelites did when stung with fiery serpents. Christ calls every feeble soul to do it, Isa. xlv. 22. *Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth;* and would you have Christ come any lower than a look! O look up to Jesus as lifted up upon the pole of the cross, for all nations to behold him.—*Object.* My eyes are dim, the cross far off: Jerusalem, where it was set up, is out of sight. *Answ.* The pole of the gospel, and of the sacrament, on which Christ is now lifted up, is near at hand; look up to him thereon, and be saved.—*Object.* Saith one, I am so burdened with guilt, I cannot lift up mine eyes. *Answ.* Then lie low before him, like the humble publican, who was so burdened that he was ashamed to lift up his eyes to heaven, and, under a deep sense of his vileness, cried, *God be merciful to me a sinner,* and so doing was accepted. In like manner humble yourselves before a merciful Redeemer, and plead his promise, Matth. xi. 28. Trust his word for ease and rest to your burdened soul.

ADVICE X.

From John iii. 14.—Even so must the Son of man be lifted up.

THE lifting up of the brazen serpent upon a pole, to heal serpent-stung Israelites, was a type of the lifting up of Christ on the cross, to heal convinced sinners of their wounds by sin. As there was but one brazen serpent for healing the whole camp of Israel, so Christ crucified is the only remedy and Saviour for a lost world. He must be lifted up; his dying on the cross was necessary to fulfil his engagements from eternity to be our surety; he must be offered up as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice for the sins of men, seeing nothing else could do it. Though Christ's engagement to suffer for us, was entirely voluntary at first, yet having once undertaken, it became necessary for him to be lifted up. And glory to him that would not go back from his word, however great his sufferings were.

Come men, O communicants, behold and consider, with suitable thoughts and affections, your lifted up Jesus dying on the cross. After he had borne the heavy cross on his bleeding shoulders up mount Calvary, this cross must next bear him up on the top of the mount, being first nailed to it.

and lifted up with it.—Come, see how this was done : Behold the cross-tree laid down upon the ground, and the Lord Jesus stript naked, laid on his back with hands and feet stretched out upon the tree, that they might take the measure of his body, and mark the holes for the nails ! and lo, they take the measure longer than the truth, that they might both crucify and rack him at once, till his bones should go out of joint : So the cross was rack as well as a death.—Our first parents stretched forth their guilty hands to take the forbidden fruit from the tree, therefore our glorious Saviour did willingly stretch forth his innocent hands to be nailed to the tree to satisfy for their guilt.—Come see four big nails driven into his hands and feet, the most sinewy and sensible parts of his body, and fastened to the tree ; apply your ear, and hear the hideous sound of the hammers knock in these nails ! Oh, your sins were the hammers that did it ; mourn for them.

Come next and see the Lord of Glory, when nailed fast to the tree, lifted up with it on high, and made to stand upright to the view of all the world. And then the foot of the tree let fall down with violence into the deep hole they had digged to fasten it, which fall did unspeakably increase his torments, and rend the four wounds made by the nails. Thus his own weight became his torture, still widening the wounds more and more, till all his precious blood streamed out of them. Behold your great Emmanuel lifted on a cross betwixt heaven and earth, as if he had been unworthy of a place in either, hanging betwixt two thieves, as if he had been the greatest malefactor of the three. O what a spectacle was your Redeemer to both heaven and earth when thus lifted up ! An astonishment to angels ? A derision to the wicked ! Compunction to believers ! but a sacrifice acceptable to the justice of his eternal Father !—Look on this moving spectacle with deep sorrow for sin that fastened him to the tree, and made him hang on these tormenting nails for several hours without comfort inward or outward. No way could he turn for ease, being fixed to the tree ; if he stirred his blessed body at all, he was tormented afresh by the wounds of his hands and feet, on which the whole weight of his body did hang ; if he had moved his head, which had the crown of thorns on it, the thorns would but pierce into it deeper, yet for all this he complained not ; no sigh or groan was heard from him, but what he offered up to God for your sins.

When the Son of Man was thus lifted up, observe how the streams of precious blood run down to the ground, and stood in a little pool at the foot of the cross, until the earth drank it up. Let this sight affect your hearts, and open all the springs of sorrow for sin that pierced him. Sit down at the foot of the cross, and receive the sacred blood, as it falls, upon your hard hearts ; let it drop on them, until it make them as soft as the ground it fell on. Let it drop on all the sores and

wounds of your souls, for it is the balm that must heal them.—Observe also the great extent of Christ's sufferings at this time, they reached to all the parts of his body, and to all the powers of his soul: He suffered in all his senses, his seeing, with the scornful gestures of his enemies; his hearing, with their scoffs and blasphemies; his smell, with the noisome stench of Golgotha; his taste, with gall and vinegar; his feeling, with the piercing nails and thorns. Behold his hands, that were still bestowing blessings, now fixed with nails; his feet, that walked in God's ways, now digged through; his bowels, that yearned for sinners, now shrunk and dried up: his lips, that spoke as never man spoke, now swollen with blows. Now he suffered on the cross till *his strength was dried up like a potsherd, and his tongue cleaved to his jaws*; the fire of God's wrath scorched him inwardly, which made him cry out, *I thirst*. His enemies mingled, at this time, a cup of vinegar and gall to him, which he refused; but, glory to him, he refused not the cup which his Father mingled to him, though filled with wrath and curses: This he drank for us, though it filled his whole soul with anguish, and made him roar and complain of his Father's deserting him: The arrows of the Almighty were within him, the poison whereof drank up his spirit. Amidst these fearful sufferings, our lifted Jesus expired, willingly offering up himself, on the cross, a propitiatory sacrifice for us.

O believers, did Christ lift up himself as a willing sacrifice for you on the cross, see then to lift up the gates of your souls to receive in this Saviour; let him have a joyful welcome into your souls, and give him the best entertainment, the best affections, and the best service.—Did he willingly stretch out his arms to be nailed to the cross for you? Then be not unwilling to stretch out the arms of faith to embrace him; but see to embrace him wholly in all his offices, of prophet, priest, and king; be willing to be taught, saved, and ruled by him. Was Christ lifted up on the cross (as the brazen serpent was lifted up in the wilderness) for healing all the stings and wounds given us by sin and Satan? O then look up to him with the eye of faith for healing. This is the great remedy of God's contriving and providing, put strong confidence in it, and look to it with hope and expectation: Never mistrust the virtue of God's remedy, nor despair of healing from it, however deep your stings, or large your wounds be: For Christ was lifted up to be a remedy for the chief of sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15. and none ever perished that looked to him.—Was Christ willing to be lifted up to suffer for you? Then let your hearts be lifted up to serve and obey him, like king Jehoshaphat, whose heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord 2 Chron. xvii. 6. Lift up your hearts with your voice in his praise; speak of the glorious honour of his Majesty, and make known his mighty acts: Obey his commands, and particular-

ly his dying command: to remember him at his table, with activity and delight: Go with lifted up hearts to a communion table to remember him, that went so willingly to be lifted up on a bloody cross for you. The antient exhortation to communicants was *SURSUM CORDA*, "Lift up your hearts to meet with a lifted up Jesus."

ADVICE XI.

From Exod. xiv. 15. Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.

THIS is the answer of Moses' prayer for Israel when in a great strait at the Red sea. It is said, he cried to God, yet we read not of one word he spake: He only lifted up his heart to God, who well understands the language of the heart. Moses' silent prayer of faith prevailed more with God, than Israel's loud outcries of fear. A believing communicant may, in a strait cry to God, in prayer, without speaking a word: so did Moses here for fainting Israel. When they came out of the land of bondage, and fled from Pharaoh's tyranny, the Lord ordered them to march towards the sea; but now when they are near to it, and see Pharaoh's mighty army pursuing, and close at their heels, they are in a great strait what course to take, they think certainly they must turn either to the right or left hand to make their escape from Pharaoh; no, saith God, speak to them to go still forward, as straight towards the sea, as if they saw a fleet of transport ships there waiting to take them in. O, might they think, "This is a hard command, go forward, when we see nothing but the deep devouring sea before us; as good go back to the Egyptians, or stand still until they come up and put us to the sword, as go forward into the sea and be drowned: Will the deep sea have any more mercy on us than the cruel Egyptians."—But, saith the Lord, make no objections, ask no questions, let the people go forward, obey my command, and trust me with their lives.

Observe here, O timorous communicant, O doubting believer, when you are in fears and straits with respect to the management or success of your duty, you are to set yourselves to obey God's command; go forward in the use of means, with a sincere heart, and leave the event to God. You may possibly, at this time, be brought to the straitening case of the children of Israel, when at the brink of the Red sea, and their hearts in great perplexity, ready to sink within them for fear. Some may be saying within themselves, How shall such a vile, black, unworthy creature go forward to the Red sea of Christ's blood, who hath both spilt it and despised it? How shall I, after all, venture to go forward, to wash or bathe my unclean soul in it? Well, it is God's plain command to you to go forward to it, however heavy laden you be with guilt, see

1 John iii. 23. Matt. xi. 28. John i. 29. others as vile and black have obeyed his command, have gone forward to this Red sea, and been washed in it, see 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. yea, we read, Acts ii. 36. of three thousand of those who actually embrued their hands in this blood, who were washed by it. How wonderful is its virtue ! It is able to take away the sins of a whole world, and much more the sins of a few ; therefore do not, O sinner, rebel against God's command any longer.

Again, consider what is God's special command to thee at this time, namely, *Do this in remembrance of me* ; his precept is plain and express to keep up the memory of his love to lost men. Can you think to look on his face with comfort at the last day, if you have no pleasure to remember him now : Surely his presence will be terrible then to those, to whom his memory is not delightful now. But you may have straits and difficulties about this duty. O, saith one, " My strait is great, I know not what to do : whether to stay back from God's holy table, or go forward : If I stay back, I disobey my dying Saviour's command, to shew forth his death in this manner : If I go forward unworthily, I contract the guilt of his body and blood, and eat and drink my own damnation. Alas, what shall I do ? my need of Christ and his blood is so great, I cannot think of staying back ; and yet my preparation is so little, I know not how to go forward.— Ah, my unworthiness is great, how shall I go to the table of so great a King in the state and case I am in, so vile, so sinful, so indisposed, so hard hearted ? If the woman that had the bloody issue feared so much to come and touch the hem of Christ's garment, how much more may I, who am full of the running issues of sin, fear to go forward to touch the sacred symbols of his body and blood, and put my hand into his wounds, and feel the print of the nails ? " Come then, unworthy as you are, obey Christ's command, and venture your soul in his hand : Go forward with all the preparation you can attain to, deeply sensible of your own vileness, and humbled for your short-comings, trusting in the worthiness of the Lamb that was slain to answer for your unworthiness, in his blood to wash away your pollution, and in his strength to help your weakness. Venture forward, saying, like Jehoshaphat, " Lord, I have no ability, no might for this great ordinance, neither know I what to do ; but my eyes are unto thee, it is in thy name, in thy strength, and at thy command, that I go forward to remember a dying Jesus at his holy table. Lord, put on me the wedding garment, prepare, receive, and welcome me. "

Object. Some may say, they are only the children of Israel, who, in the text, are bid go forward ; and we are afraid we are none of these.—Ans. All are bidden, without exception, to come to Christ ; yea, even the stout hearted are called to him. Now, if you come to Christ, it will be a sure proof of your be-

ing Israel's children, and among those who are bid go forward. Ministers indeed have a special commission to speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward to his table; whoever stay back, they ought not.

Quest. Who are those that may be numbered among Israel's children, or the seed of Jacob? Ans. The children of Jacob or Israel, if they be of the true kind, will be like their father, particularly in these things; first, Jacob was a great wrestler with God in prayer, and hence he got the name of Israel, he wept and made supplications at Bethel, and prevailed as a prince with God, which is the meaning of the name of Israel. Now, if you be wrestlers with God, you are Israel's children, and called to go forward.—Second, Jacob was a plain man, so he is called, Gen. xxv. 27. that is, a single hearted man: It was by this character that Christ describes a true Israelite, John i. 47. *Behold an Israelite, indeed, in whom is no guile.* Now, if you study godly sincerity, and plain dealing in your behaviour both to God and man, you are Israel's children, and called to go forward.—Third, Jacob had faith in Christ, and believing views of him as the glorious Shiloh; he waited for his coming, drew his comfort from it, and rejoiced in the gathering of the people to him: If it be so with you, then we bid you go forward.—Fourth, Israel and his children were God's covenanted people; they choosed God for their God, and gave themselves up to him: If it be so with you, you are Israel's children, go forward.—Fifth, Jacob was zealous for reformation, both with respect to himself and family, and caused them put away all their idols, and cleanse themselves, and change their garments, when going to renew covenant with God, Gen. xxxv. 2. Now, if you study sincerely to follow his example, you are among the children of Israel, to whom God warrants ministers to speak, and bid them go forward to his table. Now, if you have any of the foresaid five characters, in Christ's name we can promise you welcome to his table. Go forward to it then with hearts burning with love to Christ and to his people; go with thankfulness and praise to God for providing such a Saviour and spiritual feast for you; and go with hunger and thirst to partake of it. Go forward with humility and self-denial, renouncing all confidence in your preparations and performances, and depending only upon Christ's mediation for acceptance with God.

ADVICE XII.

From John xii. 32. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

AS the sacrifices under the law were heaved and lifted up before the Lord, so Christ, the antitype, must be lifted up on the cross as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. The Jews were not more willing to lift him up, than he was to lift himself up; he readily undertook to be lifted up, *Lo, I come*, said he; he willingly carried his cross to the place, that he might be lifted up on it. He dissuaded the women to weep for him. Why? Because I am going to be lifted up a sacrifice to justice for your sins, and to draw your souls unto me.

Quest. But how doth he draw all men, when Satan keeps many still fast in his grip? Ans. Christ was lifted up to obtain drawing-offers and invitations to all men without exception, and accordingly gives drawing-calls to all men in his word; and if they be not drawn to him it is their own fault. But though many be called, and multitudes flock to the word, yet there are none effectually drawn to Christ but the elect; and these may be called all men, as they are gathered out of all nations, kindreds, and languages, ages, sexes, and qualities. All men, Gentiles as well as Jews: All sorts of men, sinners of all sizes, greater as well as lesser. Quest. But how doth the lifting up of Christ draw sinners effectually to him? Ans. By the merit of his lifted-up sacrifice he obtained the removal of all hindrances of their coming to him, such as, the guilt of their sins, the enmity of their natures, the power of their corruptions, their unbelief, hardness, blindness, and discouraging fears. And likewise, by it he purchased all the means requisite for drawing man to him, such as the preaching of the gospel, sanctified rods, the grace of faith, and, above all, the powerful influences of the Holy Spirit. As Christ was lifted up on the cross, so he must be also lifted up on the pole of the gospel, for drawing sinners to him. Thus the brazen serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, for drawing the stung Israelites about it, and it proved most effectual for that end; so a crucified Jesus held out, and evidently set forth in the gospel, as he was lifted up on a bloody cross, with his pierced hands stretched out to embrace lost sinners, is surely the most attractive and drawing sight in the world. This wonderful loadstone hath drawn thousands of hard iron hearts to it at once. A natural loadstone though it draw iron to it, yet it may be drawn away from it again; but a crucified Christ draws the heart so powerfully and closely to him, that they can never be separated again. Never was there such a drawing engine in the world as this! A lifted-up standard or ensign draws numbers of scattered soldiers unto it, but it is seen by few;

but a crucified Jesus lifted up in the gospel, is an ensign to draw great multitudes in different nations under the banner of his love, Isa. xi. 10. At the first experiment that was made of its virtue in Jerusalem by the apostle Peter, three thousand souls were drawn to Christ at once, and after that many nations, that knew him not, did run unto him. Come then, O sinners, admire and experience the power of this lifted up ensign; let your iron hearts be drawn by this loadstone; it hath lost nothing of its virtues to this day. Thousands of hearts in other places do still feel its power: We are sometimes refreshed with the welcome news of their being drawn off from the vanities of time, and the love of sin, to glorious Christ: Why then do not your hearts also yield to the power of this blessed loadstone, Christ crucified, lifted up in the word and sacrament? It hath the same virtue here as elsewhere, were but the eyes of faith opened to behold it, according to that alluring call, Isa. xiv. 22.

When Christ was lifted up on the cross, his face was turned to the Gentiles, for the Jews, out of malice, (as several write,) would have him crucified with his face towards the west, as reckoning him unworthy to look to the temple and the holy city, that stood on the east side of mount Calvary; but Christ had a loving design in it to us Gentiles, and to accomplish that word, Psal. lxvi. 7. *His eyes behold the nations.* Behold, O sinners, Christ turned his face to you on the cross, to draw you unto him; there he bowed his head towards you to draw you; there he opened a cleft in his side to draw you; there blood and water flowed from his heart to draw you to him! And now he hath sent his word and Spirit to draw you; now he displays his blood and wounds in the sacrament to draw you; now he is casting his cords of love about your heart to draw you to him; now the devil is holding and Christ is drawing: Christ and the devil are now struggling for your hearts; the eyes of many are on you, the eyes of the glorious Trinity, the eyes of angels, the eyes of ministers and saints are on you, to see what the issue of the combat shall be, which of them shall gain the prize. Satan indeed is the strong man, but, glory to God, Christ is stronger than he. O that he may prevail; the heart is his by right, surrender it to him without delay. He will not enter without your consent; his people must all be *made willing in the day of his power.* Oh, if the will were once conquered, the day were Christ's and the field were won for ever.

Would you then have Satan's defeat, your biased will overcome, and your soul savingly brought to Christ, O look up and cry for a draught of Christ's power. You have neither strength nor will to come to a crucified Christ, unless he draw you. Ordinances or providences cannot draw you, the word or sacraments cannot draw you, judgments or mercies cannot do it; yea, neither ministers nor angels can draw your dead

and heavy hearts. O then look beyond them all to a lifted-up Emmanuel, *draw me, Lord, and I will run after thee.* The ordinance you have in view can never be a drawing ordinance, if Christ put not forth his virtue with it; the sacrament will be lifeless, and the administrators lifeless, if Christ draw you not. The most powerful sermons, the most alluring calls, will all be lost, if he draw not. You will sit still in the Sodom of a natural and a wrathful state, if he draw not: you will be eternally damned, if Christ draw you not to him. You can never overcome the strong and subtle temptations Satan casts in your way, you can never deny self, forsake beloved lusts, renounce justification by works, quit all confidence in your own doings, go naked and empty to Christ, be content to live wholly upon his righteousness, and receive grace, life, strength, and glory, as a free gift from Christ, without the drawing virtue of a lifted up Saviour. Oh, if you were once acquainted with this drawing power, you might go with comfort to his table, and feed upon his purchase.

Quest. How shall I know if I have yet been drawn effectually to a lifted up Jesus?

Ans. Try it by these marks: Have you discovered his matchless excellency so as to draw off your heart from sin, and the perishing things of the world? Have you felt the cords of his love about your heart and will, constraining you to yield yourself wholly to him? Is your heart drawn out in love and affection to a crucified Christ above all things, so that the desire of your soul is to him and the remembrance of his name? Are you growing still liker to him, more holy, more humble, meek, and heavenly minded? Nearness will breed likeness. Are you troubled for distance from Christ, when at any time you are drawn off from him by sin, Satan, or the world's allurements? Are you drawn to duty with a view of enjoying his presence therein? In the mean time are you drawn off from resting on duties, or putting any attainments in Christ's room? Then you may conclude your heart is effectually drawn by a lifted up Saviour; and so may, with holy confidence and joy, draw near to him in the sacramental trysting-place, and hold communion with him there.

ADVICE XIII.

From John i. 36—xix. 5. Behold the Lamb of God.—Behold the Man.

O Communicants, both John and Pilate call you to behold Christ suffering and sacrificed for you, and which is more, the Spirit of God calls you to this duty also. Let each one of you then say with Moses, *Exod. iii. 3. I will now turn aside, and see this great sight.* A great sight indeed! For though he be called a lamb, and a man, he is also God, God in human nature, suffering, bleeding and dying, a great and won-

derful sight ! All the persons of the glorious Trinity call you to behold it, Isa. xlii. 1.—xlv. 22. John i. 29. Draw then as near as possible, that you may get a good view of it ; stand not at a distance like those who followed him from Galilee to the cross, of whom it is said, Luke xxiii. 49. *They stood afar off beholding these things.* Do not now stand afar off, nor take a far-off look of a crucified Christ, but come close to him by faith, and take a near and saving look of him, as he calls you, Isa. xlv. 21. *Look unto me and be saved ; I am God, and there is no Saviour besides me.* O then turn not your back or shoulder to him, look not asquint to him, look not by him to other things ; but look with a broad, straight, and steady look unto him. The man Christ Jesus is the Lamb of God, appointed by him to be sacrificed, to make atonement for our sins, and to purchase pardon, life, and salvation to us : And looking to him by faith is the great mean of securing and applying the blessings of his purchase to us. And in a special manner he calls us to look unto him in his sufferings for us. *Behold me, behold me !*

Behold the suffering man, a man of sorrows indeed ! And particularly behold him entering upon that fearful scene in the garden of Gethsemane, when he began to fear, turn sorrowful, and very heavy ; when he was sore amazed, fell into an agony and bloody sweat, and cried out, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death !* O what was it that made your Saviour so heavy, but the dead weight of the elect's sins, which the law's heavy curses annexed to them ! Oh your souls were exceeding guilty, which made his soul exceeding heavy. Behold and see your sorrowful Redeemer falling into a fearful agony, and, while in it, falling down sometimes on his knees, and sometimes on his face, praying once, praying again, and praying the third time, until he is quite overwhelmed with wrath, and covered with his own blood ! “ Behold the sorrowful man ” with the great drops of blood standing above his garments for your sins, and bedewing the ground. See Jehovah now acting against him, as an inexorable judge, running on him as a giant, and making him the butt of his envenomed arrows !—Behold him in this agony making his moan to his disciples, who could make no help to him ; for neither they nor the angels in heaven durst touch his load, nor taste his cup : Yea, he got not so much as sympathy from his disciples, they fell asleep when he was at the worst, and left him in his agony to struggle and tread out the wine-press alone ! O be not idle spectators of your Saviour's agony, but let your souls be exceedingly affected with Christ's soul-suffering for your soul's sins.

Behold the man Christ, betrayed and sold for a little money, apprehended and bound with cords like a thief, and bound fast, as Judas bade, yea so fast (as some say) that the blood burst out of his tender hands ! O can your heart or eyes

hold to see those hands that made the heavens, wrung together and bruised with hard cords ! To see him bound as a prisoner, that came to set the prisoners free. But had not the cords of your Redeemer's love held him faster than the cords of his enemies, though they had been cables or chains, they could not have kept him ; but his love to you made him a willing prisoner ! *Behold the man* blindfolded, mocked, buffeted and abused for you ! Behold him stript naked and scourged ! Behold him that clothes the lilies of the field, that made coats of skins to clothe our first parents, now stript and unclothed himself ! He is stript naked, that you might not be found naked at God's bar ! He is stript of his robes, that he might provide a robe of righteousness to cover your nakedness. *Behold the man* scourged by Pilate, and that above measure, thinking thereby to save his life ; but as the Jews were not satisfied therewith, so neither was infinite justice satisfied : so that his life must go, and the man Christ is willing it should. Willingly did he give his back to the smiters, that you might be freed from the everlasting lashes of God's wrath in hell ! Behold every part of his blessed body torn and wounded, by scourgings, because every part of you was wounded by sin, and his stripes were the only cure for your wounds.

Behold the man with a plaited crown of thorns on his blessed head, with the sharp points turned inward, and these beat into his head with a staff till all his head is but as one wound, from whence a new shower of blood ran down his neck for you ! You may be ready to cry, Fy on the Jews, or fy on the soldiers that used our Saviour so ; but rather cry, Fy on your sins that did worse to him, these plaited the crown of thorns, and crucified him too. *Behold the Lamb of God* now willingly caught in the thickets, like the ram, to be sacrificed in your room, when you were bound like Isaac for that end. Behold him willing to wear a crown of pain and ignominy, that you might wear a crown of glory and renown : Willing to be disgraced and affronted, that you might be honoured and exalted : Willing to let a Barabbas, the vilest malefactor in all Jerusalem, be preferred before him, that you might be preferred to a room among God's children. *Behold the man*, after all these sufferings, put to bear the heavy cross on his sore wounded shoulders, a heavy load indeed, with the elect's sins and law's curses fastened to it ; yet he bears it without complaint till his strength is spent, and he is ready to faint under the burden, so that another must help ! Oh ! it was the weight of the tree that made him faint, he had a greater burden to bear than ten thousand worlds, even the infinite wrath of God due to the elect's sins ! O can you behold this sight with dry eyes ?

Behold the man brought to Golgotha, nailed to the tree,

lifted up, and drinking out the bitter dregs of the cup of wrath thereon, till at length he yielded himself prisoner to death, by bowing his head, giving death his orders to execute his commission, and carry him off the stage ! Behold and wonder at the sight, the Lord of Life death's prisoner !—O man, canst thou stand and see the Lamb of God slain in thy room, and for thy sins, and not be affected ! Write that man a beast, a stone, a lump of earth, that can be senseless, stupid, and unconcerned at such a sight ! O blush and be ashamed, O man, at thy stupidity, when the dead earth and rocks about Jerusalem quaked and rent at the sufferings you now behold represented in the sacrament. O cursed sin, (which many make light of) that could not be expiated by any other sacrifice, than that of our Emmanuel, the Lamb of God, the man Christ Jesus ! O *Behold the man*, and tremble at sin, the accursed thing that murdered the Son of God, the man that is God's fellow, the man that is infinitely preferable to a million of worlds full of men and angels too. O that men would always look on sin in the glass of the agonies and sufferings of the man Christ, that they might be filled with horror at it, as at hell itself ! Nay, in several respects sin is a greater evil than hell.

Let every communicant, every Christian, come and behold the glorious Son of God, with the greatest love and admiration, who, for our sakes, was willing to become a man, and God's Lamb, to be sacrificed for the sins of men. O let his name JESUS, be always to you as a precious ointment poured forth, and let the remembrance of his love inflame your souls, with a vehement indignation against sin, and a burning affection to the LAMB OF GOD, the man CHRIST, that was willing to struggle in bloody agonies, and bleed to death on the cursed tree, to deliver you from lying in hell for ever ! O, what can we render to him for his free love, amazing and unspeakable love ! O, that we could spend our whole lives in admiring his love, and contemplating his beauty, and were thereby made meet in some measure for the exercise of the redeemed above. Amen.

ADVICE. XIV.

From Job xxxvii. 14. Stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.

THE works of God, being wondrous, do well deserve our most serious consideration ; but so wavering are our minds, we cannot consider them aright, unless we stand still and compose ourselves for that end. This advice doth Elihu give to Job in the text, and Moses gives to the children of Israel, Exod. xiv. 13.—All God's works are wondrous and highly worthy of our observation, as his works of creation and providence ; and more especially his works of redemption, and of grace.

as they are made known unto us in the gospel dispensation, and particularly in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Here God calls you to stand still, and consider his wondrous work of redeeming wisdom and mercy, in saving fallen sinners.—The work of creation is indeed most wonderful and stupendous ; but his work of redemption is far more costly and surprising : The one cost him but the word of his power, but the other cost him the death of his Son. The one is but the work of his fingers, Psal. viii. 3. the other is the work of his arm, Luke i. 51. Much of the divine wisdom and power is displayed in making us men, but much more in making us saints ; by the one we have but a short mortal life, but by the other an eternal and immortal life. God's works of redemption and of grace will be the admiration of saints and angels to all eternity, Rev. v. 12.—xv. 3.

Come then and behold these works of the Lord, as they are set forth before you in the word and sacrament ! Come and see God from all eternity passing by angels, and pitching his love upon poor ruined sinners of Adam's family, and contriving their redemption by the incarnation and death of his dear Son, while he passed by the angels that fell. Come and see the glorious Son of God undertaking, in the council of peace, to become our surety, to pay our debt, and to satisfy justice for the injury our sins did to God's glory. Behold and consider the device of infinite wisdom for reconciling justice and mercy about guilty men, and satisfying the demands of them both, by punishing sin severely, and yet pardoning the person guilty.—“Stand still and see the “wondrous work” of making the Word flesh to dwell among us ; of the Creator's leaving his throne of glory, to lodge in a virgin's womb, and a beast's manger ; of the *Antient of days* becoming a *child of a day old*, learning to speak and go, and subjecting himself to his own law in the room of rebel sinners. “Behold God's wondrous work” in setting up a court and throne of grace among the prisoners of justice, and causing grace sit as a queen on the throne, with a sceptre of mercy in her hand, and thence to issue forth proclamations of grace to poor, wretched, blind, miserable, and naked sinners ; proclaiming pardon to the condemned, liberty to the captives, and life to the dead : Yea, seeing grace laying siege to the hearts of rebels, summoning them by the gospel-trumpet to surrender, and using the most prevailing arguments with them to do it, taken from the mediation, sufferings, blood, righteousness, and satisfaction of the Son of God.

Behold and consider the wondrous works of God in furnishing and fitting the Mediator for our miserable circumstances, joining the divine and human natures in one person for our relief ! Observe how well he suits our exigencies ; he

is man, that he might die for us ; and God, that he might overcome death ! Man, that he might combat the devil ; and God that he might vanquish him ! Man, that he might take on our guilt and punishment ; and God, that he might support under it ! Man, that he might offer a sacrifice for us ; and God, to make it infinitely meritorious ! Man, that he might sympathize with us in our trouble ; and God, that he might deliver us ! A wondrous work indeed !—Again, observe the Mediator's fulness, how exactly it suits our miseries and wants ! In our wonderful Emmanuel there is life for our deadness, light for our darkness, beauty for our deformity, strength for our weakness, health for our sickness, balm for our wounds, raiment for our nakedness, riches for our poverty, merit for our guiltiness, righteousness for our justification, a fountain for our pollution, grace for our sanctification, bread for our hunger, water for our thirst, and deep mercies for our deep miseries ! a wonderful work, to make one depth so exactly to answer another depth ! *This is the doing of the Lord, and wondrous in our eyes.*

Stand still and see God's wondrous work, in sending our Emmanuel, *the Prince of the kings of the earth,* to go up and down the wilderness seeking after the lost sheep, calling and inviting them in the most tender manner to come unto him for life and salvation, willingly submitting to be buffeted by Satan, contradicted by sinners, to suffer all manner of indignities, a cursed death, and the wrath of God, and all that he might be a sacrifice to satisfy justice for our sins : And after he had submitted to death and the grave for a time, he conquered them and rose again ; and gave commission to his ambassadors to go through all the earth, and call perishing sinners to come unto him, and offer them salvation in his name ; and having done so, he ascended into heaven to intercede for them. Now, it is incumbent upon all communicants to remember these amazing works of God's at his holy table, with wonder, thankfulness and praise.

Come here, and see the *fountain of the great depths* of infinite love broken up, and streams of the waters of life running therefrom to the sons of men. Come, see Jacob's ladder set up, that reaches from earth to heaven, and God the Father at the top of it calling you to climb to heaven by the steps of it, viz. Christ's wounds, offices and promises !—Come, see the manna coming down in plentiful showers, and falling about your tents, and every man invited to gather.—Come, see the rock broached in the wilderness to supply the necessities of your souls ; see the rock smitten by the rod of Moses, and bearing the curses of the law for you. Come, see the *city of refuge* opened for poor manslaughterers, that sinners, who have slain their souls by sin, may flee to it for shelter. O then flee for your lives, and do not linger by the way. Come, see God bringing his righteousness near you who are

guilty criminals, and bidding you put it on for your safety in judgment ; it is a robe that will fit every one of you.—Come, see the *fruits and leaves* of the *tree of life* shaken and scattered among starving wounded souls : Gather and feed on the fruits of his purchase for your nourishment : apply the leaves of his promises for your healing. Come, see the *well of salvation opened*, bring the chain and bucket of faith and draw water. The great medicine well is here, come with all your diseases and ailments to it, come with your hard hearts, blind eyes, weak hands, feeble knees, lame feet, and cold affections, to get them healed. Come, see Christ's testament opened, and every man allowed for to put in for a share of the legacies therein contained. This you are to do by believing, claiming, laying hold, and embracing the promises. Come, see straying prodigals returning to their Father's house, and see their Father embracing them, and the whole family rejoicing at their return : See their filthy rags taken off, and the white robe of the Son of God put on them, and the fatted calf killed for them.—Come, see the King of Glory, entering in at the everlasting gates of men's souls, dethroning sin and self, taking possession of their hearts, and setting up his throne and kingdom in them. Come, see King Solomon both crowned and married in one day ! An astonishing match concluded between the Prince of Life and the heir of hell ! All the daughters of Zion called forth to behold the sight, Can. iv. 11. All these are great and wondrous works of God to be seen in the word and sacraments, which all communicants ought to stand still and consider.

Consider these marvellous works so as to be suitably affected with them, make them the subject of your meditations ; entertain high and admiring thoughts of God, and of his infinite love and wisdom manifested in them. Give firm credit to the record and testimony God hath given us of his wondrous works, and glorify the great author of them in your hearts, tongues and lives. Embrace the gospel-offer, and be afraid of offending that God who has humbled himself so low for our sakes, and has wrought such great and wondrous works for us. Be careful to serve him and please him in all things, and abhor sin his grand enemy.

ADVICE XV.

From Rev. xxii. 2. In the midst of the street was the tree of life.

IT was a sad day to mankind, when God banished Adam from the earthly paradise, and from the tree of life that grew therein, and also shut the entry to it ! But behold God, in his free mercy, is now opening an entry, and inviting Adam's banished posterity back again to a better paradise, where there are purer delights, and neither sin nor Satan

can enter ; and where there is a tree of life, Jesus Christ, infinitely preferable to that in Adam's paradise. This tree of life far excels that in its leaves, shadow, fruit, and virtues ; it animates, yea, restores and preserves life for ever ; neither is there any flaming sword to hinder our access to it. Adam's tree endured but a short time, but ours lasts for ever. Other trees decay, fade, and wither, but *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*. O come then, sit down under the shadow of this tree, eat of its fruit, and live for ever. Though the tree be now planted in the heavenly paradise, yet its branches, shadow, and fruit, extend to every believer on earth, as well as to the saints above. Thousands of communicants at the lower table have *sat down under his shadow with great delight, and found his fruit sweet to their taste*. Christ is a tree that bears fruit at all times, every mouth, and even in the sharpest winter months of sickness and death.

There are some very useful trees in the world, that afford all necessaries to men, such as meat, drink, physic, and clothing. Behold God hath provided such a tree for us. Jesus Christ affords us all these. 1. Meat : He tells us, That *his flesh is meat indeed* ; that is, his flesh wounded and dying, yields strengthening food for the soul in respect of its fruits and effects. It is food well prepared : the Holy Trinity spent a whole eternity in preparing it. It is meat well seasoned ; it is seasoned with the love of God, sauced with the blood of Christ, and spiced with the graces of the Spirit.—2. Drink : Christ's blood is also drink indeed to the soul, in respect of its comfortable effects ; such as pardon, peace, light, life, strength, &c. The streams of the Rock are most refreshing cordial, and savoury drink ; savoury to God, savoury to angels, and most savoury to every soul that hath tasted it. It is a sweet cup that is to be put into your hand, if you have faith, but it is poisonous to any unworthy communicant that wants faith : But if you be worthy, the drink will poison sin, quicken grace, and refresh the soul. Fear not, O believer, to take a good draught : faith will make the cup medicinal and restorative to thy soul, and it will only kill and destroy thy lusts.—3. Physic : The leaves of this tree are for *healing of the nations* : Christ hath many healing promises, which, when applied by faith, are most useful to purge out sin and corruption, and to heal all the soul's wounds and diseases.—4. This tree affords clothing also. Poor fallen Adam, when naked, went to the fig tree for leaves to cover him ; but, O let his posterity go to the tree of life, where they shall get infinitely better clothing, even Christ's perfect righteousness, which is spotless and law-biding. Behold a rich robe, set with the pearls and diamonds of heaven. A large robe, so broad as to cover a whole elect world. It also covers all the spots and infirmities of

believers : so that not one of them is to be seen. This robe is as broad as the law, which we are told is exceeding broad. And it is just as beautiful as broad, for it makes every elect soul amiable, and acceptable to God. Never then was there such a tree, either in the earthly or the heavenly paradise, as our glorious tree of life, Jesus Christ. O hungry souls, here is meat ! O thirsty souls, here is drink ! O diseased souls, here is medicine ! O naked souls, here is clothing ! O come then to this tree of life, and you have all things necessary for you.

O communicants, you are called to take a view of this blessed tree, as it was hewn, mangled, and cut down by the ax of justice, when he died upon the cross for you. Even in this his mangled condition, he is a most beautiful and engaging sight to the eye of faith ! O believer, behold your princely Jesus lifted up on a bloody cross, on the top of mount Calvary, for all nations to see him, and gather to him for food and healing. Since that mount was first created, it never produced such a tree, or such precious fruit, as the Lord of Glory hanging on the tree of the cross, that was planted there some hours : Christ's hanging on it changed its nature from a cursed to a blessed tree, a tree of life and salvation. This tree of life made mount Calvary a sweet and lovely paradise that day, (notwithstanding all the malefactors' bones that lay scattered upon it) and the fruit growing on it that day hath enriched both heaven and earth, and will fill heaven with eternal songs of praise.

You are likewise called, at this time, to draw near a crucified Christ, the tree of life, that is always laden with fruit : Come as near as possible you can win, shake the tree by faith, and gather as much fruit as you can, eat and lay up for after times ; yea, gather, and lay up for eternity. The fruits of this tree are durable and lasting, plentiful and enriching, sweet and satisfying, manifold and various, Rev. xxii. *Twelve manner of fruits every month*, which is one hundred and forty-four crops in the year. Likewise, they are most suitable to the wants and necessities of your souls. What can be more suitable to the guilty than pardon ? to the dead than life ? to the hungry than bread ? to the thirsty than drink ? to the wounded than balm ? to the blind than eye-salve ? to the naked than clothing ? to the impotent than strength ? to the weary than rest ? to the captive than liberty ? to the disturbed than peace ? to the bewildered than light ? to the warrior than victory ? All these, and innumerable more, are the sweet and suitable fruits of the tree of life.

O then give all diligence to secure and clear up your interest in this blessed tree of life and its fruits, which are now offered to you freely, without money or price. Abandon and reject the sour and unsavoury fruits of sin, the world,

and your own righteousness, and embrace the tree of life in the arms of faith, and all its fruits are yours. Come, *sit down under his shadow*, at his table, and believingly receive and feed on these delicious fruits. O how delightful and refreshing is the shadow and shelter of Christ's righteousness to the soul, that hath been scorched with a sense of divine displeasure for sin! This shadow skreens and protects him from the heat of God's wrath, from the curses of a fiery law, and from the slavish fears of death, and wrath-like dispensations. Then let every weary and scorched soul come at Christ's call, and sit down under his shadow: Give firm credit to the gospel-report concerning Christ's suretyship, his sufficient righteousness and free offers: Acquiesce heartily in this blessed contrivance of shelter and safety, and put all your trust and confidence in his righteousness alone; and abide contentedly under his shadow, without wandering from it, or going from tree to tree, as many do, seeking rest or shelter. Surely all who leave Christ, and wander after the shadow of creature comforts, or their own doings for relief, will disquiet themselves in vain; for there is no safety or rest any where but under the shadow of the tree of life. Here only you will find protection and provision: This made the spouse say, Cant. ii. 3. *I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.*

Let all those, who have experienced the safety and sweetness of Christ's shadow and fruit, bless God who gave them counsel, and drew them to this happiness. See that you abide close under this shadow, and make it your continual resort. Christ speaks to you, as David to Abiather, when he fled to him from Saul's cruelty. *Abide thou with me, fear not, for he that seeketh my life, seeketh thy life, but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.*—Likewise, pity and pray for them who slight the tree of life, and are going through all the trees of the wood for rest and satisfaction, but cannot find it. O commend this blessed tree to them, and invite them to come and sit down under the shadow of it, where they will find all things. Say to them, as Philip to Nathaniel, *Come and see.*—Be also looking out, and longing for the full enjoyment of the tree of life in the paradise above, where you shall eternally *sing among the branches of it*, meet with all your friends, and eat the fruits with a far better appetite and relish than ever any did here below.

ADVICE XVI.

From Isa. xxxii. 2. A man shall be a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest.

WHATEVER storms or tempests believers are exposed to here, Christ is an excellent shelter and hiding-place from

them. Before Adam's fall, that sin entered into the world, all was calm and serene ; but since that, the world has become a weary wilderness, full of tempests, and as soon as one is laid, another is ready to blow. There are storms of outward afflictions, sickness, losses, and disappointments, and many wrath-like dispensations of Providence ; there are storms of temptations from Satan, challenges from conscience, thunderings from mount Sinai, desertions from God, reproaches and persecutions from the world : And yet all these storms here are but like drops before the shower, if compared with the terrible storm of wrath to come, which is abiding the ungodly and unbelieving. But glory to infinite wisdom and free love, for finding out a proper hiding place for lost sinners amidst these storms, to which we are called to turn, Zech. ix. 12. *Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope.* The man Christ is an excellent strong hold and hiding place against all storms whatever ; in him there is sufficient room and accommodation for us, his wounds are wide, his mercy large, his merits infinite, his offers free, his calls most gracious and extensive, Isa. xlv. 22, *Look to me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.* The access is declared free, and the way patent, to all who turn to this strong hold for shelter, and never was any excluded that turned to it.

A crucified Jesus, O communicants, represented to you in the sacrament, is the strong hold and hiding place to which you are called to turn by faith for shelter and safety, from the sword of justice. In him there are excellent clefts for shelter, Cant. ii. 14. and which you ought to be well acquainted with. There are the clefts of his wounds and merits, which all Christ's doves flee to when storms arise. There is also the cleft of his power, the cleft of his wisdom, the cleft of his love, and the cleft of his faithfulness ; many a storm have they escaped in these clefts.—In this hiding place there are also chambers of safety, to which you may retire when the tempest blows, Isa. xxvi. 20. There are the chambers of Christ's offices and sweet relations, which he hath assumed for the safety and comfort of believers ; in each of these many of them have found shelter when storms have blown. There is also the pleasant chamber of his covenant, with the closets of its promises, which afford sweet retiring places in tempestuous times. O study to be acquainted with them. David was well acquainted with the well ordered covenant and its promises, and hath his recourse thereto in troublous times, and particularly when he was threatened with the storm of death, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. *Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure ; this is all my salvation.* And he pleads the promises of this covenant for his safety, Psalm cxix. 49. *Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.* Come then by the exercise of faith

and shut yourselves up in these sweet chambers at the Lord's table, and take complacency in viewing and walking through them.

Christ crucified is a covert and hiding place to believers, and to every thing that belongs to them : He is even a covert to their bodies in time of danger, so was he to his disciples when the storm was breaking upon himself, John xviii. 8. *If ye seek me, let these go their way.* But more especially he is a covert to their souls, these he accounts precious as his jewels ; he hides them in his wounds, and *keeps them by his power, through faith, unto salvation.* He is also a covert to their graces, and keeps them in life when ready to die, and saves them from being overwhelmed in the day of tempest. What had become of David and of Peter's grace, under violent storms of temptation, if he had not been a covert to them. Many a time hath he preserved the smoking flax, and the bruised reed, under the most dangerous storms. Likewise, Christ is a covert to their evidences and marks of grace : he preserves them, and keeps them legible, after many blots which sin and Satan do cast upon them : He hath the blessed art of recovering and clearing up their evidences, when they are frequently given up for lost in times of backsliding.

Let all consider how miserable they are who have no interest in this hiding place ; you that are out of Christ, have no covert from the tempest, you can neither have safety nor comfort in times of trouble. Nay, when any storm blows from without against you, a guilty conscience will be ready to raise a storm within ; and also shew you a more terrible storm gathering against you, even the wrath that is to come ; wrath still coming, but never all come ; a storm that will still be blowing, but never will blow over. O what will become of you, if death come upon you in this shelterless state, when out of Christ the only hiding place! to be sure then *hell will follow the pale horse.* To whom then will ye flee for help or shelter ? The rocks or hills will not be a hiding place to you, if Christ do not hide you : No creature will screen or pity you, if Christ do it not : All the creatures will take part with their Creator against you, and instead of hiding you, they will be ready to divulge and accuse you to the pursuer, *the justice of God.* If you cry to the heavens, O cannot the vast expanded heavens afford me a hiding place from the tempest ? No, will they say, there is no refuge, no entrance here for the slights of Christ ; we will open only to rain fire and brimstone, and furious storms upon their heads. If you look to the air, and say, Is there no hiding place through the vast regions of the air for me ? No, the air is transparent, and will discover the criminal, and will raise a whirlwind of wrath to blow you into hell. If you cry to the sea, Is there no hiding place in all the depths of the spacious sea to shelter me from the Lamb's wrath ? No, the sea will give up her dead to be

judged, and will rage furiously against you. If you look to the earth, Is there no cave nor pit in all the earth to hide me from the dreadful storm? No, the earth, instead of hiding you, will open its mouth, and let you go quickly down to hell. for slighting the wounds of Christ, that were open to shelter you.

O let every sinner then flee now, while it is time, to these blessed wounds of Jesus for safety: *Be of good comfort.* O sinner, *rise, he calleth thee*; rise and come, for there is yet room; forsake all false shelters and lying refuges. Absolute mercy, a blameless walk, convictions, resolutions, prayers, tears, ordinances, ministers, will not be a hiding place to you, if Christ be neglected. Nothing can satisfy justice, or skreen from wrath, but the wounds and blood of the Redeemer; therefore see to make these only your covert and hiding place.

It concerns all to try if they have got into this hiding place, and if they be among Christ's *hidden ones*; so believers are called, Psal. lxxxiii. 3. If you be among the hidden ones, you will have a hidden life, and be acquainted with a life of secret prayer and correspondence with heaven, and a life of faith and leaning upon the Son of God; you will have hidden food, meat the world knows not of, the hidden manna of communion with God. You will have hidden clothing, and be acquainted with putting off your own rags, and putting on the hidden garments of Christ's righteousness.—You will have hidden strength, and be acquainted with borrowing strength from Christ both for work and warfare.—You will live upon hidden supports in dark and calamitous times, and draw comfort from the promises, and make these the ground of your hope.—If you be in Christ as your hiding place, you will be among Christ's poor and needy ones, for it is to such he is a refuge, Isa. xxv. 4. Do you see your own emptiness, ill deservings, and insufficiency, and depend upon free mercy for every crumb? Are you still begging at the throne of grace, and inclining to exalt free grace? Saying, *Not unto us, but to Christ be the glory*; he is *all our salvation and all our desire*. Happy are they who can lay claim to these marks.

ADVICE XVII.

From 1 Kings xix. 9. The Lord said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

IT is the concern of every man, to be always in case to give account to God of his errand and design in every piece of work he is employed in: and so ought communicants at the Lord's table, when God or his ministers ask them, as the Lord did Elijah, What doest thou here, communicant? What is your business and errand at this table? Can you say, I have many errands here: I come, upon my Saviour's call, to celebrate the memorial of his dying love, that his name may be

remembered to all generations? And *worthy is the Lamb that was slain* to be admired, adored, and praised for ever.— I come also to subscribe and seal a marriage contract with him in the most solemn manner, before all the persons of the glorious Trinity, before the elect angels, and before all the congregation. Seeing Christ doth once more call me to it, after many a broken tryst, and hath put on his marriage robes, his dyed garments, to win and engage my heart, I come to join hands with him before God, angels, and men, and take them all witnesses to the bargain. Surely this is a good errand: O that the long spoken of match may now hold.

Can you say, I am come to a rich and liberal Saviour, to supply my needs out of his fulness. I come on a good day when he uses to deal bountifully with the poor and needy, and to say to them, as the king to Esther, *What is thy petition? and what is thy request?*—Well, is thy petition ready? Dost thou come with the publican's petition, *God be merciful to me a sinner?* Or with David's petition, *Lord be merciful to me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee!* Or with that petition, *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than the snow?* Or with that, *Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee?* Or do you come with the Spouse's petitions and requests, *Draw me, and we will run after thee? Awake, O north wind; and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out?* Surely these petitions are agreeable to your Redeemer; see that you insist upon them, and press for an answer. Study to have a lively feeling at this time of all your wants.— Would you have them all supplied at once? Then come and embrace a crucified Jesus in the arms of faith, and he will fully answer them all. Would you have all your five senses satisfied at once? Behold Christ invites you to come to him to get it done.— Would you have the sense of seeing satisfied? Then he says to you, *Look to me, and be ye saved.*— *Behold me, behold me!* Behold King Solomon, with the crown on his head.— Would you have the sense of hearing satisfied? Then saith he, *Incline thine ear; hearken to me; give ear to my voice.* Would you have the sense of tasting satisfied? He saith, *O taste and see that God is good.* Would you have the sense of touching satisfied? He saith, *Reach hither thy hand, thrust it into my side;* feel the wounds made by the spear and the nails. Would you have the sense of smelling satisfied? Come then to Christ, whose *name is as ointment poured forth;* and whose *garments smell of aloes, myrrh, and cassia.* Come here and get all your spiritual senses satisfied at Christ's full feast.

Object. But I am afraid I am not among these invited guests that Christ will make welcome. Ans. Have you any of the Scripture characters of those that Christ invites? Are you among his friends? Do you wish well to his cause and in-

terest? then Christ saith to you, *Eat, O friends*, Cant. v. 1. Is your heart open to Christ's offers, and willing to accept him in all his offices? Then he saith to such, *he will come and sup with them*, Rev. iii. 20. Doth your heart love him? Then he saith, *He will manifest himself to such*, John xiv. 21. Are you poor and needy? Then he saith, *The needy shall not be forgotten*, Psal. ix. 18. Do you see yourself a lost sinner? Then he saith, *He is come to seek and call such*, Luke xix. 10. Matth. ix. 13. Do you feel sin to be a heavy burden? Then he bids the *heavy laden come to him*, Matth. xi. 28. Do you hunger and thirst after Christ? He saith, *He fills the hungry with good things*, Luke i. 53. Are you sensible of backslidings? He invites such to come to him, Jer. iii. 14. Are you desirous to put on the wedding garment of imputed righteousness? Then, to be sure, you shall neither be excluded, nor neglected. Do you earnestly seek for his Holy Spirit? He assures you, he is more willing to *give the Spirit to them that ask it, than loving parents are to give bread to their hungry children*. What is man's compassion to their children, in comparison of Christ to his? Well then, you may rest on Christ's word; for he is not more free in making promises, than faithful in making them good. He is a God that *keeps covenant to a thousand generations*. Venture then upon his word, and come to his table with hope and expectation to get all your wants supplied.

Let me again ask you, as God did Elijah, *What doest thou here*, communicant? Can you say that you are come to get a heart-affecting sight of the blood and wounds of the glorious Redeemer, so as you may love Christ, and hate sin more than ever? That is a good errand, and what God will surely approve. Come then, draw near, as it were, to the foot of the cross, and take a narrow and close view of his wounds, and of the blood that streams from them. Observe how fast the blood runs down from his hands to the ground, faster than ever tears ran down from your eyes for sin, that caused the shedding of his blood? Christ is not sparing of his blood for you, however sparing you be of your tears for him. Draw yet nearer, and lay your ear to his wounds, especially his five big wounds in his hands, feet, and side; which like so many mouths are wide opened to speak to believing communicants. Listen and hear what they say: What is the language of the two wounds in his hands? "Come to me, and cast your guilty soul into my bleeding out-stretched arms," and I will save you from the sword of justice.—Lay your ear to the two wounds in his feet, and hear what they say, "Run to me, and cast yourself down at my feet," and I will protect you from the avenger of blood.—Hearken to the deep wound in his side, saying, "Flee to me," O trembling dove, "and I will shelter thee in this cleft of the rock:" Thou hast now free access to the ark, behold the window opened in the side of it: look in

at it, and see my heart burning with love: Yea, *thrust in thy hand to my side*, unbelieving Thomas, and *feel my bleeding heart* how warm it is to you, and *be no more faithless, but believing*.

O communicant, can you come to the foot of Christ's cross, and see his wounds, and hear such language, and your heart not be affected with love to Christ, and hatred to sin? Can you behold Christ thus cruelly used, nailed to the tree, bleeding and dying in your room? Can you see the heavens turning black, the sun drawing in its head, the earth quaking, and the rocks rending at the sufferings of the Son of God, and your heart not quake for sin, that awakened the sword of justice against him as our surety? O what cause have you to be ashamed of the hardness and unconcernedness of your hearts at such a sight, and to cry to God that the heart of stone may be changed into a heart of flesh, and that the fire of Christ's love may descend and kindle such a flame in your soul, as may melt your frozen affections, and consume the stubble of your lusts and corruptions. Of old the Lord used to answer his people's prayers and sacrifices by fire from heaven: Pray that he may answer yours in like manner, by kindling a holy fire in your soul, as he did in the heart of the two disciples going to Emmaus; even a twofold fire, to wit, a fire of love to Christ, and a fire of indignation against sin. O love the Lord Jesus as your treasure and portion; let your thoughts be mainly upon him, and your souls breathing after him. Be much concerned for his interest and cause, and for the spreading of his kingdom and glory in the world. And be looking out, and longing for the full and perfect enjoyment of him. Likewise, keep up a strong aversion to sin, and to what is opposite to Christ, and injurious to his interest and kingdom; look always upon sin as the grand enemy and murderer of Christ, and therefore do not spare it.

ADVICE XVIII.

From John v. 6. Jesus saith unto him, *Wilt thou be made whole?*

THIS miraculous healing pool of Bethesda, at which the impotent man had lain thirty-eight years, was a type of the Messiah, and the fountain of his blood opened and set forth in gospel-ordinances, for healing all our spiritual diseases. And Christ's method of healing this man teaches us, That if we would be healed, we must be willing to wait at the pool of ordinances, till the Spirit come to stir the waters, apply the blood, and effect the cure. And in the mean time, we must be sensible of our disease, and look up to Christ our great physician, with earnest desires for healing. This is imported in Christ's question, *Wilt thou be made whole?*

O communicants, you are diseased by sin, and the plagues

of your hearts; these have blasted the primitive beauty of the soul, and brought on it a ghastly deformity, with much pain and weakness. Your diseases are manifold; atheistical thoughts, misbelief, and ignorance of God's truths, are woe-ful plagues; hardness of heart, and earthly mindedness, formality, and heart-wanderings in duty, trusting to your own righteousness, ingratitude, and backsliding from God; these are diseases you ought all to be sensible of. God would have every man to know the plagues of his own heart, 1 Kings viii. 38. in order to his being made whole. These are the sick that Christ is ready to come to heal, Matth. ix. 12. Christ first makes men sick and sensible before he makes them whole. Have you then any acquaintance with this healthful, preparatory sickness? Have you been made sensible of the dangerous nature of your disease, and thoughtful and solicitous about the issue of it? Have you been made to groan and moan under the burden of your disease, saying, *I am troubled and bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long*? Have you seen there is no healing in yourselves, or in your convictions, prayers, tears, or reformations? and that it is only in Christ, who hath an infinite fulness of merit and Spirit to suit your desperate malady? Are you willing to submit to the physician's prescriptions for healing? Be the pill or portion never so bitter, will you swallow it? Is it your cry, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do*? These are tokens of a right preparatory sickness. May the Holy Spirit work them in you.

The great meritorious means of your healing is the blood of Jesus Christ, which is set before you in the sacrament, for you to look to and apply by faith. As the Israelites were made sensible of their stings before they looked to the brazen serpent for healing, so must ye, in order to your prizing of Christ, and looking to his blood for healing your spiritual plagues. Now the fountain is open, and the healing streams run freely on both sides of the table: Come then, with a feeling of your diseases, and bathe in them for curing your hard hearts, your blind eyes, your weak hands, your feeble knees, your lame feet, your cold affections.—O impotent man, are you lying at the side of a pool while the waters are stirring? Have you no strength to move forward, and is there none to put you in? O then, look up to Christ, that healed the impotent man after many years waiting: Look to him by faith, as he calls you, Isa. xlv. 22. *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth*. As I offer myself to every diseased soul in particular, as well as to all in general, so let every soul embrace me as his Saviour, and apply my blood to his particular diseases. Faith is a healing grace, not only it's touches, but it's very looks are healing: hence Christ said to several who were healed, *Thy faith hath made thee whole*. O see then if you have got this healing faith.

Quest. How may I know if my faith be of this kind? *Ans.* A healing faith will make the soul heartily approve the gospel method of salvation, embrace God's testimony, and close with his gospel-offer in all respects. And it hath in it, an appropriating trust and confidence in the merit and virtue of Christ's blood, offered to the sinner in particular for his pardon and healing, which makes him rest upon Christ as his Saviour, and venture his soul and salvation upon his merit and promise. In this healing faith of a diseased sinner, there is a particular acceptance of, and confidence in a crucified Christ, corresponding to that free gospel-offer which he makes to the distressed soul. This faith brings him to a fixed resolution to lie at the physician's door, and depend upon him alone for healing. And it makes him cast open all the doors and rooms of his soul to receive and entertain his physician. Now, O poor impotent soul, if there be such a faith as this wrought in thee, then thy faith in Christ makes thee whole. The healing balm is applied, the cure begun, and shall shortly be perfected. *Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee; Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.*

It concerns you also, to try if the happy fruits and effects of his healing faith really appear in you, whereby you may conclude, that the strength of your disease is broken by virtue of the blood of Christ; and that you have got it applied for curing your heart-atheism, hardness, unbelief, pride, carnality, and particularly your weakness of hands and feebleness of knees: So that, though formerly they were so weak and feeble, that you could not lift up the one, nor bow down the other in prayer with any fervency and liveliness, yet now it is otherwise: Then this is a good token, the strength of the disease is broken, Christ has taken you into his hospital, and has you under cure, by the daily application of his blood and Spirit, and you are on the way of recovery.—Can you say further, That your drought is greatly abated, your thirst after sin and the world; and that your appetite for soul food, communion with Christ in ordinances, is happily increased? Can you bear the light better than before? Do you love searching sermons? All these are good signs.—Have you a high esteem of your physician, and do you entertain him kindly when he visits you? Have you recovered more strength and willingness to serve him in the way of commanded duties? And have you a holy fear and jealousy of every thing that might bring on a relapse into your old distempers? Then there is good hope, through grace, that your faith is a healing faith, the work of healing is begun, and so far carried on. Christ is our rock, and his work is perfect.

O then study to be thankful to your great physician, saying, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits toward me? Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, healeth all thy dis-*

eases, and redeemeth thy soul from distraction: who reneweth thy youth like the eagle's, maketh thee run and not weary, walk and not faint.—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us. Then the cure shall be fully perfected, and we shall always dwell beside our physician, and enjoy perfect and uninterrupted health for ever and ever—Express your thankfulness while you are here, by being witnesses for Christ, shining as lights before others, commending Christ and his ways to them, hating all sin, abstaining from it, reproving sin in others, and testifying against it. Be meek and lowly in your carriage, deal uprightly with all men, love all that bear Christ's image, be zealous for family religion, for sanctifying the Sabbath, and attending God's ordinances. Pray earnestly for the coming of Christ's kingdom upon the earth, and do all you can to promote it.

Watch and pray against backslidings and relapses into old distempers, and for that end be humble and self-diffident, be denied to your own strength and conduct, and be always jealous of your corrupt and deceitful hearts. *Live by faith upon the Son of God*, looking to him both for righteousness and strength. And because you are environed with enemies, *put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.* It is not the armour of your own resolutions, it is the armour of God, even the graces of the Spirit. It is not some graces or part of that armour, it is the whole armour, all the Christian graces.—It is not enough to have the armour in the house, or grace in the habit? no, it must be put on, daily worn and exercised. God hath provided different pieces of armour for you, the sword of the Spirit, the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, the breast plate of righteousness; but there is nothing for the back, for God disowns run-aways, Heb. x. 38. *If any man draw back, &c.*

ADVICE XIX.

From Exod. xii. 14. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial.

AS the Passover feast was a memorial both of the deliverance from Egypt, and the redemption of Christ, so a communion Sabbath is a memorial of sundry remarkable things, and ought to be held as a most memorable day by every believer, as it brings to our remembrance the greatest events and blessings.

1. A communion Sabbath is a lively memorial of Christ's death? for the sacrament administered that day by breaking

of bread, and pouring out of wine, is a visible representation of Christ's death, by the breaking of Christ's body, and pouring forth his blood on the cross; an event which God will have remembered till the end of the world, and through all eternity. Why? because by it God's perfections are highly glorified, and the elect world redeemed from hell. Christ did institute this ordinance to be a standing monument of his death while the world stands, 1 Cor. xi. 26. *As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.* And a monument of the wonderful love of God in giving his Son, and of the Son in giving himself to be a sacrifice for our sins, who were utterly unworthy of his love. By this memorial God would teach us the inestimable value of Christ's death, as the greatest obligation he ever put upon the world, and that we ought to declare our gratitude to God for the favour in the most open and public manner, and rely upon Christ's death and sacrifice as the foundation of all our hopes of pardon and salvation. The death of Jesus Christ is the most worthy subject of the discourse and praise, both of the redeemed on earth and the glorified in heaven, according to Rev. i. 5.—v. 9, 12. Hence it was that Moses and Elias, when they came from heaven to mount Tabor to wait upon the Lord, when transfigured, they made choice of Christ's death for the subject of their conversation, Luke ix. 31. And good reason, for Christ's death was the spring and cause of all their glory in heaven; neither Moses nor Elias had shined there, if it had not been for Christ's death.

2. A communion Sabbath is a special memorial to us of Christ's resurrection from the grave, which was on the first day of the week, and hence called the Lord's day, it being the most honourable day to our Lord Redeemer, and the most joyful day to all the redeemed, as it gave a clear proof of the perfection of Christ's sacrifice he offered to divine justice, and that our surety's satisfaction was accepted for our complete justification and absolution. Hereby it appeared that the elect's debt was discharged, their redemption finished, and their cautioner liberated from prison. This day Christ was *declared to be the Son of God with power.* As his death did shew him to be truly man, so his resurrection did manifest him to be truly God, and the great Redeemer of the world. This was the day of Christ's victory and triumph, in which he solemnly appeared to be the captain of our salvation, and obtained a glorious victory over all his and the church's enemies. This day he triumphed over the grave, death, and hell, and over sin, Satan, and wicked men. Now death was unstinged, the grave lost its purchase, the serpent's head was bruised, the powers of hell vanquished, and they were all swallowed up in victory. Likewise Christ by his resurrection, as the head of the church, gave to all the members of his body a sure pledge and earnest of their resurrection from the grave at the

last day, to immortality of eternal life. And on this day he rested from all his works of suffering and redemption, and rejoiced in the review of them with infinite delight and complacency. Now a communion Sabbath is a bright memorial of this glorious day, which is to be held in everlasting remembrance. O believer, remember it with thankfulness and joy.

3. This day is a memorial of your spiritual resurrection and new birth, as it declares your reception into God's family, and seals your title to the privileges of his children, that you are born *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, of the heavenly inheritance*. And though the Lord's supper be not a converting ordinance in its own nature, yet the preaching of a crucified Christ this day, has been the means of converting many thousands, and, in many others, of beginning the pangs and forerunners of the new birth, to wit, saving convictions of sin, and enquiries after Christ, and salvation through him, which have landed in their conversion. O pray that it may be such a day to you and many others.

4. This day is a memorial of your marriage day, because on it you enter into or renew your marriage covenant with Christ, the bridegroom of the church. Ministers, by the gospel-offers, court your souls to Christ, saying, as those did to Rebekah, Gen. xxiv. 58. *Will you go with the man Christ?* On the communion day, you solemnly give your answer as she did, *we will go*; and at the Lord's table you seal your engagement to him.—Likewise this day is a memorial of the consummation of your marriage with Christ at the great day, when he will come to receive home his espoused bride, and conduct her to the King's palace with joy and triumph. O prepare and long for that day.

5. The communion Sabbath is a memorial of your crucifying sin, which was the cause of your Redeemer's death. At this ordinance you draw virtue from the death of Christ, to kill sin and mortify strong lusts. Many wrestling believers have been enabled, at this occasion, to give a death's wound to those lusts and idols they had been long struggling against before. Resolve then, in Christ's strength, that sin shall not outlive this day; it is most just to revenge the death of Christ upon it.

6. A communion Sabbath is a memorial of Christ's conquest and coronation: For on this day Christ frequently receives the fruit and reward of the travail of his soul and his bitter agonies, by overcoming hearts, deposing Satan from his throne, and delivering souls from his thralldom, and translating them into his own kingdom. And, at this occasion, all worthy communicants, do, as it were, put a crown of glory and honour upon Christ's head, by renouncing sin, Satan, and all that had exercised dominion over them before, and giving their full and hearty consent, that Christ alone shall reign over them for ever. Christ is so delighted with this, that he es-

teems it as his coronation day, Cant. iii. 11. O come then, and yield your hearts to Christ, and pray that the communion day may be a day of his coronation and conquest, when sinners shall give their free and willing consent to the dethroning of Satan, and enthroning of King Jesus; come under Christ's sceptre and government, and abandon all his enemies, for he hath best right to the throne, and the justest title to reign over you.

7. A communion Sabbath is a lively memorial and emblem of the everlasting Sabbath above, and the heavenly feast there that shall never end, which Christ hath purchased and promised to his people. Why? because on a communion Sabbath here, there is an assembling of God's people to give thanks for redeeming love, and to feed upon Christ and his purchase, with satisfaction and songs of praise. In like manner, in the heavenly Sabbath, there will be a greater gathering of all the saints through all the world, to admire and praise God for redeeming goodness, and to sit down and feast with Christ for ever, upon the benefits of his purchase. O how great is the plenty, variety, the fulness of provision and satisfaction which is at the upper table! there they feed upon eternal redemption from hell and wrath, perfect freedom from sin and Satan, and from all afflictions and complaints: They feed upon the glorious presence of God in human nature, the constant shinings of his face, and intimations of his love; the bright discoveries of the works of God in creation and providence, and especially in the redemption of men by Christ. And in this festival they have perfect satisfaction, joined with eternal songs of praise. But O how far will the communion Sabbath above, excel those we have here below! Here we are oft put to mix our praises with mourning and tears, because of sin prevailing, or the Spirit withdrawing. Here Judases and unworthy guests thrust in among the disciples, but at the higher table there is no such mixture, all is pure and holy, and there is nought to allay their joy. Here our communion Sabbaths are soon over, and have nights, week days, and trials to succeed them; but the communion Sabbath above the feast, music, and assembly are everlasting, without interruption or uneasiness of any sort. O then improve these short Sabbaths as memorials and means to prepare you for this everlasting Sabbath, and in all ordinances here, keep your eye upon the heavenly festival.

ADVICE XX.

From Jeremiah iii. 19. How shall I put thee among the children? Thou shalt call me, My Father.

THOUGH there be great mountains of difficulties in the way of sinners' salvation, yet God, in his free mercy,

hath found out an expedient to get over them ; even by making choice of God as our God and Father in Christ. That you may admire his grace the more, take a view of the difficulties that lie in the way. God might say, *How shall I put thee among the children* of my family, who are the offspring of apostate and rebellious parents, who ungratefully departed from God without any provocation, sold themselves to the devil to do his drudgery, and rebelled against a most gracious God, and loving Father ? And how shall I put you, that have sinned after the similitude of Adam, among my children ? How shall I be reconciled to such treacherous dealers ?—Again, he might say, *How shall I put thee among my children*, who are condemned rebels in the hands of my infinite justice, and whom I am engaged by my truth to destroy, having said, *The soul that sinneth shall die*. Here is a burning mountain of justice in the way of your salvation ; how shall mercy get over it to help you !—How shall I put *you among my children*, whose hearts are full of enmity against me, and have all your days been plotting with the devil, and assisting him to fight against me, and pull the crown off my head ?—How shall I put you among *my children*, who are so deformed, polluted, and loathsome creatures as black as hell can make you, who have all your days been wallowing in the mire, and drenched in the puddle of sin ?—*How shall I put you among my children*, who have been all your days Satan's vassals, drudging at his work, grinding in his prison, and serving divers lusts and pleasures ?—*How shall I put you among my children*, who are impotent and lame, cannot run my errands, nor move one step in my service, nor do any thing to please or glorify me ? *How shall I put you among my children*, who hate my children and my image in them, and have preferred the devil's children to mine : *How shall I put you among my children*, that hate my children's bread, and choose rather to feed on husks with the swine ? *How shall I put you among my children*, that never liked my children's work, never loved prayer, praise, or any spiritual employment ! *How shall I put you among my children* who are sinners in Zion, have sitten many years under gospel-offers and calls to come to Christ, and have slighted them all, and boited the door against my dear Son ; and quenched the motions of my Spirit ! *How shall I put you among my children*, who have been so impenitent and hard hearted all your days, as never to drop one tear for any of all the black and heinous sins you have committed against me ? *How shall I put you among my children*, who have never kept one word to me, but have broken all your baptismal engagements, and gone over to the devil's camp, and harboured my enemies ! O how is it that God can come over these mountains, to put such as you among the children, and allow you to sit down at the chil-

dren's table, and eat of their bread? how is this consistent with the honour and holiness of God?

Blessed be God who hath found out a way for his mercy to come over all these mountains, by providing a Mediator and Surety to satisfy justice for our sins, and proclaiming a new covenant, that whosoever accepts of the Mediator, and makes choice of God as his God and Father in him, shall be taken into God's family, and be numbered among his children, notwithstanding of all that you have done to provoke him to cast you off. *Thou shalt call me, My Father.* Wonderful condescension, that he should allow such prodigals and run-aways at all to speak to him, and far more that he should put words in their mouths, and such kindly words, as, *My Father!* amazing goodness!

If you would make this address aright, and take hold of his covenant, so as you may be taken in among the children of God, and allowed to come to his table, and eat of their bread, you must be truly grieved for your long rebellion against your heavenly Father, and slighting his offers of mercy and pardon through Christ; you must be deeply humbled before him, and fall in with the gospel-method of access to him by a Mediator; you must quit all dependence on your own righteousness, and break with all your Father's enemies; you must make a free and hearty choice of God, as your God and Father in Christ, resting wholly upon Christ's mediation and righteousness for acceptance with God;—you must make a surrender of yourselves, and all you have to him, and engage in Christ's strength to serve him, as obedient children, desirous to please your Father in all things.

O come then, enter into covenant with God, and make choice of him as your Father in Christ; this is the only expedient for removing the difficulties in the way of your salvation, and for taking you into God's family, and numbering you among his children; unless you fall in with it, you can have no right to the children's bread, you will be unworthy communicants, and eat and drink judgment to yourselves. O then prevent it, by entering into covenant with God, that you may be taken in among the children. O young persons, let me put the matter home to you, as Joshua did to the Israelites, *choose you this day whom you will serve?* Choose you whom you will take for your father, whether God or the devil? Both are courting your hearts: which of them will you yield to? Is there any so foolish as to halt betwixt two opinions in this case? Is there any mad so as to stand in doubt whether to dwell with Christ or the devil for ever?—Now Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels, are struggling for your hearts; a cunning devil is holding, and a dying Saviour is drawing; now cast the balance, and shew which of them you incline to: The eyes of the holy Trinity are on you, the eyes of angels and men are on you,

to see what the issue will be. O then be wise and come presently, and make a surrender of your hearts to God in Christ. There is no music so melodious in God's ears, as the voice of young persons weeping and covenanting with God.—The season of youth is the male in your flock, it belongs to God, let him have it; they are cursed who deny it to him, and reserve the blind and the lame to God, such as the dregs of old age, or sickness, Mal. i. 7.

O communicants, see always to bring Christ along with you in your covenanting with God; never think of covenanting with him but by sacrifice; bring the sacrifice of Christ's death to atone for the breach of the first covenant, and bring his suretyship to answer for your faithfulness in the second, otherwise you can never call God your Father, nor be taken in among his children. Remember you are all engaged in this covenant by your parents undertaking for you in baptism, but as soon as you are capable, God will have you to renew it personally and explicitly, and to come sensible of your breaking this covenant, in running away from Christ's colours, and in going over to the devil's camp, and deeply sensible of your folly in delaying and standing out so long against Christ's gracious calls and free-offers. O come as penitent prodigals, and mourning backsliders, and with your faces Zionward, weeping as ye go, willing to enter into God's covenant, and give yourselves away unto the Lord, who is your rightful owner. Since Christ comes to you at this occasion as in streams of blood, it is surely proper that you meet him with streams of tears for sin, that caused his blood to be poured forth as water; and that you come presently to an open rupture with all his enemies, and particularly with your unbelief, your pride, your passion, your hypocrisy, and other sins that have pierced him. Break with them all, and come to him with the appropriating acts of faith, saying, *My Father, my Lord, and my God.*

ADVICE XXI.

From Luke v. 26. They glorified God, saying. We have seen strange things to-day.

THOSE who have been attending ordinances, ought to recollect what they have been seeing, doing, and hearing, and to be suitably affected therewith. Self examination is needful after communicating as well as before it. Had you the eyes of faith open to see and observe the goings of our God and King in his sanctuary, you may then say on the evening of a Communion Sabbath, *We have seen strange and marvellous things to-day.* You have seen the bloody tragedy of Christ's sufferings represented and re-acted; Christ with garments dipt in blood fighting a bloody battle

for us, in which the glory of the divine attributes are wonderfully displayed : Behold the free love and mercy of God, who was highly offended with us, yet contriving our redemption, and giving the Son of his love to die for us who were his enemies, and for this end creating a new thing in the earth, the incarnation of an infinite person, making a woman, a virgin, to be mother of him that created her ? God incarnate is a world's wonder, Jer. xxxi. 22. A strange thing ! The Son of God consents thus to humble himself and die for condemned criminals ; rather than he would see elect sinners plunged into the bottomless pit of eternal misery, in his love and pity he would put himself into it to keep them out. Here infinite wisdom is displayed in finding out a way to satisfy justice in punishing sin severely, and at the same time to gratify mercy in pardoning the sinner freely ! A strange device ! Justice and mercy are reconciled and kiss one another in man's redemption by Christ's death, the demands are both answered, and the glory of both equally discovered !—Here is seen the severity of justice and the fierceness of God's wrath against sin, in not sparing his innocent Son when he came to be our Surety, nor abating him one farthing of the debt ! Nay, he awakened the sword of justice against him, and poured out the vials of his wrath upon him : which kindled a fire in his soul, made him sweat, and fall to the ground ; and there he that made the heavens, lay grovelling in the anguish of his spirit, and sweating clots of blood. O how heavy was the burden of guilt that pressed his soul at this time.

You have seen a strange thing, blood streaming forth, of marvellous virtue, that can soften hearts, though harder than a stone ; that can heal all the wounds given you by the old serpent ; that can wash away the deepest stains of guilt, and make creatures black as hell, whiter than snow ! and though many thousands have been cleansed by it, yet the stream is nowise defiled, but still is pure and clear as crystal ! You have seen the amazing humiliation of the Son of God for vile worms ! a strange thing ! he was made a worm, a clod of dust ; yea, made sin for us ! Strange ! that he who thunders in the heavens, should be brought to lie in the manger, and cry in the cradle ! That he who framed the heavens should work with a carpenter in his trade ! That the great Judge of all the world, should be brought to the bar, accused as a malefactor, condemned and crucified betwixt two thieves, that such criminals as you might have room among the blessed ! You have seen the Lord of Life deprived of life, to purchase life for you ! spotless holiness made sin, and eternal blessedness made a curse to redeem you from sin, and the curse due to it ! A strange thing ! For the Holy One of God to make such an exchange with you, to take the curse, to give you the blessing ! to take shame, to give you glory ! to take death

to give you life ! to take your sins, to give you his righteousness ! A strange thing ? to see the righteousness of one man, a robe large enough and sufficient to cover many thousands, so as not one spot of guilt can be seen in them by the eye of infinite justice !—A strange thing ! to see Christ willing to have his side opened, to satisfy doubting souls of the reality of his love, that you might look into his heart, and see it panting with love to you, and hear him saying, as to Thomas, *Be no more faithless, but believing !* Strange ! to see him bowing his head on the cross, to whisper comfort into your ear, saying, now *it is finished* ; I have drunk the brook in the way, even the whole river of God's wrath, so that there is not one drop left for you ; every believer's debt is paid !—A strange thing ! to behold the Father pleased to see the bruises, agonies, and sufferings of his dear Son, that his enemies might be eternally freed from them !

A strange thing ! to see death conquering death ; the death of Christ conquering all his and our enemies ! If any had seen Christ entering the lists with death and hell, law and justice, he might have stood amazed, and said, O what will come of this champion that is engaged with such strong enemies ? But stay a little, and you shall see him lead captivity captive, triumphing over them all, and fetch all he came for out of the hand of the devil ! When Christ was brought to the cross, one might have thought that devils, wicked men and death, were triumphing over him ; but the word saith that, *on the cross he spoiled principalities and powers ; and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.* A strange mystery ! while enemies were scoffing and insulting him, Christ is triumphing over them ! A glorious conquest Christ's was ; for he not only subdued his enemies, but conquered them so far, as to make them useful and serviceable to him and his people ! Let us admire the conquest and the conqueror, though he were despised by men ; yet, like David, he gloriously subdued Goliath, that defied the armies of the God of Israel, he crushed the head of the old serpent that had bruised his heel, and enslaved his elect ; and he put all his other enemies to flight !

A strange sight you have seen to-day, God coming over the greatest mountains of difficulties, to pardon and save sinners ! taking rebels to be his children and favourites ; and exalting them above angels that never sinned ! You have seen the King of Glory courting poor slaves, black Ethiopians, and inviting them with outstretched arms to come and match with him, and sealing the marriage covenant with his blood ! You have seen him make a rich feast to them, and welcome them to feed on a crucified Christ, and all his purchase : Behold the heavenly pelican that feeds his young ones with his blood ! How amazing is the sight, that God should not only feast, but seal a marriage covenant with you, whose

descent is base, whose person is ugly, whose portion is nothing but diseases and misery ! O what strange sights you have seen to-day ! you have seen the love of Christ, the worth of souls, the price of pardon, an emblem of the higher table, to which many of your friends and acquaintances are gone, where the feast will never end !

You have seen, to day a strange act of mercy to guilty and ill deserving creatures, who have eat and drunk before the Lord, and yet on them he hath not laid his hand ; he hath made no breach upon any, as on Uzzah, Nabab, Abihu, or the men of Bethshemesh ! He hath not struck any dead with the bread in their mouths, or cup in their hands : nor sent any from the table to hell, though you must acknowledge you deserved rather to have had a cup of wrath put in your hand, than a cup of blessing ! A strange sight ! that gospel-offers are still continued to those who have abused many sacraments and sermons ! that Christ should be stretching out the sceptre of grace, and offering pardon and mercy to those who have crucified him afresh, and trampled his blood under feet.

Have you seen evidences of gracious changes wrought on hearts and wills by the word, secure souls awakened, blind eyes opened, proud creatures humbled, careless sinners made to cry, " Away with the world, and give me Christ, none but Christ. I count all things but loss and dung in comparison of Christ and his righteousness." These are strange sights, with which you should be much affected so as to hate sin, love Christ, bless God, and glorify him with your hearts, tongues and lives. It is the end of all God's works, that we should glorify him. Oh ! the best have reason to lament that they are so little affected with the marvellous things set before them in the word and sacrament ! Surely when you compare the rock whence you are hewn, and that on which God sets you ! and when you consider the low stoop Christ has made to purchase such clods of earth and sins with his blood, you have cause to be amazed at his love, and confounded at your own ingratitude, in being so little affected with his marvellous loving kindness, or melted for sin that was the cause of all his sufferings ! O let the strange and wonderful tokens of Christ's love, you have been seeing and sharing of in the sacrament, engage you to more thankfulness in heart and life. Have you been washing your robes white in the blood of the Lamb ? be careful to keep them clean, and do not defile them again in the mire of sin ; remember your vows, and keep your face still towards your Father's house, which is a pure and undefiled dwelling : you cannot take filthy hands or feet thither, for no unclean thing enters there, Psal. xciii. 5. *Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever.*

ADVICE XXII.

From Luke vi. 21. Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled.

IN Scripture, hunger and thirst, when applied to spiritual things, imports the same thing, to wit, a strong desire after spiritual and heavenly good things; which desire implies spiritual life, a feeling sense of wants, and a longing for food to the soul, together with the use of all proper means to obtain it. Now, the main object of this hunger or thirst is Jesus Christ, or God in Christ, Psal. xlii. 1, 2. lxiii. 1. Now there are many things in Christ which the hungry soul doth desire; as, 1. Christ's blood as the soul's ransom and cleansing fountain.—2. Christ's Spirit, as the soul's quickener, comforter, and guide.—3. Christ's righteousness, as the soul's clothing and protection.—4. Christ's word, as the soul's daily food and cordial.—5. Christ's supper, as the soul's feast and pledge of heaven.—6. Christ's graces as the soul's riches and ornaments.—7. Christ's way, or holiness in heart and life, as the soul's path to heaven.—8. Christ's day, as the soul's weekly market day, for getting in provision necessary for working, journeying, fighting, &c.—9. Christ's mansions above, as the soul's dwelling place for eternal communion with God and his saints.—Now, if ye would be truly blessed, ye must hunger and thirst for these things, firmly believing that in these your true happiness doth lie, and not in the world of sensual things.

Again, see that your hunger be of the right kind, that it be insatiable, so that nothing can put it off or satisfy it but Christ: the truly hungry soul will not be pleased with the best duties, ordinances, ministers, sermons, sacraments, or any thing without Christ. The hungry soul will adventure on the greatest difficulties for Christ; he will part with any thing for him: All the treasures, honours, music, or comforts of life, cannot satisfy him, none but Christ the soul's food. True hunger will put him upon the use of all means, and make him content to take Christ on any terms, and put a blank in his hand, and say, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* I'll subscribe to any thing, only give me Christ, give me food to my starving soul.

Such hungry souls are blessed, because he hath promised to satisfy and fill them. It is God that creates the appetite and excites the hunger, and therefore he will satisfy it. The hungry are the most earnest and importunate beggars at the throne of grace; and such he hath promised to hear, Luke ii. 9. The hungry will wait at God's door for an alms, and he promises that those who *wait for him shall not be ashamed*, Isa. xlix. 23. The proud, the rich, the full, and self-righteous will go away, if the door be not presently opened, but the hungry will ask, seek, knock, and knock again, and

wait till God think fit to open and grant an alms. These God is bound by his word to satisfy. He is their Father, and hath the bowels of a father to pity his children. He hears the ravens and young lions when they cry, and feeds them, and will he not hear his own children, and fill their hungry souls? Yea, he hath promised it.

But what is that fill he promises to the hungry? Ans. He fills them with divine discoveries, as with the knowledge of God's greatness and majesty, so as to make them sensible of their own nothingness; and with the knowledge of God's goodness and free love to sinners in Christ, so as to make them fall into raptures of admiration, and cry, *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity*, Micah. vii. 18. He fills them with a discovery of the excellency of the gospel remedy for perishing souls, so as to make them say it is a device every way worthy of God, Christ's Mediatorial offices, his covenant, his righteousness, his blood, his purchase, and fulness, do nobly answer all our souls wants and necessities: they deliver us from sin and misery, and they bring us grace and glory. He fills his hungry people with gospel-promises, by letting them see their name in them, and giving them faith to take hold of them and apply them. Many a sweet fill do they get from such promises as these, Jer. xxxii. 40. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 28. Jer. iii. 22, 1. John ii, 1. Rom. xvi. 20. Heb. xiii. 5. He fills them with the intimations of the pardon of their sins, and with peace and joy in believing, Rom. xv. 10, so as to banish their doubts and fears. What a sweet fill doth Christ's voice give them, such as that in Matth. ix. 2. Luke xxiv. 36, 38. John xiv. 27. Rom. viii. 1. He fills them with resolution and strength to conquer sin, perform duties, resist temptations, and bear afflictions: when he speaks to them as to Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 9. or as in Isa. xli. 10. and xlii. 2. He fills them by giving them sweet returns of prayer, assurance of his love, and of his gracious presence with them. He fills them by making over Christ's fulness and purchase to them, and by giving Pisgah views of the promised land, and will at last fill them with glory.

It is only the hungry that shall be filled, the needy, the humble and self-denied, for *the rich are sent empty away*, Luke i. 53. the rich. that is those who are filled with a conceit of their own strength and sufficiency, their gifts and performances, and go about to establish a righteousness of their own, and see not their need of Christ. These shall go empty away, for they do not prize Christ, nor are willing to come up to his terms. They go away empty of Christ and his riches; but alas, they go away filled with pride and self-conceit, filled with love to sin, love to the world, and love to their own righteousness. Oh this is a miserable fill!

O hungry souls, bless God that gives you this appetite when others are rich and full in their own conceit, labour to

preserve this appetite, and wait about God's house and table, where soul food is to be had; and bless him even for the smallest crumbs, as when he gives you a greater hatred of sin, a higher esteem of Christ, a great desire after heart holiness, a restlessness without Christ, a willingness to part with all for Christ, or stronger resolutions to cleave to Christ and duty. These crumbs are worthy of thanks though ye be not filled with joy and peace in believing. Wait on the Lord, and wait for him in every ordinance and duty of his appointment, believing him to be faithful who hath said, *They shall not be ashamed who wait for me.*

Object. Some may say, We have waited long, and have not got a crumb. Ans. Some eminent saints have been put to cry, *How long wilt thou forget me, Lord, shall it be for ever.* Psal. xiii. But they must wait in the use of means until God's time come, and adore the sovereignty of God in his dealings with them. His people have resigned themselves to the care and wisdom of God, who knows what is best for them; believing there is a time coming when God will make up for all their losses. O believers, there is a fill remaining for you above, that will soon make you forget all your days of scarcity here below.

ADVICE XXIII.

From Psalm cvii. 2. Let the Redeemed of the Lord say so.—

WHAT is it such persons should say? Let them both say and sing of God's goodness and mercy to them; for (of all men) the *redeemed of the Lord* have most reason to be thankful for Christ's distinguishing mercy in freeing them from the law's curses and Satan's power, from the guilt, dominion, and punishment of sin; from the sting of death and the wrath to come. Believers are redeemed both from sin and hell.

Q. How may I know if I be among these happy ones, *the redeemed of the Lord*? A. Take these marks.—Did you ever see your slavery and bondage by nature, so that no less than an infinite price and power could ransom and liberate you? Was you so convinced and humbled with the sight of your misery, as to be content of freedom from it on any terms? Have you ventured your soul on Christ's merit and mercy, conform to gospel-offers, being well pleased with the frame of the new covenant, and the self-denying way of saving souls by Christ's imputed righteousness?—Are you content with Christ to be your King and Ruler, as well as your Priest and Saviour?—Have you given up yourself to the Lord to live for him, desirous that his love may always constrain you to do his will? O then, you may conclude, you are among *the redeemed of the Lord*, and that his blessed body was broken, and his blood shed to ransom you.

Peculiar reasons have you to extol his goodness and mercy above others. Why! he hath opened your eyes to see the beauty of your Redeemer, and the ways of holiness, when others remain in blindness! He hath opened your ears to hear the joyful sound, and fall in with it when others are deaf to it. He hath loosed your tongues to pray and praise, when others are dumb and tongue-tied! He hath opened your heart to entertain Christ crucified, when others shut him out! He hath brought you to a feeling of the evil and burden of sin, when others are without feeling! He hath given you appetites for spiritual food, when others relish nothing but things earthly: He hath given you the promise and hopes of complete redemption from sin and misery above, when others live without Christ, and without hope! Let *the redeemed of the Lord* then sing and praise him above all others.

O believing communicants, *redeemed of the Lord*, give him thanks and express your thankfulness by your thoughts and actions, as well as your words; namely, by your high esteem of your Redeemer, and of his blood and righteousness that purchased all for you. By avoiding every thing that dishonours him, and flying from the sins that are common and fashionable where you live. By commending your Redeemer to those who know him not. By standing up as witnesses for him, and for his truths and ways, in the midst of a Christ despising generation. By strictly observing the Lord's day, as being a weekly memorial of redeeming love. By longing for the enlarging of Christ's kingdom, and rejoicing at the news of it, and by putting honour on all the friends and lovers of the Redeemer.

Lastly, Shew your thankfulness by singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, in praise of redeeming love, and of the Redeemer's person, offices and sufferings, a subject that can never be exhausted. Sing praises to the great God, that humbled himself to leave his high throne, that came down to dwell in flesh and die for us; and to rise again, and to ascend to heaven, to take possession of the inheritance, and make accommodation for us there. On this account the Spirit calls us four times to sing praises in one breath, Psal. xlvii. 6. *God is gone up with a shout; sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises.* This singing is most acceptable to God, and profitable to ourselves. As God makes it the eternal work of heaven, so he would have us frequently employed in it on earth. But Oh! how do we fail here? Reformed churches abroad do far exceed us in the frequency of this duty, as they do in the variety and sweetness of their tunes.

What is singing, but a kind of reading with meditation and deliberation, in order to give the more free vent to the thoughts and affections to breathe and ascend heavenwards. The wise God institutes singing in his praise, because the

melody of the voice helps to affect the heart, and raise the thoughts, "for he knoweth our frame." And indeed it is only when the heart corresponds with the voice, that the music is pleasant to God : To this purpose one saith well :

Sweet melody the hymn affords,
When with the lines the heart accords.

O let the redeemed sing praise, and give thanks to God for his unspeakable gift, both now and for ever more. Amen.

I shall add no more Sacramental Advices in the preceding method, but shall shut up all with a cluster of short scripture directions, proper not only for communicants, but for all Christians travelling heavenward.

A SHORT
CHRISTIAN DIRECTORY;

CONSISTING OF

Forty SCRIPTURE DIRECTIONS, proper for all
CHRISTIANS intending Heaven.

IT ought to be the great concern of all baptised persons to renew their baptismal covenant betimes, and, by a private transaction with God, to take the baptismal engagements upon themselves, and thereby become Christians by their own personal consent and surrender, as well as by their parents' dedication; and afterwards go and seal this transaction publicly, by partaking of the Lord's supper. Concerning this, I have given directions in the Young Communicant's Catechism. Only I would intreat all my readers, for Christ's sake, and their own souls' sake, to beware going about this work in a superficial or formal manner, and of resting upon lip-labour, and the external part of the duty. O never be easy until you inwardly and heartily close with Christ, according to the gracious gospel-offer which God makes unto you. Take no rest till you get your souls united to Christ by a true faith, and savingly renewed and changed from nature to grace by the efficacious working of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. And as you are to close with Christ by faith in your first conversion, so you must study to live all your days to a life of faith on the Son of God, always making use of him, and leaning on him for righteousness and strength. I will say no more by the way of preface, but proceed to branch forth the Christian's work and exercise in this lower world, in the following Scripture precepts and directions.

Direction I. *Let never the world come in God's room.* Beware of the love of the world; often think upon that awakening word, 1 John ii. 15. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* Oh, this is the ruining sin of multitudes, their love to, and complacency in, the things of the world. Nay the most part of men are damned for loving the world too much, and loving God too little. Remember

the faster grips ye take of the world, the looser are your grips of Christ; and the more you get of the world, ye have the greater account to make to him that gives it, and has made you the steward of it; therefore use your money and goods for his service and honour: You must answer for your riches, but your riches cannot answer for you. Also, remember if ye set your hearts on the world, it will be all that you will get; to have a competent portion of things earthly is a mercy, but to have earthly things for our only portion, is a dreadful misery. Wherefore, while your hand is in this world, let your heart be in heaven. Let the business of your soul be the business of your life.

Direct. II. *Keep up the same opinion now of the things of the world, that you will have when you come to die.*—You see what a low price men set upon the riches, pomp, and glory of the world when they are dying: Had you the same thoughts of these things now, I am sure you would not venture the loss of your souls, the loss of God's favour, the loss of a good conscience, and the loss of eternal glory, for a whole world; far less for a small trifle of it, as many now do. Think much upon that text Matth. xvi. 26.

Direct. III. *Be not strangers to yourselves, but often commune with your own hearts; as directed, Psal. iv. 4.* When others are censuring and back-biting their neighbours, be you searching and censuring yourselves. Self-examination is a most necessary duty. Examine yourselves after every ordinance, what good you got by it, what entertainment you gave your Saviour; ask how were your hearts affected by such a word, &c. Commune with your hearts about your title to heaven: Judge of your eternal state by your spiritual state, and judge of your spiritual state by the delightful and customary actions of your lives; judge of it by your hatred of sin, and love to Christ, and by the conscience you make of secret prayer, and reading God's word. In communing with your hearts, among other things, ask yourselves, What are likeliest to be your death-bed thoughts and wishes? Will they be such as these? O that I had loved Christ more and the world less! O that I had improved gospel-opportunities better! O that I had accepted Christ's calls and offers more readily! O that I had spent more time in prayer and searching the scriptures! O that I had been more spiritual and fervent in every duty. Ask yourselves, what are those sins or practices which will be most frightful to look back on, when you see yourselves just within a step of God's tribunal? Study always to keep up death-bed thoughts of things. Commune with your hearts about these things upon your bed, and also before you go to bed, let conscience bring in the accounts of every day before you lie down: mourn over the sins of every day, and apply the blood of Christ for washing them away. Thus keep short reckonings with God and conscience, that you may not have

old scores to clear when you come to a death-bed. Likewise, at these communings, let every man ask himself, What is my present state and condition? Would I be willing to lie down and die in the frame and disposition I am in just now? And I know not but I may be as near death this moment, as if my friends were looking on me struggling with the pangs of death on my bed.

Direct. IV. *Begin early in the service of God, and give him the days of youth*, Eccl. xii. 1. Those who are young cannot begin their service to God too soon; God desires it, to shew God's delight in early piety. - We see the scripture commends young ones for it; it is recorded with honour, that the child Samuel ministered to the Lord, 1 Sam. ii. 18. Josiah is commended for his tender heart for God in his tender years, 2 Kings xxii. 19. Christ was well pleased with the hosannas of the children that attended him, Matth. xxi. 15, 16. When Solomon in his youth sought God for wisdom, it is said, *the speech pleased the Lord*, 1 Kings iii. 10. So Timothy is commended for his early piety, 2 Tim. iii. 15. And God says to Israel, *I remember the kindness of thy youth*, Jer. ii. 2. And he recommends to every one to begin soon, Eccl. xii. 1. The young disciple was most beloved, and leaned on Christ's bosom.—Now is the proper time, O young people, for making your acquaintance with God, and for laying a good foundation for the time to come. Repentance is easiest in younger years; sin is then less rooted, Satan's grips less fastened, gospel-offers are not so slighted, the Spirit is not so much quenched, the conscience not so hardened, the heart is then more easily melted and broken, God seeks the male of the flock, the best of your time, O then let him have it. If you forget God when young, it is just with God to neglect and forget you when old.

Direct. V. *Shun the company that shuns God, and keep the company that God keeps*, Psal. cxix. 63, 115. Prov. xiii. 20. Look on the society of the carnal or profane as infectious, but reckon serious praying persons the excellent ones of the earth. Such will serve to quicken you when dead, and warm you when cold. Make the liveliest of God's people your greatest intimates; and see that their love and likeness to Christ be the great motive of your love to them, more than their love and likeness to you. It is not true Christian love, but party love, to love only those who are of your sentiments in all things. Yea, though they should differ from you in some things, if you see God's image on them, and that they have fellowship with the head, you ought to love them, and have fellowship with them; keep up the communion of saints, for it is one of the articles of our creed. Christian conference and social prayer have been blessed of God to preserve the life of religion in many places, therefore let those who fear the Lord speak often one to another, Mal. iii. 16.

Direct. VI. *Put a high value upon precious time, and lose none of it by sloth*, Eph. v. 16. Esteem time as those do who are at the point of death; and always remember that it is impossible to call back time again. Look upon the loss of time as a greater loss than the loss of your money, or any worldly thing; and therefore shun time-wasting games, unprofitable diversions, and idle talking. Especially value the most precious part of your time, such as the morning of youth, the morning of every day, and particularly the precious time of the Lord's day. Look on the Lord's day as a tryst day with heaven; lose not any part of it, but carefully improve it for God and the good of souls, both your own and others. It is want of thought, not want of work, that makes any say, they have not time to spare.

Direct. VII. *Allow a little time every day to think upon eternity*. Consider the import of these words, *everlasting punishment, and life eternal*, Math. xxv. 46. O eternity, eternity, that is never nearer an end, but always, as it were, but beginning! One serious thought of eternity is enough to strike a careless soul to the heart. Why? he stands every hour at the door of eternity, and if he step in while out of Christ, he is eternally undone, eternally in despair. O the swift river, time, is carrying every one of us into the ocean of eternity, an ocean that hath neither bank nor bottom, and what each of us must soon launch forth into. What an awful thought is this! Every one of us is within a step of being eternally blessed, or eternally cursed! Eternally saved or eternally damned! O if every one would believe and consider this and be wise, so as to pray as for eternity, repent as for eternity, hear as for eternity, live as for eternity, obey and do every thing as for eternity.

Direct. VIII. *Throughout your whole life, be mindful of the chief business of life*, Phil. ii. 12. Now the business of life is to make it sure that Christ is your life; it is to think much on the end of your life, and provide for it; it is to lay hold on eternal life, and keep still sight of it: So that *when Christ, who is your life, shall appear, ye may also appear with him in glory*, Col. iii. 4. Let not religion be your diversion, but your business; mind it as the *one thing needful*; give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. Make sure your calling, and thus you make sure your election. If you would make sure your calling, make it sure that you are united to Christ by faith, and that Christ is the life of your souls. Do not rest in convictions, nor in tears, or prayers, or duties, nor in any thing short of Christ. Press both for an interest in Christ, and for the assurance of it. Assurance is attainable, and actually attained by many; and it is most necessary for cheerful obedience, for bearing the cross, rejoicing in the Lord, giving thanks for redeeming love, and for performing many other duties of Christianity.

Direct. IX. *Let the rational soul govern, and the body be subservient to it*, 1 Cor. ix. 27. Alas, many on the contrary make their souls drudges to their bodies, and employ their noble faculties wholly in devising how to please the flesh. Ah, what fools are they that mind nothing but their bodies! Why? they are the greatest enemies to their bodies, for, by so doing, they forfeit the eternal happiness of their bodies, as well as of their souls. Whereas those who prefer their souls, and mind them chiefly, they consult the happiness of their bodies, as well as of their souls; for the body is never so well as in heaven; when fashioned like Christ's glorious body, then it is in perfect and eternal health.

Direct. X. *Study both to live and die in the exercise of repentance and godly mourning for sin*, Math. v. 4. Some may think repentance a melancholy word, but it is one of the sweetest words in all the book of God: It is a gospel duty, for the law or covenant of works admitted of no repentance; it is the effect of God's free love in and through Christ, to open the door of repentance to fallen sinners; it cost Christ his blood to obtain it for us, and it is his free gift to us, Acts v. 31. Surely it is good news to hear that our Sovereign bids poor condemned criminals, that were brought to the place of execution, repent, and throw themselves down at his feet, and they shall get pardon. It was the sum both of John's and Christ's preaching, *repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. It was the saying of a godly minister, "that if he were to die in the pulpit, he would wish to die preaching repentance; and if out of the pulpit, he would wish to die practising repentance." Augustine saith, repentance "is the fittest disposition both for dying Christians and ministers." And it is written of himself, that he died with tears in his eyes, weeping for sin. This is a duty never out of season, therefore study daily to keep up a tender and mourning frame, maintain contrition of heart and abhorrence of sin, and for that end take every day a turn on mount Calvary. Many think it is a sad thing to be repenting on earth, but it is a far sadder thing to be repenting in hell. Seek repentance from God for Christ's sake; say with Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18. *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God*.

Direct. XI. *While you mind the necessary study of holiness or inherent righteousness, let it never take the place of imputed righteousness*, Rom. x. 3. Psal. lxxi. 16. Inherent righteousness indeed is to be loved, but imputed righteousness only is to be trusted; for though inherent righteousness or holiness be a necessary qualification for heaven and salvation, and our evidence for it, yet it is imputed righteousness only that is the foundation of it, and our title to it. Let Christ's name be dear to you, *the Lord our righteousness*.

Direct. XII. *Employ Christ as your surety in all cases, and in every strait go to him for relief*, Psal. cxix. 122. Isa. xxxviii. 14. Study therefore to be well acquainted with your surety, and live near him. When the law demands payment of debt, and threatens you with prison, look to Christ, and cry, "Lord, be surety for me; Lord, undertake for me."—When you are called to perform duties, bear afflictions, resist temptations, struggle with corruptions, engage with enemies, &c. look still to Christ to be your surety, and to undertake for you; plead with him to make that promise good to you, Deut. xxxiii. 25. *As thy days so shall thy strength be.*

Direct. XIII. *As you expect to live with Christ in heaven, study to live to Christ on earth*, 2 Cor. v. 15. Phil. i. 21. If you would live to Christ here, then you must make Christ's honour and glory your ultimate end in all your designs and actions; and make your most valuable interests subservient to his interest and glory. Study an universal conformity to Christ's holy laws and precepts, and make it your great business to approve yourselves to Christ in all things: Choose the things that please him, and carefully avoid every thing that is displeasing to him, Psal. cxix. 30. Isa. lvi. 4.

Direct. XIV. *Cleave fast to Christ, and the way of holiness, whatever it may cost you*, Acts xi. 23. 2 Tim. iii. 12. Think not the worse of Christ and his ways, that they are persecuted or reproached, and that few do own them. Christ foretold this, and saith, *his way is a narrow way that few walk in*. Join with the little flock to whom the kingdom is promised, which will abundantly compensate all your sufferings for Christ. Never follow a multitude to do evil, but cleave to Christ however few join you.

Direct. XV. *Seek the approbation of God above that of men*, 2 Cor. x. 18. What is the applause of worms to the smiles of the God of heaven? What would it avail us to have poor men like ourselves to commend us, when the great God that made us doth condemn us; no matter though men censure or condemn our actions, if God approve and commend them. *It is a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment, but he that judgeth us is the Lord*, 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

Direct. XVI. *Be much employed in admiring God's redeeming love, and Christ's suretyship for us*, 1 John iii. 1, 16. This is the employment of the redeemed to all eternity, Rev. v. 9. And all who go to heaven must be acquainted with their work while here, Rev. i. 5. O what matter of eternal wonder and praise is there in God's giving his dear Son to be our surety and sacrifice, and in the Son's voluntarily undertaking it!

Direct. XVII. *Delight much in thinking and speaking of Christ, and particularly of his death and suffering for us*, Luke ix. 31. Rev. v. 9, 12. Oh, did he wade through a sea of wrath, a sea of blood, a sea of sorrows and sufferings, to

bring redemption to us? And will we ever forget him! The great God takes great pleasure in the work of our redemption, and is well pleased with our Redeemer who undertook it. God repented he made man, but never repented his redeeming man. Now, what God delights in, we should delight in, especially since we reap the benefit. We see, from Luke ix. Rev. v. that the subject of Christ's death is matter of discourse and praise to the glorified society above. When Moses and Elias came from heaven to mount Tabor to wait upon their transfigured Lord, they chose Christ's death for the subject of their conversation: Why? Christ's death was the spring and cause of all their glory in heaven: Neither Moses nor Elias had shined there, had it not been for Christ's death. And shall not we, here below, delight in thinking, speaking, and singing of this noble subject, which is the ground of all the happiness we either have, or hope for!

Direct. XVIII. *Treat objections raised against your closing with Christ, as suggestions of the enemy, that is seeking the ruin of your souls.* Reject them as Christ did Peter's counsel, Mat. xvi. 23. *Get thee behind me, Satan.* As Satan would have hindered Christ's dying for us, so he would hinder us from relying on Christ's death. Oh, saith one, I am unworthy of any share in Christ's death. Ans. If you will have nothing but what you are worthy of, you must have nothing but hell. What was Abraham, Paul, Magdalene, the thief on the cross, the idolatrous Corinthians worthy of, before the Lord called them? Whatever be your unworthiness, are you willing to apply Christ's blood? Then see what Christ saith to you, Rev. xxii. 17. *Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.* Oh but, saith another, my sins are heinous. Ans. Canst thou be more guilty, than Christ is gracious? Doth he not promise to wash away sins that are like *scarlet and crimson*, Isa. 1. 18. and tells you, 1 John i. 7. That *his blood cleanseth us from all sin*? O bless him for that word *all*. Do not then believe Satan, who would tempt thee to think that God hath cast thee off; but, in spite of all he can say, still believe God's faithful word, that there is mercy enough in God, merit enough in Christ, power enough in the Spirit, and room enough in the gospel-offers and promises to you. Believe that word, Lam. iii. 25. *The Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.* Say to thy soul, "Can this word of God fail? Has God made thee willing to wait and seek for him, and is he not willing to be found of thee? O my soul, dost thou not see an infinite perfection of Christ's righteousness, in Christ's blood and merits." We may see an end of all earthly perfection, but we can see no end of Christ's perfection, which is infinite.

Direct. XIX. *Study much these great gospel lessons of denying yourselves, and exalting God's free grace, Matth.*

xvi. 24. 1 Cor. i. 31. The design of the gospel is to cast down self, and all idols, that God alone may be exalted ; it is to make self nothing, and God all, in point of wisdom, strength, righteousness, and glory ; it is to take man wholly off himself ; and cast him on Christ for the whole of his salvation. It is a good sign of a saving change upon the heart, when a man is thus humbled and cast into the gospel mould, when self-loving is turned into self-loathing, self-admiring into self-abhorring, self-excusing into self-accusing, and self-seeking into self-denying.

Direct. XX. *Draw all your strength for work and warfare from Christ, and present all your duties to God in Christ's name*, Isa. xlv. 24. Col. iii. 27. Christ himself tells us, *without him we can do nothing*, John xv. 5. that is, nothing aright, or nothing that is acceptable to God. All our duties, if acceptable, must be done in Christ's strength, and covered with his righteousness. The Apostle owns that *of himself he could not so much as think a good thought*, 2 Cor. iii. 5. but he *could do all things through Christ that strengthened him* Phil. iv. 13. And hence he exhorts us to *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, Eph. vi. 10. Let us think, before we go to duty, from whence our strength for it must come, and study to fetch it in by faith, and believing ejaculations ; and when we are assisted, let us ascribe the glory to Jesus. Be assured of this also, that your most costly sacrifices are unsavoury, if they be not perfumed with the fragrant incense of Christ's merits and intercession ; and that your fairest *righteousness is but as filthy rags* in God's sight, if Christ's righteousness do not cover it. Let it therefore be your constant language, *In the Lord Jesus have I righteousness and strength*, Isa. xlv. 24.

Direct. XXI. *In all the actions of your life, set the Lord still before you*, Psal. xvi. 8.—xxv. 15. Acknowledge him in all your undertakings, and by faith and prayer commit your way to him ; look to him for direction and success, and depend on him as the Father of your mercies, the sum of your bliss, the strength of your life, the staff of your bread, the breath of your nostrils, and the length of your days. Set the Lord always before you as your Almighty Creator, your loving Redeemer, your rightful owner, your careful preserver, your all sufficient portion, your holy pattern, your observing witness, and your awful judge. Undertake and perform all your actions under a sense of God's all-seeing eye, and of your being accountable to him for all you do.

Direct. XXII. *Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. x. 31. We eat and drink to God's glory, when we do it for the end that our bodies may be fitted to serve our souls in honouring and serving God ; and when we receive these mercies with thankfulness from the hand of God, and depend upon God's blessing

to make them nourishing to us; and when we remember we are but stewards of what we possess, and are accountable to God the proprietor how we improve these earthly blessings to his honour and service.—You must also apply the business of your callings to God's glory, and this you do, when you depend on God to bless you in it, and to prosper the work of your hands, and to arm you against all the sins, snares, and temptations, which your business may give occasion to. You ought also to pay and receive visits, and attend company with an eye to God's glory, by blessing God for giving you friends and earthly accommodations, and looking to God for wisdom to behave yourselves so, as you may do no harm to those ye converse with, nor get any harm from them: But on the contrary, may be helped to do them good, and get benefit from them. You are also to undertake journies for God's glory, to look to him for protection by the way, and for direction, through-bearing, and success.

Direct. XXIII. *Spend as much time as possible in secret prayer and converse with God*, 1 Thess. v. 17. And that you may do this with delight, endeavour to keep your hearts always in a serious praying frame, with an abiding impression of God upon your spirits. There is a great difference between a serious fit and a serious frame. Ahab, Saul, Felix, and others had their serious fits, but religious persons only keep, their souls in a serious frame, and strive to be *in the fear of the Lord all the day long*, as God enjoins, Prov. xxiii. 17. Prayer, that is acceptable to God, must be performed with faith, delight, and liveliness, and not with deadness and weariness, as if it were a task or burden. A life without prayer, or a prayer without life, are both hateful to the God of our life. He is the living God whom we worship, and hath no pleasure in dead performances: but they who delight themselves in duty, shall have the desires of their hearts granted them, Psal. xxxvii. 4. Surely they who spend their days in faith and prayer, shall end their days in peace and comfort.

Direct. XXIV. *Make conscience of family religion, as well as of the closest duties*, Josh. xxiv. 15. 2 Sam. vi. 20. Neglect not family prayer and praises, reading the word, catechising children and servants. sanctifying the Sabbath, exhorting to duty, reprovng and curbing sin. Religion and reformation must begin in families, if we would wish it to be national and universal. God is the author and founder of families, and therefore should have homage from families, as such, by the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and praise. Go to him to bless family mercies, supply family wants, sanctify family trials, and redress family grievances. Early train up children in the way they should go, pray much for them, and for God's blessing on the means of their education.

Direct. XXV. *Begin and end every day with God*, Psal. v. 3.—iv. 8. Let prayer be the key to open the heart to God in the morning, and lock it against all his enemies at night. Let no Christian say he cannot pray; for prayer is as necessary to him as breath, Lam. iii. 56. Let none say, they have not time for it? better take time from sleep than want time for prayer. Think it not enough to say your prayers, but mind you must pray your prayers, pray with sincerity and fervour. Think with yourself, this morning may be my last morning, or this night, my last night; for certainly that morning cometh for which you will never see the night, or that night of which you will never see the morning. Let the conclusion of every day put you in mind of the conclusion of all your days, by the long night of death, that will put an end to all your work, and bring you to count and reckon with your Great Master about your work. O to lie down every night reconciled with him! O that we could lie down and leave our hearts with Christ, and compose our spirits so, as if we were not to awake till the heavens are no more.

Direct. XXVI. *Seeing none knoweth what a day may bring forth, spend every day as it were to be your last*, Prov. xxvii. 1. Look on yourselves as standing every day at the door of eternity, and hundreds of diseases and accidents ready to open the door to let you in. No doubt you have sometimes apprehended yourselves nearer death than you think yourselves just now; yet it is certain that death was never so near you, nor judgment as near you, as they are at present. We, who stand every hour at the door of eternity, should spend our precious hours with the greatest frugality, seeing the work we have in hand is soul-work, and work on which eternity depends; and the time we have to work it in, is very short, and cannot be recalled. This short life being only a passage to eternity, it should be spent as a continual preparation for eternity. Surely those who have immortal souls so near eternity, have other work to do than trifle away time on tippling, idle talking, gaming, and such diversions.

Direct. XXVII. *Sojourn in this world as travellers, keeping so loose from the world, as to be able to pack up and be gone from it upon short warning*, 1 Pet. i. 17. 1 Cor. vii. 29, 31. We have no continuing city nor certain abode here; therefore let us always be ready to arise and depart. And if we would be right travellers towards Zion above, we must have Christ in our hearts, heaven in our eye, and the world under our feet. We must take God's Spirit for our guide, God's word for our rule, God's glory for our end, God's fear for our guard, God's people for our companions, God's praise for our recreation, and God's promises for our cordials. We must make religion our business, prayer our delight, holiness our way, and heaven our home. O Zion's travellers, distinguish yourselves from the men that dwell on the earth; let

Christ always be precious to you, the word sweet, sin bitter, the world a wilderness, and death welcome. Let Christ's will be your will, Christ's dishonour your affliction, Christ's cause your concern, Christ's success your joy, Christ's day your delight, Christ's cross your glory, Christ's sufferings your meditation, Christ's wounds your refuge, Christ's blood your balm, Christ's righteousness your clothing, and Christ's presence your heaven. While travelling here, let your hearts burn with love to Christ, love to think of Christ, love to hear of Christ, love to read of Christ, love to speak for Christ, love to speak to Christ.

Direct. XXVIII. *Keep up a lively sense of sacramental vows, and engagements, and walk answerable thereto,* Psal. lvi. 12, 13. You are under a sacramental oath to be true and faithful soldiers to the Captain of your salvation, see that you fight his battles against his and your enemies, the devil, the world, and the flesh. Remember what your Captain has done and suffered for you, let his love, as well as your oath, constrain you to abide by his standard. Never go over to his enemies' camp, nor keep correspondence with them. Your glorious Captain gives you the choice feasts at his table to strengthen and encourage you both for work and warfare; walk on in strength of these spiritual meals, and grow stronger in grace, and more lively in spiritual duties, pray more fervently, hear more attentively, meditate more frequently, partake more believingly, keep Sabbaths more delightfully, and walk worthy of the Lord to all well pleasing. Your spiritual meals are designed for your nourishment, strength and growth. Therefore grow in grace. O believers, if you would lay up a treasure of glory for yourselves hereafter, lay up a treasure of grace in your hearts just now; increase faith, love, heart-purity, and humility. Whoever is rich in grace now, will be rich in glory hereafter: For what is grace but glory begun, and what is glory but grace perfected? Who would not then love grace, seeing it is begun glory, and a certain pledge of complete glory.

Direct. XXIX. *Improve the talents God gives you for his service and glory,* Luke xix. 13. Remember you were not made for yourselves only, but for the society and benefit of others: therefore employ your gifts, substances, and whatever God has bestowed, for the good of others; teach the ignorant, relieve the poor, strengthen the weak, comfort those that are cast down, tell them your experiences, commend Christ as a choice master and lovely Saviour, and invite them to come *taste and see that he is good*; pity those who are strangers to him, and pray for them. Be useful to others while you live, which will make your memory savoury when you die; many alas, are so unprofitable in their lives, that when they come to die, neighbours scarce think their lives worthy a prayer, or their death worth a tear; but pub-

lic spirited and useful persons are much lamented. Let every one in their stations be active and occupy their talents for God. Be assured the more you do for God in this world, the more God will do for you in the world to come. If the saints were capable of grief in heaven, it would be for their doing so little for God on earth.

Direct. XXX. *Let all believers be thankful to God for his distinguishing favours and mercies to them*, Psal. cxvi. 8, 12. A life of praise doth highly become the proofs of God's love to you. Fall down humbly before God, and ascribe all to his free undeserved grace! For *who is it that maketh thee to differ from another? What hast thou, but what thou hast received in a way of free gift?* O wonder at his free love, that has distinguished you from others! has done that for you, that he has not done for thousands, for myriads, for millions! nor for those who sit in the same assembly, or dwell in the same house with you! O bless God who sent his dear Son to ransom you, and bring you out of prison, when others are left in bondage! Who sent his Holy Spirit to open your eyes, when others are left blind; to open your ears, when others are left deaf; to open your hearts, when others are left shut; to open your mouths to praise free distinguishing love, when others are left dumb. Employ your tongues then to commend his love, and sing his praise.

Direct. XXXI. *Since God distinguishes you from others in his mercies to you, see that you distinguish yourselves from others, in your service to him*, Matt. v. 47. Are you Christians indeed? You are under stronger obligations to live and act for Christ than others: Why? you have both your new name and new nature from Christ, which others have not; you are more nearly related to Christ than others; you are engaged to act for him, by more frequent and solemn vows than others; you have greater mercies bestowed on you than others; others have but common mercies, but you have covenant mercies, mercies that accompany salvation. You have spiritual life within you, and divine influences, which others want; not only the world, but Christ expects more from you than others; all which are powerful engagements on you to do more for God than others. You know more of the things of God than others; you talk more of them, you profess more, you promise and engage to do more than others, and he may justly expect more from you than others, and put that question to you, *What do ye for me more than others?* Matt. v. 47.

Quest. Wherein should believers distinguish themselves and do more for God than others? Ans. You should be witnesses for God, and testify against what is dishonouring to him, by abstaining from all known sin, and from those sins which are common and fashionable, and little thought of by others. By reproving sin in others, and endeavouring to pluck them out

of the fire. By keeping up family religion even in the midst of business, and banishing all known vice from your dwellings, even minced oaths, rash using of God's name, idle walking or talking on the Lord's day, backbiting, evil wishes, revengeful actions, unnecessary drinking or tipling, lottery games, and pastimes of bad report, &c. Be zealous for Sabbath holiness. Be meek and lowly in your carriage; commend Christ to others; speak for the honour of religion before those who disregard it; shew special regard to those who are stamped with God's image, though mean or despised; be ready to forgive wrongs, and render good for evil; deal honestly and justly with all men, be sober and temperate in eating, drinking, sleep, apparel, &c. Guard against pride, passion, hasty and unguarded words; put great respect upon God's word and ordinances; be concerned for the enlarging of Christ's kingdom; never venture upon any known sin for the sake of worldly gain; make conscience of relative and stational duties, as to be good husbands, good wives, good parents, good children, good masters, good servants, good neighbours, &c. In such things as these you are to do more for God than others.

Direct. XXXII. *Be not content with a fair profession of religion, or with a form of godliness, and a name to live among men, Tit. i. 16. 2 Tim. iii. 5.* But endeavour to know and feel the power of godliness in your hearts, and to have your practice in all respects corresponding to your profession. If your practice be not answerable to what you profess, you sin against great light, you discredit religion, and tempt men to think it all hypocrisy. If a man live and die a mere professor, it had been better he had lived and died a mere heathen.

Direct. XXXIII. *Keep always a watch on the door of your lips, Psal. cxli. 3.* Seeing the tongue hath a world of iniquity in it, Jam. iii. 6. keep it as with a bridle, as Psal. xxxix. 1. and beg the Lord's help to keep it, and that he himself may set a watch upon your mouths, as the Psalmist prays, Psal. cxli. as knowing that no watchfulness or resolution of our own is sufficient for the governing of our tongues, without God's special grace, without this the most watchful watchmen watcheth in vain. Earnestly seek, for Christ's sake, God's special grace, to govern this unruly member, that it may not be suffered to utter words which may tend to the dishonour of God, or to the hurt of men. Study to govern your tongues by using God's name with reverence, speaking always what is truth, and what is seasonable, useful, and edifying, guarding carefully against lying, evil speaking, passionate, proud, and self-exalting words, and against all rash censures. You have need of great caution in speaking, and to take heed either how you commend yourselves, or condemn others.

Direct. XXXIV. *Walk carefully and contentedly in every condition, Acts. viii. 39. Phil. iv. 11.* Such a walk as this doth bring credit to religion and to the service of our Redeem-

er. What though a believer be fed with the bread and water of affliction the most of his life, he hath other bread and another cup to sweeten both; "the forgiveness of sin, is a reviving cordial in every case." Have no will of your own distinct from God's will, but be resigned to God's disposing will in every thing, and let God's will and choice be always yours. If you cannot bring your condition to your mind, then you must labour to bring your mind to your condition, believing that the will of your heavenly Father is always best for you. Still remember that he hath engaged himself to be with you in all states and conditions, and to order all things for your advantage: Be sure then he cannot deny himself, all his words are oaths for their certainty, and all his promises are the sure mercies of David. Be content in every case; for since Christ is yours, *all things are yours*. Well then, let your covenanted God choose out your lot for you; for you may trust that it shall be done with more wisdom, and with more affection, than you can choose for yourself.

Direct. XXXV. If you would manifest yourselves to be truly religious both before God and man, *keep always the first and second table of the law, joined together, and make conscience of both*, Matth. xxii. 37. &c. Love both God and your neighbour, be just and upright in all your dealings with men, acting always under a sense of the all-seeing eye of your heavenly Father, who enjoins you to do the same to others, as ye would have them do to you. Let a moral man try his religion by the duties of the first table of the law, and a professor his by the duties of the second table of the law. See that you love God above all things, and prefer his worship and service to every thing. Love God for himself, and love men principally for what is God-like in them.

Direct. XXXVI. *Carefully guard against apostacy and backsliding from God and his ways*, Heb. x. 38, 39. Be always jealous of your deceitful and treacherous hearts, knowing that they are bent to backsliding. A holy fear of departing from God, is a good means to keep us from departing from God. Therefore endeavour to preserve always a watchful and tender frame of heart, and be afraid of falling away, according to that word, Heb. iv. 1. If you would preserve yourselves from total apostacy, rise speedily after every fall by sound repentance, and recourse to the blood of Christ. Lie not one day in any sin, but rise out of the puddle immediately, and go to the cleansing fountain, and renew your covenant with God, and beg more strength and faith to derive continual supplies from Christ your head. Be often calling your souls to account, and asking your hearts what is become of the good frames, the melting sense of sin, the hungering desires, the delightful tastes, the heavenly longings, the warm affections to Christ, that they sometimes had. When you attain to these, or to any of them, see that you commit them to

Christ's keeping, saying with the Psalmist, *Lord, be surety for thy servant for good*. Lastly, consider the dreadful case of an apostate as described by our Lord and his apostle, Matth. xii. 43, 44. 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. That man's case becomes far more miserable than it was at first. What a sad case is it for a soul to fall back into hell, after it had climbed near the gates of heaven? None fall so deep into hell as those who fall backward into it.

Direct. XXXVII. *Be watchful against all sin, and particularly your darling or constitutional sin, the sin that most easily besets you*, Psal. xviii. 23. Heb. xii. 1. Our adversary the devil well knows this sin, and on what side we may be attacked with the greatest success; and to be sure he will bring his strongest temptations thither, and employ his most subtle wiles and devices that way to ensnare us. It were happy for us if we were still watching against him, and could say with the apostle, *we are not ignorant of his devices*. You are likewise to watch against all sin whatsoever, sins of omission as well as of commission. Gross outbreakings make conscience to start at their appearance, but it is not so alarmed with the neglect of duties. But if conscience be awakened, sins of omission will lie heavy as well as sins of commission. Some eminent Christians, who have lived the most circumspect lives, when they come to die and reflect upon the by-past time, have been put to cry, *Lord, in special forgive my sins of omission*. Venture not to live in any frame, course, or practice, that you would not adventure to die in, seeing you know not but your next step may be into the grave. Guard against all these sins and evils now in time of your health, that may put thorns in your pillow when sickness and the harbingers of death approach, such as misspending of precious time, neglect of prayer, or reading of the scriptures, formality and lukewarmness in religion, earthly mindedness, unthankfulness for mercies, and miscarrying after them, neglect of improving Christ, quenching the Spirit, neglect of convictions, breaking of vows, falling from your first love, returning to old sins you had mourned over, sinning against light, and after afflictions, &c.

Direct. XXXVIII. *Be heartily concerned for the coming and enlargement of Christ's kingdom in the world*, Matth. vi. 10. Psal. lxxii. 19. Bewail it that his flock is so little, his subjects so few, when Satan's are so numerous. Bewail the unsuccessfulness of the gospel, the restraint of the Spirit, the divisions among Christians, and the many hinderances of the progress of Christianity. Lament the wrongs and dishonours done to God by others, cry and wrestle for the out-pouring of the Spirit, both at home and abroad; pray for the revival of God's work in these lands, amidst these declining years; and in enquiring after public news, have a view to this, be concerned for the interest and welfare of Christ's king-

dom through the world, for the accomplishment of God's promises concerning the destruction of Antichrist, Babylon's downfall, the in-bringing of the Jews, and the subduing of the nations. And when you hear any appearance of God's rising to countenance his word, and conquer sinners' hearts to himself, whether at home or abroad, rejoice at the news, reckon them good tidings of great joy, and bless the Lord for them with all your hearts. It is most pleasing and acceptable to God, to see his people heartily concerned for the prosperity of Jerusalem.

Direct. XXXIX. *Be busy laying up a stock for a sick bed or death bed, when all the comforts of life will be tasteless to you.* 1 Tim. xi. 19. Lay up a stock of faith and patience, a stock of evidences of divine love, and of your interest in Christ; a stock of divine promises, and experiences of God's loving kindness, which may be supporting to you in the day of sharp trials. When mariners go to sea, they victual the ship, and provide for a storm. And ought not we to foresee the storms of affliction, of sickness, and death, and provide and lay up for them? It will be sad, if, when the bridegroom is come, we have our oil then to buy, when the market is over. Now is the time for providing oil; now is the market of grace; now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation.

Direct. XL. *Be looking and longing for the eternal supper of the Lamb.* Phil. i. 23. Rev. xix. 9. Hungry souls who tasted the love of Jesus, long for the Lamb's supper below, that they may enjoy communion with him here, and this makes them cry, When shall the opportunity return? When shall I come and appear before God? When shall I again see his power and glory in the sanctuary?—When shall I again taste his love and goodness in the sacrament? and yet these are but small foretastes of the Lamb's supper above. What is our drinking of the fruit of the vine here, to our drinking it new with Christ in his Father's kingdom? Therefore look out, and long for the time when the day shall break, and the shadows flee away, and the marriage of the Lamb shall be triumphantly solemnized, and completed with the church his espoused bride, whom he will then lead into the King's palace, where their transient glances shall be changed into immediate vision, and their short tastes into everlasting feasting and fulness. *O blessed are they for ever who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.* These are the true sayings of God. I believe, Lord, help my unbelief. Amen.

SCRIPTURE SONGS
FOR
ZION'S TRAVELLERS,
IN THEIR WAY TO HEAVEN.



Isa. xxxv. 10. The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with
SONGS.

Psal. cxxxviii. 5. They shall sing in the ways of the Lord.

SONG I.

The Primitive Communicants.

- 1 **CHRIST'S** friends at first oft broke his bread,
Inspir'd with love divine ;
They drank the spirit of their head,
As well's the sacred wine.
- 2 They shewed his death with heart and soul,
And feasted in his love ;
His blood and wounds they did extol,
And sung like saints above.
- 3 Lord, grant us part of that love flame,
Which in their hearts abode ;
That made them witness for the Lamb,
And suffer for their God.
- 4 Warm show'rs from heaven send down on us,
That frozen hearts may yield,
And turn us from a wilderness
Into a fruitful field.
- 5 Thy people, Lord, lament for thee,
And sore thy absence mourn ;
They long thy face again to see,
Till gospel-feasts return.
- 6 Come to thy table, with us sit,
Our grudges all remove,
Unite our hearts, and make us fit
To keep the feast of love.

- 7 Cause streams of living waters flow
 In channels of thy grace ;
 And let the north and south wind blow,
 Our strait'nings to release.
- 8 Thy Spirit's temple make our hearts,
 And with us still abide ;
 Make his convictions pierce like darts,
 Let us no more backslide.
- 9 Thy hidings are a bitter cup,
 Like flow'rs we fade and mourn ;
 We droop, we grieve, and can't look up,
 Till thou our Sun return.
- 10 Lord, charge not on us former guilt,
 Let all thine anger cease ;
 Look to the blood on Calv'ry spilt,
 And bid us go in peace.

SONG II.

The Holy Spirit fits us for the Holy Table.

- 1 O FATHER of our dying Lord,
 Hear thy Son's speaking blood,
 Fulfil to us his gracious word,
 Send down thy heav'nly food.
- 2 Thy Spirit grant, for which he pray'd,
 To glorify thy Son :
 His promis'd influences shed,
 That wonders may be done.
- 3 Glad we'll his death commemorate,
 Aye till he come again ;
 Bless both the word and sacrament,
 Take thy great pow'r and reign.
- 4 Christ's table now stands furnished,
 With blessings of best kinds ;
 Pardon and peace bought with his blood,
 Choice food for troubled minds.
- 5 Give faith to feed and view his love,
 His stripes and wounds each one,
 How he was jeer'd that's fear'd above,
 Blasphem'd and spit upon.
- 6 In's hands and feet we see the nails
 Piercing his tender veins ;
 For us each wound the blushing ground
 With blood infinite stains.
- 7 Black clouds for us o'erwhelm'd his soul,
 Sore was his agony,
 When he cried, *My God, my God, why
 Hast thou forsaken me ?*

- 8 Thy matchless love we'll praise aloud,
Our souls it doth constrain
To love and live to thee, our God,
Who for our sins was slain.
- 9 May I no more to prayer be dragg'd,
To serve thee let me run ;
May I in duties keep my course,
Like to the rising sun.
- 10 Unto the Lamb that once was slain,
Be praise and glory given,
By all that dwell upon the earth,
And all the hosts of heaven.

SONG III.

Christ's Sacrifice the only foundation of our Trust.

- 1 SO great's the guilt of fallen men,
None could his pardon buy ;
Great must it be, when God himself
Must for his creature die !
- 2 Slain beasts for sin could not atone,
Such off'rings all were vain,
Had not the Father given his Son
For sinners to be slain.
- 3 Had the whole church been offer'd up,
As one burnt sacrifice,
Our smallest debt this could not pay,
Creatures could not suffice.
- 4 But mercy in this hopeless case,
A sacrifice prepares,
A Lamb of all-sufficient worth,
Which dissipates our fears.
- 5 This sacrifice more precious
Than all created things,
To us eternal happiness
In soul and body brings.
- 6 This is the sure foundation stone,
Which God in Zion lays,
For men to build their hopes upon,
He's blest that on him stays.
- 7 Tho' earth's foundations be remov'd,
This rock still standeth fast,
By storms unmov'd on this alone
My anchor I will cast.
- 8 The Lamb, our rock, for us did die,
For us rose from the dead,
For us he did ascend on high,
For us his blood doth plead.

- 9 O bleeding Lamb, shew me my name
 Writ in thy book of life,
 Then I will long to be with thee,
 Out of this land of strife.
- 10 To worship with the heavenly host,
 JEHOVAH one in three,
 The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
 To all eternity.

SONG IV.

The Distressed Soul looking to the Lamb for pity.

- 1 COME see my case, O bleeding Lamb
 In mercy take me as I am,
 Quite naked, and put clothing on
 A stranger, and make me a son.
- 2 Burden'd with guilt, and give me ease,
 A bond man, and my soul release,
 All vile, not fit to join thy saints;
 A creature all made up of wants.
- 3 By nature I have nothing good,
 All must be bought me by thy blood;
 But since thy wounds are open'd wide,
 I'll hope in Jesus crucify'd.
- 4 Thy blood men's sorest plagues doth cure,
 Thy wounds their backward hearts allure,
 Thy blood strange changes works in men,
 For wondrous works the Lamb was slain!
- 5 Thy Bible doth thy pity shew,
 I rest on thy words sweet and true,
 "Souls, come to me, and no more doubt,
 "For him that comes I'll not cast out."
- 6 Renew my soul, plant grace this day,
 Give me a heart to mourn and pray,
 O kill in me this rebel sin,
 Restore thy image me within.
- 7 For these things I unto thee come,
 Cast me not out, since there is room;
 Make good thy words, and hear my cries,
 For on thy truth my soul relies.
- 8 O dearest Lamb, didst thou not bleed
 To purchase every thing we need?
 Doth not thy blood still run to heal
 Distressed souls, their plagues who feel?
- 9 We feel our sores, Lord, heal us soon,
 And in us let thy will be done:
 Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
 One God in Christ, that saves the lost.

SONG V.

A Call to wonder at Christ's Sufferings from love to us.

- 1 BEHOLD Christ in a bloody sweat,
Which all his garment stains,
See four wide wounds in's hands and feet,
When big nails pierc'd his veins !
- 2 Behold his soul oppressed sore,
And in the greatest pain !
How heavy was the wrath he bore,
Of which he did complain ?
- 3 Yet, Lord, whilst our sins fill'd to thee,
This bitter wrathful cup,
A blessed feast thou mad'st, that we
Might at thy table sup !
- 4 O friend of Christ, draw near his throne,
To him thank-off'rings bring,
For in his temple ev'ry one
Should of his glory sing.
- 5 Let men him love, and sin abhor,
Which caus'd him grief and pain.
Let all the angels still adore
The Lamb for sinners slain !
- 6 With warm affection let us bless
Our great High Priest above,
And ev'ry day admire and praise
The wonders of his love !
- 7 From love he left his throne on high,
Lodg'd in a virgin's womb !
Love brought him to the cross to die,
Love laid him in a tomb !
- 8 Love rais'd him up, and took him back
To heaven, to make us room !
From thence return he'll for our sake,
In love to bring us home !
- 9 From love he wearies not to plead,
And shew his bleeding hands,
Since he hath justice satisfy'd,
Our freedom he demands.
- 10 Thy blood hath done all things for me,
I'll glory in thy cross ;
My best things I'll give up for thee,
I count them all but loss.

SONG VI.

From 2 Sam. xxiii. 3—7. Being a Prophecy of Christ, and King David's Swan Song in views of death.

- 1 A RULER just o'er men shall rise,
In God's fear rule shall he,

- As morning light springs from the skies,
So welcome shall he be.
- 2 Like rising sun he scatters all
The black shades of the night,
No clouds this morning darken shall,
Refreshing is its light.
- 3 He shall the frozen earth solace,
Like sunshine after rain,
Whose warming beams revive the grass,
And make all spring again.
- 4 I'm griev'd, all prove not good and just,
Who from my loins do spring ;
But glad to see he springs from me,
That's Zion's blessed King ;
- 5 A King that saves us from our foes,
In hearts rules by his might ;
With his just laws let all men close,
Obey him, 'tis his right.
- 6 Although my house be not with God
Such as it ought to be,
Yet he hath through Messiah's blood
A cov'nant made with me :
- 7 A covenant which life doth bring,
And evermore endure,
Well ordered in every thing,
With promises most sure.
- 8 My heart's desire is towards it,
'Tis my salvation,
Although he doth not come as yet,
For to redress what's wrong.
- 9 But Belial's sons, who are his foes,
God smite them will in ire,
He'll them consume who him oppose,
Like thorns burnt up with fire.

SONG VII.

The Saints Triumph over death, from Job xix. 25. &c. 1 Cor. xv. 43, 53, Phil.
iii. 21. Ezek. xvi. 14.

- 1 **THOUGH** on me heavy trials come,
And death's stroke on me fall,
My faith and hope shall not succumb,
But triumph o'er them all.
- 2 I know that my Redeemer lives
Who pleads my cause with God,
To save each soul that him believes,
He comes to shed his blood.
- 3 Then for a while he'll go away,
But will return again,

- And on the earth, at latter day,
 Stand with a glorious train.
- 4 Though in the grave my body fall,
 And worms do it consume,
 Ev'n skin and flesh, blood, bones, and all,
 Yet death I'll overcome.
- 5 My Lord will raise me from the dust,
 He'll clothe my bones with flesh,
 I'll see my God whom now I trust,
 Which will my soul refresh.
- 6 That flesh which all consumed was,
 The very same shall rise ;
 Yea, I will see Christ's lovely face,
 With these my very eyes.
- 7 Though for a time my dust be loath'd
 Most beautiful I'll be,
 My mortal body shall be cloth'd
 With immortality.
- 8 Like Christ's own body will I shine,
 With raiment white as light,
 His comeliness is ever mine ;
 This every saint makes bright.

SONG VIII.

Christ's Eternal Love to Mankind ; From Prov. viii. 27, to the end.

- 1 WHEN the creation was begun,
 By God's almighty hand,
 Then I, his own eternal Son,
 Concurr'd in the command.
- 2 I joined in his counsels wise,
 Lost mankind to redeem ;
 I was my Father's chief delight,
 And I rejoic'd in him.
- 3 And in the earth when it for man
 Was fram'd with divine art,
 With pleasure I foresaw the Church,
 Its habitable part.
- 4 Before the light was made to shine,
 My heart was set on man ;
 My thoughts, from all eternity,
 On his salvation ran.
- 5 The foresight of man's misery,
 Made me engage for them,
 To be their help ; for my delights
 Were with the sons of men.
- 6 O children, then, to me give ear ;
 They're blest my ways that choose ;
 Be wise, and my instruction hear,
 They're fools who it refuse.

- 7 Blest is the man that hears my word,
 And doth attend my gates,
 Who watchfully looks for the Lord,
 And at his door-posts waits.
- 8 Blest is the man that findeth me,
 With me he'll live above,
 And have, through all eternity,
 God's favour and his love.
- 9 But his own soul he doth injure,
 Who slights my offers free ;
 And those who hate my precepts pure,
 Court death eternally.

SONG IX.

From Solomon's Song, chap. i. Being a Dialogue betwixt Christ and his Spouse.

SPOUSE.

- 1 LIKE sweetest ointment smells thy name,
 Dear Jesus, unto me,
 Hence virgin souls send out a flame
 Of holy love to thee.
- 2 O draw me, and we'll run to thee ;
 Blest King, thou didst me bring
 Into thy chambers, hence will we
 In thee rejoice and sing.
- 3 More than the taste of richest wine,
 Thy love think on we will ;
 Most costly was thy love design ;
 The upright love thee still.
- 4 Tell me, good Shepherd, whom I love,
 Where thy dear sheep are fed ;
 Shew me the paths wherein they move,
 And where they find a shade.
- 5 Leave me not in a wand'ring course,
 Like those who lose their way ;
 With flocks of thy competitors
 Let me not go astray.

CHRIST.

- 6 Art thou bewilder'd, my fair one,
 And canst not find thy rest ?
 Come follow my direction,
 I'll shew thee what is best.
- 7 In footsteps of my flock go on,
 The shepherd's tents keep nigh ;
 Thy kids and young ones bring along,
 So shalt thou meet with me.

SPOUSE.

- 8 While at the table sits the King,
 My spikenard smelleth sweet,

- My graces languishing do spring,
 With this sun's quickening heat.
 9 Dear Jesus, as a bunch of myrrh,
 Shall in my bosom lie ;
 To lodge with me he'll not demur,
 While nightly shades do stay.

SONG X.

From Song ii. 1, to 9.

CHRIST.

- 1 I AM the Rose of Sharon's field,
 The Lilly of the Vale ;
 I sweetness and delight do yield,
 When earthly glories fail.
 2 As lilies shine amidst the thorns,
 So doth my love the bride ;
 The daughters want what her adorns,
 Though they live by her side.

SPOUSE.

- 3 As th' apple tree doth far excel
 The forest's barren growth,
 So my love outshines mortals all,
 Though in their blooming youth.
 4 Under his shade with great delight,
 I sat down for to rest ;
 I found solace, his heav'nly fruit
 Was sweet unto my taste.
 5 He brought me to his house of wine,
 My faintings to allay,
 The banners of his love divine
 O'er me he did display.
 6 Bring strength'ning flaggons unto me,
 With cordials from above ;
 Fetch me sweet apples from the tree,
 For I am sick of love.
 7 When thus my fainting soul did cry
 For grace me to uphold,
 My tender hearted Lord drew nigh,
 His arms me did infold.
 8 All things without me and within,
 I charge to stand in awe,
 To wake or grieve my love with sin,
 Lest from me he withdraw.
 9 Though griev'd, he doth return to me ;
 For lo ! his voice I hear,
 O'er hills of guilt him leap I see,
 My mourning soul to cheer.

- 10 He hastes to me like hart or roe,
 Our dark walls he makes light :
 Through lattices himself doth shew,
 With comeliness most bright.

SONG XI.

From Song ii. 10, to the end.

CHRIST.

- 1 RISE up, said Christ, my fairest one,
 Come thou away to me ;
 The winter storms of wrath are gone,
 I bore them all for thee.
- 2 From barren grounds the flow'rs do spring,
 Men hear the turtle's voice,
 The drooping birds begin to sing,
 And sad hearts to rejoice.
- 3 Young figs and grapes do now appear,
 And yield a sweet perfume ;
 The heav'nly vine faint hearts doth cheer,
 Rise up, my love, and come.
- 4 My dove that lodgest in the rock,
 In clefts of my dead wounds,
 And dost to me in secret look,
 When in thee grief abounds :
- 5 Lift up thy face and voice to me,
 These please mine eye and ear :
 Thy graces all I love to see,
 Thy voice and pray'r to hear.
- 6 Take us the foxes, whose designs
 Are vineyards to annoy,
 The little foxes, which the vines
 And tender grapes destroy.

SPOUSE.

- 7 My love is mine, my soul's delight,
 And I am also his ;
 Among his saints, those lilies white,
 His place of feeding is :
- 8 There he abides, till break of day,
 When shadows all shall flee ;
 Till then, come like a hart or roe,
 O'er Bether hills to me.

SONG XII.

From Song iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11.

- 1 ALL's dark when Jesus hides his face,
 Night shades fall me upon :

R

- Desertion is a weary case,
 When Christ my love is gone.
- 2 I on my bed my loss did mind,
 I sought him thus alone ;
 My drowsy search did not him find,
 Vain was my slothful moan.
- 3 I'll rise and round the city go,
 Through streets, broad-ways, and lanes ;
 'This way I sought my love, but lo !
 Successful were my pains.
- 4 The city watchmen found me out,
 Their doctrine touch'd my case ;
 Ah where's he ? Can ye solve my doubt ?
 None of them brought me ease.
- 5 When means and duties prov'd so weak,
 Beyond them all I past :
 When I some steps from them did make,
 I found my love at last.
- 6 I him embrac'd and held him fast,
 Till once I got him brought
 Into my mother's dwellings waste,
 To strengthen what he wrought.
- 7 Since he's come in, I do you charge,
 Who Salem's daughters are,
 By roes and hinds which run at large,
 Our joys you do not mar.
- 8 Let sin or earth no motion make,
 For to disturb his rest ;
 Let none presume my love to wake,
 Until it please him best.
- 9 O, Zion's daughters, all go forth,
 Behold King Solomon,
 Ev'n Christ our King, of higher worth,
 Wearing his glorious crown,
- 10 Wherewith his mother crown'd his head,
 On his espousal day,
 That day on which his heart was glad ;
 Him love and praise for aye.

SONG XIII.

From Song iv. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16.

CHRIST.

- 1 THOU art all fair when in thy dress,
 My love, thou'rt fair to me ;
 When clothed with my righteousness,
 No spot is seen on thee.
- 2 My spouse come off from Lebanon,
 And mounts of vanity :

- Let all the world's deceit alone,
And come along with me.
- 3 By faith look from Amana's top,
Shenir and Hermon fair ;
From dens of prey, behold with hope
The land beyond compare.
- 4 My Spouse, thou dost my love enhance,
And drawest my heart to thee,
With thy neck chains, and with a glance
Of thy believing eye.
- 5 Thy love to me more grateful is
Than wine of any kind ;
- Thy graces more than fragrant spice
Acceptance with me find.
- 6 Thy lips drop sweet ; and from thy tongue
Do milk and honey flow :
Thy garments smell as Lebanon,
Which on thee I bestow.
- 7 A garden fair, inclos'd by grace,
My Spouse thou art to me,
I choos'd thee from the wilderness,
With fine springs furnish'd thee.
- SPOUSE.
- 8 If I thy garden be, O Lord,
Cause Heaven's wind awake,
Sweet quickening gales to me afford,
My graces lively make.
- 9 Sharp northern blasts send to convince,
And cause the south winds blow ;
With breathings warm assist my mints,
And make thy spices flow.
- 10 Then let my love his presence sweet
Unto his garden grant,
That he may eat his pleasant fruit,
Which he himself did plant.

SONG XIV.

From Song v. 1, 2, 3, 4.

CHRIST.

- 1 MY Spouse, to answer thee I'm come
Into my garden fair ;
My myrrh and spice of sweet perfume,
With pleasure I do share.
- 2 On honey, wine, and milk I feast ;
All friends come eat with me,
And drink my wine of heavenly taste,
Yea, drink abundantly.

SPOUSE.

- 3 While Christ invites, my sloth prevails,
 Yet something wakes in me,
 To hearken to Christ's knocks and calls,
 His voice speaks pressingly.

CHRIST.

- 4 Open to me, my Father's child ;
 Open to me, my love ;
 Open to me, my undefil'd ;
 Open to me, my dove.
- 5 From love I'm standing at thy door,
 Thy heart cast open soon ;
 A midnight show'r of wrath I bore,
 To save thee when undone.

SPOUSE.

- 6 I am undress'd, and rest is sweet,
 From bed I cannot rise ;
 How shall I now defile my feet ?
 Thus sloth did me entice.
- 7 By the key-hole, my well belov'd
 His hand of pow'r put in,
 So that my bowels all were mov'd,
 For being ungrate to him.
- 8 When I rous'd up, obey'd his knock,
 My hands dropt pleasantly
 With oil of myrrh, left on the lock,
 Which made the bolt to fly.
- 9 To my belov'd I open'd fast,
 Who, to my grief, was gone :
 I fainted, when his speeches past
 I mournfully thought on.
- 10 I sought him then with carefulness,
 But found he could not be ;
 I call'd on him in this distress,
 He did not answer me.
- 11 The watchmen who do go their rounds,
 And keep the city wall,
 Abus'd me, and did give me wounds,
 And tore away my veil.

SONG XV.

A Dialogue betwixt the Spouse and Daughters of Jerusalem, from Song v. &
 to the end.

SPOUSE.

- 1 O SALEM'S race if you him find,
 I charge you tell my case ;
 I'm sick of love, sore pain'd in mind,
 He only can me ease.

DAUGHTERS.

- 2 O fairest one, we fain would know
The object of thy love ;
What charms he hath, that thou dost so,
Praise him all men above.

SPOUSE.

- 3 My love is white and ruddy too,
The chief of thousands ten ;
His innocence and suff'rings do
Him beautify to men.
- 4 His blessed head doth far excel
The gold that is most fine,
His locks are black and curled well,
They raven-like do shine.
- 5 His eyes are like the eyes of doves,
When they in flocks are met
Near water streams, which they do love,
Milk wash'd and fitly set.
- 6 His cheeks are like unto the flow'rs,
And beds where spices grow ;
His lips like lilies are, from whence
Sweet smelling myrrh doth flow.
- 7 As rings of gold with beryl set,
So doth his hands appear ;
His belly bright as ivory
O'erlaid with sapphires clear.
- 8 His legs like marble pillars are,
Which on gold sockets went ;
Like Lebanon his face is fair,
As cedars excellent.
- 9 His mouth that makes sweet promises,
To every saint is sweet :
Yea, he all over lovely is,
View him from head to feet.
- 10 O daughters of Jerusalem,
This is my love and friend ;
For whom none can devise a name,
Or proper emblems find.

SONG XVI.

The Dialogue continued. Song, chap. vi.

DAUGHTERS.

- 1 O FAIREST bride, we fain would know,
Where's thy beloved gone ?
Tell us that with thee we may go,
To seek this matchless one.

SPOUSE.

- 2 My love is gone to heav'n above,
Yet doth he condescend

- To come into his garden here,
And beds of spice attend.
- 3 In meetings of his saints he's found,
Those gardens of delight,
He's there to bring them rich supplies,
And gather lilies white.
- 4 To my beloved I belong,
And my belov'd to me ;
To feed among the lily flowers
Great pleasure taketh he.
- CHRIST.
- 5 O who is she that looketh forth,
Like to the morning light,
When it darts out to chase away
The darkness of the night ?
- 6 Fair as the moon, clear as the sun,
With dazzling beams array'd ;
Yet like an army terrible,
With banners all display'd.*
- 7 She comes up from the wilderness,
She walks and always leans
On her beloved ; for her heart
From all things else she weans.

SONG XVII.

Christ's Sufferings for us. From Isa. liii.

- 1 WHO hath believ'd the faithful word
Which we to men declare ?
Who fees the arm of God the Lord,
Displayed and made bare ?
- 2 Messiah, like a weak plant grows,
A root from ground that's dry ;
No outward beauty he assumes,
To draw the carnal eye :
- 3 Rejected and despis'd is he,
Through sinners' unbelief :
A man of sorrows all his days,
And well acquaint with grief.
- 4 We hid our faces when he came
To take our wrathful lot,
Despis'd he was and put to shame,
And we esteem'd him not.
- 5 Of griefs and sorrows all his time
For us he bore the load,
But ah, we judg'd that for his crime,
He smitten was of God.

- 6 But he for our transgressions
Was wounded and abus'd,
His soul for our iniquities
Most grievously was bruise'd.
- 7 On him was laid our chastisement,
By which our peace he seal'd;
Sharp bloody stripes he underwent,
Whereby our wounds were heal'd.
- 8 All we like sheep from God have stray'd,
And did our own ways choose,
And these our sins God on him laid,
Which love would not refuse.
- 9 Oppress'd and wrong'd our Surety stood,
Accused of untruth,
To slaughter went he as a lamb,
And open'd not his mouth.
- 10 Before the shearers, like a sheep,
He dumb and silent lies,
He meekly goes through waters deep
Without repining cries.
- 11 His soul in trav'ling anguish lies,
His pains were multiply'd,
But when the blessed fruit he sees,
He is well satisfy'd.

SONG XVIII.

A Thanksgiving for Redeeming Love. From Rom. v. and Heb. xiii.

- 1 WHEN we were destitute of strength,
Ourselves to help and save,
For the ungodly, Christ at length
His life a ransom gave.
- 2 Scarce any for a righteous man
His life will dare to stake,
And for a good man it were much
Such an exchange to make :
- 3 But God his matchless love commends,
When his most glorious Son
Died for us while unrighteous,
Vile sinners and undone.
- 4 Since by his blood Christ us from sin
Doth justify and free,
Then surely from the wrath to come
We ever safe shall be.
- 5 If Christ for enemies to God
Did die, to end the strife,
Much more when reconciled thus,
He'll save us by his life.

- 6 Yea, more than so, we joy in God,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord :
The great atonement we receive,
And so obey his word.
- 7 Now he that's Lord of quick and dead,
The God of love and peace,
That from the grave brought Christ our head,
And him to life did raise ;
- 8 Who, as the shepherd great and good,
His life for us did grant,
And did establish, with his blood,
Th' eternal covenant.
- 9 May he in us his work fulfil,
Till he us perfect make,
Still strength'ning us to do his will,
For our Redeemer's sake.
- 10 And work in us what, his word says,
Is pleasing him before,
Thro' Jesus Christ, to whom be praise
And glory evermore.

SONG XIX.

Matchless Love in the Gift of Christ. From John iii. 14—17.

- 1 O WOND'ROUS divine love to men !
When wrath 'gainst us did swell,
God took our nature, bore our guilt,
To save our souls from hell.
- 2 As Moses, in the wilderness,
Did lift high on a pole,
A brazen serpent, for stung men
To view and be made whole :
- 3 So Jesus Christ, the antitype,
Was lifted up on high
Upon the cross, that wounded souls
Might look and healed be.
- 4 And there, he says, whoe'er believes,
In him unfeignedly,
Shall never perish in their sins,
But live eternally.
- 5 God lov'd the world, so as to give
His Son to dwell in clay,
And die, that all who in him trust
Might live with God for aye.
- 6 Good news ! that Christ there twice declares,
All who in him believe
Are safe from hell, and ever shall
With God in heaven live ;

- 7 And that his Son God did not send
 A lost world to condemn,
 But by his blood he did intend
 To save condemned men.
- 8 Believers all with Christ shall live,
 And ne'er condemned be,
 The broken law he satisfy'd,
 Them for to justify.
- 9 But vengeance just for ever lies
 On all the rebel race,
 Who God's eternal Son despise,
 And scorn his offer'd grace.
- 10 Obey Christ's call, who saves the lost ;
 Serve God, that's One-in-Three ;
 To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
 Give praise eternally.

SONG XX.

God's Love in Christ unalterable: From Rom. viii. 31—to the end.

- 1 GOD'S love in Christ transcends our thoughts,
 In saving men from woe ;
 If God's for us, and stands our friend,
 Who then can be our foe !
- 2 Since God for us spar'd not his Son,
 But gave him up to die,
 His lesser gifts he'll not refuse,
 Nor aught that's good deny.
- 3 Who shall God's elect ones arraign,
 Whom God hath justify'd ?
 Or who will dare those to condemn,
 For whom this Surety died ?
- 4 Christ died for us ; yea, in his love,
 He rose up for our sake,
 And doth at God's right hand for us
 Still intercession make.
- 5 Who from Christ's love shall us divide !
 Shall trouble or distress ?
 Shall persecution or the sword,
 Famine or nakedness ?
- 6 Nay, o'er all these we triumph shall,
 With the celestial pow'rs ;
 Thro' Jesus Christ's victorious love,
 We're more than conquerors.
 am persuaded death nor life,
 Nor principalities,
 Nor finite pow'rs, nor present things,
 Nor yet futurities ;

- 8 No height, no depth, no creature shall
 Dissolve the twisted cord
 Of mutual love 'twixt God and us,
 In Jesus Christ our Lord.
- 9 Unchangeable is love divine,
 Time makes it not decay ;
 For those whom once the Lord doth love,
 He them doth love for aye.
- 10 From love, great mercies us thou giv'st,
 But one we'll sing of still ;
 Eternal thanks to God for Christ,
 His gift unspeakable !

SONG XXI.

Thanksgiving for God's free Love in and through Christ: From Eph. i. 3. &c.
 and iii. 18. &c.

- 1 BLEST be Christ's God, and Father dear,
 For all our heavenly fare ;
 In Christ he hath enriched us,
 With spiritual blessings rare.
- 2 In love he chose us in his Son,
 Before the world he made,
 To make us blameless, holy men,
 Like Christ our holy Head ;
- 3 Predestinate us of his grace,
 By Jesus Christ did he,
 To be adopted children all,
 In his own family ;
- 4 That all the praise might still redound
 To glorious grace alone ;
 The Lord hath us accepted made,
 In his beloved Son :
- 5 In whom, thro' his most precious blood,
 We have redemption free,
 Ev'n full remission of our sins,
 That rich grace all might see.
- 6 In wisdom God makes grace to us
 Flow out abundantly,
 That grace may be our lasting song
 To all eternity.
- 7 May we be grasping with the saints,
 Christ's love to comprehend,
 Whose breadth, and length, and depth, and height,
 Do boundlessly extend ;
- 8 And press to know that wond'rous love
 Which knowledge all exceeds,
 That from his fulness we may have
 Supply to all our needs.

- 9 Now unto God who can do more
 Than we can ask or think,
 According to his mighty pow'r,
 That took us from hell's brink ;
- 10 All glory in the church by Christ
 To him be render'd then,
 Through ages all for evermore :
 Let all men say Amen.

SONG XXII.

Our Hope is in Christ's Righteousness, and in being with him : From
 Phil. iii. 7. &c. 2 Cor. v. 1, &c.

- 1 **THOSE** things I heretofore thought gain,
 And of them made my boast,
 For Christ that doth me justify,
 I give them up for lost.
- 2 Yea, doubtless, 'tis my fixt resolve,
 To count all things but loss,
 That I the excellence may know
 Of Jesus and his cross.
- 3 All wordly things for him I've lost,
 I them as dung esteem,
 That I may Christ my treasure win,
 And safe be found in him.
- 4 My righteousness as rags I quit,
 I plead what Christ hath done ;
 This righteousness which God ordains,
 By faith I take alone.
- 5 May I know Jesus in that pow'r
 Which rais'd him from the grave,
 That with him in his sufferings
 I fellowship may have :
- 6 And being conformed to his death;
 By dying unto sin,
 A resurrection blest from death
 I may obtain through him.
- 7 Yea, now we know if this clay house
 Dissolv'd were off the field,
 An heavenly house we have on high,
 Which God himself doth build.
- 8 With strong desires we therefore groan,
 That to us it were giv'n,
 To know that bliss, and be new cloth'd
 With our pure house in heav'n.
- 9 We walk by faith, and not by sight,
 And hence we often say,
 Content we would the body leave,
 And dwell with Christ for aye.

- 10 Faith's views of Christ prompt us to seek,
 And make it still our care,
 That whether here, or with our Lord,
 Of his love we may share.

SONG XXIII.

A Thanksgiving for the Fruits of Christ's Resurrection: From
 1 Pet. i. 3, 4, &c.

- 1 FOR ever blessed be the God
 And Father of our Lord,
 Whose mercy doth to us abound,
 According to his word:
 2 Who hath begotten us again
 Unto a lively hope,
 By Christ his rising from the dead,
 Of faith the blessed prop:
 3 For by it we are well secur'd
 Of an inheritance,
 That's not corrupted nor defil'd,
 Nor fades by any chance;
 4 Which is for us in heav'n reserv'd,
 And we are kept for it,
 By the almighty pow'r of God,
 Through faith, till we be fit.
 5 For that salvation glorious,
 To be reveal'd at last,
 Of which we wait to be possess
 When time and days are past.
 6 In this bless'd hope we do rejoice,
 Though for a time we need
 Here to be kept in heaviness,
 Through trials multiply'd.
 7 Our faith, more precious than gold,
 By fire is tried here,
 That unto praise it may be found,
 When Jesus doth appear.
 8 This Jesus, though unseen, we love,
 In him believing still,
 Which yields us joy unspeakable,
 That is of glory full.
 9 When Jesus comes, we shall receive
 The blest end of our faith,
 Ev'n the salvation of our souls,
 Procur'd us by his death.

SONG XXIV.

The Sons of God manifested : From 1 John iii. 1, 2, &c..

- 1 BEHOLD how matchless is that love !
The Father hath bestow'd
On men, that we should be adopt
And call'd the sons of God !
- 2 His image he makes us to bear,
As sons of heav'nly birth ;
This dignity exalts us far
Above the kings on earth.
- 3 Though now the world us doth not know,
As Christ it never knew
Yet God doth own us as his sons,
We're chang'd and born anew.
- 4 And what hereafter we shall be,
It doth not yet appear,
But this we know, when Christ shall come,
We shall his likeness bear :
- 5 For we shall see him as he is,
And like him shine full bright ;
We then come near our glorious Sun,
From whom we have our light.
- 6 As Christ is holy, so must we ;
All who hope for that hour,
Themselves must also purify,
As he the Lord is pure.
- 7 Let's here, as strangers, follow peace,
And walk with one accord,
And always study holiness,
As we would see the Lord.
- 8 No eye hath seen, no ear hath heard,
No heart can things above
Conceive, which Jesus hath prepar'd
For them who do him love.

SONG XXV.

The glorious Trinity adored, and Christ's Love extolled : From
Rev. i. 4, 5, &c. and iv. 8, &c.

- 1 MAY we have grace and peace from God,
The glorious One in Three,
Who us created and redeem'd,
And us doth sanctify ;
- 2 Ev'n from the Father, who still was,
Who is, and still shall be,
And from the sev'nfold working Sp'rit,
Before his throne on high ;

- 3 From Jesus Christ, the witness true,
And first born from the dead,
Who of all earthly kings and pow'rs
Is Prince and ruling Head :
- 4 To this great Lord, that so lov'd men,
Such loathsome men as we,
As wash'd us in his precious blood,
Our souls from sin to free ;
- 5 To him who made us kings and priests,
To God his Father high,
Be glory and dominion
Through all eternity.
- 6 Behold he comes with flying clouds,
Him ev'ry eye shall see,
And unbelievers, who him pierc'd,
Shall wail most bitterly.
- 7 But let believers lift their heads,
With joy, to see and hear,
For then complete redemption
To them is very near.
- 8 The hosts above their homage pay,
And crowns cast on the ground,
They never cease by night nor day,
These praises to resound :
- 9 "O holy, holy, holy Lord,
"Almighty God alone,
"Who ever was, and also is,
"And ever is to come !"
- 10 Glory, pow'r, and honour still
Thou'rt worthy to receive ;
All things were made to please thy will,
And by thy pleasure live.
- 11 Most worthy, Lamb, art thou, they sing,
To be adored thus ;
Let with thy praise heav'n's mansions ring,
For thou wast slain for us.

SONG XXVI.

The Lamb that was slain eternally exalted: From Rev. v.

- 1 THE heav'nly host and elders join,
To bow before the Lamb,
With golden harps, and sweetest tunes,
They trumpet forth his fame.
- 2 They cry, "O Father, who shall look
"Into thy secret will ?
"Worthy the Lamb to take the book,
"And open ev'ry seal :

- 3 "Thou'rt fit God's myst'ries to reveal,
 "For thou wast slain for us,
 "And thy blood purchas'd us to God,
 "Which thou shedst on the cross.
- 4 "From ev'ry nation, kindred, tongue,
 "Thy precious blood us bought ;
 "Well thou deserv'st our praising songs,
 "Who us salvation brought.
- 5 "Unto the Lamb that once was slain,
 "Be endless praises giv'n,
 "By all that dwell upon the earth,
 "And all the hosts of heav'n.
- 6 "Thou hast us ransom'd by thy blood,
 "And set us pris'ners free ;
 "Thou mak'st us kings and priests to God,
 "And we shall reign with thee."
- 7 Let's join, while here, our cheerful songs
 With hosts around the throne,
 Ten thousand thousands are their tongues,
 Yet all agree in one.
- 8 "Worthy the Lamb that dy'd (they cry)
 "To be exalted thus,
 "Worthy the Lamb (let us reply)
 "For he was slain for us.
- 9 "The Lamb is worthy to receive
 "Strength, riches, wisdom, might ;
 "Eternal honours we ascribe
 "To him, for 'tis his right.
- 10 "Let heav'n and earth unite in one,
 "To praise the glorious name
 "Of him that sits upon the throne,
 "And to adore the Lamb."

SONG XXVII.

Christ's Victory and Babylon's downfall : From Rev. xviii. and xix. &c.

- 1 BEHOLD, an angel doth descend,
 With pow'r and glory great ;
 To earth he comes for a great end,
 Blest tidings to relate !
- 2 "Great Babylon that did enthral
 "The kingdoms of the earth,
 "The time is come for her to fall,
 "Which calls for holy mirth.
- 3 "Let heav'n be glad, with all the saints,
 "Let prophets all rejoice ;
 "God doth avenge your long complaints,
 "With praise lift up your voice.

- 4 "A millstone cast by Gabriel,
 "And in the sea is drown'd;
 "Thus terribly shall Babel fall,
 "And never more be found."
- 5 Upon the sea of glass they stand,
 The beast who overcome,
 With harps of gold into their hand,
 To celebrate her doom.
- 6 These conquerors do meet in throngs,
 And to Jehovah's name,
 They pleasantly unite the songs
 Of Moses and the Lamb.
- 7 By Moses' hand the enemy
 Did sink deep in the flood,
 So drown'd our sins are in the sea
 Of Jesus' precious blood.
- 8 The conquerors with fluent tongues
 Christ's honour will proclaim,
 In sweeter notes than Moses' songs,
 They'll tune those of the Lamb.
- 9 All nations shall to thee bow down,
 And worship rev'rently,
 When once thy judgments are made known
 Against thine enemy.
- 10 The hosts of God, with one consent,
 Shall hallelujahs sing,
 When the Lord God omnipotent
 Takes his great pow'r to reign.
- 11 At length will end the devil's reign
 Over the sons of men,
 Let heav'n and earth rejoice and sing,
 With all that dwell in them.

SONG XXVIII.

A view of the Saints and Martyrs in Heaven: From Rev. vii.

- 1 LET'S view by faith the saints above,
 Redeem'd from sin by Jesus's love,
 Their various tribes, their sweet employ,
 In raptures of eternal joy.
- 2 The patriarchs, with Jacob's race,
 Rais'd up to heav'n by God's free grace!
 With songs they praise their father's God,
 Who led them home the heavenly road.
- 3 Next, see a num'rous multitude,
 Redeem'd from hell by Jesus' blood,
 From ev'ry nation, kindred, tongue,
 Who sing an everlasting song.

- 4 In white robes cloth'd they all do stand,
 With palms of triumph in their hand ;
 "Salvation to God on the throne,"
 They cry, " and to the Lamb his Son."
- 5 Next these come angels, and fall down,
 Humbly adoring Three in one ;
 They cry, " Amen, give glory, pow'r,
 " And thanks to God for evermore."
- 6 But whence come these in white who shine,
 All cloth'd with righteousness divine ?
 These come from suff'rings great to God,
 Their robes they wash'd in the Lamb's blood.
- 7 The martyr's trials now are o'er,
 They see God's face for evermore ;
 The Lamb makes sure their heav'nly bliss,
 They've said, He's ours, and we are his.
- 8 No more the heat shall them torment,
 Of scorching sun they've no complaint ;
 The Lamb, who shines amidst the throne,
 Shall be their everlasting Sun.
- 9 To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
 One God, who saved us when lost,
 Be everlasting glory giv'n,
 By all on earth and all in heav'n.

SONG XXIX.

The good news of the Ransom of Christ's Blood.

- 1 GREAT' pity God shews
 To Gentiles and Jews,
 He sent them his gospel to bring them good news :
 Good news to the lost,
 With racking fears toss'd,
 That sound is a ransom in which they may boast.
- 2 A ransom of blood,
 That runs like a flood,
 The sins off to carry, who God's law withstood.
 News ! that Christ was kind,
 When hell's pow'rs combin'd,
 To rout them he freely his dear life resign'd.
- 3 Blood stream'd from his side,
 T' atone for our pride ;
 Sin was the tormentor that him crucify'd.
 When we have him view'd,
 With his blood embru'd,
 May we by this prospect get all sin subdu'd.
- 4 What sight do we see ?
 Christ stretch'd on the tree,
 For rebels as we are most willing to die!

Pains dreadful he felt,
 O let our hearts melt
 For sin that did pierce him, when he bore our guilt.
 5 Since for sins of men
 God's dear Lamb was slain,
 Hard must the man's heart be that yet feels no pain.
 When the sun did faint,
 And hardest rocks rent,
 Shall we be so stubborn as never relent !
 6 Our glorious head
 Our victim was made,
 To heal us when wounded his blood all he shed.
 In our place he stood,
 And pour'd out his blood ;
 Yea, gives us free access to that healing food.
 7 Christ's feasts we'll attend,
 And his love commend,
 We'll think on his sufferings till our hearts do rend.
 His wounds I'll not view
 Like a harden'd Jew,
 But when set before me my grief I'll renew.

SONG XXX.

The news of Christ's pierced feet : From Isa. liii. 7.

- 1 HOW beautiful upon the mount !
 Where Christ's feet pierc'd on our account,
 Where he was crucify'd ?
 His feet, though nailed to the tree,
 Swift tidings bring to you and me,
 God's wrath is pacified.
- 2 Tidings that Christ has purchas'd peace,
 With treasures full of needful grace,
 To supply all our wants.
 Good news ! that he hath purchas'd room,
 For every needy soul to come,
 To sit and feast with saints.
- 3 Were men at God's bar strictly try'd,
 None living could be justify'd,
 All would be guilty found.
 From justice' throne we sinners fly,
 To Christ our bleeding Priest on high,
 Where mercy doth abound.
- 4 In Christ's the proper mercy seat,
 Where we with God may humbly treat,
 In him God's satisfy'd.
 His blood hath justice reconcil'd,
 Its flaming sword hath quit the field,
 Justice is on our side.

- 5 Now God his friendliness to prove,
 Invites us to a feast of love,
 A rich and costly feast :
 To partake of the rarest food,
 Pardon and peace through his Son's blood,
 Which angels ne'er did taste.
- 6 Lord, sin, the murderer here stands,
 That pierc'd thy heart, thy feet, and hands,
 For which I mourn and grieve.
 Lord, give a strong courageous faith,
 To doom each darling lust to death,
 Sin shall no longer live.
- 7 This foe my Saviour betray'd,
 It bound and haul'd him to be try'd,
 And rais'd the furious cry,
 To crucify the Lord our head :
 But, good news ! he rose from the dead,
 And pleads for us on high.

SONG XXXI.

The Lamb's Battle and Victory.

- 1 THE Lamb fought for me,
 My foes vanquish'd he :
 The lion he conquer'd, when nail'd to the tree.
 The Lamb when he fought,
 Great victory brought ;
 Our freedom from bondage to Satan he wrought.
- 2 The Lamb for us dy'd,
 He was crucify'd :
 Yet, when at the lowest, hell's pow'rs he defy'd.
 He lay in the grave,
 Our lost souls to save,
 Yet rose as our champion, most valiant and brave.
- 3 He fought and he fell,
 Yet overcame hell ;
 He conquer'd and triumph'd, for such as rebel.
 He rose for our sake,
 And did the earth shake,
 The devils and keepers to tremble did make.
- 4 Then rocks they did rend ;
 Him angels attend,
 He taught his disciples, till he did ascend.
 He went up in night,
 With chariots of light ;
 A cloud him received out of his friend's sight.
- 5 Above he did land,
 Sits on God's right hand,

Our High Priest and Sov'reign, all things to command,
 'There he pleads on high,
 Loud doth his blood cry,
 For pardon to sinners, who to him do fly:
 6 The Lamb's judge of all,
 The dead he will call,
 All must stand before him, be they great or small.
 His mercy is great,
 His blood paid our debt,
 He will then absolve us when judgment is set.
 7 Of Christ that did die,
 But now reigns on high,
 Our songs with sweet music we'll spread through the sky,
 With both hearts and tongues,
 We'll sing the Lamb's songs,
 Let ev'ry soul join us that to him belongs.

SONG XXXII.

Christ's Sufferings, and his Love to Believing Souls.

- 1 WHEN Jesus pour'd out blood and tears,
 A sinking load of wrath he bears,
 God's justice to appease.
 A bloody robe for us he wore,
 His soul in pain did travail sore,
 And all to bring us ease.
- 2 The ploughers his dear back did plough,
 Their scourges here long furrows drew,
 In which his blood did run.
 They him expos'd to all disgrace,
 They spat upon his blessed face,
 His love this did not shun.
- 3 He bore our curse and punishment,
 Shed blood till ev'ry drop was spent,
 To ransom us from wrath.
 Who can his love enough commend,
 That saves all criminals condemn'd,
 Who look to him by faith?
- 4 From sin and wrath thou dost relieve
 The chief of sinners who believe,
 Thy wounds do them inclose:
 Their souls in thee thy people hide,
 And there they constantly abide,
 Safe from their deadly foes.
- 5 A skreen from wrath, I know of none,
 But Jesus' righteousness alone,
 Which covers all our sin.
 Strict trial this can well endure,
 For it is infinitely pure,
 No flaw is found therein.

- 6 Thou when on earth the sick didst heal,
 And to the hungry bread didst deal,
 Our souls when starving feed ;
 More precious they are than clay,
 Lord Jesus, pity souls this day,
 And satisfy our need.
- 7 Believers by thee are belov'd ;
 A kingdom, ne'er to be remov'd,
 Shall unto them be giv'n.
 Rich crowns on them thou wilt bestow,
 No matter what they want below,
 They'll be made up in heav'n.

SONG XXXIII.

Christ's great Sufferings bring great Benefit to us.

- 1 THE Lamb silent stood,
 While men shed his blood !
 Himself he gave freely to be our soul's food.
 Crown'd was he with thorn,
 Us'd with spite and scorn,
 Yet patiently bore it, to save the forlorn.
- 2 Exposed he stands,
 With nail'd feet and hands,
 Deep pierc'd, long bleeding, to pay law's demands.
 No man's tongue can tell,
 What grief him befel,
 In saving lost sinners from sinking to hell.
- 3 He was doom'd to die
 On mount Calvary,
 Sore press'd he did utter his last bitter cry.
 Our guilt which he bore
 Squeez'd blood from each pore,
 Great was his soul's torture that made him to roar.
- 4 His wounds bring us peace,
 His pains give us ease,
 From sin's pow'r and bondage they give us release.
 Christ straying souls sought,
 Their pardon he bought,
 From Satan's vile slav'ry their freedom he wrought.
- 5 Lord, thy love's divine,
 It doth kindle mine,
 O let it cause me in all graces to shine.
 Dead souls to revive,
 When they life derive
 From thy wounds, the fountain that makes them alive.
- 6 I'm sinful and vile,
 My heart's full of guile,

It will be free mercy if thou on me smile,
Lord, do not despise
My soul's feeble cries,
Receive a lost sinner that to thy blood flies.
7 This blood saves from hell,
And tears doth dispel,
The thunders of Sinai the Lamb's blood doth quell,
I plead thy free grace,
One smile of thy face,
One word to me spoken will fill me with peace.

END OF THE SCRIPTURE SONGS.

APPENDIX.

CONTAINING,

A LECTURE, on 1 Cor. xi. 17, to the end.

A PREPARATION SERMON, from Jos. iii. 5.

AN ACTION SERMON, from Cant. ii. 4.

A LECTURE,

On 1 Cor. xi. 17, to the end.

Concerning the Institution of the Lord's Supper.

Verse 17. Now in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not, that you come together, not for the better, but for the worse.

Verse 18. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you and I partly believe it.

Verse 19. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

IN this passage the apostle takes occasion to reprove the great disorders and abuses crept in among them in administering and partaking of the Lord's supper, which (as the ancients tell us) was commonly administered with a love feast annexed to it, which gave occasion to the scandalous disorders here reprehended.

Verse 17. We have the manner of his introducing the charge, *Now in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not, &c.* Which shews his willingness to commend them so far as he could. But such scandalous disorders as they were guilty of in so sacred an institution, he could not pass without a sharp reproof. Why? they inverted the very end and design of the ordinance, which was intended to make them better, or to promote their spiritual interests, but it really made them worse. Wherefore he says, *they came together not for the better, but the worse.*

Observe 1. That Christ's ordinances, if they do not make us better, they are apt to make us worse. If they do us no good, they may do us harm; if they do not melt and mend, they will harden; and that corruptions will be confirmed in

us, if the proper means do not work a cure of them. 2. It concerns us all to enquire into the success of ordinances and solemn meetings. O it is sad, if our meetings tend to the increase of our sin, instead of the increase of our grace. Let us earnestly deprecate this.

Verse 18. *For first of all, when you come together in the church, I hear there be divisions among you, &c.* They fell into divisions, sects, parties, and factions, in their celebrating of this ordinance; they fell a quarrelling one with another about meats and drinks in the love feasts, or about the order of their down sitting, or the time when they should begin, or did not stay till they all came up. The whole church did not join together, but they eat it separately; there was also uncharitableness, alienation of affections, discord and contentions among them, which very much marred their edification, and success of the gospel.

Quest. Seeing schisms are mentioned here, what is meant thereby? Who are guilty of schism, and who are schismatics? Ans. In Scripture the word is variously taken: 1. It is taken for a difference in opinions and sentiments about some points, when there is no heat of contention, or breach of communion. Such a division or schism was among the Pharisees, about Christ's curing the blind man, John ix. 16. it is said, *there was a division among them*, originally *chidma*. And such schisms may be among orthodox divines about lesser points, and yet managed without giving offence. 2. The general sense of the word is, a dividing and breaking off from communion of the church in public ordinances, without cause, like those Heb. x. 25. *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.* And in this sense the antients take schism as distinguished from heresy. Augustine saith, *Shismaticos facit non diversa fides, sed communionis disrupta societas*. 3. In this place, and commonly in other places of Scripture, as 1 Cor. i. 10. iii. 4. and xii. 25. the word *chidma* is taken for uncharitable contentions, and divisive practices among the professors of the gospel, without breaking off from the communion of the church; when people are chargeable with uncharitable contentions and discords, and alienation of affections from their brethren; for here they came together, and yet were schismatics.

Observe. That may be schism where there is no separation of communion. Persons may attend ordinances together, and sit at the Lord's table, and yet be schismatics in Scripture sense, by reason of their uncharitable contentions, and alienation of affections: Whereas Christians may separate from each others communion, and yet be charitable one towards another; and this is not so much schism in Scripture sense, as to be uncharitable and contentious.

The apostle had a report of these divisions, which he did the more easily believe, because he knew there behoved not only to be divisions but heresies also, that is, false doctrines,

more dangerous than schisms ; for heresies are corrupt opinions, which strike at the fundamentals of Christianity and all sound religion. Heresy, according to the modern sense of the word, is an error in the fundamentals of religion maintained with obstinacy ; though we cannot say the word necessarily imports such a strong sense in this place, heresy and schism sometimes being synonymous terms.

Observe 1. We have no cause to wonder that there should be breaches of Christian love in the church, when we know such offences will come as shall make shipwrecks of faith and a good conscience.

Quest. How says the apostle, *Heresies must come* ? What necessity is there for them ? Ans. There is no necessity of force upon any man to broach them, any further than his own corruption, pride, vain glory, envy, or contentious spirit, or Satan's temptations prompt him to it. But the event is certain, because of God's decree permitting them, who by his wisdom orders them for wise ends, that they *who are approved may be made manifest*, by their constant adhering to the truth, against all the temptations of seducers.

Observe 2. A time of temptation and seduction is a time of trial and discovery, who are sincere and constant adherers to the truths and ways of God, and who not.

Observe 3. It is a pleasure to God to see the faith and constancy of his upright ones discovered to the world.

Observe 4. The wisdom of God can make the errors and wickedness of others a foil to the piety and integrity of the saints.

Verse 20. *When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper.*

21. *For in eating, every one taketh before other his own supper ; and one is hungry, and another is drunken.*

The heathens used to eat and drink plentifully at their feasts upon their sacrifices, and this profane custom was creeping in among the wealthier Corinthians. Many think the apostle was pointing here at their *agapai*, or love feasts, that in those times either preceded or followed the Lord's supper ; and they are called love feasts, because they were designed to manifest their love to their fellow Christians, both poor and rich, and the poor carried away what was left at them : And also they had them to represent our Lord's last supper, in which he eat the Paschal Lamb, before he instituted that ordinance now called the *Lord's Supper*. These love feasts were founded on no command of Christ, but came in by custom, and by the Jews who became Christians. These would needs have an appendix or appurtenance to the Lord's supper ; and in imitation of Christ's eating the Paschal Lamb before the Lord's supper ; would have a feast or supper of their own to precede the Lord's supper ; and having provided it at home, would needs bring it to the place where the church met. To this

feast all the poor were invited at the charges of the rich, as an expression of their perfect love and charity one to another. But in this church great abuses crept in, in this practice; the poor Christians were neglected and despised. The rich did either not invite them, or not wait for them: But the rich hasted to eat what they had brought with them, and some of them eat and drank to excess, so that *one was hungry another drunken*. The apostle inveighs against this practice, as turning a feast of charity into a debauch, and as that which made them incapable to partake of the Lord's supper. This was a scandalous irregularity, a profaning a sacred institution, and corrupting a divine ordinance to the last degree. What should have been a bond of mutual amity and affection, was made an instrument of discord and disunion.

Observe 1. Duties not done as they ought, are not done at all in Christ's account. Or a careless eating and drinking of the Lord's supper is as good as none, yea worse than not eating. So prayers may be made, yet not made; sacraments received, yet not received; alms given, yet not given, because not done in the manner and form required by God.

Observe 2. A sincere soul must and will look not only to the matter of the duty, but also to the manner of performing it.

Observe 3. It is a heinous evil for christians to treat their fellow christians with contempt and insolence, especially at the Lord's table; For the rich to despise the poor, this is a great evil.

Observe 4. That even in the apostolical and primitive times, great disorders and irregularities had crept into the church, and that there is no church without spot in this imperfect state.

Observe 5. That the apostle, notwithstanding of these, doth not direct the one part of the Corinthians to separate from the other, but he only reproveth and rectifies their abuses. He doth not say, Withdraw from such persons, for they will pollute the ordinance to you. No, if they be polluted, it is to themselves, and not to others. He eats and drinks damnation *to himself*. Every man shall bear his own burden. Wherefore, says he, *Let a man examine himself*, not his neighbour. The apostle doth not encourage separation upon that ground, that there were scandalous persons admitted in Corinth, even some drunk about the time of partaking, which might be the occasion of their divided way of communicating. But he reproveth their divided communicating, and charges them to come together to the Lord's supper, and tarry for one another. He indeed sharply reproveth their scandalous practice, and tells them that it was most hazardous to themselves to communicate unworthily, but he speaketh of no danger to others. He commands them to examine themselves, and so to eat, but not to examine their fellow communicants, which certainly he had done, if their joining with them had made them partakers of their sin and danger.

Verse 22. *What, have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the church of God. and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.*

The apostle here doth condemn both the abuses of those feasts, and also their keeping them in the place where the church met. Some understand *the church*, of the house wherein the church met, and call their feasting there, a profaning or unhallowing the place set apart for divine worship. Others understand it of the people or poor members there met. Why do you despise them? By excluding them from your company because, of their poverty; and so ye put them to shame whom God has adopted, and admitted into his family. This feast was originally designed for the poor's relief, and ye excluded them from it.

Observe 1. The despising the poor members of the church, is a despising of the church itself, yea, Christ the head of the church, as he that pincheth the little toe, paineth the whole body and the head too.

Observe 2. With what lenity and mildness the apostle reproves these great disorders, *Shall I praise you?* It was the first time he had told them of their faults, in hopes of amendment, and therefore doth it gently; and some think this gentle way of reproof had the due effect, because no fault is taxed in the second epistle that was reproved in the first.

Verse 23. *For I have received of the Lord, that which I also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread.*

24. *And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you: This do in remembrance of me.*

25. *After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*

26. *For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.*

After reproving their disorders, he reduces them to the primitive institution, and tells them, how he came by the knowledge of it, seeing that he was not among the apostles at the first institution. It was by revelation from Christ, and what he had *received of the Lord* he communicated to them without varying from the truth in the least, without adding or diminishing. As if he had said, *As for these love feasts preceding the Lord's supper, I received nothing from the Lord; you have borrowed them from Jews or heathens: but all I received from the Lord concerning the Lord's supper, I here set before you.* And indeed he gives a more particular account of the institution than we meet with elsewhere.

1. We have the author of it, the Lord Jesus Christ, Obs.

It is an act of Christ's royal power and authority, as King and Head of the church, to institute sacraments. The church has no power to appoint such, but only to execute and administer what Christ appoints: And as it is Christ's ordinance, we should have a special regard to it, and not profane or neglect it.

2. We have the time of the institution, *the same night in which he was betrayed*; when he was entering on his soul-sufferings in the garden, and going next day to the cross; a night much to be remembered, being the last night before Christ's death; the night wherein he began his bitter agonies, and swate the bloody sweat for us; a night, wherein he saw heaven, earth, and hell, even justice, men, and devils, drawn up in battle array against him. A wondrous instance of his love, in spending so much of that little time he had in the world, when he seemed to have more need to mind himself, in settling an ordinance for the confirmation and consolation of his people to the end of the world. Whatever come of himself, his people must not be forgot.—Observe from the time of the institution, the night before his suffering, that it is very necessary when sufferings are approaching, to have recourse to the Lord's table, which affords both an antidote against fear, and a restorative and cordial to faith. Wherefore Christ, for our example, communicated with his disciples the night before he suffered.

3. We have the sacramental elements, or the memorative, significative, and instructive signs, bread and wine.

4. The things signified thereby, the body and blood of Christ, his body broken and blood shed, together with all the benefits which flow from his death and sacrifice.

Observe 1. There is no transubstantiation, as the Papists absurdly imagine. Why? Paul calls that which is eaten *bread* five times over in this passage, and even after what the Papists call consecration. A plain argument that the apostle knew nothing of their monstrous doctrine, which makes the bread by the words of consecration to be changed into the substance of Christ's body, only the accidents of bread remaining, which affronts and destroys the nature of a sacrament, and gives the lie to our senses. It is called his body, because it was a sign and representation of it, not his real body to be sure; for then it would follow, that Christ eat his own body while alive, and that his disciples did the same; yea, that they devoured that body over night which hang upon the cross next morning, with a thousand such like absurdities. But whether the Papists will or not, they must admit of a figurative expression in this passage; for when Christ says, *This cup is the New Testament in my blood*, they must mean that which was in the cup, and not the vessel that held it; and this is the ordinary sacramental dialect, concerning circumcision and the passover. Circumcision is called *God's covenant*, Gen. xvii. 18. i. e. the sign of it. Also the Lamb is called the

passover, Exod. xii, 11. i. e. the sign of it. It is true the heathens laid it to the charge of the primitive Christians, that they eat human flesh; but falsely, as it appears by the apology made for the primitive Christians, by Tertullian and others; which apology had been false, had they eaten the flesh of Christ in the sacrament. It hath been always reckoned a most detestable thing to eat human flesh, and much more it is to eat the God we worship, and devour him whom we pretend to adore.

Observe 2. That both bread and cup are used together, which shews the unwarrantable usurpation of the Papists in depriving the laity of the cup. It is directly contrary to Christ's institution; for our Saviour (as it were) foreseeing the Papists' encroachments in this matter, is more express in his injunction concerning the cup, than the bread, in the these words. Matth. xxvi. 27. *Drink ye all of it*; and their obedience is recorded of the cup, and not of the bread, Mark. xiv. 27. *And they all drank of it*. Now, why is Christ so express in this? Surely it was because he foresaw in the after-ages this ordinance would be dismembered, by the prohibition of the cup to the laity, and that by the Popish councils and canons, with an express *non obstante* to the command of Christ.

5. We have the sacramental actions both on the minister's and the people's part.

For the first. Our Lord took the bread, he blessed it, he brake it, he gave it to his disciples. 1. The taking of bread signifies God's choosing, setting apart, and appointing Christ to be a surety and sacrifice, and laying on him the sins of his people. 2. The blessing signifies his qualifying and furnishing Christ with all gifts and graces needful for the discharge of his mediatory office, and for answering his peoples' exigencies. 3. The breaking signifies all Christ's breakings, bruising, and woundings, both in soul and body, which were for our sins, in order to satisfy divine justice, and procure salvation for us. 4. The giving signifies his offering, giving, and actually bestowing Christ and all his benefits on us. There is no promise reserved, no blessings excepted or kept back; all is theirs.

2dly. The actions on the communicants part are to take, to eat, and drink in remembrance of Christ.

Quest. What is meant by taking this bread? Ans. It is the accepting of Christ as he is offered to us; a receiving the atonement, approving of it, consenting to it, coming up to the terms on which the benefit is proposed to us. It is an accepting of Christ's grace, and submitting to his government. Believing on Christ is expressed by taking or receiving of him. Well then, when we are bid to take this bread, we are bid take Christ and all the benefits of his purchase; and that sincerely and honestly, without dissimulation; entirely, fully, and without exception; with close and particular application,

saying, *My Lord and my God*; with thankfulness and praise for such a glorious surety, such a rich purchase, such a free covenant, and such suitable promises: with humility and self-denial, renouncing all confidence in our own preparations, or qualifications of any sort, saying, *In the Lord only have I righteousness and strength*; and with full assurance of faith looking on the bread, as the Lord's seal and pledge of our interest in, and title to the blessings of the covenant; and as a token from Christ that his body was broken for us; believing that Christ and all the blessings of the covenant are herewith given to us, as really as Christ gives the bread into our hands.

Quest. What is meant by eating this bread? Ans. It signifies our feeding by faith upon Christ and his benefits, which is done by our believing the report concerning Christ and his purchase, and making a particular application of Christ and his benefits unto our souls, and their various necessities and exigencies. And particularly this eating signifies, 1. Our union with Christ. 2. Our satisfaction and complacency in him. 3. Our receiving strength and increase of grace from Christ. 4. Our taking investment and possession of Christ and his purchase as our inheritance, and receiving this outward sign as a pledge of the whole.

As the words concerning the cup, *This cup is the New Testament in my blood, shed for many, for the remission of sins*: it is a figurative speech, signifying that the wine in the cup, as the representing the shedding of Christ's blood, is a sign and seal of Christ's Testament or Covenant of grace, confirmed by his blood.—From which we may observe, 1. That every worthy communicant doth here get a copy of Christ's Testament put into his hands, with all the legacies and blessings it contains, such as pardon of sin, peace with God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, grace, and glory. Which Testament if we take hold of, and acquiesce in the method of salvation contained in it, and can prove our relation to the Testator by faith and regeneration, we are children and heirs, and have an interest therein.—Obs. 2. What it was that purchased the New Testament to us, even Christ's blood; there is never a line we read or hear of the New Testament, but we should mind the blood of Christ. Had it not been for the blood of Christ, we had never had the New Testament written, and had it not been for the New Testament, we had never known the meaning of Christ's blood shed.

6. We have the ends of the institution, 1. *To keep up the remembrance of Christ*. Christ knew how apt our base hearts would be to forget him amidst the throng of sensible objects as we here converse with: and how much our forgetfulness of Christ would be to our prejudice and disadvantage, and therefore he appoints this ordinance, to bring Christ, his death and love to our believing, affectionate, and thankful remembrance. 2. *To shew forth his death*, i. e. to declare,

publish and proclaim it. It is not barely in remembrance of Christ, of what he hath done and suffered, but also to celebrate, publish, and proclaim his glorious condescension, his love and favour to lost sinners. We declare his death to be our life, and the spring of all our comforts and hopes. We glory in this atonement and sacrifice, and spread it before God as our only ransom. We set it in the view of our faith for our quickening and comfort. We own it before the world, as the only ground of our hope; and that we are the disciples of a crucified Christ, who trust in him alone for salvation and acceptance with God.

7. We have a mandate or charge given for the celebration of this ordinance, and for doing it frequently. Our Lord's command is twice repeated for security, *this do, this do ye*. It was our Lord's will that we should celebrate the memorial of his death and passion. It is the will of our sovereign Lord and Lawgiver, the express command of a Saviour, yea, of a dying Saviour. A command of love: and it is such a command, as, if we duly observe it, will be a blessed means to enable us to observe all the commands of God the better. It is such a command, as whosoever lives in the wilful neglect of it, cannot be called a Christian, but will be treated by Christ at the great day, as an enemy and despiser of his dying love. Wherefore it is our duty not only to communicate and partake of this ordinance, but we must do it often. We cannot maintain bodily health and strength without frequent meals, so neither can we maintain soul health and strength without this spiritual diet frequently taken and received. The ancient churches celebrated this ordinance every Lord's day. Let us be thankful that we have this spiritual meal more frequently tendered to us than formerly. O for sharpened appetites for our food!

8. We have the perpetuity of the ordinance. It is to be celebrated *till the Lord come* the second time; without sin, for the salvation of them that believe, and to judge the world. Observe 1. That the Lord's supper is not a temporary, but a standing and perpetual ordinance. 2. That there is no need of sacraments in heaven, for Christ is there bodily present. Faith is then changed into vision, and hope into fruition. Here we hold communion with him by signs and symbols, but above we will see him as he is, and enjoy him perfectly. The day will then break, and all the shadows will flee away.

Verse 27. *Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*

28. *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

29. *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*

The apostle having declared the original institution of the Lord's supper, he comes now to instruct the Corinthians in

the right use of it, and to beware of profaning and abusing this ordinance as they had done.

Observe 1. The sin which he warns them of, *viz. Eating and drinking unworthily*. Quest. What is this? Ans. It is not a weak faith, or weakness in knowledge, or want of perfect holiness, or freedom from sin, that will denominate a person an unworthy receiver, for this ordinance was not instituted for angels, but for men, who are imperfect and sinful: But it is to come ignorant, without due preparation, without faith, without repentance, without self examination, without resolution against sin, and without reconciliation to God or to our neighbour.

Observe 2. The guilt and heinousness of this sin: They are *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*, i. e. It is an accession to the guilt of shedding the innocent blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is an implicit approbation of the Jew's act in crucifying Christ. It is a trampling Christ's blood under our feet. It is a crucifying Christ afresh, and harbouring the traitors and enemies of Christ in our bosom.

Observe 3. The danger of it, eating and drinking damnation to ourselves, i. e. They provoke God to inflict sore temporal and spiritual judgments on them here, and eternal judgments hereafter. The meaning is not, that this sin is unpardonable, but that it deserves damnation, and will bring it on, without repentance and flying to the blood of Christ for cleansing. Every sin is in its own nature damning, and therefore such a heinous sin, as profaning this holy ordinance, must surely be so. But timorous and fearful believers should not be discouraged from attending this holy ordinance by the sound of this word, as if they bound upon themselves the sentence of damnation, by coming to the Lord's table unprepared. For hearing and praying unworthily incurs damnation, as well as communicating unworthily. But this sin, as well as others, leaves room for forgiveness upon repentance.

Observe 4. That unworthy receivers of the Lord's supper do contract great guilt, and incur great danger to themselves. And therefore they should be much concerned to guard against this heinous and dangerous sin, and cry with the Psalmist. *Lord deliver us from blood guiltiness.*

Observe 5. It is only judgment to himself, it is not to another that receives with him. For if a wicked man's presence at the sacrament should pollute the ordinance to a worthy receiver, then Christ and his eleven apostles were defiled by the company of Judas at the passover, at which he certainly was, and, as many think, at the Lord's supper also. Which is absurd.

We have in verse 28th, the duty required for preventing the sin and danger of unworthy communicating, and that is the great and necessary duty of self-examination. It is a metaphor taken from goldsmiths, who try the truth of their gold by the touchstone, the purity of their gold by the fire,

and the weight of it by the scale. We have here, 1. The person examining, *let a man examine*. 2. The person examined, it is himself; he is to call himself to the bar of conscience, and put questions to himself. 1. Concerning his state, whether he has a right to come or not. 2. His sins and short comings. 3. His wants and necessities. 4. His ends and designs; whether it be to obey the charge of his dying Saviour, to shew forth his death, renew and seal his covenant with God, get nearness and communion with him, nourishment to his soul, and supply to his wants. And, 5. Concerning his graces and qualifications, particularly as to knowledge, faith, repentance, fear, love, thankfulness, holy desires, and new obedience.

Observe 1. It is not enough that a minister examine us, before partaking. We must examine ourselves, for we only can try our own hearts and thoughts, which a minister cannot.

Observe 2. Our main concern before partaking is about ourselves. It is not about examining others, but about examining ourselves that we are to be employed. It is not what he or she is that is to communicate with us, but what I am myself.

Observe 3. It should therefore be our singular care before communicating, to examine ourselves, and commune with our own hearts, as to our right to and fitness for the Lord's table.

We have in verse 29th, the true cause of unworthy communicating, *not discerning the Lord's body*; i. e. not making a distinction between this bread and common bread; betwixt the Lord's body, and the body of a mere man; not prizing and esteeming the body of a crucified Jesus as the meritorious ground of our justification.

Verse 30. *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

Some were punished with sickness and weakness, and some with death, for their irreverence in approaching to the Lord's table.

Observe 1. That careless and irreverent partaking, brings on temporal judgments, as well as spiritual and eternal.

Observe 2. That God may punish his own people with temporal judgments, for several of those so punished were in a state of favour with God, as appears from the word *sleep*, the death of the wicked being hardly called sleep in any place of Scripture; and from verse 32, they were *chastened of the Lord*, that they might not be condemned with the world. Now, divine chastening is a sign of divine love.

Observe 3. That the holiness of an ordinance, or the habitual holiness of a person, will not exempt him from God's displeasure and the infliction of temporal judgments here in this life, if he do not by actual preparation sanctify the name of God in the duty and ordinances of his worship.

Observe 4. That God punishes his people now to prevent their eternal woe.

Verse 31. *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*

If we would examine, try, censure, and sentence ourselves, and so come to the Lord's table, we would escape the castigatory punishment, and condemnatory sentence of God. Observe 1. That as it is our duty often to examine and judge ourselves, so self-judging will preserve us from the condemnation and judgment of God. 2. That those who through weakness of understanding are not capable to examine themselves, are by no means fit to partake of this ordinance.

Verse 32. *But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*

The nature of these judgments, or afflictive evils, which befall the children of God in this life; they are chastenings, *we are chastened of the Lord.* To be chastened has a double aspect, first upon our privilege, it denotes our relation, as children to God our Father. Chastenings are a part of his children's portion; yet in that we are chastened, it taxes us with weakness; we are foolish and unruly, and therefore, so long as we are here, must always go with a rod at our back. Christ, who was also a son, was chastened. *The chastisement of our peace was upon him;* but his were judicatory chastisements, not as a child, but as an enemy, a malefactor, in our stead. Observe, The merciful design of God in chastening his children, is to prevent their condemnation.—When therefore at any time we are under chastisement, let us justify God, and condemn ourselves, seeing his chastisements are designed to prevent our condemnation.

Verses 33, 34, 35. *Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*

The apostle closes all with a caution, to beware of the irregularities they had been guilty of, and to rectify them, that they come not together unto condemnation. Observe 1. That our holy duties through our own abuse may prove matter of condemnation. Christians may keep sabbaths, hear sermons, perform prayers, attend sacraments, and only aggravate their guilt, and bring on a heavier doom on themselves. Observe 2. We have great need to see that we come to God in due order.

Lastly, he tells them, that as to the other points of church order, he would determine them, when he came among them: *the rest will I set in order when I come.* Such unchristian disorders may arise in the church, as will require the presence and coming of an apostle to correct and reform them.

A PREPARATION SERMON,

BEFORE THE SACRAMENT.



Joshua iii. 5. Sanctify yourselves, for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.



IN this chapter we have the history of Israel's passing through Jordan to Canaan ; and a very memorable history it is, for long after they are bid to remember what God did for them between Shittim and Gilgal, Micah vi. 5. *That they may know the righteousness of the Lord.* Shittim was the place where they decamped, and Gilgal where they next pitched. See Joshua iii. 1. compared with Joshua iv. 19.—He orders them to march up to the river side, where they came and lodged, though they were unprovided of means to pass it in the ordinary way. Though they had neither boats nor bridges, yet they go forward in faith, trusting God's power and promise. It was told them, Joshua i. 11. that they should pass it. We must go on in the way of our duty, though we foresee difficulties, trusting God to help us through them when we come to them. The people are directed to follow the Ark, v. 3. when borne by the Priests and Levites, to teach us closely to attend ordinances, if we would have the marks of God's favour and special presence.

In the text we have two things, 1. A Command. 2. Reasons given for it.

As to the first, *Sanctify yourselves.* The word *sanctify*, has divers acceptations in scripture. Sometimes it is applied to God ; we are commanded to *sanctify the Lord*, that is, to think and speak reverently of him, or humbly to worship him. At other times we are commanded to *sanctify ourselves*, and then it imports several things:—1. Our separating or setting ourselves apart to some holy use. 2. Our

cleansing ourselves from all ceremonial pollution. 3. Our preparing ourselves for some solemn or sacred action, by the use of some sacred rites or ceremonies, such as legal washing, &c. 4. Our putting ourselves in a suitable frame for attending on God's worship. 5. Our purifying ourselves inwardly for sin, and adorning ourselves with holiness. I might cite Scripture for all the significations of the word, as Exod. xix. 22. Josh. vii. 13. 1 Cor. xv. 12. 2 Chron. v. 11. xxix. 5. xxx. 3. &c. I shall take it here as comprehending something of all these senses, especially the people preparing themselves to attend the Ark, and the discovering of God's power, glory, and goodness, with a suitable sorrow and awful frame of spirit, befitting such a great occasion.

2. We have the reasons for it, *For to-morrow the Lord will do wonders amongst you.* See how magnificently he speaks of God's works, he calls them *wonders*; and indeed these were so, the dividing of the waters of Jordan, and making them to stand up as a heap, and then to run back, turning fluids into solids, and causing the Israelites to walk through the rapid river upon solid dry ground. All these were great wonders of God's power and goodness towards Israel. Now, says Joshua, since God is about to give you such uncommon instances of his power and favour, *sanctify yourselves*, compose your minds by meditation, prayer, and abstractedness from the world, that ye may be in case for a careful and religious observation of his wonderful works, and to receive the discovery of his glory, and the communications of his goodness, that so ye may give God all the glory, and take to yourselves the comfort of his wondrous works and gracious appearances.

Doctrine. When God is about to make wonderful discoveries of his glory and goodness to his people, then they should make solemn preparation for observing and receiving of the same. For confirmation whereof, see Exod. xix. 10, 11.—*And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes; and be ready against the third day; for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people, upon mount Sinai.* Or, 2dly, When God sets tryst with a people, they should prepare themselves to attend him. 1 Sam. xvi. 4, 5. *And Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Bethlehem; and the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably? and he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord: Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.*

Method. I. When it is that the Lord makes such wonderful discoveries of himself to his people.

II. Wherein the preparation for waiting on the wonder-working God doth lie.

III. The properties of this preparation.

IV. The necessity of it.

V. And lastly, I shall make application.

I. As to the first head, When it is that the Lord makes glorious and wonderful discoveries of himself to a people.—

1. When, notwithstanding of grievous sins and provocations, he averts threatening and impending judgments, and comes to them in a way of mercy; as when he threatens famine and scarcity, he sends fruitful seasons and plenty of bread; when he threatens the noisome pestilence, he removes it and sends health; when he threatens a bloody sword, he sheaths it up, and sends peace and safety.

2. When he is pleased to quell the church's enemies and persecutors, to deliver his people from their oppressions, and give them the freedom of their assemblies, and of observing God's institutions in purity.

3. When he pours out a spirit of reformation on all ranks and degrees, so that people generally turn to the Lord, prize ordinances, prayer, family worship, and appear against vice.

4. When God pours out his Spirit on the assemblies of his people, so that the preaching of the gospel is attended with life, power, and success, to the melting of hearts, and converting of souls.

5. When he discovers a Redeemer to a lost, sinking soul; when a poor self-condemned sinner, that was at his wit's end, gets a sight of the possibility of salvation through the satisfaction of Christ.

6. When he sets forth Christ crucified before our eyes in the sacrament; when he displays therein the wisdom, justice, love, and goodness of God to sinners in a most lively manner.

7. When he returns and makes his people's sky break after a long night of desertion; when he makes light to arise and shine to them that were in darkness, and opens the door of his presence chamber.

8. When he gives them the victory over Satan's temptations and assaults, after long sufferings and conflicts, and speaks to them as to Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 9. *My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

9. When he meets with them in ordinances, looses their bonds, frees them from straitenings in duty, and enlarges their hearts in prayer, and enables them to pour forth their complaints and requests before the Lord.

10. When he comes with a return to their prayers; particularly, 1. By lifting on them the light of his countenance; or, 2. By giving them a view of their covenant relation to God; a well grounded hope of heaven, and new strength to grapple with sin, perform duties, and bear trials.

11. When he comes and gives a glorious discovery of his

greatness and majesty, so as to fill them with awful fear and reverence of God, and makes them cry, *Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him?* O the unspeakable distance that is between God and us! God is glorious, and the creature is nothing.

12. When he comes and gives the soul a glorious discovery of the holiness and purity of God, in his nature, his law, and his works, as he did to Job, making him cry, *Behold I am vile*: and to Isaiah, *Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips*.

13. When he gives a glorious discovery of the goodness and mercy of God, particularly in these instances: 1. The glorious contrivance of our redemption, by sending Christ to save us. 2. In pardoning guilty sinners so many crimes, and making them cry, as Micah vii. 18. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy*. 3. In taking rebellious traitors and enemies to God, to be children of God, and favourites of heaven. 4. In exalting them above angels that never sinned, and providing glorious mansions for them.

14. When he comes in the ordinances, and quickens the dead and languishing graces of his people; as, 1. When he melts their hard hearts into the exercise of repentance and mourning for sin. 2. When he comes and actuates their faith, enables the weak sinner to go out to Christ, cast his soul and lay his burden on him, and wholly to look to him, and lean on him for pardon and salvation. 3. When he comes and makes their hearts burn with love to himself, and to precious Christ the Mediator, while he talks to them and opens up the Scriptures. 4. When he draws out the desires and pantings of the soul towards himself. 5. When he quickens the spirit of prayer, and elevates the heart for praise, and enables the soul for every duty.

II. As to the second head, wherein this preparation and sanctifying of the heart for waiting on God in ordinances, doth lie: First, It supposes, 1. That we are naturally unfit and unprepared for approaching to God. 3. It supposes a work of God's grace and Spirit on the heart; he only fits the soul for spiritual things. *It is God that worketh in us both to will and do of his good pleasure. The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord, Prov. xvi. 1.*

Secondly, It directly imports these things: 1. The soul's being in a gracious state, translated from nature to grace by the Spirit of God, and that the soul is reconciled to God by the blood of Christ, and a work of sanctification begun; without this we cannot be accepted.

2. It lies in bringing our hearts with us, and engaging all

the powers and faculties of our souls to attend God in duty, Psal. lxxxvi. 11. *Unite my heart to fear thy name*; and, Psal. cxix. 10. *With my whole heart have I sought thee.*

3. It lies in our having right thoughts and uptakings of that gracious God whom we approach to: 1. That we believe that God is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. 2. That he is incomprehensibly great and glorious, fills the heavens and earth with his presence, and that great fear and reverence is due to him. 3. That he is glorious in holiness, and of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity. 4. That he is spotless in justice, and will by no means clear the guilty. 5. That he is omnipotent in power, for protecting his people, and destroying his enemies. 6. That he is matchless in clemency and mercy, easy to be entreated, and ready to forgive through Christ. 7. That he is faithful, and keeps covenant for ever.

4. It lies in having humble and low thoughts of ourselves, as unworthy to approach to God, or receive any token of his favour. The soul that is sanctified and prepared for approaching to God, hath a deep sense of former sins and miscarriages, wonders at God's patience, that the earth hath not opened its mouth to swallow it up ere now.

5. It lies in cleansing and purifying ourselves, by searching for and throwing out all those sins and evils that unfit us for converse with God. If we would have God to accept us, we must regard no iniquity in our hearts; particularly, 1. We must cast out pride and self-conceit. If we have a good opinion of ourselves, our duties and performances, God will not accept us; we must count all but loss and dung for Christ. 2. Worldliness, and thoughts about earthly things. 3. Unbelief and doubtings concerning the truths of God.— 4. Malice and revenge. 5. Vain and wandering thoughts, and seek to have our hearts fixed, Psal. lvi.

6. It lies in our retiredness and abstractedness from the world and earthly thoughts. In the temple, for as much flesh as was used there for the sacrifice, not one fly was seen stirring; which teacheth us to drive away the flies of worldly thoughts in God's presence, that they do not spoil or corrupt the sacrifice, as that grievous swarm of flies did every thing in the land of Egypt, Exod. viii. 24. Do as Abraham, when he went to approach God and to sacrifice on mount Moriah, Gen. xxii. 4, 5. *When he saw the place afar off, he said to his young men, Abide you here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship.* He knew that if they had gone along with him, they would so distract him with their clamour, that he could not offer sacrifice with that freedom and tranquillity of spirit requisite.

7. It lies in examining the principles from which you act, and ends to which you move in duty. The principles must be faith and love; the belief of God's command, and the love

of Christ, must constrain you to duty. Your ends must be to glorify God and enjoy him; not as the Pharisees, to be seen of men; not legal ends to get a reward. Selfish and legal ends are as a dead fly to spoil the ointment, and make duties unsavoury to God. O for right principles, pure and spiritual ends!

8. It consists in labouring to get the heart in a suitable frame for converse with God; as, 1. In a humble and self-denied frame. 2. In a spiritual and heavenly frame. 3. In a fixed and stayed frame, calling in all straying and wandering thoughts, breathing out that prayer, Psal. lxxxvi. 11. 4. In a loving and affectionate frame; for God is love, and love is the cement between God and the soul in duty. 5. In a cautious and watching frame, guarding always against every thing that may creep in, to indispose you for communion with God, and mar your access to him. 6. In an active and lively frame; all the spices should flow out, all the graces should be in exercise.

9. It lies in awakening our souls, which are naturally dull and drowsy, to activity and liveliness in duty, as David, Psal. lvii. 8. *Awake up, my glory, awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.* Psal. ciii. 1. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.* Be stirred up all that is within me; there must be a stirring up our souls to take hold of God, Isa. lxiv. 7. Put forth your spiritual strength to the utmost; pray with the most fervent importunity; praise with spiritual elevation of heart; love God with the most sublime affections; and do all in some proportion to the greatness of that God with whom you have to do, Psal. cl. 2. *Praise him according to his excellent greatness.*

10. It lies in our earnest prayers to God to sanctify us; for we must put it back on him, and pray for the sanctifying influences of his Spirit, for the subduing of sin, quickening grace, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

III. As to the third head, the properties of this preparation: 1. It must be timeous preparation. The Jews took time to prepare for approaching God in the passover, they had the lamb for days before in their houses, tied to their bed posts, that hearing constantly its bleating, they might look back to Egypt, and remember the sorrows and bondage they endured there, and be thankful for their redemption; and especially for their deliverance from the destroying angel that night he passed over their houses, which were sprinkled with the blood of the lamb; and that they might look forward to the Messiah, and remember the bitter agonies and sufferings he was to endure for their sins.

2. Inward preparation. It must lie mainly in the heart; a grave decent carriage is needful indeed, but God looks to more than the outward appearance, even to the heart.

3. Conscientious preparation, doing all as in the sight of God, before whom all things are naked and bare. Study to have single ends and aims to glorify God, and obey our Lord and Saviour's call.

4. Diligent preparation, not dealing with a slack hand, but applying your souls with the greatest activity to the work in hand, believing that your salvation depends on it.

5. Humble and self-denied preparation, trusting in nothing in yourselves, but in Christ; depending on God that he would fit and prepare your hearts, and accept graciously for Christ's sake.

6. Universal preparation; be mindful of all the parts of it, especially of examining yourselves with respect to your state, your sins, your wants, your knowledge, faith, repentance, love, and new obedience.

IV. As to the fourth head, the necessity of this preparation: 1. Because of the falseness, sluggishness, and deceitfulness of our hearts; they love to wander from God, and are bent to backslide in duty, as the wise man says, Eccles. x. 10. *If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength.* Labour to heat the iron, seeing a blunt iron, if hot, will pierce more easily than a sharper, if cold. Warm your hearts with the love and sufferings of Christ.

2. Because it is the heart God mainly seeks in duty, Prov. xxiii. 26. *My son, give me thine heart;* he says as Joseph concerning Benjamin, *Except your brother be with you, I will not see your face.* If the heart be not brought to him, there can be no acceptance.

3. Because God is well pleased with them that do so, as with Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xix. 3. *Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God.* And he is highly displeased with those that do it not, as with Rehoboam, 2 Chron. xii. 14. *And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek God.*

4. Because God, whom we approach to, is an infinitely pure and holy spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

IMPROVEMENT.

Inference I. See hence the cause why so few get discoveries of God's glory, and wonders of mercy, in the ordinance, but meet with a hiding God; they do not sanctify themselves and prepare their hearts in a suitable manner.

II. Use of reproof to several: 1. To those who approach God under the power of wandering and roving thoughts, their minds are not fixed, sanctified, and prepared. 2. To those whose minds are going out after their covetousness, when

their bodies only are presented before God. 3. To those who are hypocritical and formal in their approaches to God. 4. To those whose hearts are dull and drowsy in God's service.

III. Use of trial. It concerns you upon this occasion to examine if your hearts be sanctified and prepared for approaching God to-morrow. It is highly necessary now to examine your souls; *let a man examine himself, and so let him eat.* I fear there are many unsanctified and unprepared hearts among us. And in order to assist you therein, I shall give some marks, both negatively and positively.

1. Negatively, marks of unsanctified hearts: 1. The ignorant heart that knows not Christ, nor has any uptaking of the way of salvation through his righteousness. Such are unprepared, and incapable of gracious communion with God.— See how the promise runs, Jer. xxiv. *I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.* 2. The unbelieving heart is unprepared. 3. The impenitent heart. 4. The heart that harbours Christ's enemy. 5. The heart that hath no love to Christ. 6. No love to the friends of Christ. 7. No hungering and thirsting after Christ and his righteousness. 8. That hath slight thoughts of his ordinances. 9. Indifference about the success of the ordinances. 10. That resists the motions of the Spirit. 11. The heart that is drowsy, and at no pains to awaken itself. 12. That is a stranger to itself, and to self-examination. Such hearts are unsanctified and unprepared for approaching to God to-morrow.

2. Positive marks of hearts in some measure sanctified and prepared. 1. Hearts sensible of their depravity and sinfulness. 2. That are sensible of their need of Christ.— 3. Hearts filled with revenge against sin. 4. That are humble and lowly. 5. Hearts troubled for heart-plagues and sins. 6. Hearts that consent to the well ordered covenant in all its articles. 7. Hearts that aim at communion and fellowship with God in every duty. 8. Hearts that hold on in close pursuit after Christ, notwithstanding discouragements and disappointments, as Mary Magdalene, who would not leave the sepulchre, when others left it. 9. Hearts that are unsatisfied with the best means and ordinances, if God be not found in them. 10. Hearts that are applying themselves to every duty in Christ's strength, saying, without Christ I can do nothing. 11. Hearts that are troubled when they drive heavily in duty, and are weary of their remissness.— 12. Hearts tender of the peace of God, afraid of sin, and of grieving the Spirit. 13. Hearts concerned about the success of this ordinance, both with respect to themselves and others. 14. Hearts concerned for want of sufficient preparation, praying, with Hezekiah, for pardon and acceptance, though

not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19.

IV. Use of exhortation. O communicants sanctify yourselves against to-morrow, that the Lord may come down and do wonders among you, wonders of mercy for your souls.

Motive 1. Consider that the near approach you are to make to God at his table to-morrow, is the nearest approach you can possibly make on this side of death. Consider what preparation God required of the Israelites for receiving the fiery law at mount Sinai, Exod. xix. 10, 11. *God commanded them to sanctify themselves, wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day, for upon that day the Lord would come down upon mount Sinai, in sight of all the people.* What awful fear and trembling do you imagine was there among them, when God came down in a thick cloud, when the trumpet began to sound, the thunder to crack, the mountain to smoke, and the earth to tremble under the weight of the great God descending on it. Well, you should be under the same awe of God in this solemn ordinance as they were. It is true he comes not down with such terror, to give a fiery law, as on mount Sinai, but to deliver the gospel of peace from mount Sion : But mind, it is the same God that speaks, hath the same majesty, the same authority, and therefore you should prepare as carefully, and be as humble before him, as the Israelites were. Were God to come down among you to-morrow in terrible majesty, should a thick cloud fill this house, and lightning break out, and should you hear the thunder of his voice, *I am the Lord, thou shalt have no other gods before me,* certainly such a dreadful glory would make your hearts tremble within you, and the earth tremble beneath you. Well then, God is come down as really among you as among the Israelites, hear him with the same reverence, and be as intent upon adoration as they were. Let not his gracious and familiar way of condescending to deal with you, tempt you to come with less preparation and reverence.

2. Consider the nature of that God you are to approach to.

1. A great and mighty God, Psal. lxxxix. 7. 8. *God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. O Lord, God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee, or to thy faithfulness round about thee?* Would we feast with a great king with filthy hands and garments? Joseph prepared himself by shaving himself, and changing his raiment, before he went in to Pharaoh ; and wilt thou not prepare thyself, by putting thy soul in the holiest dress and humblest posture, when thou art to go to the King of heaven and earth? 2. He is a jealous and omniscient God, most jealous of his honour, and will come in to see the guests, Math. xxii. 11. and then he will spy every unprepared and unsanctified guest ; he notices the

state of your souls, the frame of your hearts, the ends of your communicating, and your preparation before hand. O then sanctify yourselves before you come to the feast. 3. He is a pure and holy God; he cannot hold communion with unholy persons, he will be sanctified in them that come nigh him, Lev. x. 3. he will be attended as a holy God, in a holy manner. Did a holy angel set trust with you at a certain place, against such an hour, would you not prepare with all seriousness and solemnity to attend him? Oh! but it is the God of angels that trusts with you here, even the God, before whom the angels adore, and cover their faces and feet with their wings, and say, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty*. If the linen on the communion table, or vessels that hold the elements were foul, ye would be ready to exclaim against it; and no doubt there ought to be observed an outward decency in this respect: Christ would have the very room in good order where he was to eat the passover. But O it is a small crime to have a foul cloth or vessel for outward elements, in respect of what it is to have a foul heart, or an unprepared soul to entertain a holy God, and receive the body and blood of Christ.

3. Consider that God's people used always great preparation before solemn approaching to God, Gen. xxxv. 1.—5. Where we see how solemnly Jacob prepared himself and his family, when by God's command he was going up to Bethel, to sacrifice unto the Lord. *They change their garments, wash and make themselves clean, and put away their strange gods*. How much more ought we to prepare when we go not only to Bethel, God's house, but to God's table, by changing our garments of sin, and putting on Christ's righteousness by faith, and putting away and mortifying our lusts and idols of jealousy? We see also the Psalmist's preparation for approaching to God, Psal. xxvi. 6. *I will wash my hands in innocency, so will I compass thine altar, O Lord*. The Jews had great preparation for the passover, and so should we for the Lord's supper that is come in its room. Wherefore we find the primitive Christians used to sit up whole nights at prayer before the Lord's supper, which they called *vigilia*.

4. Consider that the matter of this sacrament requires solemn preparation. Solomon directs us, when we are to eat with a ruler, to consider what is set before us, Prov. xxii. 1. There are here the symbols of Christ's body and blood, rare food! It is a great sin to abuse common meat and drink, or to partake of these without some serious thought before hand. We would have vessels clean to hold our ordinary food; but here is soul food, heaven's dainties, the jewels of heaven. Christ's body in the sacrament must be wrapt in a clean soul, as well as his body by Joseph of Arimathea, was wrapt in clean linen, and laid in a new tomb.

5. The duties to be performed at the Lord's table require preparation, viz. Covenanting with God, renewing our baptismal vow, expressing our love to Christ, feasting on a broken Christ.

6. You are naturally unfit for this ordinance; naturally you have neither habitual nor actual preparation, being dead in sins and trespasses, leprous, loathsome, carnal, and earthly minded. Wherefore we must be quickened and purified, before we can hold communion with a holy God.

7. Because communion with God would be altogether disagreeable to an unsanctified soul, he would weary of it, and take no pleasure in it.

8. Because of the great advantage of this preparation, God will come to-morrow, and work wonders of mercy for such as sincerely aim at preparation. O then sanctify yourselves. Quest. What are these wonders of mercy? Answ. 1. He will raise dead souls out of the grave, and put life in them.— 2. He will warm cold hearts, and put spiritual heat in them. 3. He will soften hard rocky hearts, and make them tender and sensible. 4. He will cleave the rock and make waters gush out of it, the waters of penitential tears. 5. He will cure the paralytic trembling hand, that could hardly be stretched out or grip to any thing. He will enable the weak soul to grip fast to Christ, and subscribe his name to the marriage contract. 6. He will strengthen the feeble knees and lame feet, and make the soul to run on in the way of his commandments with enlarged heart. 7. He will kill strong Goliaths and lusts that defied the armies of the God of Israel. 8. He will fix a wandering heart, and fix it on God and things above. 9. He will heal a wounded conscience by the balm of Gilead. 10. He will brighten a dark cloudy mind, and resolve all the doubts and fears of believers. 11. He will give a sight of the King in his beauty, a view of the smiles of Christ's lovely face. 12. He will give a seal of the pardon of all your sins. 13. He will give a Pisgah view of Canaan, a sight of the promised land. 14. He will feed the hungry, and fill them with the dainties of heaven.—O these are rare wonders of grace, that Christ will work for the prepared soul. O preparation is your seed time, receiving is your harvest. Now, as a man soweth, so shall he reap; *he that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully*, 2 Cor. ix. 6. It is in the duty of partaking, as in the duty of praying, the more prepared a man's heart is to pray, the greater is his return from heaven, Psal. x. 17. *Thou wilt prepare their hearts, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.* So it may be said in the case of receiving, Thou wilt prepare the heart, thou wilt cause thine hand to give. When God prepares a man's heart for duty, it is a token he hath a hand prepared for mercy. Hence the Lord makes that gracious promise, Psal.

lxxxii. 10. *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it, q. d.* I will enlarge my hand as you enlarge your heart. He saith, as Joseph to his steward, Gen. xlv. 1. *Fill the men's sacks as much as they can carry.* So as Joseph's brethren prepared sacks in number and largeness, so did they carry corn away: And as you bring prepared hearts to the ordinance, so shall you reap benefit thereby.

9. Because of the great danger in coming unprepared. If you do not sanctify and prepare yourselves, God will come and do wonders of judgment, wonders of wrath among you. 1. He may inflict bodily diseases, as 1 Cor. xi. 30. 2. He may send untimely death. 3. He may smite with desertion from God. 4. He may send darkness on the mind. 5. He may smite with deadness and impenitency on the heart. 6. With decaying and withering on the gifts and graces. 7. He may send a leanness and barrenness on the soul. 8. He may smite with formality and lifelessness in duty. 9. With searedness on the conscience, so as it shall challenge for no sin. 10. He may send horror and terror on the conscience, so as to make it a Magor-missabib. 11. He may let Satan loose against you with temptations, atheistical and blasphemous thoughts. 12. He may send you to hell from the communion table, as Mat. xxii. 12, 13. *And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the King to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness.*

Quest. How shall I get my heart sanctified and prepared, so as I may expect the Lord will come and do wonders of grace for me to-morrow? Ans. There is a twofold preparation, habitual and actual; you must study both, and habitual preparation in the first place. Quest. What is habitual preparation? Ans. It hath several ingredients in it. 1. A covenant relation to God in Christ. 2. A principle of spiritual life. 3. A state of peace with God. 4. The imputation of Christ's righteousness. 5. An universal change by regenerating grace. 6. The inhabitation of the Spirit. 7. A holy conversation. 8. The lamp of a profession. Quest. 2. What is the actual preparation for the Lord's supper? Ans. 1. Sequestering ourselves from the world. 2. Self-examination. 3. Humiliation for sin. 4. Renewing of our personal covenant with God in Christ. 5. Reformation of what is amiss. 6. Exciting of all the graces to a lively exercise. 7. Meditation on the death and sufferings of Christ. 8. Earnest prayer to God for preparation and assistance in the work.—And after your utmost preparation, you must lay no stress thereon, but cast yourself wholly on Christ for assistance, saying, *It is only in the Lord I have righteousness and strength.* We ought to be denied to ourselves, and to look with David to the Lord both for assistance and accept-

ance, Psal. lxxi. 16. *I will go in strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.* You ought to imitate king Asa, who, though he had a great army to fight against the Ethiopians, yet cried to the Lord, and trusted in him alone for help, as you have it recorded, 2 Chron. xiv. 11. *And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power; help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go out against this multitude.* So let every communicant say, "Lord, all my strength and preparations are nought, I have no power for celebrating this feast; help me, O Lord my God, for I rest on thee, and in thy name I go to this great and weighty ordinance." And if you come forward tomorrow in this self-denied and sanctified frame, you have ground to expect that the Lord will do wonders of grace and mercy for you.

ACTION SERMON.

From Cant. ii. 4. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

THE whole of this song is an allegorical description of the mysterious union and communion betwixt Christ and his church, under the persons of a bridegroom and bride, which is a frequent metaphor made use of in Scripture. The forty-fifth Psalm, is an abridgement of this song.—In this chapter Christ and the Church seem to strive who shall outvie each other in their commendations. Christ first commends the Church, and then the Church extols Christ. She compares him to the *apple tree among the trees of the wood*, verse 3. Christ is a fruitbearing tree, but the children of men are barren trees. And O but his shadow is refreshing, and his fruit sweet to a believer. But as if the shadow and fruits of an apple tree were too low a simile, to set forth his excellency and goodness, she tells us of the entertainment he gives her in the banqueting house, in the text.

Where we have, 1. The place where the Spouse was brought to, *the banqueting house*, or house of wine, i. e. of feasting, because wine is a principal part of feasts; by which we are to understand the order, or means, whereby Christ conveys his graces and blessings to believers; and there is none of all the ordinances of the gospel that may more fitly be called the banqueting or feasting house, than this of the Lord's supper, which is the great gospel feast wherewith Christ entertains his people on earth. Ordinances are called the banqueting house, because of the great plenty, variety, and riches of the blessings he thereby communicates to his people.

2. We have the person that brings her into this banqueting house, and that is Christ, *He brought me*; which shews, 1. Our want of right to these blessings of ourselves. All our right is in Christ. 2. Our impotency to come to the feasting house, he must give us both strength and preparation of soul. 3. The freeness of his grace in bestowing these blessings on us.

3. The manner how she is brought in, and that is under a *banner*, standard, or ensign. It is a military word; banners or ensigns are used in camps and armies. Psal. xx. 5. *We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God*

will set up our banners. Her march or entry into this feasting house was joyful and triumphant, such as that of people under a displayed banner; or colours lifted up. Colours are useful to draw, invite, engage, and lead people after their captain; and the lifting up or displaying of colours is a sign to invite and direct those of such a party or side, to come to such a place, or march such a way. Now what is the device or motto of Christ's banner; not like those of other generals, a lion, an eagle, &c. but LOVE. The love of a crucified Jesus is like a banner lifted up and displayed in the gospel for inviting and engaging sinners to come to him. Love is the banner that Christ lifts up and displays this day, to engage you to come to him, and list yourselves under his banner. Love 'is that which leads to the banqueting house, and furnishes provision and entertainment for us there.

Observe I. That Christ has rich feasts in the ordinances for entertaining his people's souls.

II. That the banner which Christ displays for drawing us to him is love.

As to the first, I shall shew, 1. That Christ in the ordinances doth provide feasts for his people's souls. 2. That the Lord's supper in particular is one principal feast that he prepares for them. 3. Why he prepares such a feast. 4. Shall apply.

As to the first, it is evident, 1. From God's promise to his people, Psal. xxxvi. 8. *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.* Isaiah xxv. 6. *And in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people, a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.* This promise is concerning the gospel times.—From Prov. ix. 2. where *wisdom, i. e. Christ, is said to have killed her beasts, mingled her wine, and furnished her table.*—And, to name no more, from Luke xv. where the father prepares the fatted calf for his penitent prodigal.

2. From the experience of God's people, as of David, Psal. iv. 6. lxiii. 5. and lxxv. 4. and particularly from the experience of the church in the text, God's people can set their seal to this truth.

As to the second head, That the Lord's supper is one principal feast, which the Lord prepares for his people. Wherefore it is called the table of the Lord, 1 Cor. x. 21. It is called *a feast on the sacrifice of Christ*, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. *A wedding feast*, Matth. xxii. 4. In these places the Lord's supper is principally pointed at.—I shall here shew wherein the Lord's supper resembles a feast; yea, it is not an ordinary feast, it is a rich, royal, and magnificent feast.

1. At a feast there is rich and noble provision. So here there is more than bread and wine, even the body and blood

of Christ, *my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed*, John vi. 55. What bread and wine afford to the body, viz. strength, comfort, and nourishment, the same doth the body and blood of Christ, received by faith, yield to the soul. Here is spiritual food to the hungry soul, bread that strengthens man's heart, and wine that cheers the fainting spirits. Behold here is wisdom's gate, and wisdom's feast. It is good for us to be here, good to wait at her door posts. Here the breasts of consolation are drawn forth, here we may suck and be satisfied. Here the fountain of life, and the wells of salvation are opened, the stone rolled from the well's mouth.—Here is the hidden manna, angel's food, bread from heaven, yea the fruits of the tree of life, that grows in the midst of the paradise of God. Here is the water of life that springs from beneath the throne of God and the Lamb, clear as crystal; if you get but one drop of it, it shall be an everlasting spring in your soul, so that you need not thirst after carnal comforts and enjoyments. Here are the grapes of Canaan, the fruits that grow in the land of promise; yea clusters of these grapes are at this feast, the first fruits of heaven. In a word, there is at this spiritual feast, for the soul to feed on, Christ crucified, and all his benefits and purchase: And are there not many dishes and delicacies here?

1. Here is pardon of sin sealed to a believer. O is not this a rare feast and excellent cheer. Matth. ix. 2. *Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee*. Here you get Christ's blood which was shed for many, for the remission of sins. Here we clasp about a crucified Christ as the great propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, and accept of him as the Lord our Righteousness: and thus we receive the remission of sins. Here God saith to a believer, as Nathan to David, 2 Sam. xii. 13. *The Lord hath put away thy sins, thou shalt not die*. Here we hear the voice of joy and gladness, which hath made many a broken bone to rejoice. Is there any thing more sweet than pardon to a condemned man near the place of execution? And what can give more joy, than a free discharge to a sinner arrested by justice, and drawn to hell's door to be cast into that prison for debt, out of which there is no redemption.

2. We have peace and friendship with God.—O rare dish! not only to be saved from a burden of debt, that would have weighed us down to hell; and for which millions already have been carried thither, and are roaring under it without hope; but also to be received into special favour with God: For in this a covenant of peace and friendship is sealed and confirmed. O must it not be a sweet cordial for an enemy, a rebel, to be owned as a special favourite of the King of Heaven, so that the soul may send a challenge to hell and earth, and bid defiance to men and devils, Rom. viii. 33, 34. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that*

died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. And you may say with David, Psal. iv. 8. *I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: For thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety.* Come life, come death, I am safe; my conscience is disburdened, and I am at ease.

3. Adoption is another of the dishes at this feast. You are not only made a friend, but a son and heir; and in this sacrament you got sasine and investment of the children's privileges, relation, and inheritance. And here God saith, *I will be a father to thee; and, son, thou shalt be ever with me, and all that I have is thine.* Thou shalt have my blessing and love, the smiles of my face, the kisses of my mouth, and the arms of my grace to support and preserve thee. Thou shalt have my Son for thy elder brother, thy priest and advocate; my angels to be thy guards; my providence to be thy protector and manager: Thou shalt have manna in the wilderness, and water out of the rock. Thou shalt be my heir, and joint heir with my eternal Son and first-born. Thou shalt have heaven for thy home, Christ's throne for thy seat, and a kingdom for thy portion; an honourable maintainance while here, and an incorruptible inheritance hereafter.

4. Another dish is peace of conscience. This is one of the precious legacies which Christ leaves in this testament, which is here sealed, John xiv. 27. It is here Christ speaks peace to his people and to his saints, here he breathes peace upon them, as in Luke xxiv. 36. Do doubts and fears arise within you, that hinder you to believe the good news, as with the disciples; so there is that in this sacrament which may check all these fears. Luke xxiv. 38, 39. *Why are ye troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see, &c.* O but the prints of the nails may calm the doubting conscience, and quiet thy fears.

5. Supplies and strength to our weak and decayed graces. Here Christ's store-house is opened, and we may get grace for grace out of his fulness; here the smoking flax may be kindled into a flame, and the bruised reed find support; here you may get weak faith strengthened, cold love inflamed, weak desire kindled, repentance renewed, hope made lively, the soul fitted and fortified for trials and sufferings, and prepared for passing through the valley of the shadow of death: Yea, in a word, you may get all your wants supplied, all your grievances redressed and maladies remedied. Here you may get a meal that will both satisfy and beget a stomach in you, that will prove life to your souls, and poison to your lusts. It is here the empty soul is filled, the starving creature fed, the poor beggar enriched, the hard heart softened, the cold heart warmed, the dead soul quickened, the paralytic hand cured, the blind eye enlightened, the thirsty heart satisfied, the feeble knees strengthened, the straitened heart enlarged,

the wandering heart fixed, the creeping desires elevated, the cloudy soul brightened, and the doubting soul resolved. O, are not these gracious and blessed changes! Here you may get strength against your strong lusts and temptations, and furniture for every duty, so as you may pray with enlargement, hear with comfort, praise with elevation of mind, and meditate with delight.

6. Here is Christ's gracious presence, and a sight of his countenance: that is a rare delicate in this feast, that satisfies the soul, Psal. xvi. ult. *In thy presence is fulness of joy*; that was the Psalmist's heaven upon earth. It is here Christ trysts with his people, here he walks with them, and is held by them in the galleries; here he visits them, and holds communion with them, intimates his love, and kisses them with the kisses of his mouth. Here they see the King in his beauty, here the saints have beheld the beauty of the Lord, Psal. xxvii. 4. O this is worth our while. O let it be our errand this day to meet with Christ, and see his blessed face. God's people in all ages have placed their happiness here. Abraham rejoiced at a sight of Christ, though afar off, at nineteen hundred years distance. The wise men thought it worth their while, to undertake a long journey from the east to see him, though but new born. Old Simeon desires to see no more on earth, after he gets a sight of him, though a child. Zaccheus ran and climbed up a tree to see him, though despised of men. O now he is shining in glory, shall we not desire a sight of him? David desired it as his *one thing*, Psal. xxvii. though he then wanted his throne and kingdom. The spouse seeks it as her one thing, Cant. iii. 3. *Saw you him whom my soul loveth?* O but a sight of him would make your face to shine, a sight of him in his love, in his dyed garments, treading out the wine press alone.

7. Another dish is the comfort of his Spirit, and the clearing up your interest in Christ and glory, a sight of heaven, and your names written in the book of life, so that all your fears may be scattered, objections answered, doubts resolved, and likewise the evidences of your graces cleared up to you, so that though you doubted before if you had faith, yet now you may be enabled to say with the poor man, *Lord, I believe*. You doubted before of your love, but now may say with Peter, *Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee*. You doubted before of your interest in Christ, but now you can say with Thomas, *My Lord, and my God*; with Job, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*; and with Paul, *I know in whom I have believed*.

Thus have I shewn you some of the rich provision and noble entertainment prepared in this banquet before you: Yea, you see it is not only rich provision, but there are choice rarities here, hidden manna, angels food: yea, not only choice, but plenty and variety, food adapted to our soul's nature and faculties; food to nourish, strengthen, delight, and refresh

the soul. Here is food suitable to all the faculties, light to the mind, peace to the conscience, satisfaction to the will, and food to all the affections. Here love may satisfy itself in embracing the chief among ten thousands. Desire may satisfy itself in clasping the desire of all nations. Delight may here bathe itself in the river of pleasure. In a word, what can the soul need but is here? for Christ is made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Here is precious blood to purge away our deep guilt; here is perfect righteousness to cover our naked soul; here are riches, and unsearchable riches in Christ; righteousness for our justification, and grace for our sanctification; here all things are given us richly to enjoy; here hope may feed on the great and gracious promises.

2dly, At feasts there used to be lavers for the guests to wash in, as at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, where were six water-pots set for purification, John ii. 6. Doth sense of defilement scare you from partaking? Behold here is a fountain opened, Zech. xiii. 1. O come and wash in it, that ye may be fit to compass God's altar, and sit down at his table.

3dly, At banquets there used to be mirth and cheerfulness, so here when prodigal sinners first return to their Father, he hath mirth and music to entertain them, see Luke xv. 24. The tidings of Christ's purchase, and the promises, are the best music and melody in the world; the news of what he hath done and suffered, ought to fill your hearts and lips with the high praises of God, and thankful admiration of Christ and redeeming love. O believers, consider you are not to come like mourners to a funeral, but like children to your father's feast, a royal feast. "I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer, saith the Lord." So that ye may eat this bread with joy, and drink this wine with a merry heart, in hopes of God's accepting you and your sacrifice, Eccl. ix. 7.

4thly, At feasts there is the master of the feast, to bid the guests welcome, as ready as the father to welcome the prodigal child. Christ is the master of this feast; he hath sent forth his servants, to call and invite you to the feast, and now he is come to the table to bid you welcome, as in Cant. v. 1. *Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.*

5thly, At feasts there are servants to attend the guests; here the ministers are stewards and servants to attend Christ's guests at this feast; and their work is to direct you to the table, and to give every one their portion of meat in due season. God grant we give not the children's bread to dogs, and them that have no right to it. We know not the heart, ye all have professed yourselves to be children, O do not mock God and his servants.

6thly, Here is a blessing craved by the master of this

feast, yea, he has commanded, and will command the blessing, and his servants are to pray for the virtue of that blessing to this table.

7thly, At a feast there is good company. O there is rare company at this feast. *The king sits at his table*, Cant. i. 12. even the King of Glory. Christ himself is there present, and the Father also; for in this feast we have fellowship with the Father and the Son, through the Holy Spirit. Here the children of God, yea the glorious saints above sit at this table, and share with us in this feast. It is true, they sit at the upper end of the table, and we at the lower end. They have better appetites, better music; they feed on a naked Christ, we by signs and symbols; but we have all the same cheer. O what a great and good company is here!—We read of Belshazzer that made a feast for a thousand of his lords, Dan. v. 1. But here is a feast for many thousands, yea, to all believers, Jews and Gentiles, an open free feast, Isa. xxv. And we read that Ahasuerus made a feast to all his princes and servants, which lasted one hundred and eighty days, Esth. i. 4. But here is a feast which lasts to all eternity.

III. As to the third head, why he prepares such a feast for his people? Ans. 1. To be a solemn memorial of his love to sinners, in suffering and dying for them; and this memorial is to be kept up through all generations till Christ's second coming. Just so the passover was a commemorating feast to the Israelites of their protection and deliverance from the bondage of Egypt.

2. To discover his infinite riches and goodness to poor sinners. So Ahasuerus, Esth. i. 3, 4. *made a feast to all his princes and servants, to shew them the riches of his excellent majesty.*

3. To express the joy and satisfaction he hath in the believers coming to him. The father of the prodigal evidenced his joy for the return of his son (who was dead and now alive, lost and found) by a feast and music. O believers, this is the day of the gladness of Christ's heart; glad is he to see his prodigals returning, and this feast is the welcome home.

4. To express his love to believers, and that he might have opportunity of nearer communion and fellowship with them. At feasts people have great freedom and familiarity with one another, mutual expressions of kindness, communicating of secrets, rejoicing in one another. O but many a poor soul has been ravished with Christ's love here, and with the wine of his consolation; he hath made rare discoveries of his love to them.

5. To ratify and confirm the covenant between God and us. It was usual in the eastern countries to ratify contracts and covenants by eating and drinking together. So it was in the covenant made between Isaac and Abimelech, see Gen. xxvi. 28, 30. And so it was a federal rite between Laban and Jacob, Gen. xxxi. 46. between the Israelites and Gibeonites, Johua ix. 14. between David and Abner, 2 Sam. iii.

20. Consider then, this is a covenanting feast, here a solemn bargain between God and us is sealed and ratified. What is the bargain? See the tenor of the covenant, Acts xvi. 31. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* Here we engage to believe in Christ, and Christ engages to save us.* Here God promises to be to us a God, and we promise to be to him a people. Here God promises and seals the benefits of the covenant on his part, and we promise and seal the duties of the covenant on our part. Here God's giving the signs is a seal on his part, and our taking them is a seal on ours. Here Christ gives us his soul and body to save us, and we give our souls and bodies to serve him. Here God binds himself to be faithful, and we bind ourselves to be constant. Yea we here swear allegiance to Christ over his broken body and shed blood.

6. To be a cordial to his poor fainting ones, and for strengthening the weak and feeble of his people. Many of his people are sore cast down, and have dwelt long with fears and horrors; and this is a relief to them, here Christ smiles, and speaks peace. Others are weak in grace, here he brings them supplies, here the decayed have renewed their strength, here the lame have been made to leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing.

7. To fortify and encourage against all difficulties and trials we may meet with in Christ's service. We are to look for reproaches and persecutions if we hold fast by Christ. Satan and the world will not be idle, see Heb. x. 32. Here is a meal and cordial to hearten us for it; and some have met with that in this feast which hath made them cheerfully venture on sufferings, and resolve never to leave Christ. An hour of sealing animates the soul for an hour of suffering. If the Redeemer smile on us, and his love be shed abroad in our hearts, we can bear any thing, suffer any thing, lose any thing, and not be discouraged. O then come, and take in provision against the evil day, for ye have a wilderness to go through. Elijah was excited to take a double meal, for his journey was long. So if you would have strength for your journey, O here you may have it; here is food more subsisting, durable, and nourishing than Elijah's cake and cruse of water, of which he eat and drank, and in the strength of that meal went forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb the mount of God, 1 Kings xix. 6, 8. What bread and wine affords to the body, the same doth Christ's body and blood in the sacrament, received by faith, afford to the soul, viz. strengthening, comforting nourishment. And who but a madman would be so cruel to himself, as to deny his faint body its stated meals and reliefs? O may it not hearten you,

* This is not accurately expressed, nor conformable to what the author says in other parts of his works.—Christ first engages to save sinners, and makes gracious discoveries of his willingness and ability to save all that come to him, before the soul can give its assent to be saved by him, or believe on him for salvation; so the apostle says, *Faith is the gift of God*, Eph. ii. 8.

that whatever your straits, bodily wants or necessities are, and however you may be despised, you have a great King that honours you, owns you, takes you to feast with himself here, and will shortly call you to the marriage supper of the Lamb above.

8. To wean you from the vain pleasures and comforts of the world, and from sensual delights; and to make you long for that glorious and full feast above. This is a foretaste of it, and should stir up a hunger for it; for this feast is the first fruits of heaven.

Improvement I. I infer what a horrid calumny it is, that is raised against the ways of Christ, by the devil and the world, that they are sad and melancholy, of purpose to fright men from them. No, you see Christ has royal feasts for his people, the world knows little of. A believer would not give a crumb of this spiritual feast for many days of worldly feasts.

II. Admire his condescension, that the Lord of glory should make such a feast for beggars, see Luke xiv. 21. Poor worms, vile sinners, will he call us, that deserve not a dog's crumb beneath the table, to come and sit down with the children at the table? O what are we that he should deal so with us, sinners vile as the mire, and black as hell. You have far greater cause to wonder at this privilege than Mephibosheth, 2 Sam. ix. 7. *David said to him, I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father, and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually:* Observe his answer, *What is thy servant that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?*

III. How inexcusable are they who slight this feast that has cost Christ so dear, more than ten thousand kingdoms? He has made all things ready, and has been calling sinners to come. Consider how grievously the king took it, when he made his marriage supper, and those that were bidden would not come, Luke xiv. 24.

IV. Exhortation. O communicants who have been preparing for this feast, come away to the marriage, all things are ready on Christ's part. Obj. But how shall I get access to the banqueting house? Ans. Employ Christ to bring you in. It is he alone that brings his spouse in. You may come to the table, and get the outward elements. but unless Christ bring you in to the banqueting house, ye will not be taken in. It is only Christ that can give you appetites, and clothe you with the wedding garments; it is only he that can quicken the dead soul, and strengthen the weak: *I can do all things through Christ's strengthening me,* saith Paul. He only can send the Comforter, the north and south gales of the Spirit. He only can remove the body of sin, and take away the heart of stone. dissolve doubts and scatter clouds. O look and long for him then to bring you in, and say with those in John xi. 56. *What think ye, will he come to the feast? will he bring*

me into the banqueting house? will he touch my heart and take me by the hand? Poor sinner, I'll tell you whom he will bring in. 'Tis true, it is not every one, many come thronging to the feast that have no ground to expect to be taken in. But there are some he will bring in, and they are these: 1. The hungry and thirsty sinner that is longing for a meeting with Christ, sensible of his needs and want; and crying, O a crumb from his hand, a drop from his wound, a seal of pardon from that table, else I die. These have a promise to be filled. 2. The poor, broken hearted, humbled soul, that has a deep sense of his own nothingness, and unworthiness, saying, I am not worthy that Christ should come under my roof, and far less worthy that I should come under Christ's roof, my sins are so many and great. Is there any standing afar off with the publican, afraid to come to the holy table, saying, *God be merciful to me a sinner*; Christ will come to such. Isa. lvii. 15. *He will revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite ones.* 3. The poor praying and wrestling soul, that has been putting up many a petition, sigh, and groan for access, saying, *O that I knew where I might find him!* O when wilt thou come unto me, how long wilt thou hide thy face? O have ye been storming heaven with your cries last week, last night, and this morning? Have ye been knocking for the opening of the door of the banqueting house? he will come and bring such in. 4. All the friends and lovers of Christ will be taken in. O sinner, art thou such, see thy warrant and thy welcome, Cant. v. 1. O say some, I cannot be a friend to Christ, but I wish him well, and his people and interest. I cannot say I am a true lover of Christ; but I find my heart glowing and warming with desire to him, and I would give all the world I had these glowings kindled into a flame. Take courage, poor soul: Christ will not quench the smoking flax, he will blow it up into a flame, and take thee in. 5. All sincere covenanting souls, that have been yesternight and this morning honestly consenting to the bargain offered in the gospel, content to close with Christ as he offers himself, to renounce their idols and lusts, and to give Christ their hearts. Is there any soul willing to open to Christ? O then he will take you in, Rev. iii. 20. *If any man open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* O poor sinners, that never opened your hearts to Christ, be persuaded to open to a bountiful Lord: open your hearts to him, and he will open his banqueting house to you. O sinner, hast thou no need of Christ's dainties; art thou not a poor perishing, starving soul, a famished prodigal, and needest thou not the bread of life! Christ is at the door with variety of blessings, and ready to open his banqueting house to you. O will ye open to him? Consider that if you do not accept of Christ, he may pass such a sentence against you, as in Luke xiv. 24. *For I say unto you, that none of these men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.* O

will it not be dreadful to see the royal feast in heaven, and you yourselves shut out, like a company of starving beggars, standing about the doors where the marriage supper is kept? they see the lights, and behold the rich dishes carried up, they hear the mirth and music of the guests, but not a bit comes to their share.

But as for you that are content to accept of Christ on his own terms, come away to the marriage supper, Christ the master of the feast invites you, and will make you welcome. And in coming to this feast observe the following directions:

1. Come with holy awe and reverence of God, the master and maker of this feast. If you were going to a prince's table, you would have some awe upon your spirits; mind the master of this feast is a glorious, holy, and jealous God, that will not be mocked.

2. Come with a pure heart and clean hands; wash your hearts in the tears of true repentance, purge them of all filth, through the blood of Jesus, which cleanseth from all sins, otherwise you'll affront the master of this feast. Should a beggar that has been wallowing in a puddle, intrude himself in that condition into a prince's company, sit down at his table, and dip his besmeared hands into the same dish with him, how would he take it? O come not with filthy rags and filthy hands to this holy table, but repent of every sin, renounce every sin, and resolve against every sin.

3. Come with a holy fear and jealousy over yourselves, afraid that ye be not ready. Cry, Lord, let me not wrong Christ or my own soul this day; O let me not betray the Son of God with a kiss; O let me not murder Christ or my own soul, contract blood guiltiness, or drink damnation. O what if I want the wedding garment when the King comes in to view the guests?

4. Come with a broken and bleeding heart to view the slain Lamb. O will not the dying groans and bleeding wounds of Christ move you? When you see him stretched out and nailed, will ye not cry, O behold my Saviour that was nailed for me, dying with love in his heart, and smiles in his face; O it was my sins drove in these nails. Remember the sun veiled his face in the time of Christ's sufferings, fainted at the sight, and could not look; O veil yours, retire inwardly, and take amends of sin the cause of his sufferings.

5. Have on the wedding garment, viz. faith in a Redeemer's righteousness. Come relying on him for acceptance, and look to him for strength and furniture: Look up to him, O dead soul, for life and quickening. How unseemly will it be to see a company of dead corpses set down to the feast of the living God? O be acting faith in a lively manner on Christ, for faith is the life of all: O come reach hither thy finger,

and behold Christ's hands; reach hither thy hand, and feel the print of the nails, and mark of the spear, and cry with Thomas, *My Lord and my God: Here I will rest, and here I will stay.* In the clefts of his wounds my soul will take shelter, where justice shall not reach me.

6. Come with love, for it is a love feast. O love Christ that is both the master, the maker, and matter of the feast. Christ's heart is bleeding and burning with love to you, O let yours do so to him. Without love ye have nothing to do here. Come also with love and charity to all men, be ready to forgive every one, as ye would have God to forgive you.

7. Come with panting and thirsting desires, to see and meet with Christ, saying, I care not who is here, if Christ be absent. O the desire of my soul is towards him, and the remembrance of his name.

8. Come with expectation, depending only on Christ's merits, God's promises, and free mercy in Christ, greedily expecting something from Christ this day; as the poor cripple man did from Peter and John, Acts iii. 4, 5. *And Peter fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.* We ordinarily receive little because we expect little. O raise your desires and expectations, for ye come to a merciful and liberal God, that will not let the expectation of the poor perish, Psal. ix. 18.

9. Come resigning yourselves to Christ. Give up your hearts to Christ, saying, Lord, I have no sacrifice to bring but my heart, O that it were a thousand times better than it is, it should be thine; Lord, accept of this poor sacrifice.

10. Come with admiration and praise. O the high praises of God should be in our mouths: Wonder and praise God for the contrivance of our redemption, and for making choice of such a Redeemer. O wonder and praise our Redeemer for leaving his throne of glory for a manger; yea, for a cross and a grave, and all for the sake of us. Say, "Lord what am I, that thou shouldest part with thy glory, yea, with thy blood and life for such a wretch as I am? O how am I ashamed, that I love thee no more; my heart is cold, my tongue is slow, I cannot love, I cannot praise. O let heaven and earth, angels and men, join to extol his free grace and wondrous love." If ye come in such a frame, you will be taken into the banqueting house, and his banner over you will be love. And this leads me to speak a word of the *Banner of Love.*

Christ upon the cross hath lifted up a banner of love; he hath declared himself willing to receive every soul that will come under his banner, and list himself to fight under his colours. As ye are professing to leave the devil's standard, and come to Christ, by taking your sacrament (which used to be a military oath among the Romans) and swearing

allegiance to Christ ; O mind ye are not to draw back, but to follow the Captain of your salvation, and fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh. If ye perjure yourselves, and return to your old ways, saying, Welcome drunken cups, bloody oaths, lying, &c. ye will incur all the curses of the law, and vengeance of the gospel also. O ye will sink deeper into hell than others, and ye will be made to cry, Would to God I had been the son of a Pagan or Mahometan. Wherefore own and stand by the banner of Christ ; and to encourage you to stedfastness, keep in mind that you have, 1. A noble general, who hath already conquered, and is ready to join you in the fight. 2. A noble cause, it is the Lord's battle, they are God's enemies, and enemies to your souls also. 3. You have noble weapons, the shield of faith, sword of the Spirit, &c. they are impenetrable and full proof. 4. Noble pay, a white stone, a crown, and a new name, grace here, and glory hereafter. 5. Ye are sure of victory, if ye fight valiantly, for Christ will fairly bring you out of the field at length.

A banner is a sign of union ; it signifies that all who resort to it, are united in one company, under such a captain : O then study union among yourselves. Let the consideration of Christ's love move you all to be united, and to love one another. O shun division, discord, slandering and backbiting ; ye are soldiers of one company, and under one captain, and if you divide, enemies will reap advantage.—Again, a banner is a sign of protection, and love is the Banner that engages Christ to protect his people ; as long as Christ loves his people, he will protect and defend them. O then mind your work in evil times, flee to Christ's love, and abide in this love ; keep your souls in the love of God, clear up the evidences of Christ's love, and so you may look to him for protection and through-bearing in the worst case ; men or devils shall do you no hurt, while his Banner over you is love.—Lastly, a banner displayed signifies victory. When conquerors win a city, they display their colours on the walls ; O has Christ this day won your hearts, conquered your enemies and lusts, and displayed his banner thereupon. O it is love that engaged him to make such a conquest. Be faithful to your friendly conqueror, and let not these enemies and rebels get into the city again. O hold out the city, and fight valiantly under Christ's banner ; be not cowardly, do not basely surrender the fort that Christ has won ; he has won it, let him wear it, let him possess the throne for ever. Say to Christ, as the men of Israel said to Gideon, Judges viii. 22. *Rule thou over us, for thou hast delivered us out of the hand of Midian.* O but Christ has delivered you out of the hands of Satan, submit therefore kindly to his government and laws, own him as a King as well as a Priest ; surrender willingly the keys of your heart to him, and keep your heart for him.

THE
YOUNG COMMUNICANT'S
CATECHISM;
OR
A HELP,
BOTH SHORT AND PLAIN,
FOR INSTRUCTING AND PREPARING THE
YOUNG,
TO MAKE A RIGHT APPROACH UNTO
THE LORD'S TABLE.
WITH A PROPOSAL FOR PUBLIC RENEWING OF THE
BAPTISMAL COVENANT.

BY JOHN WILLISON,
Minister of the Gospel in Dun . . .

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PREFACE.

ABOUT fourteen years ago, I published a large *Sacramental Catechism*, for instructing communicants in the nurture of the sacraments, especially of the Lord's Supper, and the work of *communicating*. But the questions therein being numerous, and the answers large, and too burdensome to the memory, and the book itself become scarce, I have compiled this short *Catechism* for young communicants, wherein the answers are short, and may be easily committed to memory; which I hope, by the blessing of God, may be useful to them, (after learning the Assembly's Catechism,) before their approaching the Lord's table.

It is directed to young persons; because the time of youth is a noble season for laying the foundation of Christian knowledge, and for getting acquaintance with Jesus Christ, the Saviour of souls. Were the bar of ignorance early removed out of the way, the destruction of many precious souls might be prevented; let me therefore, in the first place, entreat and obtest all Christian parents to be at due pains to instruct their children in the knowledge of God, of their misery by nature, and of their need of Jesus Christ the Saviour. As ye would desire to prevent the ruin of those who came out of your bowels, and would not have them proving crosses to you in this world, nor pouring out curses against you in the other world, see that you tell them frequently of the evil of sin, the excellency of godliness, and the happiness of true believers and lovers of Christ; teach them early to read, pray, and keep the Sabbath: and let them never hear nor see any bad example in your practice.

In the next place, let me address the young, with the greatest earnestness, to remember your Creator and Redeemer *in the days of your youth*; set about salvation work in this age, which is the best season for it: the heart is more tender and tractable now, and will sooner melt into tears for sin, and sooner kindle into a flame of love to Christ, who suffered for sin, than it will do afterwards; the branches of a young tree will easily bow and ply to the wall, but when old they will not yield. That question of *Nicodemus* is not improper here, John iii. 4. *Can a man be born when he is old?* Alas! an old sinner is nearer the second death than the second birth; custom of sinning miserably besots the understanding, and benumbs the conscience: O guard against it!

A religious and well-spent youth is most pleasing to God, and will be comfortable afterwards to yourselves. Under the law, God demanded in sacrifice the first fruits, and even the *green ears of corn dried by the fire*, Lev. ii. 14. He would not stay till they were fully ripe, to teach us how much he desires the first of our time, and service of youth. Youth is the male of our flock, and our Creator doth best deserve it. There is no music so melodious in God's ears, as the voice of young persons, their weeping, praying, praising, believing, repenting, loving Christ, and covenanting with him. Again, how pleasing would it be to yourselves, to look back upon a well-spent youth! How comfortable was it to *Polycarp*, that could say when he was old, and tempted by the persecutors, to deny Christ—*These fourscore years have I served Christ, and ever found him a good master; he still dealt well with me, and how shall I deny him?* He began early to serve the Lord, and the reflection on it was pleasant. Well then let me, in the bowels of Christ, beseech you to hearken to his calls, and kindly to entertain the motions and convictions of his Spirit in the season of youth: Why? Christ loves it best, and makes it the usual season of converting and espousing sinners to himself. If we look through among the people of God, we shall hardly find one of a hundred, but will date his first acquaintance with Christ from the time of youth.—This is then a critical time for the soul, and should not be spent in vanity.

But seeing there is no time in youth so critical as the time of our first communicating, I must warn all young persons to take heed how they manage it: then it is that the soul is betwixt sinking and swimming. If it be well managed, the soul is happy for ever, for it is a special season for closing with Christ, and getting acquaintance with him: but, if it be wrongly managed, the loss is generally irreparable; for many, by their careless approaching to his holy table at the first, do provoke God to smite them with judicial heart-plagues, such as deadness, formality, and a careless spirit in attending ordinances all their days. Whereas, others who have been helped to manage their preparation-work with care and diligence, have found to their sweet experience, that the time of their *reading, hearing, praying, and communion with their own hearts*, before their first approach, was the time of the Lord's beginning a gracious work in them, and making saving impressions upon their souls; yea, to many, it hath been the time of their espousals to Christ, when they got the intimations of their pardon, and the assurance of God's love, which they have been helped to remember with comfort, all their lives after, and hath proven very useful to them in the day of affliction, and upon a death-bed.

Look well then to your behaviour at this time ; for now it is you are to renew your baptismal covenant, and become Christians by your own free choice. Now you are to enter into the state of adult church-members, and to be admitted into full communion with the church, and to share of the privileges of God's children, sealed to you in baptism. Now you are to lay the ground-stone of your spiritual building, to wit, your salvation-work ; and if you take not care to dig deep and found well, the building will never be secure : see then that you dig deep, by self-searching, humiliation, and renouncing self-righteousness and every false foundation, till ye win at last to the rock Christ, and his most perfect righteousness, which is sufficient to bear all the weight you can lay upon it, either your justification, your sanctification, or your glorification. Seeing then so much doth depend upon this first step, great need have ye to cry to the Lord to give you counsel ; Lord, *guide me with thy counsel, and keep me from stumbling in the threshold.*

You have many excellent helps provided already for your instruction and direction in this case ; though it is sadly to be regretted, that great ignorance still remains among the young, of the nature and ends of this sealing ordinance, of the grace to be exercised, and the acts of faith requisite in communicating, of the preparation needful before their approach, and particularly of the work of self-examination.—As a remedy for this ignorance, I humbly offer you this short Catechism, which you may get by heart, and be ready to answer to those who are willing to instruct and assist you at this critical juncture of your first approach ; also, I have drawn up some special questions for secret self-examination, by which you may be assisted in trying the state of your souls and your right before God to his holy table ; I wish you may make use of them in a conscientious manner, before you adventure to approach to it. It is easy to get man's approbation, or a token from a minister, who cannot judge of your inward state : but be not satisfied with that, nor with any thing, till you get something of a testimony from conscience, and a warrant from the master of the feast.

And seeing there is so much at stake with young communicants at their first approach, it is incumbent upon ministers to take more pains upon them than upon others, according to the recommendation of the General Assembly, 1706, Session 12 ; the tenor whereof follows. “The general assembly hereby recommends it to the several ministers within this national church, to take as strict a trial as can be, of such as they admit to the Lord's Supper, especially before their first admission thereto ; and that they diligently instruct them, particularly as to the covenant of grace, and the nature and end of that ordinance as a seal thereof, and charge upon them their baptismal covenant, and seriously exhort them to

renew the same." And it is the opinion of many worthy ministers, that there ought to be something of a public renewing of this covenant, as well as private.

In the mean time, that we may follow the assembly's directions with regard to persons before their first admission, it is needful that they make known their design to ministers several weeks before the administration, that they may have sufficient time to try them, instruct them, explain their baptismal engagements to them, and charge them home upon them.

If we find them weak in knowledge, we may try their capacity and desire to learn, by prescribing a task to them against some days thereafter, such as, 1st, getting by heart so many questions of the assembly's catechisms, or any other, and learning the meaning thereof. Or, 2dly, the reading of some chapters of the bible, especially those which narrate the sufferings of Christ, and requiring them to be in readiness to give some account thereof. Or, 3dly, the reading some part of a practical book upon the sacrament, and calling them to give some account of the same. Or, 4thly, enjoining them to take heed to the first sermons they shall hear upon the sabbath, or any week day, and to tell what they remember thereof. Or, 5thly, requiring them to humble themselves, and pray much in secret at this time, and to be ready at next meeting to give account what sins they have been mourning over, and what things they have been praying for, in the view of their approaching unto the table of the Lord. And, for taking sufficient trial of them, it may be proper to cause them to come frequently to us. In the mean time, it is fit we should consult with the elders, and enquire about their carriage and character, before we come any great length with them.

As to these, concerning whose knowledge and behaviour we are some way satisfied, it is needful, in the next place, to take a private dealing with them, by enquiring into the sense and feeling they have of religion upon their souls; what sense they have of their natural estate, and of the evil of sin? what thoughts they have of Christ? what they have been doing for their souls in secret, by way of prayer, reading, meditation, or self-examination? what influence sermons have had upon their hearts? what discoveries God hath made of sin, or of Christ, upon them? what meltings or tenderness of heart they found in prayer, or in confessing of sin? what are their real ends and designs in desiring access to this holy ordinance? and of what things they have been mourning over, and praying for, in the view thereof? And in order to excite them, and to get the better proof and discovery of them, it is not improper to pray with them, and cause them to pray with us. And likewise, we ought to insist much with them upon the nature and necessity of regeneration, and of faith in

Jesus Christ ; and to open to them the nature of the covenant of grace, with the several parts and articles thereof, and the obligations they are already brought under to accept of and adhere thereunto, by their baptism. As for the parts and articles of the covenant of grace, which communicants are to accept of, and engage unto, they are pretty fully laid open in the proposal subjoined to this catechism, for renewing our baptismal engagements, and in the example of personal covenanting, which, I hope, young persons and others will seriously consider and deliberate upon.

After we have found them in some measure qualified for receiving tokens, it would be much for edification to bring them some way in public, at least before the elders, to make profession of their faith, and a recognition of their baptismal covenant, by owning the glorious Trinity, renouncing the enemies thereof, and dedicating themselves to the Three in One. Also by declaring their acceptance of Christ in all his offices, and engaging themselves to make conscience of all the duties of christianity. All which I have opened, and particularly insisted upon, in the said proposal: and which, with the greatest humility, I would recommend to the mature thoughts, both of ministers and people. Well, after these catechumens have given satisfying answers to the questions proposed to them ; have consented to their baptismal engagements so opened and explained to them, and have undertaken personally to renew covenant in secret with God in these terms, before they approach to his table ; it is fit to give them their tokens, declaring that they are now admitted into the state and privileges of adult church-members, and to full communion with the church ; and, upon this occasion, to give them suitable directions and encouragements ; concluding all, by giving up and recommending these young persons to the grace of God, in solemn and fervent prayer.— This was the ancient and primitive practice. The solemn dedication in use among the churches of Macedonia, is commended by the apostle, 2 Cor. viii. 5. *They gave themselves first to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.* O ! if this practice were happily revived and brought in among us, how edifying, instructing, and confirming, would it prove to all the members of the church ! what obligations would it lay upon them to study holiness of life, to distinguish themselves from the world ; to desire and delight in christian society, and to love, and quicken, and admonish, and edify one another ! I know nothing that would beget a deeper sense of the relative duties of church-members one to another ; to which we are so often exhorted in the New Testament, the sense and practice whereof is almost lost in most christian churches. I am fully persuaded the neglect of this ancient practice hath done much harm to religion, by contributing to encourage and cherish a formal and lazy profession, yea, loose and untender

walking, and the abounding of immoralities among many, which otherwise might have been prevented.

I know, something of this practice of renewing the baptismal covenant is observed in private by several ministers, and some have done it more publicly to good advantage: yea, I have known this method and practice very much owned of God, having been accompanied with much tenderness and many tears, among the young people, one of them contributing to affect another, and which hath made very moving impressions upon the whole audience: and I doubt not but such opportunities have been to several the happy occasions of their espousals to the Lord Jesus, which they will thankfully remember, and bless God for, not only while they are in time, but through eternity. It would be a desirable thing, and a token for good, if the *General Assembly* would maturely consider this affair, and commend it to the uniform practice of the church, which, through the blessing of God, might be of great use to heal our woful breaches, unite our hearts, and revive serious religion and the power of godliness among us.

Another thing which I recommend in this Catechism, in order to young communicants, their worthy partaking, and comfortable walking with God, is, secret-personal transacting and covenanting with God before they approach. This is a practice highly recommended, and much insisted upon by worthy Mr. *Guthrie*, Mr. *Gouge*, Mr. *Allein*, and many other practical writers; this hath been the ancient practice of the most eminent saints of God in this land, and also in other parts of the christian world; it hath been a mean of helping them to much solid peace and joy in believing, and hath been quickening and relieving to them, through the various periods and trials of their wilderness-journey: upon which account many of God's people have had cause to bless his name for determining them to comply with the advice of early covenanting with God; and I am afraid the great decay of religion in our day may be very much imputed to the neglect of this practice.

But, that we may understand the nature of this work and our warrant for it the better, let these things be considered in the first place, that all of us have covenanted with God, either one way or another. Every baptized person hath covenanted with God by a visible profession and external dedication. And every adult person who hath truly believed the gospel, and closed with God in Christ, hath covenanted with God, not only externally, but in reality; and of these, some do it only virtually and implicitly; others do it formally and explicitly. Those who sincerely accept of the gospel-offers, and close with God in Christ, which is still by choosing the Lord for their God, and giving up themselves unto him, do all of them virtually covenant with God; and surely their state is to be reckoned good and safe, who really do so. But

besides, there is a formal and explicit covenanting with God, when a man doth professedly renew his baptismal dedication, and in an express manner doth bind himself to the Lord anew by his solemn vow or promise ; and this we may do several ways, either by the inward acts and out-goings of the soul to God, or by the outward words and expressions of the mouth, or by drawing up the same in writing, and subscribing it with the hand. And the more express we are in this matter, it is so much the better for evidencing our faith, clearing up our interest in Christ, and for fixing and binding our hearts the more strongly unto God. And we have sufficient foundation for all this in God's word : for when *Isaiah* is foretelling a great conversion of sinners unto the Lord, which fell out partly at the return of the *Jews* from *Babylon*, and more especially at the turning of the *Gentile* nations unto the Lord in the gospel time, he represents their management thus, *Isa.* xlv. 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;' that is, they shall all cheerfully renew the covenant with God, and consent to their part of the covenant, some one way, and some another ;—some more implicitly, and others more explicitly ; and the zeal of one will provoke another. Some shall say, *I am the Lord's*, that is, I will be his only, his wholly, and his forever ; I will be for his interests, for his use, and for his praise. Others, again, shall call themselves by the name of *Jacob* ; that is, they shall incorporate themselves with the people of God, join with them in profession of religion, and put on the character and livery of God's family ; they shall associate with God's people, and act for their good and welfare. But there are others who will subscribe with their hand to the Lord ; that is, they shall manage this transaction with great exactness and solemnity ; they shall draw up a writing, and sign it, as men do for the confirming and fixing of a bargain : and seeing men take this course in other affairs of importance, why should we not think it proper to do it when we make a covenant-dedication of ourselves to the Lord, which is an affair of the greatest importance ? when we draw up a summary of what we engage both to be and to do, and sign it with our hand, we give a testimony of our acting in this matter with consideration, heartiness, and resolution. We are apt to forget what we do by word of mouth, but writing would preserve the memory of our soul's transaction with God. And hath not God discovered this noble invention of writing to us for such excellent sacred purposes as this is ? and surely those who duly consider the worth of their souls, the weight of eternity, and the treachery of their hearts and memories, will not account this an unnecessary task or burden. We see how express, exact, and solemn, *Moses*, *Joshua*, and *Nehemiah*, were in an affair of this

kind, when the people were to renew the covenant with God; they caused the covenant to be written, and read it over in their hearing; the people, by their direction, gave express consent, and many of them set their seals unto it:—and they set up stone pillars to preserve the remembrance of what they did, *Exod. xxiv. 4, 7. Josh. xxiv. 26, 27. Neh. ix. 38.* They were so sensible of the forgetfulness and treachery of men's hearts and memories, that they judged all this needful to make suitable impressions upon them, and to maintain the sense of their dedication, and engagement to the Lord and his service. And surely they who bear honest minds will not startle at giving assurance; and they who know the deceitfulness of their own hearts, will not think them unnecessary.

Quest. Is not personal covenanting the same thing with believing?

Answ. Yes, it is; only it hath an agreeable mixture in it of repentance and love, which saving faith is never without. Faith is the great uniting grace which brings Christ and the soul together; it is the hand that takes hold of God's covenant, and brings us within the bond of it. What is personal covenanting, but a very solemn, explicit, and particular exerting of saving faith in its various acts, as such, its accepting, appropriating, applying, and resigning acts? what is faith, but the out-goings of the soul to God through the mediator? and what are these out-goings but the soul's taking God for his God, and devoting itself to him, which is personal covenanting? and upon this account it is, that faith is sometimes expressed, by an *avouching the Lord to be our God*, *Deut. xxvi. 17.* sometimes by a yielding ourselves to the Lord; *2 Chron. xxx. 8.* and a giving ourselves to the Lord, *2 Cor. viii. 5.* sometimes by espousing Christ as our husband, *2 Cor. xi. 2.* and being married to Christ, *Rom. vii. 4.*—yea, it is called a joining ourselves to the Lord in covenant, *Jer. i. 5.* and making covenant with God, *Psal. i. 4.* so that believing and covenanting are the same; I mean believing in a large sense. And indeed the nature of saving faith doth necessarily import covenanting; for it hath in it, not only the assent of the understanding, but also the consent of the will to embrace God's offer of salvation through Christ. There is in it a full consent of the soul to Christ, not only as a priest and saviour but also as a king and ruler, which must have in it the soul's engagement to new obedience.

Quest. How shall I take up this matter aright? Sometimes I am called to covenant with God without any mention of Christ, sometimes to close with Christ only, and sometimes to come to God in Christ.

Answ. Though Christ be not always mentioned in the calls given us to covenant with God, yet it is still understood; for the thing is so clear in scripture, that all who live under the gospel are supposed to know, that there is no transacting

with God, nor dealing with him, but in, by, or through Christ, the Mediator. Hence God is said to be reconciled to us in Christ, 2 Cor. v. 19. and that the Father is well pleased in Christ, Mat. xvii. 5. and that he accepts us in Christ, Eph. i. 6.—and hence we are appointed to come to God by Christ, Heb. vii. 25. and to believe in God by Christ, 1 Pet. i. 21. Why? Christ being our only mediator, and also God-man in one person, he is now God's representative to us, and the proper meeting-place betwixt God and us:—and it is in him only that we can meet with God. The name, the nature, and perfections of God, are in Christ; so when we close with Christ, we close with God in him.—Christ is, as it were, the visible hand which God holds out to sinners, and upon this hand we must lay hold in all our transactions and dealings with God; and therefore it is only in, by, or through Christ, that we are to close with God as our God and portion.

Quest. Can our personal covenanting, or renewing our baptismal covenant, be reckoned a bringing in of any other covenant beside the covenant of grace?

Answ. No; for our covenanting with God is nothing but our consenting to the covenant of grace, or to the method of salvation proposed therein to us through Christ the Mediator, which is believing. So that our personal covenanting can no more be reckoned a different covenant from the covenant of grace, than our believing. That which occasions mistakes in some, is, the different notions they have of the covenant of grace; they perhaps understood it merely of God's gracious promises to us in Christ, and indeed it is sometimes so taken in scripture, Psal. cxl. 5. Eph. ii. 12. But the covenant of grace is commonly taken in a large sense, for the whole scheme and contrivance of our salvation through Jesus Christ: and then it includes all the duties of the covenanted to God, as well as God's promises to them, Psal. lxxviii. 37. Heb. viii. 10. God has thought fit to adopt the moral law into the covenant of grace, as a rule of life to all who come into it, and share of its promises, though in the mean time, I grant that strength to obey this law is a blessing promised in the covenant of grace, as freely as any other blessing in it. Now, when we consent to the covenant of grace, or take hold of it, we must not only accept of the promises of pardon and salvation through Christ offered therein, but we must also consent to the duties required of the covenanted, and engage to them; we must consent to Christ as a ruler, as well as a Saviour. And God is graciously pleased to call this consent of ours, the making of a covenant with him, and is well pleased with it, Psal. l. 5. Jer. xxiv. 18. l. 5. which may be admired as an evidence of his wonderful goodness and condescension, that he should put such honour and respect upon our feeble endeavours: for indeed the covenant is pro-

perly only of God's making, and not of ours; in regard he is the sole deviser of it, and it is he that, by his free grace, enables us to give consent to the covenant, and do any part of it. And as this covenant is all grace, we must see that the free grace of God in Christ get all the glory of our salvation. And therefore we must be careful to remember, that the duties of the covenant to which we engage, or even faith itself, are not properly the counterpart or condition on the side of the covenanted to which the promises of pardon and salvation are properly annexed. For though these be required of us, and must necessarily be performed, so that without them there is no salvation; yet we must still bear in mind, that it is only the obedience, satisfaction, or righteousness of Christ our surety, which is the proper and pleadable condition in the covenant of grace before God, of our justification and salvation: and to this only we must look as the great meritorious condition to which all the promises of the covenant are properly annexed.

Quest. In what respect then is faith, repentance, or new obedience, required of us in this covenant?

Answ. Faith is required as the great means or instrument for interesting us in the surety's righteousness; and repentance, love, and new obedience, are required as the evidences of this faith, and as a testimony of our gratitude to God for his free love to us in Christ, but are in nowise conditions for purchasing any mercy or blessing whatsoever.

Having thus cleared the nature of the duty of personal covenanting, and our warrant for it; seeing it is nothing but a solemn and explicit exerting of the various acts of faith, let me beseech all young people, in God's strength, to essay the duty in the most express and exact manner, not only by word, but by writ also. I know some have abused this practice, and have relied presumptuously upon it, but that should not make us reject the lawful use of a thing so well warranted, and in which the saints of God have found so much profit and sweetness. And the more solemn and express they have been in their covenanting, leaning wholly upon their Surety's strength, they have still had the more satisfaction and comfort in it.

Well then, young people, intended communicants, what say ye to it? Are ye inclined to this covenant-transaction with God, or not? If ye knew the advantage and comfort of it, I am sure ye would not be averse to it. Would you be entitled to the blessings of God's covenant of grace, and clear up your interest therein? It is surely an excellent mean for both, to be seriously aiming at taking hold of the covenant in a way of express transacting with God: and remember, when I call you to it, I call you to engage to no more than what you are already engaged to by your baptism; for it is just the same covenant you are to consent to now, which you

consented to by your parents then ; only now ye are to ratify your parents' deed by your voluntary consent and personal resignation, and to be somewhat more express and particular in your engagements. To which, if you refuse to do, your baptism will not profit you, but stand as a witness against you. Lay your hand then to your heart, and resolve what to do ; for God is still waiting on you, and saying, *Choose you this day whom you will serve : Why halt you betwixt two opinions ?* Come like Amaziah, *who willingly offered himself unto the Lord*, 2 Chron. xvii. 16. O, *young communicants*, let your hearts begin to melt, and your eyes to drop, for your long rebellion and backwardness to yield to your rightful owner ! If Christ be coming to you in streams of blood, it is fit you go to meet him with floods of tears for sin. If you be to seal a covenant with God, see that ye come to open rupture with all the enemies of God ; presently break league with *sin, Satan*, and the world, and come and make an offer of yourselves, *soul and body*, unto the Lord, and do it with the greatest seriousness and solemnity ; and to be sure he will in no wise reject your offer, nor *cast you out*.

And as for you who are acquainted with this duty, who have made a covenant transaction with God formerly, and have done it, perhaps, with considerable solemnity and exactness, let me exhort you not to rest here, but frequently revise and renew your transaction. You think it your duty frequently to renew your acts of repentance, and why not also to renew the actings of faith and love by personal covenanting with God ? Your frequent aiming at this would serve both to strengthen your faith, and to evidence the truth and reality of it unto you ; for as a Christian should persist in repenting for sin, till he know that he truly repents, so he should believe, and exert faith in its different acts of proving, applying, renouncing, accepting, appropriating, giving up and surrendering, till he know that he truly believes. Your frequent aiming to renew these acts in a solemn way, is the best way for you both to get and keep sight of your interest in Christ. And for the poor believer that is complaining of walking in darkness, and is sadly oppressed with doubts and jealousies, about the truth of his faith, and the reality of his interest in Christ, I know no better remedy than this very practice. I might recommend several seasons as proper for renewing our solemn dedications and covenant transactions with God : such as a time of imminent danger, or some great strait ; or when you fall into some great sin, or into declining or backsliding, or when you fall into great darkness and perplexity about your soul's condition ; likewise it is very proper upon days of fasting, and at the beginning of every new year, and particularly before you approach the Lord's table. All these are covenanting times to God's people.

For your help in this important affair, I have set down an example at the end of this *Catechism*, from which you may best suit the sins, wants, weakness, and peculiar circumstances of your souls. When you have drawn it up, be not rash in going into it, but read it over, and consult conscience about every paragraph in it before you venture to subscribe it; and when you find in yourself a willingness and firm resolution to do it, then essay to do it with the greatest self-deniedness, seriousness and solemnity: humble yourself on your knees, and again read it over, and pausing after every article, look up to God in Christ for strength, before you give your consent and *Amen* to it; and then, after all, take the pen, as in the sight and presence of an all-seeing God, and *subscribe with your hand to the Lord*.

DUNDEE, *March*, 1734.

THE YOUNG COMMUNICANT'S CATECHISM.



Concerning Man's Natural Estate.

Quest. *IN what estate were you born?*

Ans. In a woful, miserable estate, wanting the image and favour of God, which man at first had: and with a sinful nature, prone to what is evil, backward to what is good, and exposed to the wrath of God, both here and hereafter.

Q. *How came you to be born in this estate?*

A. Because of my descent from sinful *Adam*, who fell from his happiness, by breaking covenant with God, and incurring the penalty thereof; whereby he lost all his grace, and was wholly unable to recover himself.

Q. *Is fallen man left without hope in this miserable estate?*

A. No: there is a noble remedy provided; for though the *Old Covenant* be broken and dissolved, there is an excellent *New Covenant* contrived, yea, revealed and tendered unto lost sinners of mankind.



Concerning the two Covenants.

Q. *WHAT are these covenants which God hath made with man?*

A. The Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace.

Q. *By which of these two covenants is it that you can be saved?*

A. Only by the covenant of grace, which is called the *New Covenant*.

Q. Which is the Covenant of Works ?

A. It is God's agreement with Adam and Eve, wherein he promised them life upon their perfect obedience to his laws, and threatened death upon their disobedience.

Q. Why cannot you be saved by the covenant of works ?

A. Because I am neither able to fulfil the condition, nor endure the penalty of it ; that is, I can neither give perfect obedience to God's law, nor bear his wrath, which is due for breaking it.

Q. What is the Covenant of Grace, by which you are to be saved ?

A. It is God's gracious paction with elect sinners in Christ, in which he is pleased mercifully to offer and promise salvation to all poor fallen sinners of Adam's race, who believe in his Son Jesus Christ.

Q. Who are these that truly believe in him ?

A. They are such, who, being made sensible of their low estate, are content to receive Jesus Christ as their surety and Saviour, and to depend upon his righteousness and satisfaction to divine justice, as the only ground of their justification before God, and are resolved in his strength to show forth their faith, by a sincere love and obedience to God.

Q. Why is this new covenant called a covenant of grace ?

A. To distinguish it from the covenant of works, wherein the ground of a man's justification is something done by the man himself: whereas, in this new covenant, the ground of a man's justification is something done by a surety in his room: and also because the surety himself, and all the blessings of this covenant, are most gracious and free gifts bestowed by God upon undeserving and ill-deserving creatures, who could do nothing to obtain them.

Q. How can this covenant be altogether of grace, when faith is required of us as the condition to interest us in the blessings of it, and likewise good works to show forth our faith ?

A. Though both these be required of us, yet the grace for producing that faith and those works is promised to us in this covenant, as freely as any other blessing in it ; upon which account this covenant is frequently called in scripture a Testament.

Q. Why is this covenant called a Testament ?

A. Because all the blessings and good things promised therein, are freely bequeathed and made over to the elect, as legacies left and made sure to them by the death of Jesus Christ the Testator: and also, in it there is grace left them to perform all the duties required of them.

Q. What are the principal legacies of this Testament ?

A. Pardon of sin, deliverance from wrath, peace with God, all the graces of the Spirit, with perseverance therein

to the end; safety through death, resurrection to life, and eternal glory.

Q. How is it that this covenant or Testament is established and confirmed to us?

A. By the death and blood of Jesus Christ, the Mediator and Testator of it; and by the outward signs and seals which he hath instituted to be dispensed to us, with the preaching of the gospel.

Concerning the Seals of the Covenant.

Q. WHAT are the seals of the covenant of grace?

A. The two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper.

Q. For what end hath God appointed these sacraments, or seals?

A. To be sacred signs, memorials, and pledges of his mercy to us through a crucified Jesus, he being the great surety and sacrifice, to which we are appointed constantly to look for pardon, grace, and glory.

Q. Why are baptism and the Lord's supper called seals of the covenant of grace?

A. Because, like sealed charters, they confirm and assure us of the certainty of the covenant, and all its promised blessings; and particularly, that God is willing, in and through Christ, to be a God to us, and to take us for his people.

Q. What is baptism?

A. It is the sacred washing, or sprinkling with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Q. What doth the sprinkling signify?

A. The cleansing of our souls from sin by Christ's blood and Spirit, and our entering in among the disciples and followers of Christ.

Q. Why are you baptized in the name of the Father?

A. In testimony of my choosing and owning God the Father, as my Father, and the great contriver of the gospel-method of salvation through Christ.

Q. Why are you baptized in the name of the Son?

A. In token of my choosing and accepting of the Son of God as my great Redeemer and Saviour, in all his offices, Prophet, Priest, and King.

Q. Why is he especially styled our Saviour?

A. Because of the eminent hand he hath in the salvation we look for: he preached it to us as our great Prophet; he procured it for us as our high Priest; and bestows it on us as our Lord and King.

Q. Why are you baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost?

A. In testimony of my owning and accepting of the Holy Ghost as my sanctifier, and the great applier of Christ's purchase to me, whose office it is to work saving faith and all grace in the elect.

Q. What engagement have you come under by your baptism?

A. To believe and obey the holy Trinity, and to renounce the three great enemies thereof, viz. the devil, the world, and the flesh; and to live as a Christian indeed, always remembering the name by which I am called.

Q. How is it that a Christian, or baptized person, ought to live?

A. As one that is solemnly consecrated to the faith and obedience of the holy Trinity; and particularly, as one that is washed in the blood of the Lamb, who will not again venture to defile himself with sin, but will study to make Christ his pattern.

Q. Are you not bound to renew your baptismal engagements, and to take them upon yourself?

A. Yes, I am; and I do it expressly when I go to take the second seal of the covenant, and partake of the Lord's supper.

Q. What is the difference betwixt baptism and the Lord's supper?

A. The first is to be administered to us but once, but the second often: The first doth signify our spiritual birth; the second our spiritual nourishment: Baptism is the door of Christ's house, by which we must enter; but the Lord's supper is the table at which Christ's children must feed and get strength.

Q. What should be your great design in attending and partaking of these sacraments?

A. That thereby I may show my regard and obedience to the author of them, and that I may find a crucified Jesus in them, and get myself assured of his love and purchase.

Concerning the Lord's Supper.

Q. WHAT is the Lord's Supper?

A. It is a religious eating of bread and drinking of wine, according to Christ's institution and example, in remembrance of his death and sufferings for us.

Q. When did Christ institute this sacrament?

A. In the same night wherein he was betrayed, and imme-

diately after he had eaten the Jewish passover with his disciples.

Q. Why did he institute it at that time?

A. To shew that the passover was abrogated by this new ordinance, and the Lord's supper come in its room; and also to lay all his people under the stronger obligations to observe and attend it.

Q. Why doth the time of the institution lay us under such obligations to observe it?

A. Because the command and directions which he gave us at that time, are to be regarded as the solemn dying charge of a crucified Jesus, who was going to do more for us than all the world could do.

Q. Did Christ enjoin this ordinance as any task or burden on his people?

A. Not at all, but left it as a rare privilege and precious legacy to the church, seeing it is a bright memorial of his dying love, a sure pledge of his second coming, and a quickener of all the graces.

Q. What are the elements or signs appointed in this sacrament?

A. Bread and wine.

Q. What do they represent unto us?

A. Christ's body and blood, with all the benefits and blessings thereby purchased to us.

Q. What is signified by the breaking of the bread, and pouring of the wine?

A. All Christ's sufferings, and particularly the breaking and wounding of his body on the cross, and the shedding of his blood, to take away our sins.

Q. What is signified by giving the broken bread and poured out wine to the communicants?

A. God's actual making over and giving a crucified Christ, with all the benefits of his purchase, to believing partakers.

Q. What are these benefits here made over and sealed unto them?

A. A remission of sin, freedom from wrath, peace with God, peace of conscience, adoption into God's family, increase of grace, perseverance therein, sanctified mercies and crosses, and a title to eternal life.

Q. What is signified by communicants' taking the bread and cup in their hand?

A. Their putting forth the hand of faith to receive a crucified Christ for their Saviour, in all his offices and with all his benefits, as offered to them in the gospel.

Q. In what manner ought you to receive a crucified Christ at his table?

A. With much humility, self-denial, thankfulness, and with close and particular application of his offices and fulness to my soul's necessities.

Q. *What is signified by Communicants' eating of the bread and drinking of the wine?*

A. Their near union with Christ, their actual partaking of the benefits of his death, the great satisfaction they have in him, and the spiritual strength and nourishment they get from him.

Q. *Why ought Communicants to partake of the cup, as well as of the bread?*

A. For the more full confirmation of their faith, and because Christ said to his disciples, *drink ye all of it.*

Q. *Why did Christ make choice of bread and wine as the symbols of his body and blood?*

A. To hold forth their refreshing and strengthening virtue to believing Communicants: for as bread strengthens man's heart, so wine makes it glad.

Q. *What were Christ's words when he instituted the sacrament?*

A. He spoke something concerning the bread, something concerning the cup, and something concerning the whole sacrament.

Q. *What spoke he concerning the bread?*

A. He said, take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me.

Q. *What said he concerning the wine?*

A. This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Q. *What said he concerning the whole sacrament?*

A. He said, as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Q. *Do we partake of Christ's body and blood here in a carnal manner?*

A. No; but only in a spiritual way.

Q. *What is the meaning of these words, Take, eat, this is my body broken for you?*

A. The plain meaning is, that the broken bread signifies and represents Christ's body as it was broken and bruised for his people.

Q. *Is not Christ really present in the sacrament?*

A. Yes, he is so; but yet he is not bodily, but spiritually, present there.

Q. *How is it we partake spiritually of Christ's broken body?*

A. We do it when our souls do share of the benefits and fruits of his broken body, such as pardon of sin, increase of grace, access to God, spiritual discoveries, loosing of bands, and the like.

Q. *How long did Christ intend this sacrament shall continue?*

A. Until his coming.

Q. *Why no longer?*

A. Because in heaven there will be no need of sacraments to represent Christ, he being always present there in a bodily way.

Something more particular of the nature and ends of the holy Supper.

Q. *WHAT further account can you give of the nature and design of this sacrament ?*

A. It doth evidently partake of the nature of a seal, of a feast, and also of an oath.

Q. *What hath it of the nature of a Seal ?*

A. It is justly called a seal of the covenant of grace ; because, like a sealed charter put into our hands, it doth make over, seal, and confirm to us, a right and title to all the benefits and fruits of Christ's purchase, which are therein promised to believers.

Q. *What kind of a seal is this sacrament ?*

A. It is a spiritual seal, and of great value, seeing it is a seal of Christ's own devising and engraving, whose inscription is, Christ loving us ; and whose image is, Christ dying for us.

Q. *What hath this sacrament in it of the nature of a feast ?*

A. It is justly called a feast, as it brings food, nourishment, and delight, to the souls of worthy communicants, the invited guests.

Q. *What sort of a feast is it ?*

A. It is a spiritual feast, a marriage feast, a feast upon the sacrifice of the Son of God ; a feast of Christ's making, of a strange nature, in which Christ is both the master and matter of the feast, the provider and provision, the feeder and the food : for his *flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed.*

Q. *In what respect is this sacrament of the nature of an oath ?*

A. In respect the word sacrament was used among the Romans, (from whence it is borrowed) for a military oath, whereby they bound themselves to be true and faithful soldiers to their general ; so in this ordinance we in effect swear allegiance to the King of heaven over the broken body and shed blood of the Son of God, and also bind ourselves to be true and faithful soldiers to Christ our captain-general in the spiritual warfare.

Q. What are the main ends you have in view in coming to this ordinance ?

A. To keep up the remembrance of Christ's death and sufferings, to get communion with him, to renew my baptismal covenant, to get my faith strengthened and confirmed, and all my graces quickened.

Q. What are these sufferings of Christ, which you are to remember at his table ?

A. Those which are recorded in his word.

Q. What do you remember of these just now ?

A. I remember the assaults and temptations he met with from the devil ; the reproaches and persecutions he endured from wicked men ; his soul-sufferings and agonies in the garden of Gethsemane ; the cruel mockings, buffetings, crownings, spittings, and scourgings, he endured in the high priest's palace, and in Pilate's judgment-hall ; and lastly, his bloody sufferings and bitter death on Mount Calvary, when he was nailed to the cross, forsaken by his friends, derided by his enemies, and deserted of God.

Q. What was the cause of all these sufferings ?

A. Christ's own love, and our sins : For having in his astonishing free love, undertaken to satisfy divine justice for us ; " He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities."

Q. Are we not under the strongest obligations to keep up the sacramental remembrance of Christ ?

A. Surely we are ; for he is matchless in his love to us, poor, sinful worms, having remembered us in our low estate, and done and suffered more for us than all the world could or would have done. And likewise, he hath strictly enjoined us, among his last words, to continue to celebrate this memorial of his death.

Q. Why do we need this memorial ? Are we in any hazard of forgetting his matchless love ?

A. Yes ; for so worldly are our hearts, so unbelieving our minds, so treacherous our memories, and so wavering our affections, that we are apt to be ensnared by the world's allurements, and to let Christ and his love slip out of our thoughts.

Q. Is not the fresh and frequent remembrance of a crucified Christ in the sacrament very useful and advantageous to us ?

A. Yes.

Q. In what respect is it useful ?

A. For weakening and killing of sin, for melting a hard heart, for overcoming of Satan's temptations, for quickening and increasing grace, and for giving comfort in all tribulation.

Q. What kind of a remembrance ought we to have of the sufferings and death of Christ at his table ?

A. It should be an affectionate and believing, a mournful and sin-loathing, yet a joyful and thankful, remembrance.

Q. How can we both mourn and rejoice at the same time ?

A. We may upon different accounts : for, as we should mourn for our sins that pierced Christ, and put him to death ; so we ought to rejoice in his wonderful goodness, that undertook to be our surety and sacrifice, to save us from sin and wrath : and the more we are helped to mourn, we have still the greater ground to rejoice and be glad in him.

Q. How so ?

A. Because a mourning heart for sin is a good evidence of a person's interest in Christ and his purchase.

Of worthy and unworthy Partakers.

Q. ARE all partakers to be reckoned welcome guests at this holy feast ?

A. No.

Q. Who then are such ?

A. Only believers are worthy partakers of it.

Q. Who are these ?

A. They are such, who by faith do cordially consent to the covenant of grace, sincerely aim to do honour to Christ at his table, by showing forth his death, and study preparation for it.

Q. Who are the unwelcome guests ?

A. Those who never closed with the offers of the gospel, and neglect preparation for this feast ; and particularly those who continue in love and league with sin, while they pretend kindness to Christ, and to renew covenant with him.

Q. What is to be understood by the worthiness of those who are called worthy partakers ?

A. Not any worthiness in a legal sense, for we are all unworthy before God of the least mercy ; but only a gospel suitableness and meetness of the soul's state and frame to attend this holy institution.

Q. May not even a believer be guilty of partaking unworthily ?

A. Yes, he may, if he neglect self-examination, harbour any known sin, or want grace in exercise.

Q. *What is the duty of worthy partaking, and wherein doth it lie?*

A. It is, in short, to eat and drink at Christ's table, with a believing and thankful remembrance of his dying love, looking by faith to him that we have pierced for salvation, and lodging our souls in his wounds, mourning for sin that pierced him, and solemnly resolving in his strength that we will pierce him no more.

Q. *What is the advantage of worthy partaking?*

A. Hereby remission of our sins through Christ's blood is assured, the power of sin is weakened, the graces of the Spirit are strengthened, the soul's diseases are cured, the doubts of the mind are resolved, and sweet views of Christ and glory are obtained.

Q. *What is the sin of unworthy communicating, and wherein doth it lie?*

A. It is to partake without due preparation and right ends, or to eat and drink without suitable knowledge and reverence, without reconciliation to God and our neighbour, or without the exercise of the sacramental graces, such as faith, love, and repentance; or to approach while we entertain any known sin.

Q. *What is the danger of unworthy partaking?*

A. Hereby the guilt of Christ's body and blood is contracted, and God highly provoked; and the guilty person draws down judgments and damnation upon himself, if it be not timeously prevented by repentance and free mercy.

Q. *Why is a man's unworthy partaking charged mainly upon not discerning the Lord's body in the sacrament?*

A. Because the unworthy communicant doth not consider that the bread here is solemnly consecrated to represent the Lord's body, but eats it as earnestly as if it were common bread; and because he puts not due respect and honour upon the body of our crucified Lord, here set forth; but treats it as if it were the body of a mere man or common person.

Q. *How shall we prevent this guilt and danger?*

A. By entering into God's covenant, and making due preparation for approaching to his holy table, both habitual and actual.

Of Preparation for the Lord's Supper.

Q. WHAT is the necessity of making such preparation for attending this ordinance ?

A. Because the approach we make to God in it is very near and awful ; and the author of it is a holy, jealous, and heart-searching God, who will shortly call us to account. And because we are assured there is great benefit by a worthy approach, and as great danger by an unworthy.

Q. What is our habitual preparation ?

A. Our being in a gracious state.

Q. What is the actual preparation requisite for approaching to the Lord's table ?

A. It mainly lies in these two : Examination of ourselves, and excitation of our graces.

Q. What sort of examination is needful before our partaking ?

A. There is a public church-examination necessary by church-officers, that the Lord's table be not abused by the ignorant and profane ; and there is a private self-examination necessary by our own consciences, that the Lord's supper be not unworthily received through unbelief, impenitency, formality, earthliness, pride, malice, or any secret sin entertained by us.

Q. What things must we examine ourselves about, before we approach ?

A. Principally concerning these three : Our right to the Lord's supper, our need of it, and our actual fitness for it.

Q. Why about these three ?

A. Because, if we have no right to it we shall but usurp it ; if we feel no need of it, we shall but despise it ; if we be unfit for it, we shall but abuse it, and hurt ourselves.

Examination of our Right to the Lord's Table.

Q. WHAT is this right to the Lord's table ?

A. It is twofold : 1st. There is an outward and visible right before the church. 2dly. There is an inward and invisible right before God.

Q. Who are those that have the outward, and visible right to this ordinance ?

A. Those who are baptized, and have a competent measure of Christian knowledge, profess their faith in Christ, and are blameless in their lives before men.

Q. Are all such persons worthy partakers ?

A. No ; but they have such an outward and visible right

before the church, that they cannot be excluded : for, of this outward right only the church is to judge.

Q. *Who are those who have not this right ?*

A. Neither the ignorant nor profane have it, and therefore they are to be excluded from the Lord's table.

Q. *Why are the ignorant to be excluded ?*

A. Because they are not capable to examine themselves, nor to discern the Lord's body ; and so behooved in this case to eat and drink unworthily.

Q. *Why are the profane to be excluded ?*

A. Because they who allow themselves to live in sin, can have no communion with a holy God. Nay, they expose themselves to his judgments ; by coming with defiled hands to his holy table.

Q. *Who are those that have the inward and invisible right to this holy ordinance ?*

A. Those who not only have knowledge, a profession and blameless walk ; but are really within the covenant by a true faith in Jesus Christ, even a faith that works by love, and purifies the heart as well as the life ; they are really in heart before God, what they seem to be outwardly before men.

Q. *Who are the judges of this right ?*

A. Of this inward right the church cannot judge ; but every man is to enquire, examine, and judge of it with respect to himself.

Q. *By what evidence may a man know that he is really within the new covenant, and thereupon judge that he hath an inward and invisible right to its seal before God ?*

A. If he can say, that he hath seen himself perishing, while upon the whole bottom of a covenant of works, and that he hath fled from it to the new covenant, heartily approving the whole frame and contrivance of it ; accepting of Christ the Mediator of it in all his offices, and giving up himself to be the Lord's, to live for him, and walk with him in newness of life. And that it is his earnest desire that his inward man, as well as his outward, may be conformed to the laws and image of God.

Examination of our need of the Lord's Supper, and of the wants we should seek to be supplied thereat.

Q. *WHAT need have you of the Lord's supper ?*

A. I need it upon many accounts : As, 1st. To bring a crucified Jesus, in a lively manner, to my remembrance. 2dly.

[See several questions subjoined to this Catechism, which may be assisting to us in the duty of private self-examination concerning our right and title to this holy table.]

To renew my baptismal vow, and lay me under stronger engagements to be the Lord's. 3dly. To nourish and strengthen my weak graces. 4thly. To fortify me against *Satan's* temptations, and all other discouragements. 5thly. To renew the sense and assurance of my pardon, which is frequently obscured and darkened.

Q. *What are these things which obscure the evidence of pardon?*

A. Sins, both of omission and commission, and especially sins against light.

Q. *Why should you examine your wants before you approach to the Lord's table?*

A. Because there Christ is set forth with all his fulness for the supply of my spiritual wants and necessities; and it is necessary that I should have a lively sense of these needs, that I may know what to apply for to this full Saviour, when at his table.

Q. *What are these wants you ought to enquire into before partaking?*

A. I ought to examine these chiefly: 1st. What sins I want most to be subdued. 2dly. What graces I want most to be strengthened. 3dly. What mercies I want most to be bestowed. 4thly. What faculties of my soul I want most to be sanctified. 5thly. What offices of Christ I want most to be executed in my soul.

Q. *How may you discover the sins you want most to be subdued?*

A. By examining what are the sins or corruptions which do most prevail in me, if it be atheistical thoughts, unbelief, pride, passion, heart-hardness, earthliness, wandering, formality, backsliding, or any other; and these I must keep in eye, that I may apply to a full Saviour at his table for strength to wrestle against them and overcome them.

Q. *How may you discover the graces you want most to be strengthened?*

A. By examining which of the graces are weakest and lowest there, if it be faith, hope, love, meekness, humility, or any other; and these I must bring to a full Christ at his table, to be cherished, strengthened, and increased.

Q. *How may you find out the mercies you need most to be bestowed?*

A. By examining; what are my present complaints, pinches, and difficulties; and what are the mercies which would be most suitable and relieving to me under them; if such as these, intimations of pardon, spirituality of affections, liveliness in duty, patience under crosses, conduct in intricate cases; strength against corruptions and temptations, deliverance from atheistical or blasphemous thoughts, or the like: And these mercies I must remember, to ask them from Christ when at his table.

Q. How may you find out the faculty of your soul you want most to be sanctified?

A. By examining what is the power or faculty that is least renewed, and needs most the Spirit's influences to be poured out upon it; if upon my understanding, to cure its blindness, and enlighten it with saving views of spiritual things; or if upon my will, to cure its perverseness, and make it pliable to God's will; or upon my memory, to cure its treachery and weakness, and to strengthen it to retain God's word; or upon my conscience, to cure its searedness, and to make it tender and watchful; or upon my affections, to cure their coldness to Christ and spiritual things, and to fix them upon right objects.

Q. How may you discover the office of Christ you want most to be executed in you?

A. By enquiring into the case of my soul, and plagues of my heart, saying, Whether do I need Christ most as a prophet to teach me and cure my ignorance? or as a priest, to cover me with his righteousness, and intercede with God for me? or as a king, to subdue my heart to himself, and conquer my indwelling corruptions? And being sensible of my soul's need, I must go to my full Redeemer at his table, and say, Lord, come and execute such an office in my soul.

Examination of our Sins necessary before partaking.

Q. WHY must you enquire so narrowly about your sins before partaking?

A. Upon several accounts: 1st. That there may be no *Achan* lodged to hinder the presence of God with me. 2dly. That, by discovering them, I may be helped the better to look upon him whom I have pierced, and mourn. 3dly. That I may be more capable to point out my wound and sore unto my physician for cure. 4thly. That I may behold the evil of them in the glass of Christ's sufferings, and be thereby moved to hate them, and turn from them all unto God, and walk with him in newness of life.

Q. How ought you to manage this part of your preparation-work, so as to accomplish a diligent search of your sins?

A. 1st. I must set time apart for it, and before I begin it, pray earnestly for the illuminations of the Spirit of God to discover sin unto me. 2dly. I must think upon the sins of my heart and my life, my sins of omission and commission, and these both open and secret, of ignorance, and against light, and the sins of my station and character in the world. 3dly. For my help, I will read our larger Catechism and the ten commandments, and the sins therein enumerated, with their many aggravations, and enquire how far I am charge-

able therewith. 4thly. I will never give over searching and thinking, until I see my indispensable need of the blood of the Lamb of God, which cleanseth us from all sin.

Examination of our actual fitness for the Lord's Table.

Q. *WHAT is that fitness which every communicant ought to have before partaking?*

A. It is twofold, both habitual and actual; and both must be had by every one.

Q. *What is this habitual fitness or preparation which every partaker must have?*

A. He must be a believer, a man in a gracious state, that hath the habits of grace planted in his soul.

Q. *What is that actual fitness you must have?*

A. It is when a man is not only in a gracious state, but in a gracious frame: when grace is not only in the habit, but in the lively exercise.

Q. *What are these graces which must be examined, quickened, and brought to exercise, before partaking?*

A. They are chiefly knowledge, faith, repentance, love, humility, thankfulness, spiritual appetite, and resolution for new obedience.

Examination of Knowledge.

Q. *WHAT is that knowledge you must have to qualify you for worthy partaking?*

A. It is a gracious discovery and uptaking of God and divine truths, as they are revealed in his word.

Q. *What are those things particularly, which you must know in order to partaking aright?*

A. I must have a competent knowledge of these five things: 1st. Of God in his essential perfections and Trinity of persons. 2dly. Of man, and his estate both before and since his fall. 3dly. Of Jesus Christ the Mediator, in his twofold nature, and threefold office. 4thly. Of the new covenant, or gospel-method of justification by the Surety's righteousness apprehended by faith. 5thly. Of the seal of this covenant, and particularly of the holy supper, in its nature, ends, and uses.

Q. *Is a literal knowledge of these things sufficient for a communicant?*

A. No; it must be a true, sanctified, and saving knowledge.

Q. *How may we discover if our knowledge be sanctified and saving?*

A. We may know it by its properties and effects ; as, 1. If it be experimental, and gives us a sweet taste and relish of the truths we know. 2dly. If it be humbling, and makes us, like *Paul*, look upon ourselves as the least of saints, and the chief of sinners. 3dly. If it leads us to Christ and his righteousness, as the only ground of our hope. Lastly, If it be communicative, practical, obediential, fruitful, and puts us on to desire a greater conformity to Jesus Christ our Head.

Examination of Faith.

Q. *WHAT is true saving faith.*

A. It is a grace of the Holy Spirit, whereby a man, knowing his sin and misery, and assenting to the truth of God's record concerning Christ, doth cordially receive and rest upon Christ and his righteousness for pardon and salvation, according to the gospel-offer.

Q. *What need is there for the exercise of faith at the Lord's table ?*

A. It is needful : 1st. For discerning the Lord's body, and the spiritual mysteries here represented ; seeing faith is the spiritual eye whereby the soul sees Christ and things invisible. 2dly. For applying Christ, and his benefits here set forth to our souls, seeing faith is the spiritual hand for taking hold of a crucified Jesus, and the mouth and stomach that feeds upon him.

Q. *How may we know if our faith be true and saving ?*

A. True faith hath these effects : 1st. It softens the heart and makes it bleed for sin that pierced Christ. 2dly. It makes the soul approve and admire the gospel contrivance of salvation, through the righteousness of Christ. 3dly. It works by love, and carries out the soul to love Christ above all things, and to do all duties from a principle of love. 4thly. It makes a man sincerely obedient and fruitful in good works. 5thly. It looses the heart from the world and all earthly felicities, and carries it to things above.

Examination of Repentance.

Q. *WHAT is the true repentance which worthy partakers must have ?*

A. It is a grace of the Holy Spirit, whereby we are convinced of the evil of sin, sincerely mourn for it, and turn from it unto God, through Jesus Christ, resolving to serve him in newness of life.

Q. *What parts are there in true repentance ?*

A. Chiefly three ; conviction, contrition, and conversion.

Q. *What is conviction?*

A. It is a right sight and sense of the evil and sinfulness of sin.

Q. *What is contrition?*

A. It is a true and godly sorrow and grief of heart for sin, chiefly because God is offended, and Christ pierced thereby.

Q. *What is conversion?*

A. It is the soul's turning from all sin to God in Christ for mercy and pardon, and to all the ways of holiness and new obedience.

Q. *What need is there for the exercise of repentance and Godly sorrow at the Lord's table?*

A. Because here we are to renew covenant with God, and certainly penitent mourning for former breaches and backsliding is very suitable upon that occasion. Again, we are here to behold Christ bruised for our sin, and to receive him into our hearts; and nothing suits a broken Christ so well as a broken heart; nay, this is what he prefers to all sacrifices.

Q. *How may we know if our repentance be of the right sort?*

A. We may judge it right, 1st, If we do lay the axe to the root of sin, the corruptions of the heart and nature, and long to be delivered from it. 2dly, If we do hate all sin, and resolve to harbour no known evil, either in heart or life. 3dly, If we have recourse to Christ's blood and Spirit, for freedom from the filth as well as the guilt of sin, and breathe after universal holiness.

Examination of love.

Q. *WHY is the exercise of love so necessary at the Lord's table?*

A. Because it is a love-feast, an ordinance where we have the highest representation of divine love to sinners that ever was given; which necessarily requires the exercise of love in us.

Q. *What do you understand by the love which is required of communicants? and what are the objects upon which it must be placed?*

A. It is a saving grace or spiritual affection wrought in believers by the Holy Spirit, which terminates upon various objects, namely, upon God, upon *Jesus Christ*, upon the brethren, and every thing that bears his image, and in some sense upon all mankind; even our very enemies.

Q. *Why do you make God and Jesus Christ different objects of your love?*

A. I love Jesus Christ as he is God, and the same God with the other persons of the glorious Trinity: but seeing the se-

cond person is for us become God-man, our Mediator, and the great sacrifice to justice for our sins, in this respect I view him as a special object of my love.

Q. By what marks may you examine if your love to God be true?

A. By such as these: my care to please him, my fear to offend him, my desire after his presence, my regard to his laws, and concern for his glory.

Q. By what marks may you examine your love to Jesus Christ?

A. By the same before mentioned to which I may add, true love to Christ far exceeds all our love to relations and dearest worldly enjoyments: it terminates upon him in all his offices, as a *Prince* upon the throne, as well as a *Priest* upon the cross; in his life as a pattern, as well as in his death as a sacrifice, and embraceth him as altogether lovely: also, it prompts the soul to have many thoughts of him, and even to look and long for his second coming.

Q. How may we know if we love him above all things in the world?

A. By these marks: if we value his favour more than that of any creature; if the loss of his countenance affect us more than any worldly loss; if we rather displease all the world than offend him; and if it be our greatest grief that we cannot love more.

Q. By what marks are you to examine if your love to the brethren be true?

A. By such as these: If I love them, not for outward or temporal things, but upon spiritual accounts, because they are God's children, and bear his image; if my love be to all saints, poor and rich, hated and honoured, strangers and friends; if I sympathise with them both in their joys and sorrows, and prefer their company to all others.

Q. How doth your love to God's people differ from your love to the rest of mankind, and those who are your enemies?

A. I love the rest of mankind, and even my enemies, with a love of benevolence and beneficence, being inclined to wish them well, pray for them, do them good, and even return them good for evil; but I love the people of God with a love of delight and complacency, and esteem them as the excellent ones of the earth, the friends of God, and the pillars of the land.

Examination of Humility.

Q. WHY is the grace of humility so needful in your approach to the table of the Lord?

A. Because I am a most unworthy creature, and he is a great and holy God with whom I have to do, and he hath a

special respect unto the lowly : besides this grace is necessary to make me resemble my Saviour, whose love I commemorate ; for as he was meek and lowly in his disposition, so he humbled himself deeply for my good.

Q. How may you know if your humility be of the right stamp ?

A. By such marks as these : 1st, If I have low and mean thoughts of myself under a sense of unworthiness, and be ready to say with the Prodigal, *I am no more worthy to be called thy Son ;* and with the *Canaanitish* woman, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog.* 2dly, If I be more apt to suspect myself than to censure my neighbour, like the eleven disciples at the Supper. 3dly, If I be grieved for the motions of pride and self-conceit within me. 4thly, If I renounce all confidence in my duties, and betake myself entirely to Christ for righteousness and acceptance with God.

Examination of Thankfulness.

Q. WHY is thankfulness necessary to worthy partaking ?

A. Because it is the chief design of the ordinance to keep up a thankful remembrance of redeeming love, and to give thanks to God for the unspeakable gift of a crucified Christ : and hence it is called *Eucharist*, or thanksgiving.

Q. How may you discern if your thankfulness be of the right sort ?

A. By these marks : 1st, If I account myself unworthy of the least mercy, and admire God's undeserved goodness. 2dly, If I look upon Jesus Christ as the mercy of mercies, and the channel of all other mercies. 3dly, If I sincerely love my benefactor, and study to please him. 4thly, If I be oft meditating how to express my thankfulness to him, saying with the Psalmist, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his gifts and benefits towards me ?*

Q. But what can you, or should you, render for a crucified Jesus ?

A. Though all I have be nothing in comparison of the benefit received, yet I should be willing to render it to the Lord ; such as, 1st, My endeared affections. 2dly, My triumphant praises. 3dly, My unfeigned repentance and reformation. 4thly, My faithful performance of vows. 5thly, My zealous actings for his glories. 6thly, My cheerful resolution to suffer for Christ, who so willingly suffered for me.

Examination of Spiritual Appetite.

Q. WHY is a spiritual appetite so requisite at this time ?

A. Because a feast is not relished but by those who have an appetite for it ! and it is the hungry and the thirsty that God hath promised to satisfy with good things.

Q. How may you know if your appetite or spiritual desires be of the right sort?

A. By these marks: 1st. If I be glad of the news of Christ's feast, and an invitation to it. 2dly. If I count the cost, and be willing to be at all pains to obtain soul-food, such as to pray, to search, to humble myself, and part with my dearest sins. 3dly. If I be satisfied with no food for my soul, but a crucified Christ. 4thly. If I find this food very sweet and pleasant to my soul's taste.

Examination of Resolutions for New Obedience.

Q. WHY is a believer's obedience call'd new obedience.

A. 1. Because it proceeds from new principles, faith, and love. 2. It is performed in a new manner, to wit, by faith leaning upon Christ's strength for enabling him to do it, and upon Christ's righteousness for his acceptance with God. 3. It is done for new ends, not to advance his own secular interest, but to please God, and promote his glory.

Q. How may you know if your resolutions for new obedience be of the right stamp?

A. By these marks; 1st. If I count the cost, and be deliberate in making them. 2dly. If they be absolute, without any reserve for a beloved sin. 3dly. If I make them in a deep sense of my own insufficiency to keep them, and in a humble dependence upon Christ my surety for strength.

Concerning the Excitation of Graces.

Q. HOW shall you get all these graces before mentioned excited and brought to lively exercise, before you come to the table?

A. I must use all the means which God hath appointed for this end; such as reading and hearing the word, Christian conference, retired meditation, fervent prayer, and frequent ejaculations to God for the awakening influences of his Holy Spirit; and cry with the spouse, 'Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.'

Q. What ought you to do when spiritual deadness doth continue after using all the aforesaid means?

A. I must go a little further in humiliation and prayer, and meditate more closely upon the sufferings of Christ, and also act faith upon him, as my head of influences, for life and quickening to my dead graces, and resolve still to depend upon him for needful supplies of life according to his promise.

Q. How ought you to pray at this time so as to prevail?

A. I must pray with humility, faith, fervency, and impor-

tunity, as knowing how much is at stake, both with respect to the glory of God, and the salvation of my soul : I must plead the power, the mercy, and free promise of God, and merits of Jesus Christ his beloved Son.

Q. For what things ought you mainly to pray before this solemn approach ?

A. For these things: 1st. For the preparation of the heart, and chiefly for sanctifying grace, and a spiritual frame of soul. 2dly. For life and liveliness to all the sacramental graces, and for the assistance of the Spirit of God in all the parts of the work. 3dly. For the cure of all my soul distempers, and the pardon of all defects. 4thly. For much nearness and communion with God at his table. 5thly. For the Lord's gracious presence both with ministers and people through the whole solemnity.

Q. How ought you to be employed upon the Saturday evening and Sabbath morning before partaking ?

A. Besides the work of self-examination, and excitation of grace, I resolve to spend much of that precious time in direct covenanting with God on my knees, taking and accepting of him for my God in Christ, and of Christ the Mediator in all his offices, and in giving up myself, soul and body, to be the Lord's, to be disposed of by him in time and to eternity. Also, I will make it a particular piece of my preparation, to consider, beforehand, how will I act when I go to the Lord's table ; how my faith and love shall then be employed ; what objects I will think of, and what sins I will mourn over, that so I may not spend my short time there in confusion.

Concerning our employment when at the Lord's Table.

Q. WHAT is that suitable communion frame, and disposition, with which you would desire to go to the Lord's holy table ?

A. I would desire to go to it with a humble, believing, and affectionate frame of soul, having in it a mixture of holy mourning and rejoicing, which I look upon as a noble communion frame ; I mean, mourning for my sins that were the cause of Christ's sufferings, and rejoicing in Christ Jesus that came to satisfy justice for me.

Q. How are you to be employed when sitting at the table, and when beholding and making use of the elements there ?

A. 1st, I must take a view of the sufferings of Christ, both in soul and body, for me ; and particularly, I must remember the anguish of his soul, when he lay under the pressure of God's wrath for my sins. 2dly, I must take a view both of the mercy and justice of God, and of Christ's love, displayed

in these sufferings. 3dly, I must exert faith in embracing a crucified Jesus, and my faith is to be attended with the exercise of all the sacramental graces, repentance, love, thankfulness, &c. 4thly, I am to be suitably affected with the amazing sights set before me. 5thly, I am to make vows and prayers after the partaking, and before I rise from the table.

[See the short account of the duty of worthy partaking given before.]

Q. Seeing faith is the principal grace in communicating, how is it to be exercised and employed at this time?

A. Faith being the soul's eye to discern Christ, the soul's hand to receive him, and the soul's mouth to feed upon him, it is to be employed at this time in the most active manner, in looking to Christ lifted upon the cross for healing our soul's maladies, in embracing Christ as our great Surety and ransom, in fleeing into his wounds for shelter, in applying his blood for cleansing, and in pleading his blood with God for all we want.

Q. What are the amazing sights set before you at the Lord's table, which ought so much to affect you?

A. They are, 1st, The unspeakable evil of sin, and God's infinite displeasure against it. 2dly, The inexorableness of divine justice in demanding satisfaction for sin. 3dly, The infinite greatness of the love of God to lost sinners, in providing a Surety and sacrifice for them, and of Christ in becoming both. 4thly, The great worth and preciousness of immortal souls, and the costliness of pardon, and of eternal glory. 5thly, Christ dying, and yet, in the mean time, conquering principalities and powers, and triumphing over them upon the cross.

Q. What ought you to vow when at the Lord's table?

A. That in the strength of Christ my Surety, I will abstain from all known sin, and make conscience of every known duty: That I will mind religion, as the one thing needful, and make the pleasing of God the chief business of my life.

Q. For what things are you to offer your request at this time?

A. For grace to preserve my liveliness of frame, for strength to pay my vows, for wisdom and skill to improve a crucified Christ in my after life, for furniture for future trials, for victory over Satan's temptations and indwelling sin; for mercy to my near relations, to my mother-church, and for the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ through the world.

Q. In what frame ought you to rise and go from this holy table?

A. 1st, In an admiring and thankful frame, upon account of redeeming love. 2dly, In an humble and watchful frame, because of the snares and dangers I am still exposed to. 3dly, In a believing and depending frame, leaning on Christ, for conduct through the wilderness.

Concerning our behaviour after partaking.

Q. HOW are you to behave when the public work is over?

A. 1st, I will retire in secret, and solemnly on my knees re-act what I was doing at the Lord's table; I will renew my choice of God, as my God, and my acceptance of Christ in all his offices, and my engagement to be the Lord's: 2dly, I ought to pray for the continuance of a communion frame with me when the communion is over. 3dly, I must set about self-examination concerning my behaviour and success at the Lord's table.

Q. How may we keep up something of a lively frame when the communion is over?

A. In order thereto, we must, 1st, Be jealous of Satan, the world, and heart-lusts, that lie in wait to rob us of it. 2dly, Learn the art of living by faith, and of deriving life from Jesus Christ our head, for maintaining our life. 3dly, Still plead for the quickening influences of the Holy Spirit, which must, like the bellows, blow up the fire, and maintain it against all the cold blasts of the devil and the world. 4thly, Delight in the company of lively christians.

Q. How may we examine our behaviour at the Lord's table, and discover if it were suitable?

A. We may take comfort, if we can say, 1st, We had there very low and abasing thoughts of ourselves and our own righteousness. Or, 2dly, We had something of a heart-melting remembrance of Christ's death and sufferings, when the signs and memorials of them were represented to us. Or, 3dly, We are filled with abhorrence of sin that pierced him. Or, 4thly, We went in cheerfully with the terms of the covenant of grace.

Q. How may we examine our success, and know if we have got any good by this ordinance?

A. We may discern it by such effects as these; 1st, If we have got any further assurance of God's love; Or, 2dly, If we have higher esteem of Christ; Or, 3dly, If we have greater delight in duty; Or, 4thly, If we have a better relish of ordinances and their usefulness, so as to make us resolve to hang still on about God's hand.

Q. What should be our conversation after this solemn ordinance?

A. We should walk circumspectly, and carry suitably to the Lord's dealings and dispensations towards us, whether we had success at it or not.

Q. How ought they to carry, who have got no good by this ordinance?

A. 1st. They must search into the cause, if it were unbelief, sloth, self-conceit, or any sin reserved, and mourn over it. 2dly. They must flee to the blood of Christ for pardon and

cleansing. 3dly. They should look out for another communion occasion; and prepare for it more diligently and self-deniedly; and watch especially against that evil or defect in their management which conscience suggests was the cause of their bad success of the former.

Q. How should they carry, who have got good at the sacrament?

A. 1st. They should be thankful to the author, and like the children of Zion, be joyful in their King. 2dly, Record what they have got, that it may be of use to them in a day of clouds. 3dly. Study to preserve it by committing it to God, and walking humbly and tenderly before him. 4thly. Pity and pray for others under discouragement, and be ready to communicate their experiences to them for their support. 5thly. Study to recommend Christ and religion to strangers, by a holy and shining conversation before all men.

Q. What is that holy becoming conversation which communicants should study?

A. It is a conversation ordered aright and suitable to the rule of God's word, to the principles they profess, the sights they have seen, the benefits they have received, and the vows they have made.

Q. What is it that makes our conversation to shine before the world?

A. When we have it adorned with humility, purity, justice, charity, meekness, patience, resignation to God's will, and contentment in every condition.

Q. Are not the best of God's people in danger of mis-carrying after such a solemn ordinance?

A. Yes; as appears from the instance of *Peter* and the rest of the disciples, after the first communion.

Q. Whence is it that we are in such hazards?

A. It proceeds from such things as: 1st. From the natural inconstancy of our hearts. 2dly. From that security and self-confidence we are prone to, after favour received from God. 3dly. From the malice and activity of *Satan*, who seeks by all means to ensnare us into sin after the sacrament, that he may thereby exceedingly widen the breach betwixt God and us.

Q. How shall we prevent backsliding and yielding to Satan's temptations after the sacrament?

A. 1st. We must labour to preserve a warm sense of the love of Christ in our souls. 2dly. Maintain an everlasting jealousy over our treacherous hearts, and never trust them at any time. 3dly. Keep Christ our ascended forerunner full in our eye, and beware of losing sight or thought of him. 4thly. We must commit our souls, by humble and believing prayer into the hands of God's power and mercy, as the child doth itself into the nurse's arms.

QUESTIONS

FOR SELF-EXAMINATION,

Proper for Young Communicants in examining the state and condition of their souls in secret, before they approach unto the Lord's Table; the which if they can answer in the affirmative, or some few of them, they have ground to hope they are in a gracious state, and have a right before God to this sealing ordinance.

Quest. 1. CAN I say, that I am deeply affected about my soul, and my eternal state, so that my great and leading questions are, What must I do to be saved? What shall I do to be born again? What shall I do for the Holy Spirit to come and work a saving change on me, and make me a new creature?

Q. 2. Have I been spiritually enlightened to see the depravation of my nature, and the sinfulness of my heart and life, so as to be convinced that I am all as an unclean thing before God?

Q. 3. Have I been made to see sin as the greatest evil, and feel it as the greatest burden in the world, so as to account deliverance from it the greatest happiness?

Q. 4. Is my spirit very lowly and humble before God? Am I truly low and vile in mine own eyes, under a deep sense of my unworthiness and ill deservings, so as to cry with the Centurion, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; and, with the publican, God be merciful to me a sinner?

Q. 5. Have I seen my absolute need of Jesus Christ to save me from sin and wrath, to restore the lost image of God, and to give me grace and glory, so that I am truly willing to part with all things for Christ?

Q. 6. Have I been made heartily to approve of the gospel method of salvation through the satisfaction of Christ? And is my soul well pleased with the self-abasing and grace-exalting way of saving sinners by the righteousness of another?

Q. 7. Have I made choice of God in Christ the Mediator, as my God and portion? And can I say, that which moved me to this choice was a sight of the vanity of seeking a rest for my soul among the creatures, and that its happiness lies in the enjoyment of God, which is only to be had through Christ?

Q. 8. Have I an high opinion of Jesus Christ the Mediator? Is he very precious to my soul? Have I seen a matchless beauty in his person, in his offices and fulness, and that the fulness

of the Godhead is in him, and all freely exhibited for the use of those that come to him ?

Q. 9. Have I been helped to close with God's offer unto me in the gospel, and to accept of this well qualified Surety and Saviour in his fulness, and in his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, and to embrace him as altogether lovely ?

Q. 10. Have I been determined to resign and surrender myself unto the Lord, to be taught, ruled, and saved by him ? And have I given up all I have, to be disposed of by him at his pleasure ? Or, am I willing presently to do so ?

Q. 11. Am I willing to renounce my own righteousness in justification, and my own strength in sanctification, and to look to Christ as my Surety and head for both, saying, in the Lord Jesus only have I righteousness and strength ?

Q. 12. Is Jesus Christ welcome to my soul as a King, as well as a Priest, so that I am as willing to be governed by his laws, as to be justified by his righteousness ?

Q. 13. Have I got new discoveries of spiritual and heavenly things, which I had not before ? Do I see a reality in a future life and glory, an awfulness in eternity, an emptiness in this world, a worth in my soul, an evil in sin, and a beauty in Christ and holiness, which I saw not before ?

Q. 14. Do I seek more earnestly after the favour of God through Christ, than after any earthly comfort or enjoyment whatsoever ?

Q. 15. Do I study the things which please God and make for his glory ? And do I prefer his interest above the interest of the world, or of the flesh ?

Q. 16. Is indwelling sin, and the corruption and plagues of my heart, my daily grief and burden ? Do I struggle and strive against them, and long for a deliverance, crying with the apostle, O ! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death ?

Q. 17. Can I say that I have respect to all God's commandments ; and conscientiously practise whatever I discover to be my duty ? that I dare neither omit duty when I know it, nor dare I venture upon any sin against my light ?

Q. 18. Can I say, as I dare not omit duty, as little dare I rest upon it ? that I see my prayers have need of pardon, and my tears need to be washed in Christ's blood ; and therefore I can find no rest to the sole of my foot, but in my Cautioner's perfect righteousness ?

Q. 19. Can I say, I am truly grieved in heart for sin that pierced Christ, and am ready to put a bill of divorce into the hand of every lust, yea, the most beloved idol, resolving never to give harbour to any of these traitors or enemies of my Lord ?

Q. 20. Can I say that I love Christ with my heart, and that I can appeal to himself for the truth and reality of it, though it be but weak ? and that it is my great grief that I cannot love him more ?

Q. 21. Can I say, that I breathe after greater conformity to God both in heart and in life, and that I desire heart-holiness more than any temporal thing whatsoever? and that I cry out with the Psalmist, O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes?

Q. 22. Can I say, that I am truly desirous of converse and fellowship with God in the duties of religion? and that I look upon that prayer, that sermon, that Sabbath, as lost, where I find nothing of his gracious presence?

Now, let young communicants retire in secret for putting these questions to their souls, as in the presence of God, and let them wait till conscience give answer to them: but see that they do this, when they are in the best frame?

A PROPOSAL

FOR YOUNG COMMUNICANTS,

Their express renewing the Baptismal Engagements, before their first admission to the Lord's Table: which practice might be much for edification; especially if duly managed, and done with some solemnity before witnesses, such as ministers, elders, and other young persons.

Ques. *WHAT* moves you to seek access to the Lord's Table?

Ans. The Lord's command, and because I desire to renew my baptismal engagements, and declare myself a Christian by my own free choice and consent, and would join myself unto the Lord by my own voluntary act and deed.

Q. *Why* do you desire to do so?

A. Because, when I got the first seal of the covenant, to wit, baptism, I knew not what was done for me, nor was I capable to consent to my parents' deed: but now, when I am come to some knowledge and capacity, I am willing to declare that I make religion my free choice and reasonable service.

Q. *Why* do you come so early? will it not be soon enough to mind religion in old age?

A. No: for besides that I may die young, those who neglect religion, and give up themselves to the world or the flesh in their youth, do fall into hardness of heart, from which few recover.

Q. *What* is the most proper season to seek acquaintance with Christ and religion?

A. The time of youth, because in this age the heart is more

easily melted, and the habits of vice are not so rivited, as afterwards; and because God has a special delight in early piety.

Q. What views then have you got of your natural state and condition?

A. I do see it to be a most sinful, wretched and helpless case; I am condemned to perish under a load of guilt and wrath, having broke the covenant of works, which I cannot fulfil, offended the justice of God, which I cannot satisfy, and lost the image of God, and my precious soul, which I cannot recover. O what shall I do to be saved?

Q. To whom do you look for relief?

A. Only to Jesus Christ, who hath in his free love to lost sinners, undertaken as Surety and Mediator in the new covenant, which is exhibited and sealed to believers at the Lord's table.

Q. What views have you got of that covenant which is there sealed?

A. I see the way of salvation laid down in it through the suretyship and righteousness of Jesus Christ, to be an excellent contrivance, well ordered in all things and sure, I look upon it as a device every way worthy of God, and of infinite wisdom, and I do heartily approve of it, consent to it, and desire to come and venture my soul and eternal salvation upon it.

Q. What think you of the love of God, that was the spring of this new covenant?

A. I view it as wonderful and amazing; I admire the love of the Father, in contriving and sending his beloved Son to execute it: I admire the love of the Son of God, in undertaking to be a surety and sacrifice for lost sinners, of Adam's race, when the sinning angel's were past by and left to perish for ever: and I admire the love of the Holy Ghost, in undertaking to apply that redemption to lost elect sinners, by working in them conviction, conversion, and faith in Jesus Christ.

Q. With what frame and disposition do you come to renew your baptismal covenant?

A. I desire to be sensible of my guilt in breaking this covenant, in running away from Christ's colours, in going over to Satan's camp, and in standing so long out against Christ's calls and offers; and I desire now to return to the Lord as a penitent prodigal, and a mourning backslider, with my face Zionward, weeping as I go, willing to renew my baptismal vows with others, saying, Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant, never to be forgotten. And, in a word, I desire to go to a broken Christ with a broken heart.

Q. What is that baptismal vow or covenant which you design to renew?

A. According to my engagement and dedication in bap-

tism, I desire expressly to own and acknowledge the only living and true God as my God in Christ, as he offers himself in the covenant of grace: and to give up myself soul and body to him, to be for him, and not for another. And I design in the most solemn manner, to go and renounce all the enemies of the Holy Trinity, to wit, the devil, the world, and the flesh: and to declare my acceptance of God the Father as my father, of God the Son as my redeemer, and of God the Holy Ghost as my sanctifier: in whose blessed name I was baptized, and to whose service and glory I was dedicated.

Q. What do you think of Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the covenant?

A. I think him a matchless Person, and an excellent and all-sufficient Saviour; and I am content to accept of him in all his offices, namely, as a Prophet to instruct and teach me, as a Priest to atone and intercede for me, and as a King to rule in me and over me.

Q. What do you think of your own righteousness and strength with respect to your salvation?

A. I look upon my own righteousness and strength as insufficient to answer the demands of God's law, and therefore I renounce them, and flee to a Surety for both, saying, in the Lord Jesus Christ only have I righteousness and strength: And I am content, and resolved to make use of borrowed strength for my performing of duty, and of a borrowed righteousness for my acceptance in duty.

Q. How do you like this self-denying way of saving lost souls?

A. I am well pleased with it, as it makes me an eternal debtor to free grace, as it doth exclude all boasting and glorying in the creature, and ascribes all the glory of my salvation to Christ only: as it takes the crown off the head of self, and puts it upon the head of glorious Christ.

Q. How do you relish the kingly office of Jesus Christ?

A. I am well pleased therewith, and content to take Christ as a King to govern me by his laws, as well as a Priest to save me by his blood: nay, I am desirous he may come in as a King, and execute his Kingly office in my soul; that he may set up his throne in my heart, subdue indwelling sin, and conquer all my rebellious lusts and corruption.

Q. What view have you of the Holy Ghost, the third person of the Trinity, and of his office in the business of saving souls?

A. I look upon him as the blessed applier of Christ's purchase unto me, and do accept of him as such; and I am willing to give up myself to him, to convince, enlighten, renew, sanctify, and guide me; and I believe he is as willing and ready to make the application as Christ was to make the purchase; and therefore I desire to trust him for this blessed effect.

Q. What think you of the things of this world as a portion to the soul ?

A. I look upon all its profits, honours, and pleasures, to be insufficient to suit the soul's desires, and that they are nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit; and therefore I will never set my heart upon the world as my portion: it is only the enjoyment of God reconciled in Christ, that can afford complete satisfaction to my soul; and this only I choose for my happiness and portion.

Q. What do you think of the world to come ?

A. I look upon it, and the things thereof, as awful, certain, and very near. I look upon hell as the eternal habitation of unbelievers; but I view heaven as the country and dwelling-place of the followers of the Lamb, with whom I desire to join to seek that country, and dwell with them for ever.

Q. What do you think of a holy and religious life ?

A. I think a religious life, or a life spent in the service of God, and in communion with him, the most pleasant and comfortable life that a man can live in the world.

Q. How do you think to attain to holiness for living this life ?

A. I look upon Jesus Christ as the Purchaser of holiness as well as of happiness; as he who by his death hath obtained the Holy Spirit to effectuate the new birth, and form the image of God in his people: and therefore I desire to come to Christ and his blood for sanctification, as well as for justification; for conformity and likeness to God, as well as for access to fellowship and communion with God; and I will plead, that he may send his Holy Spirit into my soul, for producing holiness, and all the graces of the Spirit.

Q. What view have you got of the promises of the covenant, and their usefulness ?

A. I look upon them as the ground of all my faith and hope, and I desire to make daily use of them, and to plead them with God for furniture and strength to perform every duty, and for perseverance and through-bearing in all the steps of my pilgrimage, and I resolve to have recourse to him in every strait and difficulty.

Q. As you profess willingness to accept of God in Christ as your God, are you not also willing to dedicate yourself to him for his use and service ?

A. Yes, I am willing (I hope through grace) to give up and surrender unto the Lord myself, and all that belongs unto me, my soul and body, with all their powers, faculties, senses, members, and enjoyments, to be instruments of his glory, and to be disposed of by him for his use and service at his pleasure.

Q. How do you instruct your willingness to give up and surrender the powers and faculties of your soul unto the Lord ?

A. I think I am willing to dedicate and give up my understanding to the Lord, to contemplate his perfections, and know his will; my memory to him, to retain and treasure up his gracious promises and counsels; my will to him, to choose and refuse every thing according to his will, and to comply therewith in all things; and my conscience to him, to be his deputy, to accuse and excuse according to his direction.

Q. *Do you also resign and give up the passions and affections of your soul unto the Lord?*

A. Yes, I give up and dedicate my passion of grief to the Lord, to mourn for every thing that is offensive to him; my hatred, to abhor every thing that is hateful to him; my desires, to long for his presence; my love, to embrace and entertain him; my delight and joy, to solace myself, and to acquiesce cheerfully in him, as my soul's portion and happiness.

Q. *In what respects do you resign your bodily senses and members to the Lord?*

A. I give up my eyes, to read his word, and behold his wondrous works; my ears, to hear his word, and attend to his counsels; my taste, smell, and feeling, to discern and relish his sweetness and excellency in the creatures; my tongue, to proclaim his praise, and commend his ways and service; my hands, to help his people; and my feet to walk in paths pleasing to him.

Q. *How do you resign your enjoyments and comforts to the Lord?*

A. I resign my time, my health, my talents, my opportunities, my relations, my gifts, my interest, my power, my wisdom, my substance, my honour, my reputation, and all I have in the world, unto the Lord, to be employed and disposed of by him for his glory, as he thinks proper.

Q. *What view have you now of sin, and of those sins you once esteemed as your right hand and right eye?*

A. I see and abhor them as the enemies and crucifiers of my Lord Jesus, and as the very nails and spear that pierced him, and desire to throw them out of my heart, and to cut off every right hand and pluck out every right eye, and to renounce all ungodliness and all beloved lusts, and count no sin too dear to part with for Jesus Christ my Lord.

Q. *What do you think now of companions in sin and their solicitations?*

A. I am convinced of their folly, and resolve never to follow the multitude to do evil, nor to join them in any of the common sins of the age, and steadfastly (through grace) to avoid the snares, and resist the temptations of evil company; saying, with the Psalmist, depart from me, ye evil-doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God.

Q. *What thoughts have you of the people of God, and those who bear his image?*

A. I look upon them as God's precious jewels, the excellent ones of the earth, and the most desirable company in the world.

Q. *But what do you think of them when you see them few and despised?*

A. I resolve, through grace, to join Christ's little flock, his praying, and sin-hating flock, though they be few in number: I desire to love them above all others, and to accept of them as my fellow-travellers to the heavenly Zion, and that notwithstanding of their being despised or reproached by the world.

Q. *But what do you think of the cross, and of sharp persecution, that sometimes attend the owning of Christ?*

A. I desire to take Christ with his cross, as well as with his crown: and to welcome the world's hatred, reproaches, injuries, or any kind of trouble or persecution I may meet with for owning Christ, his truth and ways.

Q. *What think you of the holy scriptures?*

A. I believe they are indited by God's Holy Spirit, I value them above all books, I accept of them thankfully as a guide through the wilderness, a light to my feet, and a lamp to my paths, and a treasure of comforts and cordials suitable for me in all cases and difficulties, which I desire always to search into and study to be acquainted with.

Q. *What do you think of the Lord's day?*

A. I regard it as holy and honourable, and as a standing testimony of the perfection of Christ's sacrifice; I look upon it as the best day of the week, as being Christ's weekly market-day for needy souls, which I resolve to improve carefully for getting provision for my soul through the rest of the week.

Q. *What do you think of gospel ordinances?*

A. I look upon the word, sacraments, prayer and praise, to be God's institutions, and means of conveying grace to souls. I thankfully accept of them, as needful helps in the way to heaven, and as meeting-places betwixt God and my soul: and desire to make it my main errand in attending them to meet with him therein.

Q. *What do you think of the Lord's supper that you have in view?*

A. I look upon it as Christ's banqueting house and spiritual feast, which in his love he hath provided for refreshing and strengthening his people's souls, while travelling through this wilderness. I desire to bless God for it, and to accept of it as a rare privilege, a quickener of grace, a memorial of redeeming love, and a pledge of Christ's second coming.

Q. *What do you think of the duty of prayer?*

A. I look upon it not only as my great duty, but also as an honourable privilege, seeing hereby I have access to con-

verse with God ; and therefore I resolve through grace to live a life of prayer and acquaintance with God in and through Christ all my days, and that I will always go to God and consult with him in all cases and difficulties.

Q. What do you think of the rest of the duties of christianity, and of those which the moral law enjoins ?

A. I look upon the law, (which Christ hath adopted into the covenant of grace, as a rule of life to his people.) to be holy, just, and good ; and the duties enjoined by it to be most reasonable, calculated for the glory of God and his people's good. The gospel, which is the doctrine of grace, doth strongly enforce this law, by teaching us sobriety with respect to ourselves, righteousness with respect to our neighbour, and godliness with respect to God. And the love of Christ doth mightily constrain us to the diligent performance of all these moral duties.

Q. What do you think of the rods and afflictions which attend the children of God ?

A. I believe they are fatherly chastisements for our good, and that they are wisely and seasonably ordered by him who hedges up his people's ways with thorns, that they may not find their crooked paths, and therefore, I desire to submit to the rod, as the needful discipline of Christ's house, and to welcome his convictions and reproofs, as well as his comforts and smiles ; and to bless him for afflictions as well as for mercies.

Q. What do you think of the life of faith ?

A. I believe it to be the most happy life, and that it ought to be the daily life of God's people while in this world. And I desire to study and learn this noble life of faith, and of dependence upon the Son of God, and to make daily use of his blood and righteousness to cover my guilt, and of his grace and strength to enable me to perform duty, conquer sin, resist temptation, and bear affliction.

Q. What do you think of the spiritual warfare which Christ calls you to ?

A. I look upon that war as just and honourable ; and therefore do come in a volunteer at the sound of the gospel-trumpet, to list myself a soldier under Christ's banner ; I do for ever abandon the devil's camp, and am willing to swear allegiance to Christ Jesus, to take up arms for him, and to fight against his enemies, the world, the devil, and the flesh, all the days of my life. I resolve never to make peace with these enemies, nor agree to a cessation of arms. I will never wittingly nor willingly reset, nor give harbour to these bosom traitors, indwelling lusts and corruptions ; but under the conduct of my glorious Captain, and in his strength, I will carry on the war, till I attain to that complete victory which is promised to all believers in Christ.

Q. What do you think of those who are deserters and runaways from Christ's standard?

A. I look upon them as guilty of the greatest madness, and exposed to the greatest wrath, seeing Christ's soul can take no pleasure in those who draw back from him; and therefore I propose, through grace to keep close by my Captain, and to adhere to his cause and interest all the days of my life.

Q. In whose strength is it, that you engage to all these parts and articles of the covenant?

A. Only in the strength of Jesus Christ my head and Surety, who hath undertaken for me, and promised to make his grace forth-coming for me. Wherefore I altogether distrust my own strength and resolution, and betake myself to borrowed strength. I resolve never to trust in my promise to Christ, but in Christ's promise to me, that he will never leave me, nor forsake me.

Q. Will you satisfy yourself with a public profession and engaging to these things before men?

A. No: I will through grace profess and declare all these things also in secret before God. And I will give consent to all the parts and articles of God's covenant of grace in the most serious and self-denied manner: and I will, by grace, bind and engage myself to them, by entering into secret transaction, or personal covenant with God through Christ, before I come to take the seal of God's covenant. And afterwards I will adventure, in his strength, to approach to his holy table, to ratify and seal this bargain, before men and angels.

An Example of a young Communicant's secret transacting and Covenanting with God, before his approach to the LORD'S Table.

ALMIGHTY GOD, and Creator of all things, Thou didst make man at first upright and happy : but by the fall he is become most sinful and miserable. I acknowledge, that by nature I am an enemy to thee, a child of wrath, and a slave to sin and Satan. I have been a transgressor of thy laws from the womb ; and it is a wonder of thy patience that thou hast not made me a monument of thy wrath in hell, long before this time. Oh ! What will become of me to all eternity, if I abide in this state ?

I have heard there is mercy in God to lost sinners through the blood of a crucified Jesus, which revives my drooping soul. O can this mercy reach the like of me ! But surely the viler sinner I am, thou hast the fairer opportunity of showing the freeness of thy love and the efficacy of thy Son's blood, and if I be a sharer of it, eternal hallelujahs will be sung to the Lamb of God on my account. I do therefore come and cast myself down at the feet of infinite mercy, and plead for it according to thy promise through Jesus Christ thy dear Son.

O FATHER of Mercies, and Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, I am now sensible of my sin and folly, in rebelling against thee, and going over to Satan's camp : I desire to return as a penitent prodigal to my heavenly Father, confessing my guilt; and willing to join myself unto the Lord in an everlasting covenant, never to be forgotten. O Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy child : but happy would I think myself, if I were admitted to the meanest station or room in thy family. I desire to magnify thy free love and infinite wisdom in contriving a way of salvation to lost sinners through a Mediator, and in sending thy eternally beloved Son to be the Mediator and Surety for satisfying thy justice for them, and for purchasing grace and glory to them. According to thy command, I desire to put honour upon thy Son, and heartily to approve of this device of salvation, as every way worthy of God, and to fall in with it in all respects. O pity thy own creature, the workmanship of thy hands : go over thy work again, and upon Christ's account, create me anew after thine own image, that I may be fitted for thy service and glory.

O BLESSED Jesus, I admire thy love in undertaking to be the surety and sacrifice for lost sinners, and in making offer of thy blood to wash the like of me : Welcome Lord Jesus ! I do here disclaim all other ways of salvation, and betake myself to thee as my only Mediator and Saviour, to be saved, taught, and ruled by thee ; I accept of thee as my

great High Priest, to atone for my soul and plead my cause with the Father, by thy meritorious death and powerful intercession: I renounce all my own righteousness and worthiness in the business of justification and acceptance with God, and avouch thee alone as the Lord my righteousness. I accept of thee, as my great Prophet, and give up myself to thy teaching and instruction, that I may be conducted by thee through this wilderness, and brought safe to heaven at last: O for wisdom to follow thy directions! I do accept of thee as my King, swear allegiance to thee, and heartily consent to thy laws and government. Let thy throne be set up in my soul, and all thy enemies there made thy footstool: I accept of thee for my Husband, and consent to the marriage-covenant in all its articles: I accept of thee as my Captain, and list myself as a soldier under thy banner, to fight in thy strength, against all thine enemies: I go in with all thy gospel-terms, and am well pleased with the self-denying way of salvation proposed therein. I am content to be an eternal debtor to free-grace, and that the glory of my salvation be for ever ascribed to Jesus Christ my surety.

O HOLY SPIRIT, I thankfully accept of thee as the Applier of my Redeemer's purchase, and do welcome thee to do thine office in my soul, to work faith in me to believe the gospel, to bring about the change of the new birth, and to renew all my faculties. To thee I am beholden for all the good motions and inclinations excited in them. O let them be continued, and the good work carried forward in me to perfection. I do choose thee for my quickener, sanctifier, and my director through all my pilgrimage: I yield myself to thy influences and conduct, and desire carefully to attend all thy motions and convictions, both in performing my duty, and in abstaining from sin: O work grace in me for that effect, and enable me always to study and choose the things that are pleasing to thee.

According to my baptismal vows, I do here renounce and abandon all the enemies of the holy Trinity, the devil, the world and the flesh; and I do here surrender myself unto thee, FATHER, SON and SPIRIT, One God, to be thine, and only thine; thine, and not the devil's, thine and not the world's, thine and not my lust's, thine and not my own; I desire with my whole heart to choose and avouch thee to be my God and everlasting portion, and also to devote and dedicate my soul and body, and all that belongs to me, to be instruments of thy glory, and to be disposed of for thy use and service. O do thou henceforth set thy mark upon me, as a child born to thee, and formed by thy praise; stamp me with thy image, that I may be distinguished, set apart, and consecrated for thy service and glory all my days.

And seeing, above, thou requirest the heart, I do here make an offer and surrender of my heart to thee. Lord,

take it, and form it for thyself, make it entirely new, make it soft, tender, pliable and holy; put thy fear in it, and write thy laws on it, that I may serve thee continually, and never depart from thee. Lord, I here give my consent to thy entering in, and taking possession of the throne in my soul; be therefore cast open, all ye doors of my soul, that the King of glory may enter in and dwell for ever. I have found my heart very corrupt, wicked and deceitful, and will no longer pretend to manage it; but give it up to thee, to bring every thought and inclination in subjection to thee.

I see the world is nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit; I will never any more set my heart upon it, but endeavour to conquer it and subdue my inclinations to it: I place my happiness only in the enjoyment of God. I view heaven as my country and dwelling-place, and I will henceforth set my face heavenward, and spend my life here in God's service and in communion with him, that I may be meet for the heavenly state.

I will always look upon sin as the enemy of God, and the crucifier of Jesus Christ my Saviour, and will pursue it to death: I will never follow a multitude to do evil, but will join myself to the people of God, though they be despised or persecuted: I take Christ with his cross, as well as with his crown, and I cheerfully submit to the rod and discipline of his house. Lord, if thou wilt undertake that thy grace shall be sufficient for me, I shall think nothing too difficult to attempt, or too much to suffer for thee. I desire to learn the life of faith and prayer; O teach me it, that I may make daily use of Christ my surety, both for justification and sanctification, for strength to perform duty, bear the cross, and resist temptation. I look unto thee to send forth the Spirit into my soul, to assist and strengthen me for every good word and work. Heavenly Father, I take thee for my Father, I take Christ for my life, I take the Spirit for my guide, I take thy word for my rule, thy promises for my encouragement, thy testimonies for my counsellors, thy Sabbath for my delight, thy ordinances for my meeting-place, thy people for my companions, thy glory for my end, holiness for my way, and Heaven for my home.

Lord, I have no might or strength to keep or perform any thing I have engaged, but undertake all in my Surety's strength, depending upon his promise, that he will never leave nor forsake me. In the Lord Jesus only have I righteousness and strength; O Lord, be Surety for thy servant for good; give always what thou requirest, and then demand what thou pleasest.

And as an evidence of my sincerity in this solemn profession, dedication, and engagement, I am willing to subscribe with my hand unto the Lord, as I am warranted. Isa. xlv. 5.

Now I am thine, Lord save me.

POSTSCRIPT.

AS for those who may incline for a different form, and one that may be more suitable to their case, let them, for their help in drawing it up, bear in mind these four branches of a covenant-transaction with God, renunciation, acceptance, dedication, and engagement, and they may enlarge and be particular upon them, or any of them, as it may best suit the condition of their souls.

Under the head of renunciation, we may enlarge upon our abandoning and forsaking the world and its allurements of profit, pleasure, honour and power; Satan and all his tempting baits; the flesh and all its lusts, our beloved idols, our inward and outward sins, and our own righteousness in point of justification, &c.

Under the head of acceptance, we may insist upon our choosing and closing with God the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost; Christ as a Prophet, a Priest, a King, a Husband, a Surety, a Shepherd, a Captain; God's covenant; his promises, his word, his precepts, his sabbaths, his ordinances, his people, his providence, his rod, his cross, &c.

Under the head of dedication, we may expatiate upon our resigning and giving up to God our souls, with all their faculties, understanding, will, memory, conscience; and their affections, love, hatred, joy, sorrow, hope, fear; our bodies, with all their senses and members, heads, tongues, even our ears, hands, feet; our enjoyments, and all the good things we possess, such as our health, strength, gifts, interest, wisdom, power, reputation, substance, relations, time, opportunities, &c.

Under the head of engagement, we may run out in resolving, promising, and vowing, in Christ's strength, to cease to do evil, and learn to do well: to avoid all outward sins, and those which have most easily beset us, whether lying, swearing, intemperance, unjust dealing, sabbath-breaking, &c. to subdue all inward lusts, as pride, passion, covetousness, unbelief, &c. to perform all commanded duties, both inward and outward, as keeping of the heart, believing, repenting, meditating, examining ourselves, reading, hearing, praying, family-worship, sabbath-sanctification, &c. of prayer and thankfulness, the life of communion with God, the life of new-obedience, &c.

FINIS.









