

XIV

A

SERMON

ON THE

SHEPHERD FEEDING HIS FLOCK,

AND

AN ANSWER TO

A QUERE ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BY J. YOUMANS.

CHARLESTON:
PRINTED BY J. S. BURGESS,
No. 85 East Bay.
1838.

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ON THE TREE OF LIFE.

THE SHEPHERD FEEDING HIS FLOCK!

Rev. 7th chap. first part of the 17th verse:—“*For the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them.*”

ST. JOHN in writing the Revelations of God through his son Jesus Christ to the churches, and to his ministering servants, to preach the Gospel of God the Father, in Jesus Christ his only beloved Son, to perishing sinners the way of life and salvation. Jesus the Saviour is preached to us, under various names and titles. 1. He is called the Lord God. 2. Angel of the Covenant. 3. The Messenger of peace. 4. The High Priest over the household of God. 5. The shepherd of the sheep, who for the salvation and safety of the sheep given him by the Father lays down his own life for their redemption. John in this verse calls him the Lamb, to be sacrificed for the rest of the sheep; they being given him by the Father, and now bought with his life and blood. Besides giving his life for their life, his soul for their soul, and offering his body of human nature upon the Godhead the Altar, the altar sanctifying the gift; he made, and obtained eternal redemption for them. Heb. 9: 12, “Jesus is viewed the Tree of life, whose shadow is delightful and the fruit sweet.” Song 2: 3, “to keep off the heat of the sun, (read context.)

This tree was in the midst of the garden of Eden, and was the support of the life of our earthly parents while innocent, but no support of them in that happy place, after acts of disobedience which is sin. They being disobedient to God their Creator, that life of the soul withdraws from them, and the soul became dead in trespasses and sin. Eph 2: 1. And man and woman driven out of the garden, from the tree of life; under the sentence of death. (Now, the dispute between the Arminian and the Predestinarian, is on this question: did Adam get back to the tree of life or not? The Arminian says, that Adam was restored back to that tree: and all his children restored with him. The Predestinarian say, not so. But Christ the tree of life came to him in the cool of the day, and favoured him by putting on him a coat of skin the emblem of a robe of righteousness, in which Adam was restored to favour, but not his children. For his children issuing from his corrupted nature are born in the condemned state. Psal. 51: 5, 6, And each one of his posterity are born naked, and must be cloathed with the same coat, or the imputed righteousness, or perish.) Now for this to stand fast and remain sure to all the sheep, this tree of life and Lamb became man born of a virgin woman to be as we are, sin only excepted; that is, God man, God manifested in the flesh, God with us. To make an atoning sacrifice, offered himself a ransom for the sheep.

And obtained the lost life, and immortality, never more to die. Death hath no more dominion over him. Rom. 6: 9. And Jesus says to his chosen disciples, because I live, you shall live also. John 14: 19. And in this Jesus the shepherd is treasured all the living food of Heaven;

for him to feed all his redeemed sheep of his pasture. Now observe the text, the counsel of heaven. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, for the Redeemer in the midst of the throne, not now in the midst of the garden, but in a much better and surer place, shall feed them, the redeemed. In the midst of the throne as near one as the other. To cheerfully hand food to the needy, hungry souls the bread of life, and he that eateth thereof shall never die. John 6 : 58. And the Father hath given them to his Son. John 17 : 2. And highly exalted the Son to the right hand of majesty and glory. And the Father hath given into the care of the Son the whole church, and made him head over all things unto it. Eph. 1 : 22. To take care of it, to feed the flock of God. Acts 20 : 28. With the food of eternal life and joy. Therefore the needy, hungry, starving souls come to him, by the moving and drawing of his Spirit of God. John 6th : 44. For life and salvation of their souls. This Jesus is the Shepherd of the sheep and is the only one appointed to feed them, and doth know what is good for them to eat and live.

Therefore he giveth them the fruit of knowledge, to know their misery by sinning, and their happy state in grace, by being delivered from sin, and unto the smiles of God towards them through the Son. Then he giveth them the fruit of wisdom to discern good from evil, and right from wrong: and to know how to refuse the wrong and choose the good, and also to choose the good and refuse the evil. This being handed them by the goodness of God, makes them sorry for sinning against him, and this godly sorrow in their hearts for their error, he giveth them the fruit of repentance, a repentance unto life, and not to be repented of. This brings them to bow to his sceptre. Then he giveth them the fruit of temperance, to do nothing rashly, but to go on smoothly. Then he feedeth them with the fruit of understanding which the Shepherd giveth them to understand what the will of the Lord is, and causeth a desire to do the will of the Lord in all cases. The sheep then are fed with discretion to act fairly, honestly, and cautiously in mind and body. They then are fed with the fruit of piety; this leads them to their duty to God and parents as become the children of each. Then they are fed with an apple of faith that enables them to believe their duties are acceptable to God through the chosen shepherd, who was appointed of the Father for the purpose.

Then being fed with the fruit of humility, cheerfully bowing to his sovereign will, being entirely dependant upon him. And for their strength and activity, he fed them with the blessed fruit charity, which we interpret love, love to God, true godliness, and man, the great evidence of Christianity. And for their happy approach to him at all times, he giveth them an apple of prayer. This spirit of prayer holdeth a communion with God in love, with the Son in grace, and with the Holy Ghost in strong consolation, conversing in prayer as children do with their father or mother. In this use of means, he feedeth them heartily on the fruit hope. And we are saved from despair by hope, in the promise made to us, or them, "fear not, I never will leave thee, nor forsake thee."—Heb. 13 : 5. The Shepherd then feedeth them with his precious and soul reviving fruit of grace. The spirit of grace, his free favour towards his sheep, ready to forgive them all faults, and bear

with them in all their follies. And pities and comforts them in all their sorrows; brings them to delight in his laws, and to possess a regard for others. Then the Shepherd feeds them with benevolence, by this fruit they are brought to believe the regard the Lord Jesus Christ had for their souls, and make them regard others, and pray for their safety from ruin. They then being fed with prudence; to take care of what is given them by the shepherd and bishop of their souls; to make the best improvement thereof as they can, and set the best examples they can before others. Not only to show their love to the Shepherd, but to encourage others to the same. In this practice he giveth the noble apple of patience. This fruit he giveth freely and bountifully, that they being dependants, they may patiently wait the Lord's pleasure in blessing their good fruit, or works as the production of the fruit given them by the lovely Shepherd. The Shepherd then feedeth bountifully with the fruit of past and present experience of his grace; they put all confidence in their Shepherd, that he will keep all put into his care until that day. 2 Tim'y. 1: 12. They then are fed with the assurance of salvation; as he is able to save all that come unto God by him. Heb. 7: 25. Being confirmed by faith in him, that the good work he hath begun in you, he will perform it, to the day of Christ. Phil. 1: 6. Then the Shepherd feedeth them with the fruit of meekness, and perseverance in his grace to eternal glory. And as the design of the Shepherd is to bring them all into one place of joy. He feedeth them plentifully with the fruit of virtue and friendship in this life, as they may live so in the life to come. Lastly he feedeth them with apples of unity as one in him, like Saul of Tarsus and Annanias were united by the spirit of love unfeigned, never to part.

But to live together in peace. The peace of God in their hearts or souls, and with praise and thankfulness forever. This fruit of peace is the gift of Christ Jesus the Shepherd. Peace I leave with you, my peace give I unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. John 14: 27. Now, when the world giveth any thing, you may loose it, it may wear out, and decay, or it may be stolen from you. Not so, when Christ the Shepherd giveth, it is sure in the soul, and it is hid with Christ in God, where neither moth, nor rust corrupteth, nor thieves break through to steal. But it is an everlasting treasure by the great shepherd and bishop of your souls, and laid up in Heaven for you believers in him.

I will acknowledge all the above mentioned fruits may be taught in the wordly institution of education, the same may be taught and greatly improved, and that to wise and good ends. But it is understood in a moral philosophical view, in use to mankind. Thus Voltaire, Volney, and Paine were all well educated men, and men of great talents, and possessed great knowledge of earthly, temporal, and momentary objects. But they knew nothing of heavenly bliss, nothing of God, and Godliness, nor the want, and benefit of a Saviour. Jesus Christ the great Shepherd of his sheep, were by them, and many more learned men of this world, despised, ridiculed, disdained and denied.

Jesus Christ had a school for his disciples that these learned men know nothing of. Therefore these sheep of his redeemed are put into a school of grace, to be taught by the spirit of all truth. This spirit teach-

eth nothing but truth. In this school of grace all scholars are taught one language, and taught that, which the scholar will find true, and to last forever when all the knowledge taught in schools of philosophy will be lost, and be forever banished from them; and they will be forced to cry folly! folly!! But those taught in the school of grace, by the spirit of truth, will possess greater knowledge, and greater enjoyments than ever was taught; though they were taught to believe it, and to place all their confidence in the Shepherd, for the performance thereof, (read 13th chapter of 1st Cor's.)

This apple of faith given you by the Shepherd is an evidence with the apple of charity or love, of things not seen, and is the substance of things hoped for. In these three soul reviving fruits, is faith, hope, charity. Paul says, the greatest of the three is charity. I believe him. Jesus the Shepherd is gone, and promised to prepare a place far better than this for the redeemed sheep, a place of a fat pasture of eternal duration, and come again to carry them to it. We who have caten the above fruits spiritually, and put the spiritual uses thereof to the spiritual end, believe him and do patiently wait for his coming.

When seeing the happy, glorified, everlasting kingdom, faith is done, it is swallowed up in sight. And when we come to enter and possess that glorious kingdom hope is done, for no man hopeth for that he possesses. But my dear reader love continues forever, in this glorious and eternal kingdom of God; who is love, in Christ, in the world to come that will never end. My friends and readers, I would not have you to harbour a thought in your breast, that I am an enemy to education, far be it from me. I highly approve of education, and would wish to encourage it in all its various branches whatever. But I want you to see with me, that education is not the revealed religion of Jesus Christ, nor is it any evidence of it; neither can any man join them together. But God in Christ, by his spirit of truth, can unite them to a oneness. In doing this work of grace, the great scholar of this world, must submit to be taught again in a new school to him, and by a new teacher; and begin again at A. B. C. And when this man is taught in this new school of grace, he will say with Paul, the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. 1 Cor's.—1, 2 chaps.

My dear reader, I have gone through the doctrines and substance of what the text supported. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them.

According to comparative expressions in Scripture, the whole Scripture, Old and New Testaments, Law and Prophets altogether with one voice, points to one object, that is Jesus Christ, the Son of the virgin Mary, and is truly proved the Son of God by sundry evidences. God in presence of witnesses owned and declared him to be his beloved Son, with whom he was well pleased; and commanded those hearers to hear him, as the only saviour and director to life and salvation from sin, and the wrath to come. He was declared the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead to die no more. He is the death of death, and he is the life of the living. He holds eternal life with immortality to give to whom he pleases, who giveth to all penitent believers in him. To all sinners that see their ruined state, and fallen situation, by sinning against a good and gracious God, and their need of

him as a redeemer from ruin and destruction. Exhorting to repentance for these transgressions before his Father, and faith in the son to be saved. This faith in Christ is the gift of God, it is treasured in the Son to be by him given as a fruit of the tree of life, to be given as the fruit of life. And the use of it is taught in the school of grace. For he that believeth in the Son hath life. The fruit repentance is given, and taught in the same school for the same end. A repentance unto life, that needed not to be repented of.

My dear hearers, or readers, have you eaten this fruit offered to you in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you have not eaten thereof, O sinner, you are in a woful condition, and in a dangerous state of guilt. For except you repent, you all shall perish.—Luke 13 : 3, 5. And without faith it is impossible to please him.—Heb's. 11 : 6. He that believeth not in the Son, hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.—John 3 : 36 and 8 : 24. As you are yet alive, and remain on praying ground, where repentance is obtained, and hearing many as vile as yourself, declare that Jesus gave them these living fruits. Take courage to ask the same Jesus who is in the midst of the throne, as near you as them, by earnest prayer to give you the fruit of repentance, faith and prayer. And it is no doubt with me, but he will give them. If you see the need of them, and ask Jesus to give you this fruit spiritually, that he will give them to you, as he did to other needy ones. But if you think they are not worthy of asking for, and neglect it, and sin sinking you down in a future day for want of them; and you should say when sinking, O Jesus, why did you not give us these living fruits; and Jesus answers you,—You never asked me for them. What then can you say ?

Jesus has all the government of the church and pardon for sinners in his own hands. He has reconciled the whole court in heaven, and has made his way accessible to a throne of grace : and this Throne is before every humble, contrite heart and spirit. And you as bad as you are, are invited to come boldly to this throne of grace, to obtain mercy and help in time of need. Heb's. 4 : 16. His ears are open to hear your cry, and his eyes are open to see your distress. If you will not believe it, and willingly and wilfully neglect it in time, how can you grumble at your doom of eternal banishment ! But I hope some of my hearers as well as readers will consider their latter end, that without this Jesus they must die : and will venture near the Redeemer and cast all their cares upon him, who careth for them. 1 Peter, 5 : 7. Psalms 55 : 22. And plead with him to deliver you from your guilt, and as a great burden on your mind, that Jesus would take all your sins, which are as a great mountain and cast them in the sea of oblivion. Micah. 7 : 19. I want you all to taste and see the Lord is good ; and experience his plenteous redemption, and never ending mercies in pardoning your transgressions, and saving your soul from death to life. Those who have Jesus precious to your souls, through believing in him, and began to eat of his living food and find it sweet to your taste, go on my dear young sister and brother, to pray to Jesus for more. When ever needed he will give freely to you, it is his delight to give his meat to the hungry, that you may grow in all his graces.

And become strong and valiant for the truth, to the praise of his glo-

rious grace. Stand near the Redeemer your shepherd, for him who is in the midst of the throne to feed you with all his life giving food. But take heed to yourself, that you do not step aside to a Moses looking shepherd, and from him get wild unhealthy gourd fruit and eat, and have to cry, O! man Legality, here is death in this fruit, and not life! 2 Kings, 4: 39. Remember the text, none but the one in the midst of the throne giveth living fruit, all others give the fruit of death.

Therefore take care that you receive no fruit from any or none, but Jesus Christ, who is appointed of the Father in the midst of the throne to feed them. For God is faithful to his Son, and his Son Jesus is faithful to his redeemed children. He will give nothing that is destructive to them that believe him. But the good things of God is given to the Son, to be distributed to all that love and fear him. He will give nothing but what is life and health to the soul, that you live with him forever. Therefore his fruits are always good and fresh and is sweet to the taste, and never fail. They are taken from the tree of life, and given you, that you may live forever. Therefore take heed to yourself that you eat none of the forbidden fruit. For there are many in this our day, offer many fruits to sinners, they take thereof and eat, and faint and perhaps die! because they are not living fruits. O my brother and sister sinners, you are liable to be deceived, you are in a world of uncertainty and treachery, and are easily deluded into error by seducers; who speak evil of truth, and offer falsity in the room thereof. For you to escape their deceitful and pernicious ways, I commend you to God, and the word of His grace, (the Bible) and fervently and earnestly pray to him to give you the fruit of wisdom and understanding. James 1: 5. That you may be able to judge righteously between truth and falsity, and be fed with the fruit of charity, or love to the truth, turn your back to all false ways, and hate them. Psal. 119: 104. Loving the truth you will be able to keep it, and die before you deny it. This apple of truth and that of grace will guide you in the way of everlasting life, and lead you to the rock that is higher than I. Psal. 61: 2. The eating of this fruit of life, given you by the living Saviour, will make you wise unto his salvation, and cause you to grow in grace, and in knowledge of Jesus Christ, the great shepherd. To know him to be your Saviour, and his power and wisdom, to deliver and direct you from, and through all the enemies whatever, that oppose you by the way.

These fruits when given you by Jesus himself will make you mete for the inheritance of the Saints in glory that fadeth not away; and to dwell forever where the spirits of just men are made perfect. O, happy place to enjoy the Son and God the Father forever. To meet with all our departed friends around the throne of God and the Lamb, and part no more.

Every heart flowing with gratitude, saying, thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is in the midst of the throne to feed them, and shall lead them to the fountains of living waters, and God himself shall wipe all tears from their eyes. My dear brother and sister sinners, I am grieved to leave you behind, where I fear you have no hope of such a happy place. Have you any desire in your mind to leave behind you all the joys of wordly pleasure, of this life; for the eternal joy and happiness in that which is to come? Let

me persuade, and cheerfully invite you to pray to God, to draw you by His blessed and Holy Spirit to Jesus who is at the throne of grace, whose ears hear your prayers, whose eyes see your desire to eat of his living fruit, and your need of him to give it to you ; to enable you to believe and to live to God, and to possess the enjoyment of God, and his Christ, with the redeemed forever more ; where I hope through his grace to meet you, sister and brother, and all your households, to be unitedly joined with one tongue and voice to praise him that liveth forever and ever.

And to our redeeming Shepherd, who redeemed us to God, and did feed us with living food from the tree of life, for us to live forever, who is our guide, with equal praise and honour, and to the blessed spirit of truth, comfort and consolation, while we sing the three in one, the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.

May God-Almighty command his blessings upon his word, and people, for Christ's sake. Amen.

South Carolina, Colleton District, }
 WALTERBOROUGH, April 22, 1835. }

QUESTION ON THE LORD'S SUPPER, ANSWERED.

“Should not a person, who is not comfortably persuaded of being a real christian, abstain from the ordinance of the Lord's Supper; lest he should eat and drink damnation to himself?”—1 Cor's. 11 : 29 verse.

THIS question is of great importance, therefore deserves a distinct consideration, and a sincere answer. The above, has caused many to keep from a known duty in the law of our blessed law-giver. The person who put forth this question, is desirous of joining himself to some christian church; but considering if he make one step, he must make two steps, he is well satisfied with the ordinance of Baptism, and thinks himself a candidate; but knowing if he submits to the one, he must to the other in religious duties: here he stands and trembles. And, the reason of his trembling is, he views this ordinance to be more sacred than the other (Baptism.) And because the Apostle gave such a severe caution to the unworthy. Is this the consequence, says he. O! what shall I do? How must I act? Must I attend in these circumstances, as it is not absolute safe, but it may be to my ruin of soul forever. Is it not rather my duty to abstain from this ordinance, as it is not necessary to my salvation? Here are two things that present themselves before me. 1st. I may be saved, and yet not attend at the Lord's table. 2nd. I am not such but on attending, I may eat and drink damnation to myself. What therefore must I do? Thus we see the difficulty this person is under! To endeavour to remove this difficulty is to make the following inquiry:—For what reason do you believe you are a candidate for baptism? In the first place, from my recollection, I was a moral person. I never used profane words neither in one way nor another. I never heard profane language but with abhorrence. I delighted in doing my duty to my neighbour, when and where I thought it necessary. I was bound in humanity to pity and shew mercy to the distressed, and to tell the truth in all cases, or not speak at all. I was what is called a morally good person, and thought myself such; and thought myself much better than many professed christians. Contenting myself that I never did any person harm, in no shape whatever, and was prepared for death and happiness, let that come when it would. But reading the Scripture, as all good men ought to do, to hear how Jesus praised all the holy people, something caused me to read the 18th chapter of St. Luke from the 9—15 verses. I discovered a Pharisee a boasting himself, saying, God, I thank thee, that I am not like others. I thought this shewed my feature. I thought myself much like that moral good Pharisee. At the same time, read the cries of a poor sinner, crying for mercy. And the friend of sinners says, that sinner went down justified more than the other. This put me to a stand. And to make the following impartial inquiry, to know whether I was justified before God, or only before myself. When I made an impartial inquiry in the court of conscience, I found to my surprise, I was only justified in the court of self conceit, and was not justified in the court of justice. Here I found that Jesus never praised corrupt fruit that grew on a cor-

rupt tree. For I only done my duty to my neighbour, but had not done my duty to God. I never thought of God, who was to have the first duty paid to Him. Here I was finally upset, and lost. I read the Bible for instruction, wherein I found his righteous law cursed me for neglect of duty. Deu. 27: 26. And all my righteous acts I so much boasted of, were as filthy rags. Isa'h. 64: 6. In my miserable and wretched situation, the same Jesus came to me, and found me lame, blind, and deaf. I cried to him for mercy and help. He (Jesus) told me to arise and walk; at His command I did so. He opened my ears to hear what I never heard before. He opened my eyes to see him as he is, and to see his glorious work of redemption, and see his power to forgive sinners, who pardoned my sin of neglect of duty, and washed and cleansed me of all my righteousness, and my sins in his sin atoning blood from all sin. He then presented my soul into his Father's court without spot or wrinkle. Eph's. 5: 25—27. The Father took the best robe, and put upon me. Luke 15: 22.

(This robe I believe was the righteousness of Jesus) in which I stood justified before God, in the court of justice. 1st John, 1: 9. Rev's. 1: 5. Now, as I believe Jesus dipped my soul in his fountain of blood to wash away all sin, I believe it to be my duty to be dipped in a fountain of water: the former for justification before God, the latter for admittance into the christian church of Christ, to have fellowship with his Saints, that believe in him to the salvation of their souls. The above concise history of my experience makes me believe I am a candidate for believer's baptism. My dear friend, I wish to ask a few questions, on the nature of your experience. Do you at this time find your whole dependance on this Jesus Christ for the salvation of your soul? I do, and without him I must perish. Well, and for what he did for your soul, do you really love him, and delight in his law, after this inward man? I do verily, and desire to reverence, praise and adore him, and wish to do his will, and not my own will; as a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Prov's. 18: 24. I fully believe his wisdom will guide me, and his power protect me through, and from all enemies whatever; and see his grace sufficient for me. 2nd Cor's. 12: 9. Well, now tell me the reason, you cannot be comfortably persuaded of being a real christian? 1st. When I read of David being taken out of the miry clay and put on rock.—Psal's. 40: 2; and when I read of Saul of Tarsus, being struck down by a light from heaven, and blind for three days.—Acts 9; and of the three thousand being made to cry out, Men and brethren what shall we do? 2nd. When I hear of others in like cases, being convicted of heinous crimes, and feeling so miserable; and wonderfully delivered from such deep distress and sorrow; and made so loudly to rejoice in Christ Jesus as their Saviour. They tell more than I can. This cuts me down, and puts me into the back yard! And sometimes almost makes me believe I am deceived, or under some delusion or other. Well brother, consider you have not done such great and bad crimes as David, Solomon, Peter and Paul; therefore you could not feel so deep and keen convictions as they, because you were not so guilty. For, the greater the sinner, the more he loves sin; the greater the convictions for sin, and greater the grace to turn them from the love of sin, to the love of God, and Godli-

ness; and to save them from the dominion of sin. If I understood you, when you told me your thoughts, and exercise of your mind, you were distressed and cut off from all your boasted confidence, and left exposed before the court of truth, you found yourself lost, miserable, and condemned without being saved by this Jesus Christ; and that it was him, Jesus alone, that delivered you from all your distress and misery, and turned your sorrow into joy. And you did rejoice greatly. Well, brother, you felt as much as they, and they no more than you, only in this,—they being saved from great sin and guilt, they loved most, and could tell more than you, but at last you all tell one thing. And why should you be so timid at the Lord's table? Because the Apostle gave such a strict and solemn caution to the unworthy. Here my brother, you seem to lay this so much to heart, when in my opinion baptism is a more sacred ordinance than the Lord's Supper. Still you boldly go to the one, and you tremble at the other. For baptism is administered in the name of the triune God, the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost. When the Lord's Supper is only administered in the name of one, and that the human nature of Jesus Christ. And none have a right to neither of these ordinances, without faith in our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I pray you, dear brother, to duly consider the following observations. First, inquire whether a person may not satisfy himself in abstaining from the Lord's table or supper, because it is not a saving ordinance? This is too often pleaded as an excuse by those who come not to the table. But it will appear weak, as well as ungrateful, if we consider these two things. 1st. the Lord's supper is not a saving, yet it is a useful ordinance. A person may be saved, who never appeared at the Lord's table. This consideration should be encouraging to them who are deprived of the opportunity by the providence of God; but it should be no encouragement to negligence, when we are called to attend. If it is not necessary to the being of a christian, it is to his well being. True, some make a god of it; they are never satisfied till they have this ordinance administered to them, as if the bare receiving it would wipe away every sin, and entitle a person at once to the salvation of Christ. Others slight or neglect it. How happy to be kept from these two extremes! This ordinance was not designed to be a standing means of awakening and converting of sinners, but it was of carrying on the work of grace in the heart, and of training up the soul for heaven. Particularly it is designed to give us a greater hatred of sin, and fill our souls with deeper humility for it. And this it does, as it exhibits all the riches of a Redeemer's love, all the glories of the cross. A view of these under the influence of the spirit, powerfully, though secretly works upon an ingenuous mind, and comes with an energy that nothing can withstand. Oh, says the christian, the hatefulness of sin! canst thou love it, fondly embrace it, and pursue it, O my soul? Oh, no, says the redeemed soul! But it cries melt, O melt this hard heart of mine,—why dost not thou move to see thy pierced Saviour? A Saviour pierced for thee, pierced by thee! Dost thou not rise with resentment against the Jews, who thus put the Son of God to a painful and ignominious death? But oh, stop thy resentment against them, and look at home,—thy sins, O my soul, were the murderers of thy Lord! Your sin of unbelief was the spear that

wounded his side! The sins of a hard impenitent heart the nails that fastened his hands and feet to the cursed tree! that covered his body with blood and sweat, and prepared the bitter cup he drank! O, weep,—mourn, O my soul! be ever humble under the sense of sin, and dishonor not that Jesus who loved thee, and gave himself for thee! who redeemed thy life from death and ruin.

Again, this ordinance intends to enliven and strengthen our graces, and bring us into a greater conformity to God. When we are sitting and viewing the matchless love of Christ, it tends to fasten the deepest convictions of our obligations to him on our minds, and increase our love to, and faith in him, under a sense of guilt and unworthiness—to reconcile us to every difficulty, and quicken us when slothful—to restore us when wandering—to wean our affections from earthly things, and to carry on the work of God in our souls. Oh, says the christian, see what love, and to loiter thus! Shall I be so cold to Jesus? Oh, why does not the fire of love burn within me? Why so slothful? Up, O my soul! and let thy Redeemer's glory be thy concern, as thy everlasting salvation was his concern.

Again, this ordinance tends greatly to promote our spiritual comfort. Here, behold a Father's love! He parts with his only begotten Son, and delivers him up to an accursed death for us! Here we see the Saviour's heart; it is set upon our salvation! View here the virtue, the glory of an infinitely atoning sacrifice! See justice sheathing his sword, Death and hell vanquished, the uttermost farthing paid, all the blessings of salvation purchased! Oh, here behold a righteousness provided, the promise confirmed, grace and glory both secured to every chosen vessel! How animating, how comforting such a view! Oh, how glorious! says the christian. See, O my soul, the Saviour's love. And wilt thou any more distrust him? View all the triumphs of the cross! And wilt thou be any longer afraid? Oh, what a foundation is here laid for a strong faith and a lively hope!

Again, this ordinance tends to increase our love to one another. It is a cementing ordinance. It cannot but raise in us mutual affection, while we view each other as purchased by the same blood, members of the same body, and children of the same family. Thus, then, though it may not be necessary to our salvation to wait upon Christ at his table, yet it is necessary for our growth in grace and comfort here, and fitness for a better world. Therefore it is our duty and privilege to appear among his people at their feast.

Secondly: consider Christ himself instituted this ordinance, and invites his believing humble followers to wait upon him here, to remember all his suffering for them. What our Lord said to his disciples, he says to us in this distant age: "Do this in remembrance of me." And where is the expression of our love? Where our gratitude if we refuse to obey? Oh, says the soul, if my Redeemer has commanded, it is enough for me, I cannot but obey: who can resist his love?

Who can hear the compassionate Jesus, who came and suffered death, who can hear him inviting his followers to his table, and say, "I will not come, for I may be saved without it?" What disingenuousness is this? What has he done, who loved us so as to give himself for us, called and invited us, and will you not obey? Because you may get safely to hea-

ven without it, to a better world, and never attend to his table to partake of this ordinance: where is your concern to honor your Redeemer? These hints I hope are sufficient to shew the weakness of your arguments, that you appear so timid and neglectful of this institution; and I hope this will stir you up to a delight and cheerfulness to the discharge of duty, that you may glorify your once dead but now exalted Saviour, and gain some saving advantages to your soul. I now come to consider the other objection which you make to your waiting upon Christ Jesus in his ordinance—that is, a fear lest you eat and drink damnation to yourself. This objection seems to lie in your mind, and is dreaded. My dear christian friend, this as a mountain is before you! Thus, if I should eat and drink unworthily, I shall eat and drink damnation to myself: and I am not sure that it will not be the case. Therefore shall I attend, when the consequence is so awful? O that word damnation, it strikes me with peculiar terror! It appears the greatest stress is laid upon this alarming word. If, then, I can set this circumstance in such a light as to remove these distressing fears, I hope the case will be in some measure resolved. That this may be done, I would consider what this unworthy eating and drinking is, which is brought in as the cause of this damnation, and then the word damnation itself.

1st. Let us inquire what it is to eat and drink unworthily. He that does so, attends this ordinance in a manner, and with ends and views different from those for whom it was appointed. This was the case with the Corinthians. They had not the glory of Christ in view, when they did meet together to administer this ordinance. They, like the Jews, acted no doubt at their passover; and, like idolators when coming to worship their idols, made a feast of it. They brought cart loads of provisions, and flagons of wine. They fell into confusion and contention, so that there could not be that harmony which was necessary to be found in a christian church, setting down together at the Lord's table. They came not to view the body and blood of Jesus Christ, or to remember his matchless love. But they came to satisfy their craving appetite, and relish animal nature. And they acted so disorderly that some even eat and drank to excess, while others had not enough to satisfy their hunger. In this feast of theirs, some were drunk and disputed with others; no doubt some were killed, others dreadfully beaten, and some sick. Notice the thirtieth verse: "For this cause some are weakly and sickly among you, and sleep." How do you suppose those sober, serious christians then present, and had to stand off, did feel with melting hearts to see such disorders going on in the church of Christ? Can you suppose that the love of God was among them? Well might the Apostle Paul give the severe and sharp rebuke as he did. Thus we see what it is to eat and drink unworthily. When we attend the Lord's table in an irreverent, disorderly and carnal manner, from ends different from those for which the ordinance was appointed by our Lord; when we prostitute it to some earthly purpose, and have no regard to the frame of soul in which we attend, or to the great end to be answered by it. Secondly: Let us consider what this damnation is. 1st. Taking the word in its most awful sense as eternal condemnation, it should not deter us from waiting upon Christ in this ordinance. In this case it does not signify that there is no forgiveness after an unworthy eating, or receiving this ordinance.

Many have set down at the table of the Lord, and were enemies to him, and afterwards have been the triumphs of sovereign grace. Thus you timorous souls, who are so often distressed with a view of this awful word, and entertain from hence such solemn thoughts of this ordinance, see here is nothing to affright you from this, any more than from any other sacred institution. You might as well forsake reading, hearing and praying, because if these are not the means of your salvation, the consequence will be your damnation. Therefore the eating a piece of bread, and drinking a little wine, will not convert your soul to God nor condemn your soul to damnation. But it is the object it signifies. I do not believe in transubstantiation nor consubstantiation, for it is done to signify something else. The bread is bread yet, and the wine is wine yet, do or say what you please. Therefore take the bread as viewing the body of Christ, and the wine as blood of Christ, who redeemed you and is able to save you.

Secondly: The word is to be taken in a softer sense, as it signifies temporal judgments or afflictions of bodily diseases—as before mentioned, of being weak and sickly, and some sleep. As if the Apostle had said, As you come to the table of the Lord in so disorderly a manner, and have perverted the end and design of this ordinance, so God has manifested his displeasure by laying on you his hand of affliction, in so much that many of you are in an unhealthy state, feeble and a sickly condition, and many moved from time to eternity. Thus damnation carries nothing frightful in it. Again, thyself does not mean the soul, but your bodily afflictions. What has been said only tends to remove the distressing fear of the christian about the word damnation, and to encourage him to come to the table of the Lord; and not to promote a carelessness of spirit, nor will it have this influence upon a mind under the Gospel truths.

Well, sir, you have spoken very pointedly to the objections I had before me. But there is one objection still remains. That is, I see and feel myself so unworthy to appear before God in this holy ordinance, I cannot cheerfully venture into his holy presence. If I could see myself as I see others, I could not venture, for all others are better than myself: this keeps me at a stand. My brother, you well please me by speaking as you do. Remember, you said with the Pharisee, you could see yourself better than others. You thought yourself much better than many professed christians. Now you see them better than yourself. This is a good seeing, seeing things right. For the Lord opened your own heart, and showed it to you, and a miserable sight it was. You never saw another man's heart; therefore your own heart was the worst of all. A true christian evidence, when he can see himself the worst.

The question now is, do you see a worthiness in Jesus Christ? Can you venture your all upon his worthiness to find acceptance before God? Yes, I can; and, as I said before, without his worthiness I am gone. Well, now, my dear brother, will his worthiness through faith in him make you acceptable before God, and at his table?

Come, then, you fearful souls, who start at the mention of his holy ordinance. Do you not love Jesus? Have you not made choice of him for your Saviour? Would you not love him more and be brought into a greater conformity to him? Your answer is, Yes. Then you

are the very person Jesus Christ invites. Would you prostitute this ordinance, from what you have heard of it, to any earthly purposes? Would you now eat and drink in a disorderly, indecent manner? You answer, No. You would come to remember the love of a dying Redeemer, and to view all that is exhibited. You would come to be quickened and to behold a suffering Saviour, to admire the riches of distinguishing grace, in the sacrifice of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. But you are afraid you are unworthy, an unfit person to make such an approach to God, and to be indulged with such a privilege. If it be thus with you, my dear brother, be not discouraged, but venture near your Redeemer. Come humbly to view your expiring Lord, and to plead and rest upon his atoning sacrifice, and you will be far from eating and drinking damnation to thyself. If you were to come for some selfish ends; as a way to worldly advancements; and pay no regard to the body and blood of the blessed Saviour, you might tremble and conclude you were an unworthy receiver. But if you come to the Lord's table under a sense of your sinfulness, and desire to come looking to the blessed Jesus, who pardoned you, that he would at this time strengthen, sanctify and quicken your drowsy, drooping spirit more and more by his addition of graces, you need not be afraid, but with liberty and cheerfulness come. He has invited you. He will make you welcome and worthy, and carry on his work of grace in your souls, by faith in him, by his loving and soul-reviving ordinance he has appointed. That you may be familiar with his children at his table. That you may be, and live with his children in joy, in that kingdom he is gone to prepare for us, and promised to come again and receive us to myself, that where he is, we may be also. And from that kingdom we shall part no more.

Well, my brother, you have removed from me all objections. I feel fully satisfied; my fears are gone,—and praised be God for it. And making the path clear, that I may run and not be weary, and walk and faint not. So be it. AMEN.