

A
S A C R A M E N T A L
C A T E C H I S M:
O R, A
F A M I L I A R I N S T R U C T O R
F O R
Y O U N G C O M M U N I C A N T S.

Plainly unfolding the Nature of the
C O V E N A N T O F G R A C E,

With the Two Seals thereof,
B A P T I S M and the L O R D ' S S U P P E R.

W H E R E I N
Especially the Sacrament of the L O R D ' S S U P P E R is fully and distinctly
handled, both in a Doctrinal and Practical Manner;
With many C A S E S of C O N S C I E N C E relative thereto, intermixed and
resolved, for the Relief and Support of those who are exercised to
Godliness.

With an A P P E N D I X,
*Containing suitable Materials for Meditation and Prayer,
both before and after Partaking.*

By Mr. J O H N W I L L I S O N,
Minister of the Gospel at Dundee.

G L A S G O W:

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M.DCC.LXXXVII.

P R E F A C E

T O T H E

R E A D E R.

ALTHOUGH it cannot be denied that there are many excellent books written, and sermons delivered concerning the *Lord's Supper*; yet it is sadly to be regretted, that there remains still a lamentable ignorance, among many, of the nature of this holy ordinance, and the principal acts required in communicating. Which consideration chiefly hath moved me to handle this subject (of which too much cannot be written or preached, seeing it is the epitome of the whole Christian religion, both as to doctrine and practice), in a plain catechetical method, and have studied the easiest words and expressions that I could devise, to make the nature of the *covenant of grace*, and the seals thereof, plain and intelligible to every vulgar capacity.

As I do not know much that is written upon this subject, in this method, so I have observed in treatises of the *Lord's Supper*, that generally there is but little said of the nature of the *covenant of works* with the first Adam, or of the *covenant of redemption* with the second Adam, or of the *covenant of grace* with the elect, to which this Sacrament is annexed as a seal; and that yet less is said of the sacrament of baptism, the first seal of the covenant; which certainly should, in the first place, be considered and understood by every man, before he adventure to partake of the second seal of the covenant, which bears a special relation to the first. Wherefore I have thought fit, in this catechism (for the better understanding the nature of this sacrament) to give a succinct view of the gospel scheme, and method of man's salvation, by opening up the nature of the foresaid divine covenant, and of the sacrament of baptism, before I come to treat particularly of the *Lord's Supper*.

All Christians should study to have distinct uptakings of the gospel-covenant, and of this ordinance, which is the compend and seal of it; and in a special manner young persons before their first admission to it, when they are hereby, in a solemn and explicit manner, to renew their baptismal bonds, and give their voluntary consent to the covenant. O young people, take heed to your first communicating, for very much depends upon it; you are as it were, about laying the foundation-stone of your salvation-work, which ought to be done with much spiritual skill and knowledge, if you would have a sure building; if you approach to this holy table in ignorance, you stumble in the threshold; nay, you will surely be unworthy communicants, and so may provoke God to smite you with the plagues of judicial blindness, heart-hardness, and formality, which may cleave to you all your lives, and so you are undone for ever. Wherefore, as you regard your immortal souls, pray for knowledge and spiritual illumination; apply to your great prophet Jesus Christ for it; improve the means and helps which he affords you, and seriously peruse this catechism, before you first communicate; that so you may get some right uptakings of the nature of the covenant of grace, and the seals thereof; and particularly, of the obligations you already lye under by the first seal, that you may with knowledge, seriousness and solemnity, go, and personally renew your baptismal covenant with God, and get it ratified, by receiving of the second seal thereof. For this cause it is that our national Assembly, by their act, Ass. 1706, sess. 12. do recommend to all ministers, ‘diligently to instruct persons, especially before their admission to the Lord’s supper, particularly as to the covenant of grace, and the nature and end of that ordinance as a seal thereof; and charge upon their consciences the obligations they lye under from their baptismal covenant, and seriously to exhort them to renew the same.’ And accordingly, I have known some ministers, at very much pains with young persons before their first communicating, instructing them as above directed, telling them, that they were now to enter into the state of adult church membership, to be taken into Christ’s family, and share of the children’s privileges, sealed to them in baptism; that therefore they must now make a choice for themselves, ratify their parents deed, and become Christians by their own voluntary consent, as well as by their parents dedication, and renew

their baptismal covenant with judgment and understanding. And after much pains taken upon them in private, they have called these young communicants together in a public manner, catechising them, and opening up the nature of the gospel-covenant, and their baptismal engagements to them; and with some solemnity asking each of them their consent thereunto, and taking them engaged personally to renew covenant with God in secret, and make choice of God for their God, and Christ for their Saviour and husband, before they should approach to his table, and upon these terms giving them their tokens. Unto all which they joined suitable directions and encouragements, concluding all, by giving up and recommending these young communicants to God in solemn and fervent prayer. Which method I have known accompanied with great tenderness, and many tears, among the young people; one of them helping to affect another, yea, and make very moving impressions upon the whole audience; and I doubt not, but such occasions have been to some, the time of their espousals to the Lord Jesus Christ, which they are to remember with thankfulness and praise.

Moreover, I intreat young communicants to beware of contenting themselves with a literal knowledge of the doctrine of the covenants, and of the sacraments; but O press and pray hard for the inward teachings of God's Spirit, that light in your heads may be joined with heat in your hearts. And pray for the firm and solid belief, and sincere love of all these truths which you know; and that your knowledge may be a sanctified and practical knowledge, and increasing, like the morning light.

Again, I beseech you to beware of resting upon your purposes, prayers or tears, your personal covenanting, or any performance of yours whatsoever; Let none of these come in Christ's room; be not satisfied with a form of godliness without seeking after the life and power thereof. Be never easy till you get your hearts opened to close with Jesus Christ in the gospel-offers; and get an inward change wrought upon your souls, by the regenerating grace and Spirit of God, and grace excited in you to lively exercise; and then you may approach with holy confidence to your Redeemer's table, and expect welcome.

Sacrament days in Scotland have been solemn and sealing days, yea, days of heaven to many; at such occasions many

have had their tryfts, and Bethel meetings with God, which they will never forget. O let us all then beware of formality creeping in among us in our preparation for, and partaking of this solemn ordinance; for then God will withdraw himself from our assemblies, and our solemn feasts will be melancholly and heartless. How sad will our case be, if communicants and professors of religion turn easy about this matter, and be satisfied with the shadow without the substance; with pure ordinances and sacraments, without Christ's presence in them; with communion days, without communion with Christ the master and maker of the feast. O communicants, however frequently you approach to the Lord's table, yet still make conscience of secret, serious, and solemn preparation for it; press always for a token of Christ's love at his table. There is nothing so supporting to poor believers, in this wilderness, yea, and when under the greatest trials and difficulties, than the believing views they have sometimes got, of a well ordered covenant of grace, made over and sealed to them by this sacrament: these have been the cordials of many, when they have been stepping in over the threshold of eternity. Let us then be providing such cordials against that critical time.

At first, when I fell to compose this book, I thought to contain it in a small compass; but having a design to instruct, direct, and confirm some; confute, reprove and reform others; the book swelled to this bulk, before I could in any measure reach my end.

1st, My design is, to instruct the ignorant, in the knowledge of the gospel way and method of salvation, through the mediation and suretyship of Jesus Christ; and therefore I was obliged to give such, as clear a view as I could, of the covenants of works, of redemption, and of grace, with the seals thereof.

2^{dly}, I intend to direct and assist all sincere young communicants, that desire to be rightly guided in this weighty work, so as they may not wound Christ nor their own souls, but please God and get a gracious meeting with their Saviour; and for their sakes I have fully displayed the nature, parts, ends and uses of the Lord's supper, shewed what is required of them before they come, what is incumbent on them when they come, and what is incumbent on them when they go from the Lord's table; and also have subjoined to this book,

some suitable materials for meditation and prayer, both before and after partaking.

3dly, My end is to support and encourage these troubled and exercised souls, who dare not neglect this ordinance, and who make conscience of attending it, and preparing for it, but are oft filled with doubts and fears, lest they be unworthy communicants, apprehending they have no right to Christ's table, in regard they do not perceive any sure marks of grace in their hearts, nor find any sensible benefit by the ordinance: wherefore, I have for the sake of such, laid down many marks for examining their state, their graces, their frame, and profiting by this ordinance: and also have intermixed the book with a great variety of cases of conscience, which I have handled and resolved for the relief and support of such serious souls.

4thly, I design to confute those who corrupt this holy ordinance, or in any measure deviate from Christ's institution; and therefore, I have gone through the several parts of the institution, shown the usefulness and significancy thereof, and have fairly proposed the matters in controversy, with the adversaries objections, and answered them.

5thly, I aim to reprove and reform those who rush upon this ordinance in an ignorant or careless manner, without due preparation; by shewing who only have a right to this table, what is the nature and importance of the work of communicating, with the sin and danger of doing it unworthily.

6thly, I intend likewise to reprove those who live in the habitual neglect of this ordinance; by laying open the necessity and advantages of worthy communicating, and the guilt and hazard of neglecting Christ's institution and dying command.

7thly, To reprove those who satisfy themselves with communicating once in a year or two years, as they have the occasion only in their own parish kirks, and no oftner; By shewing the obligations that lye on all Christ's disciples to partake often. And I shall add in this place, that there is ground to fear, that the unfrequent celebration and participation of this blessed feast which Christ hath prepared for us, is an evil that many in this church are chargeable with; and for which the Lord may plead a controversy with us. How can we expect but he will depart from us, when we stand at such a distance from him, and come so seldom near him in the method he hath appointed? Can we look for the smiles of Christ's countenance, when we live so much in the neglect of his dying words? Is

it any wonder our hearts are so hard, when we are so seldom applying the blood of Christ for softning them? Or that our graces be so weak and withered, when we so little use the means for strengthening and cherishing them. Is not the frequent use of this ordinance, in the way Christ hath appointed, an excellent help, to soften our hearts, renew our repentance, strengthen our faith, inflame our love, increase our thankfulness, animate our resolutions against sin, and encourage us to holy duties, and shall we willingly neglect it? It is no wonder that we complain we miss what we aim at, and expect in this ordinance, when we are so little sensible of former neglects. It is a sad sign, our receiving of this sacrament is not right, when it leaves not in us earnest breathings for the like opportunity; Is it possible for us to meet with Christ, and taste of his sweetness and fulness in this ordinance, and not long for another meeting?

Let none think, that the frequency of the administration would expose to contempt; for I am sure no worthy communicant will undervalue this ordinance, because of a frequent repetition, but rather prize it the more. Did the primitive Christians bring it to contempt by partaking every Lord's day? Nay, was not their esteem of it much higher than those who dispense, or receive it only once in two years? I wish, the words of our dying Saviour, and the acts of our General Assembly, relative to this matter, were more adverted to, by one and all of us.

The mind of our church, with respect to this point, is well known; for our Directory for public worship declares 'that the Lord's supper is frequently to be celebrated.' Our reformers appointed it to be administered in parishes three or four times in the year, and that ministers who were slothful in the administration of it, should be censured, as appears from the acts of Ass. 1562, and 1596; which are also approved by Ass. 1638, who further appoint, 'that some course be taken
' for furnishing of the elements, where the minister of the parish hath allowance only for once in the year;' that so the want of a fund for communion elements, might not hinder the frequent administration of this ordinance. Again, lest the multiplicity of preaching, or ministers assisting at it, should hinder its frequency, the General Assembly, anno 1645, did appoint, 'that ministers should have at this work, but two
' assistants, who were to provide their own parishes at home

‘ with preaching ; and that there be but one preparation-sermon on the Saturday, only one sermon on the Sabbath-morning before serving the tables, and one thanksgiving sermon after the communion.’

And that the church, since the Revolution, continues to be of the same mind with our predecessors, concerning the frequency of celebrating this ordinance, appears from the late acts of the General Assembly thereanent ; particularly the 9th act of Ass. 1701, where it is recommended to presbyteries, ‘ To take care that the sacrament of the Lord’s supper be more frequently administrate in their bounds ; and that the number of ministers to serve thereat be restricted, so that neighbouring churches be not thereby cast desolate on the Lord’s day.’ But the act, which is most plain and particular on this head is the 11th act of Ass. 1712, entitled, ‘ Act appointing the more frequent celebration of the Lord’s supper.’ And it runs thus, ‘ The General Assembly considering that the Assemblies of this national church have, by several acts appointed the frequent celebration of the holy sacrament of the Lord’s supper, in all the congregations of this church ; and judging, that the due observation of these acts will greatly tend to the glory of God, and the edification of souls ; therefore, they do hereby enjoin all presbyteries to enquire, if these acts be duly observed by all the brethren ; and in case any minister shall neglect to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, in his parish for a whole year, the Assembly appoints the presbytery in which the said parish lyes, to call for an account of the reasons of his omission of that great and solemn ordinance, and to approve or disapprove the same, as they shall see cause, and to record their diligence in this matter. And for making this effectual, the General Assembly enjoins the synods at their several meetings, to enquire at the presbyteries within their bounds, what care they have taken to execute the said act, &c. And further, that the Lord’s people, may have opportunity of frequent communicating, the General Assembly, by the 6th act, Ass. 1711. ‘ Do recommend to presbyteries, to do what they can, to get it so ordered, that the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, may be administered in their bounds, through the several months of the year.’ And this they enacted for redressing the practices, that are too common in most places, of crowding the whole communions of the bounds, in the

space of a few sabbaths, in the summer-season; whereby ministers, who are called to assist at these occasions, are exceedingly hurried and straitned; and serious exercised persons are deprived of the benefit of that holy ordinance during the rest of the year, which is certainly a very great loss: and also many parishes, by this method, are allowed the sacrament no oftner than once in two years: which practices are still continued notwithstanding of all the excellent acts to the contrary. However, I am glad to hear, that in some parishes, ministers have begun to celebrate this ordinance twice in the year; I heartily wish this practice were general among us, and people had a lively appetite after this quickening feast.

I confess there is one thing among us, which is a great obstruction to the frequent celebration of this ordinance, viz. The great number of ministers and preachings now used on such occasions, which truly makes that solemn work a business of such outward toil and labour to the administrators, as discourages them frequently to undertake it. So that till some regulation be made in the foresaid respect, I despair of seeing this holy ordinance dispensed so frequently among us as it ought to be.

In the days of old, there was less preaching at communions, but much power and life in them; but in our days, there is much preaching, but little power. Not that I am against much preaching at these occasions, where there is an appetite among the hearers, and where plenty of ministers may be had, without laying the neighbouring congregations desolate, or proving any let to the frequency of this ordinance; but to make it a standing order, that there shall be so many preachings, whether there be an appetite or no, or whatever inconveniences should follow, I apprehend cannot be so easily justified. I acknowledge about the time of our late happy Revolution, when so much preaching at communions began to be a settled practice, there were such vehement desires among the people, after the ordinances, and lively preaching of the word, that had been so scarce for so many years before, that it was necessary to gratify them with much preaching at these solemn occasions; but it is not to be expected, that these longings should always continue. In the primitive times of Christianity, when the disciples hearts flamed with love to their lately crucified and ascended Redeemer, they had so burning desires after the ordinances and preaching of the

gospel, that the apostle Paul, at the celebration of the Lord's supper, Acts xx. 7. was encouraged to continue preaching to the people till midnight; yet none ever pleaded, that the apostle's practice, on that occasion, should be a standing rule for the church, in all time coming.

But that I be not too tedious in this preface, I shall only acquaint my reader, that I have chosen to handle this excellent subject in a catechistical method, as being the most easy and familiar way of instructing the ignorant, and most easy for the memory to retain. The work of catechising hath been signally bless'd of God, for instructing people in the principles of Christianity; and where this is neglected or contemned, people understand little of the most excellent sermons they hear, and are little edify'd by them. Proper food must be provided for children, as well as meat for strong men. And hence it is, that the chief Shepherd enjoins his servants, to feed his lambs, as well as his sheep.

I know the church of Scotland is already provided with excellent Catechisms, both Shorter and Larger, and with a choice explanation of the Shorter by Mr. Vincent, all which I earnestly recommend to the reader's diligent perusal, and especially our Larger Catechism, as containing a noble system of divinity. It would be the advantage of all the members of this church, to be at more pains in reading, considering, and laying it up in their memories, than generally they are. The approbation of the Larger Catechism, by the General Assembly 1648. Sess. 10. should not be forgotten; in which we find, that after the most exact trial and examination, both by the respective presbyteries of this church, and by the assembly itself, they do declare this Catechism to be most agreeable to the word of God, and the received doctrine of this church; and that it is a rich treasure, for increasing knowledge among the people of God; where also they bless God that so excellent a Catechism is prepared, with whom I do heartily join issue. But seeing it cannot be expected that any Catechism of its bulk (which is of an universal nature, treating on all the heads of divinity) should be so full and copious about the sacraments, and particularly the *Lord's Supper*, as the necessity of some do require, I have adventured to compose this sacramental Catechism, for the benefit of young communicants, and others weak in knowledge; and have studied to contract as much of the doctrine of the Covenants, and of

the sacraments, as possibly I could, into so small bounds. And in doing this, I frankly acknowledge, I have borrowed many things from others that have written upon the subject, and especially from our excellent Larger Catechism.

And in the whole compofure, I have copied, as closely as I could, after the approved form of sound words, expressed in the word of God, and agreeably thereto, in the Confessions of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms of this church, which are justly to be accounted most valuable pieces of our reformation.

And truly I esteem it a singular mercy to this church, in these shaking and fluctuating times, when new thoughts and expressions in matters of faith are vented, which are not agreeable to the form of sound words formerly used in this church, that we have such an approved standard of doctrine to look to, as is laid down in our excellent Confession of Faith and Catechisms, plainly founded on the scriptures of truth; and which all the members of this church are strictly bound to maintain, both by solemn national vows, and private engagements at baptism; not to mention the particular obligations which all the office-bearers of the church come under both by word and writ thereunto, at their respective ordinations and admissions to their functions. Only, I pray the Lord may give us grace, constantly to maintain and keep up the due and suitable impressions of these engagements on our spirits; which if we have, there is no doubt, but we will carefully evite every appearance of error; nay, even be afraid to disuse the former modes of speaking and expressing gospel truths used in the church, or adopt new phrases and expressions in their stead; seeing such a practice hath often introduced new errors into the church. It cannot but be thought strange, that any lovers of our Zion, for the sake of some fond new thoughts and peculiar expressions, (which perhaps their hearers cannot comprehend so well as themselves, but are apt rather to construct to a wrong sense,) should choose to recede from the old approved ways of speaking, or find fault with those that retain them, whereby their people are brought to stumble at worthy gospel-ministers that have not learned their new phrases, and pass harsh censures on them; which not only tends to mar people's edification, but also to endanger the peace of our mother-church, and the purity of her doctrine. For by such courses, the seeds may be sown, that

may spring up (if God prevent it not) into the noxious weeds of schism or error, when we of this generation are rotting in the dust. I cannot yet be persuaded, but Rutherford, Gillespie, Dickson, Durham, Guthrie, and other such eminent lights in this church, (that were blessed with such large measures of the Spirit of God,) had as clear discoveries of the gospel mysteries, and doctrine of grace; were as spiritual and evangelical in their preaching, frame and conversation; and also honoured by their master, to bring in as many souls to him, as any in our day; notwithstanding that they taught, 'The covenant of grace, its being mutual, faith being its condition, the necessity of personally covenanting with God, of leaving sin in order to come to Christ, of closing with him, upon the terms of the gospel, of obeying gospel precepts, making vows at the sacrament, &c.' Tho' perhaps in some places, those who would adventure to speak in the style of the fore said worthies, may lay their account with being censured as legal preachers.

I pray the Lord may give us one heart and one way, that we may all think and speak the same things; and that he may always preserve this church from the infection of error of one sort or another, whether Arminian or Antinomian; and that no opinion or expression be vented among us, that either tends to the disparagement of free grace, by ascribing too much to the power of corrupt nature in the business of man's salvation; or, that under the pretext of advancing free grace, doth weaken people's obligation to holy duties.

But, reader, I shall not any longer detain thee from perusing this Catechism; if thou findest in it any thing profitable or edifying to thy soul, then give God all the glory; and if any thing in it shew the author's weakness, I beg you may not rashly censure, but pray for him who would willingly contribute his mite, for the advantage of the weak and ignorant.

DUNDEE, January, 1720.

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QUESTION.

FOR what end hath the Lord appointed sacraments in his Church?

Answer. To be visible signs and seals of his gracious covenant with man, in order to represent and apply Christ and his benefits to his covenanted people ; to strengthen their faith in his promises, and solemnly to engage them to his service.

Q. Why hath the infinitely glorious God chosen to carry on the business of man's salvation, in the way and method of a covenant, or gracious paction with him?

A. For these reasons, 1. To display the mildness of his nature, and moderation of his government ; for though he be the absolute emperor of the world ; and may make of his creatures what he pleases ; yet he sweetly tempers his supremacy with goodness, seeking (as it were) to reign with his subjects consent.

2dly, To shew his marvellous goodness, and condescension to the sons of men ; in that he humbleth himself to treat familiarly with them, make promises, and come under obligations to make them happy and glorious. ‘ Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou thus visitest him!’

3dly, God deals thus with men, that he might have reasonable service from a willing people, and their voluntary consent to his good laws. For though he might prescribe to man, what

conditions of happiness he pleased ; yet he would require nothing of him but what he should be obliged to judge a just and easy yoke.

4thly, That his people might serve and obey him, with the greater delight, having such gracious covenant promises for their encouragement.

Q. How many covenants hath God made with man, concerning life and salvation ?

A. Two, the first, being called the covenant of works ; the second, the covenant of grace.

Q. What is the covenant of works ?

A. It is a gracious agreement, which the great Creator made with our first parents, Adam and Eve, in their state of innocence : and in them, with all their children descending from them by ordinary generation : wherein God promised them life and happiness, upon their perfect obedience to his holy will and law ; and threatened them with death and misery in case of disobedience. And withal, giving them for the trial of their obedience, a particular command, that they should not eat of the ‘ tree of the knowledge of good and ‘ evil, Gen. ii. 17. Gal. iii. 10, 12.

Q. How doth it appear that God made such a covenant with our first parents ?

A. Because in this affair, the scripture lays down the essential parts of a covenant : we have two distinct parties contracting, God on the one part, and man on the other. We have God requiring something of man, viz. obedience to his will : and we have this requisition, attended with a promise of life upon obedience ; and a threatening of death upon not obedience. And lastly, We have Adam submitting or consenting to all this : for seeing he was made after the image of God, perfectly holy ; he behoved certainly to consent to God’s holy will, when at first laid before him, and that immediately by God himself, his gracious and bountiful Creator. And this also is confirmed by several places of scripture, Hos. vi. 7. Rom. iii. 27. Rom. vi. 14. Gal. iv. 24.

Q. Why is this covenant by the compilers of our Confession of Faith, called sometimes a covenant of works, and sometimes a covenant of life ?

A. Because works or perfect obedience, was the condition of this covenant, on man’s part ; and life or perfect happiness was the reward promised on God’s part.

Q. Was there no grace manifested in the first covenant?

A. Yes, in several things, 1. In that the glorious Creator was pleased to descend (as it were); to a level, and transact a covenant with his own creature, and thereby come under bonds and obligations to him, Psal. cxiii. 5, 6. Rom. xi. 35.

2dly, In taking such pains to help the mutability of man's state and free-will, by hedging in his way with promises and threatenings; and thereby graciously fortifying and arming him, against all temptations to sin, by furnishing him with arguments, both from the promise of reward in case of obedience, and the threatening of punishment in case of transgression.

3dly, In that he was pleased to promise a reward so great and glorious as eternal life, to man's obedience, when he was sufficiently obliged to it, by the law of his creation, though nothing had been promised for it.

4thly, In that he created Adam with sufficiency of power and grace to enable him to perform God's whole will; gave him all the creatures to obey him, and allowed him intimate communion with himself.

Q. What law or rule had our first parents given them for their obedience, in the estate of innocency?

A. They had both the moral law, and a positive law: both a general commandment, 'do this and live;' and a special commandment 'not to eat of the tree of knowledge.'

Q. How were these laws given and promulgate to our first parents?

A. By their creation in a perfect state, they had the moral law written and engraven in their hearts. But the positive law was given them by external revelation, Eccl. vii. 29. Rom. ii. 14, 15. Gen. ii. 17.

Q. Why is that special command called a positive law, and distinguished from the moral law?

A. In regard it is of the nature of a positive law, to command or prohibit things that before were indifferent, and only become good or evil by virtue of the command, and not of their own nature. So the eating of the tree of knowledge was neither good nor evil, but as commanded or forbidden by God. That law was not founded on the light or dictates of nature, as all the moral precepts are; which, therefore, are a standing and unalterable rule of righteousness.

Q. Why did God forbid the eating of that tree?

A. 1. To let Adam know that he was not absolute owner of what he possessed, but only a servant; and that God was the supreme master and Lord of all.

2dly, To keep him in mind, that his happiness did not lye in time's things, but in the pleasing of God, and enjoying his favour.

3dly, To try his obedience, and regard to the divine authority; and to render him for ever inexcusable, if he should disobey God in so easy a command, when he had such helps and encouragements to keep it.

Q. Did our first parents keep their covenant with God?

A. No; for though they had sufficient strength given them for keeping it perfectly; yet being left to the freedom of their own will, they did so mismanage the same, that they misbelieved God, hearkened to the devil, and complied with his temptation to eat the forbidden fruit: whereby they sinned against the clearest light, and were guilty of the most cursed ingratitude and rebellion against God.

Q. What state did the breach of the covenant of works bring man into?

A. Into a most wretched and miserable condition, having thereby lost God's image; his favour and all communion with him; plunged himself into a fearful gulph of sin; and fallen under the sentence of death and all sorts of miseries, temporal, spiritual and eternal.

Q. Was the whole posterity of Adam brought into this woful state by Adam's sin?

A. Yes, all of them who descended from him by ordinary generation: so that never any, but the man Christ was excepted.

Q. How can we be charged with Adam's guilt, seeing we were not existent when he sinned?

A. Because when the covenant was made with Adam, he acted as a public person, representing his whole posterity who were then in his loins; and thus the covenant being made with them in him, they sinned in him, and fell with him, Rom. v. 12, 18, 19. 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

Q. Was there no remedy provided for Adam in the first covenant in case of a breach?

A. No; for it threatened death for the least transgression, and left the transgressor hopeless under the curse, without a promise of pardon upon repentance, or of new strength upon

losing what he had, or of a surety to answer for him, Gen. ii. 17. Gal. iii. 10.

Q. Was it possible for fallen man to find out a remedy for himself?

A. No; for he lost all power to do any thing that was good; and his misery called for a ransom of infinite value, which none but God could provide, Rom. vii. 18. Psal. xlix. 7, 8. Mic. vi. 6, 7. Hos. xiii. 9.

Q. Is the covenant of works now disannulled, so as it hath no power over any man?

A. No; for every natural man and unbeliever, is as much under the power and obligation of this covenant, as ever Adam was; it still stands in full force against all such; they are obliged to perform its condition, viz. perfect obedience, and also to undergo the penalty for breaking it, for they lye still under its sentence, according to John iii. 18. 'He that believeth not is condemned already,' i. e. by virtue of the covenant of works, which they have violated, and Eph. ii. 3. it is said, 'We are all by nature children of wrath,' i. e. we are doomed to wrath and destruction by the broken covenant of works, and still lye under the sentence, while we are in the state of nature.

Q. Is any man now able to answer the demands of the covenant of works?

A. No; for, as we have lost our strength to perform its condition, so it is impossible for any created power to pay its penalty, or give satisfaction to infinite justice for the offence of sin.

Q. But how is it consistent with justice to require that from us, which we are utterly unable to perform?

A. Though we by our own fault have lost our strength to obey, yet God doth not thereby lose his just right to demand what belongs to him. A creditor loseth not his right to crave a just debt, because the debtor has squandered away his stock, and is turned bankrupt; nay he is still liable and his children too. So in this case our being unable to pay, will not absolve us from our debt; especially seeing the inability is brought on by ourselves.

Q. Is there any way for such bankrupts as we are, to be discharged of that debt, and loosed from the bond of the first covenant?

A. There is no way, but by taking hold of the new cove-

nant, and flying to its Mediator and surety for the payment of our debt.

Q. Are believers in Christ wholly absolved from the obligation of the covenant of works?

A. They are wholly loosed from this covenant, as to its power of justification and condemnation. It can neither justify nor condemn them, since God hath entered into a new covenant with them for their justification. But tho' it be no ways binding upon believers, as a covenant; yet still it binds them as a law, or rule for regulating their hearts and lives: for the law being of universal moral equity, it remains a perpetual rule of righteousness to believers as well as others; and it is impossible that a rational creature can at any time be loosed from its obligation as a holy and just law; though believers are freed from its condemnation as a covenant. As the law or covenant of works is (in respect of its threats and whips) a schoolmaster to drive us unto Christ for righteousness and justification; so Christ graciously frees his people from the rigour and condemning power of this school-master; but refers them back to him as a guide and director of their walk and behaviour, Gal. iii. 13, 24. 1 Cor. ix. 21. Rom. vi. 14. Rom. vii. 16, 22, 25.

Q. Is it simply impossible for any man now to enter heaven by the way of a covenant of works?

A. Yes, certainly; for that way was eternally blocked up by Adam's fall; so that there is no passage by it ever since, Rom. iii. 20. Rom. viii. 3. Gal. ii. 21.

Q. If there be no salvation by that Covenant, why doth the Lord now require sinners to perform the condition of it, viz. perfect obedience, as he did the Israelites of old; and that young man, Matth. xix. 17. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments?

A. The Lord insists on the terms of the first covenant with all sinners in a natural state, not to shew that life is attainable that way; but for these reasons,

1. To shew the equity of the terms of the first covenant, the justice of its sentence, and his right to demand obedience and satisfaction thereto.

2dly, To humble proud self-conceited sinners under a sense of guilt; and convince them of their own impotency.

3dly, To drive them out of themselves, and make them de-

spair of salvation, by their own righteousness, and of finding life by the first covenant, Rom. vii. 9.

4thly, To convince them of the absolute necessity of be-taking themselves to the covenant of grace, and the righteousness of the Mediator therein provided, Gal. iii. 22, 24.

Q. Why have men such a natural inclination to be justified and saved by the way of the old covenant of works?

A. It being the covenant of nature, and made with Adam when all mankind was in his loins; men, by nature do still entertain a deep impression of it. Besides, man, by nature being a proud and selfish creature, he is unwilling to be beholden to another for righteousness and salvation, but strongly inclineth to be his own saviour and to stand upon his own legs, and this we all derive by natural generation from Adam. Hence it was that the Jews and Pharisees of old sought so earnestly to 'establish their own righteousness,' and declined 'to submit to the righteousness of Christ,' Matth. xix. 16. Luke xviii. 11. Rom. x. 3. Hence also the Galatians of old sought to join their own works with Christ's righteousness (as the Papists do now) in the matter of justification. We are all naturally married unto the law, or a covenant of works, that is our first husband; and from it we must necessarily be divorced, in order to our being married to Christ and his righteousness in a covenant of grace. But so strong and rooted is our inclination to our first husband, the covenant of works, that even the best believers have a natural hankering after it, and find it the greatest difficulty in the world to get their hearts weaned and pluckt from self-righteousness; and from seeking to be justified and accepted with God, by virtue of something in themselves.

Q. Did God leave all mankind to perish under the sentence and penalty of the broken covenant of works?

A. No; for God of his own free grace from all eternity, hath elected some to be redeemed and saved from it, Eph. i. 4, 5.

Q. What way hath God chosen to redeem and save elect sinners from their lost and perishing estate?

A. Man being wholly miserable, and incapable of any relief by the first covenant; God of his infinite mercy was pleased to frame a gracious new covenant answering all the demands of our miserable circumstances, and constitute his own Son to be the Mediator and surety of it; and this is now the

only way and method of salvation, Gen. iii. 15. Gen. xvii. 2, 7. Rom. viii. 3. Acts iv. 12.

Q. What is this gracious new covenant, which God hath made for redeeming fallen man?

A. It may be said to be twofold. 1. The covenant made from eternity with Christ in name of the elect, commonly called the Covenant of Redemption.

2dly, The covenant of reconciliation made in time with the elect in Christ, commonly called the Covenant of Grace.

Q. Doth the word of God give any ground for this distinction?

A. Yes, Psal. lxxxix. 3. &c. Isa. lix. 21.

Q. What is the covenant of redemption?

A. It is an eternal and gracious agreement in the council of the glorious Trinity, upon the foresight of man's fall, for the redemption and recovery of elect sinners: wherein God the Father, out of his infinite mercy, gave a certain number of fallen mankind to God the Son, as their federal representative and surety, to be by him redeemed and saved: and for this end, demanding of him, that he should assume their nature, and in their room satisfy divine justice, by paying their whole debt both of obedience and suffering, the which they were obliged to do by the covenant of works: and also, that he should undertake to gather all the lost elect and bring them unto God. And for his encouragement in this great work, it was promised to the Son, that he should have all requisite furniture, support, acceptance, and success: And likewise a glorious reward to himself, together with grace and glory to his people. With which proposals of the Father, the Son out of his infinite free love did most chearfully comply; undertook to do the whole work required of him, accepting of, and claiming the promises made unto him, Psal. lxxxix. 3, 4, 19, 20, &c. Isa. xlix. 3, 4, &c. Isa. lix. 20, 21. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2. Heb. ix. 5, 9. Psal. ii. 7, 8. Isa. l. 5, 6, 7. Psal. xl. 7, 8. John x. 18. John xvii. 4, 5.

Q. What is the covenant of grace?

A. It is God's free and gracious paction with elect sinners in Christ, proposed to and made with them in the gospel; wherein, according to his eternal compact with Christ their surety, and for the sake of his mediation and merits, he graciously and immutably promiseth pardon, peace, grace and glory to them. Particularly, he promises in an absolute man-

ner, to grant them the blessings of vocation, faith, regeneration and other means of salvation. And in order to their obtaining of the pardon of sin, the adoption of children, and eternal life (all which blessings are purchased by Christ) he requires of them, that they believe 'in his Son the Lord Jesus Christ,' and accept of him, with all the benefits of this covenant by a true and lively faith, which they are called to shew forth by a sincere repentance, and study of new obedience. All which gracious promises and demands, the elect in due time, upon God's call, do cordially acquiesce in, accept of, and give consent unto: and this they do, thro' the grace and strength of Christ their surety, according to his eternal engagement for them, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. Heb. viii. 10. John i. 12. John iii. 16. Jam. ii. 18, 22. John vi. 37, 44, 45. John xvii. 12. Acts v. 31.

Q. Was not this new covenant a most wonderful, gracious, and suitable contrivance and remedy for our misery in a fallen state?

A. Yes; for though the first was a glorious covenant contrived in infinite wisdom; yet seeing it could not answer the demands of these miserable circumstances we plunged ourselves into, God was content to lay it aside, and frame a new one suitable to our misery. For the first covenant leaving man helpless, hopeless, and remediless under its sentence, having no provision for pardon, place for repentance, nor room for a Mediator, God pitied us in our undone state, (though he could more easily have destroyed Adam and his posterity, and made a new world of innocent creatures to have been governed by the first covenant) yea, he took down that glorious fabric of obedience and rewards, and framed a more gracious and excellent one in its stead, for saving lost man. And seeing man was disabled and incapacitate for covenanting with God by himself a second time, God found out a Mediator and surety to bind for him, and perform both the condition and pay the penalty of the first covenant, and answer for any new thing to be demanded of him. And thus both God's justice is satisfied and man's happiness secured; the law-breaker's life saved, and the law-maker's honour maintained; and free grace highly glorified.

Q. Is there not a great affinity betwixt the covenant of redemption, and the covenant of grace?

A. Yes; for they agree not only in their spring, ends, and

indissoluble nature, but likewise in their substance and matter; in so far as the covenant of redemption doth comprehend the whole of the covenant of grace, both promises and demands: for the whole blessings and benefits promised in the covenant of grace to the elect, were from eternity promised in the covenant of redemption to Christ their head and representative; and so to the elect in him: and so the condition or qualifications required of the elect in the covenant of grace, they were first demanded of Christ their head in the covenant of redemption, who there undertook and became surety for his people's performance. So that we see in some respects, the covenant of grace is only a transcript of the covenant of redemption, according to 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. ii. 2. Gal. iii. 16.

Q. Wherein then do these two covenants differ?

A. In these respects, 1. As to the time of making them; the covenant of redemption being made from all eternity, but the covenant of grace only in time by the preaching of the gospel.

2dly, The federates or parties covenanting are different: in the Covenant of Redemption, the Father and the Son are the only parties covenanting; but in the Covenant of Grace, God and the elect are the parties. I grant, that Christ is a federate in the covenant of Grace, as well as in that of Redemption, but in different respects: for in the first he stood as principal, but in the second as surety. In the first he was the only party; but in the second he hath the elect joined with him. Christ is the Mediator and surety of the Covenant of Grace, but the Covenant of Redemption had no Mediator or surety; the Father and the Son trusted one another upon the agreement.

3dly, These two covenants differ from one another as a prior treaty or agreement, made by one friend for the behoof of another, doth differ from the posterior ratification of it by the party concerned, for whose good it was made. Our blessed Redeemer Christ graciously listed himself as the elect's representative in the Covenant of Redemption, transacted with God the creditor for the payment of their debt, and made a most advantageous bargain for them. But it being made without the elect's knowledge, it was necessary that their consent should be had to this treaty and method of salvation; wherefore God is pleased to cause it to be promulgated and proposed to them in the gospel, for the gaining of their con-

sent. And God's voice to them in the gospel is to this effect;
 "Are you content with what Christ my Son hath engaged
 "and done in your name? Are you willing to quit all other
 "methods of salvation, and come to me thro' a Mediator,
 "and rely wholly upon his righteousness? Are you satisfied
 "with the remedy provided for you in the Covenant of Re-
 "demption." O, saith the poor soul, (being determined
 thereto by the powerful operation of the Holy Ghost, whose
 office it is, according to the foresaid eternal agreement to ap-
 ply the remedy prepared by Christ). "This is a most noble
 "method of salvation, I am well pleased with the eternal
 "treaty and the execution of it, with the Mediator and his
 "righteousness, and with the great and precious promises
 "made to me in him: I renounce all other ways of salva-
 "tion, and rely entirely on Christ, to bring me to God."
 And this is that which we call the Covenant of Grace.

4thly, They differ in respect of their comprehensiveness,
 the Covenant of Redemption being far more large and com-
 prehensive than the Covenant of Grace, in regard it doth contain
 it and much more: for the Covenant of Redemption hath in
 it, not only what is promised to, and required of the elect,
 but also many distinct demands of Christ as their surety, and
 promises made to him as such, which do not immediately con-
 cern the elect: such as these, it was required of Christ that
 he should "leave his glory, take a body of flesh, fulfil the
 "law, and suffer death: also, that he should quicken the
 "elect by his Spirit, convert, and sanctify them, guide them
 "through the world, and bring them safe to glory at last."
 Again, it was promised to Christ personally, for his encou-
 ragement to engage in this work, that he should have all
 "needful assistance and furniture for it, acceptance and suc-
 "cess in it, and a glorious personal reward, an honourable
 "resurrection, and high exaltation above all principalities
 "and powers. That he should have the administration of
 "all things put in his hands, for the good of his people, and
 "an unsearchable treasure of grace and rich supplies given
 "him, to communicate to them, whatever is for their good
 "and happiness." Whereupon Christ as our surety freely
 undertook the work proposed, and laid hold on the promises,
 both these made to him personally, and these made to his seed
 in him, Gal. iii. 16. 2 Tim. i. 9.

Thus we see how many things there are in the Covenant

of Redemption, required of, and promised to Christ as the elect's surety and representative, distinct from the things promised to and required of the elect themselves: which last part makes up the Covenant of grace when promulgate to them in the gospel, for their consent and acceptance; so that it is plainly a part or branch of the Covenant of Redemption, and differs nothing from it, but as a part doth from the whole, or as the map of a particular province distinctly bounded and illuminated with a new inscription or dedication, differs from a general map of the whole kingdom whereof it is a part. The Covenant of grace as proposed to and made with Christ in the elect's name from eternity, can hardly be distinguished from the Covenant of Redemption; for thus it is a constituent part thereof, and incorporated with it. But as it is drawn out by itself, to be proposed to the elect in the gospel and their consent obtained to it, it becomes a distinct covenant. Nay, it is distinct both in respect of conditions and promises.

1. In respect of conditions: death, and satisfaction for sin thereby, was the great condition of the Covenant of Redemption on Christ's part; but faith, and closing with Christ thereby, is the condition of the Covenant of Grace on the elect's part. I grant indeed, that Christ our Mediator is bound for the performance of both these conditions, but it is in different respects: for the first he is engaged as principal, but for the second as surety. Christ undertook for us, things of two sorts; first, Things that he was to do for us by himself; secondly, Things that he was to make and enable us to do: the first sort he performed for us, according to the Covenant of Redemption, as the principal party engaged for them. The second, he works in us as the surety of the Covenant of Grace, which from eternity he undertook to be. Now there is a great difference betwixt these two; for tho' it be certain and true in the strictest sense, that Christ actually died for us, and satisfied justice for us, and in our room; yet it can no ways be said that he repents or believes for us, these are formally our acts, though it be Christ that enables us to do them, and works them in us.

2. In respect of promises; the great promise on God's part to Christ in the Covenant of Redemption, was giving to him a seed and a glorious reward: but his great promise to the elect in the Covenant of Grace, is the giving of Redemption and eternal life to the party believing. The tenor of

the Covenant of Redemption as made with Christ from eternity runs thus ; “ Make thy soul an offering for sin, and “ thou shalt see thy seed ;” But the tenor of the Covenant of grace as proposed to the elect in the gospel, is, “ Believe in “ the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt not perish in thy sins, “ but have everlasting life,” Isa. liii. 10. John iii. 16.

Q. Wherein doth the Covenant of grace differ from the Covenant of Works ?

A. In many things, such as, 1. The Covenant of Works which God entered into with our first parents, was a covenant of friendship, betwixt God and an innocent creature, that were in amity together. But the Covenant of Grace is a covenant of reconciliation betwixt enemies, an offended God and guilty man : The first flowed from divine love and goodness ; but the second from divine compassion and tender mercies.

2. The first covenant was universal, being made with all mankind in Adam. But the second in particular, being only made with the elect in Christ.

3. The condition required of Adam in the first Covenant, was working and obeying, and that to perfection ; but that required of us in the second, is believing.

4. The first covenant makes the proper condition of life, and the ground of a man’s justification before God, to be the righteousness performed by the man himself : but the second, declares it to be, the righteousness performed by our surety Christ, apprehended by our faith.

5. The first covenant did not provide, nor so much as admit of a Mediator or surety to answer for Adam’s performing his part of it, or of any remedy in case of breaking it : for it allowed no place for repentance, it gave no hopes of forgiveness upon any condition whatsoever. But the second covenant doth graciously admit and allow of all these.

6. The first covenant could be broken and disannulled, but the second is indissoluble and everlasting, because of the sufficiency and faithfulness of its surety, Isa. liv. 10. Isa. lv. 3. Heb. vii. 22, 24, 25.

7. The least sin or failing on Adam’s part, made void the first covenant, excluded him from all the blessings promised in it, and rendered him perfectly miserable : but all the sins and failings of the elect cannot dissolve the second, or deprive them of happiness, Psal. lxxxix. 31, 33, 34. Jer. iii. 14. Heb. xiii. 5, 8. 1 John ii. 1, 2.

Q. Hath our faith the same place in the Covenant of Grace, that Adam's obedience had in the covenant of works? Or, is faith the condition of the Covenant of Grace, in the same sense, that Adam's obedience was in the condition of the Covenant of Works?

A. No; for Adam's obedience was his righteousness before God, and the proper ground of his justification and claim to happiness: It was a real and pleadable condition according to the covenant, upon which Adam's title to life and happiness was properly founded. But this cannot be said of the believer's faith; for faith is not his righteousness before God, nor the ground of his justification and claim to happiness; it being only the instrument or applying condition required of him, for interesting him in the righteousness of Christ his surety; which alone is the proper ground of his justification and claim to happiness; and the only pleadable and meritorious condition of life and salvation, which the poor, naked, and guilty soul must flee to, and depend upon.

2. The condition required of Adam in the first covenant was to be performed by him in his own strength, i. e. the strength that was given him at his creation. But the condition required in the second covenant, is not to be performed by the elect sinner in his own natural strength, but by the strength freely promised and communicated to him in this covenant.

Q. Doth not the Covenant of Grace oblige us to obedience, as well as the Covenant of Works did?

A. Yes, but not in the same way, or for the same ends.

Q. What is the difference betwixt legal and evangelical obedience?

A. It is very great in several respects. 1. Legal obedience was peremptorily commanded as man's duty: but evangelical obedience is also freely promised, and given as the gift of God.

2. The first could not be admitted, unless absolutely perfect; but the second is accepted, tho' imperfect, if sincere.

3. They vastly differ in their ends, the first was required as the proper condition of life and happiness; but the second, as an evidence of our faith, and conformity to our Redeemer. The first was for the justification of our persons; but the second for the testification of our gratitude for redeeming love. The first was required as the legal condition for purchasing of

heaven and glory ; but the second, as a gospel qualification in order to possessing it only.

Q. What names or epithets doth the Covenant of Grace get in scripture ?

A. A great many, particularly it is called a testament, a covenant of peace, a covenant of life, a covenant of promise, a new covenant, an everlasting, holy, sure, and well-ordered covenant, Heb. ix. 15, Ezek. xxxvii. 26. Mal. ii. 5. Eph. ii. 12. Heb. xii. 24. Isa. lv. 3. Luke i. 78. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Q. Why is this covenant called a testament ?

A. It is frequently called so in scripture, and that because the everlasting inheritance promised in it, with all things thereunto belonging, is freely bequeathed and made over to the elect ; yea, even the things required of them, are freely promised to them : and all these precious promises and legacies are made sure and firm to them by the death of Jesus Christ the testator, Heb. ix. 15, 16, 17. Matth. xxvi. 28.

Q. Is the Covenant of Grace a scripture term, and what is the import and meaning of it ?

A. This term indeed is not found in the express words, tho' it be oft express'd in words equivalent. The term is very significant and most fitly appropriated to this covenant ; in regard the free grace (i. e. the undeserved mercy and goodness) of God is richly and gloriously displayed in this covenant. It was free grace that inclined God at first to contrive it, that moved him afterwards to reveal and propose it. It is free grace that determines the elect to consent to it, and abide in it. And it is the exalting of God's free grace, which is the great end and design of it. But more especially it is called a Covenant of Grace, in respect of the matter of it, all the blessings and good things promised in it, being God's gracious and free gifts to undeserving sinners, proceeding meerly from his gratuitous bounty, and astonishing free love in Christ. Yea, so full of grace is this covenant, tho' God is pleased to require faith of us, as the condition to interest us in the benefits of it, and also good works to shew forth that faith : yet, both that faith, and these works, are as freely promised and given to the elect by virtue of this covenant, as any other blessing in it, Eph. i. 4, 5, 6. Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10. Zec. iv. 7.

Q. What are these blessings, gifts, and benefits, which are so freely offered and promised to us in this covenant ?

A. They are so many, they cannot be numbered ; and so

great, they cannot be exprest. The great thing stipulated on God's part in this covenant, and that which is the sum and substance of all his other promises, is, *I will be your God*, Jer. xxxi. 33. This is the fullest, largest, sweetest, sublimest, and most comprehensive promise in the whole Bible. The Covenant of Works had no such promise that we read of; God said only to Adam, *Do this and live*, i. e. thou shalt have life and happiness. But in the Covenant of Grace he saith, *Believe in my Son, and I will be thy God*, i. e. I'll not only give you life, heaven, and glory, but I'll give you myself, a Jehovah, all I am, all I have, and all I can do, shall be thine. *I'll be thy God*, includes all God's blessings to his people, whether grace or glory, earth or heaven, time or eternity. It implies his standing instead of all relations to them, his being their Father, their King, their Husband, their Master, their Friend, their Benefactor, and all things to them. Further, *I'll be your God*, imports an interest in all the divine attributes and perfections, you shall have my wisdom for your direction, my power for your protection, my mercy for your pardon, my grace for your sanctification, my faithfulness for making good all the promises to you, and my sufficiency for giving you perfect happiness. Nay, a whole Trinity shall be yours, the Father with his eternal love and pity, the Son with all the fullness of his purchase, and the Holy Ghost to make application of the blessings of that purchase unto you.

Q. What are the blessings of Christ's purchase contained in this covenant?

A. All the blessings and mercies that ever were or shall be enjoyed by any believer in time or eternity, they are all the fruits of Christ's purchase, and run to them in the channel of this covenant. The chief of these particular blessings, are,
 “ The new heart, illumination, faith, repentance, pardon,
 “ freedom from the law's curses, reconciliation, adoption,
 “ sanctification, access to God, hearing of prayers, the quick-
 “ nings, consolations, and conduct of the holy Spirit, increase
 “ of grace, peace of conscience, perseverance, the ministry of
 “ angels, suitable outward provision, through-bearing at death,
 “ resurrection to life, and eternal glory;” together with all the graces of the Spirit, and innumerable other blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12. Psalm xxxiii. 1. &c. Psalm xxxiv. 10, Psalm lxxxiv. 11. Psalm xci. 11. Isa. xxxiii. 16. Isa. xli. 10.

Jer. iii. 19. Hof. xiv. 4, 5. John x. 28. 1 Cor. i. 30. 1 Cor. iii. 22. 2 Cor. i. 20. 2 Cor. vi. 18. Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. Jer. xxxii. 38, 39, 40, 41. Rom. viii. 26, 28. John iii. 18, 36. John xiv. 16, 17, 26. Isa. liv. 13. Isa. liii. 11. Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26. 1 Tim. iv. 8. Phil. iv. 19. 2 Pet. i. 4.

Q. Whether is the Covenant of Grace absolute or conditional?

A. If the definition before given of this covenant, with the scripture texts, whereon it is founded, be duly considered and compared, we will find it partly absolute, and partly conditional.

Q. In what respect is the Covenant of Grace absolute?

A. In respect of the first blessings and benefits promised in it, which serve as means for obtaining the ends of the covenant, such as effectual vocation, regeneration, faith, and repentance; these are promised, and given absolutely and freely by God for Christ's sake, without depending on any condition to be performed by the elect, Heb. viii. 10. John vi. 44, 45.

Q. In what respect is this covenant conditional?

A. In respect of the second and subsequent blessings of it, which are as the end of the foresaid means, such as union with Christ, justification, adoption and glorification. God is pleased to suspend the bestowing of these, till that condition be performed by the elect, which he requires, viz. Faith, John i. 12. Gal. ii. 16. Phil. iii. 19.

Q. In what sense is faith called a condition, on our part, in this covenant?

A. I shewed before that it is not to be meant in that sense, that obedience is called the condition of the Covenant of Works; that we do not understand it as an act any ways meritorious, or pleadable before God for a reward, or an act performed by our own inherent strength, or elicit by the power of our free-will. But we mean only that faith is an act or qualification, required of us in point of duty, as necessarily antecedent to the conferring of the promised blessings of pardon and life: and that the bestowing of these blessings is suspended, till this act or condition be performed.

Q. Is faith the only condition in the Covenant of Grace?

A. In this covenant, there are conditions of three sorts, 1. There is *conditio propter quam*, or a condition for which the blessings of this covenant are bestowed on the elect, and that

is Christ's satisfaction and merits, in respect whereof, all the blessings of the covenant are truly conditional, except that of election, and God's purpose of Redemption.

2. There is *conditio per quam*, or a condition by which we come to get an actual title to and interest in the second, or subsequent blessings of the covenant before-mentioned, and that is faith, which is required as a necessary condition, instrument, or mean of application on one part, in order to our partaking of these blessings, Rom. v. 1. Acts xvi. 30.

3. There is *conditio sine qua non*, or a condition without which the foresaid blessings of pardon and eternal life, cannot be enjoyed: so repentance and new obedience may be called conditions of this sort; in regard they are absolutely necessary for all Christians; partly as the concomitants, fruits and evidences of a true faith; and partly to prepare and make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, Luke viii. 3. Zech. xii. 10. Col. i. 10, 12. Heb. xii. 14.

Q. Doth it not detract from the grace and freeness of this covenant, and afford something to the creature whereof to boast, to say, that the covenant requires any condition on our part?

A. If any act or duty required of us in this covenant were to be performed by our natural strength, or by the help of common grace; or if it did give a right to the blessings of the covenant in any meritorious way, either by way of congruity or condignity in the Popish sense; then indeed, it would derogate from the free grace of this covenant; wherefore, with all sound Protestants we must abhor all thoughts of such duties, works, or conditions as these. But when we call faith a condition, and understand it only of a gracious instrument or qualification in the elect, purchased for them by Jesus Christ, absolutely promised by God in this covenant, and wrought in them by the holy Ghost; a grace that receives all from God, and gives the entire glory to God: such a conditionality of faith is noways inconsistent with a covenant of grace, or of promise, Eph. ii. 5, 8.

Q. Since faith is not performed by our strength, but wrought in us by the holy Spirit, how can it be said to be a condition on our part?

A. Tho' the grace and power of believing be derived from God's Spirit, yet the act of believing is properly the act and deed of the gracious soul, as being exerted and performed by his faculties; and hence it is that the Spirit of God styles these

truly our works, that are wrought in us by his grace, Isa. xxvi. 12. 'Lord, thou hast wrought all our works in us.' They are still termed our works, though performed by his grace.

Q. May not love, repentance, humility, self-denial, holiness, and new obedience be called conditions of this covenant as well as faith, seeing these are likewise required of all that enter into this covenant, and many blessings of this covenant, are also suspended until the performance of them?

A. There is a very great difference betwixt the conditionality of these graces and that of faith, as I shall afterwards make appear. In the mean time, I own, if condition be taken in a large sense, for every thing, duty, or qualification, that is necessarily required of those that enter into this covenant; then indeed all the forementioned graces and qualifications may be called conditions or terms in this covenant; and some of these terms, conditions, or qualifications are necessary as antecedents unto our entering into this covenant, others as concomitants of it, and others as consequents to it, tho' indeed they are also freely promised to the elect.

Q. What are these terms or qualifications, that are required as antecedents unto our entering into this covenant?

A. Such as, hearing of the word, some knowledge of God, and sense of our misery, and despair of help in ourselves, and a sight of our need of a Mediator, &c. all these may be called antecedent or preparatory conditions of our entering into covenant, in regard they are necessarily and previously requisite unto it, Mat. ix. 12. Luke xv. 16, 17. John iv. 10.

Q. What are these terms or qualifications, that are required as concomitants?

A. Such as repentance, love, humility, self-denial, spiritual hunger, &c. these may be called concomitant conditions of our entering into this covenant, in regard they do necessarily accompany it, and are inseparable from true faith, Mark i. 15. Acts ii. 38. Luke vii. 47. Luke ix. 23. Phil. iii. 3, 8. Mat. v. 6.

Q. What are these terms or qualifications, which are required as consequents unto our entering into this covenant?

A. Such as, evangelical obedience, taking up the cross, patience, perseverance, &c. these we find laid down as fruits and evidences of faith, and required as necessary conditions, of our enjoying and possessing the ends of this covenant, viz. eternal

life and glory, Gen. xvii. 1, 2. Luke ix. 23. Heb. xii. 14. Heb. x. 36, 38. I say, all these may be called conditions or terms in this covenant, in the sense before specified; as being duties and qualifications necessarily required of all those that enter into it; and so we find these words, conditions and terms, used by many sound Protestant divines.

Q. What is the difference betwixt the condition of faith, and these other conditions required? or what preference hath faith to these, in reference to this covenant?

A. Repentance, and the other graces and qualifications before named are only conditions of certain connection, without which we cannot be justified, united to Christ, or inherit his purchased glory: but faith is the only instrumental, uniting and applying condition of our justification, by and through which, as a mean and instrument, we are actually justified, united to Christ, and entitled to all the blessings of his purchase. It far excels all other graces, in regard it hath a peculiar influence on our justification, and union with Christ. It doth that noble office to us, which no other grace or act of ours is capable of, because of its special aptitude and fitness for taking hold of the Redeemer, and closing with his righteousness. Hence we are frequently said to be justified by faith, but never by repentance, love, or any other grace. And the righteousness that doth justify us, is oft called the righteousness of faith, and by faith. And it is so called, to teach us, that as the righteousness of Christ is the only meritorious condition of our justification and our partaking of the great blessings of the covenant; so faith is the only instrument and applying condition thereof, Rom. iv. 13. Rom. x. 6. Phil. iii. 9. Gal. v. 5. Heb. xi. 7.

Q. Doth faith justify and entitle us to the blessings of the covenant, as a work, grace, or habit in us, of special excellency and worth before God?

A. Not at all; for if it be considered as a work or grace in us, it hath not any more intrinsic worth or value, than other gracious habits, nor any more influence on our justification before God, than other graces have, which is indeed none at all. Faith then, doth not any ways justify us upon the account of its own worth, or as it is a work or grace of ours: but only as it is an instrument having a peculiar fitness, as the hand of the soul, for apprehending of Christ, and applying his righteousness, which is the only ground of our justification.

before God. And upon this account only it is, that faith is preferred to all the rest of the graces, and called the only condition of the covenant of grace on our part.

Q. Why is Christ called the Mediator and surety of the covenant of grace?

A. 1. He is called the Mediator of it, because he graciously interposeth betwixt God and man, who were at variance, and by his blood and spirit reconciles them together, and brings them into a covenant of peace and friendship.

2. He is called Surety of this covenant, because he graciously undertakes for both parties fulfilling their parts of it, viz. that God shall perform all his promises to the elect, and that they shall do whatever God requires of them, 1 Tim. ii. 5. Heb. ix. 15. Heb. vii. 22.

Q. Doth God need any surety or cautioner on his part?

A. Not at all, upon his own account, for he is the faithful and immutable God, 'for whom it is impossible to lie,' or falsify his promise. But only on our account, for our guilt having made us suspicious, that God would not accept, or dwell with such unworthy creatures; it was requisite for our comfort, that the Son of God should be surety to us, for the performance of these promises, that are truly so great in themselves, and may justly be astonishing to our thoughts.

Q. Is this covenant universal, or made and entered into, with all men, as the first covenant was?

A. No; it is only made and entered into, with such as accept the offers and terms of it, and these are none but the elect, Isa. lv. 3. Ezek. xi. 19, 20. Heb. viii. 10. Rom. ix. 4. Rom. xi. 5, 7.

Q. Is this covenant offered to none else?

A. Christ and the benefits of this covenant are tendered to all that hear the gospel, without exception: and this is plain from the many general calls and invitations of Christ to lost sinners, with the promises thereto annexed, which we have recorded; together with his peremptory commands, that require every man to come to him, and believe in him, and that under the pain of damnation, Prov. i. 20, 21, 22, 23. Prov. viii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Isa. xlv. 22. Isa. lv. 1. Mark xvi. 15, 16. Acts ii. 38, 39. Rev. iii. 17, 18. Rev. xxii. 17.

Q. Have all men, even the worst, sufficient warrant from these general calls, commands, and promises to come to Christ, and take hold of his covenant, with all its benefits and promises.

A. Yes, they may do it warrantably without any fear of presumption, firmly expecting welcome upon their coming. Nay, they hainously sin against God and their own souls, if they neglect to do it, Isa. li. 3, 4, 5. John iv. 37. Heb. ii. 3. Heb. iv. 1, 2.

Q. *Why is this covenant offered and tendered to all the hearers of the gospel indefinitely, seeing it is only made with a certain number of them, viz. the elect?*

A. Because it hath so pleased a wise and sovereign God who doth all things according to the counsel of his own will, and is not bound to give account of his matters. Yet we may adventure to say, that he doth it for these ends, namely, that he may proclaim the sufficiency and perfection of Christ's ransom, together with the freeness and fulness of divine grace, as a sufficient foundation for all to believe, and flee to Christ for refuge. And also, that by this method, the elect may be gathered out of the multitude, and the refusers of Christ left without excuse, Eph. i. 11. Job xxxiii. 13. Mat. xx. 16. Luke xv. 22. Heb. ii. 3. Heb. xi. 13, 14.

Q. *Is there any way to salvation, but by the covenant of grace, and Christ its Mediator?*

A. No, Acts iv. 12. 1 Cor. ii. 13. Gal. ii. 16.

Q. *How then were the faithful saved, who lived under the law, before Christ's coming in the flesh?*

A. Though they had a dark and legal dispensation of the mystery of grace, yet they were under the same covenant, and saved in the same method with us; for they had the same Mediator and surety typified to them by Moses and the sacrifices; they had the same promises of remission and salvation, which we have; and they were called to look through the types and figures, and act faith on Christ to come, as their only Saviour and Redeemer. And so they were justified by Christ in the method of the covenant of grace, and saved by virtue of the blood of Christ their surety, which was agreed upon to be shed for them in due time, according to the covenant of redemption; upon which account he is called 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' Rev. xiii. 8. see also, Psalm ii. 12. Isa. xlv. 22. Acts x. 43. Gal. iii. 7, 8, 9. 1 Cor. x. 4.

Q. *Was the covenant of grace promulgate and dispensed to the church, always after one and the same manner?*

A. No; but in different manners; yea, so different, that

though the covenant of grace under all periods, hath still been the same for substance; yet, because of its gradual revelation and different administration, it is distinguished into the Old and New Testament, or the old and new covenant of grace. The old covenant, being that which was administered before Christ's coming in the flesh; and the new, that which is administered since his coming, Heb. i. 1. Jer. xxxi. 31. 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7, 8. Heb. viii. 13. Heb. ix. 1.

Q. Wherein doth the dispensation of the new covenant of grace differ from that of the old?

A. The Old Testament or covenant of grace was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, and other types; which did all point forth Christ as to come. But the new covenant of grace is administered by the preaching of the word, and dispensing of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which shew forth Christ as already come. Moreover the new dispensation of the covenant is far more easy, clear, efficacious, and extensive than that of the old, Heb. x. 1, 2, 3, &c. 1 Pet. i. 10. Mat. xxviii. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 23. Heb. viii. 6, &c.

Q. What way hath God taken to establish and confirm the Covenant of grace to us?

A. Several ways; 1. By his word of promise. 2. By his oath. 3. By the death and blood of his Son. 4. By outward signs and seals, commonly called sacraments, Gen. xvii. 7. Gen. xxii. 16, 17. Heb. vi. 13, to 18. Heb. ix. 16, 17. Rom. iv. 11.

Concerning the S A C R A M E N T S.

Quest. WHAT is the proper signification of the word Sacrament?

A. It is not a scriptural word, more than the word Trinity is, yet seeing the thing signified is there, and the word is very significant, it may be lawfully used. Anciently the word sacrament was a military word, in use among the Romans, and signified the solemn oath which the soldiers took, to be true to their general: afterwards, it was used by ecclesiastical writers to signify any holy mystery, and particularly the sealing ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and indeed

it is very applicable to them, seeing by receiving these seals, we solemnly engage ourselves to be the Lord's, and swear to stand by him as faithful soldiers, fighting under his banner, against all his enemies.

Q. What is the true nature and use of a sacrament?

A. It is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his church, and annexed as a seal to the covenant of grace; wherein by outward and sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of his mediation, are represented, sealed, and applied to those that are within the covenant, to confirm their interest in him, to strengthen and increase their faith and all other graces, to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another, to put a visible difference betwixt those that belong to the church, and the rest of the world: and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his word, Gen. xvii. 7, 8. Rom. iv. 11. 1 Cor. xi. 24. Rom. xv. 8. Rom. vi. 3. Eph. iv. 5.

Q. Why is it said to be an ordinance instituted by Christ in the Church?

A. 1. To shew that Christ is the sole king and head of the church, who alone hath the power to appoint her ordinances. 2. To distinguish the sacraments of Christ's institution, from those of Popish invention, viz. the five bastard sacraments, of *ordination, confirmation, penance, marriage, and extreme unction*: none of which are instituted by Christ for sacraments, nor have they the parts of true sacraments, and none of them are seals of the covenant of grace.

Q. What are the parts of a sacrament?

A. Every sacrament hath two parts; the one external and earthly; and the other spiritual and heavenly. There is an outward sensible sign, that doth represent, convey, seal and apply the spiritual benefit thereby signified.

Q. What is a sensible sign?

A. That which is obvious to the outward senses, of hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling or feeling. And such are both the sacramental elements and sacramental actions.

Q. What things do sacraments signify and seal?

A. 1. As they are signs, they signify and represent the grace and good-will of God in Christ to his covenanted people. 2. As they are seals, they ratify and confirm his people's right to all the blessings and promises of the covenant, and likewise their engagements to new obedience.

Q. Is not the word alone sufficient to salvation? What need is there for sacraments?

A. It is enough to satisfy us, that the infinitely wise God hath thought fit to adjoin sacraments to his word, as necessary means of his peoples salvation and comfort: and since he hath thus graciously appointed them; it becomes us with reverence, thankfulness, and diligence to receive them, and to judge the contempt or abuse of them a hainous sin before God.

Q. How doth the word and sacraments differ as means of salvation?

A. In several things; 1. The word is directed to the bodily ear; but the sacraments to the eye and other senses. 2. The word is preached to all without exception; but the sacraments belong to none but the members of the church. 3. The word is the ordinary mean of begetting faith; but the sacraments are means for confirming and increasing it, Mark xvi. 15. Acts xviii. 36. Gen. xvii. 7. 1 Cor. iii. 5. Rom. iv. 11.

Q. Why hath God adjoined sacraments to the word?

A. That he might give a further proof of his condescending goodness, and tender concern for his peoples good. It is wonderful condescension in God to dispose his grace into a covenant form, and enter into a paction with us; but it is yet more, to be content to add seals to it, for our further confirmation and consolation.

2. That they might serve to awaken the affections and excite grace. Sacraments are, as it were, a visible gospel, the offers of free love, and benefits of Christ's purchase, are thereby exposed to the eye, as the word doth sound them in the ear. God knows our stupidity and dulness, that we are much more affected with things that we see with our eyes, than that which we only hear.

3. That he might provide against that prevailing plague of unbelief in his people; and strengthen their weak faith, by giving them sensible signs of his love, and visible pledges of their interest in it. For (as Christ said to the nobleman of Capernaum, John iv. 48.) Except ye see signs and wonders, 'ye will not believe.'

Q. Are the sacraments efficacious to work grace in all that partake of them?

A. No; for we read of baptism administred to Simon Magus who still remained a naughty man; and that the Lord's

supper may be received by persons unworthy, Acts viii. 23. Luke xiii. 26, 27. 1 Cor. xi. 27.

Q. Whence have the sacraments their efficacy?

A. 1. Negatively, they have it not from themselves, *ex opere operato*, according to the Papists: nor from the intention or holiness of the minister that dispenseth them. But, 2. Positively, they have it from Christ's blessing, and the Spirit's working in and by them upon the souls of such as partake of them. It is only Christ who by his Spirit puts life and virtue in the sacraments, and makes them effectual means for conveying and applying his saving benefits to his people's souls.

Q. What were the ordinary sacraments of the Old Testament dispensation?

A. Circumcision and the passover, which are now abrogated by the coming of Christ, who was typified by them.

Q. Hath not Christ appointed sacraments under the New Testament dispensation in the room of these which he abolished?

A. Yes; viz. Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Q. Are not the sacraments both of the Old and New Testament for substance the same?

A. Yes; for they both represent and exhibit Jesus Christ, and the same spiritual benefits and mercies through him, Rom. iv. 11. 1 Cor. x. 1.

Q. Is there no difference betwixt them?

A. Yes; in several respects. 1. The old sacraments represented Christ as to come; but the new as already come. 2. The old represented Christ more darkly; but the new more clearly and plainly. 3. The old were only to endure till Christ's coming in the flesh; but the new until Christ's coming in glory. 4. Their outward signs differ much, one from another.

Q. How doth it appear that circumcision and baptism are the same in substance?

A. In respect they are both sacraments for initiation, typifying and representing our natural pollution and original guilt, the necessity of being purified from carnal affections, and the way of our salvation by the shedding of Christ's blood.

Q. How doth it appear that the passover and the Lord's Supper are the same for substance?

A. By the following things. 1. They both represent Christ crucified, and commemorate his love in delivering his people from the bondage of sin and Satan.

2. The Israelites behoved to prepare themselves for keeping the passover, for some time before ; particularly they kept the paschal lamb four days in their houses, before it was killed ; during which time, (as their writers tell us) - it was tied to their bed-posts, that by their constant hearing of its bleatings ; they might be excited to look back and remember their fore bondage in Egypt, and their gracious deliverance from it ; and also to look foreward and remember the sufferings and agonies of the Messiah for their sins. In like manner, communicants ought to prepare themselves for the Lord's supper, by serious and frequent meditating upon their misery by nature, the evil of sin, and the bitter agonies which Christ endured in delivering them from it.

3. As the paschal lamb was roasted with fire ; so Christ in the Lord's supper is held forth, as scorched with the fire of God's wrath.

4. As the paschal lamb behoved to be eaten, and that wholly ; so Christ in the Lord's supper must be received by faith, and that wholly in all his offices.

5. As the lamb in the passover, behoved to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs ; so Christ must be received in the Lord's supper, in truth and sincerity with bitter repentings for sin.

6. As the lamb in the first passover, was to be eaten by the Israelites in haste, with their loins girt, staves in their hands, and shoes on their feet ; so Christ in the Lord's supper must be received without delay, with holy resolution and preparation for our spiritual journey, travelling as pilgrims through the wilderness of this world.

7. As the blood of the lamb was to be sprinkled on their door-posts and lintels, for securing them from the destroying angel, that cut off the Egyptians first-born ; so in the Lord's supper, we must have our whole souls besprinkled with Christ's blood by faith, for securing us from the stroke of divine justice : nay, also our outward conversation that is visible to the world must be sprinkled, that they may take notice of our having been with Jesus, Exod. xii. 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

Concerning BAPTISM.

Quest. *WHAT is the true nature and use of baptism?*

A. Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, annexed as a sign and seal of God's covenant with believers in Christ; wherein Jesus Christ hath ordained the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; to be a sign, not only of the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church; but also a sign and seal of his interest in the covenant of grace, with all its blessings purchased by the blood of Christ, represented by that water, and particularly to signify and seal his ingrafting into Christ, his remission of sins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit; his adoption into God's family, and resurrection unto everlasting life. And likewise his solemn dedication to God through Jesus Christ; and entering into an open and professed engagement to be the Lord's, wholly, and only his; and to walk with him in newness of life, Matth. xxviii. 19. Gal. iii. 27. Mark i. 4. Tit. iii. 5. Eph. v. 26. Rom. vi. 4, 5, 6, 11. 1 Pet. iii. 21.

Q. *How many sorts of baptism are mentioned in scripture?*

A. We read of a six-fold baptism. 1. The Levitical baptisms or washings, Heb. ix. 10. 2. The baptism of tears, or repentance, Luke vii. 38. 3. The baptism of affliction, blood, or martyrdom: Thus Christ and the martyrs were baptized, Matth. xx. 22, 23. Luke xii. 50. 4. The baptism of the Holy Ghost, or the conferring of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, Acts i. 5. 5. It is sometimes put for the Christian faith or doctrine of baptism, Acts xviii. 25. 6. There is the sacrament of baptism, which we now speak of.

But, principally, baptism is two-fold, external and internal, *fluminis & flaminis*, of water, and of the Spirit.

Q. *What parts doth the sacrament of baptism consist of?*

A. Of two parts. 1. The outward and visible part signifying. 2. The spiritual and invisible part thereby signified.

Q. *What is the outward part signifying?*

A. The washing the body with water, and the using of the words of institution.

Q. *What is the spiritual part signified by the washing with water?*

A. 1. The washing away of the guilt of sin, or our justification by the blood of Christ applied to the soul. 2. The washing away of the filth of sin, or our sanctification by the Spirit of Christ in the work of regeneration, Rev. i. 5. John iii. 5.

Q. *What is signified by the words of institution or baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?*

A. 1. It signifies that ministers have authority from God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to administer this sacrament of baptism, Mat. xxviii. 18, 19.

2. It signifies the baptized person his entering into a solemn covenant with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, his choosing and taking God the Father as his God and Father; God the Son as his Redeemer and Saviour; and God the Holy Ghost as his guide, sanctifier, and comforter: also it signifies his consecration to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and his coming under engagements to the faith, profession and obedience of the holy Trinity: together with his solemn renouncing of the three great enemies of the holy Trinity, viz. the devil, the world, and the flesh, 2 Cor. viii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 21.

Q. *Why is the blood of Christ, and blessings of the new covenant represented here by water?*

A. Because of the near resemblance they have to one another in these things; 1. Water hath a cleansing virtue, for taking away filth and pollution from the body, so Christ's blood cleanses the soul from sin.

2. Water hath a refreshing virtue to a thirsty traveller, and the dry withered herbs; so Christ's blood and benefits are most refreshing to the poor thirsty soul.

3. Water hath an extinguishing quality, for quenching fire; so the blood of Christ quencheth both the fire of God's wrath, and the fire of our lusts.

4. Water hath a mollifying virtue, it softens the hardened earth; so Christ's blood hath softened many a hardened heart into tears, and melted them into a compliance with God's will.

5. Water is most necessary, our bodies could not live or subsist without it; so the blood of Christ is the most necessary and useful thing in the world; our souls without it would perish eternally.

6. Water is cheap and free to all, no man is denied of it; so the blood of Christ is offered freely to all that please to accept of it.

7. Water hath no effect nor operation upon us, unless it be sprinkled or applied; so neither hath the blood of Christ any effect upon us, till it be applied by faith.

Q. Is there no sacramental element or rite to be used in baptism, but the washing with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?

A. No; for though the Papists do join herewith, salt, spittle, oil, and the sign of the cross, yet they have no warrant for these from Christ or his Apostles; and therefore they are not to be regarded, but as superstitious and antichristian additions to Christ's holy institution.

Q. For what special ends hath the Lord appointed baptism?

A. They are various; 1. To be a notour badge of our Christian profession, to distinguish us from Jews, Pagans, and Mahometans.

2. To be a teaching sign or symbol, for instructing us in the knowledge of the great articles of the Christian faith; particularly, it is a looking-glass to shew us our natural pollution and misery by reason of sin, and our remedy provided in the blood of Christ.

3. To be a confirming seal of God's covenant, for assuring believers of the reality of his love, the truth of his promises, and the certainty of their title to the childrens inheritance, and (as it were) for giving them investment and sealing in all the blessings of Christ's purchase: even as men are invested in the right, and put in the possession of a bargain by formalities of law; as a house is delivered us by a key: or a field by stone and earth.

4. To be a gracious channel and means for conveying grace, and soul-purification, and spiritual blessings, to those for whom they are designed.

5. To be an obligatory bond on our part, to be true and faithful to God, to renounce the service of sin and Satan, and to walk with God in newness of life.

6. To be a trysting-place for parents, to meet and treat with Christ concerning the salvation of their young ones. For all which see Gal. v. 3. Acts ii. 38, 41. Rom. 4. 11. Col. ii. 11, 12. Acts xxii. 16. Eph. v. 26. 1 Pet. iii. 21. Luke xviii. 15, 16. Tit. iii. 5.

Q. When God doth seal his covenant with believers at baptism; what things are engaged and sealed on his part?

A. 1. That he will be our God. 2. Receive and own us as members of his visible church. 3. Give us a sealed right to church ordinances and privileges. 4. Cut us off from the old stock of nature, and ingraft us into Christ. 5. Take us into his family, and under his providential care. 6. Entitle us to Christ's purchase and make over all the blessings and benefits of the new covenant, -viz. remission of sin, regeneration, adoption, sanctification, resurrection to life, and eternal glory and happiness.

Q. Doth baptism seal and apply these things equally to all who are baptized?

A. No; for to elect infants and believers in reality, it seals and applies these things absolutely. But to these who are only believers in profession it seals and applies conditionally, i. e. upon supposition that they be what they profess.

Q. Have unbelievers then no benefit by their baptism?

A. Yes; in so far as they are hereby distinguished from the rest of the world, externally separated from Satan, the world, and the flesh, are dedicated to Christ and his service, become members of the visible church, and have a sealed right to gospel ordinances and privileges, if they do not forfeit these by their after carriage, Rom. ix. 4. 1 Cor. vii. 14.

Q. Is there any thing engaged or sealed on our part in baptism?

A. Yes, viz. that we will be the Lord's, i. e. that we will be wholly the Lord's, soul and body, in all we are, or have. 2. That we will be only the Lord's, and therefore renounce all other Lord's and masters, the devil, the world and the flesh. 3. That we will be the Lord's by practice as well as profession, that we will mortify sin, wage war against Christ's enemies, fight under Christ's banner, and study conformity to him, Rom. vi. 4, 5, 12. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. 2 Cor. viii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 21.

Q. Are the benefits sealed to believers immediately conferred upon them, at the moment of baptism?

A. Though a sealed right to these be then given them; yet the efficacy of baptism is not necessarily tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; for God being a most free agent makes this ordinance effectual, and confers his grace when, and how he pleaseth; besides the fruit and power of

baptism, reacheth to the whole course of a believer's life, John iii. 5, 8.

Q. Doth not baptism remove original sin, and confer regenerating grace to all the partakers of it?

A. No; for many partake of baptism who are unregenerated still: baptism of its own nature, or by itself operates nothing; but only as the Spirit of God, (the author of grace) doth concur therewith: and being a free agent, he works grace before, at, or after baptism as he pleaseth. And for original sin, it is not then taken away from believers themselves, except as to its guilt and dominion, (if it please the Spirit to co-operate at that time, and apply the blood of Christ) but as to its pollution and inherence, it remains in part during their whole lives, as is sadly verified by the complaints of the best of God's people, Psal. li. 5, 6, 7. Rom. vii. 23, 25. Acts viii. 13, 23.

Q. What is the necessity of baptism?

A. It is necessary in respect of the command of Christ, who hath appointed it as a sign and seal of his covenant, and an external means of salvation; and therefore ought to be held in reverence, and sought for with all due care: and to contemn or neglect this ordinance of Christ's institution, is a very hainous sin, Matth. xxviii. 19. Luke vii. 30. Acts xvii. 14. Exod. iv. 24, 25.

Q. Is outward baptism absolutely necessary to salvation? Or are they damned who die without it?

A. It is not the want, but the contempt of this ordinance that exposeth to damnation; for the converted thief wanted baptism and was saved; besides it would be a great injury to free grace, and a horrid thing in itself, to say, that it is in the power of wicked men to damn the souls of others, by their wilful neglect of this ordinance, or that the Israelites infants, who died before the eighth day, or while they were in the wilderness, were all damned; neither are parents guilty in this matter, if they do not neglect this ordinance of Christ, when and where it may be had; Rom. iv. 11. Acts x. 2, 4, 22, 31, 45, 47.

Q. Where should baptism be administered?

A. In the place of public worship, and in the face of the congregation, where the people may most conveniently see and hear; and not in private places.

Q. What is the necessity hereof?

A. In regard baptism is the public entry and door to Christ's house, or the ordinance whereby persons are solemnly admitted into the church, and made members of Christ's family: and therefore it is necessary that the church should be publicly called and assembled to the administration of this public church ordinance. And that for these reasons,

1. That thereby, they may witness, homologate and consent to the admission of new members into the church or family of Christ.

2. That the engagements of parents, or the party baptized, may be public and solemn, before many witnesses.

3. That there may be many to join in prayer for a blessing upon the ordinance. It is much for the interest of both parents and children, to have the prayers of all the godly in the congregation for them, on such an occasion; which to be sure are far more prevalent and effectual, than the prayers of a few.

4. That the whole congregation may be edified by the dispensing of this solemn ordinance, and excited to remember and improve their own baptism, and be faithful in keeping the covenant engagements which they then sealed before many witnesses, and also be humbled for former breaches.

Q. To whom is baptism to be administered?

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers from the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him; but infants descending from parents, either both, or but one of them, professing faith in Christ and obedience to him, are in that respect within the covenant, and so to be baptized; Acts viii. 36, 37. Gen. xvii. 7, 10. Gal. iii. 9, 14. Acts ii. 38, 39, 41. 1 Cor. vii. 14. Luke xviii. 15, 16. Rom. xi. 16.

Q. To whom is baptism not to be administered?

A. Not to heathens and infidels, or persons openly scandalous; for these being without the covenant, and out of the visible church, have no right to the seals thereof; neither have their infants, while they continue so: but if upon hearing the gospel, they repent and believe, duly make profession of their faith and obedience, they have a right to this ordinance, Eph. ii. 12. Mark xvi. 15, 16. Acts viii. 13, 36, 37.

Q. Who properly have a right to baptism?

A. All the members of the visible church, and their infants, Acts ii. 39.

Q. What is it you call the visible church?

A. It is a society made up of those who in all ages and places of the world, do profess Christ and the true religion; and of their children.

Q. *What is the invisible church?*

A. The whole body of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ their head.

Q. *Do all that are baptized become members of the invisible church, and thereby ingrafted into Christ?*

A. No; for our baptism make us only members of the visible church.

Q. *What is it to be really ingrafted into Christ?*

A. It is for sinners to be cut off from the old stock of nature, and united to Jesus Christ, that they may grow up in him, and bring forth fruit unto him; and this is done upon our believing.

Q. *Are adult persons and infants to be baptized in the same way and method?*

A. No; for the adult, or persons come to years, must first be instructed in the faith of Christ, and principles of Christianity, and are to make profession of the same, with confession of their sins, before they be baptized, according to the antient practice, Mat. iii. 6. Mat. xxviii. 19. Acts viii. 38. But the infants of believers (of whom these things cannot be expected or required) are to be baptized without such profession or confession, their parents undertaking as sponsors for them.

Q. *But how should infants be admitted to baptism, till they believe and confess their faith, seeing according to Mark xvi. 16. they must first believe, and then be baptized?*

A. That is only meant of adult persons without the visible church. And tho' infants do not actually profess their faith, as being incapable of it; yet they are to be ranked among believers, as being the children of believing parents: for infants are but parts of the parents wrapt up in another skin, and to be accounted but one person with them, as the root and branches are but one tree, according to Rom. xi. 16. We are to judge of children by their parents, till they come to the use of reason, and be capable to chuse their own way; and then indeed they may disinherit themselves by their degeneracy. But till then we are to judge of them by the parents, as we do of a graft taken from a tree and implanted in a new stock: for we judge of the graft by the tree from which it was taken, until it bear fruit by itself, whereby it may be discerned. It is

upon this account that God calls the children of his people, his children, and children born unto him, Ezek. xvi. 20. Now if children have a covenant-relation to God, or be within the covenant (as the children of believing parents certainly are) they have a right to the signs and seals of it also, Gen. xvii. 7. Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. Acts ii. 39.

Q. Ought not infants according to this argument, to be admitted to the Lord's supper also?

A. The infants of believers have indeed upon the same account a remote right to this seal likewise; tho' for the present they are incapable to receive it, as wanting the actual exercise of reason, which is absolutely necessary in order to our examining ourselves, and discerning the Lord's body; these being the indispensable duties of all such as partake of the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. xi. 28, 29.

Q. Should they not for the same reason, be kept from the seal of baptism, seeing they understand not the nature of that ordinance, nor the duties of the baptized?

A. 1. They understand as much of it as the Jewish infants did of circumcision, at eight days of age; and yet that ordinance behoved not to be longer delayed. Now there is the same reason, for administering the sacrament of baptism to infants under the gospel, that there was for circumcision under the law, seeing baptism is now come in its room, as the sacrament of initiation or entrance into the church, which circumcision then was. If by divine warrant, not only Abraham, but all his seed had a right to the initiatory seal of the covenant, Gen. xvii. 7, 10. then believers now, who are Abraham's children, and under the same covenant with him, must still have the same privilege; seeing the ancient grant was never afterwards repealed, but expressly confirmed under the gospel, according to Acts ii. 39. Gal. iii. 9, 14, 16.

2dly, Infants may reap the benefit of baptism, tho' they understand not its meaning. The infants Christ took up in his arms, Luke xviii. knew not his meaning, yet they got his blessing. An inheritance bequeathed to a poor child in the cradle, is of use to it, though it understands not the advantage at present, nor hath the comfortable possession, till it come to years.

3dly, It is to be observed, that though the Jewish infants did partake of circumcision, yet they were excluded from the passover; and that for the same ground, that we exclude our

infants from the Lord's supper, which is now come in its room, viz. the want of the actual exercise of reason. For none were to share of the passover, but such as could ask concerning the meaning thereof, Exod. xii. 26. But this was not absolutely needful for partaking of circumcision, in regard that was only for conveying a right; but the other was for commemorating a benefit, which necessarily supposed understanding.

Q. Is there any other scripture warrant for the baptism of infants, beside that of the circumcision of the Jewish children?

A. Though that be a sufficient warrant for it; yet we have more; for, 1. Christ commands his apostles to disciple and baptize all nations, of which infants are no small part; as our Saviour excludes none from the ordinance, so he limits no time or age for the dispensing of it: there was no need to give any express charge concerning infants, seeing their privilege was settled for many ages before, and they still in possession of it, by the initiatory seal of circumcision, which was the same in substance with baptism. This was never reversed, but their right declared to continue, Acts ii. 30.

2. Infants are capable both of grace and glory, and consequently are capable of baptism, which seals our right to these, Luke i. 15, Mat. xviii. 6. Luke xviii. 15.

3. Children of believers are pronounced holy, 1 Cor. vii. 14. i. e. federately holy, as being within the covenant; and therefore they must needs have a right to the seal of it.

4. Infant-baptism was universally practised in the ancient church, they deriving it from the apostles, whose example they followed in this matter; and of whom we have it several times recorded, that they baptized such as believed with their whole households; such as the houses of Lydia, the jailor, and Stephanas, Acts xvi. 15, 33. 1 Cor. i. 16.

Q. To whom pertains it to present the infants of the visible church to baptism?

A. It belongs properly to the parents, and not to these who are called god-fathers or god-mothers—Because children have a right to baptism, only in and by their parents: and these only have a power both by the law of God and nature, to dispose of their young ones, and to order their education; and they only are accountable to God for them. And, in the sense of the law, their will is the childrens will. Upon all which accounts, parents only ought to present their infants to God in

baptism, and consent for them to the covenant of grace, Josh. xxiv. 15. Dent. xxix. 10, 11, &c.

Q. What doth the parents bringing and presenting their children in baptism import and signify in itself?

A. It imports these things; 1. A public acknowledgment, that their children are defiled by original sin; and need washing as soon as they come into the world.

2. That they are bound by the ties of nature and common justice, to do all they can, for their childrens help and relief in this miserable state; that they may (so far as lieth in them) repair the injury done them, by conveying original corruption to them.

3. That they believe no remedy can cure them, no fountain can cleanse them, but that of Christ's blood, which is represented by the baptismal water.

4. That they willingly dedicate and devote their children to God, to be enrolled in his family, numbered among his children, and entirely disposed of by him.

Q. What are the special duties incumbent upon parents, on the occasion of presenting their children in baptism?

A. 1. To wonder at God's grace and condescension, in taking such pains on us, as to lay the great mystery of godliness and scheme of our salvation before our eyes by visible rites and signs, thereby to affect our senses, and the more effectually to excite our minds to a serious consideration of the great things which God hath done for us. Since the gospel report which the word brings daily to our ears (concerning our misery, and remedy, our ruin by sin, and recovery by Jesus Christ) makes but little impression on us; he is pleased to give a perceptible view of these things by baptism to the eye, to try if our eyes will affect our hearts, according to Lam. iii. 51. And ought not this goodness to melt even the hardest heart?

2. To admire God's free grace and mercy, that he is willing to take both us, and our children into covenant with himself: that after the first covenant was broken on our part, he was content to enter into a second (a covenant all of grace) and that with his own condemned rebel creature! Abraham fell upon his face when God was covenanting with him; and David was astonished with admiration at it, Gen. xvii. 3. 2 Sam. vii. 19. And so ought we upon this occasion.

3. Parents ought to search and see, if they be really in co-

venant with God themselves: for, when we dispense this sacrament, we are to look on the parents that claim the benefit of it to their children, to be persons in covenant with God, otherwise their children have no right to the seal of it. Therefore it highly concerns parents on this occasion, to enquire if they have as yet entered into covenant with God, by their own personal transaction, and renewing of their own baptismal dedication and engagements: And if they have dealt faithfully with God in this covenant, yea, or not.

4. Parents ought on this occasion, to renew the covenant which they made with God in their own baptism, take hold of the covenant of grace for themselves, accept of Jesus Christ the Mediator of it, close with his righteousness, and dedicate themselves, as well as their children to the Lord; and thus transact with God and Christ in secret. Which they are likewise publicly to own and renew. (at the presenting of their infants) by a solemn profession of their faith in God the Father, Son, and holy Ghost; and dutiful obedience to him according to his word: believers should rejoice to come with their children to baptism, because every time they do it, God renews his covenant with them and theirs; as he did with Abraham at circumcision, Gen. xvii.

5. They ought to be fervent in prayer, wrestling with God for the purification and acceptance of their young ones through Christ's blood; and for a solemn blessing upon the ordinance to be dispensed to them; that God may join the inward and privy seal of his Spirit, with the outward seal of this sacrament.

6. They ought to study to be well acquainted with the great truths of the Christian religion, as contained in the holy scriptures, and agreeable thereto, summed in our Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechism: that so they may be capable to instruct and train up their children in the knowledge of these truths, according to the engagements which they publicly take on. Alas! there is little conscience made of such solemn promises by many; they are ignorant of our excellent Confession of Faith and Catechisms, and will not so much as buy them, or read them over; notwithstanding of their reiterated engagements on this occasion.

7. They are to make a solemn surrender and dedication of their children to God in Christ, as children of his family, subjects of his kingdom, and members of Christ's mystical

body: and that for the end they may be washen in Christ's blood, saved by his grace, guided by his Spirit, ruled by his laws, and disposed of by his providence. Thus we are to bring and present our children to God in baptism, as living sacrifices to him, acceptable through Christ Jesus.

8. We are in the name and behalf of our infants (they being parts of ourselves, as was shewed before) to consent to the gracious offers and terms of the covenant of grace, and that they will be the Lord's wholly and only his. And for this end to teach them (when they come to understanding) the knowledge of God, and the way of salvation thro' Christ, according to his word; and to instruct them in the duties of the covenant, particularly, the necessity of faith, repentance, and new obedience. And because children are more ready to be influenced by our examples than our precepts, we are to engage to shew them the copy of a holy life, family worship, and secret prayer, in our own conversation. Thus Abraham the father of the faithful, entered into covenant with God, for himself and his seed after him, Gen. xvii. 7, 9. And according to that Covenant, he "commanded his children, and "household after him, to keep the way of the Lord, Gen. "xviii. 19." And so believing parents under the gospel, being under the same covenant with faithful Abraham, ought to "bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of "the Lord, Eph. vi. 4."

Q. What are the duties incumbent upon the congregation, or these that are witnesses to the administration of the sacrament of baptism?

A. 1. Patiently to attend, and wait till it be done: for, to remove before the administration of baptism, as many do, argues both a contempt of Christ's solemn ordinance, which he hath instituted for his church's good; and want of charity to these who are to be baptized, in that they decline to stay and pray for them, and receive them into the communion of the visible church. And likewise it shews that they have little regard to their own souls, when they turn their backs upon such an excellent means of edification, as this is. Let such consider, whether it had been just and becoming for the whole congregation to have dealt so with respect to them, when they were baptized, as they deal now in reference to others. Stay still then, and pray for the members to be ingrafted, as others did for you.

2. To witness the administration of it, with a holy awe and becoming reverence to the great Author of it, and mystery represented by it. Remember that it derives its authority and institution, not from man, but from the exalted Lord of angels and saints. Had this ordinance been of man, it had been vilipended and come to nought many years ago; but being of divine original, it hath kept its authority throughout the whole Christian world, for the space of these 1700 years. Wherefore it becomes us all to pay a dutiful regard to the administration of it.

3. Admire the wonderful kindness of God to fallen man, that he pited us, when wallowing in our blood and pollution, and provided a suitable remedy for us. Though he might in justice have suffered such wretches to drop into the devil's arms and hell's flames from the very womb; yet, behold! he stretches out his merciful and fatherly arms to embrace us, as soon as we enter into the world; 'suffer little children (saith he) to come unto me,' to me their friend and Saviour.

4. Bless God that hath ordered your lot to be born within the pale of Christ's church, of Christian parents who early presented and dedicated you in such a manner to God, whereby you got a sealed right to gospel ordinances and privileges, nay, to Christ and all the benefits of the new covenant upon the condition of your faith; so that now you have encouragement to come and claim your right; especially you whose happiness it is to be born of godly and believing parents, bless God for this mercy, plead your interest in the covenant, for your claim is certainly better than others; you may go to God as your father's God, and therefore plead he is yours too: for when God entered into covenant with your fathers, he made it both for them, and for you their seed: and how pleasant is it to sing with Moses at the Red-sea, *Exod. xv.* "He is my God, I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him." But beware of thinking that your being of such parents, necessarily entitles you to the saving blessings of the covenant, tho' you should do nothing yourselves; nay, if you put not in your claim when you come to age, you forfeit your right. Yet questionless, your birth still entitles you to many external privileges and mercies; upon which account, it is said, *1 Pet. iii. 21.* 'The like figure unto Noah's baptism doth now save us;' i. e. as the ark (which was a type of baptism) wrought

a temporal salvation for all Noah's family ; so baptism entitles the families of believers to many temporal privileges and blessings. But tho' all Noah's family was admitted into the ark, this did not entitle them to admission into heaven ; so neither will our outward baptism save us from the deluge of God's wrath, and bring us to heaven ; and therefore the apostle adds for explication in the forcited verse, ' Not the putting away ' of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience ' towards God,' i. e. not the outward washing of the body with water ; but the faithful answer of a resolved soul, accepting of and adhering to the covenant sealed in baptism : for at the first planting of Christianity, people were generally grown up when baptized, and made answer publicly for themselves, making profession of their faith and obedience to the holy Trinity, and their renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh.

5. Bless God that you are born under the New Testament times, when the fountain for cleansing sinners is so fully opened in the word and sacraments, that the streams of it are daily so near you, and you invited to wash therein. - Our access to the fountain is now plain and easy ; it is not lock'd up, covered with leaves, or obscured with types and figures, as under the law ; we have now an open view of it : there is a wide vent made to its streams, by Christ's death and wounds upon the cross ; and excellent channels framed for conveying it to us, viz. the preaching of the gospel with its sacraments. O how inexcusable will we be for ever ! if after all this we contemn the water of life, and die in our pollution.

6. Be concerned for the precious souls of those that are to be baptized ; pray fervently for them, that God may come and bless his own ordinance to them ; give the inward grace with the outward seal ; apply Christ's blood to the soul, as water is sprinkled upon the body ; that he may regenerate them by his Spirit, stamp them with his image, make them instruments of his glory : that they may rise up, and do God better service in their generation, than, alas, we have done in ours.

7. When you see and hear parents solemnly engaging for their children at their baptism ; let such as are parents, that have come under the like engagements, consider how they have performed them. Do ye make conscience of praying for your children, teaching them the principles of religion, admonishing them of their duty, warning them against sin, and learn-

ing them to read and pray? When took you them aside to tell them of the vows you took on at baptism in their name, and press them to renew personally their baptismal covenant? O have ye not cause on this occasion to be humbled for your neglect and short-comings in performing your solemn engagements, and seek forgiveness through the blood of sprinkling! O negligent parents! remember what a fearful meeting will be betwixt you, and your graceless children one day at Christ's tribunal, when they will come with accusations and curses in their mouths against you, for your unfaithfulness in performing your solemn engagements, with respect to their precious souls.

8. Let every one upon such an occasion call to mind his own baptism, how he was thus once presented, dedicate and sprinkled in like manner; and study by all means to improve his own baptism, which is a most needful, though much neglected duty.

Q. How is it, that we ought to improve our baptism?

A. 1. Be sensible of the greatness of the privilege and dignity conferred upon you, in being baptized in the name of Christ, and sacramentally sprinkled with his blood for the remission of sin; and think much upon it. Alas, there are many who never think on Christ, or his blood, and put no value upon their baptism. I have read of Lucian a scoffing Atheist, when he apostatized from the profession of Christianity, he mocked at his baptism, saying, 'He got nothing by it, but a syllable to his name; he was Lucian before, and at baptism was called Lucianus.' And what do many get by their baptism, but a name? Why, they undervalue their baptism, never think on it, nor study any way to improve it.

2. You ought personally and explicitly to renew your covenant and solemn dedication to God sealed at baptism. It is not enough that you are Christians by your parents dedication, but you must be so by your own also, by ratifying your parents deed, when ye are of age; otherwise your baptism will profit you nothing; nay, instead of profiting you, it will be a witness against you, if you do not personally transact with God in Christ, and give away yourselves to the Lord in truth and sincerity.

3. Improve your baptism, by labouring to secure and clear up your interest in the pardon of sin, adoption, sanctifying grace, and other blessings sealed to you in that sacrament.

Remember, that these blessings were only sealed to you conditionally, upon your believing in Christ; and that they are not actually conferred, till you be sensible of sin, and close with Christ and his righteousness. Go then, O penitent sinner, apply to the blood of Christ by faith, which was sacramentally applied to you at baptism, and plead with God for pardon of sin; make use of your baptism as a strong argument for it, say, “ Lord, have I not thy seal, as well as thy promise for my pardon? Got I not a pledge of it from thee at my baptism? Behold thy ring and thy bracelets; are they not thine? Lord, make good thy word, thy sealed promise;” I believe, Lord, help my unbelief.

4. Press also for the joyful sense of this benefit of pardon sealed to you in baptism; the having whereof, is the most comfortable thing in the world. We see the Eunuch, when he had got this seal of baptism, “ went on his way rejoicing: “ O now (thought he) my case is blessed, I am a pardoned man, God hath received me into his family, and taken me into covenant with himself, and implanted me a member of his mystical body: I that was the plant of a strange vine, am now ingrafted into a noble stock: and shall I not be glad and rejoice in his salvation?” Thus, O believer, improve the seal of baptism, in order to your growing up to the comfortable assurance of your pardon of sin, and adoption into God’s family: seeing these blessings are irreversibly promised and sealed to you in that sacrament.

5. Improve your baptism as a spur to holiness and diligence in Christ’s service; forget not him whose name you bear, whose livery you wear, and whose colours you are sworn to. Seeing you are solemnly dedicated to God, and all you have is consecrated to him at baptism; O then live as these who are not your own; spend your strength and time, not in serving sin and the world, but in worshipping of God, in loving, praising and glorifying of him, whose you are, and whom you ought to serve. Alas, there are many, who list themselves into God’s service by baptism, and yet turn deserters, and go over to the devil’s camp, taking on to fight against their King and Lord to whom they are sworn. They live as if they had been solemnly devoted to, and baptized in the name of the cursed trinity of hell, the devil, the world and the flesh, instead of the ever blessed and glorious Trinity of heaven: Alas, they live as if they had renounced that, and not the other;

which is certainly a most fearful guilt, and cannot miss to be attended with a severe doom.

6. Be humbled for your manifold pollutions, your falling so much short of the grace of baptism, and walking unsuitably to your solemn engagements. Have you not cause to lament before God, for forgetting and slighting the free love of God manifested to you in baptism; and for having so little recourse to the fountain that was opened to you therein, for sin, and for uncleanness; and that you feel so little of the efficacy of the precious blood of your Redeemer (which was represented and applied to you in that ordinance) for melting of your hearts, cleansing you from sin, and quickening you to holiness.

7. Improve your baptism as a shield against Satan's temptations; 1. Are you tempted to despairing thoughts of mercy, or troubled with perplexing doubts and fears? Then remember the seal of free love you got in baptism. Christ himself was tempted after his baptism, to doubt of his filiation and sonship; but gave Satan a peremptory repulse; teaching us thereby to do the same. Luther saith, that all his answer to the devil, when he tempted him to despair, was, *baptizatus sum, et credo in Christum*, I am baptized into the belief of Christ. 2. Are you at any time tempted to sin? Then remember your baptism; Luther also tells of a holy virgin, that when she was tempted to sin, replied, *baptizata sum*, I am baptized. And indeed this is a sufficient answer to all Satan's temptations, "I am baptized and dedicate solemnly to God; I am not my own but the Lords; I am sworn to Christ, and how shall I serve the devil?" Profanity in a Christian is apostacy from Christ, and on the matter a renouncing of his baptism, which is a fearful, nay, a devilish sin.

8. Improve it as an argument to courage and resolution in time of danger or persecution. Stedfastly adhere to the doctrine of the Trinity, in whose name you are baptized; be not ashamed of Christ or his truths, seeing his name is called upon you, and you solemnly owned him before the whole congregation. "He that is ashamed of me (saith Christ) and of my words, in this sinful and adulterous generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels, Mark viii. 38." Dionysia, encouraged Majoricus her son, an African martyr, when he was going to die, with these words, "Remember, son, that thou was baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Lastly, Do not trust to your baptism, and your having the name of Christ called upon you : an empty name and profession of Christianity will not save you ; Simon Magus was baptized, and yet perished : many go with baptismal water on their faces, and sacramental bread in their mouths to hell at last. Kings have both their common and privy seals. Rest not in the outward seal, but seek the inward seal of God's Spirit, changing your natures, and applying the blood of Christ for cleansing your souls.

Q. Why may not baptism be administered to a person oftner than once, as well as the Lord's supper ?

A. 1. It is not commanded to be reiterated, as the Lord's supper is, 1 Cor. xi. 26.

2. Circumcision under the Old Testament was not reiterated.

3. The nature of this sacrament doth not require or allow of repetition : for as the Lord's supper is for nutrition, this is for initiation and implantation. This is the sacrament of our new birth, and admission into the church : now as we can be but once new born, and once entered into the church ; so we are no oftner to be baptized, Tit. iii. 5.

Q. Wherein doth the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper agree ?

A. In these things, 1. They have both the same author, Jesus Christ. 2. They are both seals of the same covenant. 3. They signify and seal the same things, viz. Christ and his benefits. 4. They are both to be dispensed by ministers of the gospel, and by none else. 5. They are both to be continued in the church till Christ's second coming.

Q. Wherein then, do these sacraments differ ?

A. In these things ; 1. Baptism is to be administered but once, but the Lord's supper often. 2. There is but one element in the first, viz. water ; but in the second, there are two, viz. bread and wine. 3. The first may be administered to infants ; but the second, only to those that are of years, and capable to examine themselves. 4. The first doth signify our regeneration and admission into the church : but the second doth represent Christ as our spiritual nourishment, and sealeth our continuance and growth in him. Baptism is the door of Christ's house, by which we must enter ; but the Lord's supper is the table, at which the children must feed, and receive strength.

Concerning the LORD'S SUPPER.

Quest. WHAT is the Lord's supper?

A. The Lord's supper is a sacrament of the New Testament; wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is shewed forth; and the worthy receivers are not after a corporal or carnal manner, but by faith made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace: to the confirming of their union and communion with Christ, renewing of their covenant with God, and their thankfulness to him; and their mutual love to, and fellowship one with another, as members of the same mystical body, Matth. xxvi. 26, 27, 28. 2 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25, 26. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

Q. Who is the author of this sacrament?

A. The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the glorious king and head of his church, to whom alone it appertains to institute her ordinances.

Q. What may we learn from its being Christ's ordinance?

A. That we ought therefore to have a special regard to it, and beware of either neglecting or abusing it.

Q. When did Christ institute this ordinance?

A. In the same night wherein he was betrayed, and immediately after he and his disciples had eaten the Jewish pas-fover.

Q. Was not that a very remarkable night?

A. Yes, it was a night ever to be had in remembrance, being the last night before Christ's death, the night wherein he began his bitter agonies, and sware the bloody sweat for us; a night wherein he saw heaven, earth, and hell, even justice, men, and devils, all drawn up in battle-array against him.

Q. Why did he institute this sacrament at such a time?

A. For these reasons; 1. Because this ordinance was to commemorate his death, and so it was very fit to appoint it when he was going to die.

2. To encourage and strengthen the hearts of his drooping disciples, now when he was about to leave them (as to his bodily presence) and they were to meet with many trials.

3. To shew the great weight and import of this ordinance:

had it not been a matter of the greatest concern to our good and his glory, it had not taken up the thoughts and care of our great Redeemer just when he was going to die, and undergo such unspeakable sufferings.

4. To lay the greater obligation upon us to attend this ordinance, and religiously to observe the charge and instructions he gave concerning it: as being the words of a dying man; nay, of a dying Saviour, who did more for us that night he spoke them, than all the angels of heaven, or relations on earth could or would have done.

Q. Did not Christ's matchless love to us appear wonderfully, in chusing such a time to institute this ordinance?

A. Yes; 1. In that he minded and spoke so much of us, when his time was so short. 2. That he provided so carefully for us, when his danger was so great. Which shews that still his people lay nearest his heart; that he regarded their interest more than his own, and preferred their comfort to his own safety: for though he saw all his enemies in a full march against him, and his *all* at stake, whence it might have seem'd high time for him to be providing for his own safety: yet he spent much of the short time he had, in providing a sweet feast, and bequeathing rich legacies to his poor people that he was to leave behind him.

Q. Why did Christ institute this sacrament immediately after the Jewish passover?

A. To shew that the passover was thereby abrogated, and the Lord's supper come in its room.

Q. Are we not bound to receive this sacrament at night, after Christ's example?

A. The circumstances of time, place and company, in the first administration, not being essential to the ordinance, were not intended for our imitation. We are no more required to receive it at night, than to do it in an upper-room, with but twelve in company. Moreover, the time was occasioned by the passover, that was always eaten at night, and in private families: in the room whereof, and after which, the Lord's supper was to be instituted. But now when we have numerous assemblies for religious worship, the night would be highly inconvenient for them.

Q. What are the usual names and designations given to this ordinance?

A. It is called the sacrament of the Lord's supper, the

Lord's table, the communion, the breaking of bread, the cup of blessing, the feast, Christ's testament, the Eucharist, 1 Cor. xi. 20. 1 Cor. x. 16. Acts ii. 46. 1 Cor. 5, 8. Luke xxii. 20.

Q. Why is it called the sacrament?

A. It is called so, by way of eminency: and because here we take a most solemn oath of fidelity to our Redeemer.

Q. Why is it called the Lord's supper?

A. Because, 1. It was instituted when Christ was eating the passover-supper with his disciples, which was at night. 2. The supper was then accounted the principal meal of the family. 3. It is ordained only for these that dwell in Christ's family, and abide with him both day and night.

Q. Why is it called the Lord's table?

A. Because he is the author of it; yea, he is both the maker and the matter of this entertainment; the feeder and the food also.

Q. Why is it called the communion?

A. Because in the right partaking of this ordinance, we have communion and fellowship with Christ, share with him in the benefits of his death and purchase, and also have communion one with another.

Q. Why is it called the breaking of bread?

A. Because in this ordinance, bread is broken and made use of, as the outward symbol and seal of Christ's wounded and broken body, with all the glorious benefits flowing therefrom.

Q. Why is it called the cup of blessing?

A. Because, 1. In the using it, we bless God for his free love to us in Christ. 2. It contains offers, and sealeth to us, in a sacramental way, all the blessings of the new covenant.

Q. Why is it called Christ's testament?

A. Because in this ordinance we have Christ's testament and latter-will seal'd, and a copy of it put into the believer's hand, containing the rich legacies he hath left them.

Q. Why is it called a feast?

A. Because hereby the believers are richly entertained by Christ, have sweet intimacy with him, and great expressions of his love; and their souls are nourished and strengthened for duty. It is both a marriage-feast and a feast of commemoration.

Q. Why is it called the Eucharist by the ancients?

A. It signifies the thanksgiving; because, 1. When this sacrament was instituted, it both began and ended with the giving of thanks. 2. Because the great design of it is, to keep up the thankful remembrance of Christ's death and redeeming love. And believers when they partake, should with their whole souls give thanks to God because he is good; and sing glory to God in the highest.

Q. *What parts doth the Lord's supper consist of?*

A. Of two Parts; 1. The outward sensible signs. 2. The spiritual and heavenly things thereby signified.

Q. *What are the sensible signs made use of in this sacrament?*

A. They are of three sorts; 1. Sacramental elements. 2. Sacramental actions. 3. Sacramental words.

Q. *What are the sacramental elements here made use of?*

A. Bread and wine.

Q. *What are the things signified and represented by them?*

A. The body and blood of Christ, with all the benefits and blessings flowing therefrom.

Q. *What is the necessity of two elements or signs in this sacrament, bread and wine both, might not one suffice?*

A. The Lord hath thought fit to ordain them both to be used; and for these reasons; 1. To shew us the fitness and certainty of his covenant, and to strengthen his peoples faith the more in the belief of its promises. Why hath he annexed two seals or sacraments to his covenant, but chiefly for this end. And why hath he instituted a two-fold sign in this sacrament, but for the same design. What Joseph said of Pharaoh's dream, is most applicable here, Gen. xli. 32. 'The dream is doubled to Pharaoh, twice, because the thing is established of God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.' In like manner, O believer, you may perceive here, by the doubling of the sign, that the mercies and blessings sealed in this sacrament, are firmly established to you, they are even 'the sure mercies of David,' and God will shortly bestow them upon you.

2. These two signs are both appointed, because of the unbelief, and hardness of our hearts. It is a sad truth of us all, what Christ said to the two disciples going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 25. 'O fools, and slow of heart to believe what the prophets have spoken.' Nay, we are slow to believe even that which Christ, the great prophet himself hath spoken, when

he came in our nature to teach us. And therefore, for curing of this plague, the Lord gives us one sign after another, as he did to the hard-hearted and unbelieving Israelites in Egypt, when he sent Moses to deliver them: to convince them the more of his truth and faithfulness, he gave Moses two signs to shew them; and faith to him, Exod. iv. 8. 'And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe, nor hearken to the voice of the first sign, they will believe the voice of the latter sign.'

3. Both these signs are appointed here, that we may have a more full and distinct representation of Christ's death and sufferings; and may be helped to be the more distinct in our meditations and acts of faith upon this wounded and bleeding Saviour.

4. To shew us the plentiful redemption that we have in Jesus Christ. That there is in him not only sufficiency, but all fulness and abundance. That he hath suitable supplies for our necessities, and complete nourishment for our starving souls. There is here both the bread of life, and wine of consolation.

Q. Are not bread and wine too mean things, to be seals or signs of God's covenant?

A. Although they are but common things in themselves; yet having the stamp of divine institution, they become highly valuable, in respect of their signification and ends. A small piece of wax or lead is of little worth in itself; yet when appended to a charter by authority, it serves to give or confirm a right and title to a great inheritance. Of the same use are bread and wine in the Lord's supper; they are seals appended to God's covenant by divine authority, and serve to confirm the believers right to Christ's purchase, pardon of sin, and eternal life, and so are highly valuable. Our gracious Redeemer thought fit to chuse for this end, things that were not costly or rare, but common and easy to be had (though most useful in themselves to human life) because he would not be burthensome to his people with any of his ordinances.

Q. Why hath Christ chosen bread to represent his body?

A. Because of the resemblance betwixt bread and Christ's blessed body, in these things; 1. Bread ere it be fit to nourish us, must be first sown, and die in the earth; so Christ's body behoved to die, and be buried in the earth, in order to feed and nourish our souls.

2. Bread must be prepared by threshing, bruising, and grinding in the mill, and baking in the oven; so Christ, that he might be a fit Saviour to us, was content to be bruised betwixt the millstones of God's justice and our sins, and to be scorched in the oven of his Father's wrath.

3. Bread thus prepared, is most excellent and useful for nourishing and strengthening our bodies; yea, it is the most necessary thing in the world, none can live without it: hence it is oft called the staff of bread, as being the support of human life. So Christ's broken body is a most excellent and necessary means provided by God, for preserving our soul's lives; without which we would eternally perish.

4. Bread is most pleasant, as it doth refresh, strengthen, and satisfy our hungry bodies; and hence it is called 'bread that strengtheneth man's heart,' Psal. civ. So Jesus Christ and his broken body is most precious, pleasant, and satisfying to a sensible needy sinner. The hungry believing soul will highly prize this food, tho' others, who are full, and insensible of their wants, do loath and despise it.

5. Bread must be broken, eaten, and received into the stomach, before it can be of any use to the health and advantage of our bodies; so Christ's body must be broken, received, and fed upon by faith, ere it can be of use to the spiritual health, and advantage of our souls in this sacrament.

6. Bread, thus received and eaten, becomes one with our bodies; so we by a believing partaking of Christ's broken body, become one with him, John. vi. 56.

Q. Why hath Christ made choice of wine to represent his blood in this sacrament?

A. Because of the resemblance betwixt wine and his precious blood, in the following particulars;

1. Wine, in order to prepare it for our use, must be squeezed out of the grape, which for that end is crush'd and bruised in the wine-press; so our blessed Saviour was crushed in the wine-press of his Father's justice, till the precious juice of his sacred body did gush out, for the saving of our souls. None could afford our perishing souls this remedy, but Christ alone: Hence he saith, Isa. lxiii. 3. "I have trodden the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with me."

2. Wine doth refresh and cheer the heart of man; Psal. civ. so Christ's blood doth much more cheer and refresh the soul.

of a humble penitent sinner, that makes application of it by faith.

3. Wine doth warm the cold heart: much more doth Christ's blood warm the cold affections with the heat of divine love.

4. Wine is useful to animate and encourage the faint-hearted: much more doth Christ's blood revive and embolden the poor drooping and disconsolate soul. It heartens him to go with a holy boldness to the throne of grace; yea, to 'walk through the valley of the shadow of death, and fear no ill.'

5. Wine is good for medicine: it cleanses and cures; so the blood of Christ is the most medicinal thing in the world; for it cleanses and cures the putrifying wounds of the soul, 1 John i. 7. Isa. liii. 5.

6. Wine, however excellent in itself, can be of no use to us, unless it be drunk and applied; so Christ's blood, (though the most sovereign thing in the whole world for our perishing souls) will do us no service, if it be not received and applied by our faith.

So much for the Sacramental Elements; let us come next to the Sacramental Actions.

Q. What are the outward sacramental actions in the Lord's supper?

A. They are two-fold, some on the part of the administrator; and some on the part of the receivers.

Q. What are these actions on the administrator's part?

A. They are four; as may be seen in Christ's example:
1. He took bread. 2. He blessed the bread and wine.
3. He brake the bread. 4. He gave both of them to his disciples.

Q. What is signified by the minister's taking of bread?

A. It signifies God the Father his chusing and taking Christ among men, to be a surety and sacrifice for lost sinners, and his laying upon him as such, the whole sins of the elect, John iii. 16. Isa. liii. 6. 2 Cor. v. 21.

Q. What is signified by the blessing of the bread and wine?

A. It signifies these things; 1. The consecrating and setting apart of the bread and wine, from a common, to an holy

and sacramental use ; and that by solemn prayer for a blessing from heaven upon them.

2. This blessing being also expressed by the giving of thanks, it signifies a solemn thanksgiving to God for his astonishing grace and mercy to lost sinners in giving them a Saviour and surety ; and also for his giving them this blessed ordinance for conveying and sealing Christ's glorious purchase to them.

3. This blessing being of the same import with consecrating or sanctifying, it signifies God's sending his Son into the world, sanctified, blessed and furnished with all gifts and graces needful for the discharge of his mediatory offices, and for answering of his people's exigencies.

Q. What is signified by the breaking of the bread in this sacrament ?

A. It signifies the breaking and wounding of Christ's body, and the bruising of his soul for elect sinners, in order to satisfy God's justice, pacify divine wrath, and purchase salvation for them. And that now the whole work of man's redemption is compleated by Christ's death, which is here represented by these elements and signs.

Q. Is the breaking of the bread a necessary or essential action in this sacrament ?

A. Yes ; it being instituted by Christ, and practised by his apostles, with design to teach us the necessity of Christ's death, and that an unbroken Christ could not profit sinners. And consequently we may infer, that Papists and others, who dispense the sacrament with an unbroken wafer, do egregiously swerve from the institution, and mar their souls profiting by this ordinance.

Q. What is signified by the fourth sacramental action, viz. Christ's giving the broken bread, and the poured out wine to his disciples : and the minister's doing this after his example ?

A. It signifies these things ; 1. God's gracious and free offering of his Son, and Christ's offering of himself to be ours, with all his purchase, upon our believing.

2dly, God's actual making over, giving, and sealing Christ and all the benefits of the new covenant to the worthy receivers. For as truly as bread and wine are put into their hands, and given them to be their own, and disposed of for their use : so as truly is Christ and all the benefits of the covenant made over, given and sealed to them, to be their in-

heritance and portion, and to be by them freely enjoyed and possessed as their own.

3dly, It signifies God's offering and giving Christ fully to us. For as he gives us not only the bread, but the wine also, that we may have complete entertainment: so he makes over and gives a full and complete Saviour to believing communicants. He gives Christ and all Christ to them; and all that is in him, all his offices, all his benefits, and all his promises. There is no promise reserved, no blessings excepted, or kept back; all is theirs, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.

4thly, It signifies God's making a gratuitous donation and a free gift of Christ and all his purchase, to believing communicants. For as the sacramental bread and wine are given freely by the minister to the communicants, without requiring any price or good deed for them; so Christ and all his purchase are made over and given to believers in a way of the freest grace, without any worth or desert of theirs, or any thing done by them for which they are bestowed, Isa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17.

5thly, The breaking, dividing, and distributing these elements among all the communicants, do signify that Jesus Christ is really, though invisibly present, dealing forth the effects and benefits of his death and sufferings to all the worthy communicants, young and old, poor and rich, without exception of any. He is a most knowing and faithful steward in his Father's house, who will not pass by the meanest of the family.

Q. What is signified by the pouring out of the wine in the cup?

A. Christ's suffering and pouring out his blood most freely and plentifully to wash and save his people from their sins; even as freely as the wine in the sacrament is poured out to them. Hence it is said, Isa. liii. 12. 'He poured out his soul unto death.' i. e. he gave his life and soul so freely and willingly for us, as we pour out water out of a vessel.

Q. After what manner are the elements to be given to the communicants? Is the bread to be put into their mouths, or the cup into each of their hands by the ministers?

A. No; this is not agreeable to Christ's practice in the first institution, nor with the table-posture then in use, which he kept with his disciples in time of the action; speaking to them (at the giving of the elements) in the plural number,

‘ take ye, eat ye, drink ye all of it,’ which import his giving the elements to those that sat next him, to be handed about from one to another ; for had he given them to every particular man, he would have said, take thou. Besides, this practice of our Saviour with his disciples suits best with that familiar way of feasting common among people that are come to age and the use of their reason. And the communicants taking the elements into their own hands, doth carry some resemblance of the free and deliberate consent of faith, requisite in our receiving of Christ in the sacrament, John i. 12.

Q. What are the outward sacramental actions, on the part of the communicant ?

A. They are these ; 1. Their taking the bread, and the cup into their hands. 2. Their eating the bread, and drinking the wine. 3. Their dividing the elements among themselves and giving to one another. 4. Their doing all this sitting in a feasting posture.

Q. What is signified by the communicants taking the bread and cup into their hands ?

A. Their cheerful stretching forth of the hand of faith to accept of a crucified Christ for their Saviour with all his benefits, as offered to them in the gospel : and the soul’s hearty compliance with the gracious terms of that offer.

Q. What is signified by our receiving of both the elements ?

A. Our taking, and receiving Christ wholly, as he is held forth and offered unto us in the gospel, without making exception of any of his offices or demands. We profess hereby that we are satisfied to take Christ as he is, his person, his offices, his benefits, promises, and all that is in him : That we are content with his laws, as well as his love ; his precepts, as well as his promises ; and his cross as well as his crown.

Q. Have communicants a right to the cup as well as the bread ?

A. Yes certainly they have, conform to our Saviour’s institution and pattern, and his apostles practice, which we have plainly recorded, Mat. xxvi. 26, 27, 28, 29. 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. And if one of the sacramental signs were wanting, believers would not have a full representation of their Redeemer’s sufferings, nor a complete feast for their nourishment and strength.

Q. Are not Papists much to blame then, in taking the cup from the people ?

A. Most certainly they are; for as they do a great injury to the people, so they are guilty of the greatest sacrilege before God, and rebellion against his authority; who instituted this sacred ordinance. For by the institution, the people have as good right to the cup, as to the bread. Nay, our Saviour (as it were) foreseeing the Papists encroachment in this particular, is more express in his injunction concerning the cup than the bread; in these words, ‘drink ye all of it.’ Also their obedience to this injunction, is more expressly recorded than with respect to the bread, in these words, ‘and they all drank of it;’ compare Mat. xxvi. 27. with Mark xiv. 23.

Q. *What is signified by the communicants eating the bread and drinking the wine?*

A. In general, it signifies our making close and particular application by faith, of Christ and all his benefits unto our souls and their various necessities and exigencies, each of us saying of Christ in a believing manner, with Thomas, John xx. 28. ‘My Lord and my God.’ But more particularly, these actions of eating and drinking in the sacrament do signify;
1. Our near union with Christ. For as, by eating and drinking, the bread and the wine enter our bodies, become ours, and turn one with us; so by our receiving and applying Christ’s broken body and shed blood in the sacrament by faith, Christ is mystically united to us, he is made one with us, and we one with him. All that he hath, his blood, and all the purchase of it, his merits, graces, influences, riches, &c. all are ours.

2dly, They signify the great satisfaction and complacency, which the believer hath in partaking of Christ and his benefits. For as eating and drinking are actions very gratifying and pleasant to the body; so our tasting and partaking of Christ’s dainties in the sacrament, is most pleasant to the hungry soul.

3dly, They signify the strength and increase of grace, which the believer receives by this ordinance. For as, by our eating and drinking of earthly food, our bodies are increased and strengthened for labour; so by this spiritual food, our graces, are increased, and souls strengthened, for the duties of religion.

Lastly, These sacramental actions denote the mutual giving, and taking seising and infestment betwixt Christ and the believing communicant. As by the giving and receiving earth and stone among men, infestment is given and taken of a field

or heritage; so by the giving and receiving of bread and wine in a sacramental way, believers get inestment of Christ and his purchase as their own inheritance; and also Christ hereby takes inestment of them, both soul and body, as his people and portion, his servants and soldiers, to obey him and fight for him all the days of their lives. Likewise by these sacred symbols, he takes possession of their souls and bodies as his temples, solemnly consecrated to him for his service and residence.

Q. Why should communicants divide the elements among themselves, and give to one another?

A. 1. That they may the more closely imitate the practice of Christ and his disciples, in partaking of the passover and the Lord's supper, Luke xxii. 17. Mat. xxvi. 26, 27.

2dly, That they may testify their mutual Christian love and union among themselves, and their communion and fellowship one with another, 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

Q. What should be the bodily posture of communicants in time of receiving?

A. It ought to be a feasting posture, or such a table-gesture as is ordinary at feasts in the place of the world where we live; and that is sitting. And this we have authorized by the example of Christ and his apostles at the first institution, Mat. xxvi. 20, 26. Luke xxii. 14. John xiv. 31. I grant indeed they sat leaning, yet still that posture is termed a sitting as in the forecited texts. Besides, that was the ordinary table-posture then in use among the Jews; which clearly warrants us to use that posture which is ordinary among us. This also is proper to signify that holy familiarity, which Christ allows his people with himself at this ordinance; for it is a blessed love-feast, wherein he treats his people as his friends and intimates.

Q. But may it not be thought presumption, or want of due reverence in sinful man, to adventure to sit at Christ's holy table?

A. 1. It is far greater presumption in sinful man to think to amend or alter Christ's wise and holy institution to the better; or to pretend to be wiser, holier, or humbler than the apostles and primitive church who used this posture; or to accuse them of indecency and irreverence.

2dly, It is no presumption to sinful men to receive that honour which their Lord and Saviour puts upon them: or to use

that holy familiarity with him, which he allows them: for the disciples were sinful men as well as others, and yet they sat with their Lord and master, at the first communion, and continued afterwards so to do.

Q. Why may not the reverend and humble posture of kneeling be admitted at the Lord's table?

A. It cannot, because of the reasons above-mentioned; for we must not be wise above what is written, or think to please God by our inventions in his worship?

2^{dly}, It is of a Popish original, for Pope Honorious the second was the first that ordained this posture of kneeling, in the beginning of the thirteenth century; and that as a native consequence of the doctrine of transubstantiation, which had been decreed some time before, by his predecessor Pope Innocent the third. And we ought not to symbolize with Papists in their errors.

3^{dly}, There is too much ground to suspect this practice of idolatry, or having a tendency that way. For, 1. The Papists by this posture, do professedly worship the sacramental bread, believing it to be Christ's real body; and plainly say, that if they believed not this, they would neither worship it, nor kneel in receiving it. *2^{dly},* Our kneeling before the elements, and that out of reverence and respect to them, in an act of worshipping God or Christ, seems to say, that we worship God or Christ in or by the use of them: now these elements being consecrated creatures, of purpose placed before us, to be an image and representation of Christ to us, it hath too great appearance of evil, to use an outward posture of adoration before them: especially seeing, this is not done in the other sacrament, viz. that of baptism.

Q. Do not many who use this posture, profess they have no design of worshipping the bread as the Papists do, and consequently are not to be suspected of idolatry?

A. 1. Though they have no such design, yet still they do a thing that hath a dangerous tendency, and an appearance of evil, which we are expressly commanded to shun.

2. A good intention will not excuse an idolatrous action; the Israelites pretended not to worship the golden calf, but Jehovah before it, and yet that did not excuse their sin.

Concerning the Sacramental WORDS.

Quest. *ARE not the sacramental elements, actions, and words to be reckoned all three together, as the outward sensible signs in this ordinance, for exhibiting, sealing, and applying Christ and his benefits to worthy communicants?*

A. Yes.

Q. *Is there any difference betwixt them?*

A. Though they all be very significant and instructive to us in partaking, yet they seem to differ in this; that the sacramental elements mainly hold forth the spiritual matter and substance which we partake of; the sacramental actions serve as a rule or example to regulate our practice in it: and the sacramental words point forth the doctrine, uses, and ends of the ordinance.

Q. *What are the sacramental words chiefly to be used in dispensing and distributing the elements in this sacrament?*

A. These words which Christ spoke at the first institution?

Q. *What were the words which Christ spoke?*

A. He spoke something concerning the bread, something concerning the wine, and something concerning the whole sacrament.

Q. *What did Christ speak with respect to the bread?*

A. He said, 1. Something by way of command, viz. ‘Take, eat, this do in remembrance of me.’

2dly, Something by way of explication, viz. ‘This is my body which is broken for you, 1 Cor. xi. 24.’

Q. *What did Christ speak concerning the wine?*

A. He said likewise, 1. Something by way of command, viz. ‘Drink ye all of it, this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me,’ Mat. xxvi. 27. 1 Cor. xi. 25.

2dly, Something by way of explication, viz. ‘this cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins,’ Matth. xxvi. 28. Luke xxii. 20.

Q. *What spake Christ with respect to the whole sacrament?*

A. He said, by way of argument to enforce it, ‘for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord’s death till he come.’ 1 Cor. xi. 26. He likewise added on this occasion, ‘I will not drink henceforth of this

‘ fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom,’ Mat. xxvi. 29.

Q. What is the import of these words concerning the bread, Take, eat?

A. It is, as if Christ had said, receive and make use of this broken bread, as a sign and seal of my broken body, with all its benefits. As ye take the bread out of my hand, and by eating receive it into your stomachs; so accept of a Saviour as he is offered unto you, receive the atonement, approve of it, and consent to it; come up to the gracious terms on which Christ and his benefits are proposed to you, accept of his grace, and submit to his government.

Q. What should we think upon, when we hear these words?

A. We should think upon the infinite free love of God in giving his Son, and of Christ in giving himself to such poor wretches as we are. Yea, we should in a contemplative and believing way, think we see Christ (as it were personally) at the head of the table, making offer of himself to us in the freest manner, saying, take me and the whole purchase of my death and sufferings; take my sealed testament, and all the legacies in it; take a sealed pardon of all your sins, and a sealed right to eternal life.

Q. In what manner are we to take Christ and his benefits in this sacrament?

A. We are to take Christ and all the blessings of his covenant in the following manner. 1. Sincerely and honestly, without all dissimulation of hypocrisy, which is a thing most hateful to God.

2dly, Intirely, fully, and without exception of any thing required of you.

3dly, With close and particular application, saying, ‘ My Lord, and my God’.

4thly, With thankfulness and praise, stirring up your souls, and all that is within you to bless his holy name. Bless God for such a glorious surety, such a rich purchase, such a free covenant, and such suitable promises.

5thly, With humility and self-denial, reckoning yourselves unworthy of the least crumb from his table, renouncing all confidence in your preparations, humiliations, or qualifications of any sort, saying, ‘ In the Lord only have I righteousness and strength.’

Lastly, We ought to take Christ and his purchase in the sa-

crament with full assurance of faith; looking on the sacramental bread as the Lord's seal and pledge of our interest in, and title to all the blessings of the covenant: and taking this bread as a sure sign and token from Christ, that his body was broken for us; believing that Christ and all the blessings of the covenant, and purchase of his death, are herewith given to us, as really as Christ gives the bread into our hands.

Q. What is the meaning of these words, this is my body broken for you?

A. The meaning is, this broken bread is my body spiritually and sacramentally, or, it signifies and represents my body; and is a visible sign and token of my body its being broken, bruised and crucified; yea, crucified for you, 'O worthy communicant, even wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities.'

Q. Do we not partake of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament, after a corporal or a carnal manner, or by the mouth of the body?

A. No; we only do it spiritually by faith, which is the mouth of the soul.

Q. Is not Christ really present in the sacrament; and are not believers said to be partakers of Christ?

A. Though Christ is not bodily present, yet he is really and truly present in a spiritual and invisible manner. He is present by his God-head, and by his Spirit. He is present by his power and efficacy, communicating and applying the virtue and benefits of his death: and thus we are really made partakers of Christ in this ordinance. We partake of the sun, when we have its beams of light and heat darted down upon us, altho' we have not the bulk and body of the sun put into our hands: so we partake of Christ in the sacrament, when we share of his grace, and the blessed fruits of his broken body, though we do not actually eat his flesh with our mouths.

Q. Are not the bread and wine, by the words of consecration transubstantiated, and really turned into the body and blood of Christ, as the Papists do maintain?

A. No; the opinion is most false and absurd, in regard;

1. It is destructive of the very nature and end of a sacrament, which is to signify and commemorate an absent Christ; for according to this opinion he would be corporally present, and so there would be no difference betwixt the signs and things signified.

2dly, It is also destructive of the nature of Christ's body ; for, according to this opinion, it would not be a true human body, ' in all things like unto his brethren,' Heb. ii. 17. If it could neither be seen or felt, or could be contracted into the bounds of a small bit of bread.

3dly, It is expressly contrary to the scriptures, which call the elements after their consecration, still bread and wine, as formerly ; Mat. xxvi. 29. 1 Cor. x. 16. yea many times over, 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27, 28. Again, the scriptures inform us, that when Christ first administered this sacrament, his body was entire, and his blood in his veins ; and that the same body afterwards went forth and swate blood in the garden, was crucified, buried and rose again, appeared alive to many witnesses, and at length really ascended up into heaven, where he still continues ; and his body must remain there till his coming at the last day ; and so, it neither was, nor can be corporally eaten in the sacrament, Mat. xxvi. 26, 27. 1 Cor. xv. 4, 5, 6. Acts i. 9, 10, 11. Acts iii. 21. 1 Thess. iv. 16. Heb. viii. 4.

4thly, It is contrary to sense and reason ; for it is most obvious to us, that the bread and wine after consecration are the same in substance what they were : we see, feel, taste, and smell them to be real bread and wine still : they retain both their quantities and qualities ; they have the length, thickness, breadth, colour, taste and smell of bread and wine. Reason also tells us that the same body cannot be at the same time both glorified in heaven, and broken and eaten upon the earth. That Christ's body could not be entire, living, sitting at the table and speaking with his disciples ; and yet at the same time broken, dead, lying on the table, and eaten by his disciples ; yea, and by himself also.

Besides these, many other monstrous absurdities and contradictions do follow upon the doctrine of transubstantiation.

Q. What are the other absurdities of this doctrine ?

A. 1. It would follow hence, that either Christ behoved to have many thousand bodies, which would be monstrous ; or that the same one whole body of Christ can be in many thousand places at the same time : both whereof are equally absurd.

2dly, It destroys the testimony of our senses in all other cases ; so that the being or power of God cannot be proven by the works of creation, which is contrary to the apostle's doc-

trine, Rom. i. 20. Nor can the truth of Christ's resurrection be proven from the testimony of the witnesses, or from their seeing, feeling and hearing, which is contrary to Luke i. 1, 2. 1 Cor. xv. 5, 6, 7. 1 John i. 1. According to this doctrine, there was no strength in the argument which Christ used to prove the verity of his resurrection, when he appealed to the senses of his disciples; bidding them, 'handle him and see, behold his hands and feet, and thrust the hand into his side, Luke xxiv. 39, 40. John xx. 27. And this would go far to shake the truth of Christianity itself, which depends on the resurrection of Christ.

3dly, This doctrine allows a power to a silly mass-priest, which is not granted to all the angels in heaven, viz. to make his maker and eat his god: for he worships what he makes, and eats what he worships.

4thly, According hereunto, Christ's glorious body would yet be liable to sufferings, subject to corruption, and obnoxious to be eaten by wicked men, yea, by dogs, rats, mice, &c.

5thly, It would follow that a minister could give to a communicant, the thing signified as well as the signs, which is the prerogative of God alone.

6thly, That other figurative expressions in scripture should also be understood literally; and so Christ would also be turned really into a door, a vine, a rock, &c. For he doth as expressly call himself by those names, as he calls the bread in the sacrament his body.

Q. Is there no change made at all upon the elements at consecration?

A. Yes; but it is not a physical, but a moral change: it is only a change as to their use and signification. By consecration they are set apart from common use to a sacred and mystical use. They are no more for ordinary aliment to the body, but become thereby signs of Christ, seals of grace, pledges of justification, and earnest of salvation; which is not done by destruction of their nature, but by divine designation. As of common wax a valid seal is made to a charter, by putting an authoritative stamp upon it, though it be still the same, what it was, as to its substance; so here the consecrated elements still retain their former nature, and are not Christ's real body and blood, under the accidents of bread and wine, as the Papists most absurdly assert.

Q. How then can Christ's words be true, when he saith expressly of the bread, This is my body?

A. These words are most true in a sacramental sense; for Christ speaks here in a sacramental dialect, and retains the same style he had used formerly concerning the passover, *Exod. xii. 11.* 'It is the Lord's passover.' Now this cannot be meant but figuratively; for certainly the Lamb, or their eating of it, was not literally the Lord's gracious act of passing over the Israelites houses, when he came to destroy the Egyptians on every side of them; but a sign or token of his passing over them; and yet he says expressly, 'It is the Lord's passover.' Thus also did he speak of the other sacrament, viz. circumcision when he instituted it, *Gen. xvii. 10.* 'This is my covenant.' Now circumcision was not literally the covenant itself, but only a sign and seal of the covenant. Also in the institution of the Lord's Supper, he useth the same sort of figurative speeches; and if the Papists will not grant this concerning the bread, when Christ said of it, 'This is my body;' yet whether they will or not, they must own it, concerning the wine, when he saith, 'This cup is the New Testament'. For here is a two-fold figure; first, he did not mean this properly or literally of the cup or vessel that contained the wine; for so the cup cannot be the New Testament or covenant of grace, but the wine contained in the cup. Neither, secondly, can the wine be properly called the New Testament, or covenant itself, but only a sign or pledge of it. So that we see such metonymical and figurative speeches, are the ordinary sacramental language that God in all ages hath made use of, in instituting the seals of his covenant. And can Papists give any solid reason, why such speeches as these, should be taken in a figurative sense in one place and not in another, when the case is the same, and the necessity plainly equal.

Q. What is the meaning of Christ's words concerning the cup, Drink ye all of it, and this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me?

A. He means these things; 1. To discover the freeness of his grace, and the ready welcome he gives to all his guests, even the meanest and poorest of them.

2dly, To teach us thirstily and affectionately to receive (together with the cup) the precious blood of Christ, and by faith apply it to our souls in a particular manner, for the cur-

ing of all our diseases, the washing away all our sins, and the supply of all our wants.

3dly, That in the receiving and drinking of this cup, we should entertain and keep up a fresh and thankful remembrance of Christ's sufferings, and of his dying love in shedding and offering up his blood as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins. We should remember and think upon, both what he hath done, what he is still doing, and what he is about to do for us.

Q. Why are we so expressly charged to remember Christ in this ordinance? are we in any hazard of forgetting him?

A. Yes; our Saviour knows that we have worldly hearts, treacherous memories and stand in need of all these memorandums, to keep up the lively remembrance of his love.

Q. What is implied in remembring of Christ?

A. It hath in it, 1. The knowledge of Christ, and the method of redemption through his blood.

2dly, Some precious acquaintance with him, by a work of grace on the heart, and closing with him by faith.

3dly, A believing contemplation of his death and sufferings.

4thly, Such a remembrance as makes deep and suitable impressions on our souls.

Q. What obligations lye upon us to keep up the remembrance of Christ?

A. 1. Because he is our most loving friend; a friend that remembered us in our low estate, and that hath done more for us than all the friends of the world could or would have done.

2dly, Because he is an absent friend; yea, absent on our account, and still negotiating our affairs at the court of heaven. He constantly remembers his people, and hath them still on his heart, and in his eye.

3dly, Because he is a friend quickly about to return. He is still meditating on it, and fast preparing for it. He is hasting to come again in the clouds to meet his people, take them home to his palace, and put them in possession of all his purchase.

Q. What kind of remembrance of Christ ought we to have in receiving the sacrament?

A. Not a bare historical remembrance, for so Judas, Pilate and the devils in hell, may remember how they betrayed and crucified Christ on earth; but it is a remembrance with suitable impressions on our souls.

1. We must have an awful and reverential remembrance, adoring the justice and holiness of God, displayed in the sufferings of Christ his dear son. O how vehemently did he hate sin, that he would not spare him when he cried, and was but surety for another! May not we cry with the Bethshemites, 1 Sam. vi. 20. 'Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?'

2dly, It must be a mournful and heart-breaking remembrance looking on a slain Christ in the elements, as one pierced through and crucified by our sins; and our eye should affect our hearts with grief and sorrow for these sins that nailed and killed the Lord of life.

3dly, We must have a sin-loathing remembrance; abhorring with the utmost detestation, our cursed sins that made a strong and mighty Redeemer to sweat blood; and groan under their weight; yea, never parted with him till they brought him to a bitter death.

4thly, It must be an affectionate remembrance. The unparalleled love of Christ discovered in the sacrament, must not be thought on without love. Our hearts should even burn with affection to him, when we remember the great floods of wrath that brake in upon Christ's soul, and yet could not drown his love to us.

5thly, It must be a thankful remembrance, saying, O what shall I render to Christ for undertaking my deliverance, and wading through hell to save me from perishing there for ever. O if men and angels would help me to extol his free grace and wondrous love.

6thly, It must be a fiducial remembrance, laying the whole stress of our soul's justification and salvation upon the death of Christ; pleading it with God, for answering all the accusations of Satan, the indictments of the law, and challenges of our own consciences.

Q. What is the import of these words of Christ, concerning the cup; This cup is the New Testament in my blood, shed for many for the remission of sins?

A. It is a figurative speech, as I shewed before, and the plain literal sense of it is, the wine in this cup, as representing the shedding of my blood for your sins, is a sure sign and token to you, of God's making and confirming the New Testament, or covenant of grace with you; and of his sealing all the blessings of it unto you. Or, this cup is a visible pledge

to you of that rich covenant with its blessings, which is brought about and ratified to you by the shedding of my blood for sin.

Q. What are the sweet instructions and meditations which these words of Christ do afford us?

A. They are many, such as these; 1. The covenant of grace is Christ's testament, wherein all manner of precious legacies are freely bequeathed unto his people.

2^{dly}, That this testament is sure, and of undoubted force, being confirmed by the death of the Testator, and sealed with his blood.

3^{dly}, That Christ puts a sealed copy of his testament into every worthy communicant's hand, at the Lord's table.

4^{thly}, That the covenant of grace, with all its blessings, is purchased by Jesus Christ to believers, by the price of his blood.

5^{thly}, That pardon of sin is one of the choicest legacies in Christ's testament, and to be highly valued.

6^{thly}, That without the shedding of blood (even the precious blood of Christ, which is the blood of atonement) there can be no remission of sin.

7^{thly}, The blood of Christ cannot be effectual to any, unless it be received and applied by the hand of faith.

8^{thly}, That in order to make a good title to covenant blessings it is absolutely needful, that every man for himself do take hold of the covenant, as tendered in the gospel ordinances.

9^{thly}, That the news of a covenant ratified, and pardon, sealed by the blood of Christ, is most reviving and refreshing to the guilty soul; as wine that makes glad the heart.

Q. What are the legacies and blessings contained in the Testament given, and sealed to believers in the Lord's supper?

A. There is the holy Spirit to teach, guide, and comfort them; there is pardon of sin, and peace with God; in a word, there is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, grace and glory. All which, with many more, were mentioned before, among the promises of the covenant of grace.

Q. How shall we know if we have any part in Christ's testament, or if our names be in it?

A. By these two things, 1. If we do heartily take hold of it, embrace its promises, and acquiesce in the method of salvation contained in it.

2^{dly}, If we can prove ourselves to be amongst Christ's poor relations, or claim any likeness to him by faith and regeneration.

All these being children and heirs, have an interest in Christ's testament, Isa. lvi. 4, 5. John i. 12. 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17, 18. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. Rom. viii. 17.

Q. What are the marks of these who are children of Christ's family and heirs of his testament?

A. They are such as are begotten by the word to a lively hope, transplanted from nature's garden to grace, and become plants of his right hand's planting.

2dly, They know something of the spirit of adoption, and his operations in their souls; particularly in discovering sin, exciting to prayer, conquering lusts and sanctifying the heart, Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6. Eph. iv. 23, 24.

3dly, They have children's frames and dispositions of heart, viz. a filial fear, and reverence of God, a filial love and affection to Christ, and a deep hatred of every thing that is offensive or dishonourable to him. Also they have a great concern for their mother the church; and a love to their brethren the saints. They love their Father's presence, and desire to be much about his hand, Mal. i. 6. John viii. 42. Psal. cxix. 136. Psal. cxxxvii. 6.

4thly, They have children's appetites for their food: they earnestly desire the ordinances, and communion with Christ in them, Psal. lxxxiv. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 2.

Q. How are we assured that Christ's testament is firm and unalterable?

A. From these three things; 1. The faithfulness and immutability of the testator, Heb. x. 23. Heb. xiii. 8. Rev. i. 5.

2dly, It is become of unalterable force by the Testator's death, and is confirmed by his blood, Heb. ix. 16, 17. Mat. xxvi. 28.

3dly, He hath appended the two great seals of heaven to it, baptism and the Lord's supper, of purpose to declare the validity and fulness of his testament.

Q. But how are we certain that this testament will be duly execute, conform to the Testator's will?

A. Because, 1. He hath left it in a sure and faithful hand, even that of the holy Spirit, who is the executor thereof, to apply it, and bestow the legacies it bequeathes, upon these who are named in it, John xiv. 16, 26.

Yea, *2dly,* The blessed Testator is risen from the dead,

and lives for ever, to see the execution of his own testament himself, Rev. i. 18. Heb. vii. 25.

Q. When will all these legacies be bestowed on the heirs of this testament? is it just now?

A. They are just now infest, and vested therein, by the word and sacraments; whereby their right is sufficiently secured to the great estate, which Christ hath left them by his latter-will. And in the mean time, they have out of it a sufficient maintainance, to continue till the time appointed come, when they shall enter into the full possession of the whole. Believers while here, are but minors, and not fit to be entrusted with the management of their estate, so that it is secured for them in good hands, till they arrive at full age.

Q. What is the meaning of the words which Christ spoke with respect to the whole sacrament; for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come?

A. It is, as if he had said, see that ye make conscience of coming to this holy table, and of coming frequently; for every time you do it in a right manner, you keep up the memorial of your Lord and Saviour's death, in a way that is pleasant to him; seeing he hath appointed this as a standing ordinance in the church, to continue till his coming to judgment; when he will call his whole servants to account concerning their observing his injunctions, and this among the rest.

Q. What obligations lye upon us to come and partake of this ordinance?

A. All the professors of Christ are obliged to it on many accounts; 1. In point of duty. 2. In point of interest. 3. In point of gratitude. 4. In point of safety.

Q. How are we obliged in point of duty?

A. Because Christ our Lord and law-giver hath peremptorily commanded it: nay, for the more security, he repeats the command twice, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. 'This do ye, this do ye;' and surely all of us owe obedience to his authority, without reserve.

Q. How are we obliged to partake in point of interest?

A. Because of the great advantages which are to be got by it, seeing Christ and all the benefits of the new covenant are here sealed and applied.

Q. How are we obliged to partake in point of gratitude?

A. 1. Because the command enjoining this duty, was a-

mong the last words of our dying friend and Saviour, who did more for us than all the world could have done.

2dly, Because the design of the ordinance is to keep up the memorial of the love, which our dying Saviour expressed at the institution of it, in suffering death, and offering up himself a sacrifice to divine justice in our stead.

3dly, Because he seeks no greater return for his love than a thankful remembrance of it.

4thly, Because he puts us to no greater charge to express it, than by eating and drinking at his table.

Q. How are we obliged to partake in point of safety?

A. Because the slighting or wilful neglecting of this ordinance, is a great sin before God, and very provoking to him, as well as dangerous to ourselves.

Q. Wherein lyes the sin of neglecting this ordinance?

A. In respect it is no less than contempt of the words of our dying Saviour, disobedience to his command, ingratitude to our greatest benefactor, a base slighting of God's love, Christ's sufferings, and all the great preparations he hath made for us; a wronging of our own souls, and despising of our choicest mercies and privileges.

Q. What is the danger of neglecting this duty?

A. It draws on the wrath and vengeance of God, nay, of Christ the Mediator; which must be very terrible. As God threatned to cut off these that neglected the passover of old, so he threatned severe wrath against these, who should neglect the gospel feasts, Num. ix. 13. Zech. xiv. 16, 17, 18. And these threatnings are renewed, Matth. xxii. 7. Luke xiv. 24.

Q. Is it a good excuse for neglecting this ordinance, for people to say, they are not prepared, have quarrels with their neighbours, or cannot get such particular sins left?

A. No; for the want of preparation is our sin, and one sin can never excuse or answer for another. It is a fearful thing to live in a sinful course against light, and then to make sin an excuse for the neglect of commanded duty.

Q. Is it not enough that we partake of the Lord's supper once in our lives, as we do of the other sacrament, baptism?

A. No; for baptism being the sacrament of initiation, is not to be repeated; but the Lord's supper being for nutrition, is often to be received.

Q. What obligations lye on us to partake often?

A. We are obliged to it: 1. By our Saviour's words at the first institution, 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26. 'As often as ye do this;' which have the virtue of a command to frequency in communicating.

2dly, By the example of the apostles and primitive Christians, whose practice it was to communicate frequently, nay, for ordinary, every Lord's day, Acts ii. 42, 46. Acts xx. 7.

3dly, Our souls necessities do call for frequency in partaking; for we are oft ready to forget Christ, and therefore we oft need this ordinance to bring him to our remembrance. We are oft subject to spiritual deadness, weakness of faith, and decays of grace; and therefore have frequent need of this ordinance, for strength and quickening.

Q. Are we as much obliged to frequent communicating, as the apostles and primitive Christians were?

A. Though they were in a much better frame for it, as having had more recent and warm impressions of the love and death of their Redeemer constantly upon their spirits, than we have; yet certainly we are under as strong obligations to frequent partaking, as the first Christians were. For we have the same Lord and Saviour that they had, and are under the same obligations of love and gratitude to him. We have the same need of the application of Christ's blood, and a confirmed interest in his meritorious death that they had; and consequently the same need of this memorial-feast and sealing ordinance.

Q. Is not frequency apt to breed formality in this duty?

A. 1. The same thing may be alledged with respect to other duties, which yet is no good argument for the unfrequent practice of them.

2dly, This fault is no ways chargeable upon the holy ordinance and institution of Christ, but upon the corruption and carelessness of our hearts; which we ought diligently to watch and strive against; endeavouring in Christ's strength, as often as we partake, so often to prepare for it, with all due care and solemnity.

Q. What is meant by shewing forth the Lord's death in the sacrament, which seems to be laid down as our main business in this ordinance?

A. We may be said to represent, shew forth and announce the death of Christ in the sacrament, three ways: 1. With

respect to ourselves. 2dly, With respect to the world. 3dly, With respect to God.

Q. How are we to shew forth the death of Christ with respect to ourselves?

A. As the external elements and signs, in the Lord's supper, do give a plain representation of the death and sufferings of Christ to the eye of the body; so in partaking of these elements, we ought to set the things represented by them (viz. The death of Christ, with the matchless love he therein expressed) before the eyes of our minds and understandings, in order to beget a fresh remembrance of that dying love, and to raise our faith and hope in a crucified Saviour.

Q. How are we to shew forth Christ's death in the sacrament with respect to the world?

A. By owning hereby, in the most public manner, that we are the disciples of a crucified Jesus; not ashamed of our master, or his ignominious death, but declaring before all that we glory in him, and rely upon the merits of his death here shewed forth, as the only hope of our salvation; and that we have no Saviour besides him.

Q. How are we to shew forth Christ's death in the sacrament with respect to God?

A. Two ways; 1. We are to shew it forth to a loving and merciful God in a way of thanksgiving and praise; ascribing all glory to him for such a noble ransom and sacrifice, as he hath found out and provided for us.

2dly, We are also to shew forth Christ's death in the sacrament to a just and sin-revenging God, in a way of faith and prayer; pleading this sacrifice with God, as a screen and defence against the sword of justice, and curse of the law; and presenting it as the ground of all our hopes and expectations.

Q. Is the Lord's supper to be reckoned a sacrifice to God; as the Papists have turned it in their mass, into a proper atoning sacrifice for the sins both of the dead and living?

A. Not at all; for that is nothing but an abominable corruption of this blessed ordinance. For though the Lord's supper be a representation and memorial of the sacrifice of Christ's death and sufferings, which he offered to God upon the cross for our sins; and in partaking thereof, we may by faith plead this sacrifice with God: yet the sacramental bread and wine are no such sacrifice to God themselves; but only a sign and seal thereof, given by God to us for strengthening our

faith in his mercy promised unto us through Christ's death.

Q. What are the absurdities of the Papists doctrine and practice in this matter?

A. 1. The Popish mass-priests do usurp Christ's priesthood and office, pretending really to offer up Christ a sacrifice to God, which none but himself could do.

2dly, This highly reflects upon the perfection of Christ's sacrifice, that he once offered up on the cross; which we are assured by the word of God, was acceptable to God, perfect, and never needing to be again repeated, Heb. ix. 25, 26, 27, 28. Heb. x. 12, 14.

3dly, This is bottomed on their absurd doctrine of transubstantiation, which teacheth that the bread in the sacrament, is turned into Christ's real and true body, which is most false; as I proved before.

Q. What is the import of shewing forth the Lord's death till he come?

A. Till he come, imports, 1. That this sacrament is to endure till Christ's second coming, and no longer.

2dly, That in communicating, we should have the lively faith of Christ's coming at the great-day to judge of our sincerity and faithfulness in covenanting with him; as also to fulfil all his promises to worthy communicants.

3dly, That communicants should always live in the hope and expectation of the coming of Christ, and of everlasting glory, Tit. ii. 13. Jude 21.

Q. Why cannot the sacrament continue after Christ's coming?

A. Because in heaven there is no need of sacraments. Here we hold communion with Christ by signs and symbols, in regard of our darkness, distance and imperfection; but above, believers will see him as he is, and enjoy him perfectly. Faith shall be turned into vision, and hope into fruition. The day then 'will break, and all the shadows will flee away,' Cant. ii. 17. Rev. xxi. 22, 23.

Q. What is the meaning of these words of Christ at the first institution, henceforth I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day, when I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom?

A. Christ designs hereby to teach his disciples several things; 1. That now he was taking his leave of sacraments

and ordinances here below ; and that there is no use for such above.

2dly, That the Lord's supper here, is an emblem of the marriage-supper of the Lamb hereafter : Or, a representation of that heavenly communion above, which the saints for ever will partake of with the Lord Jesus, which is held forth by the pleasures of a banquet of wine.

3dly, That the pleasures of that communion, which they should entertain with him in heaven, will never wax old, but always continue fresh and new.

4thly, That in this world, they were no more to have communion with him in his bodily presence, as they had formerly enjoyed ; but they must henceforth feed on him by faith, till their happy meeting together in heaven : where faith will be swallowed up in vision.

5thly, That notwithstanding of the want of his bodily presence, they should still keep up communion with him in the use of this ordinance, patiently waiting and looking for the full accomplishment of it, in that glorious eternal feast above.

Q. Is there not a great difference betwixt the communion here, and the communion above ? or betwixt our drinking the fruit of the vine here, and our drinking it new with Christ in his Father's kingdom ?

A. Yes ; the odds are very great : For, 1. The communion, which Christ allows his people here, is but the fore-taste or first fruits of the promised land, given to wean their hearts from this world, and sharpen their appetites and desires after the Canaan above, where these first fruits do grow and are fully ripe.

2dly, The comforts of the lower table are but small, and of short continuance for ordinary : but these of the higher table are full, satisfying and everlasting.

3dly, Here we feed on an absent Christ by signs and symbols, and have but bad appetites for our food : but the communicants above will enjoy Christ's bodily presence, see him as he is, and have vast and never failing appetites for that heavenly feast.

4thly, Here communicants meet in parcels, and in sundry places : but above, the church of the first-born shall meet together in one general assembly ; and be all set together with Christ, as it were at one table.

5thly, Here many traitors and unworthy communicants do

thrust themselves in among the children, and many things happen to mar the children's comfort: but above, no Judas or unfurnished guest can come, nor any thing fall out to impair the glory of that feast.

6thly, The lower table is placed in temples made with hands, with earthly men attending; but hereafter the glorious heavens will be the rooms, and the heavenly hosts the attendants.

7thly, Here the communicants are entertained with the singing of psalms: but above there will be the multitude of the heavenly host, singing 'hallelujahs to the Lamb that sits upon the throne, and glory to God in the highest.'

Q. What are the great ends and uses of the Lord's supper?

A. 1. To keep up the solemn and lively remembrance of Christ's death, and dying love to lost sinners among men, while the world stands.

2dly, Solemnly to make over, apply, and seal Christ, his purchase, and all the benefits of the new covenant unto true believers.

3dly, That hereby we may have occasion to make public profession of our owning and receiving a crucified Jesus, as our only Saviour and master.

4thly, That we may testify our thankfulness to God, for giving his Son to die for our redemption; and to the Son for laying down his life so willingly for us.

5thly, That we might get a pledge and seal of our union and communion with Christ, and our faith in his promises strengthened and confirmed.

6thly, That we may renew and seal our covenant with God in Christ, personally ratify our baptismal vows, and solemnly bind ourselves to take God for our God, and give up ourselves to be the Lord's people, and to walk with him in the ways of gospel obedience.

7thly, It is appointed as a sign and bond of believers union and communion among themselves; their mutual love to and fellowship one with another.

Lastly, It is designed as a spiritual meal, for strengthening of the Lord's people in the inward man, for nourishing their graces, cheering their hearts, removing their fears and faintings, and giving them a pledge of heaven, and a fore-taste of the eternal communion above. For all which, see Matth.

xxvi. 26, 27. 1 Cor. xi. 20, 25, 35, 36. Gal. iii. 1. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. Heb. ix. 15, 16, 17.

Q. Is it not to be fear'd that many have not right ends in coming to the Lord's supper?

A. There is too much ground for it; and people's ends are surely wrong. 1. When they come to the Lord's table to make atonement for their sins, or purchase and ensure heaven to them; as some ignorant persons think they do by this action.

2dly, When they come, thinking hereby to hide or cloak some sin or wicked practice, they are presently living in.

3dly, When they come only to comply with the custom and fashion of the places where they live, or to prevent people's having bad thoughts of them, or some worldly inconveniences to themselves.

4thly, When they come to please ministers and friends, or to gain applause and a good name in the world.

5thly, When they come in order to qualify or put themselves in a capacity for obtaining or keeping lucrative posts or places of preferment in the world.

6thly, When people come to this ordinance, thinking to be converted by it, and brought into Christ.

Q. May not people be converted by this sacrament?

A. This is not a converting, but a confirming ordinance in its own nature, which doth suppose that these who come to it, are converted, and in Christ before. Yet we must own that this ordinance hath been the occasion of converting many thousands, by reason of the word preached or dropt at the dispensing of it, which God hath signally blessed to them. But though sovereign grace may do so, this is no warrant for unconverted persons to come and partake of this holy feast, which the Maker of it hath not instituted for them, but for his people.

Q. To whom is the Lord's supper to be administred?

A. Only to these who have a gospel-right to it, and gospel-preparation for it.

Q. Who are these who have a gospel-right to this ordinance?

A. There is a two-fold gospel-right; 1. An external right with respect to the church. 2. An internal right with respect to God.

Q. Who have an external right with respect to the church?

A. These who being baptized, have a competent measure of Christian knowledge, profess their faith in Christ, and live

religious and blameless lives before men. These have so far a right to this table in the sight of men, that they cannot be justly debarred from it by the office-bearers of Christ's house, Acts viii. 36, 37, 38. Phil. i. 27.

Q. Who are these that have not this right, and are to be kept back from this holy table?

A. All who are grossly ignorant, or openly prophane.

Q. Who are to be reckoned grossly ignorant?

A. All these who know not God in his nature, persons and attributes; who know not their misery by nature and the way of their recovery by Christ; who know not the nature of regeneration or conversion; nor the ends and uses of the Lord's supper.

Q. Why should such ignorant persons be kept back from this ordinance?

A. Because they are not capable to examine themselves in order to prepare for coming, nor rightly to discern the Lord's body in the sacrament when they do come; and so they would provoke God, and get no benefit by their coming, but much hurt, 1 Cor. xi. 28, 29. 1 Tim. v. 22.

Q. Who are to be reckoned openly prophane?

A. All such as live in the open and known commission of sin, and omission of duty, without repentance, or serious resolution to reform their lives.

Q. Why are such to be kept back?

A. Because such do but mock God, when they pretend to seal a covenant with him: they dishonour God and prophane the ordinance, when with unholy hands, they presume to meddle with such holy things: yea, they contract the guilt of Christ's blood, and 'eat and drink judgment to themselves,' 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29. Mat. vii. 6. Num. ix. 6, 11.

Q. Are all these who have knowledge in their heads, or morality in their lives, to be thought worthy communicants?

A. Though such have a right to this ordinance before men; yet many such may want grace in their hearts, and so have no right before God; and consequently unworthy communicants.

Q. Who are these who have an internal and true right to the Lord's table in the sight of God?

A. All such who are truly in covenant with God; believe in Christ with their hearts, obey them in their lives, and make suitable preparation for this holy ordinance.

Q. Doth not God call and invite all the professors of Christ to come to his table, and consequently have they not all a right?

A. Very true, all professors, nay, the greatest sinners, are called to come; but surely God doth not call them to come to his table in their sins, but to come in the due order, first to quit their sins, close with Christ, and then to come to his table: we are first to prepare, and then come. And though many unprepared persons may have allowance from men, who know not their hearts or secret actions; yet, none but the prepared (notwithstanding of the general call) have God's allowance to come to his table, or can expect benefit or welcome from him, Isa. lv. 7. Mat. xxii. 11, 12.

Q. Why have none God's allowance and welcome to his table, but believers in Christ?

A. Because this is a seal of God's covenant with his people, which supposeth that it should be made, and consented to on our part before-hand, otherwise we annex the great seal of heaven to a blank; which is a mocking of God. So that this ordinance is instituted to confirm believers who are in the covenant, and not to convert unbelievers, and consequently none but believers have a right before God.

Q. Are all believers still welcome guests to his table: or can they never be guilty of unworthy communicating?

A. There is more requisite to worthy communicating, than being in good state; we must also be in a good frame: there must not only be faith in the habit, but faith in the lively acts. So that if a believer neglect to examine himself, fail in his preparation, or want grace in exercise, he even communicates unworthily: yet neither this, nor any other of his sins, will bring him into condemnation, though it brings on chastisement, 1 Cor. xi. 28, 30, 31, 32. Mat. xxv. 5. Rom. viii. 1. Psal. lxxxix. 32.

Q. What is it to communicate unworthily?

A. It is for a man to partake in an unworthy state, an unsuitable frame, or with wrong ends. Or, more particularly, it is for a person to approach ignorantly, without suitable knowledge: or, to approach formally, without a suitable reverence and awe of God; or to come without due preparation, without the exercise of faith, love, repentance, spiritual hunger, thankfulness to God, covenanting with him, and resolutions against sin. Or, to come entertaining some known sin in the life, whether of omission or commission, or harbour-

ing some secret lust in the heart, such as pride, malice, or revenge.

Q. Is not unworthy communicating both highly sinful and dangerous?

A. Yes; for 1. The sin of it is no less than murdering the Son of God, and being accessory to the guilt of shedding his innocent blood. 2. The danger of it is both temporal strokes and eternal damnation: for this hainous sin, God is provoked to throw the bodies of many into the grave, and the souls of many into hell, 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29, 30.

Q. Why should this sin be reckoned so very hainous?

A. For these reasons; 1. It argues a low esteem and an undervaluing of Christ, his precious blood, and redeeming love.

2^{dly}, It is a solemn affront to Christ; as it is to a king, to throw his picture or great seal into a puddle.

3^{dly}, It is a horrid mocking of Christ, as it is a pretence of love to him, and hatred of sin, while in the mean time sin is hugged, and Christ despised.

4^{thly}, It is a plain accession to the guilt of the Jews and Romans, who embrued their hands in Christ's blood; for he is reckoned accessory to a murder who consents to it, aids or abetts the murderers, and this unworthy communicants are guilty of.

Q. Is not the guilt of unworthy communicants in some respect more hainous than that of the Jews?

A. Yes; for the Jews when they pierced him and shed his blood, they did it ignorantly, they did it to one they reckoned a criminal and blasphemer, they did it to him when he was in the form of a servant, in a state of humiliation. But unworthy communicants do this wittingly against him, they own him to be their innocent Saviour, now gloriously exalted at the right hand of God; and at a time when he is displaying his love and making a rich feast to them; which makes the crime horrid and monstrous. Which consideration should make us all tremble, and cry with David, Psal. li. 14. 'Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God.'

Q. Who are those that may be reckoned worthy communicants?

A. These who are in a worthy state, viz. a state of grace; and who have a worthy frame of spirit, viz. the lively exercise of grace; and who have worthy ends and designs, viz.

to shew forth Christ's death, and renew covenant with God.

Q. Are there any worthy communicants in a legal sense?

A. No; for the best saint hath no worth or merit before God; he hath nothing in himself to found his claim or plea for any of these good things which God bestows in the sacrament. There are still many sins and imperfections in the best, so that after we have done all, we must acknowledge ourselves to be most unworthy and unprofitable servants,' Gen. xxxii. 10. Luke xvii. 10.

Q. What is meant then by the worthiness which some communicants are said to have?

A. Nothing, but a gospel suitableness and meetness of our souls state and frame, to this holy ordinance; for worthiness is oft taken in this sense in scripture, Mat. xxii. 8. Luke iii. 8. Col. i. 10. Rev. iii. 4.

Q. Is perfect holiness, a strong faith, or a very great measure of knowledge in religion, or sensible joy and comfort at the Lord's table, essentially necessary to worthy communicating?

A. No; for there may be worthy communicants in a gospel sense, graciously owned and accepted of God, who yet may have many sins and doubts, much darkness and confusion: but where there is any measure of true faith in Christ, though weak, the Lord marks not iniquity, but looks on the soul as white, through the imputed righteousness of Christ, Numb. xxiii. 21. Psal. cxxx. 3, 4.

Q. What is it then to communicate worthily? And wherein lies the nature of this work and duty?

A. It is a complex act, and a very great work. And it lies shortly in our receiving Christ and his benefits with the hand of faith, and making particular application of them for our souls necessities; as we receive the elements with our bodily hand, and make use of them for our bodies. Or, it is, to cast our guilty souls into the open arms of a crucified Saviour for mercy, and, in the mean time, to embrace and clasp about this bleeding high priest, with the arms of faith, as our Saviour and Lord, saying with Thomas, 'my Lord, and my God.' It is a flying into his wounds for shelter, and applying his blood for pardon and cleansing. It is a taking Christ's body and blood to save us, and a giving up our souls and bodies to be saved, taught and ruled by him. Or in a word to communicate worthily, is to eat and drink at Christ's table, with a believing and thankful remembrance of his dying

love, resting on his merits, mourning for sin that pierced him, and solemnly resolving to pierce him no more.

Q. What are the advantages of worthy communicating?

A. They are very many, and very great: hereby Christ and his benefits are received, the souls diseases and plagues are cured, our sins and lusts weakened and killed, and our graces strengthened and increased. Hereby the hard heart is softened, and the cold heart inflamed, the dead soul quickened, the palsy hand cured, and feeble knees strengthened. Hereby the straitened soul is enlarged, the wandering heart fixed, the creeping desires elevated, the fainting heart supported, the cloudy mind brightened, the uneasy conscience satisfied, and doubting souls resolved. Many times hath Christ made himself known to his disciples in 'the breaking of bread,' herein he hath allowed them the smiles of his face, the comforts of his Spirit, and seal of their pardon, and a sight of the king in his beauty, and a Pisgah-view of Canaan. O worthy communicant, is there any meal in the world so profitable as this? A meal that proves life to your souls, and death to your sins, a cordial to your hearts, and balm to your wounds, strength to your graces, and poison to your lusts.

Q. What are the disadvantages of unworthy communicating?

A. It draws down judicial strokes from God upon the soul, diseases and untimely death on the body, and eternal wrath upon both. It brings on desertion from God, and the rebukes of his anger, darkness on the mind, deadness and impenitency on the heart, barrenness and leanness on the soul, decay and withering on the graces, formality and lifelessness in duties, fearedness, and sometimes horror on the conscience: yea, it lets loose Satan against the soul. And some of these plagues have even believers themselves smarted under, for their careless communicating, 1 Cor. xi. 29, 30.

Q. What is the meaning of these words, 1 Cor. xi. 29. He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body? Is this sin so damnable that there is no pardon for it?

A. Tho' the sin be hainous, yet it is not unpardonable: that is not the meaning of the words; the word damnation; in the original is *krima*, which properly signifies judgment, as well as damnation, and therefore our Assembly Divines use this word upon this subject, 'They eat and drink judgment

‘to themselves,’ i. e. they make themselves liable to temporal, spiritual, and eternal judgments: temporal and spiritual judgments will follow them in this world, and without a timely repentance, these will end in eternal damnation in the other. This is pardonable, as well as others, through ‘the blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin.’ For as the virtue of this precious blood saved and cleansed many, who actually shed it at Jerusalem; so it can save and cleanse these who spill and trample it under foot in the sacrament, upon their application to it, Luke xxiv. 46, 47. Acts ii. 36, 38, 41. 1 John i. 7.

Q. Doth the presence of a wicked man pollute the sacrament to worthy receivers who sit at the table with him?

A. No; for it is said, ‘he eateth and drinketh judgment to himself’ only, not to another that receives with him: otherwise Christ and his apostles had been defiled by the company of Judas; for at the sacrament of the passover he certainly was.

Q. Why is the guilt of this damning sin, laid upon the unworthy communicant’s not discerning the Lord’s body?

A. Because he doth not distinguish betwixt common bread and the sacrament bread, which represents the Lord’s body; but useth it with as little preparation and regard, or as carelessly, as he useth the other; which infers dreadful guilt before God.

Q. Where is this sacrament to be administered?

A. Only in the congregations and assemblies of God’s people. For, 1. Christ gave it to his disciples when met together, and not to any of them apart, Mat. xxvi. 20, 26.

2dly, It was the practice of the primitive and apostolical churches to administer and partake of this sacrament publicly, when the congregation or church was assembled together in one place; which is ratified by the apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 20.

3dly, Because it is one great design in this ordinance to testify the union or communion of Christians one with another, 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. ‘For we being many are one bread.’ Now this union of many cannot be expressed where there are not many convened together to do it.

Q. Wherefore may not the sacrament be administered to the sick, or persons on a death-bed?

A. It ought not, because of the foresaid reasons; and also

in regard of these following, 1. We have neither precept nor example for this practice in the word of God ; and so it cannot be done in faith, Rom. xiv. 23.

2dly, It derogates much from the awfulness and solemnity of this great and august ordinance, to administer it so privately, and with so little deliberation and preparation, as often it is done, where this practice is allowed.

3dly, Few sick or dying persons are priviledged with such stayedness of mind, calmness of thought, free exercise of reason, and undisturbed use of the faculties, as is necessary for a man's examining himself before he partake, and so exerting the several acts of faith, and the other graces which are requisite in partaking. And to administer the sacrament to these who are tossed with sickness, distracted with pain, or incapable of any freedom or distinctness of thought (as most sick people are) is to profane the ordinance, and to do the sick person more harm than good.

4thly, This were to symbolize with Papists and idolaters in their superstitious practices, and to homologate their errors : for Papists believe that the sacraments do of themselves confer grace, and that all is well, if they at last partake of this sacrament. From all which errors, idolatries and superstitious customs, we ought to keep a due distance in obedience to God's command, Exod. xxiii. 24. Lev. xviii. 3. Deut. xii. 30. 1 Cor. x. 6. Rev. xviii. 4.

Q. Seeing it is our indispensable duty to communicate, and that frequently ; and it is so highly dangerous to communicate unworthily ; what course shall we take, in order to our being worthy communicants ?

A. We must with all earnestness seek after that gospel fitness and preparation, which God requires of these that approach to this holy ordinance.

Concerning our P R E P A R A T I O N for the L O R D ' S S U P P E R.

Quest. WHAT sort of preparation is it, that God requires of such as come to his table ?

A. It is not a slack or careless preparation to be put by in a hasty and superficial manner, as some do, who never set about

it till the Saturday or Lord's-day morning before they communicate. No, it must be timeous and deliberate, conscientious and impartial, diligent and fervent in the use of all appointed means, depending upon God for the gracious preparation of the heart, according to his promise, Psal. x. 17. Prov. xvi. 1.

Q. What is the necessity of such solemn preparation for the Lord's table?

A. For these reasons; 1. God requires it, 1 Cor. xi. 28.

2^{dly}, There was also a great preparation required for the passover, Exod. xii. Numb. ix. And this was not put by in a short time; for the trumpet was blown in Jerusalem to make intimation of its approach fifteen days before; and every family was to have the lamb in their houses four days before the eating of it, Psal. lxxxi. 3. Exod. xii. 3, 6. Also the house was to be prepared and narrowly searched for leaven, and that with candles; Christ before eating it, caused bespeak and make ready an upper-room furnished, swept and garnished for that purpose: all this serves to teach us, what preparation we should make for the Lord's supper, that now is come in room of the passover.

3^{dly}, The soul makes a near approach to an infinitely holy God in this ordinance; yea, transacts and renews covenant with him, which doth call for our making solemn preparation, as it was the saints practice of old on such occasions, Gen. xxxv. 2, 3. Josh. iii. 5. 1 Sam. vii. 3. 1 Sam. xvi. 5. Psal. xxvi. 6.

4^{thly}, There is need for it, because we are naturally unfit and unprepared; we have carnal hearts, dead affections, and unholy souls; and therefore they must be renewed, quickned, and purified, before we can hold communion with a holy God at his table.

5^{thly}, God makes great preparations for us in this ordinance, he hath made all things ready on his part: a rich feast, a complete Saviour, a full covenant, a sufficient ransom, a perfect righteousness, suitable promises, sovereign remedies, a glorious purchase, and everlasting inheritance. And are not we bound in duty and gratitude to prepare for receiving these great things Prov. ix. 2. Matt. xxii. 4.

6^{thly}, There is great danger in coming unpreparedly, even of eating and drinking damnation: of which I have spoken before. We must not think that we can escape the eye of a

jealous and all-seeing God at this feast; for he narrowly views all the guests, and will spy out every unprepared communicant, as he did the man that wanted the wedding-garment, Matth. xxii. 11. about whom he gave most fearful orders v. 13.

Q. What are the parts of preparation required of us in order to our approach to God's table?

A. There are generally two, but very comprehensive, viz. self-examination and exciting of the graces.

Q. What is the nature of this work of self-examination?

A. It lyes in a free communing with our own hearts, and bringing our souls before the tribunal of conscience, and there judging them according to God's word. And in this process, there must be an awakening summons given and impartial enquiry made, plain accusations tabled against us, and a just sentence pronounced upon us, concerning our state. And if the sentence be bad, there must be the poor pannel's earnest cries for mercy, and a fleeing quickly to our surety for repealing of the sentence of the law. All this I include in self-examination, as necessary for preparing us to come to the Lord's table.

Q. Is there an absolute necessity for self-examination before communicating?

A. Yes, 1. Because without it, we cannot know how it is with us as to our state, and whether we have a right to approach or not. 2dly, Without it, we cannot know our wants and miseries; see our need of Christ, or esteem him precious. 3dly, Without it, we cannot have a full discovery of our sins, and so cannot reform from them. 4thly, Without it we cannot know the deficiency or weakness of the sacramental graces in us, and so cannot excite them. 5thly, Without a particular knowledge of our plagues and distempers, we cannot make particular application of the remedy provided for us in the sacrament.

Q. What are the properties of this duty?

A. 1. It is absolutely necessary: for it is the first step to our conversion.

2dly, It is a duty much neglected by the most part of the world, they have no acquaintance with themselves.

3dly, It is very difficult and displeasing to nature. We are most unwilling to turn accusers of ourselves; it being against self-love, which always inclines us to flatter ourselves.

4^{thly}, It is a duty we soon tire of, and are ready to flinch from, after we begin it. It is no easy matter to keep the mind close at this work for any considerable time together.

Lastly, It requires a constant dependance on, and looking to God for his Spirit's assistance and light, without which we cannot make right discoveries of ourselves, Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

Q. What are these things we ought to examine ourselves about, before we approach to the Lord's table?

A. Concerning these five things. 1. Our state and condition. 2. Our sins and short-comings. 3. Our wants and necessities. 4. Our ends and designs. 5. Our graces and qualifications.

Q. Is it possible to know the spiritual state and condition of our souls, if it be bad?

A. Yes, by marks and evidences laid down in scripture; particularly, our state is bad, if we love the world more than God; if we mind our bodies more than God; if we mind our bodies more than our souls. If we be insensible of the necessity and usefulness of Christ to our souls. If we make religion only our bye-work, and give God no more service, than what the world and the flesh can spare. If we live vain and careless lives, and allow ourselves in known sin, 1 John ii. 15. 2 Tim. iii. 4. John v. 40. Rom. viii. 5. Rom. x. 3. Matt. x. 37. Psal. lxxiii. 27.

Q. How may we know if our spiritual state be good?

A. By such evidences as these. If we be heartily concerned about our souls and eternity, and carefully seek the favour of God through Christ: if we place our happiness in the enjoying of communion with God, and not in the world's comforts. If Christ the Mediator, his ordinances, people, and all that belongs to him, be precious to us; if indwelling sin be our burden, and we sincerely strive against sin both in heart and life: if we make conscience of our words and ways, and have a respect to all God's commandments. These are marks of our state being good, Psal. lxxiii. 25. Rom. viii. 5. 1 Pet. ii. 7. 1 John iii. 9, 14. Gal. v. 25. Rom. vii. 24. Psal. cxix. 6, 128.

Q. What is that good estate we must necessarily be in, if we would be worthy communicants?

A. We must be in covenant with God through faith in Je-

Jesus Christ; and acquaint with a saving change of our hearts and natures by a work of regeneration.

Q. Who are these that are in covenant with God?

A. These who have actually taken hold of the covenant of grace, and have cordially consented to its gracious offers and terms by faith. Particularly, these who have been thoroughly convinced of their misery under a covenant of works, and have betaken themselves to the new-covenant; have heartily acquiesced in the way and method of salvation through Christ and his righteousness; have cordially accepted of Christ in all his offices and promises; and in him have made choice of God the Father, Son, and holy Ghost, as their God and portion; have also given up themselves soul and body, and all they have to be the Lord's, to be for him, and not for another: and in Christ's strength have engaged to live for God, and walk with him in newness of life; as becomes his covenanted people: and this is what we call our personal-covenanting with God, which ought to be solemnly gone about, by all that would seal a covenant with God at his table, Psal. xvi. 2. Psal. l. 5. Isa. xliv. 5. Jer. l. v. Psal. cxix. 57. 2 Chron. xxx. 8. 2 Cor. viii. 5. Rom. vi. 4, 13. 2 Cor. v. 15.

Q. Is not personal-covenanting with God, the same thing with faith?

A. Yes, only it imports a very solemn, explicit, and distinct exerting of the several acts of faith, and lyes mainly in these two, acceptation and dedication.

Q. Is our accepting of Christ as a Lord and sovereign, that act of faith which entitles us to the covenant and its blessings; or that is the mean and instrument of our justification before God.

A. No; For though it be essentially requisite to our entering into the covenant, and necessarily connected with our justification; yet it is not, itself, that very act of faith, whereby we are entitled to the covenant and justified before God.

Q. What is the precise act of justifying faith then, whereby that is done?

A. The act of faith, whereby we are absolved, reconciled and justified before God, and entitled to the covenant and all Christ's purchase therein offered, is precisely the soul's embracing Christ as a bleeding high priest, offering up himself a sacrifice to divine justice, for expiating our guilt, and acting the part of a cautioner in paying our debt: so that the proper ob-

ject of that faith which is justifying, ' is Christ crucified and ' his righteousness,' and upon this alone doth the believing soul rely for pardon and salvation. Yet, as I said before, with this act of faith, which accepts of Christ as a high priest and surety, is inseparably connected that other act, viz. the accepting of Christ as a king and Lord, to rule and govern us, all the days of our life ; which is absolutely requisite to our covenanting with God. And hence it is that there is a distinction made, betwixt justifying faith and saving faith. So that we see personal-covenanting is also one with faith ; only it comprehends more of its act than that which is precisely justifying, Deut. xxvi. 17.

Q. Since the first act in personal covenanting is acceptation ; what are these things we must accept of ?

A. We must first accept of Jesus Christ as our peace-maker, and Mediator with God, seeing it is only by him we have access to God, and all the promises come to us in him. Then we must accept of all the covenant blessings, even a whole God-head as our portion ; God the Father, as our father in Christ ; God the Son as our redeemer, our prophet to teach us, our priest to atone for us, and our king to govern us ; God the holy Ghost as the applier of Christ's purchase by his renewing us, sanctifying, comforting and guiding us to glory. We must accept of all the divine attributes and perfections ; God's wisdom for our direction, his power for our protection, his mercy for our pardon, and his faithfulness for making good all the promises to us. We must accept of all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, faith, repentance, love, hope, fear, patience, &c. as our portion in Christ. We must accept of all the divine precepts as our rule ; all his ordinances and providences as our helps to heaven : his covenant as the treasure of our supplies and comforts : his rod to reclaim and spur us on to duty : his people as our companions in travel : and his heaven as our home and eternal dwelling place.

Q. Seeing dedication is the other act in personal covenanting, what is it we are to dedicate to God ?

A. As God gives himself wholly to us, so we must dedicate and give ourselves wholly and unreservedly to him ; our souls with all their powers and faculties ; our understandings to embrace God's truths ; our wills to comply with his will ; our consciences to receive his orders ; our memories to lay up his counsels ; and our affections and desires to be centered

upon him ; as the object of our happiness. Also we must devote and give up our bodies with all their senses and members to be for his service ; our eyes to read his word and behold his works : our ears to hear his calls ; our feet to walk in ways pleasing to him ; our hands to supply his people in distress ; and our tongues to pray, and speak the language of Canaan. Again, we must give up our enjoyments to him, our time and talents, our estates and substance, our relations and friends, our gifts and graces, our power and interest to be employed for God and his honour, and to be entirely disposed of for his service and glory. Likewise, we must dedicate our service and endeavours to God, with all the actions and performances of our lives ; aiming at his glory in all we do, resolving and engaging in Christ's strength to live wholly to God, perform every duty he commands, suffer patiently what he lays on us, watch against every sin he forbids, and renounce all his enemies. In a word, we must give up and resign our whole man to God, and all that we have to be guided by his Spirit, ruled by his laws, and disposed of by his providence. And in these things lies our personal covenanting with God, which certainly is the communicant's best token, to warrant him to approach to the Lord's table.

Q. Is not the gracious covenant which believers are brought into by their closing with Christ, called God's covenant, and a covenant which he makes with us ? How then can we be said to make a covenant with him ?

A. I grant that it is God's covenant, and that ordinarily he is said to make the covenant with his people ; and for this good reason, that God is the blessed author and deviser of this covenant, the revealer and proposer of it to us ; and he that affords us grace and strength to consent to it, and do our part of the covenant. But the covenant of grace being a marriage-covenant, it necessarily imports in its nature a bargain that is mutual, and requires the consent of both parties, in order to the making and concluding of it. So that we are to be active, and not wholly passive in this transaction ; something must be done on our part when we enter into this covenant ; not that we have this principle of activity in and from ourselves ; no, it is the fruit of Christ's purchase, and his Spirit's operation, freely promised and given us by God, Jer. xxix. 13. But seeing this activity is put forth and exerted by our faculties, it becomes the act and deed of the gracious soul. That this

covenant is mutual, and doth require activity on our part, is plain from scripture, and the several ways that faith is expressed therein. Our entering into this covenant is held forth by the sinners yielding himself to the Lord, or giving his hand to the Lord, as in the original, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. By our taking hold of the covenant, Isa. lvi. 4. Our making a covenant with God, Psalm l. 5. 2 Chron. xxix. 10. Jer. xxxiv. 18. So that we are said to make it with God, as well as he is said to make it with us. Also, it is held forth by our joining ourselves to the Lord in a covenant, Jer. l. 5. Our avouching the Lord to be our God, Deut. xxvi. 17. Our swearing to the Lord, 2 Chron. xv. 14. Our being married to the Lord, Jer. iii. 14. Hos. ii. 19, 20. Our subscribing with the hand unto the Lord, and saying, 'I am the Lord's,' Isa. xlv. 5. Our souls saying to the Lord, 'Thou art my Lord, thou art my God, and my portion,' Psal. xvi. 2. Psal. xxxi. 10. Hos. ii. 24. Lam. iii. 24. Likewise in the New Testament, our covenanting with God is held forth by our coming unto God by Christ, Heb. vii. 25. Laying hold upon the hope set before us, Heb. vi. 18. Embracing of the promises, Heb. xi. 13. Receiving Christ, and being married to him, John i. 12. Mat. xxii. 2. Rom. vii. 4. All which expressions import our activity in covenanting with God. I grant indeed, that it is God that works it in us, and that it is he that is the first mover in this blessed bargain; he courts us before we consent; he chuses us before we chuse him, Hos. ii. 23. Zech. xiii. 8, 9. so that this covenant is all free grace; for though God put a condition in it on our part, yet he graciously works it in us, and promises it to us, saying, 'Ye shall be my people,' Jer. xxxiv. 7. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, 28. Phil. ii. 12, 13.

Q. In what manner must we go about this work of personal-covenanting with God?

A. We must have our hearts prepared and put in a suitable frame for it; they must be spiritual, humble, and panting after God in Christ.

2dly, We must be deliberate in managing this weighty transaction, and labour to have a clear view of the nature and frame of the covenant of grace; what God offers and promises to us, and what he requires of us, and endeavour by grace to get our hearts wrought up to a stedfast resolution to comply therewith.

3^{dly}, We must still bring Christ alongſt with us in our covenanting with God, we muſt bring the ſacrifice of his merits to atone for the breach of the firſt covenant, and his ſuretyſhip to answer for our faithfulneſs in the ſecond, ere we can expect to be taken into covenant with God, and owned as his people.

4^{thly}, We muſt give up and engage ourſelves to God in a moſt humble and ſelf-denied manner, narrowly watching againſt a ſelfiſh and legal frame of ſpirit in this work (which we are moſt ready to decline unto) and guarding with all care againſt any ſecret relying upon our own engagements and doings, or letting them come in the room of Chriſt, who alone is 'the Lord our righteouſneſs.' Therefore in managing this work, let us rely wholly upon Chriſt's righteouſneſs to procure us acceſs to God, and acceptance with him: and upon his ſtrength and grace both in making and performing our promiſes and engagements to him; let theſe ſcripture-texts be ſtill in our view, Pſal. l. 5. Jer. xxiii. 6. Iſa. xlv. 24. 1 Cor. i. 30. Phil. iii. 8, 9.

5^{thly}, We ſhould ſet about this work of perſonal covenanting timeouſly and ſpeedily, without delay or loſs of time; and particularly let it be done in the ſeaſon of youth, or when perſons firſt gets their eyes opened to ſee their loſtneſs by nature, and their need of Chriſt.

And then, *Laſtly*, It ought to be undertaken and gone about in an humble dependance upon divine grace and conduct, with all ſecrecy and retiredneſs, ſeriouſneſs and holy awe; and yet in the moſt ſolemn and explicit manner, with the expreſs words of the mouth, as well as the fixed purpoſe of the heart; yea, ſubſcribing it with the hand, and calling heaven and earth to witneſs our ſincerity in this grand affair. An example whereof I have ſubjoined in the appendix of this catechiſm.

Q. What is the neceſſity of our perſonal covenanting with God?

A. 1. Becauſe God requires it of us, and promiſes great happineſs to them who do it in ſincerity, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Pſal. l. 5. Iſa. lvi. 4, 5, 6, 7.

2^{dly}, The nature of faith (which is required of every man) implies covenanting with God. For faith is the uniting grace, and carries in it not only an aſſent of the underſtanding, but alſo the conſent of the will to embrace God's offer of ſalvation through Chriſt, and accept of Chriſt on his own terms, both

as our Saviour and ruler, Mat. xi. 28, 29. Mat. xvi. 24. He is a high priest on a throne, Zech. vi. 13.

3dly, Our baptism obligeth us to personal covenanting with God. For the whole of the covenant of grace is contained in baptism, and every man's consent to it is implied in these words, 'I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost,' i. e. I sprinkle thee with water (which represents God's bequeathing and making over to thee all Christ's purchase) in sign and testimony that thou dost own God the Father for thy father in Christ, God the Son for thy Redeemer, and God the holy Ghost for thy Sanctifier: Now it is certainly requisite that we should, when we come to age, personally renew our baptismal covenant and ratify our parents deed, that we may be Christians by our own free choice and consent, as well as by our parents dedication. And this every individual man and woman that would be saved, must do for themselves, by their own particular consent, and personal coming into the bond of this covenant, Ezek. xx. 37. The which, if we neglect to do, our baptism will not profit us, for God will rank and punish us with the uncircumcised, Jer. ix. 25, 26.

4thly, This was the practice of God's people of old, Deut. xxvi. 17. 2 Kings xxiii. 3. 2 Chron. xxix. 10. Neh. ix. 38. Psal. l. 5. Jer. xxxiv. 18. Jer. l. 5. Isa. lvi. 4, 6. Nay, it is the practice of all the New Testament believers, 2 Cor. viii. 5. 2 Cor. xi. 2. For our giving ourselves to the Lord, in a marriage transaction, doth plainly import our personal covenanting with God.

Q. But what warrant have we for such an expresse verbal way of covenanting with God, as before mentioned?

A. I do not say that such an explicit or formal transaction is absolutely necessary to salvation, seeing a man's state is safe, if he with his heart close with God's offer of salvation through Christ. But yet this expresse verbal transacting is very necessary on several accounts.

1. Because it is a matter of the greatest moment and concern to our souls to be in covenant with God, and we can never be at too much pains to make it sure. Shall we be so very expresse, plain and peremptory in other bargains of lesser moment, and yet be content to be overly in this, upon which our eternal concerns do depend.

2dly, It is necessary, that so the impressions of our consent

and engagements to the Lord, may be fixed the deeper in our minds and memories; and so may be the more abiding with us.

3dly, It is necessary for the strengthening of faith, and preventing many groundless fears and jealousies about our souls estate. There is nothing so liable to be questioned and brought in debate as our interest in Christ, and our being in covenant with God through him; and therefore we should do all we can for maintaining a comfortable sense of it upon our spirits, that we may be the more cheerful in our obedience to God. And this way of solemn verbal transacting with God is a proper means for that end; it being, as it were a formal instrument taken and put in record, of what passeth betwixt God and the soul.

4thly, This practice is very advantageous and supporting to God's people in the day of trouble and distress, or when they are in the view of death. How comfortable is it then, to call to mind former experiences of the souls communion with God, and particularly for them to remember how, at such a time and place, they joined themselves to the Lord in a personal and perpetual covenant; then and there God spake with them, sealed their pardon, and owned them as his covenanted people. The soul was helped solemnly and expressly to say unto the Lord, 'Thou art my God.' and God graciously answered the soul, 'I am thy salvation.' This was very comfortable to the royal Psalmist in time of his greatest straits, and when in prospect of eternity, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Psal. xlii. 6, 11. Psal. lxxvii. 10, 11, 12, 13. Psal. cxliii. 5, 6.

5thly, Express transacting with God hath been the usual practice of the best and holiest of God's people: and still is most frequent in these times and places, where the power and life of religion do most abound; this practice of God's people hath been visibly owned by God; by this method many of them have attained to the comfortable assurance of their interest in Christ, and the blessings of the new covenant, which hath been very steadable to them through the whole course of their lives. And to the neglect of this ancient and useful practice, many think the great decay of religion in our day is to be imputed.

6thly, There is solid foundation and warrant given us for express verbal transacting with God, from his word and the practice of his saints therein recorded. For the covenant be-

twixt God and his people is there represented by a marriage-covenant betwixt husband and wife, Hof. ii. 19, 20. 2 Cor. xi. 2. And we know it is necessary that the wife give express and explicit consent to the husband, as well as the husband to the wife. And therefore the Lord saith to his people, 'Thou shalt call me Ishi,' i. e. my husband, 'and thou shalt not be for another, so also will I be for thee,' Hof. ii. 16. Hof. iii. 3. Such a consent gave the spouse, Cant. vi. 3. 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.' Likewise our joining ourselves to the Lord in this covenant, is called a giving the hand to the Lord, which imports a most positive and express way of transacting, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Again he saith, 'One shall say I am the Lord's, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord,' Isa. xlv. 5. These and many other scriptures, that might be cited, import a most express and formal consent in this covenant, to be necessary and warrantable on our part, Jer. iii. 4, 19. Isa. xlv. 24. Zech. xiii. 9. Which also we have exemplified, in the practices of Jacob, David, Hezekiah, Nehemiah, Thomas, and other saints, Gen. xxviii. 20, 21. Psal. xvi. 2. 2 Chron. xxix. 10. Neh. ix. 38. John xx. 28. Psal. cxi. 6.

Q. What are the proper seasons for express covenanting with God?

A. 1. In time of youth, when the heart is most tender and melting: and especially when persons are first brought under convictions, and are about to renew their baptismal engagements, and approach to the Lord's table, for receiving the second seal of God's covenant, Psal. lxxi. 5, 17. Jer. ii. 2. Jer. iii. 4.

2dly, This practice is to be renewed upon some special occasions. As, 1. In time of great backsliding, and deep humiliation for the same, Neh ix. 29. 2dly, In time of great straits and imminent dangers, Gen. xxxii. 9, 26. Psal. xxxi. 14. Psal. lvii. 1, 2. 3dly, When persons are undertaking some great and difficult work, as Joshua when Israel was to settle in Canaan in the midst of snares, Josh. xxiv. 23, 24, 25. And Jacob when going to Padan-aram, Gen. xxviii. 20, 21. 4thly, When believers are under desertion, and in the dark about their case, and through temptations brought to question if ever they really covenanted with God; then it is proper to essay the matter of new, and do what we can to put it out of doubt, by saying expressly to God, thou art my God and

my portion, Psal. xxxi. 14. Psal. cxlii. 5. So the spouse when deserted, professed and avowed Christ as her beloved, Cant. v. 4. and vi. 3. 5^{thly}, Some have repeated this practice with comfort at the beginning of every year. I grant indeed there is hazard lest people by frequent express covenanting with God, turn too formal in it: and therefore, it may be as fit on some occasions, to declare in the sight of God, our adherence to the covenant formerly made. Formality and overlinefs in this work, should be especially guarded against; for our express verbal covenanting is of no worth, unless heart-covenanting be joined with it. It is a mocking of God, to draw nigh unto him with the lips, when the heart is away.

Q. What shall we think of these, who apprehend that they once covenanted with God in Christ, but by their sins they have broke their engagements, and so are no more to be reckoned God's covenanted people?

A. 1. All such have cause to be humbled deeply for their sins, whereby they have broken covenant with God: and if they be not humbled on this account, they have indeed ground to suspect themselves, that they were never truly God's covenanted people.

2^{dly}, We ought to remember that the covenant of works and the covenant of grace differ vastly in their nature: for the first could be violated by the least sin, but the second cannot be dissolved by an sin of the covenanted. For though we break the engagement we come under when we enter into this covenant; yet God will not break the promises he makes on his part. God's gracious covenant with his people stands firm and undissolved, notwithstanding of many breaches and failures on their part; because there is a surety in this covenant, from whom he receives satisfaction for the sins of the covenanted: and upon this account, it is provided as a special article of this covenant, that God will forgive the sins and breaches of his covenanted people, when they confess them, and sue for pardon for their surety's sake: and hence it is, that the covenant of grace is perpetual and indissoluble, and these who are once in covenant with God, are still in it, Jer. xxxi. 32, 34. Psal. lxxxix. 31, 34. Isa. liv. 8. 1 John i. 9. 1 John ii. 1.

3^{dly}, All sensible backsliders, covenant-breakers, and treacherous dealers of any sort, are graciously invited and en-

couraged by God to return to him, and renew their covenant again, Jer. iii. 1, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22. Hos. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Q. But what if we should just break over again: Is it not better not to engage, and come under new obligations, which would but aggravate our guilt?

A. 1. It would be a fearful aggravation of sin indeed to come under new engagements to God, without having a sincere design of keeping them.

2dly, We are peremptorily obliged by God's command to renew covenant with him, and not left to our freedom to come under new engagements or not, as we think fit.

3dly, It is good to be jealous of ourselves in taking on new engagements; for the weaker we be in our own eyes, and the more we distrust our own strength, the stronger and safer we really are, 2 Cor. xii. 10.

4thly, If we covenant honestly with God through Christ our surety, we may expect sufficient covenanted grace and strength, for breaking the power of sin in us, and enabling us to wrestle against it. And likewise we will have our surety engaged to answer for all our failures; and though we be weak, to be sure he is sufficiently able and sponfible for us.

Q. Is not this doctrine concerning the perpetuity of the covenant, and Christ's suretiship for us, an encouragement to people to turn licentious in their walk?

A. Not at all; for, on the contrary, believers are hereby laid under the stricter obligations to love God and Christ, which love will surely and sweetly constrain them to an holy and obedient walk. And whoever they be that improve this doctrine as an encouragement to sin, they are none of God's covenanted people; for it is the character of the ungodly, 'to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness:' and though they should do so, yet the foresaid doctrine is true, and necessary to be published, to prevent dejected souls being sunk with discouragement, or driven into despair, Rom. vi. 1. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Gal. vi. 1. Jude verse 4.

Q. But what shall be said to those, who are so discouraged with a sense of their own unworthiness to enter into covenant with God, that they suspect God is not willing to accept of them?

A. 1. God never refused to enter into covenant with any upon the account of unworthiness. Who more vile than Ma-

nasseh, and yet God excluded him not upon his humble application. Who more unworthy than the prodigal, that forsook his father, and took on to serve the devil and his swinish lusts, and yet upon his return, the father takes him into his arms, rejoices in him as his dear child, and calls heaven and earth to rejoice with him too, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13. Luke xv. 13, 15.

2dly, God never took any into covenant with him but the unworthy; for God's covenanting with any of the sinful posterity of Adam (who are all of them utterly unworthy of this privilege) is an act of pure grace, and free condescending love, which all his people will have reason to admire and glorify to all the ages of eternity.

3dly, The more sensible we are of unworthiness, and humbled for it, the more fit we are for covenanting with God; for it is such he hath promised to accept, Psal. x. 17. Isa. lxvi. 2. Matth. v. 3.

4thly, Though we be altogether unworthy, in ourselves, of being taken into covenant with God; yet worthy is the Lamb our surety, who hath merited this privilege to unworthy sinners, and it is only his worthiness that we must plead.

5thly, We have the plainest calls, and most pressing invitations from God to the unworthiest of sinners to come and enter into covenant with him, and many arguments made use of to engage them to it, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Isa. li. 4. Isa. lv. 3, 7. Ezek. xviii. 30, 32. 2 Cor. v. 20. Now for any to doubt of God's willingness to enter into covenant with them, after these plain proofs which he has given us of it, is no less than to suspect God's sincerity and ingenuity in his offers and declarations; which must be no small crime.

Q. But what shall be said of these, who have many times refused God's gracious offers, and hence are afraid that he will not accept of them now?

A. 1. They ought to be deeply humbled for the former refusals they have given. 2dly, Bless God that the treaty is not yet broke off, and that his gracious offers are still sounding in their ears. 3dly, The longer they have formerly refused, the more haste ought they now to make to come and take hold of God's covenant, that they may not provoke him by refusing or delaying any longer.

Q. But have we strength of ourselves to take hold of this covenant and transact with God?

A. 1. I grant we have not, but yet it is not here that the bargain sticks: it is not so much for want of power, as want of will, that this transaction is not made; for if once we were willing, strength would not be wanting. It is our unwillingness that ruins us, John v. 40.

2dly, We ought to be deeply humbled under a sense of our impotency before God, lie groaning in his way, plead earnestly for pity, and flee to God's power, Christ's grace, and the Spirit's assistance, to enable us for this work, begging importunately, that according to his promise, for Christ's sake, he would put a principle of life and activity in us, that we may covenant with God, and close a bargain with him through Christ.

3dly, As we ought to be looking and seeking for this principle of activity from God; so we must not lay aside our own endeavours and efforts (weak as they are) till we know that we have this principle of the Spirit's concurrence with us, for commonly the Spirit's work in the soul is not discernible at first: but (seeing the duty is ours, though the work be the Spirit's) we ought, in a humble dependence on Christ and his Spirit for strength, to be aiming and minting to close with God in Christ, take hold of his covenant, and consent to the gospel method of salvation, as we can; and if by any means we can get a grip of this covenant, let us take it, and say, with our souls, to the Lord, 'Thou art my God.' For it pleaseth God to see us minting our duty, and he useth to join weak endeavours, and work in and by our own activity and weak mints, gradually influencing and inclining our hearts and wills to spiritual things, and holy duties, Luke xi. 13. Isa. lxiv. 5. Jer. xxx. 21, 22. Jer. xxxi. 18. Hos. xiv. 2, 3, 4. Faith ordinarily comes at first to Christ, with a weak and trembling hand, minting to take hold of God's covenant, and the offers of grace, but knows not if these mints shall be any way available; faith even adventures on a *may-be*, 'It may be the Lord will be gracious: who knows but he will return,' Amos v. 15. Joel ii. 14.

Q. What shall we say of those who refuse to enter into covenant with God, because they suspect they are none of God's elect, and so have no right to God's covenant?

A. We are to look on this suspicion as a temptation of Satan, designed by him to hinder sinners from Christ, or to drive them to desperation, and therefore ought to be resisted.

For, 1. It is a great madness to open our ears to the suggestions of the devil, who is a liar and murderer from the beginning, and stop them from hearing the voice of the God of mercy and truth speaking to us in the scripture, and calling us to take hold of his covenant.

2dly, It is high presumption to intrude ourselves into the secret decrees of God, which he hath forbid us to pry into, and to reject these plain duties which he hath commanded: 'For secret things belong unto God, but revealed things to us,' Deut. xxix. 29.

3dly, The way to know our election is to make sure our effectual calling, which, must be by entering into covenant with God through Jesus Christ, and turning our back upon sin; which, if our hearts be determined to do, we may surely conclude we are elect vessels; for turning to God in Christ is a fruit and certain proof of election, 2 Pet. i. 10.

4thly, This way of acting in soul matters must be altogether against reason; seeing it is so in things respecting the body. We would reckon him a self-murderer, that would take no food, nor use any means for preserving his natural life, because of an apprehension he hath, that he is appointed to die in a short time. So they murder their souls, who will not use the means of spiritual life, because they fear they are not elected. Again, if we have but a probability of gaining some temporal advantage, though not a certainty, we will venture and run some hazard for it: and do we think heaven and eternal glory such small things, that we will not venture and essay to take hold of God's covenant in order to obtain them?

Q. What shall we say of those, who fear it is now out of time for them to attempt this, because they suspect their day of grace is past, and the door is shut?

A. 1. I grant there are not a few who provoke God to shut the door and give up with them, because of their long grieving and quenching the Spirit of God, and living securely in known wickedness, under the most searching and lively sermons; upon which account he withdraws his Spirit, and plagues many with judicial obduration, so that no means can do them any good. Wherefore if we in any measure be guilty of the foresaid sins, it should be matter of great mourning and humiliation to us.

2dly, Closing with Christ, in the gospel-offers, can never be too late, nor out of time; for God hath said, 'Whosoever,

believeth in Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life: But faith not, if they do not believe against such a time, they shall be excluded; no, the offer is made to all sinners whatsoever, and late believers or repenters are not excepted from the benefit of it more than others.

3dly, They that can say, they sincerely desire God's favour, and heart-holiness, the death of sin, and true love to God, more than all the glory of the world: or, that they sigh and groan after Christ, and would fain have him for their Lord and Saviour; it is a sign their day of grace is not over, for these very desires are some degrees of grace, and a certain evidence that God still continues to deal with their hearts.

Q. What are the marks of those, who are truly God's covenanted people?

A. They are a willing people, a humble and self-denying people: they are an holy people, zealous of good works: they are a thankful and God-exalting people. Jesus Christ the Mediator and surety of the covenant, is very precious to them. The free grace of the covenant is the matter of their wonder and admiration. They are inclined to perform covenant duties, and that in a covenant way, relying on covenant strength, from a principle of love and gratitude to their covenanted God, and with an eye to glorify his name, Psal. cx. 3. Ezek. xvi. 62, 63. Tit. ii. 14. Isa. lv. 1. Psal. cxv. 1. Isa. xiv. 24. Isa. lvi. 4, 5, 6.

Q. Are not these, that are truly in covenant with God, acquainted with the new birth and a work of regeneration?

A. Yes; for these two, being in covenant with God by faith in Jesus Christ, and being renewed or born again, are inseparably connected, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, 28. 1 Cor. v. 17.

Q. What is it that you understand by the new birth, or a work of regeneration?

A. These words, the new birth, new creature, regeneration, renovation, conversion, and effectual calling, are commonly used to denote the same thing: and they signify, that gracious and saving change which is wrought upon the whole man, both inwardly and outwardly, by the almighty power and grace of the Spirit of God, by the means of his word: whereby the soul, being awakened to see its misery and danger in a natural state, is humbled for sin, and powerfully drawn and determined to come to Jesus Christ for remedy, the mind

is savingly enlightned, the will is made pliable, the heart is melted and made new, the seeds of grace are sown therein, sin's power is broken, the outward life is reformed, and the whole man is turned from sin to Jesus Christ and his ways, firmly resolving through his strength, to walk with him constantly in the practice of holiness and duties of religion, Eph. i. 18, 19. Tit. iii. 4, 5. Acts xxvi. 18. Ezek. xxxvi. 27, 29. Rom. vi. 6. Eph. iv. 23, 24. 1 John iii. 9.

Q. What are the signs of a person that is unregenerate, and in a state of nature?

A. They are such, 1. Who love the world and the things of it more than God, 1 John ii. 15. James iv. 4.

2dly, Who against light live in the practice of secret wickedness, or regard iniquity in their hearts, Col. iii. 5, 6. Isa. i. 13, 14, 15. Jer. xlv. 16.

3dly, Who believe not the report of the gospel concerning Jesus Christ, John iii. 36. John viii. 24.

4thly, Who go about to establish their own righteousness, not submitting to the righteousness of Christ, Rom. x. 3.

5thly, Who are haters of the people of God, 1 John ii. 9. John iii. 10.

Q. Have such, who upon self-examination find themselves in that state, any cause to despair of mercy?

A. Though they may despair of help from themselves, or of help from God while they resolve to continue in sin; yet they are to believe there is a door of mercy and hope opened to the greatest sinners in the gospel through Christ, seeing he is willing to accept of all who are sensible of sin and misery, and come to him for help. And to despair of mercy in Christ is the greatest slight and dishonour that can be done to him and his most efficacious blood, Matth. xi. 28. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. 1 John i. 7. Lam. iii. 26.

Q. What course shall these sinners take, who are convinced of their bad estate, in order to be brought out of it?

A. 1. They ought to cherish convictions, and labour for a deep and thorough sense of sin and misery, Matth. ix. 12. Luke iv. 18.

2dly, They are to be diligent in attending upon the word, and in the use of prayer and meditation, John v. 25. 1 Pet. i. 23. Acts ix. 11.

3dly, They are to believe, though neither faith nor repentance be in their power, yet they are both purchased by Christ,

and graciously promised to sinners in the gospel, Phil. i. 29. Acts v. 31. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

4thly, They ought, in the firm perswasion of Christ's ability and willingness to help, to be looking to him for righteousness and strength; and in the painful use of all the ordinary means to be much in pressing their own hearts to believe and close with Christ in the gospel offers; earnestly crying to God with Ephraim, 'turn thou me and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God,' Jer. xxxi. 18.

Q. But may we not delay this affair till afterwards?

A. No; we must presently set about it. For, 1. Our lives are most uncertain, and many thousands go suddenly into eternity before they be aware; and none knoweth how short while the days of God's patience, and the offers of grace may last, James iv. 14. Heb. iii. 15. Luke xii. 20.

2dly, A state of sin is so dangerous, that we should not willingly adventure to live and lye down another night in it.

3dly, The longer we delay conversion-work, the more unwilling we will be to set about it, the heart will be the more hardned, and the habits of sin be more strengthened: our guilt will be the more increased, and our souls the more unwilling to be called to account.

4thly, There are many thousands in hell already who have perished through delays.

5thly, If we refuse to hearken to God in the time of youth and prosperity; he may justly refuse to hearken to us in the time of our need, Prov. i. 26, 28. Zech. vii. 13.

Q. By what marks may we know if the saving change by regeneration be wrought upon us, and that we are new-born, and in a state of grace?

A. By these; 1. If we have got our eyes opened, and new discoveries of sin, Christ and holiness. If sin appear to us most vile, Christ most necessary, and holiness most beautiful Acts xxvi. 18. Rom. vii. 12, 13.

2dly, If we have got new cares and concernments of soul, not about 'what we shall eat, drink,' &c. but what we shall 'do to be saved,' get the favour of God, our interest in Christ secured, and our souls made meet for glory, Matth. vi. 31, 32, 33. Acts xvi. 30. Job. xxiii. 3.

3dly, If we have got the new heart, and a new principle of spiritual life, and be endued with new resolutions to strive

against sin, and walk with God in newness of life, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Rom. vi. 4, 12. Gal. v. 16, 17.

4thly, If we have got new desires after the word of God, and the means of spiritual nourishment, 1 Pet. ii. 2.

5thly, If we have earnest desires after God's presence in ordinances, and particularly after converse with God in secret prayer, Psal. lxxiii. 1, 2. Psal. lxxiii. 28. Acts ix. 11.

6thly, If we hunger and thirst after righteousness both imputed and inherent, Matth. v. 6.

7thly, If indwelling sin, and remaining corruption in our hearts, be our greatest grief and trouble, Rom. vii. 24.

8thly, If we have a sincere love to all the people of God, 1 John iii. 14.

Lastly, If we come to the light, and be willing to be searched, and have matters put to trial, John iiii. 20, 21. Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24.

Q. What are the marks and properties of a new heart?

A. The new heart is a sincere and single heart, it is a soft and tender heart, trembleth at God's word, and is affected with his frowns: it is grieved for inward sins and heart plagues: it is afraid of temptation to sin and the appearances of evil: it is concerned for the honour of God, and affected with the dishonours that are done to him: It desires and delights to do the will of God, and chuseth the things that please him, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Psal. xviii. 23. Isa. lvi. 2. Psal. xxx. 7. Psal. cxxxix. 21. Gen. xxxix. 9. Rom. vii. 22, 24. Acts xiii. 22. Isa. lvi. 4.

Q. What shall these poor exercised souls do, who, after the most diligent search, still doubt of their being in a gracious state: for when sometimes they attempt to lay claim to some of the fore-said marks, they are presently beat off again, and all is darkened to them, so that they cannot say they have any true grace or faith at all?

A. These trembling and doubting souls, who are labouring by all means to attain to clearness about their souls condition, and yet cannot win at it, are very much to be pitied. For though they be still using the means for light, yet they can get no solid ground to build any confidence upon. And hence they are often tempted to renounce their hope, and give over all further endeavours.

But such ought to consider, 1. That all seasons, and particularly a deserted condition, is not a very proper time for be-

lievers to examine and find out the marks of this gracious state : for ordinarily, then, Satan raises many fogs and mists to obscure their grace, and the saving change the Spirit of God hath wrought in their souls, that they cannot possibly discover it ; so that they must wait a fitter opportunity for this work.

2dly, We ought not to overlook the lowest marks of grace, but be thankful, if we can at least say, our souls desire grace and an interest in Christ above all things : and that we are much troubled and cast down for want of clear evidences thereof ; and though we cannot say we have true love to Christ, yet it is our greatest grief, that we cannot get our wretched hearts to love him : and tho' we cannot say we believe in Christ, yet we resolve never to rely on our own righteousness, nor seek another Saviour, but to cast our souls down at his feet, and look up to him, and none other for help : and though we cannot say, he will have mercy upon us ; yet nothing in all the world would so please our hearts, as one ray or love-blink of his countenance. And though we cannot say, we have true repentance, or any gracious change wrought in us ; yet we resolve never to give over duty, nor give way to known sin ; we will find thirst for Christ as our Saviour, and for heaven as our home. Then, I say, we ought to be thankful, for these, though oft overlookt, are some degrees of faith, and evidences of the Spirit's work in the heart ; for the least degree of grace, is grace, as well as that which is stronger : as the least spark of a diamond, is truly a diamond, as well as bigger stones ; and the least drop of dew is water, as well as a river. We read of little faith, and of faith like a grain of mustard-seed, which nevertheless is true faith, as well as that which is stronger ; and we must not ' despise the day of small things,' Matth. viii. 26. Matth. xvii. 20. Zech. iv. 10. Mark viii. 24. Mark ix. 24. Job xiii. 15. Matth. v. 6. Matth. xii. 20.

3dly, If we cannot attain to clearness, by poring on the marks of a gracious change, or of saving faith in us, (as indeed sometimes believers cannot, since there is no mark can be given, but a scrupulous conscience will find an evasion or back door) then let us try to act faith in a direct manner upon Jesus Christ ; for often believers come sooner to clearness about their interest in him, by the direct acts of faith, than by the reflex acts. Therefore, let us flee to Christ for refuge, and lay hold upon the promise and offer of life through him, as

if we had never done it before. Let us go and transact a covenant with God in Christ, as if we had never essayed any thing like it before; and possibly our fears will soon vanish, and light break in, Psalm xcvi. 11.

Q. But can we never conclude, that we are renewed, and in a gracious state, till we feel the pangs of the new birth, be acquainted with a law-work, and deep humiliation for sin: do not these necessarily go before our closing with Christ?

A. 1. I grant indeed, that the operation of the Spirit of conviction by the law, or the spirit of bondage, doth ordinarily go before the spirit of adoption, and the intimations of pardon by Christ. And that all who come to Christ, must come in the due sense of their sin and misery by nature. And that some have had a great measure of conviction, sorrow and humiliation for sin, Rom. viii. 15. Matth. ix. 12. Acts ii. 37. Psal. lxxxviii. 11.

2dly, God is a sovereign free agent, and is not tied to one way of working in these he brings home to himself. Some he brings in very early in their childhood, so that they do not remember the workings of God's Spirit in them, which they have truly felt. And these he brings in, in riper years, he deals variously with them: in some the work of humiliation is very great and discernible; but in others not, as in Zaccheus and Lydia. In some, humiliation work is deep and short as was in the jailor, and the three thousand converted by Peter's sermon, who were convinced and pricked in their hearts, repented and closed with Christ by faith, were converted and baptized all in a few hours, Acts ii. 37, 41. Acts xvi. 30, 33, 34. In others again, this work is not so deep, but of longer continuance. Some God calls not home, till they have run a long race in a course of open sin, and rebellion against God, and these he useth to humble more deeply, and for a longer time; so that they can better observe the steps of the Spirit's working in them, than others. Paul was three days under deep conviction and humiliation, Acts vi. Others again, are in the time of their youth, restrained from gross sins, and have had always some liking to religion, and the people of God, yet, without saving grace: when God brings these in, usually their humiliation is not so deep as others. Nay, some are drawn to Christ by the sweet cords of love, and scarce know any thing of these mount Sinai thunderings, or the legal shakings and terrors that others are sorely broken and exercised with. They are called in by

the still and calm voice of the gospel, which convinces them in a kindly manner, melts their hearts for wounding of Christ, and warms their souls with the gracious discoveries of his free love and matchless excellencies, which makes them to stand and wonder, and readily to yield themselves his captives. Zaccheus was soon surprized with the love-offers. Christ made to his soul, so that he came down in haste, and received him joyfully.

3dly, I grant, that these who are brought in without a discernable law-work, are ordinarily more in the dark afterwards about their souls estate than others; because their change was not so remarkable. Satan oft makes more successful attacks upon them to drive them to doubting and despondency, than on those who are gained by the law-terrors; and hence they are frequently tempted to raze the foundation.

4thly, As God doth not limit himself to one way of working, so none can prescribe what time or degree of humiliation is sufficient or necessary for the soul's conversion and closing with Christ. Only if we have as much of it as is necessary to let us see our need of Christ, and determine us to pass through all difficulties to come at him for salvation; and cause us to loath ourselves in dust and ashes, and to hate every sin, and break off from it; I say, if this be obtained, which is the true end of humiliation, we have no ground to despond for want of such particular degrees and measures of it. Who can tell what measure of it Zaccheus, the Ethiopian Eunuch, Lydia, and others had, whose heart the Lord suddenly opened by his word, to Christ: they had so much as made them break through all oppositions to Christ, and willing to close with him on his own terms, and to reckon him more lovely than heaven and earth, and all their idols and enjoyments in a world, and say none but Christ: which if we can win to, we need not be troubled, though we have not been so long in the depths, and in the dark as others. For Christ did never put any away from him upon that account; he saith not, the man that comes to me convinced and humbled in such a measure, I will receive: but 'him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.' Our coming to Christ is a certain proof of our having seen our misery, and the worth of Christ, which is the main thing required of us.

5thly, Our keeping off from Christ, till we attain such a measure of sorrow and humiliation, favours too much of the covenant of works (which all Adam's children naturally in-

eline to be justified by) for herein we are prone to affect making some sort of expiation or atonement for sin of our own, or to seek a price to bring in our hands to Christ, whereby we might purchase his blood, or some way deserve him, and his righteousness; which is a dangerous practical error.

6thly, Our not being humbled enough for sin, should not make us linger in flying to Christ; but rather hasten our flight to him, who 'is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel, as well as forgiveness of sin.' Let us then be sensible of the hardness of our hearts, and humbled so much the more, that we are not humbled as we ought to be for offending God; and so let us run in to Christ, that he may give us a better measure of humiliation and repentance, Acts v. 31.

Q. What shall we think of these exercised persons, who doubt of their conversion, because they know not the time when it was?

A. There are several things said upon the former question, which may help to resolve this:

To which I add, 1. That the conversion of some is so remarkable, that it is no hard matter for them to be particular as to the time of it; and it is very comfortable to such as can be so.

But 2dly, There are others, who are brought in by the calm gospel way, in whom faith, repentance, and a holy life have been gradually wrought, and grown somewhat insensibly with the growing knowledge of the gospel and the will of God revealed therein, of whom it may be truly said, the 'kingdom of God cometh not with observation;' so that they cannot particularize the time of their conversion, Mark iv. 26, 27. Luke xvii. 20.

3dly, We ought to look into our hearts, and examine if Christ's Spirit be dwelling there, and if we find that he is, we need not trouble ourselves though we know not the particular time and manner of his entrance. Let us try if we value Christ above the world, and desire nearness to him, rather than the best things in the world, if we would rather displease all the world than displease him. And also, if we be acquainted with the illuminating work of his Spirit, making new discoveries of things to us, which we had not before; and though we cannot tell exactly the time, manner, and steps of the change, yet if we can say with that blind man, John ix.

25. 'One thing I know, that whereas I was once blind, now I see.' Once I saw little evil in sin, but now I see it exceeding sinful and damnable. Once I saw little evil in my nature, but now I see my nature corrupt, and my heart deceitful and desperately wicked, swarming full of vile lusts. Once I thought something of my own performances, but now I see them all to be loss and dung. Once I saw little need of Christ, but now I see him to be more necessary to my soul, than food to my body. Once I thought I might perform duty well enough in my own strength, but now I see I can do nothing without Christ. Once I saw little beauty in Christ, but now I see he is the 'rose of Sharon, and the chiefest among ten thousand;' nay, among all the thousands in heaven and earth. Well, if this be our case, we need not be anxious to know what day, month, or year, the holy Spirit wrought these things in us; for to be sure, the happy change is wrought, for though once 'we were in darkness, yet now are we light in the Lord,' Eph. v. 8. Phil. iii. 3, 8, 9. Cant. v. 9, 10. 1 Pet. ii. 7.

Q. But what shall exercised souls do, who, after all pains and searchings, still doubt of their being in covenant with God, and in a gracious state? Can such doubting souls adventure to the Lord's table?

A. There are many exercised persons, who doubt much of their being in a gracious state, and yet are really in it, though they cannot attain the assurance of it. Many have great fears and perplexities because of the weakness of their faith, and yet their weak faith is truly faith. Wherefore, if such doubting souls be truly concerned and affected for the weakness of faith and want of suitable preparation for covenanting with God, and if they can say they have unfeigned desires to be found in Christ, and to be in covenant with God, and to part with every known sin, and also willing to be at all pains to prepare for this ordinance, in the use of the means of God's appointment, then they may adventure to come to it: for sincere desires to believe and close with Christ, are some degrees of faith; and this sacrament is appointed for the relief, strengthening and establishment of weak and doubting believers, who bewail their unbelief, and look to Christ for help, Isa. l. 10. Isa. xl. 11, 29, 31. Mark ix. 24, 25. Psal. x. 17. Psal. lxxiii. 2, 5. Matth. xi. 28. Matth. xii. 29.

Q. What then is the meaning of that scripture, Rom. xiv. 23. He that doubteth is damned if he eat?

A. The apostle there is dissuading from eating of flesh that was sacrificed or dedicate to idols, for fear of giving offence. And his meaning is, he that doubts of that meat, whether it be lawful or not, and yet ventures on that, whereof he is not persuaded of its lawfulness, he wrongs his own conscience and offends God; which indeed is damnable in itself, as being against his light. The apostle is not speaking there of the Lord's supper, which is in itself a plainly commanded duty, and the neglect whereof is infallibly sinful: but of eating flesh that had been dedicate to idols, which was doubtful in itself, and became plainly sinful, as it gave offence to weak brethren.

Concerning the Examination of our S I N S.

Quest. SEEING the next thing to be examined after our state, is our sins and short-comings; How are we to examine these, before our coming to the Lord's table?

A. We ought to set time apart, and convene our souls before God and conscience, and compare our hearts and lives with the rule of God's commandments. And for this end, we must pray for the light and assistance of God's Spirit, look into our hearts, look back to our former ways, and take a full and particular view of all our sins, so far as we can remember, sins both original and actual, sins of youth and riper age, sins of heart and of life, sins of purpose and of practice, sins of omission and of commission, sins secret and open, sins in thoughts, words and deeds. We are to consider our sins both against the first and second table of the law, how we have injured God, our neighbours, ourselves, with all the hainous circumstances and aggravations of our sins. And in order to get a full discovery of our manifold transgressions and sins against every one of God's commandments, let us seriously read over the questions of our Larger Catechism, concerning the duties required, and the sins forbidden in each of the ten commandments, and also concerning those aggravations, (thereafter mentioned) which make some sins more hainous than others, with the scriptures there adduced for proving these things: and there we may get (through the blessing of God) a most surprising and humbling sight of our guilt and

and innumerable transgressions before God, both of omission and commission, of heart and life, secret and open, that may cause us, with bitter lamentation, cry out with the Psalmist, in prayer to God, Psal. xix. 12. 'Who can understand his errors, cleanse thou me from secret faults?' And in a special manner, we ought to search for our predominant sins and idols, and particularly to examine into these defilements, and that guilt, which we have contracted, whether by the lusts of our hearts, or the out-breakings of our lives, since the last approach we made to the Lord's table.

Q. What are these lusts and plagues of the heart, that we should be most concerned about, in self-examination?

A. They can scarcely be numbered, and therefore, referring to the Larger Catechism, as afore-cited, for a more particular view of them, I only add this word, that we ought with deep concernment of soul to enquire into these grievous heart-plagues, viz. our atheism, unbelief, worldly-mindedness, pride, impenitency, forgetfulness of God, slighting of Christ offered in the gospel, our aversion to duty, ingratitude for mercies, security and formality, unmindfulness of death and eternity; our heart-backslidings, wandrings and wearying in duty, resting upon duties, forgetfulness of solemn vows, our malice, passion, envy, discontent, &c.

Q. What shall we think or say of these, who, upon examination, complain that they find these heart-plagues upon the growing hand in them, and hence are ready to conclude themselves hypocrites or unbelievers?

A. 1. If these heart-evils be strong or prevailing in them, and they not concerned or exercised upon that account, it is a very bad sign indeed. But if they be truly concerned, they ought to remember that the best of God's people have also complained of prevailing sins and heart-plagues, Psal. lxxv. 3. Rom. vii. 21, 23, 24.

2dly, Let us examine whether the power and prevalency of sin in us be such, as may be consistent with a gracious state, or not. 1. Are these lusts and heart-plagues our daily grief and burden? Are they matter of exercise and trouble to us? Do we groan under them, pray and strive against them? Would we reckon it the greatest happiness in the world to be freed from them? And do the hopes of being delivered from them at last, sweeten the thoughts of death and heaven to us? Then it is a good sign, Psalm lxxvi. 18. Rom. vi. 24. Phil. i. 23.

2dly, Do we carefully set ourselves to oppose and watch against the outbreakings of these lusts, whether in words or deeds; and sincerely desire, and breathe after universal holiness? Then it is a good mark, Psal. xviii. 23. Psal. cxix. 5, 6.

3dly, When any sin prevails or breaks out, are we humbled for it? Do we lay the whole blame on ourselves, and heartily approve God's law? Saying with Paul, 'The law is spiritual; yea, it is holy, just and good, but I (wretched I) am carnal and sold under sin.' O for an entire conformity to that holy and excellent law! Rom. vii. 12, 14, 22.

4thly, Are we restless till we flee to the blood of Christ for pardon of, and cleansing from any such prevailing sin? And never in our element till we get the upper hand of it, and be in God's way again? Rom. vii. 24, 25.

5thly, Are we resolved in Christ's strength never to submit to or make peace with our lusts, but all our days to wage war against them, and cleave close to the 'Captain of our salvation,' looking to him for sanctifying grace, furniture and spiritual weapons for this warfare? Then it is a sign we are no hypocrites, but grace is in the heart, and faith will have the day at last, Acts xv. 9. Heb. xi. 33, 34. 1 John v. 4.

Q. But what shall be said of those, who after search, do find the woful prevalency of the sad heart-plague of backwardness and unwillingness to duty, and especially secret duties: is there any comfort for such?

A. 1. Where this is found, and the heart is backward particularly to secret prayer, it appears that corruption is in some strength, and gives ground for great searchings and thoughts of heart, and should be matter of deep humiliation in the sight of God.

2dly, We ought not hence to despair, if we consider that in the best of God's people, there is a mixture of willingness and unwillingness, they are composed of spirit and flesh, which act contrary to one another; so that many times, 'they cannot do the good which they would,' Gal. v. 17. Rom. vii. 19. And hence it was that Christ made apology for his disciples, when they omitted watching and prayer, and fell asleep again and again, after warning and excitation thereto, 'The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak;' there was a weakness, weariness and unwillingness in their flesh, though there was still a willingness in their spirit, and renewed part, Matth. xxvi. 41.

3dly, Let us examine, if we can say, that our weariness and unwillingness is our greatest burden and affliction; that we are weary of it, resolve never to give way to it, but always to struggle against it, and keep up duty as we can. Then there is ground of hope, seeing our unwillingness is not yielded to, for if that were the case, we would turn our back on duty altogether. Let us not in this case, wholly cast away our confidence, but wait and pray in hope, for a time of reviving, and a day of the Mediator's power.

Q. What shall these do, who upon trial find themselves guilty of great unthankfulness for mercies, yea, of backslidings and breach of solemn vows made at sacrament occasions? How can such adventure to approach again to the Lord's table?

A. 1. These things should be matter of great sadness and sorrow of heart to us; as certainly they will be to every sincere soul.

2dly, We ought not to 'sorrow as these who have no hope,' but in a humbling sense of these God-provoking evils, return to him, whom we have grieved, with shame and blushing of face; and rightly 'consider what an evil and bitter thing it is to forsake the Lord,' Ezra. ix. 5, 6. Jer. ii. 19.

3dly, Let us do all this with expedition, for not to be speedy in our return is, upon the matter, to approve and vindicate our former backsliding; which will still be more provoking.

4thly, We ought to consider and believe that in our covenanted Redeemer, there is sufficient fund for stocking and setting up poor bankrupt sinners of new; for 'in him dwells 'all fulness' for his people's emptiness,' and may be had too, at a very cheap rate, Col. i. 19. Isa. lv. 1.

5thly, For our encouragement let us take a view of his kindly and engaging invitations to bankrupt and backsliding souls to return to him again, with his free promises of pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace to them upon their so doing, Jer. iii. 1, 12, 13, 14, 22. Hof. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4. One would think a serious consideration of these many charming and alluring calls might overcome and melt the most backsliding heart in the world. Can we but wonder, and say! 'Certainly a merciful God is most earnest with us to return, when he doubles and triples his invitation in the same chapter,' "return, return, return, O backsliding children;" and when he saith so to these, who have most deeply revolted;

Isa. xxxi. 6. Surely an ingenious heart will melt into tears, and cry out, as Saul to David, though he was a man of a very hard heart and rugged nature, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. yet he wept and lift up his voice, ‘Thou art more righteous than I, ‘thou hast rewarded me good,’ &c. It affects the most hard hearted person, and makes a very rugged nature to relent, to think we have been injurious to the most kind and obliging friend. But much more it will affect a believer’s heart to think, ‘Have I done all this, against a gracious Father that ‘still pities and provides for me? All this against the special ‘offers of his love, and the precious blood of his dear Son? ‘All this against the yearning bowels of his mercy, and yet ‘my heart so little moved?’ ‘Father, I have sinned against ‘heaven and before thee; I am no more worthy to be called ‘thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.’ Let us take this course, and we may expect our Father’s heart will melt, the fatted calf will be killed, and the best robe brought out, and unworthy we, made welcome again to his table.

Q. But how shall these return, or have any confidence to come to this table again, who have sinned against light and conscience, relapsed into the same sins after vows, sinning with deliberation, &c. Surely these are not the spots of God’s children?

A. 1. These indeed are very hainous aggravations of sin, and call for great mourning and humiliation before God.

2dly, I know no sin that believers are absolutely secured against falling into, except that which is unto death.

3dly, It is not the way to pay our debt; or get free of hainous sin, to sink and despond without casting our eyes about us, and inquiring for a fund from whence they may be answered.

4thly, We are assured by the faithful word of God, that there is a remedy provided for all sin, the greatest as well as the smallest; and that never any was put back, that came to it for relief, 1 John i. 7. Isa. lv. 1. John vi. 37. Let us also view the forecited promises made to backsliders of all sorts.

5thly, Let us see, if we can say, that our repentance, resolutions, and carefulness do gradually increase; as our guilt is renewed or heightened. It is not so with unrenewed men, for as their sin increaseth, their conviction and repentance decreaseth.

6thly, The greater our debts be, they lay the greater obli-

gation upon us to hasten to the rich treasure of God's pardoning grace, and put a special argument in our mouths to plead for it, Psal. xxv. 11. 'Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.'

Q. But is there any hope of pardon for wilful sinning, when it is expressly said, Heb. x. 26. If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin?

A. 1. That place is not to be understood of every wilful sin; but of a total renouncing and rejecting of Christ by infidelity and apostacy, after we have known his truth, and been convinced that he is the only Saviour; which wilful sinning includes in it despight and malice against Christ, and is attended with final impenitency.

2dly, Though every degree of wilfulness, and crossing of light, be a grievous aggravation of sinning, and calls us to be humbled to the dust; yet we ought not to despond as if there were no hope: for none sin more against light, than sometimes the godly have done, such as David, Solomon and Peter, (who were clearly illuminated, and knew more of the evil of sin, and more of the will of God than others about them) and yet they obtained pardon for their sins so hainously aggravated: and the same may we firmly expect for ours, if we be humbled for them, and fly speedily to the blood of sprinkling, resolving in Christ's strength, against these and all other sins for the future.

Q. What is incumbent upon communicants after they have discovered their sins, with their several aggravations, by self-examination?

A. They ought to draw up a catalogue of them, as it were, and go humbly therewith to God in Christ, with ropes about their necks, sorrow in their hearts, tears in their eyes, and confessions in their mouths, and ingeniously spread it out before him, crying for mercy and looking for pardon through the 'blood of Christ that cleanseth from all sin.' They ought to lay hold on Christ and the promises by faith, renew covenant with God in him, and turn from all their sins to the ways of holiness, Isaiah lv. 7. Joel. ii. 12. Matth. xi. 28. Isaiah lvi. 4.

Concerning the examination of our WANTS and
NECESSITIES.

Quest. *HOW are we to examine our wants and necessities, before our approaching to the Lord's table?*

A. We ought seriously to consider and inquire into all the defects and needs of our souls, and labour to have a lively and particular sense of them upon our spirits, and come to Christ in this ordinance, as our head of influences, fountain of supplies, and treasure of grace, for the supply of all our wants, the redress of all our grievances, and answering all our complaints.

Q. *What are these particular wants and needs of our souls, that we are specially to enquire into, at such a time?*

A. As they are many, so we must be at great pains to find them out, and therefore we are to enquire particularly into the maladies of our souls, and the defects of our graces; and what are the reinforcements and supplies we mainly stand in need of. Let us ask ourselves: Do we need more faith, wisdom, sincerity, self-denial, meekness, patience, humility and brokenness of heart? Do we need a reviving to our languishing repentance, declining love, weak faith, staggering hope, and faint desires? Do we need food for our hungry souls, white raiment for our nakedness, eye-salve for our blindness, enlargement for our straitnings, loosing for our bonds, ease for our burdens, resolving to our doubts, peace to our troubled conscience, cordials for our faintings, comfort against our fears, strength for our feeble knees to enable us for our spiritual journey, and plaisters for our manifold sores? Do we need cures for our darkness and ignorance, our hardness and impenitency, our unbelief and hypocrisy, our deadness and formality, our inconstancy and backslidings, our heart-wanderings and wearying in duty? Do we need a sight of our interest in Christ, a seal of our pardon, clear evidences of grace, a view of the King's face, and of the promised land? Do we want returns to our prayers, supply of bodily necessities, relief under bodily distresses, support under heavy afflictions, patience and submission under losses, strength to resist temptations, preparation for sufferings and trials, grace to vanquish lusts, or deliverance from atheistical and blasphemous thoughts?

These and many others of our wants, griefs and burdens, we ought particularly to examine, and inquire into before we approach to the Lord's supper.

Q. What is the necessity of our examining our wants and necessities so particularly, before such an ordinance?

A. Because it is the duty and interest of communicants to come with all their grievances to Christ in this ordinance; seeing here they have freely offered and exhibited to them all needful and suitable supplies treasured up in Christ's fulness. In this ordinance Christ sets himself upon a throne of grace, with a sceptre of mercy in his hand, and graciously waits to hear his people's complaints and petitions, saying to the believer, as Ahasuerus to Esther at the banquet of wine, 'What is thy petition, and what is thy request; and it shall be granted to thee?' Esth. v. 6. And as he said to the blind men, 'What will ye that I shall do unto you?' Matth. xx. 32. Now without a due sense of our wants and necessities, we cannot make particular requests to Christ, nor can we look for any benefit from this feast, which is only provided for the hungry and sensible soul, Luke iv. 53. Psal. ix. 18. Isaiah xlv. 3. Matth. ix. 12.

Concerning the examination of our **ENDS** and **DESIGNS**.

Quest. How are we to examine our ends and designs, in approaching to the Lord's table?

A. I have before shewed particularly what are the ends and uses of the Lord's supper; we ought then to consider them before our approach, and ask our consciences in the sight of God, if these indeed be the ends, which we purpose and set before us in this solemn work; and see if we can appeal to the Searcher of hearts that it is not to please men, or to get ourselves a name, or for any such by-end, that we go to this holy table; but to obey the charge of our dying Saviour, to shew forth his death; renew and seal our covenant with God in him, get nearness and communion with him, nourishment to our souls, and supply to our manifold wants.

Q. Why should we so particularly examine our ends and designs before we come to the Lord's table?

A. 1. Because an all-seeing God looks especially to our ends and designs in our spiritual performances, and so must we. He noticeth people's ends in fasting, Zech. vii. 5. 'Did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me?' Christ inquired into the people's ends in going out to hear John, Matth. xi. 7. 'What went ye out for to see?' And more especially will he notice our ends in going to his holy table, about which he hath given us such strict charge, 1 Cor. xi. 28, 29.

2dly, Because wrong ends will make the best actions abominable in the sight of God. Hence it was that he abhorred Jehu's zeal, the Jews sacrifice, and the Pharisees alms-deeds and good works, Hof. i. 4. Isaiah i. 13. Matth. vi. 1, 2. Matth. xxiii. 5.

3dly, Because right and pure ends in this ordinance will excite us to preparation for it, beget reverence in us when we attend it, and awaken desires after the blessings which are here offered and exhibited.

Concerning the examination of our GRACES and QUALIFICATIONS.

Quest. OUGHT all who come to the Lord's table, to have saving grace, as necessary to qualify them for it?

A. Yes; for without saving grace in the heart, we are incapable of holding communion with God, or of putting forth these acts of faith, love, and repentance which are necessary in partaking of this sacrament, Matth. vii. 16, 17, 18.

Q. What is saving grace?

A. It is a principle of spiritual life, purchased by Christ, and wrought in the souls of God's elect by the holy Spirit, and ordinarily by the ministry of the word; whereby they are inclined and strengthened sincerely to think, act, and do these things which God requires, and are well pleasing to him, Eph. iv. 18. Heb. xiii. 12. Rom. xv. 16. John xvii. 17. Heb. xii. 28.

Q. By what evidences may we know if we have saving grace?

A. By these formerly given, concerning a saving change and the new heart, which may briefly be summed up in these two. 1. Saving grace turns the heart not only from sin, but against sin; so that the soul doth sincerely hate it and seek its destruction both in heart and life, Ezek. xviii. 30, 31. Psal. cxix. 104. Gal. v. 24.

2dly, Saving grace turns the heart to God and godliness, and makes the soul willing and inclinable to do these things that are acceptable to God, cheerfully to obey the will of his precepts, and patiently to submit to the will of his providences, Isa. lv. 7. Psal. cxix. 112. Isa. lvi. 4. Job. i. 21. Acts xxi. 13, 14.

Q. Can no hypocrite attain to saving grace?

A. No; for though some hypocrites have reformed their lives and gone a great length in religious performances, and have attained to several qualifications which resemble true grace, yet none but believers attain to real and saving grace.

Q. How far may some hypocrites go in religion, and yet fall short of grace?

A. 1. They may attain to great gifts and knowledge in divine things; so did Balaam and Judas.

2dly, They may have a great profession and outward shew of godliness; so had the foolish virgins, and the people of Sardis.

3dly, Their consciences may be awakened for sin, and they may tremble for fear of God's wrath; so was it with Judas and Felix.

4thly, They may confess sin, and express much sorrow for it; so did Ahab, Judas, and many of the Israelites, Exod. xxxiii. 4. Numb. xiv. 39, 43. 1 Sam. vii. 3, 5.

5thly, They may leave off gross sins, and set about a great reformation of their lives; so did Herod and the Pharisees.

6thly, They may believe the truths and doctrine of Christ; so did Agrippa, and many of the Jews, John ii. 23. Acts xxvi. 27.

7thly, They may shew much zeal for these truths, both by promoting them, and suffering for them; so did Judas and many others, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Phil. i. 15, 16, 18.

8thly, They may shew much love to ministers, and the ordinances dispensed by them; so did Herod with respect to John, and the Jews with respect to Ezekiel, Mark vi. 20. Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32.

Nay, there is no grace or quality in true believers, but hypocrites may attain to something like it. They may have a sort of faith, repentance, love, delight, joy, desire, zeal, fear, mortification, contempt of the world, &c.

Q. How may we distinguish betwixt true grace in believers, and the counterfeit grace that may be in hypocrites?

A. 1. In believers, the nature and heart is renewed; but in hypocrites, nature is but refined, for the old heart still remains.

2^{dly}, True grace is situate mainly in the heart and affections; but the hypocrites goodness is mainly in their external actions and deportment.

3^{dly}, True grace is an immortal principle that abides constantly in the soul; but the hypocrites goodness is like the morning cloud and early dew, that evanisheth away.

4^{thly}, True grace carries the believer a further length in religion, than the hypocrites goodness can do even to renounce self; love God above all things, and hate every thing that is contrary to him.

Q. What are these attainments in graces and religion, that hypocrites cannot arrive to?

A. Whatever length they may go in religion, or change be made upon them; yet they can never attain to these things, that are peculiar to the truly gracious.

As 1. Hypocrites can never attain to pure ends in their actings and performances; they never aim singly at God's glory, Christ's honour and the good of souls: but still they desire to be seen of men. Their chief end is to get a reward either from God or man, or to evite trouble, either in their bodies or consciences here or hereafter.

2^{dly}, They can never apprehend Christ as altogether lovely, and the only satisfying good in the world, and be willing to part with all for him. For there is still something with them that they love better, and prefer before Jesus Christ.

3^{dly}, Hypocrites can never win the length to be truly grieved for in-dwelling sin, heart-plagues, and these secret evils that would never turn to their shame before the world.

4^{thly}, They can never win to have an universal respect to all God's known commands, and to be as zealous for secret duties, as for these that are public.

5^{thly}, They never attain to renounce all their own doings, as filthy rags, and go beyond all things in themselves to

Christ and his righteousness, desiring only to be found in him.

6thly, Hypocrites go not the length of being restless and unsatisfied, if they find not God's presence, and communion with him in duties. They are easy, if they acquit themselves therein to the approbation of men, or a natural conscience, although they want the approbation and countenance of God.

Q. Is it not an essential property of true grace, where it is, for to grow?

A. Yes; because, 1. Grace is the seed of God, 1 John iii. 9. And it is natural for seed to grow.

2dly, Because of the union of the gracious soul with Christ the head. All believers are branches ingrafted into this true vine, and therefore must grow, John xv. 5.

3dly, Because God hath appointed it, that hereby believers by degrees may be made meet for heaven, and ripened to be transplanted to the new Jerusalem, Col. i. 12. Prov. iv. 18.

Q. How may we know, whether we grow in grace, or not?

A. By these marks our growth may be discerned.

1. If we be growing downward in humility, and be still more vile in our own eyes, 1 Pet. v. 5.

2dly, If we be growing upward in heavenly-mindedness, and the world have still the less room in our hearts, Heb. xi. 13.

3dly, If our appetites after spiritual food be increasing, 1 Pet. ii. 2.

4thly, If our consciences be growing more tender and watchful against sin: and if we notice the first rising of sin in the heart, and avoid all temptations to it, Gen. xxxix. 9, 10.

5thly, If we take more delight in spiritual exercises, prayer, praise and meditation: or in these duties, that are displeasing to the flesh, such as mortification, self-examination, mourning for sin, self-denial, &c.

6thly, If we be more concerned for the glory of God, the interest of Christ's kingdom, and the good of precious souls.

7thly, If we can trust in God, when outward and visible helps do fail. Heb. ii. 17, 18.

Q. Shall we conclude these to have no true grace, who complain that grace is so far from growing in them, that they are sensible of a sad decay in it?

A. No; for, 1. Believers do not grow at all times, they have not only their spring-time, but also their winter-seasons,

when their leaves do wither through some prevailing temptation, and they seem to be on the decaying hand; for we see the church of Ephesus is charged with falling from her first love, and yet a golden candlestick still, Rev. ii. 4, 5.

2dly, Believers may mistake about their growth; they may judge their grace grown weaker when really it is not, when only the sense of their corruptions is grown stronger, their temptations increase, or comforts are withdrawn; and yet in the mean time grace may be in its vigour. Also the earnest thirstings of some after grace, may occasion them not to notice what they have.

3dly, It is with the growth of grace, as with the motion of the sun, or the growth of plants, which we perceive better a while afterwards, than in the mean time of it, Mark iv. 26, 27.

Q. What are these sacramental graces or qualifications, which we should especially inquire after, and examine into, before our partaking of the Lord's supper?

A. There are these eight, viz. Knowledge, faith, repentance, fear, love, thankfulness, holy desires, and new obedience; all of them necessary to fit us for a worthy partaking of this ordinance.

I. Concerning KNOWLEDGE.

Quest. WHY is knowledge so necessary for worthy partaking?

A. 1. Because without knowledge, we cannot 'discern the Lord's body,' which is absolutely necessary to be done in order to escape God's judgments, which are denounced against these who do it not, 1 Cor. xi. 29.

2dly, Without knowledge we are not capable to examine ourselves, which is indispensibly requisite before partaking, 1 Cor. xi. 28.

3dly, Without it we cannot repent: for how can we repent of sin? till we know the evil and dangerous consequences of it?

4thly, Without knowledge we cannot receive Christ in the sacrament, for how can we close with Christ, till we know

our wants and our need of Christ, together with Christ's fulness and fitness for us.

5thly, This is a feast appointed for believers the friends of Christ, but ignorant persons are unbelievers, and enemies to Christ, they are under the power of Satan, and held by him in the chains of darkness; they are under the power of reigning sin; for ignorance itself is a great sin, and the root of many others, Eph. iv. 18, 19. Hos. iv. 1, 2. 1 Pet. i. 14.

Q. What is to be understood by discerning the Lord's body in the sacrament?

A. 1. Our putting a difference betwixt the consecrated elements, and common bread and wine; looking upon them as a sacred representation of Christ's body and blood, and a seal of the covenant of grace to all worthy partakers.

2dly, Our making a solemn difference betwixt the body and blood of Christ, and that of a meer man; for it is the body of the Lord, even of him who is Jehovah.

3dly, Our looking through the elements to a bleeding Saviour, as offering up himself a sacrifice to atone divine justice for us, and discerning him as really present in the sacrament, exhibiting, offering, and actually bestowing himself with the benefits of his death, to worthy communicants.

4thly, Our having some distinct views of Christ's sufferings, in the cause of them, the greatness of them, the necessity, value and sufficiency of them; together with their great and glorious effects.

5thly, Our beholding a dying Saviour with suitable affections. We must discern him in the sacrament, so as to prize and esteem him highly: we must discern him, so as to wonder at his free love, and admire his condescendency. We must discern him, so as to look to him only for pardon and salvation, yield our hearts to him, hate and abandon sin that pierced him, and follow the Lamb wherever he goes.

Q. What is that knowledge, which is needful and competent for worthy communicants?

A. 1. We must know God in his nature and essential perfections, and especially these attributes that shine most brightly in the sufferings of Christ, such as, the wisdom, goodness, holiness and justice of God. Also we must know God in his persons, that there is one God in three distinct persons, the Father, Son, and holy Ghost; and these three

are one, and the same in essence. And that this God created the world by his power, and ruleth it by his providence.

2dly, We must know the fall of Adam, with the sad fruits of it on all his posterity. We must know what an happy state man was in before the fall, and what a sinful and miserable condition he is in now, of which I spoke before.

3dly, We must know where our help and remedy is to be found, viz. in Jesus Christ our only Saviour. We must know what Christ is, in his two natures, God and man. In his three offices, of Prophet, Priest, and King. We must know Christ in his commission, that he was sent of God; in his design in coming to the world, which was to redeem the elect: in the manner of his effecting our redemption, by his obedience and sufferings: the manner of applying it, by his intercession in heaven, and his Spirit on earth. We must know the nature and necessity of faith in order to our getting an interest in what Christ hath done and suffered: and the necessity of regeneration, and a saving change in order to our being happy. We must know the value and merit of Christ's sufferings, and the efficacy of his blood: that there is no justification but by his righteousness, and no sanctification but by his Spirit.

4thly, We must know the nature, ends, and uses of the Lord's supper; what is represented by the bread and wine, and what we are to do at the communion-table.

Q. What kind of knowledge is it, that communicants ought to have of these things?

A. 1. Not a literal or head knowledge only, not such a knowledge as a parrot hath, that may be taught to repeat the Creed, without reason or sense to understand or believe one word it speaketh. But, 2dly, It must be a rational, heart-affecting, and saving knowledge, that we must have of divine truths.

Q. What are the marks of this saving knowledge?

A. The saving knowledge which believers have, and no hypocrites nor natural men can attain to, hath these characters.

1. It is a convincing and experimental knowledge; the soul firmly assents to, and feels the truth of what it knoweth, and faith of our Saviour's coming, with Paul, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation,' &c. 1 Tim. i. 15. There is as great a difference betwixt a natural man's

and a believer's knowledge, as betwixt the knowledge in a naturalist and an Israelite concerning Manna: the one, by reading and study, knows more of the nature and effects of it; but the other by tasting and feeding on it, knew it more feelingly and satisfyingly. So believers know Christ and his truths, convincingly and experimentally, Psal. xxxiv. 8. 1 Pet. ii. 3.

2dly, It is a Christ-exalting and self-abasing knowledge, it makes the soul to value Christ at a high rate, and count all the glory of the world as loss and dung besides him. It lets us see that Christ is glorious, but we are vile: that Christ is full, but we are empty: that he is rich, but we are poor and naked, Phil. iii. 8, 9.

3dly, It is a fiducial knowledge, it induceth the heart to trust in God's mercy and power, and to accept of his Son Jesus Christ, as the only way to the Father, Psal. ix. 10. John vi. 40, 45.

4thly, It is a quickening and efficacious knowledge, it warms the heart, transforms the soul, and reforms the life. As light and heat are inseparable, so divine light in the mind, conveys a heat into the affections. It inflames the heart with love to Christ, and a desire to be like him; it determines the will to comply with duty, to avoid sin: it spurs on the soul to live up to its light, to be active in God's service, and run the way of his commands, 2 Cor. iii. 18. James iii. 17.

Q. Whence is it that believers get this saving knowledge?

A. From Jesus Christ, the great Prophet and teacher of his church, who instructs them by his Spirit, as well as by his word: there is none that teacheth like him, for he both gives light, and eyes to see the light; he not only opens the scriptures to his people, but he also opens their understandings to receive the truths, Job xxxvi. 22. Isa. xlii. 6, 7. Luke xxiv. 32, 45. Jer. xxiv. 7.

Q. Have not communicants who are taught this saving knowledge, other thoughts and uptakings of divine things than natural men have?

A. Yes; their thoughts and uptakings of these things are far different, 1 Cor. ii. 14. 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

Q. What thoughts and uptakings have they of the covenant of grace, which is sealed in this sacrament?

A. That it is everlasting, well ordered in all things, and

sure; and therefore they do cheerfully consent to it, and venture their souls upon it, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Q. What do they think of Christ crucified, who is here set before their eyes?

A. That he is a most glorious, well qualified, and all-sufficient Saviour, 'able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him,' Heb. vii. 25.

Q. What thoughts have they of sin that pierced him?

A. That it is the murderer of Christ, and the worst of evils, which therefore they will constantly abhor, Zech xii. 10. Rom. xii. 9.

Q. What do they think of Christ's way, viz. holiness?

A. That it is both pleasant and advantageous, and therefore they will love it, and walk in it, Prov. iii. 17. Psal. xix. 11. Psal. cxix. 47, 48.

Q. What thoughts have they of Christ's people?

A. That they are the 'excellent ones of the earth,' and the most desirable company in it, however they be despised by the world, Psal. xvi. 3. Psal. cxix. 62.

Q. What do they think of Christ's day?

A. That it is the choicest day of the week, holy, honourable, blessed and enriching, being Christ's weekly market-day for our souls, Isa. lviii. 13, 14.

Q. What do they think of his word and ordinances?

A. That they are food to their souls, cordials to their hearts, a lamp to their feet, and a light to their paths, Psalm cxix. 50, 103, 105.

Q. What do they think of the Lord's supper?

A. That it is Christ's banqueting-house, and a rare feast for the soul, which he hath in love, provided for his people in the wilderness, Cant ii. 4. Isa. xxv. 6. 1 Cor. v. 8.

Q. What do they think of this world?

A. That it is a strange country, the place of their pilgrimage, and that all in it, is vanity and vexation of spirit, Heb. xi. 13. Psal. cxix. 54. Eccl. i. 14.

Q. What do they think of the other world above?

A. That it is their country and their home, and the things of it are real, great, eternal, and very near, Heb. xi. 16. 2 Cor. v. 1. 1 Cor. ii. 9. 2 Cor. iv. 18.

II. Concerning F A I T H.

Quest. What sort of faith is it, that worthy communicants ought to have?

A. Not a temporary faith, or a faith of miracles, nor a historical faith only; but a saving and justifying faith.

Q. What is a historical faith?

A. It is the assent of the understanding unto the truths of Christ revealed in the gospel, whereby a man believes and gives credit to these truths as certain and true. This is not saving faith itself, but it is absolutely necessary to it, as the foundation to the superstructure, and an excellent help to promote it; for the stronger our assent is to divine truths, the more lively will our saving faith be. The more strongly we believe Christ's ability and sufficiency for the office of Mediator, the more are we helped to rely on him as our Mediator. Now though saving faith can never be without this assent or historical faith; yet historical faith may be, where saving faith is not, as is plain from John ii. 23. Acts viii. 13. James ii. 19.

Q. What is saving faith?

A. It is a grace, or special gift of God to his elect, wrought in their hearts by the Spirit and word of God; whereby they being convinced of sin and misery, and of their own inability to recover themselves out of their lost estate, do not only assent to the truth of God's record concerning Christ in his word, but also receive and rest upon Christ and his righteousness, for pardon of sin, and salvation, according as he is offered in the gospel, Eph. i. 19. Eph. ii. 8. Acts xvi. 30. 1 John v. 10, 11. John i. 12. Eph. i. 12, 13. Acts x. 43. Phil. iii. 9.

Q. What is the particular act of faith, that is the mean of our justification before God?

A. It is not our knowledge, nor the meer assent of the understanding to scripture-truths, that justifies us? but it is the receiving and resting upon Christ, as a Priest offering up himself a sacrifice to justice, and making satisfaction for our sins.

Q. What are the words and phrases, whereby the holy Ghost in scripture, doth express justifying faith?

A. It is sometimes expressed 1. By coming unto Christ. John vi. 35.

- 2dly, By flying to Christ for refuge, Heb. vi. 18.
 3dly, By casting our burdens on him, Psal. lv. 23.
 4thly, By leaning on him, Cant. viii. 5.
 5thly, By staying ourselves on him, Isa. l. 10.
 6thly, By looking unto Christ, Isa. xiv. 22.
 7thly, By taking hold of Christ, Isa. xxvii. 5.
 8thly, By receiving of Christ, John i. 12.
 9thly, By cleaving to him, Acts xi. 23.
 10thly, By putting on Christ, Rom. xiii. 14.
 11thly, By hungering and thirsting after him, Matth. v. 6.
 12thly, By eating and drinking, John vi. 53.
 13thly, By embracing the promises, Heb. xi. 13.
 14thly, By trusting in Christ, Eph. i. 12, 13.
 15thly, By seeking of Christ, Isa. lv. 6.
 16thly, By running after Christ, Cant. i. 4. and running to Christ, Isa. lv. 5.

Q. Why is faith so necessary to worthy communicating?

A. It is impossible to please God in any duty without faith, and far less in this, where it is so highly necessary, and so much to be exercised. What can we do at the Lord's table without faith? Seeing faith is the soul's eye that sees Christ in this ordinance. It is the hand that takes hold of Christ, and the arm that embraces him. It is the spiritual mouth and stomach that feeds on Christ. It is the bond of our union with Christ; it brings us into Christ's family, and makes us his children. And lastly it is the spring that moves all the other graces, and sets them on work: and therefore it is highly necessary at this ordinance, Heb. xi. 6. John xvi. 31. Heb. x. 22.

Q. What is implied in that saving act of faith, the soul's receiving and resting on Christ as exhibited in the sacrament?

A. It imports these things, 1. A lively sense of the soul's misery and danger without Christ.

2dly, A rejecting all other dependencies and supports, besides Christ, Hos. xv. 3.

3dly, A fixed resolution to look still to Christ, wait on him, and humbly submit to any thing for mercy; like Job, and the woman of Canaan, Job xiii. 15. Matth. xv. 23, 25, 27.

4thly, A hearty consent of the soul to the covenant of grace, and God's offer of salvation through Christ, with a cordial approbation of the gospel way of salvation, and the soul's acquiescing in it, as most excellent and suitable.

5thly, Our actual adventuring ourselves and our salvation upon a crucified Christ and his righteousness: casting our perishing souls into the bleeding arms of our high priest and surety, for shelter and mercy; saying, 'Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?' I am well content with thy person, and thy offices, with thy righteousness and purchase, priesthood and kingdom, laws and love, cross and crown. Though the receiving of Christ as a king, be not the first and primary act of saving faith, yet it is consequential to it, and inseparable from it. The believer must cheerfully accept of Christ as a prince on the throne, as a priest upon the cross, Zech. vi. 13. John i. 12. Heb. ii. 17. Isa. lv. 4, 5. Isa. xxxiii. 22. Acts v. 31. Matth. xi. 28, 29.

Q. Why is faith so acceptable and well pleasing to God, particularly in the act of communicating?

A. 1. Because it is a grace that humbleth the creature, strips it of its own worth, and excludes all boasting in the business of our salvation, Rom. iii. 27.

2dly, It doth highly exalt free grace, and send us out of ourselves to look for all our comfort and happiness in the mercy of God through a Mediator, Rom. iv. 16. Eph. ii. 7, 8.

3dly, It puts the highest honour on God's beloved Son, approves his glorious undertaking, free love, and excellent offices. - It makes Christ the alone ground of our justification and acceptance with God, and gives him all the glory of our salvation; which is most acceptable to God, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Matth. xvii. 5. 1 John iii. 23.

4thly, It is the grace that unites the soul to Christ, makes it one with him; and clothes it with the white robe of his righteousness; upon which account God delights in believers, and sees no iniquity in them, Phil. iii. 9. John xvi. 27. Num. xxiii. 21.

5thly, Faith is the spring and *primum mobile* of all the rest of the sacramental graces, love, repentance, thankfulness, holy desires, and new obedience. It doth excite them, afford matter to them, and set them all a-work, Lam. v. 2, 3, 4. 2 Pet. i. 5.

Q. How is saving faith wrought in the soul?

A. By the Spirit of God, who doth it by these two means.

1st, He prepares the soul for faith, by the ministry of the law, for thereby he discovers the evil and guilt of sin,

and the dreadful wrath that is due for it. He humbles the soul for sin, makes it despair of relief from the creature, and convinceth it of its need of a Mediator, John xvi. 8. Rom. iii. 20. Acts iv. 12. Matth. ix. 12.

2dly, The Holy Spirit works faith in the soul by the ministry of the gospel. For thereby he discovers the ability and fulness of an offered Saviour, and the necessity and excellency of faith. He begets in the soul an high esteem of Christ, thirsting desires for him, and some hope of relief by him. He takes the soul wholly off from depending on its own righteousness, and makes it resolve to use all means to find Christ, fall down at his feet, and lay the whole stress of its salvation upon him alone, 1 Tim. i. 15. John iii. 16. 1 John iii. 23. Cant. iii. 2. Cant. v. 10. Phil. iii. 9.

Q. By what marks may we examine ourselves if we have true saving faith?

A. By the description, which is given before, of its nature, and the manner how it is wrought. Besides which, we may take these other marks.

1. True faith makes Christ exceeding precious to the soul in all his offices as a prophet, priest, and king; and determines the soul to embrace him wholly and undividedly, and set him up as an absolute Lord over all its interests and concerns whatsoever, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Isaiah lv. 4, 5.

2dly, It is attended with true repentance, for it softens the heart and makes it bleed for sin that pierced Christ: and engages the soul to crucify sin, pursue it as Christ's enemy, and part with every beloved lust, Acts xx. 21. Mark i. 15. Zech. xii. 10. Isaiah liii. 5, 6.

3dly, It makes a man very humble, and denied to his own will, wisdom, credit, ease and worldly enjoyments, and especially to self-righteousness. It makes the soul content and willing to be saved by Christ in his own way, without joining any thing with him, to rob him of the glory of its salvation, Matth. xvi. 24. Phil. iii. 9. 1 Cor. i. 30, 31.

4thly, It inclines us to aim at Christ's honour in all our actions, whether we pray, read, hear, or communicate; yea, even when we eat, drink, buy, or sell, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. 1 Cor. x. 31.

5thly, It is attended with obedience to the will of God,

and fruitfulness in good works, and makes the soul willing to serve Christ, as well as to be saved by him, Rom. xvi. 26. James ii. 17, 18. Col. iii. 24.

6thly, It works by love, and makes the believer do all duties from a principle of love, and carries out the heart to love God for sending Christ into the world, and to love every thing that bears Christ's image. And so sincere is his love, that it prompts him to duty and keeps him back from sin, much more than the law, or fear of hell doth, Gal. v. 6.

7thly, It not only reforms the life from the practice of sin, but purifies the heart from the love of sin, by arguing against it from the word, and applying the blood of Christ to the soul, Acts xv. 9. John xvii. 17. Zech xiii. 1.

8thly, True faith inclines and encourages the soul to draw near unto God in prayer, for the accomplishment of these things it relies on Christ for, Heb. iv. 16. Rom. x. 12, 13, 14. Psalm cxviii. 25, 26.

Q. What shall these poor discouraged souls do, who have been examining their faith, but are not able to lay claim to these marks and still fear they have no true faith? Can such adventure to come to this ordinance, where faith is so absolutely necessary?

A. I. Faith indeed is absolutely necessary at the Lord's table, but it is not absolutely necessary that we should know it. Assurance is not essential to faith, for there may be true faith wrought in the souls of some, who yet do not perceive it. The mists of guilt, Satan's temptations, and their own fear, may so rise up and obscure their knowing faculty, that they cannot see 'the things that are freely given to them of God,' 1 Cor. ii. 12.

II. There is some faith so weak and small, that it can scarcely be discerned by us, which yet may be real, sincere, and acceptable before God. And this is expressed in the lesser degrees and workings of faith, which yet are true faith; such as these,

1. A total renouncing of our own righteousness, with a resolution never to depend upon any thing in ourselves, or any other, besides Christ, Hos. xiv. 3.

2dly, A good opinion, and esteem of Christ, with a persuasion of his power, fulness and suitableness to our miserable circumstances. This was all that the leper, and woman with the bloody issue had, when they first came to Christ, Matth. viii. 2. Matth. ix. 21.

3dly, An earnest desire, or a hunger and thirst after Christ and his righteousness, Psal. xliii. 1. Matth. v. 6.

4thly, A willingness to be the Lord's, and wholly resigned to him, to be managed and disposed of, as he pleaseth, Psalm cxix. 94.

5thly, A deep and hear-affecting sense of that grievous clog of unbelief, that hinders the soul's motion toward Christ, Mark ix. 24.

6thly, A serious resolve and mint of the soul to go out to Christ, throw itself at his feet, and die at his door, though he should not have mercy. Now these desires, motions and workings of the heart, in a sensible sinner, are some degrees of true faith which God will not despise, Neh. i. 11. Mark ix. 24, 25. John xiii. 15. Matth. xii. 20.

III. Seeing Christ is a most tender-hearted and compassionate Saviour, that will not 'break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax;' but is content to accept of those that come to him with a weak and trembling hand: such weak and doubting believers ought certainly to come to Christ in the sacrament, where he seats himself on a throne of mercy to wait for needy sinners, and hath graciously appointed this ordinance, for strengthening and increasing weak faith.

IV. Such weak and discouraged souls should narrowly watch the seasons of God's near approaches in the ordinances, and these special golden minutes, when the Spirit strives, the Father draws, bowels of mercy yearn, and heaven's gales do blow; and presently take hold of, strike in with, and improve them: as Benhadad's servants watched for the word *brother* from the king of Israel's mouth, and hastily caught it, 1 Kings xx. 33.

Q. Are we not utterly unworthy to receive such a glorious Saviour in the arms of faith? How can we expect that he will match with such vile wretches as we are?

A. I answered this objection before, when treating of covenanting with God, to which the reader is referred. I only add these things.

1. That seeing this glorious Redeemer freely offers himself to the most unworthy, he ought readily, and without hesitation to be entertained by us: for though we be most unworthy of receiving Christ, yet he is most worthy of our acceptance, 1 Tim. i. 15.

2dly, This exalted Saviour thinks it no disparagement to

suit his worthiness to our unworthiness, his riches to our poverty, his eye-salve to our blindness, his white-raiment to our nakedness, and his fulness to our emptiness; for he saith to the unworthiest sinner that comes to him, ‘ All thy wants be ‘ on me ;’ and though thou hast no beauty of thine own, yet, ‘ I will make thy beauty perfect through my comeliness put ‘ upon thee ; and so the King will greatly desire thy beauty,’ Ezek. xvi. 14. Psal. xlv. 10, 11.

3dly, Though there be a great shew of humility in this objection, yet there is oft no small pride at the root of it. For if there be ground of objecting against us upon the score of unworthiness, it becomes us to let it come from Christ’s side ; but so wedded are we to the old covenant of works, that we would be at giving as good as we get or at least something in lieu of it. But our money and qualifications will perish with us, if we think to buy such a prize as glorious Christ. If we be not content to accept of Christ on the score of infinite free grace and matchless condescending love, we can never expect to enjoy him, Isa. lv. 1, 9. Rom. xi. 33. Eph. iii. 18, 19. Free grace is an ocean of such a depth and breadth, that it never yet hath been sounded or measured by men or angels : nay, to all eternity, it will be acknowledged, it hath neither bank nor bottom.

III. Concerning R E P E N T A N C E.

Quest. *SEEING repentance is another sacramental grace, which we must necessarily examine ourselves about ; What is that repentance, which worthy partakers must have ?*

A. True repentance, or repentance unto life, is a saving grace, or a special gift of God to elect sinners, wrought in their hearts by his Spirit and word, whereby upon a due sight and sense of the danger, guilt, and odiousness of their sins ; and upon a discovery and belief of the mercy of God in Christ to such as are penitent ; they mourn for, and hate their sins ; confessing them to God with shame and grief, and turn from them all, to God, and the ways of holiness, both in heart and life, Zech. xii. 10. Acts xi. 18, 21. Ezek. xviii. 30. Ezek.

xxxvi. 31. Joel ii. 12, 13. Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. 2 Cor. vii. 11. Prov. xxviii. 13. 2 Kings xxiii. 25.

Q. What are the parts of true repentance?

A. There are these parts in it. 1. Conviction. 2. Discovery of God's mercy in Christ. 3. Humiliation. 4. Confession. 5. Hatred of sin. 6. Turning from sin. 7. Turning to God and his ways.

Q. Wherein consists true conviction of sin?

A. In a right uptaking of the nature and evil of sin, and a sense of the wrath of God, that is due to it.

Q. What is it in sin, that the soul must be convinced of?

A. We must be convinced of sin; 1. In respect of its source and fountain, from whence all our actual sins do proceed, and that is, the corrupt nature and wicked heart, Psal. li. 5. Jer. xvii. 9. Matth. xv. 18, 19.

2dly, In respect of its intrinsic evil and malignity, that it is enmity and rebellion against God, Rom. viii. 7.

3dly, In respect of its pollution and deformity, that it renders us vile and loathsome in the sight of God, Zech. xi. 8.

4thly, In respect of the number of our sins, that they are more than our hairs, Psal. xi. 12.

5thly, In respect of the aggravation from the hainous circumstances attending the commission of them.

6thly, In respect of the guilt and demerit of them, that we have thereby forfeited all our mercies, and do deserve everlasting wrath.

Q. What is the difference betwixt the convictions of natural men, and these of true penitents?

A. 1. Natural mens convictions proceed only from a natural conscience; awakened upon some occasion; but those of a true penitent are the special work of the Spirit of God, Exod. ix. 27. John xvi. 8.

2dly, Natural mens convictions are most unwelcome and burthenfome to them; but the true penitent is desirous of them, Acts xxvi. 25. Job xiii. 23. Job xxxiv. 32.

3dly, The natural man's convictions are mainly for gross sins, and the out-breakings of the life; but the true penitent is also sensible of the corruption of the nature, plagues of the heart, and sins most secret, Matth. xxvii. 4. Psalm li. 5. Rom. vii. 24. Psal. xix. 12.

4thly, Natural mens convictions proceed from the fear of hell, or temporal judgments; but these of the true penitent.

arise mainly from a view of sin's evil, God's goodness, his patience, or Christ's sufferings, Psal. lxxviii. 34. Luke xv. 18. Zech. xii. 10.

5thly, The one is only of short continuance, but the other is abiding and durable, Hos. vi. 4. Psalm li. 3.

6thly, The one is cured by natural means, but the other only by the blood of Christ, Acts xvi. 30, 31.

Q. Why is the discovery of God's mercy in Christ a necessary ingredient to true repentance?

A. 1. Because God out of Christ is a consuming fire, and so without a sight of his mercy in Christ, we would never turn from sin to him, but would be ready to sink, with Judas, under tormenting despair, Heb. x. 31. Heb. xii. 29.

2dly, Because the apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, is a great encouragement to us to leave sin, and a mean to affect our heart with kindly grief and godly sorrow for sin, Psalm cxxx. 4. Rom. iii. 4.

Q. Wherein consists true humiliation for sin?

A. In these things, 1. In a real inward sorrow and bleeding of heart for sin, and the dishonour done thereby to God, Psal. li. 3, 4. Zech. xii. 10.

2dly, In a holy shame and blushing of soul for sin, in the sight of God, Ezra ix. 6.

3dly, In the soul's loathing and abhorring itself for its unworthy carriage towards so gracious a God, Job xlii. 6.

4thly, In outward mourning for sin, and bewailing it before the Lord, Psalm xxxviii. 18.

Q. What is the difference betwixt the humiliation of a natural man, such as Ahab, and that of a true penitent?

A. There is such a difference, as betwixt the convictions of natural men and true penitents, of which I spoke before. I only add this; that a natural or unrenewed man's sorrow and humiliation for sin, is not so much for sin itself, as for the effects and consequences of it, as it exposes him to temporal or eternal judgments, as it deprives him of outward mercies, blasts his reputation, breaks his employment, brings on corporal punishment here, or makes him obnoxious to hell-fire hereafter. But the true penitent mourns for sin, as it displeases and dishonours God, wounds Christ, grieves his Spirit, and gratifies the devil. Also he grieves for it, as it defiles the soul, indisposes for holy duties, and debars from communion with Christ.

Q. What sort of confession of sin is requisite to true repentance?

A. 1. It must be cordial and sincere; not superficial and overly, Job xlii. 6.

2^{dly}, It must be free and voluntary, and not extorted by judgments or the fear of hell, Matth. xxvii. 4. Luke xv. 18.

3^{dly}, It must be particular and distinct, so far as we can remember our bypast sins; and not rest in generals, Judg. x. 10. Psalm li. 4, 14. 1 Tim. i. 13.

4^{thly}, It must be humble and mournful, and attended with holy shame and self-condemnation, Dan. ix. 8. Luke xviii. 13. Psalm xxxiv. 4, 18.

5^{thly}, It must be attended with present forsaking of sin, Prov. xxviii. 13.

Q. What sort of hatred of sin is it, that is an ingredient of true repentance?

A. It hath these properties; 1. It is a sincere and well-grounded hatred: unrenewed men may hate sin because of its effects; but a true penitent hates it, because it is vile and loathsome in the eyes of God, the murderer of Christ, and an enemy to his own soul.

2^{dly}, It is a deep and implacable hatred; a natural man can have no such hatred of sin; it is only a slight or transient quarrel he may have with sin upon some particular occasion, and hence he may proceed to lop off some of the branches of sin, but he strikes not at the root, the corruption of the heart; he seeks not to put the old man to death. But the true penitent hates sin implacably; he seeks its ruin, aims at its life; and would have it utterly extirpated; and longs for the time when he shall be wholly delivered from it, Rom. vii. 24. 2 Cor. v. 4.

3^{dly}, It is an universal hatred: a natural man may hate some odious gross sins, or sins that are neither pleasant nor profitable to him: but the true penitent hates sin, as sin, and so hates every sin, whether secret or open, pleasant or profitable, in himself or in others, Psalm cxix. 128.

Q. What sort of turning from sin, is requisite to true repentance?

A. 1. A turning that proceeds from right principles, not from the dictates of a natural conscience only, or respect to human laws, or from fear of God's judgment: but from a

sense of the intrinsic evil of sin, the holiness and goodness of God, or a view of Christ's sufferings.

2dly, It must be a present turning from sin, without delaying one moment longer, Psal. cxix. 59, 60.

3dly, A final and everlasting turning, without ever looking back to Sodom again, or entertaining a favourable thought of sin, that killed the Lord of life, Hosea xiv. 8.

4thly, An universal turning from all sin, both in heart and life; no Agag must be spared, nor any darling lust reserved, Isaiah lv. 5. Ezek. xviii. 30, 31.

5thly, It must be attended with turning to God, and all commanded duties; for we must not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well, Isa. i. 16, 17. Isa. lv. 7.

6thly, This turning ought to be with all the heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning, Joel ii. 12.

Q. What is this turning to God, which is included in true repentance?

A. It implies these things, 1. A sight and sense of our undone condition, while we live and continue at a distance from God; and the great happiness of nearness to him, Psalm lxxiii. 27, 28.

2dly, The outgoings of the soul to God in spiritual breathings and desires, Isaiah xxvi. 8. Job xxiii. 3.

3dly, The humble application of the soul to God in Christ, for mercy and pardon, Psalm li. 1.

4thly, The soul's making choice of God for its God and portion, Jer. iii. 22.

5thly, Our resigning and giving up both inward and outward man to God's service and obedience. We must turn both our hearts and feet to God's testimonies, Psalm cxix. 57, 58, 59.

Q. Why is fasting necessary to be joined with our repentance and turning unto God?

A. Because God hath enjoined it as a good mean to wean the heart from the world, quicken prayer, and kindle zeal. And it carries in it somewhat of a holy revenge upon the flesh or body for its former excesses, which is very acceptable to God; though it cannot in the least make satisfaction to justice for sin, 2 Cor. vii. 11.

Q. Are tears absolutely necessary to true repentance?

A. They are very desirable expressions of our grief for sin. God noticeth the tears of true penitents, and puts them up in

a bottle, Psalm lvi. 8. Yet sometimes there may be a tender heart, where are few tears to be seen, because the bodily constitution may be dry, and not qualified for producing tears. But if we can command tears for other things, such as worldly losses and crosses, and can find none to shed for sin, there is too much ground to suspect that our repentance is not true.

Q. But what shall these do, who find their hearts so hard, that they can neither get tears, nor any true grief for sin?

A. 1st. This has been the complaint of many of God's people, that their hearts are hardened from God's fear, Isaiah lxiii. 17.

2dly, Let us consider if our heart-hardness be our great burden and trouble. Can we say, that it is our daily complaint to God, and that we would give all we have in the world to have our hearts brought to tenderness, and even live beggars upon this condition; then, surely, there is some life and tenderness in the soul.

3dly, Let us go to Christ, and plead for the blessed Spirit of grace, which he hath both purchased and promised, to take off the vail of darkness from our hearts, and the scales of blindness from our eyes; that we may see sin in its blackness and deformity; let us cry to him with Job iii. 23. 'Make me
'to know my transgression and my sin.' And let us plead his free promise, Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

4thly, Let us oft be aiming to apply the softning blood of Christ to our hard hearts; and oft be viewing sin in the bright looking-glass of his sufferings. Oh! can we see our sins binding a heavy cross on Christ's back, driving big nails into the most sensible parts of his body, and piercing his heart with sorrow, and yet our hearts remain unpierced? Shall the rocks rent, and the earth shake, the sun draw in its light, and the heavens mourn in black, when Christ suffered for our sins, and yet we stand unconcerned! Surely there is not such a heart-affecting sight either in earth or hell, as the death of our innocent Redeemer.

Q. Why is repentance and sorrow for sin so necessary to right communicating?

A. 1. Because it is necessary for our access to, and communion with God in any duty. It is to such that God hath promised to look, and with such that he is pleased to dwell. It is only humble and penitent addresses that he will accept; and thence he preferred a broken heart to all sacrifices, Psalm

li. 16, 17. Psal. x. 17. Psalm xxxiv. 18. Isaiah lvii. 15. Isaiah lxvi. 1. But impenitent persons are hateful to God, and can have no communion with him, Psalm v. 5. Psalm lxxviii. 11.

2^{dly}, Because in this sacrament, we enter into, and renew covenant with God; and penitent mourning for long distance and estrangement, or many sins and backslidings, is previously requisite thereunto, Jer. l. 4, 5.

3^{dly}, Because here we are to receive the seal of the pardon of our sins, and it is only a soft heart that can receive the impression of this seal, Luke viii. 44, 48. Luke xxiv. 47.

4^{thly}, Because nothing suits a broken Christ, so well as a broken heart. In this ordinance, we behold God punishing his Son for sin, and Christ breathing out his dying groans for it; and surely it is most fit that our hearts should bleed for it? If Christ wash our souls with his blood, in gratitude we should wash his feet with our tears, Zech. xii. 10. Luke vii. 38, 47.

5^{thly}, Because, without repentance, we cannot prize the great blessings and comforts exhibited to us in this ordinance. None but the sensible sinner and humble penitent will value the blood of Christ, the pardon of sin, and favour of God which are here offered, Matth ix. 12. Luke i. 53. Prov. xxvii. 7.

6^{thly}, Because repentance is absolutely necessary for killing of sin, and reforming the life, which is one great end in this ordinance. As God here lets us see his love to Christ, so he discovers the bitterness of sin, that we may hate and forsake it; now it is by repentance, that we taste of sin's bitterness: and the necessity hereof, at this ordinance, was prefigured by the bitter herbs with which the children of Israel were appointed to eat the passover, Exod. xii. 8.

Q. Hath not repentance many counterfeits?

A. Yes; For, 1. Some confess their sin, who never forsake it; as these, Num. xiv. 40. 1. Sam. xv. 24. That was but a counterfeit repentance.

2^{dly}, Some have slight, superficial sorrow, and outward expressions of mourning, where the heart is not touched for sin, 1 Kings xxi. 27.

3^{dly}, Some may have the heart rent with legal convictions and terrors, as Judas and Felix had, and yet never broken or melted for sin.

4^{thly}, Some may have a natural softness and tenderness of spirit, whereby they are apt to relent and shed tears at the

hearing of any tragical story, or seeing any moving object, and yet, never truly weep, to see their own sin. The story of Joseph in the pit will affect them as soon as that of Christ upon the cross.

5thly, Some have several good motions, and pangs of sorrow, at hearing of a sermon, or when they are under the rod, which yet soon vanish, Hosea vi. 4. Mark vi. 20.

6thly, Some come under express vows and resolutions against sin in time of sickness or distress, or when conscience is awakened; who yet are never true penitents for sin, Num. xxii. 17. Jer. ii. 20. 1 Sam. xxvi. 21.

7thly, Some may not only leave off gross sins themselves, but express great zeal against the sins of others, as Jehu did, against the worship of Baal, and Judas did, against prodigality, and yet be strangers to true repentance, 2 Kings x. 16, 28, 29. Matth. xxvi. 8. compared with John xii. 4, 5. All these then, are but counterfeited repentance.

Q. By what marks then shall we examine our repentance, if it be true and not counterfeited?

A. By these already mentioned, in the parts and description of repentance before given. To which I add these,

1. A true penitent is more grieved for the evil of sin, than for the evil of affliction; and more troubled for abusing the goodness of a Father, than for drawing down the wrath of a judge, Luke xv. 18.

2dly, The true penitent lays the ax of repentance to the root of sin, viz. the corrupt heart; he pants for deliverance from it, and for more heart-purity and renovation, Psalm li. 10. Rom. vii. 24.

3dly, The true penitent is highly concerned and careful to apply to the blood of Christ both for pardon from the guilt of sin, and sanctification from the pollution of sin; for true repentance and saving faith are inseparable, Psalm li. 1, 7. Acts ii. 38. Acts xx. 21. Mark i. 15.

4thly, Let us examine our repentance, by these adjuncts and fruits of it, recorded in 2 Cor. vii. 11. If it works in us, 1. Carefulness, to avoid sin and preserve ourselves from it. 2dly, Clearing of ourselves, by self-examination, and applying to Christ our surety. 3dly, Indignation against sin, as the enemy of God, the murderer of Christ, and destroyer of our souls. 4thly, Fear, of being defiled again with sin, which excites to watch against temptations, and inlets to it. 5thly, Ve-

hement desires after a total deliverance from it, and after Christ our deliverer, and his righteousness. *6thly*, Zeal for God's honour, by new obedience, and bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. *7thly*, Revenge upon sin, by mortification, because it crucified Christ. *8thly*, There is a holy shame upon the remembrance of sin; not that of a thief, because of the punishment and disgrace, but that of a son, because of the ingratitude and loathsomeness of sin, Ezek. xvi. 63.

IV. Concerning H O L Y F E A R.

Quest. WHAT is this fear that is requisite to worthy communicating?

A. It is a holy awe and reverence of God, wrought in the renewed heart by the holy Spirit, whereby the soul out of a deep sense of God's majesty and goodness, is inclined to draw nigh to God in Christ, stand in awe to offend him, avoid sin as the greatest evil, and study the things that are pleasing to God, Jer. xxxii. 40. Jer. v. 22. Psalm cxxx. 4. Heb. xi. Gen. xxxix. 9. Job. i. 1, 7. Acts x. 35.

Q. What is the necessity of this holy fear at the Lord's table?

A. 1. Because when we go to the Lord's table, we solemnly list ourselves in the presence of the great Jehovah, who is our judge, the searcher of our hearts, and the all-seeing observer of our actions; and a God that is very jealous of his honour, and 'will be sanctified in all that draw nigh to him,' Lev. x. 3. Heb. xii. 28, 29.

2dly, Because at the Lord's table, we have a most awful discovery of the holiness and justice of God in the sufferings of Christ there represented. How vehemently did he hate sin, that he would not spare his dear Son when he cried, nor abate one farthing of the debt he owed to justice as our surety, but exacted full satisfaction, and punished sin to the uttermost. The heavens darkened, and the earth shook, when God punished Christ for sin, and ought not we, the guilty sinners, to tremble and adore his justice; saying, with the Bethshemites, 'Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?' 1 Sam. vi. 20.

3dly, Because this holy fear is an excellent preservative against wandering thoughts, a spur to mind our work, and excite the graces to liveliness, and do every thing as in the sight of an all-seeing God, Psalm lvi. 8. Gen. xxxix. 9. Neh. i. 11.

4thly, Because of the importance of the work of communicating, and the danger of miscarrying in it. We have ground to fear and be jealous of ourselves, lest we be found unwelcome guests, and want the wedding-garment, when the King comes in to see his guests. We have cause to fear, lest we miss Christ's presence, and the seal of our pardon: yea, lest we be guilty of wounding Christ, and eating and drinking judgment to ourselves, by unworthy communicating; but a holy fear is a good mean to prevent this hazard.

Q. How may we know whether we be acted by a holy, or by a slavish fear, in this and other religious duties?

A. 1. A holy filial fear of God, is always joined with love to him; but a slavish fear is attended with some degree of enmity and hatred against God, Hos. iii. 5. Rom. viii. 7.

2dly, Slavish fear dreads God, because of his power and justice; but filial fear also, because of his goodness and loving-kindness, Hos. iii. 5.

3dly, Slavish fear is attended with a shyness of God's presence; but filial fear puts the soul on to seek nearness with God, Gen. iii. 10. Psalm lxxiii. 27. 28. Hos. iii. 5.

4thly, Slavish fear dreads nothing but hell and the punishment of sin: but filial fear dreads sin itself, as the greatest evil of the two, Psalm vi. 4. Acts xxiv. 25. Psalm iv. 4.

5thly, Slavish fear makes men averse from the light of the world and a faithful ministry; but filial fear makes us suspicious of ourselves, and willing to be tried, John iii. 20, 21. 1 Kings xxii. 8.

6thly, Slavish fear restrains only from the external acts of sin, and puts men on to external performances in duty only; but godly fear makes a man guard even against inward and secret sins, and study to please God inwardly as well as outwardly, and give him the heart as well as the life, Isa. viii. 13.

V. Concerning L O V E.

Quest. *W H A T* is that love which a worthy communicant ought to have?

A. There is a three-fold love necessary; 1. Love to God and godliness. 2. Love to the people of God. 3. Love to our enemies.

Q. *What is true love to God?*

A. It is a special affection, or saving grace wrought by God's Spirit in the hearts of his people, whereby, from a special discovery of the glory and excellency of God, their souls are determined to have a high and superlative esteem of him, their desires are carried out after him, and their delights are centered on him, as their chief good and portion, Rom. v. 5. Psalm. lxxiii. 25. Psalm xliii. 1, 2. Psalm xvi. 5, 6.

Q. *Why is love to God and Christ, so necessary to worthy communicating?*

A. 1. Because this sacrament is a love-feast, appointed for expressing the mutual love and affection of Christ and his people to one another, and therefore, it is designed only for his friends and disciples. Now how contrary is it to the nature of this ordinance, for people to approach to it without love? Or to sit down to this love-feast with enmity in their hearts at the Master of it? Cant. v. 1. Matth. xxvi. 27.

2dly, Because we have here the highest representation of divine love that ever was given. Here we may see both the arms and heart of the Son of God open, on a cross to us, with his affections streaming out to us in blood: and we may hear the dying groans of the Lamb of God, just expiring under the burden of wrath that was due to us. And what a monstrous thing would it be for us to want love to him, at such a time? Gal. ii. 20. Eph. v. 2. Rev. i. 5.

3dly, Because other graces, which are to be exercised in this ordinance, do much depend upon love: Without it we cannot be heavenly-minded in this duty, we cannot have high thoughts of Christ, we cannot delight in him, nor have any hungry desires after him. Without love to Christ, we cannot hate sin, nor be grieved for it; nay, we may see the print of the nails, and put our fingers into his wounds without any

remorse for sin, that made them. Mary's tears were most free, when her love was most hot, Luke vii. 37, 38. Isaiah liii. 2, 3.

4thly, Without love to Christ, we can have no benefit by the sacraments, for we can have no communion with God, nor any manifestations of his favour without it, seeing these are only promised to such as love him, John xiv. 21, 23.

5thly, Because the want of this love, brings men under the severest curse, 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

Q. Must not our love to God at the sacrament, be directed to all the persons of the glorious Trinity?

A. Yes; we must love God the Father, as our father; God the Son, as our mediator and redeemer; and God the holy Ghost, as our sanctifier and comforter.

Q. How may we know if we love God the Father, as our father?

A. By our filial respect and dutiful carriage to him; if we fear him, and stand in awe to offend him, if we be tender of his honour, troubled at his frowns, desirous of his presence, and careful to please him. If we depend on him, for what we want; love to address him; imitate him in his holiness, and obey his injunctions, Mal. i. 6. Psalm cxxxix. 20, 21. Psalm xxx. 7. Isaiah lvi. 4, 5. Rom. viii. 15. 1 Pet. v. 7. Eph. v. 1. 1 Pet. i. 14, 15.

Q. How may we know if we love God the Son, as our mediator and redeemer?

A. By our accepting of him, and improving him in all his mediatory offices: learning of him as our Prophet, relying on him as our Priest, and obeying him as our King. And by our renouncing of all other lords and saviours besides him, Matth. xi. 28, 29. Isaiah xxvi. 13. Heb. v. 9. Eph. i. 12, 13.

Q. How may we know if we love the holy Ghost, as our sanctifier and comforter.

A. By our hearkening to his calls, seeking his assistance in duties, laying ourselves open to his influences, cherishing his motions, and delighting in these duties and ordinances where his operations are to be expected, and desiring to be directed and guided by him in all our ways, Psalm xxvii. 8. 1 Thess. v. 19. Eph. iii. 16. Psalm. lxiii. 2. Psalm cxliii. 10. 11. Rom. viii. 14.

Q. Seeing love to Christ, our crucified Saviour, is especially

requisite at the Lord's table; by what marks may we examine our love to him, if it be true, and not counterfeit?

A. By these, 1. Let us see if we can give any reason for our love to him; if we love him not only for what he hath done for elect sinners in general, but for what he hath done for us in particular, in hearing our cry, and helping us when we were brought low under a burden of guilt and fears, Psalm cxvi. 1, 6, 8.

2dly, If we love him also, because of his own intrinsic beauty, matchless worth, and personal excellencies, that render him altogether lovely in himself, as well as a suitable Saviour to us, Cant. v. 10—16.

3dly, If our hearts and thoughts be frequently going out towards him, and our meditation of him be sweet; for surely, if Christ be our treasure, our hearts will be with him, Psalm civ. 34. Matth. vi. 21.

4thly, If we be earnestly desirous of his gracious presence in duties and ordinances, and languish for him when he withdraws, Psalm lxxxiv. 1, 3. Cant. iii. 1, 2, 3. Cant. v. 8.

5thly, If we have common friends and common enemies; love what Christ loves, and hate what he hates; if we rejoice when his name is great, and his interest flourisheth, and grieve when any wrong or dishonour is done to him, either by ourselves or others, 1 John v. 1, 2. Psalm cxxxix. 21, 22. Psalm xcvi. 10. John xiv. 28. Psalm cxxii. 9.

6thly, If we love Christ, and his interests in all states and conditions; own him under persecution and reproach, and highly esteem a crucified, as well as a glorified Christ, a condemned, as well as an adored Christ, Cant. viii. 6, 7.

7thly, If we love Christ wholly, and all that is in him; love him in all his offices, in his death as a sacrifice, and in his life as a pattern; love him as a prince on the throne, as well as a priest on the cross; love him for purity, as well as pardon; for sanctification, as well as satisfaction. No lover of Christ will desire a disjunction of Christ's priestly and princely offices, for he sees them sweetly linked together; and hence it is that Christ is stiled a 'priest upon a throne,' Zech. vi. 13. And therefore he will love his laws to obey them, his ordinances to attend them, his Sabbaths to sanctify them, and his people to associate with them, John xiv. 21. 1 Cor. v. 14, 15. 1 John v. 1, 2, 3. Psalm cxix. 63.

8thly, If we love Christ above our relations, enjoyments,

and dearest things we have in the world, yea, even life itself, Matth. x. 37. Acts xxi. 13. Rev. xii. 11.

9thly, If we be breathing after fresh intimations of Christ's love to us, and seeking still more assurance and evidences of it, Cant. i. 2, 3. Cant. viii. 6.

Q. What shall these exercised souls do, that suspect their love to Christ is not superlative; that they love him not above their relations, and dearest enjoyments in the world? By what marks do we know if we do?

A. By these, 1. If no affection to any creature can draw us willingly or wittingly, to do that which is displeasing to Christ

2dly, If we value Christ's friendship and favour more than that of any creature, and would chuse rather to displease all the world than offend him.

3dly, If the loss of Christ's countenance, or any injury done to him, affect our hearts more than any worldly loss or damage.

4thly, If it be our greatest grief, that we cannot get more love to Christ. And if we can appeal to himself, who knoweth our hearts; with Peter, that we love him sincerely, though not so much as we ought, John xxii. 17. Eph. vi. 24.

Q. Are there not many who have lost their first love, like these, Rev. ii. 4. How shall we know if it be so with us?

A. If decay of love to Christ be our disease, it will have such symptoms as these; 1. Christ will be less in our hearts and mouths than formerly.

2dly, We will be more slack in our obedience, and have less delight in duty than before.

3dly, It is a sign of decaying love, when we lose our tenderness of conscience, and wonted abhorrence of sin, Christ's enemy.

4thly, When we are more easy under Christ's absence and withdrawings, and less anxious for his presence.

5thly, When we lose our wonted appetites for our spiritual food and nourishment from Christ, in the ordinances.

6thly, When we lose our public-spiritedness and concern for the interest of Christ's kingdom and glory in the world.

7thly, When we are little concerned to have heart-holiness, which is Christ's image, drawn upon the soul.

8thly, When we have little desire for Christ's second coming, or for the enjoyment of him in heaven.

9thly, When earthly-mindedness, and love to the world is on the growing hand.

Q. Is there not a love to worldly things, which is lawful and allowable? How may we know when we love the world too much?

A. Our love to the world is unlawful and excessive, when,
1. Worldly things are first in our thoughts in the morning, or last at night.

2dly, When they juggle out spiritual things from our minds.

3dly, When we think on worldly affairs with greater intenseness of mind, than these things that are spiritual and heavenly.

4thly, When the impressions of worldly things last longer with us, than these things which immediately concern the glory of God, and our souls good.

5thly, When the ends we propose to ourselves in worldly cares are chiefly, that we may satisfy our natural desires, prevent poverty, or make ourselves great; not that we may glorify God, and be more capable to serve him.

Q. What shall we do to get the decayed fire of love to Christ kindled and increased?

A. 1. Let us labour to be deeply sensible of this evil of decay of love to Christ, and heavily bemoan the coldness of our hearts before God.

2dly, Let us humbly apply to Christ our great physician, who can only cure this plague of a spiritual consumption, as well as our other soul-diseases.

3dly, Let us earnestly seek after further discoveries of Christ's excellency and loveliness; for if we once saw his beauty, our hearts would surely go out after him.

4thly, Let us meditate much on the love of a crucified Jesus, in sweating blood, and laying down his life for such enemies as we are: let us take a view of him in his dyed garments, as he is described, Isaiah lxiii. 1, 2, 3.

5thly, Let us carefully search out the lust or idol, the Delilah, or worldly enjoyment, that hath stolen our hearts from Christ; and when we have found it, let neither our eye pity nor spare it, but presently cast it out.

6thly, Let us seriously think, on the one hand, upon the heavy curse and vengeance which abide those that do not love Christ, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. And on the other hand, upon the unspeakable reward laid up for all the true lovers of Christ, as recorded, 2 Tim. iv. 8. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

7thly, Let us consider that loving of Christ, will be the eternal employment of saints in heaven: this grace of love abides for ever when all the rest do fail.

8thly, Let us earnestly pray for the breathings of his holy Spirit, these 'north and south winds to blow on our withered gardens.' And let us plead his gracious promises of strength and quickening which he makes to languishing and decaying souls, particularly these, Isaiah xl. 29, 30, 31. Jer. xxxiii. 6. Zech. xii. 8. Hos. xiv. 5, 6, 7. Let us often cry with David, 'Quicken thou me according to thy word,' Psalm cxix. 25, 107, 154, &c.

9thly, Let us, in this case, follow the advice and prescription of Christ, our great physician, Rev. iii. 4, 5. 'Thou hast left thy first love, remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works.'

The advice contains three directions; 1. 'Remember from whence thou art fallen,' i. e. compare thy former state with the present; remember what a warm heart and lively affections you once had to Christ, and how cold and dead they are now.

2dly, Repent, i. e. Mourn over your sad backslidings and decays, and acknowledge them before God.

3dly, 'Do thy first works,' i. e. Be as diligent in duty as formerly. When we find this holy fire decayed, we ought to cast on more fuel, i. e. Use all God's appointed means for rekindling the flame, be much in prayer, reading and hearing the word; delight much in the converse and fellowship of warm and lively Christians, and go frequently to that heart-warming and love-inflaming ordinance of the Lord's supper, carefully guarding against formality in communicating, or slowness in preparing for it.

Q. What way should the lovers of Christ express, or shew forth their love to him?

A. 1. By studying likeness and conformity to him. Holiness is Christ's image: let us imitate Christ herein, that we may in some measure be like him whom we love in meekness, humility, self-denial, diligence, and heavenly-mindedness. In a word, let us be holy in our thoughts, affections, speeches, actions, and in all manner of conversation; for so Christ was, Heb. vii. 26. 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.

2dly, Let us seek to converse with him, and be much in his company; let us walk with him in the galleries of ordi-

nances, and be much in secret prayer, and in all these duties, where fellowship with him is to be obtained, Cant. i. 7. Cant. iii. 2. Cant. vii. 5. Cant. viii. 13.

3dly, Observe his injunctions and keep his commandments, John xiv. 15.

4thly, Be concerned for his interest, kingdom and glory upon earth, Psalm cxxii. 9. Phil. ii. 21.

5thly, Let us place all relations, worldly interests, and enjoyments below him, Matth. x. 37.

6thly, Give ready audience to his ambassadors, and kindly entertainment to all his love-motions, Psalm xlv. 10. Cant. v. 2.

7thly, Avoid every thing that Christ hates, Psalm xcvi. 10. Psalm xlv. 7.

8thly, Love his people and whatever bears his image, 1 John v. 1.

Concerning LOVE to GOD's people.

Quest. WHY is love to our neighbours, and especially the people of God, so necessary for a worthy communicant?

A. 1. Because God requires us, in all our solemn approaches to him, to see that we be in a state of amity and friendship with our brother; not harbouring any wrath or malice in our hearts, as we would be accepted of God, Matth. v. 23, 25. 1 Cor. v. 8. 1 Tim. ii. 8.

2dly, Because it is one end of this ordinance to represent the union of believers together into one mystical body, as the bread is made up of many grains compacted together: and also to testify their communion and fellowship with one another as members of the same body: And how can this be done without mutual love? 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

3dly, Because brotherly love is inseparable from faith, and given frequently as a mark of Christ's disciples, for whom this sacrament is appointed, John xiii. 35. 1 John iii. 4. 1 John iv. 7.

4thly, Because without this love we can expect no benefit by this ordinance, nor any communion with Christ in it, 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 3. 1 John iii. 23, 24. 1 John iv. 12, 16. As

the Spirit descended on the disciples, when they met together in one house and were all of one mind and one heart, so he will not enter the house or heart where love and peace do not dwell, Acts ii. 1, 4. Acts iv. 31, 32. Jer. xxxii. 39, 40.

5thly, Because as we are bound to remember Christ's death in the sacrament, so we ought in receiving it to remember the dying charge and injunctions he gave his people, when he instituted and dispensed it: and particularly this of brotherly love, which he so earnestly pressed in his sacramental discourse and farewell sermon, John xv. 12, 17. And also prayed for it, John xvii. 11, 21.

Q. But if my neighbour hath offended me, or I him, and inclineth to return to a state of love and reconciliation to me: should this hinder me from partaking of the Lord's supper?

A. If we sincerely use the means which God hath appointed, in order to a reconciliation with our offending and offended brother, and endeavour, so far as we have access, to have the difference removed, and entertain no prejudice, hatred, or revenge in our hearts against him: though our endeavours of reconciliation should not have the desired effect, through our neighbour's obstinacy or untractableness, we are not to abstain from our duty, or deprive ourselves of the benefit of this ordinance, because of his fault, Matth. v. 23, 24.

Q. By what marks may we know if our love to God's people be true and sincere?

A. By these, 1. If we love them upon spiritual grounds, because of their relation to God as his children, and to Christ as his members, and because of their likeness to God and Christ in holiness, 1 John v. 1, 2. 1 Pet. i. 22.

2dly, If we love them universally, whether they be rich or poor, relations or strangers, and even though they differ from us in some lesser things, Col. i. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 17.

3dly, If we love them fervently, and above all others, 1 Pet. i. 22. Psalm xvi. 3.

4thly, If we love them constantly, in adversity as well as prosperity, when they are despised, reproached and persecuted by the world, as well as when honoured and esteemed, John xiii. 2. 1 John iii. 16, 17. Heb. xiii. 1.

5thly, If we prefer their company, and delight in it above that of any others, Psalm cxix. 63. Psalm xvi. 3.

6thly, If we sympathize with them, both in their joys and sorrows, Rom. xii. 15. 1 Cor. xii. 26.

7thly, If we be ready to serve them, and supply their wants, 1 John iii. 18, 19. James ii. 15, 16.

8thly, If we can bear with injuries from them, and be ready to forgive them, and even to cover their faults from others, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 7. Eph. iv. 32. 1 Pet. iv. 8.

Concerning LOVE to our ENEMIES.

Quest. *WHEREFORE* ought we to love our enemies?

A. 1. Because God hath commanded it, Matth. v. 44. Rom xii. 14.

2dly, Because of the example of God in loving and forgiving us who are enemies to him, and of Christ in dying for us, Eph. iv. 32. Col. iii. 13.

Q. *What sort of love is it that we ought to bear to our enemies?*

A. A love of benevolence and beneficence, though not a love of delight and complacency, Matth. v. 44, 45. Rom. xii. 20, 21.

Q. *How may we know if our love to our enemies be true?*

A. 1. If the example of Christ's loving and dying for his enemies, have influence upon us, Rom. v. 8, 10. Col. iii. 13.

2dly, If we incline to forgive them, and wish their good and welfare, Luke xi. 12. Prov. xi. 23.

3dly, If we rejoice not in their hurt, Prov. xxiv. 17, 18.

4thly, If we shun to revenge ourselves upon them, Rom. xii. 17, 19.

5thly, If we pray for them, relieve their wants and return them good for evil, Matth v. 44. Rom. xii. 20, 21.

VI. Concerning THANKFULNESS.

Quest. *WHY* is thankfulness to God so necessary in partaking of the Lord's supper?

A. 1. Because in this ordinance we have the representation of the greatest love and goodness that ever God expressed to

the world, in giving his dearly beloved Son to be a sacrifice for sin, and offering him to be a Saviour to us, John iii. 16. Gal. iii. 1.

2dly, Thankfulness to God is a special design of this ordinance: upon which account it is called the Eucharist or thanksgiving; because here we express our thankful remembrance of redeeming love, and celebrate the praises of our loving Redeemer, Mark xiv. 26.

Q. How may we know if our thankfulness be of the right stamp?

A. 1. By our low thoughts of ourselves, and our disclaiming all worthiness in us to receive the least mercy, Gen. xxxii. 10.

2dly, By our having a high esteem of God's mercies to us, and especially spiritual blessings; reckoning Jesus Christ to be the mercy of mercies, Luke i. 68, 72. 2 Cor. ix. 15.

3dly, By our dutiful rendering to God according to the mercies received from him, Psalm cxvi. 12. 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.

Q. What is that a thankful communicant should render unto the Lord?

A. 1. Both soul and body, as a living sacrifice and thank-offering, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. 2 Cor. viii. 5. Rom. xii. 1.

2dly, Sincere love and hearty affection, Luke vii. 27, 28. 47.

3dly, High praises and humble prayers, Psalm cvi. 1, 2, Psalm cxvi. 1, 2, 17. Psalm ciii. 1, 2, 3. 1 Tim. i. 15, 17.

4thly, Paying our sacramental vows by a holy walk, diligent service, and zealous acting for God's glory, Psalm cxvi. 12, 14. Psalm. cxix. 106. 1 Cor. v. 15. Acts xxi. 13.

VII. Concerning HOLY DESIRES.

Quest. WHAT are those holy desires, which are necessary for worthy communicants?

A. They are the soul's spiritual appetite, or its hunger and thirst after Christ and his benefits, as its proper food and nourishment, Isaiah xxvi. 8, 9. Matth. v. 6.

Q. Why is this holy desire or spiritual appetite so necessary to worthy partaking?

A. 1. Because it is necessary in all our duties and approaches to God, and much more in this which is so solemn, Psalm lxxiii. 8.

2dly, This ordinance is a feast, and certainly an appetite is proper for that, if we would profit by it. Without it we can taste no spiritual sweetness in this feast, get no nourishment by it, nor expect welcome to it, Matth v. 6. Luke i. 53. Rev. xxii. 17.

3dly, The greater our appetite and longings be, the greater will be our satisfaction: when the desire opens the heart widest, God opens the hand largest to fill it, Psalm lxxxi. 19.

Q. How may we know if our desires or appetite be of the right sort?

A. By these marks; 1. True hunger is insatiable without food: bring a treasure, a crown, or the greatest preferments to a hungry man, all cannot satisfy him: so nothing can satisfy the hungry soul but Christ; not his ordinances or benefits only, but himself; not the supper or bread of the Lord, but the Lord of the supper, and the Lord of the bread, Psalm lxxiii. 25. Job xxiii. 3.

2dly, Hunger is insupportable without meat; the man must die if he want it; so the truly hungry soul cannot live or subsist without Christ: he can bear the want of other things, but Christ he cannot want, Psalm cxliii. 7, 9.

3dly, Hunger makes a man resolute, active and industrious, he will spare neither cost nor travel for food: it would even break through stone-walls: so a hungry soul will venture through all difficulties to find Christ, Cant. iii. 2, 3.

4thly, Hunger makes a man very humble; he will make the coarser bread, or meanest crumb very welcome: so the truly hungry soul will be content to have Christ upon any terms, though it were even to be the meanest servant of his house, or set with his dogs, provided always he may have a relation to his family, Luke xv. 10. Matth. xv. 27.

5thly, Hunger makes a man restless and impatient of delays till food be brought; so the hungry soul cries oft, 'How long, Lord, wilt thou forget me? How long wilt thou hide thy face? When shall I come and appear before God?' Psal xliii. 1. Psalm x. 2.

6thly, It makes a man prefer Christ and his ordinances to

all his worldly interests, and willing to part with all things to obtain these, Luke v. 11.

7thly, It makes Christ and his spiritual benefits very sweet and pleasant to the soul, and likewise the ordinances that do convey them, Cant. ii. 3. Psalm cxxxii. 1.

VIII. Concerning NEW OBEDIENCE.

Quest. WHAT is that new-obedience which is required in worthy communicants?

A. It is an unfeigned desire and purpose of the soul, followed with suitable endeavours in the life, (through the strength of Christ) to yield sincere, constant and universal obedience to God's revealed will; being humbled for shortcomings, and desirous to be clothed with Christ's righteousness, and accepted of God, only for the sake of his perfect obedience, Psalm cxix. 4, 5, 6, 30, 31, 32, 112. Phil. iv. 13. 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19. Phil. iii. 9.

Q. Why is it called new-obedience?

A. Because it is only performed by these who are new-creatures, and are actuated by new-principles, and enabled by new strength, according to the tenor of the new covenant, 2 Cor. v. 17. Rom. xii. 2. Phil. iv. 13.

Q. Why is this new-obedience needful to worthy partaking?

A. 1. Because the new covenant, which is sealed in this ordinance, doth bind us to it; for as here we take God for our God; so we give up ourselves to be his people, which necessarily includes our obedience to him, Jer. xxxi. 33. Heb. viii. 10.

2dly, Because without new-obedience, and sincere purposes of it, a man comes to the Lord's table in a state of rebellion, and not in obedience to Christ, and so can have no communion with him: for his fair profession is but dissimulation, and his religious performances hypocritical and abominable to God, 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23. Amos iii. 3. Tit. i. 16.

3dly, Carefulness to maintain good works is positively required of all that close with Christ by faith, and is an evidence of the reality of our faith, Tit. iii. 8. James ii. 18, 20.

4thly, There can be no true thankfulness for redeeming love without it, Rom. xii. 1. 2 Cor. vii. 1.

5thly, Without holiness in heart and life there is no seeing of God, Matth. v. 8. Heb. xii. 14.

Q. How shall we examine the truth and reality of our new-obedience?

A. We ought to inquire into these five things; 1. If it spring from new principles. 2dly, If it be guided by a new rule. 3dly, If it be done in a new manner. 4thly, If it aim at new ends. 5thly, If it hath new properties.

Q. What are the principles of gospel-obedience?

A. The graces of God's Spirit planted in the heart, and especially the graces of faith, love, and fear of God. Fear of hell, or love of reward may force the hypocrite to some sort of obedience; but love to God, and a tender regard to his authority do chiefly influence the believer, Rom. xvi. 26. Heb. xi. 7, 8. 2 Cor. v. 14. Psalm cxix. 4, 5. Acts x. 35.

Q. What is the rule of gospel-obedience?

A. 1. The will and commands of God revealed and contained in the holy scriptures; and not the precepts and inventions of men, Isaiah viii. 20. 1 Thess. iv. 3. Psalm cxix. 4, 5. Gal. vi. 16.

2dly, The example of Jesus Christ our pattern, 1 John ii. 6.

Q. What is the new manner in which gospel-obedience is performed?

A. It is done in faith, i. e. depending on the strength of Christ, for enabling us to it, and on the righteousness of Christ for our acceptance in it, and leaning nothing upon any of our own performances, but relying entirely upon Christ, Col. iii. 17. Phil. iv. 3. Eph. i. 6. Luke xvii. 10. Phil. iii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

Q. What are the ends which believers aim at, in their new-obedience?

A. Not to gain the world, or get the applause of men, as hypocrites do; but to please God, shew forth his glory, and promote their neighbour's edification, 1 Cor. x. 31. Col. i. 10. Matth. v. 16. Phil. ii. 4.

Q. What are the properties of gospel-obedience?

A. It is universal; the obedience of the whole man to the whole laws and commands of God, Psalm cxix. 34. 2 Cor. vii. 20.

2dly, It is a willing obedience, not constrained by the com-

mands of men, education, a natural conscience, or fear of hell : but an obedience that springs from love to God and his ways, Psalm cx. 3. Psalm. xl. 8. Rom. vii. 22.

3dly, It is a quick and speedy obedience, Psalm cxix. 60. Gal. i. 16.

4thly, It is a persevering and resolute obedience, notwithstanding of trials and difficulties, Psalm cxix. 106, 112. Acts xi. 23. Rev. ii. 19.

5thly, It is a humble and self-denied obedience, Luke xviii. 10.

6thly, It is a fiducial obedience, performed in Christ's strength, and relying on his merits for acceptance with God, Eph. i. 6. Heb. xiii. 15.

So much concerning the first part of our preparation for the Lord's supper, viz. Self-examination. And so we come to the second part,

Concerning the excitation of G R A C E.

Quest. WHY should grace be excited and quickened, before our partaking of the Lord's supper?

A. Because liveliness and activity of soul is necessary to worthy communicating. That a man may be qualified for a feast, it is fit that he not only be living, but also be in health, and have an appetite : for a sick or swooning person is unfit for a feast, as well as a dead man. So in order to worthy communicating, it is requisite that grace not only be in the habit, but that it be brought forth to the lively exercise : and that for these reasons.

1. The very work of communicating lies in the vigorous actings of faith, love, repentance, and other graces of the Spirit.

2dly, Because in this ordinance, we make a solemn and immediate approach unto the living God, who will be served in a lively manner, and abhorreth a cold and luke-warm temper in his worship Rom. xii. 11. Acts xxvi. 7. Rev. iii. 19. Mal. i. 4.

3dly, Because to act without liveliness, is not only unsuitable to this solemn ordinance, and to the author of it, but also

most uncomfortable to ourselves; for lifeless duties, are unpleasant, and do occasion many bitter reflections to the soul.

4thly, Without liveliness of grace, we are in hazard of unworthy communicating, and of drawing down judgments on ourselves, 1 Cor. xi. 28, 29, 30.

Q. What is that lively frame of soul, which a communicant should have, in approaching to the Lord's table?

A. He should have all the sacramental graces drawn forth into exercise, and his heart thereby brought into a humble and self-basing frame, a melting and mourning frame, a believing and covenanting frame, a loving and affectionate frame, a longing and panting frame, a thankful and praising frame, and a willing and obedient frame, to run the ways of God's commandments, Psalm cxix. 32.

Q. What course shall we take, to get the sacramental graces brought to a lively exercise?

A. By the diligent use of the means which God hath instituted, particularly by reading and hearing of God's word, by serious and retired meditation upon proper objects, and by earnest prayer and frequent ejaculations to God for the help of his Spirit.

Q. What are these proper objects we should meditate upon, in order to bring the grace of faith into lively exercise?

A. Let us meditate on the greatness of Christ's sufferings, the acceptableness of his sacrifice, the infinite virtue of his blood, the fulness and sweetness of his promises, and the freeness of his gracious invitations, with the assurance he gives of acceptance and welcome to all that come unto him.

Q. What shall we meditate on, in order to get holy fear quickened?

A. We ought to meditate on the infinite justice and holiness of God, and his vehement indignation against sin, manifested in the sufferings of Christ for sin; and upon the near approach we make to a holy God in this ordinance, and the danger of unworthy communicating.

Q. What should we meditate on, to get repentance quickened?

A. Upon the hainous and God-provoking nature of sin, the number and greatness of our sins, the variety and greatness of our Redeemer's sufferings, and upon our sins as the cause of them all.

Q. What shall we meditate on, to get love to God and Christ quickened?

A. Upon the infinite love of God in sending his own Son to die for us, upon the matchless love of Christ in coming into the world, his readiness and willingness to sacrifice himself for us, his intrinsic loveliness and excellency, the unspeakable vileness and unworthiness of those whom he loved, and suffered so much for.

Q. *What shall we meditate upon, to get love to the people of God quickened?*

A. Upon the words of our dying Redeemer enjoining it, upon the image they bear, their near relation to Christ and to us; and upon the love of Christ in dying for them.

Q. *What shall we do, to get love to our enemies quickened?*

A. Let us think on Christ's command for it, and his example in loving and dying for us when enemies to him.

Q. *What shall we think on, to get our desires and spiritual appetite quickened?*

A. Upon our souls manifold necessities and wants, the fulness and suitableness of the supplies Christ hath provided for us in this ordinance; and the gracious promises he hath made to satisfy these that hunger and thirst.

Q. *What shall we meditate upon, to get our thankfulness to God quickened?*

A. Upon the freeness and greatness of redeeming love, the suitableness and excellency of the new covenant, the richness and fulness of this gospel-feast, and our unworthiness of the least of God's mercies.

Q. *What shall these do, who complain of their spiritual deadness still continuing, and who cannot get their hearts brought to a lively frame for approaching to this holy ordinance?*

A. 1. They ought to examine what may be the cause of their spiritual deadness. 2dly, Use all proper remedies for curing this disease.

Q. *What are the ordinary causes of our spiritual deadness?*

A. 1. Our commission of some sin, and not repenting for it; upon which account God is provoked to withhold the influences of his Spirit, Psalm li. 11.

2dly, Our omission of duty, or sluggish performance of it, brings on deadness. A key not turned, rusts in the lock, Isa. lxiv. 7.

3dly, Our careless entertaining of convictions and the motions of the Holy Spirit, doth grieve and quench the Spirit, and so brings on deadness.

4thly, Our unthankfulness for former mercies, especially spiritual mercies and revivings, provokes God to shut his hand and suspend his influences, Col. ii. 7.

5thly, Our earthly mindedness, and taking too much liberty in the delights of the world, deadens the heart, Psalm cxix. 37. Jude 19.

6thly, When we grow proud of gifts, attainments or enlargements in duty, God is provoked to blast them to us, James iv. 6.

7thly, Heavy troubles and discouragements tend to deaden the heart, Psalm cxix. 107.

Q. What are the proper remedies for curing our spiritual deadness?

A. 1. Let us be deeply sensible of this sad plague, search out the cause of it, and be humbled for it before the Lord.

2dly, Let us study to keep up a lively faith of the unseen things of another world; for when unbelief prevails, our spiritual life decays, Heb. iii. 12.

3dly, Let us act faith on Christ, and thereby draw life and quickening from him, who is the 'fountain of life and head of influences' to his people: he is a living head and will communicate life to his languishing members, John. x. 10.

4thly, Let us carefully cherish all the motions and convictions of God's Spirit, watch against all known sin, the love of the world, the company of the wicked, and every thing that tends to grieve and quench the Spirit, 1 Thess. v. 19.

5thly, Let us be frequent in reading, hearing, and meditating upon the quickening word and precepts of God, Psalm cxix. 93.

6thly, Delight in the company of lively Christians, whose flame may help to kindle our languishing spark, Psalm cxix. 63.

7thly, Let us think much on the activity and liveliness of the glorified saints and angels above, in the service of the living God; and as we pray that we may 'do his will on earth as they do in heaven,' let us join our endeavours with our prayers, chide our drowzy hearts, and excite them to liveliness, Matth. vi. 10. Psalm lvii. 8. Psalm ciii. 1, 2. Jer. xxx. 21.

8thly, Let us attend God's quickening ordinance, and continue to use all means; still waiting, longing, and looking to the Lord, who hath promised to 'give power to the faint,

‘and to be as the dew to Israel,’ Psalm xxvii. 8. Isaiah xl. 29, 31. Hof. xiv. 5.

Q. But what shall poor exercised souls do, who after using all means, find their deadness still continuing; Dare they adventure to approach to a living God in the sacrament?

A. 1. We ought to consider that our dying Saviour hath commanded us to come to his table, and we are under an indispensable obligation to obey it, and that our sinful indisposition cannot excuse us from our duty. And therefore,

2dly, We must not sit in complaining of our deadness, but we must be restless under it, mourn over it, pray against it, struggle in the use of all means to get it removed, and set our hearts to our duty: and if we be conscious to ourselves, that we have been honestly exercised, (though with much weakness) in the use of all appointed means, we are not to give over thoughts of communicating: but in obedience to Christ’s command, and with a serious design to keep up the remembrance of his dying love, we ought to set about it, with hope and expectation that God will meet with us in this quickening ordinance, and graciously remove our complaints, according to his promise, Psalm ix. 18. Psalm xxxiii. 18, 22. Isa. xli. 17, 18.

3dly, Let us remember that this course of sincere aiming to obey Christ’s command, and preparing ourselves in the use of all means, is to lay ourselves in God’s way and road, who has promised to meet such as remember him in his ways, and commonly hath a desirable issue. For God oft surprises his people with supplies of life, when they are struggling with their deadness in the use of means; help comes in, in the mean time, so that though they begin duty with a dead frame, yet they end it with a lively. ‘Before they are aware, their souls make them as the chariots of Amminadib;’ Isa. lxiv. 5. Cant. vi. 12. read Psalm xlii. the first verse compared with the latter.

Q. Are not retired meditations upon the sufferings of Christ, and secret prayer to God, two special means for quickening our graces, and preparing us for the Lord’s table?

A. Yes; when they are rightly managed and duly performed.

I. Concerning the Meditation of CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS.

Quest. WHEREIN doth the nature of the duty of solemn and retired meditation consist?

A. It consists in the soul's abstracting and retiring itself from the world, and setting itself seriously to contemplate, and think upon spiritual objects, for holy and practical uses: which religious exercise is a very necessary and profitable duty in itself, and the character of a godly man, Josh. i. 8. Psalm i. 2. Gen. xxiv. 63. Psalm cxix. 97.

Q. What is the advantage of this duty?

A. It is a great help to other duties, it affords matter to the tongue in prayer and praise, it makes us fruitful in reading and hearing the word, it over-awes the soul from sinning, and melts the heart into penitential tears for sin, it quickens the graces in communicating, raiseth the soul's esteem of Christ, enforceth holiness, and excites to diligence and activity in the service of God, Psalm xl. 1. James i. 24. Psalm cxix. 97, 99. Psalm xc. 11. Psalm li. 3. 2 Tim. i. 12. Cant. v. 16. Psalm xxvi. 3. Heb. xi. 26.

Q. Why is this useful and profitable duty so much neglected by us?

A. 1. Because of our spiritual sloth, that makes us unwilling to engage in duties, that are difficult, spiritual and tedious to the flesh, Prov. xxi. 25.

2^{dly}, Because of our guilty consciences, that make us unwilling to be alone and retired, lest the mind should fall upon itself, or bring the awful Judge of the world, and a future state into our remembrance, Rom. i. 28.

3^{dly}, Because of the carnality and dulness of our hearts, the throng of worldly business that takes up the time of many, the barrenness of our thoughts as to spiritual things, and the natural inclination of our hearts to wander and skip from one subject to another, Isaiah vi. 10. Jer. iv. 14.

Q. How shall we manage this work of retired meditation before the sacrament?

A. 1. Let us call in the assistance of the Spirit of God, to dispose and fix our hearts for it, Cant. iv. 16.

2dly, Let us excite and rouse up our souls and all their faculties to the work, Psalm lvii. 8.

3dly, Let us meditate but upon one thing at once, and labour to keep the mind and thoughts fixed upon the object that we think on, for some time together, till once our hearts be affected with it, and moved to holy mourning, prayer, or praise.

4thly, When we come any speed in this exercise, let us bless God for it, and this is the way to have more success in it: for as that which goeth up in vapours, comes down again in showers; so that which goeth up in praises, comes down again in blessings, Psalm lxvii. 5, 6.

5thly, Let us begin and end this work with prayer: in the beginning, let us pray for a blessing on the duty, and in the end, let us pray that God may preserve the spiritual thoughts we have had upon our hearts, 2 Chron. xxix. 28.

6thly, Let us realize the presence of God to ourselves, and sit ourselves before his all-seeing eye, when we are about this exercise, firmly believing that his eye pierceth into our heart and most secret actions; Psalm xvi. 8.

Q. What should be the special subjects of our meditation, before our approach to the Lord's table?

A. The evil and demerit of sin, the goodness of God, the love of Christ, the preciousness of the soul, and the excellent contrivance of our redemption; all which, as in a bright looking-glass, we may contemplate and view in the sufferings of Christ, which therefore should be the principal subject of our meditation, 1 Cor. ii. 2. Gal. iii. 1. John i. 29.

Q. What is it, in the sufferings of Christ, that we should especially think upon?

A. We should meditate, 1. On the variety and greatness of them. 2. On the cause of them. 3. Christ's innocency and patience under them. 4. The excellent properties of them.

Q. How shall we meditate on the variety and greatness of Christ's sufferings?

A. By taking a serious and fixed view of the many sore calamities and distresses which he endured in this world, in his life, and at his death, both in soul and body.

1stly, Think, how our glorious Redeemer was harrassed and tempted by the devil forty days in a wilderness.

2dly, What poverty and want he lay under, travelling up and down on foot, and having no where to lay his head.

3dly, What grievous reproaches were cast upon him.

4thly, How he was the object of the common hatred of the world; a multitude went to apprehend him, as if he had been a common enemy or robber; the multitude cried, 'Away with him,' and preferred the greatest malefactor before him, though he went still about doing them good.

5thly, Think on the unspeakable pressure of divine wrath which he lay under in the garden of Gethsemane, which made him wrestle as in an agony, and sweat great drops of blood, complain to his disciples, and cry to heaven for relief.

6thly, Think how he was betrayed by one of his own disciples, and sold to his enemies for a very small price.

7thly, How he was denied by another of his chosen disciples, and deserted by all the rest, in time of his distress.

8thly, How he was taken and fast bound with cords, as if he had been a thief or an evil doer.

9thly, How cruelly he was affronted and abused by rude soldiers a whole night; by being buffeted, spit upon, blindfolded, struck on the face, mocked with a ridiculous garb put upon him, and having the hair plucked from his cheeks.

10thly, How he was haled to the judgment-seat of men, accused of crimes he knew nothing of, and without any cause; stripped naked, and severely scourged.

11thly, How he had a crown of thorns plaited for his head, with the sharp points turned inward, and this put on, and driven into his head by a staff.

12thly, How contrary to all law as well as the conscience of his judge, he was condemned to be crucified, and put to death as one of the vilest of malefactors.

13thly, How the heavy tree of the cross was laid and fastened on his sore bleeding shoulders, and he forced to carry it to the place of execution, yea, to wrestle with it up mount Calvary, till he was ready to faint under the burden.

14thly, How he was laid on the ground, stretched forth naked, and racked on the cross, and both feet and hands fastened to it with big nails; and then the cross lift up with our nailed and bleeding Saviour upon it, and let fall into a deep hole digged for the foot of it; and so the wounds still widened, and the blood gushed forth, till he expired amidst these tor-

tures, which lasted (as learned men think) for the space of six hours.

15thly, Think how great the anguish of his soul was at this time, when he bore our sins in his own body on the tree, he was inwardly scorched with the fire of God's wrath, which 'dried up his strength like a potsherd,' and made him cry out, 'I thirst,' yea, cry aloud, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' So fearful were his sufferings, the whole world was moved thereat, the earth shook, the rocks rent, the heavens darkened, and the sun veiled his face: and shall not our hearts be moved with the contemplation of them.

Q. What was the cause of Christ's sufferings?

A. Our sins, which Christ out of pure love undertook to become a surety and sacrifice for, to the justice of God: these were the burden that pressed him down in the garden; that made the nails, and drave them into his body on the cross, Isaiah liii. 5. Rom. iv. 25. Dan. vii. 26.

Q. How did Christ's innocency and patience appear under his sufferings?

A. In that he was the immaculate Lamb of God, who had done no evil. His judge on earth was forced to exculpate him, the Judge of heaven was well pleased with him, and received him into glory. 'He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and opened not his mouth,' he reviled not his persecutors, but heartily prayed for them, and willingly poured out his soul unto death, Isaiah liii. 7, 12. 1 Pet. ii. 22, 23. Luke xxiii. 14, 15, 34.

Q. What are the properties of Christ's sufferings, on which we ought to meditate?

A. 1. The seasonableness of them; Christ slept in and suffered for his people, before so much as one drop of wrath alighted on them.

2dly, The voluntariness of them; he most willingly offered himself a sacrifice to divine justice, without any sort of compulsion, nay, he hastened to do it, Psalm xl. 8. Luke xii. 50. Luke xxii. 15.

3dly, The universality of them; he suffered in all his offices, in his good name, his outward goods, in all his senses, in all his members.

4thly, The extremity of them: the cup he drank was most bitter, being altogether mingled with wrath and curses, he was

roasted with the fire of divine vengeance, and found no pity nor abatement, Rom. viii. 32.

5thly, The acceptableness of them to God; a slain Christ was a ' sacrifice of sweet smelling savour to God, seeing it brought honour to his law, glory to his justice, praise to his mercy, and safety to his people, Eph. v. 2.

6thly, We ought to think upon the efficacy and benefit of Christ's sufferings to us: so great is the efficacy and virtue of them, that they reach back to the beginning of the world, and extend forward to the end of it; and procure great blessings to his people in all ages. In a word, the wounds and sufferings of Christ have an atoning, reconciling, healing, purifying, quickning and softning virtue, which we should often think upon.

Q. How may we know, if we have an interest in these sufferings of Christ, and if he died for us in particular?

A. By these marks, 1. If we be his people, and willing to do and suffer what he would have us, Matth. i. 21. Psalm cx. 3.

2dly, If we have an high esteem of Christ and his sufferings, 1 Cor. ii. 2. 1 Pet. ii. 7.

3dly, If we reject all other saviours, and desire only to be sheltered in Christ's wounds, and sanctified by his blood, Hos. xiv. 3. Rev. i. 5.

4thly, If our hearts melt for piercing him, Zech. xii. 10.

5thly, If we be bent to kill sin that crucified Christ, Gal. v. 24.

6thly, If we be friends and lovers of Christ, ready to obey his commands, John xv. 13, 14.

II. Concerning P R A Y E R.

Quest. WHY is prayer so needful before we approach to the Lord's table?

A. 1. Because prayer is a great mean on our part, for making up and preserving our acquaintance with God, Job xxii. 21, 26, 27.

2dly, It is needful, both to sanctify the ordinance to us, and us to the ordinance, 1 Sam. xvi. 5. 1 Tim. iv. 5.

3dly, It is the way to procure the Spirit's influences, for quickening grace, and enlivening us for duty, Cant. iv. 16.

4thly, Because no benefit can be expected by this ordinance without prayer, for it is the means appointed of God for obtaining all spiritual blessings, Ezek. xxxiv. 37. Matth. vii. 7. James i. 17.

Q. What things should communicants especially pray for, before their partaking?

A. 1. For pardon of the sin of neglecting this ordinance formerly, and of unsuitable partaking of it.

2dly, For the preparation of our hearts for this ordinance, and for quickening all the sacramental graces, particularly, faith, love, repentance, and hunger and thirst for this spiritual feast, Psal. x. 17. Prov. xvi. 1.

3dly, For pardon of all defects and short-comings in our preparation, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19, 20.

4thly, For the Lord's gracious presence both with ministers and people, for communion with Christ in the ordinance, for the intimations of his favour, the breathings of his Spirit, and communications of his grace; that we, and many others, may be nourished, strengthened and comforted by his ordinance, Exod. xxxiii. 14, 18. Cant. iv. 16. Isaiah lxiv. 1.

Q. What kind of prayer is it, that will be effectual?

A. 1. Humble prayer; we must level ourselves with the dust, when we speak to the God of heaven; for it is such prayers that he will regard, Gen. xviii. 27. Psalm x. 17.

2dly, Prayer in faith; if we would prevail in prayer we must by faith eye the power, mercy and promise of God, and rely upon the mediation and righteousness of Jesus Christ, in all our pleadings with God, James i. 6.

3dly, It must be fervent and importunate; as if it were the last prayer we were to put up, and the last sacrament we were to see, and as if our lives and eternal well-being depended upon it, Gen. xxxii. 25, 26. Lam. iii. 41. Isaiah lxiv. 7.

4thly, It must be argumentative; pleading the power of God, the mercy of God, his free promise, the blood of his Son, the glory of his name, our great misery and necessity, Josh. vii. 9. Psalm xcix. 9. Dan. ix. 16, 17, 18.

Q. But what if we have prayed and wrestled, and yet the Lord shuts out our prayers, and gives no answer?

A. 1. This is no singular complaint, for it hath been the

case of many of God's saints in former ages, Psalm xxxi. 22. Lam. iii. 8, 44. Jonah ii. 4.

2dly, There is a great difference betwixt delaying, and denying of prayer, or betwixt God's suspending the answer of prayer and his rejecting of it. For God, many times, for wise and holy ends is silent, and lets his people's suits depend long before he answer them; when yet in the mean time, he approves and accepts of their prayers, Luke xviii. 7. Matth. xv. 23, 28.

Q. How shall we know that our prayers are not rejected, when yet we receive no answer to them?

A. 1. When we are resolved and enabled still to wait upon God in the way of duty, though he hide himself from us, Isa. viii. 17.

2dly, When we are enabled to clear and justify God in his dealings, and blame ourselves only for the cause of his silence, Lam. iii. 39, 40. &c.

3dly, When we are helped to discover the failings and defects of our prayers, so as to be humbled for them, Isaiah lxiv. 6, 7.

4thly, When we get the Spirit's assistance to strengthen and enlarge our hearts in prayer, Psalm cxxxviii. 3. Isaiah lxv. 34.

5thly, When the Lord's suspending his answer, makes us the more inquisitive into our hearts, and ways, to find out the cause thereof, Lam. iii. 8, 40.

Q. Wherefore is it, that the Lord delays to hear his peoples prayers?

A. For these ends; 1. To chasten and humble them for their sins, such as, their sloth and formality in duty, their self conceit, and leaning upon their performances, their neglecting the Spirit's motions, their want of suitable apprehensions of God, and pure ends in prayer, their not joining suitable endeavours with their prayers, their not watching for a return, &c. Isaiah lix. 2. Psalm lxvi. 18. Isaiah lxiv. 7. 1 Pet. v. 5. James iv. 3. Psalm v. 1.

2dly, For the manifestation of his own glory, particularly, for discovering his power and goodness in helping and delivering his people, when matters are brought to extremity with them, John xi. 5, 6.

3dly, For the trial and exercise of his people's graces, either that the weakness of them may be discovered, or the sin-

cerity of them evidenced. Particularly, the Lord's designs hereby,

1. To try our faith, if we will trust him for what we see not, and believe he is still as good as his word, though sense suggest the contrary, Matth. xv. 27, 28. 2 Cor. v. 7.

2. To try our patience, if we be content to wait God's leisure, and time of accomplishing his promises, Heb. vi. 12. Heb. x. 36.

3. To try our love, if we will esteem, and speak well of Christ, even when he frowns or hides himself, Cant. v. 6, 10. Cant. viii. 7.

4. To try our constancy, if we will adhere to a withdrawing God, and persevere in duty, when we have no sensible encouragement for it, Hab. iii. 17, 18.

4thly, God delays to answer his people's prayers, to advance their spiritual welfare, for hereby he keeps them humble and depending, quickens them to more fervency in prayer, and makes mercies more sweet to them when obtained, 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8. Cant. iii. 1, 2. Matth. xv. 24, 27, 28.

Q. What is our proper duty in such a case, when God seems to shut out our prayers?

A. 1. We should search for the Achan in the camp, and cast out the accursed thing, as soon as we find it. And if we cannot find it out, we should go humbly to God, and cry, 'Shew me, Lord, wherefore thou contendest with me?' Job x. 2.

2dly, Let us justify God in all his dealings towards us, and lay all the blame on ourselves, Micah vii. 9.

3dly, Let us watch and look after our prayers, Psalm v. 3.

4thly, Let us be diligent also in the use of all other means for obtaining our desires, and go from one duty to another, Cant. iii. 1, 2.

5thly, We must resolve to persist in prayer, in midst of all discouragements, and wait patiently on God, though it were to the last hour of our lives, Isaiah viii. 17. Psalm xl. 1.

Q. Who are these, in a word, that are in a fit case to come to the Lord's table?

A. All penitent believers, who have seriously considered the nature of the covenant of grace, with the ends and uses of this sacrament; and examined themselves if they have unfeignedly consented to the covenant, and stand to the consent already given; live according to the covenant, in a sober,

righteous and godly life, repent sincerely of all known falls and breaches, and continue not in any known sin; ask forgiveness of all they have wronged, and forgive these who have wronged them; stir up themselves to the lively exercise of faith, and all the other sacramental graces.

Concerning the DUTIES requisite in partaking.

Quest. How should we be employed when the time of partaking comes?

A. I have already anticipated much that might be said here, in opening the nature of this sacrament, and shewing what is signified by the sacramental elements, words, and actions, what is implied in the act of worthy communicating, and what is the bodily gesture requisite therein: to which the reader is referred. Besides which, I shall add some directions how we ought to be employed, when going to the Lord's table, and when we sit down at it, and in the act of communicating.

Q. How should we be employed when going to the Lord's table?

A. 1. We should be thinking what a high privilege it is, that such unworthy creatures as we should be admitted unto such near communion and fellowship with God.

2dly, We should have awful impressions of the solemnity of the ordinance and greatness of the work we are going about; the great advantage of doing it right, and the great danger of doing it wrong.

3dly, We should be thinking, this may be the last communion we shall see on earth, and the last offer we shall get of the water of life, in this manner; and therefore we ought carefully to receive and improve it.

4thly, We should guard against wandering and impertinent thoughts, and labour to get our hearts wholly fixed on the great work in hand.

5thly, We should be meditating on the unsearchable love of Christ, and his undertaking to suffer both the pains of death and hell for us, that were enemies to him.

6thly, We should be meditating on the fulness and suitable-

ness of the many sweet offices and relations, which Christ bears to his people. Let us think on him, and go to him, as a surety, to pay our debt; as a physician to heal our diseases; as a mediator, to make up our peace with God; as a ransom, to deliver us from captivity; as a refuge, to shelter us from danger; as a teacher, to open our eyes; as a bountiful friend, to give an alms, and satisfy our hunger; yea, as a loving husband, to clothe us, enrich us, and provide for us, all we want.

Q. How should we be employed when we sit down at the Lord's table?

A. 1. We should compose ourselves into a serious frame and disposition, agreeable to this ordinance.

2dly, We are to behold by faith, the affecting sights represented to us in this ordinance.

3dly, Raise holy and suitable meditations from the sacramental elements, words, and actions made use of, in the administration of this ordinance.

4thly, Exercise the graces in a lively manner, which are necessary in the act of communicating.

Q. What is that serious frame or suitable disposition of soul, which communicants ought to have when they sit down at the Lord's table?

A. We should approach to God in this ordinance, and partake thereof; 1. With an holy awe and reverence of God; adoring his justice and holiness, manifested in the sufferings of Christ, 1 Sam. vi. 20. Psalm v. 7. Heb. xii. 28.

2dly, With humble, low, and abasing thoughts of ourselves, and all that we can do, looking on ourselves as poor and maimed, halt, blind, and impotent, unworthy of the least crumb, Luke xiv. 21. Isaiah lvii. 15. James iv. 6, 10.

3dly, With stayedness and fixedness of thought, summoning all the faculties of the soul, and thoughts of the heart, to attend and keep close to this momentous affair, Eccles. v. i. Psalm cxviii. 27.

4thly, With holy confidence, as children sitting down at their father's table, looking for, and expecting some gracious allowance from him, and believing that he would not give us stones, when we ask bread, Matth. vii. 9. Heb. iv. 15, 16. Heb. x. 22.

5thly, With a sharp and lively appetite after the spiritual benefits contained in this feast, earnestly desiring nearer com-

munion with God, and clearer tokens of his distinguishing love in Christ, Psalm lxxxi. 10.

6thly, With burning love and affection to Christ, who purchased this feast and opened this fountain to us, and laid out the most precious treasure of his blood to make us happy, Psalm lxxiii. 25. Cant. v. 8.

7thly, In this suitable communion-frame, there should be a mixture of holy mourning and rejoicing. 1. Mourning for sin, when we call to mind the anguish of Christ's soul, the bruises of his body, and the effusion of his blood for it. 2dly, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, as those that are satisfied with his undertaking, are thankful for his coming, and wonder at the rich feast he has provided for us, Zech. xii. 10. Rom. v. 11. Phil. iii. 3. Psalm xxii. 26.

Q. What are these affecting sights, set before the eyes of our faith, at the Lord's table, which we ought to contemplate, when we sit down thereat?

A. In general, Christ crucified is here evidently set forth, which is a most piercing and affecting sight to the eye and heart of a believer, Gal. iii. i. Zech xii. 10.

More particularly, we may here see, 1. The great evil of sin, that nothing could atone for, but such a sacrifice, and nothing can cure but such a medicine.

2dly, The infinite justice of God, and his displeasure against sin, which nothing could pacify, but a satisfaction of an infinite value.

3dly, The greatness of the damned's misery, who have God's justice to satisfy for themselves for ever, without hope of any to be a propitiation for them.

4thly, The dreadfulfulness of that wrath which we deserved and must have suffered, if no surety had interposed to suffer it for us.

5thly, The greatness of the love of Christ, who condescended to suffer both the pains of death and hell for such vile creatures as we are.

6thly, The preciousness of our souls, and the great value that Christ put upon them, in that he gave both his soul and body to be a ransom for them.

7thly, The excellency and blessedness of pardon of sin, that our infinitely wise Redeemer gave such a price to obtain it to us.

8thly, The worth of heaven and eternal glory, that could

be purchased at no lower rate, than the blood of the Son of God.

9thly, The riches and glory of the heavenly feast, where the saints see Christ as he is, and feed on him eternally, without signs or symbols.

10thly, The earnest desire Christ hath to engage sinners' hearts to him, in that he comes in the sacrament, with his dyed garments to cover them, his wounds opened to shelter them, and his blood streaming forth to cleanse them.

Lastly, We may here see our glorious Redeemer spoiling principalities and powers (conquering and disarming our enemies, the law, Satan, death and hell) 'making a shew of them openly, and triumphing over them in his cross,' Col. ii. 15.

Q. What meditations ought we to raise from the sacramental elements, words and actions, made use of at the Lord's table?

A. I have already insisted on these more largely, when shewing the meaning and signification of them, from whence we may raise many suitable meditations. All I shall say now, shall be briefly summed up in these following things:

1. When we see the elements of bread and wine; let us think on the body and blood of Christ, as the only proper food and nourishment of the soul.

2dly, When we see the minister take the bread into his hand, to separate it from common use; let us think on God's setting Christ apart by his eternal decree, and separating him from all other men, to be our Mediator and Surety.

3dly, When the minister doth bless and consecrate the elements; let us think on God's sending his Son into the world, sanctified and furnished with all gifts and graces needful for his mediatory office.

4thly, When we see the bread broken; let us meditate on the breaking and wounding of Christ's sacred body on the cross, and all the bruises, sufferings and pains which he endured, both in soul and body, for our sins.

5thly, When we see the wine poured out; let us think on the shedding of Christ's most precious blood, and on his willingness to pour out both his blood and soul unto death, to save us from eternal wrath.

6thly, When we see the minister offering and giving the elements to us; let us meditate on the infinite love of God the Father, in giving Christ to be our mediator; and of Christ

the Son, in giving himself to be a sacrifice for us ; and of the holy Ghost, in revealing and applying Christ to us.

7thly, When the minister saith to us ‘ Take, eat, drink ye all of it ;’ let us think, how freely God offers Christ to us, and how earnestly he presseth us to accept of him as our Saviour.

8thly, When we see that there is both bread and wine provided for us in this feast ; let us think on the plentiful redemption, complete nourishment, and fulness of grace, which we have in Jesus Christ.

9thly, When we see that both of them are offered and given to us ; let us think, that it is God’s will that we should stretch out the arms of faith, and embrace Christ wholly, in all his benefits, offices, laws, and cross.

10thly, When we see the bread and wine given separately ; we should think how Christ’s blood was separated from his body, that we might not be separated from God for ever.

11thly, When we see the elements divided and distributed among the communicants ; let us think how Christ is really, though invisibly, dealing forth the effects and benefits of his death and sufferings to the worthy receivers.

12thly, When we are receiving and eating and drinking the bread and wine ; we should be meditating on the spiritual receiving and applying of Christ by faith, and the sweetness and pleasantness of the benefits of his death, and on the close and intimate union that is betwixt Christ and believers.

13thly, When we feel the wine warming our cold stomachs ; we should meditate the more intensely upon the warm love and blood of Christ, till once they warm our cold hearts and affections with vehement love and desire to our Redeemer.

14thly, When we hear of Christ’s dying charge ‘ to do this in remembrance of him ;’ and of his testament sealed in this sacrament ; we should affectionately remember the love of our dying Friend, and meditate on the precious legacies he hath bequeathed to believers. Of all which I have treated more largely.

Q. Wherein doth the work of communicating chiefly consist ?

A. Besides what I have said before on this head, I shall add these two things ; 1. Upon God’s part ; communicating lyes in God’s giving inestment to the believer of Christ, and all his purchase, by the symbols of bread and wine. Christ doth here marry believers, and give himself to them in the re-

lation of a husband ; and in token thereof, gives them, as it were, his ring or picture, and grants them the investiture and possession of his house and palace above, by delivering the key thereof into their hands ; which upon their consent and acceptance, gives them as true right to Christ and all his purchase, as any man hath to an house or estate by an infestment or sealed charter.

2dly, On the believer's part ; communicating lyes mainly in their receiving the seal of God's covenant with them, and the seal of all his gracious promises to them in Christ ; and particularly in laying hold and applying of Christ for pardon of sin, for cleansing from sin, and for strength to do every commanded duty ; all which is promised in this covenant. So that the work of communicating doth not (as some are ready to think) lye principally in meditating upon Christ's love and sufferings, our engaging and covenanting to be the Lord's, making vows against sin, or putting up of prayers and requests to God. All these, indeed, ought necessarily to attend our communicating, but they are not the direct and principal acts of it. The nature whereof, as said is, consists mainly in our cordial receiving of Christ and his purchased benefits, as they are tendered in the covenant of grace, and sealed and applied in this sacrament : and in our believing that Christ's broken body and shed blood, here represented, with all his merits and graces, are as truly applied to us, for curing and saving our souls, and become ours by faith, as the consecrated bread and wine do enter into our bodies, and become ours by feeding thereon. And these acts are to be accompanied with the lively exercise of all the sacramental graces, particularly faith, repentance, desire, love, and joy.

Q. How is faith to be exercised in partaking of the Lord's supper ?

A. Faith being as the eye of the soul, to discern Christ ; as the hand of the soul to receive him ; and as the mouth of the soul to feed on him in this ordinance, should be most actively employed and diligently exercised in our partaking ; particularly in these acts.

1. In believing firmly the doctrine of the gospel, the truth of Christ's death, his redemption, and the world to come.

2dly, In looking unto Christ lifted up upon the cross, for healing to our souls maladies.

3dly, In fleeing into the open arms and wounds of a cruci-

fied Jesus, our bleeding high priest, for shelter and protection from wrath.

4thly, In embracing and clasping about this Redeemer as our souls up-making portion, saying with Thomas, 'My Lord and my God.'

5thly, In applying the blood and merits of Christ to ourselves for stopping the mouth of conscience, silencing the clamours and curses of the law, and answering the accusations of Satan.

6thly, In pleading his blood with a just and faithful God, for the pardoning of our sins, the justifying of our persons, the acceptance of our performances, the softening of our hearts, the curing of our diseases, the quickening of our graces, and sanctifying of our souls.

7thly, In giving up our souls and bodies to Christ; to be saved by his blood, guided by his Spirit, ruled by his laws, and disposed of by his providence; saying with the spouse, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.'

Q. How is repentance to be exercised, in our partaking of the Lord's supper?

A. By remembering our sins, that pierced Christ, with holy shame and sorrow, abhorring them, loathing and condemning ourselves for them, firmly resolving against them, and sincerely purposing to follow Christ all our days in the ways of new-obedience.

Q. How is holy desire to be exercised, in partaking?

A. In panting and breathing after the virtue and efficacy of Christ's blood, still more and more; for subduing and killing of sins and lusts, for enlivening our dead souls, and curing our heart-plagues, for quickening and strengthening our weak and decayed graces, and for more intimate fellowship with Christ, and surer tokens of his special and distinguishing love.

Q. How is love to Christ to be exercised, in partaking?

A. By the outgoings of the heart and soul towards him, closely thinking upon his free love and the expressions of it, with wonder and admiration; highly esteeming and prizing this glorious Redeemer, delighting in him, and cleaving to him, as our souls chief good and portion, and longing for the full enjoyment of him in glory.

Q. How is holy joy to be exercised, in partaking?

A. By the souls being cheered and lifted up in the believing view of its interest in Christ and his purchase, rejoicing in

God as its covenanted God and portion, shewing forth his praise, and magnifying him for redeeming love.

Q. What shall these poor souls do, who in obedience to Christ's command, come to the Lord's table; but when they are set down at it, are wholly out of case (as they think) for the exercise of the foresaid graces, being plagued with much deadness and confusion, and likewise harrassed with strong temptations?

A. It is indeed very afflicting and discouraging, when it is so with any poor exercised soul, and will occasion many great thoughts and searchings of heart.

But, 1. If the disorder of our hearts be our great grief and burden, and we desire nothing more than a right frame of spirit, for remembering and receiving a dying Saviour in the sacrament; it is a sign of some spiritual life and feeling.

2dly, We would consider, that it is no singular case, to be assaulted with temptations, at such a juncture; for Joshua the high priest, when standing before the Lord, had Satan at his right hand to resist him, Zech. iii. 1, 2.

3dly, If we feel much heart-deadness at such a time, we should send up some fervent ejaculations for the assistance and breathings of the Spirit to warm our hearts, and enliven our affections, Cant. iv. 16.

4thly, We ought to rouse and stir up ourselves, use quickening motives and arguments, and expostulate with our own hearts, and say, Oh I am lively enough in all my worldly concerns, which are but trifles; and shall I be dead and dull in this weighty affair, when the question is, 'Whether I shall live in heaven or hell for ever?' What life and activity have many in the ways of sin, and service of the devil? and shall I be so dead in the service of the living God? 'Oh my drowsy heart! Art thou not ashamed to think so coldly on thy bleeding Saviour? Is Christ's heart so warm to thee, and thine so cold to him?' Thus all means must be used in dependance upon God; and so let us wait on him, and help will come in the time of need, Psalm xxxi. 24. Psalm xliii. 5. Psalm lvii. 8.

5thly, Let us hence see the more need of a crucified Jesus, to quicken our dead hearts, and subdue our strong temptations; and let us apply the more heartily to him in this ordinance, where he seats himself on a throne of grace, ready to answer his people's requests, and supply their needs. Let us draw life from his death, and quickening from his resurrection.

And let us remember, it was Christ's special errand into the world, to bring abundant life to his people, and to destroy the works of the devil, John x. 10. John iii. 8.

Q. What shall these do, who complain of such wandering hearts, that they cannot get them stayed a moment upon one subject; and even when they are set down at the Lord's table, they find them hunting after vanity?

A. 1. Let them groan under this before God, as a very grievous plague and affliction; for if ever there was a time when the heart should be fixed, and the thoughts stayed, it should be when we sit down at the Lord's table, and have the great God to transact with.

2dly, Let us labour to over-awe our hearts with the deep apprehensions of God's presence and all-seeing eye, believing that God noticeth us now more than ever.

3dly, Let us cry for more love to Christ, and for further discoveries of his loveliness, and this would be a mean to fix the heart, 'For where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.'

4thly, Let us chide and check our hearts for every vain excursion, and say, 'O my wandering heart! did I come here to think on any thing, but Christ and his love; is this a place for earthly trifles? Is this the way to shew forth my Redeemer's death? If I cannot watch with Christ one hour; how shall I dwell with him, and live in the contemplation of him for ever?'

5thly, Let us present a crucified Christ to the eye of the mind, and study to hold this object still in its view. And let us have the communicant's proper work deeply fixed in our minds and memories, and labour to keep the heart close to its work, and even let us 'bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar,' viz. the cords of strong resolutions and fervent ejaculations; and when those birds of prey come down upon the sacrifice, let us like Abraham, drive them presently away, Gen. xv. 11. Psalm cxviii. 27. Psalm lxxxvi. 11.

Q. Are not vows and prayers requisite, at the Lord's table?

A. Yes; for here we are to profess our sorrow for sin, our thankfulness for God's favours, and join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant; and it certainly becomes all true penitents, thankful souls, and honest covenanters to make vows; and these vows are nothing worth without prayers to God joined therewith, for strength to keep them. And these

vows and prayers seem to be most seasonable after our receiving of the elements, and our exerting of the direct acts of communicating, Job xxxiv. 31, 32. Gen. xxviii. 20. John i. 16. Neh. x. 29.

Q. What is the nature of these vows, which we ought to come under at this juncture?

A. A religious vow is a serious oath of dedication of ourselves to the Lord's use and service; or, it is a solemn engagement and promise unto the Lord, whereby we bind and oblige ourselves to be the Lord's dutiful children and servants, Numb. xxx. 2. 1 Chron. xv. 12, 13, 14, 15.

Q. What is the necessity of making such vows?

A. 1. Because God is pleased thus to bind himself solemnly to us, which should draw out some answerable return from us to him, Heb. vi. 18. Psalm cxix. 106.

2^{dly}, That we may solemnly confirm and ratify what was done and engaged in our name at baptism: a bargain that is made for an heir, during his nonage, is to be confirmed by him when he comes to age.

3^{dly}, That thereby we may give our solemn approbation and testimony to God's ways and service as the best and most excellent.

4^{thly}, That thereby we may engage our souls the more to steadfastness and constancy in duty, discourage Satan and our spiritual enemies, and prevent our backsliding, which we are naturally prone to, Hosea xi. 7.

Q. What are these things, which we ought to vow and oblige ourselves unto, at the Lord's table?

A. 1. That we will in the strength of Christ keep ourselves from all known sin. 2^{dly}, That we will make conscience of performing all known duties, or in a word, that we will 'cease to do evil, and learn to do well,' Isaiah i. 16, 17.

Q. What are these evils, that we should mainly vow against, at the Lord's supper?

A. 1. In general, we must vow against all sin, as the traitor and murderer of the Lord of glory. If ever the soul take up a prejudice and antipathy against sin, it should be at the Lord's table, where the evil of it is so clearly discovered; then it is especially, that we, by a solemn vow, should cast away all our transgressions, saying, with Ephraim, 'What have I to do any more with idols?' Hos. xiv. 8.

2^{dly}, In particular, we ought to vow; 1. Against all gross

1. Against all secret sins. 2. Against all heart-sins. 3. Against our darling sins, and these sins that do most easily beset us. 4. Against all temptations to sin, and especially the snares of bad company, Psalm xxvi. 5. Psalm cxix. 115.

Q. What are these religious duties that we should vow and bind ourselves unto, at the Lord's supper?

A. 1. In general we ought in the strength of the grace of Jesus Christ, solemnly to vow and promise, that we will mind religion as the one thing needful, and make the pleasing of God the chief business of our lives; that we will give God, not only the outward man, but the heart in all our duties; that we will set the Lord always before us, and study to live a life of communion with God, and still press forward to the full enjoyment of him above, Rom. xii. 11. Psalm xvi. 8. Phil. iii. 13, 14.

2dly, In particular, we should vow and bind ourselves: 1. To the conscientious performance of secret duties, which the eyes of the world cannot observe. 2. To these duties that contribute most to promote the life of religion, and bring us into communion with God. 3. To these duties that conscience doth most accuse of neglecting. 4. To these duties by which we may be most capable to advance God's glory, and the welfare of precious souls, and by which we may adorn our profession, and make religion amiable in the eyes of strangers; and especially, that we will make conscience of family religion, and study to recommend piety to our near relations, Gen. xviii. 19. Josh. xxiv. 15. Psalm ci. 2.

Q. Is it a season for communicants to be making requests, when they are at the Lord's table?

A. Yes; for then we come to Christ in a good day, when there is plenty about his hand, when he hath on his dealing garments, and both his heart and hand are open to us. On this royal feast-day, he sets himself upon a throne of grace, with a sceptre of mercy in his hand, and waits for our addresses, and says, as the king to Esther at the feast, 'What is thy petition?'

Q. What are these particular suits, we should be putting up, at the communion table?

A. Our requests at that time, should be suitable to the particular circumstances and necessities of our souls; which are best known to ourselves. Only in general, it is very proper at that time, to be putting up requests; for strength to keep our

engagements, and pay our vows ; for the Spirit's influences to quicken us to liveliness of frame in this, and all duties, and to preserve liveliness in us ; and likewise, for holy wisdom and skill, to improve Christ for righteousness and sanctification ; for heart-holiness and grace, to subdue indwelling sin ; for strength to grapple with temptations, and bear up under trials ; for converting grace to our near relations : for the advancement of Christ's kingdom and interest through the world, and especially the land of our nativity, and the congregation we belong to : for persecuted Protestants, that are deprived of such gospel-feasts, &c.

Concerning the DUTIES requisite after Partaking.

Quest. WHAT duties are required of us, after partaking of the Lord's supper ?

A. 1. To preserve and keep up a suitable frame of spirit, when we up-rise and come away from the Lord's table.

2dly, To examine ourselves, when we go to our retiring places.

3dly, To order our conversation aright afterwards.

Q. What is that suitable frame and disposition of spirit, which communicants ought to have, when they rise and come from the Lord's table ?

A. We ought to come away from this ordinance, 1. In an admiring frame. 2. In a thankful frame. 3. In a rejoicing frame. 4. In a humble frame. 5. In a watchful frame. 6. In a praying frame. 7. In a charitable frame. 8. In a willing and obedient frame. 9. In a fixed and resolute frame. 10. In a longing and heavenly frame.

Q. What is it, that should be matter of admiration to us, when we come from the Lord's table ?

A. We should wonder at the goodness and condescension of God to us, that he should have had such thoughts of love to us ; provided such a surety and sacrifice for us, as his own beloved Son ; entertained us at his table ; taken us into covenant and communion with himself, and given us earnest of the everlasting inheritance : and that he who is higher than the heavens should have done all this for creatures, who are

by nature, mean as worms, nay, polluted and loathsome in the sight of God, Psalm viii. 4. Psalm cxiii. 5, 6. 2 Chron. vi. 18. 2 Sam. vii. 18.

Q. What is it that we should be thankful for, when we come from the Lord's table?

A. We should be thankful to God, for his love in giving Christ; for Christ's love in giving himself; and for the love of the holy Spirit in revealing Christ to us, and in us. Also we should bless God for all the blessed fruits of this love, particularly for the well ordered covenant of grace, and the seals of it; for pardon of sin, and all the rich benefits sealed to us at a communion-table. That we live in a Goshen on earth, and have the prospect of a Canaan above, Luke ii. 14. Eph. i. 3. 2 Cor. ix. 12, 15. Rev. i. 5. Deut. viii. 10.

Q. What is it that we should rejoice in, when we go from the Lord's table?

A. 1. In the persons of the glorious Trinity; in God the Father, as our covenanted God and portion; in God the Son, as our saviour and redeemer: and in God the holy Ghost, as our comforter and sanctifier, Psalm xliii. 4. Rom. v. 11.

2^{dly}, In the attributes and perfections of God; particularly in his goodness, mercy, wisdom, almightiness, immutability and faithfulness, as being all in confederacy with us, and engaged to promote our well-being and happiness, Psalm civ. 34. Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26. Psalm xlviii. 14. Hab. iii. 17, 18.

3^{dly}, We ought to rejoice in our Redeemer's love, his wonderful undertaking, and in the glorious victories and purchase he hath obtained for us, Phil. iii. 3. Luke i. 46, 47, 49, 50, 51.

4^{thly}, We should rejoice in the ways of God, having our hearts lifted up in them, and enlarged both to run and sing in the ways of the Lord, and to go about every commanded duty with pleasure, Acts viii. 39. 2 Chron. xvii. 6. Psalm cxix. 32. Psalm cxxxviii. 5.

Q. Wherefore should we come from the Lord's table in a humble frame?

A. Because we have manifold grounds for our humiliation before God at that time, when we consider;

1. Our vileness by sin, and our deservings on that account, we have more reason to cry out, than Mephibosheth had, when David promoted him to eat bread at his table; 'What

‘ is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am ?’ 2 Sam. ix. 8.

2dly, When we consider the defectiveness of our preparation for this solemn ordinance ; alas, our souls were ‘ not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary !’

3dly, When we consider our great short-comings in the near approach we were making to a holy God ; namely, that our hearts were not more deeply affected with the great sights presented to our view, and the glorious things put in our offer at the Lord’s table ; that our dull affections were not more raised, our wavering minds more fixed, and our cold hearts more warmed, when we were about such spiritual and heavenly work, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19.

Lastly, We have cause to be humbled, when we consider, that we are still exposed to many dangers, and environed with strong enemies, who are never more busy and active, than after we have been at the Lord’s table, or admitted to nearness with God ; and especially when we consider our own weakness and insufficiency to grapple with them, Luke xxii. 31. 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8.

Q. Wherefore ought we to come from this holy ordinance in a watchful frame ?

A. Because of the many evils, snares and enemies, that we are then in hazard of ; and therefore we must stand upon our guard and watch, particularly against these :

1. The malicious designs and devices of Satan, who is going about seeking to rob us of any benefit we have got by this ordinance, Luke xxii. 31. Matth. xxvi. 41. 2 John 8.

2dly, We ought especially to watch against the workings of spiritual pride, after this ordinance ; for our wicked and deceitful hearts are most ready to be lifted up, with the great favours and honour here conferred upon us, Luke xxii. 24. 2 Cor. xii. 7. 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.

3dly, We should guard against resting upon the sacrament, as if all our work were now done, and our warfare accomplished ; No, we are still in a military state, and may expect new assaults from our spiritual enemies ; we have still the *good fight of faith to fight*, and the *work of salvation to work out*, which must be done with a constant holy *fear and trembling*, Cant. ii. 7, 8. Phil. ii. 12.

4thly, We must watch against the levity and wanderings of our hearts, that are prone soon to divert from the work we

have been about ; and study to keep them close in meditation upon a crucified Christ and the great sights which we saw at a communion-table.

5thly, We should watch against vain and frothy discourse, and the snares of company after this ordinance ; for hereby many have soon lost that sweet relish of the things of God, which they have had upon their spirits ; wherefore it is much safer for communicants to retire for secret meditations, prayer and praise after this solemn work, than to be in the best of company.

6thly, We should watch against the inroads of wordly cares and incumbrances, that they be not allowed suddenly to rush in upon us, to rob us of the spiritual frame and comforts we have been privileged with in this ordinance. We ought not hastily to return to our worldly business after a sacrament, but by degrees ; and that with great tenderness, care and circumspection ; resolving that Christ shall have the throne of the heart, and the world be kept at the foot-stool.

7thly, We should carefully guard against all temptations to passion and rash anger, and study to be meek and quiet under provocations ; for if we give way to the disorders and tumultuous passions of our hearts, the Holy Spirit will be grieved, and provoked to withdraw from us.

8thly, We should watch against sloth and formality in duty, and be endeavouring always to stir up ourselves to liveliness and spirituality in all our performances.

9thly, We must watch against relying on our own strength in performing duty, and study to keep ourselves constantly depending on Christ as our head of influences, and looking to him for our quickening and strength.

Q. Why should we come from this ordinance in a praying frame ? Do we need any thing more than God hath freely given us ?

A. Though all things needful be freely promised and sealed to us in the sacrament, yet we must continue to pray for the accomplishment of these promises, Psalm cxix. 49.

2dly, We must pray for the continuance of the Spirit's influences and grace to preserve in us that tenderness of heart, warmth of affection, and liveliness of frame which have been wrought in us by means of this ordinance, 1 Chron. xxix. 18. Psalm lxviii. 28.

3dly, We must pray for strength to keep the promises, and

pay the vows which we have made to the Lord at this occasion: and that God may save us from apostacy and backsliding, which our hearts are naturally bent unto, Psalm xvii. 5.

Q. Wherein lies that charitable disposition which we ought to have, when we come away from the Lord's table?

A. 1. In bearing a good will to the souls of all men, and heartily wishing their welfare, 1 Thess. iii. 5, 12, 15.

2dly, In having a true love to all the members of Christ's mystical body, and bearing with them, though in several things they differ from us.

3dly, In a readiness to relieve the poor and indigent, according to our ability, Gal. vi. 10.

4thly, In a disposition to forgive those that have been injurious to us. And surely all who have been sharers of God's mercy and grace in the sacrament, will come away from it, with such a charitable disposition.

Q. What is that willing and obedient frame, which communicants ought to have, when they come from the Lord's table?

A. It lies in these things; 1. A grateful sense of the many ties and obligations we are under to serve him.

2dly, In making it our great scope and design to approve ourselves to God in all things.

3dly, In making it our study to know God's mind and will, and what it is that is most acceptable and pleasing to him.

4thly, In having an universal respect to all God's commands, and a readiness of mind to every good work.

5thly, In being active and zealous for the glory of God and the interest of his kingdom among men.

Q. What is that fixed and resolute frame which they ought to have?

A. It is the soul's deliberate and stedfast resolution to adhere to Christ, his ways, and interest, in the midst of all trials and difficulties. We must now be at a point in this matter, fully determined by the grace of God, to look and go forward in our Christian course, and that no sollicitation or temptation shall move us, either to look back, or draw back; but that 'with purpose of heart we will cleave unto the Lord,' Psalm cxix, 30, 31, 115. Acts xi. 23.

Q. What is that longing and heavenly frame, which we ought to have when we come from the Lord's table?

A. It consists in these things; 1. In a firm belief of Christ's second coming, and of the life everlasting.

2dly, In a lively meditation upon Christ's coming, and the future glory.

3dly, In an earnest looking for that blessed hope, and a joyful expectation of the glory to be revealed, Tit. ii. 13. Rom. v. 2.

4thly, In a constant watching and preparing for the coming of the Bridegroom, Luke xii. 36, 37.

Q. Are not our hearts prone to lose their tenderness and spirituality after the sacrament? How then shall we retain our liveliness, and keep up in some measure our communion frame, even when the communion is over?

A. 1. We must have deep impressions of the treachery and falseness of our hearts, and of their woful natural bias to depart from God, and turn carnal, Hosea xi. 7.

2dly, We must be humbled under a sense of our own weakness and insufficiency to preserve our spiritual life, or so much as to think a good thought of ourselves; for God gives grace to such humble souls, 1 Pet. v. 4.

3dly, We should be keeping up a constant thankful sense of God's kindness to us at the sacrament, and be frequently praising him for it; and this is an excellent way to engage the continuance of his mercies, Psalm lxvii. 5, 6.

4thly, We should be frequently thinking on these affecting sights which we saw at the Lord's table, and study to keep up the impressions thereof on our minds. I made mention of these sights before.

5thly, Let us study and learn the art of deriving life and influences from Jesus Christ, by acting a constant and believing dependence on him, as our fountain of life, and head of influences, John x. 10.

6thly, Let us watch over our hearts and frames with much holy suspicion and jealousy, lest Satan, the world, or our lusts should rob us of the spiritual treasure we have got. And especially, let us watch against the first declinings of the heart, and beginnings of deadness, and presently cry to the Lord for help and quickening.

7thly, Let us be much in secret prayer, pleading with God for the constant supplies of his Spirit, which is the fire that can only maintain warmth and liveliness of frame in our souls, against all the cold blasts of the devil, and the world.

8thly, Let us delight in the company and converse of lively

Christians; for one live-coal makes another to burn, Heb. x. 24.

9thly, Let us delight in attending sacrament occasions, and be still longing for the returns of this quickening ordinance, and for the Lord's special presence therein.

Lastly, Let us always guard against these things that tend to deaden our hearts, or that may occasion the losing of our frames. And these I mentioned before, when treating on the causes of spiritual deadness.

Concerning SELF-EXAMINATION after the Sacrament.

Quest. *WHAT is the necessity of self-examination after the sacrament?*

A. 1. Because our Lord put his disciples to the trial concerning their faith, after they had been at his table, John xvi. 31.

2dly, This is a necessary mean to bring us to humiliation and repentance, for the defects and short-comings that have attended our communicating.

3dly, It is needful to keep people from deceiving themselves, by thinking that they have true grace, and are in a happy state, while in the mean time they are poor, wretched and miserable.

4thly, Without it we cannot be thankful to God for the benefits we received in this ordinance; seeing it is by after-reflection, that we come to be sensible of the Lord's gracious dealings with us.

5thly, The neglect of self-examination after the sacrament, is the occasion of many doubts and perplexities, that the Lord's people fall into after this solemn ordinance. Did we carefully remark the workings of our faith and love at the Lord's-table, and the tokens of Christ's love we receive there, we might be enabled to resolve many doubts, and repel many temptations, that otherwise will be too hard for us.

Q. *What are these things which we ought to examine ourselves about, after we come from the sacrament?*

A. Concerning two things; 1. How we have dealt with

God in this ordinance. 2. How God hath dealt with us. We ought narrowly to examine if we have dealt sincerely and honestly with God in this solemn work; and if God hath dealt graciously and bountifully with us.

Q. By what marks may we know, if we have dealt sincerely and honestly with God, in this solemn ordinance?

A. By these; 1. If we were meditating upon a crucified Christ at his table, with faith, love, mourning and thankfulness, sincerely aiming and designing to keep up the remembrance of his matchless love, to shew forth his death till he come again; and were looking only to Christ for acceptance in the duty.

2dly, If it was our aim, when receiving the elements, believingly to accept of a bleeding Jesus, as our High-priest, Saviour and Lord, and to apply his blood for answering all the exigencies and necessities of our souls.

3dly, If we sincerely aimed to transact and seal a covenant with God through Christ, at his table, according as personal covenanting was explained before.

Q. How may we know if we were sincere in our transacting and covenanting with God?

A. By these two things; 1. By reviewing the frame that our hearts were in, while we were a doing it.

2dly, By considering the disposition of our souls since that time.

Q. How shall we know if we had the right and gracious frame of heart, while we were transacting with God, which sincere covenanters have?

A. We may know it by these marks; 1. If we were low and vile in our own eyes, and deeply sensible of our unworthiness to be received into covenant with God, Ezek. xvi. 62, 63.

2dly, If we were weary of the burden of sin, and groaning to be delivered from it, Psalm xxxviii. 3. Matth. xi. 28.

3dly, If we were longing and panting for Christ, as the only suitable help and remedy provided for us by God, without whom we could have no access to God, no peace, no pardon, no grace, no glory.

4thly, If we found our hearts going out to God in Christ, as our God and portion, making choice of him, as our happiness, chief good and end; and accepting of Jesus Christ as the only way to God.

5thly, If we were resigning, and giving up ourselves in all we are, and in all we have, unto God, to be governed, disposed of, and employed according to his pleasure, 2 Cor. viii. 5.

6thly, If we sincerely renounced our own righteousness, in the point of justification; and our own strength in sanctification, and the performance of duties; saying, 'In the Lord Christ only, we have righteousness and strength,' Isaiah xlv. 24.

7thly, If we be sincerely renouncing and parting with every sin, and saying, with Ephraim, 'What have we to do any more with idols?' Hos. xiv. 8.

Q. How shall we know, if the present disposition of our souls be such, as sincere covenanters use to have, after their coming from the Lord's table?

A. Let us try it by these marks; 1. If we can say, our souls have high and exalting thoughts of God whom we have chosen; and admiring thoughts of Christ the Mediator, as 'altogether lovely,' Isaiah xxv. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 7.

2dly, If we be well pleased with the contrivance and design of the covenant, i. e. to have our sins pardoned, and our souls justified and saved wholly by the righteousness of our Redeemer, that free grace alone may eternally have the praise, Rev. i. 5. Psalm cxv. 1.

3dly, If our hearts be melted for sin, at the remembrance of the wounds of Christ, which were represented to us at his table as pierced and opened by our sins; and be fully resolved through his grace, that we will pierce him no more.

4thly, If Indwelling sin and heart-plagues be a greater burden to us than all the crosses and troubles that we can meet with in the world, and that we are more desirous to be rid of sin, than of any affliction whatsoever.

5thly, If we are resolved through divine strength, to be a people zealous of good works, and to obey every commanded duty, John xv. 14. Tit. ii. 14.

6thly, If we are sensible of our own insufficiency and weakness to keep covenant with God, and therefore are brought to renounce all confidence in ourselves, and to say, 'In the Lord only, we have righteousness and strength,' Isaiah xlv. 24.

7thly, If we can say, the world and its best things are, in our eyes, as dung and nothing, in comparison of Christ and his righteousness: and that we are more concerned to have an

interest secured in him, to have heart-holiness, and the image of Christ drawn in us; and that we desire further degrees of grace, of faith, of love, and brokenness of heart for sin; more than any honours, profits and pleasures this world can afford: then surely these are good signs, that our hearts have been sincere in covenanting with God.

Q. Is not their case sad, who, upon examination, may find that their hearts are not right with God, and that they have dealt falsely and hypocritically in this matter, and so have communicated unworthily?

A. Yes; it is very sad. For, 1. They have been guilty of dissembling with the great God, in pretending to join themselves in covenant with God, while they continue in league with the devil and sin.

2dly, They have sadly been deceiving themselves, in pretending to come and receive the pardon of their sins, while they never repented of them, nor designed to part with them; and so are in hazard of going to the grave with a lie in their right hand.

3dly, They have been crucifying Christ afresh, and putting him to open shame, and the blood of Christ is crying for vengeance against them.

4thly, They have been eating and drinking damnation to themselves, 'not discerning the Lord's body;' nor receiving him by faith.

Q. Is there any help for these that are in this sad case; and what is it that they should do?

A. 1. They ought to set their souls a trembling before God, for their condition is very sad and highly dangerous.

2dly, They should set their souls a wondering, that the Lord did not lay his hand upon them, and smite them dead with the bread in their mouth, or cup in their hand; or that he did not send them to hell, from the communion-table.

3dly, They ought to bless God that their case is not hopeless, or remediless like that of the damned; and that yet they are in the land of prayer and repentance, and have an offer of mercy and pardon through the blood of Christ.

4thly, They should presently go and weep and mourn over a slain Christ, whom they have pierced and crucified by their sins, and particularly by their unworthy communicating. The advice which Peter gave to Simon Magus (whom he declared to be in the 'gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity,' after

he had received the sacrament of baptism) is very proper for them: 'Thy heart is not right in the sight of God; repent therefore of this thy wickedness: and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee,' Acts viii. 21, 22.

5thly, They ought presently to flee by faith to the blood of Christ, which they have shed; and apply it for pardon and cleansing: seeing nothing can wash them from this guilt, but that very blood which they have spilt; and blessed be God for this efficacious remedy that can cure the deepest wound, and most desperate disease; 'for the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, 1 John i. 7.

Q. Ought we not also to examine and try how God hath dealt with us in this ordinance?

A. Yes; we are not only to examine and try how we have dealt with God in this solemn ordinance; but also how the Lord hath been pleased to deal with us, that if we be sensible of his bountiful dealing towards us, we may be thankful for it; and if we be not sensible of it, that we may enquire into the cause, and be humbled before God.

Q. May not some mistake God's dealings with them in this ordinance, and make wrong conclusions thereanent?

A. Yes; there is no doubt, but many mistake and deceive themselves in this matter; some concluding they have got real benefit by this ordinance, when they have got none; others, that they have got no good by it, when really they have, like those mentioned, Prov. xiii. 7.

Q. Who are these that deceive themselves, thinking they have got benefit by the Lord's supper, when they have really got none?

A. 1. These who mistake the common flashes of affection, which they may have on this occasion, for spiritual liveliness of soul, and the gracious influences of the Spirit.

2dly, These who mistake their seeming joy and delight, which they may feel at this time, for joy in the holy Ghost.

3dly, These who take their delusive and false peace, which they may have in their minds on this occasion, for a true peace of conscience.

4thly, These who apprehend their temporary faith, counterfeit love, and their pangs of grief, tears and resolutions, which they may attain to, at such a time, to be true grace, and certain evidences of a gracious work of the Spirit; when

yet they are no more than what hypocrites may arrive to, without the aid of special grace.

Q. How shall we distinguish the gracious liveliness of believers, from the common flashes which hypocrites may have, at sacraments?

A. By these characters; 1. True liveliness of soul arises from a gracious and renewed heart, influenced by the Spirit of God: but these common flashes may be, where there is no gracious change in the heart at all, being occasioned only by outward things, such as the external revelation of the great things done by Christ for lost sinners, the pathetickness or fervency of a minister, the lively representation of Christ's sufferings, the example of others, or the like.

2dly, Gracious liveliness humbles the soul, and inclines it to give all the glory to God: but common flashes do cherish pride, puff up the man to a conceit of himself, and to rest upon his attainments.

3dly, Gracious influences of the Spirit leave some solid and lasting impressions upon the soul, and make a man tender and conscientious in his after-walk: but common flashes are soon gone, leave no abiding impressions, and produce no gracious effects in the heart or life; but the man that hath them, turns as carnal and careless, hardened and profane as formerly, Psalm lxxviii. 34, 37. 2 Pet. ii. 22.

Q. How shall we distinguish betwixt the joy of believers, and that which hypocrites may have at communion occasions?

A. They differ in these things; 1. In respect of their antecedents; true joy follows after true sorrow, and heart-brokenness for sin: this, hypocrites know nothing of, but believers do, Psalm cxxvi. 5. Matth. v. 4.

2dly, In respect of their foundation; true joy is founded upon the promises and the Mediator of the covenant, and springs from a gracious discovery of redeeming love, and our interest therein. But the hypocrite's joys are built on a false and slippery foundation, Matth. xiii. 20, 21. Phil. iii. 3. Rom. v. 11.

3dly, They differ, in respect of the matter of them; hypocrites joys are only terminated upon the external part of duties and ordinances; but the believer's joy is upon the account of God's presence in them. The hypocrite rejoiceth not in Christ's ways and ordinances, as they are means for

enjoying communion with him, but only as they satisfy conscience, and get them the applause of men.

4thly, They differ in their fruits and effects. 1. True joy abaseth, but the hypocrite's joy puffs up the heart. 2. True joy makes the believer's heart burn in love to Christ, and to have a very high esteem of him; but the hypocrite's joy hath no such effect. 3. The Spirit of sanctification, and endeavours after holiness, do always attend joy in the holy Ghost: But, notwithstanding of the hypocrite's joys, the heart is still carnal and the life unholy, Rom. xiv. 17. 4. Spiritual joy doth encourage and strengthen the soul for duty, particularly, for attending ordinances, bearing afflictions, and resisting temptations, Neh. viii. 10. Isaiah xl. ult. But the hypocrite's joy produceth no such fruits.

Q. How shall we distinguish betwixt a false and delusive peace, which some may have after a sacrament, from a true peace of conscience?

A. They differ mainly in two respects; 1. In respect of their antecedents and causes. 2. In respect of their consequences and effects.

Q. How do they differ, in respect of their antecedents and causes?

A. I. A false peace of conscience, which hypocrites have, doth ordinarily flow from these springs. 1. From the flattery and deceitfulness of our own hearts, that are bent to speak peace to us, when there is no peace from God. 2. From the delusions and suggestions of Satan; sometimes he keeps the house as a strong man armed, and so all is at peace: at other times he is fain to make use of his cunning artifices for that end; he flatters the sinner, blinds the mind, dazzles the eyes with false appearances; and sometimes ceaseth from tempting, and so he goes out, when he is not casten out, Matth. xii. 43, 44. 3. This false peace proceedeth from a man's mistaking of his soul's state and condition, thinking himself something, when he is nothing; apprehending conviction to be conversion, legal sorrow to be repentance unto life, common flashes and stirrings in the affections to be the special influences of the Spirit.

4thly, From too high an opinion of our duties and performances, as if these were sufficient to satisfy God's justice, and recommend us to him.

5thly, From outward favourable providences, and worldly

prosperity, as if these things were a certain sign of God's special love. But,

II. True peace of conscience, which is wrought by the Spirit of God in the believer, doth spring from other causes and antecedents; such as these,

1. From a true faith in Jesus Christ our peace-maker, Rom. xv. 13.

2dly, From a true love to God and his law, Psalm cxix. 165.

3dly, From a tender and conscientious walk, Gal. vi. 16.

4thly, From a view of our covenant relation to God, and gracious nearness to, and communion with him in duty, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. 1 Sam. i. 18.

5thly, Solid peace of conscience commonly follows upon an inward soul-conflict, and deep humiliation and trouble for sin, Psalm cxlvii. 3. Isa. lvii. 15. Isa. lxi. 3.

6thly, It ordinarily follows upon fervent wrestling with God by prayer, and upon the diligent use of all the other means and ordinances of God's appointment, 1 Sam. i. 18. 2 Thess. iii. 16.

Q. How do a true and false peace of conscience differ, in respect of their consequents and effects?

A. I. A false peace hath ordinarily such things attending or following upon it, as these;

1. It doth not incline the soul to be low in its own eyes, and to exalt Christ and free grace; but rather to exalt self, and lean upon duties and attainments.

2dly, It doth not determine the heart to hate sin, and love duty, or influence a man to a holy walk and conversation; but rather to separate what God hath joined together, viz. Holiness and peace, Deut. xxix. 19.

3dly, A false peace cannot support a man, when outward comforts are withdrawn, but leaves him comfortless in the day of affliction.

4thly, It makes a man unwilling to be searched and tried by the light of God's word, John iii. 20. But,

II. A true peace of conscience hath such consequents and fruits as these;

1. It makes the man to have an high esteem of Jesus Christ, who is our peace, and to count all things as loss and dung beside him.

2dly, It makes a man content with that lot and condition

in the world, which the Lord thinks fit to carve out for him.

3dly, It composes and cheers the heart in time of the greatest dangers and difficulties, and when all worldly comforts do fail, Hab. iii. 17. John xvi. 33. Psalm. iv. 7, 8.

4thly, It makes a man active for God's glory, and the interest of religion, Psalm li. 12, 13.

5thly, The man that hath it, doth not shun the light, but is willing to be tried by it, Psalm cxxxix. 23.

6thly, He guards against the temptations of Satan, the risings of corruption, the out-breakings of sin, and every thing that tends to disturb his peace.

Q. How may we know, that the faith, whereby we were receiving and apprehending Christ in the sacrament, was a true and saving faith, and not a temporary faith which hypocrites may have?

A. By taking a view of the different properties and effects of a temporary and saving faith.

I. As for a temporary faith, it hath these following.

1. It only gives a seeming consent to Christ, like the stony-ground hearers, and almost perswades them to be Christians: but doth not prevail with them cordially to accept of Christ, both as a Saviour and Lord.

2dly, It doth not make them part wholly with their own righteousness for Christ's righteousness, but still they continue upon their legal foundation, and rest upon their own doings.

3dly, It never brings a man the length, to resign himself, and his most valuable interests and concerns in the world, to Jesus Christ, to be disposed of by him, as he thinks fit: but still some Agag or other must be reserved.

4thly, It never brings a man to apprehend Christ as matchless and altogether lovely, and to be willing to suffer the loss of all things for him: but still there is something the hypocrite prefers unto Christ. But,

II. A true faith determines the soul to embrace Christ wholly in all his offices; it makes a man part entirely with his own righteousness, and cry, 'none but Christ.' It makes him give up himself wholly to Christ, to esteem Christ as exceeding precious, to study to raise his honour, advance his interest, and oppose his enemies, and to do every thing that is well pleasing in his sight.

Q. How shall we know, if the love we were expressing to

Christ at his table, be true and sincere, and not a counterfeit love, such as hypocrites may have?

A. 1. The hypocrite's love is selfish, he loves Christ, because he apprehends that Christ loved him, laid down his life for him, and hath purchased great happiness to him; but he doth not love him for his own intrinsic beauty and excellency. Again, the hypocrite's love is not superlative, he loves him not above all things in the world, his love doth not prompt him to all that Christ commands, and to undertake these duties that are most difficult and spiritual: it doth not make him thirst for nearness to him in ordinances, and long to see him, and dwell with him in glory. But,

2dly, True love to Christ, makes the believer do all these, it makes him desirous of his presence, zealous of his interests, concerned for his people, and afraid to displease him. It makes the believer have common friends and common enemies with Christ; love what he loves, and hate what he hates, rejoice when he is glorified, and grieve when he is dishonored; it makes him desire conformity to him, and love holiness, because it is his image; and also to long to be with him above, where he shall be like him, and see him as he is.

Q. *How shall we know if these pangs of grief and tears, which some attain to in this ordinance, be hypocritical sorrow, or repentance unto life?*

A. 1. There is no doubt but hypocrites, and these whose hearts were never truly broken for sin, may shed tears, and have some pangs of sorrow at such an occasion; but then, it is certain, their sorrow doth not proceed from an internal principle, or a special discovery of the evil and hateful nature of sin; but only from external motives and considerations, such as these, the consideration of the solemnity of this ordinance, the great danger of unworthy partaking, the hearing of a pathetic sermon, or a fervent representation of Christ's sufferings, the example of others weeping beside them, a view of the sad effects of sin, as it exposes the sinner to infinite wrath, and shuts out from eternal happiness. These things, I say, may occasion some pangs of sorrow and tears in natural men, at a sacrament, and especially in these who are endued with something of a natural compassion and sympathy, which disposes them to relent and weep at the hearing of any tragical story, or beholding any pitiful spectacle. All this may be without any special operation of the Spirit of God, or real

change on the heart; the hearts of natural men are like the stones, which are wet by the rain, but not softened. But,

2dly, That repentance which is true and saving, makes the soul to mourn for sin, upon the account of its intrinsick evil, because it highly dishonours God, abuses the goodness of the Father, wounds a loving Redeemer, grieves the Spirit of grace, defiles the precious soul, defaces the image of God, and debars from communion with him. It makes the soul to mourn for heart-sins, as well as outward sins, and long earnestly for more heart-purity, and a total deliverance from sin.

Q. How shall we distinguish these purposes and resolutions which hypocrites may put on at a sacrament, to walk religiously and circumspectly; from the sincere resolutions of true believers?

A. 1. Hypocrites purposes and resolutions are not cordial and deliberate, but hastily taken without consideration; they are not made in faith, and with self-denial and dependence on Christ; but taken on in their own strength. Their resolutions are not sincere and universal, against all known sin, and for all known duty; but only against some particular sins, and for some particular duties. They proceed not from a principle of heart-love to God and holiness, but only from legal terrors and apprehensions of wrath.

Lastly, They are not continuing, for they are only taken on in a fit, and soon vanish. But,

2dly, Believers resolutions are cordial and deliberate, humble and self-denied, sincere and universal, and make abiding impressions on the soul. They proceed from heart-love to God, a deep conviction of the evil and danger of sin, and a gracious discovery of the beauty and excellency of holiness. They are made in an humble sense of their own weakness, wholly distrusting their own power, and relying entirely upon the grace and strength of Christ their surety, according as it is promised to them in the covenant of grace, Psalm lxxi. 16.

Q. Are there not some sincere souls, who mistake the Lord's dealing with them, and think they have got no benefit by the sacrament, when really they have?

A. Yes; for there is a difference betwixt real communion with Christ, and sensible communion with him; the two disciples going to Emmaus had the first, but wanted the latter; they conversed with Christ in the way, but knew him not. So God's people may sometimes get special tokens of his bounty at the sacrament, when they are not sensible of it;

and may have ground to say, as Jacob did of Bethel, ‘ Surely God was in this place, and I knew it not,’ Gen. xxviii. 16.

Q. What may be the reasons of their mistake?

A. 1. Some may think they have got no good at the sacrament, because they have not got that which they particularly expected and looked for, though perhaps, God hath given them something in lieu of it, that is as necessary and fit for them.

2dly, Some may reckon they have got no good, because they have not got so much as others; or perhaps as they themselves have felt at former occasions: they too much overlook and undervalue the crumb God hath given them, because of its smallness; though surely the least token of his favour should be highly prized, and thankfully received, as being far greater than they deserve.

3dly, Some may think they have got no good, because they did not sensibly perceive it, when they were at the Lord’s table, or immediately thereafter; but we must know that a sovereign and wise God will not be limited but take his own time and way, to make his people sensible of these things that are freely given them at his table.

Q. What is the reason that so many of the Lord’s people complain, they get little or no benefit by this solemn ordinance, that they came expecting to meet with Christ at his table, but alas, they return disappointed?

A. 1. Sometimes the Lord may hide himself from his people, for his own holy and wise ends; that he may try them, how they will behave in his absence; that he may humble them under a sense of their own weakness; and that he may excite them to greater earnestness and fervency in seeking after him. But,

2dly, The ordinary cause of God’s dealing so with any, is for something in themselves: Either, 1. They have not been at all due pains in preparing themselves, before they came to this ordinance. Or, 2. They have trusted too much to their preparation; and pains they were at, expecting that this would make them acceptable to God, and merit something at his hand. Or, 3. Their appetites were not sharpened enough for this feast, they had not such a sense of wants and plagues, as was needful. 4. It may be they rested more upon the ordinance itself, or the minister that dispensed it, than upon the

Author and institutor of it. 5. Perhaps there was some leaven in the house, or Ahan in the camp, I mean, some secret lust or idol, which was unhumbled for, or uncast out of the heart, for which God may be chastising them. 6. It may be, they have not readily hearkened to Christ's knocks, nor opened the door presently when he came to it, for which Christ is sometimes provoked to depart, as Cant. v. 2, 3, 6.

Q. What course ought these to take, who complain they find no benefit in this ordinance?

A. 1. They ought always to justify Christ in his dealings, and never blame him, who is certainly a gracious and bountiful Saviour, and delights in mercy.

2dly, They should only blame themselves for it, and diligently search for the cause of their disappointment in themselves, and cry with Job, ' Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me, make me to know my transgression and my sin.'

3dly, When the sin is found out, they should humble themselves for it, mourn over it before the Lord, and flee to the blood of Christ for pardon.

4thly, They should long for another communion occasion, prepare for it more diligently and self-deniedly, watch more carefully over their hearts, and seek Christ more earnestly than before; resolving still to look to him, wait for him, and lye at his feet; pleading his power, mercy and faithfulness to the very last.

Q. How may we know if the Lord hath dealt bountifully with us in this ordinance?

A. The Lord deals bountifully with his people in this ordinance, when he visits them with his gracious presence, draws nigh to them by his Spirit's operations, and vouchsafes to hold communion with them.

Q. Are not God's people always near to God, and he to them; and doth not his Spirit still dwell in them? Psalm xxxiv. 18. and cxlviii. 14. John xiv. 16, 17. How then doth God draw nigh to them with his gracious presence and Spirit in the sacrament?

A. 1. We must distinguish betwixt a state of nearness, and acts of nearness. Believers, by conversion and faith in Christ, are brought into a state of nearness to God, in so far as they are brought into favour and friendship with God, get the image of God drawn upon their souls, and the Spirit of God to

dwell in their hearts. But it is in worship, that believers attain to acts of nearness and communion with God.

2^{dly}, There are some special acts of nearness to God in worship, that believers only attain to at some times, for God is nearer to them in some duties than others; as he allows them more of the evidences of his favour, and of the influences of his Spirit, at one time than another.

3^{dly}, Though God be always near to his people in respect of his Spirit's inhabitation; yet, not always in respect of his sensible operation. Though Christ doth still dwell in the heart, by his Spirit, yet he doth not always act alike in the soul, but only according to his good pleasure.

4^{thly}, God is always near his people, by these operations and influences of his Spirit, which are necessary, for preserving the being of grace in them; but not always near by these influences, which actuate and enliven grace, and give them suitable consolations.

Q. How is it that God draws nigh to his people by his gracious presence, and holds communion with them by the special operations of his Spirit?

A. He draws nigh and communicates himself to his people, by his spiritual influences; 1. Of light. 2. Of life. 3. Of strength. 4. Of comfort.

Q. How is it that he draws nigh to his people with his influences of light, in this ordinance?

A. By giving them gracious and satisfying discoveries of God, and Christ, and spiritual objects: As,

I. When he gives them such a view of God's glory in his attributes and perfections, as makes deep impressions on their hearts: As, 1. When he lets them see the greatness and majesty of God so as to fill them with holy fear and reverence of God, and humble them under a sense of their own nothingness before him. 2. When he shews them the infinite holiness and purity of God, so as to humble them under a sense of their own vileness and sinfulness in his sight, and make them cry with Isaiah, 'Wo is me, I am undone, I am unclean,' &c. Isaiah vi. 5. 3. When he makes his goodness and mercy pass before them, proclaiming his name in their hearing, 'The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness,' &c. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. So as to set them a wondering at God's free grace and good-

ness, in pitying wretched rebel-sinners, and finding out a way for their recovery.

II. When he discovers in us the glorious divine attributes shining forth in a crucified Saviour. As, 1. When he lets us see the infinite justice and mercy of God illustriously displayed, yea, meeting together, and sweetly reconciled in the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ.

2^{dly}, When he lets us see the divine power and strength treasured up in a crucified Jesus; and that he is able to draw our dead souls out of the grave, though our sins were as mountains of lead to hold them down. That he is able to kill our lusts, though every one of them were like Goliath for strength. That he is able to cleanse our souls, though every one of our sins were red as crimson. That he is able to bear us up, bring us through, and keep us by his power through faith unto salvation, though of ourselves we be weak and unstable as water.

3^{dly}, When he lets us see the infinite goodness and mercy of God laid up in a crucified Christ, that he is not only able, but most willing, compassionate, and ready to save and pity helpless sinners; so as our hearts are melted by the discovery, and made to say, we will never again have uncharitable thoughts of Christ, we will never say, he is cruel or hard hearted to a perishing sinner; for we see he is all made up of bowels and tender mercies.

4^{thly}, When he lets us see all the divine fulness dwelling in a crucified Redeemer. 1. That there is a fulness of grace in our Mediator, answerable to all our soul's wants and miseries; a fulness of light for our darkness; a fulness of life for our deadness; a fulness of strength for our weakness; and a fulness of merit for our guiltiness. 2. That there is in him a fulness and suitableness of offices: being constituted of God, to be a Prophet to cure our ignorance; a priest to atone for our guilt; and a King to rescue us from the bondage of our enemies. 3. That there is in him a fulness and suitableness of relations; that he stands in the relation of a Physician, to cure our diseases; of an Advocate, to plead for our acceptance with God; of a Surety, to clear our old accounts and arrears; of a Shepherd, to seek the lost straying sheep; of a Brother and Friend, to agent our cause with God, when we are incapable to act for ourselves.

III. When he lets the soul see that Jesus Christ is not only

a great and glorious Saviour in himself, but that he is our Saviour; when he clears up to us the evidences of our interest in him; so that we are in case to say with Job, 'I know my Redeemer liveth;' and with Paul, 'I know in whom I have believed.'

IV. When he lets us see the intrinsick evil and vileness that is in sin, and gives us such a discovery of it, in the glass of Christ's sufferings, as makes us to see its monstrous deformity, and God-provoking nature; and also to loath ourselves, because of our abominations.

V. When he lets us see such a beauty in holiness as it is the image of God, and that which makes us to resemble him, as causeth our souls to thirst for further degrees of it.

VI. When he gives us a heart-engaging view of the fulness, suitableness, freeness, sureness, order and excellency of the new-covenant and its promises; that it is Christ's blessed testament and latter-will to his people, containing and bequeathing many rich and precious legacies to them; all which are ratified and sealed to them in the Lord's supper.

VII. When he gives us a convincing view of the emptiness of the world, and the insufficiency of all creatures to help a sinner, or satisfy the desires of an immortal soul; so that we are fain to betake ourselves to Christ as our all-sufficient help, and cry, 'None but Christ.'

VIII. When he gives a soul-ravishing discovery of the things that are unseen in the other world, the glory of heaven, and the inexpressible happiness of the saints that dwell there; so as to make us long for the finishing of our pilgrimage, that we may depart and be with Christ.

These, and such like discoveries, doth the Lord oftentimes make by his Spirit to his people, in this ordinance; by opening their understandings to see divine things in another way, than ever they saw before.

Q. How is it that the Lord draws nigh, and communicates himself to his people in the sacrament, by the influences of life?

A. By sending his quickening Spirit to put life in their graces, and to draw them forth to a lively exercise; particularly, 1. When he actuates their faith, and enables them to go out to Christ, lay the burden of their sins upon him, and lean wholly to him for pardon and salvation.

2dly, When he quickens repentance, and makes the heart to melt into tears and godly sorrow for sin.

3dly, When he kindles love in the heart, and makes it to burn, while he talks with them, and opens to them the scriptures.

4thly, When he draws out the desires and pantings of their souls towards Christ, and makes them hunger and thirst for God, and follow hard after him.

5thly, When he quickens the spirit of prayer in them, and makes them more fervent and lively in pouring out their hearts to God, and causes them to take delight in the duty. Thus the Lord draws nigh to his people in the sacrament, by enlivening their souls in the exercise of grace; but seeing I have treated of this liveliness more particularly before, and given marks for the trial of it, I shall add no more upon this head.

Q. How is it that the Lord draws nigh, and communicates himself to his people, in this ordinance by his influences of strength?

A. He doth it by the operations of his Spirit in their souls, these several ways;

1st, When he seasonably steps in, and supports their weak faith, staggering hope, and fainting hearts, when ready to sink with fears and discouragement, Isa. xli. 10.

2dly, When he encourages them to undertake, and enables them to perform the hardest and most difficult duties, not only to attend all public ordinances; but even to make conscience of secret prayer, meditation, mourning over sin, mortification, &c. Isa. xl. 24.

3dly, When he enables them, not only to perform duty, but even to do it with delight and activity; counting it their meat and drink to do God's will, and reckoning one day in his courts worth a thousand elsewhere.

4thly, He strengthens his people at the sacrament, by enabling them to conquer and subdue their strong lusts and corruptions, that formerly were too hard for them.

5thly, He doth it by enabling them to resist all temptations, and get the victory over Satan, Luke xxii. 31.

6thly, By heartening them to a patient bearing of the cross, and all these afflictions and burdens that the Lord thinks fit to lay upon them, Psalm cxxxviii. 3.

Q. How is it that the Lord draws nigh to his people in the sacrament, by his influences of comfort?

A. 1. By clearing up the evidences of their graces to them; so that they are made to see, that they have true grace wrought in them, by the Spirit of God. Before they questioned if they had any faith; but now they can say with that poor man in the gospel, 'Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief;' before, they doubted if they had any love to Christ; but now they are helped to say with Peter, 'Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee.'

2dly, He comforts them, by clearing up to them, their interest in the great and precious promises; and in Jesus Christ the author of them, and his glorious purchase; so that they are enabled to say with the spouse, Cant. ii. 16. 'My beloved is mine, and I am his;' and neither sin nor death will dissolve this sweet relation, Rom. viii. 35, 38. and this gives them very strong consolation.

3dly, He comforts them in the sacrament, by intimating to them, the pardon of their sins, and a free discharge of all their debt, graciously whispering by his Spirit into the ear of the soul, such a word as that which Christ spoke to the man sick of the palsy, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee,' Matth. ix. 2.

4thly, He comforts them, by loosing them from their bonds and straitenings of spirit, and allowing them free access unto the throne of grace, so as they can pour out their melting hearts in God's bosom with some confidence of his favour and good will, 2 Cor. iii. 17.

5thly, He comforts them, by hearing and answering their prayer, and graciously bestowing upon them their spiritual mercies, which they have been many a day seeking and wrestling for, Deut iv. 7.

6thly, He sometimes gives them the assurance of his love and favour, by the witnessings of his Spirit, concurring with the reasonings of their spirits, whereby they are enabled clearly to discern and know the things freely given to them of God; and conclude, that they are in covenant with God, and passed from death to life, 1 Cor. ii. 13. Rom. viii. 16.

7thly, He comforts them, by letting out upon their souls the sensible breathings and influences of his Spirit, that are like the dew to the withered grass; the rain to the dry ground; or the south wind to the spices; and these do enlarge their hearts, put an edge upon their faith and love, and make

them cheerful in every duty, Psalm lxxii. 6. Hof. xiv. 5. Cant. iv. 16. Psalm cxix. 32.

8thly, He sometimes comforts them, by bringing them into his banqueting-house, and setting them under the banner of his love. He sheds abroad his love in their hearts, and gives them peace and joy in believing. He scatters their clouds, dissolves their doubts, removes their fears, and makes them to hear the voice of joy and gladness. Conscience acquits them as sincere in their faith and love. God smiles on them, and kisses them with the kisses of his mouth, i. e. he enables them to apply the sweet comforts of his promises, which are the refreshing words of his mouth, sweeter to them than honey from the honey comb. Thus the Lord sometimes makes his people joyful in his house of prayer, satisfies them as with marrow and with fatness, gives them the peace that passeth understanding, and fills them with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; whereby they are enabled, to delight and rejoice in God, as their covenanted God. He brings them out of the miry clay, sets their feet upon a rock, establishes their goings, and puts a new song in their mouth, 'even praises to our God,' Psal xl. 2, 3. Cant. ii. 4. Rom. v. 5. Rom. xv. 13. Psalm li. 8. Cant. i. 2. Psalm lxiii. 5.

Q. How shall we know that our manifestations and attainments on sacrament occasions, are real, and not delusions?

A. 1. These manifestations which are from God, do commonly carry their own evidence alongst with them, that convinces the soul of their reality.

2dly, They are usually attained, after much wrestling, humiliation, and tender walking.

3dly, They are accompanied with great self-loathing and abasement, and bring humbling discoveries of our own emptiness and vileness, Luke v. 8.

4thly, They excite us to high exalting thoughts of Christ and free grace, and to approve heartily of Christ in all his offices.

5thly, They stir up those that have them, to holiness and tenderness of walk, and to have a holy jealousy over themselves. But so do not the delusory attainments of hypocrites.

6thly, Where manifestations are real and gracious, the soul entertains good thoughts of Christ, and gives him its testimony as lovely and matchless even when withdrawn, Cant. x. 6, 10.

Q. But what shall these serious souls do, that cannot lay claim to these high attainments and comforts before-mentioned?

A. 1. Let them bless God, that they have these things, necessary for making out a saving interest in Christ; for some of these high things aforementioned are not essential thereunto.

2dly, Let them beware at any time of razing the foundation, upon the account of their wanting these special blessings and attainments; seeing the promises of life and salvation are not annexed to these, but unto faith followed with holiness.

3dly, We have even ground from Heb. ii. 15. and other texts, to believe that there are some heirs of glory, who have a cloudy passage, and a rough sea through their whole voyage to the heavenly Canaan: being all their life-time very subject to fears and darkness: though indeed, I grant it is God's ordinary way to give his people some lucid intervals, and calm breezes now and then, for their support and through-bearing.

Q. May not some poor souls have real communion with Christ, and reap spiritual benefit by this solemn ordinance, who have not such comforts, and sensible manifestations from God, as before mentioned?

A. No doubt, they may; for when Christ gives his people a heart-grief and sorrow for sin, it is as sure an evidence of his gracious presence, and his holding communion with Christ, as when their souls are affectionately melted into love, praise and joy: there is communion with Christ, even in a reproof, as is evident in the case of Peter, when he denied his master; Christ gave Peter then a look, and it was a heart-piercing look, whereby he was sharply rebuked; and yet it was one of the sweetest and kindest looks that ever Peter met with since his conversion, for it melted his heart, set him a mourning, and brought him back again to his Redeemer, whom he had so foully deserted. And there we see, was sweet communion with Christ, even in sharp rebukes; so that the nature of communion with Christ, is by many very much mistaken, when they confine it only to sensible manifestations of God's love, and the smiles of his face. — For there may be real communion with Christ, and great soul-advantage reaped by the Lord's supper, where these are not enjoyed.

As for instance, 1. When we find our repentance and grief for sin increased, when we see more of sin's deformity and bitterness, abhor it, and resolve against it more as Christ's

enemy; and are more afraid of grieving or piercing him by it, than formerly.

2dly, When we have an higher esteem of Christ, and his glorious undertaking, and find our hearts better pleased with the tenor of the covenant, and contrivance of redemption through Christ, than formerly.

3dly, When we are strengthened to pray better, cry more fervently to God, and be more anxious for his presence in duty, than formerly.

4thly, When we find stronger desires after heart-holiness, and for grace to make us capable to serve Christ, and advance his glory and interest in any station.

5thly, When our hearts and consciences are more tender than formerly, so that we dare not now shift any known duty, nor venture on sin, or temptations to it as before. The company of the wicked, and all other temptations to sin, are now unwelcome to us.

6thly, When at least, we can say, that we have a greater burning of desires towards Christ than before; that we long, thirst, and are wholly restless without him, and even would be content to part with all our best enjoyments in the world for an interest in him: then it is a sign Christ hath been with us in this ordinance, and hath shewed us tokens for good, for which we have cause to be thankful to him.

Q. What shall we say of these, who thought they had something of the shining of God's face upon their soul, when they were at the table; but now they are gone, and their sky is again overcast with clouds: they apprehended their hearts were melted: and their affections thawed, and their souls were in a good frame, but now they are dead again, as before?

A. 1. Let such examine their attainments, whether they be the temporary flashes, or seeming goodness of hypocrites, by the marks and differences, which I have laid down before, for that end.

2dly, Let them not conclude, that all they tasted or felt at the Lord's table, was delusion; because their case is so soon altered; for it is no new thing for the people of God to complain of a sudden change in their prosperous condition, and to be troubled with heart-deadness and drowsiness, and with Christ's withdrawing soon on the back of sweet communion with him; Psalm xxx. 6, 7. Cant. ii. 16, 17. compared

with Cant. iii. 1. Matth. xxvi. 26, 30, 35. compared with v. 40, 43, 45.

3dly, They ought to reflect upon their own carriage under Christ's smiles, and see what ground they have given him to withdraw. It may be, 1. They were not thankful, when they had his presence. Or, 2dly, perhaps they were vain or proud of it. Or, 3dly, They were not watchful against their spiritual enemies. Or, 4thly, They trusted too much to themselves, and did not depend upon Christ, for preserving their gracious frame of heart.

Q. What course ought these serious souls to take, who have so soon lost their gracious frame and attainments?

A. 1. Let them beware of questioning all the former proofs of God's favour, or blaming Christ now for unkindness, in tarrying so short while with them; but let them blame their own unwatchful and untender carriage, while he was pleased to visit them with his presence.

2dly, Let them go in secret, and be deeply humbled under a sense of their miscarriage and mismanagement, and look to the blood of sprinkling for pardon.

3dly, Let them try to close afresh with Christ on the gospel-offers, and seal the covenant of new; and if they subscribed it before with a trembling hand, and so indistinctly and darkly, that they cannot read their name; let them now subscribe over again, and study to do it in more distinct and legible characters.

Q. What is incumbent upon those, who are still sensible of God's gracious presence, and bountiful dealing towards them, at the sacrament?

A. 1. They should wonder, that he condescends so far to such vile unworthy creatures, 2 Sam. vii. 18.

2dly, They should be thankful, and rejoice in him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their king, Psalm cxlix. 4.

3dly, Let them entertain their Redeemer kindly, and hold him in the galleries by a holy importunity, and carefully guard against every thing that may stir him up, or awake him, till he please, Cant. ii. 7.

4thly, They ought to set up their pillar of remembrance, record what they have seen and met with at this ordinance; take all about them to witness that it is Christ, and resolve to keep it always on record, and make use of it against the time,

when cursed unbelief, or a challenging devil will be ready to say, 'Where is thy God?' Psalm xliii. 3, 4, 6.

5thly, They ought to walk very tenderly and watchfully, fearing, lest they should lose what they have got; like a traveller that hath much money or many jewels about him, who is apt to suspect every one he meets with for a thief. We have many envious enemies, who have a narrow eye upon us at this market of grace, and seek to rob us of the precious treasure we get there, Luke xxii. 31.

6thly, They ought to pity and pray for others that have not won their length, and by prayer send portions to these, for whom nothing is provided.

7thly, Let them commit their hearts and frames to Christ's keeping, that he may preserve any good thing to them they have got, and be surety for them and it, and make it forthcoming to them against the time of need, 1 Chron. xxix. 18. Psalm cxix. 122. 1 Tim. i. 12.

8thly, Let them carefully notice the first step or least degree of God's withdrawing from them, and endeavour to hold him, and stop his way by throwing themselves at his feet, and humbly beseeching him to stay with them, notwithstanding of many grounds of provocation.

Q. But what shall these poor believers do, who instead of praising God for his bountiful dealing at this ordinance, are put to sigh and mourn under darkness and desertion?

A. 1. They should consider that this case is not unusual for the best of saints; Job, David, Asaph, Heman, nay, Christ himself, have complained of desertion.

2dly, They should make no harsh constructions of God's dealing with them, but leave their complaints upon themselves, and justify God in all he doth.

3dly, They should be deeply humbled under the loss of God's gracious presence, be grieved for these things that have sinned him away, sit as a widow in his absence, and refuse all other comforters till he return, Lam. i. 16:

4thly, They should be searching diligently for the Achan in the camp, the sin for which God is contending with them, Psalm lxxvii. 6. Job. x. 2.

5thly, They should learn to live by faith, and trust in a withdrawing God; believe him, think and speak well of him, when he frowns, as well as when he smiles, Job xiii. 15.

Q. Is not desertion, or the withdrawing of God's presence from a poor soul, a very sad and melancholy case?

A. Certainly it is: for, 1. The soul under desertion, is deprived of the light of God's countenance, which is the choicest blessing in the world, Psalm iv. 6.

2dly, The consequents of God's withdrawals are very heavy and grievous to believers; because ordinarily there follows upon it these evils,

First, Great darkness and confusion upon the spirit, Lam. iii. 2.

2dly, Great hardness and impenitency upon the heart, Isa. lxiii. 17.

3dly, Much deadness and stupidity upon the affections.

4thly, Loss of spiritual appetite and desires.

5thly, Unspiritedness and disability for duty, Psalm xl. 12. Psalm lxxxviii. 4.

6thly, A general barrenness upon the soul, and witheredness of the graces, John xvi. 6.

7thly, Liableness to all sorts of dangers and enemies, Num. xiv. 9.

8thly, Anxiety of mind, for former unkindness and unthankfulness to God, Psalm lxxvii. 3.

9thly, Unwelcome thoughts of death and judgment.

10thly, A revived sense of wrath, and of the law's curses and threatenings.

11thly, Melancholy apprehensions of God's judgments to pursue them, while they are in time.

12thly, Fears of utter rejection; and eternal banishment from God's presence, Psalm lxxvii. 9, 10. Psalm cxix. 8.

Q. What are the usual causes of God's withdrawing from his people?

A. 1. Their scandalous outbreakings, Isa. i. 13, 14.

2dly, Their wearying of duty, Isa. xliii. 22.

3dly, Their not entertaining Christ's calls, and his Spirit's motions, Cant. v. 2, 3, 6.

4thly, Their earthly-mindedness, and preferring of time's things to precious Christ, Isa. lvii. 17. Matth. viii. 28.

5thly, Their sloth and formality in duty, Isa. lxiv. 7.

6thly, Their want of a due sense of their own sins, and the sins of the land where they live, Hos. v. 15.

7thly, Their making a Saviour of their duties, and putting these in Christ's room.

8thly, Miscarriages under, or after signal enjoyments and manifestations, 1 Kings xi. 9.

9thly, Their sins under, or after great afflictions, Isaiah lvii. 17.

Q. What shall we do to recover God's gracious presence again, when we have lost it?

A. 1. Let us be sensible that we have sinned him away.

2dly, Let us humbly enquire into the cause of his departure.

3dly, Let us be restless and uneasy in our minds till he return.

4thly, Let us conscientiously attend all ordinances, and use all means for recovering God's presence.

5thly, Let us still be lamenting after the Lord, and bewailing the loss we sustain for want of him.

6thly, Let us both be mourning for, and striving to mortify these sins and idols, that have taken our Lord away from us.

7thly, Let us still continue fervent in prayer, and wrestle with God for his gracious return; and let us fill our mouths with arguments to plead with him for it, Psalm xxv. 16, 17. Job xxiii. 3, 4.

Q. What are these proper arguments, which we are to plead in prayer, for the return of God's gracious presence?

A. 1. We ought to plead the low and helpless case we are in without it, Psalm lxxix. 8.

2dly, We should plead the extreme need we stand in of it.

3dly, Plead the greatness and tenderness of God's mercy, and Christ's bowels of compassion, Matth. xv. 22.

4thly, Plead how easy it is for him to answer all our complaints, and redress all our grievances, Psalm lxxx. 1.

5thly, Plead the freeness of his grace.

6thly, The greatness of his power.

7thly, The glory of his name, Psalm lxxix. 8.

8thly, Let us plead former experiences of his kindness, Psalm lxxxvi. 3, 5, 13.

Lastly, Let us much plead our covenant-relation to God, and our interest in him: the church and people of God do often make use of this argument with God, 'We are thine, a people that belong to thee,' Isa. lxiii. 19. Psalm cxix. 94. Psalm lxxix. 8. And this argument hath often prevailed with God to return to his people, Isa. lxiii. 8. Exod. xxxii. 11, 12, 13, 14.

Q. But what shall these do, who cannot plead this argument, in regard, they fear they are not in covenant with God, and so cannot say to him, We are thine?

A. 1. Though believers under desertion are often tempted to renounce and quit claim to any covenant-relation to God; yet we should not hearken to that temptation, nor be willing to let go the covenant we have taken hold of. But seeing we have fled to the horns of the altar for safety, we should abide by them; and even when by temptations, we are beat off from one horn, we should strive to hold fast by another. And therefore when we cannot say to God, 'We are thine' by his acceptance; yet we should say, 'We are thine' by our own resignation. As we have formerly given up ourselves to God, so we resolve to abide by that deed: we will not be the devil's nor the world's, but we will be the Lord's. And when we are thus helped resolutely to cast ourselves upon him, our souls may revive, and faith gather strength in prayer; for to be sure, God is more ready to covenant with us, than we with him; and more willing to be ours, than we are to be his.

2dly, Let us plead a title to God by creation, when we cannot do it by redemption; so doth the church under desertion, Isa. lxiv. 7, 8, 9. 'O Lord, thou art our Father, we are the clay, and thou our potter, and we are all the work of thine hand. Be not wroth very sore, &c.' If we can do no more, let us thus plead an interest in him by creation, and wait his leisure; for if we duly make use of this one talent, it will increase.

Q. What shall be said to those disconsolate souls, who are complaining, that it is not with them now, as in the days of old, and in months past, when the candle of the Lord shined on their heads: once they went to communions with great satisfaction, and returned with the high praises of God in their mouths: but now God hath altered the course of his dealing with them; he hides his face, and sacrament-days are melancholy occasions to them. They call to mind former experiences, but alas, they find that doth but increase their trouble, Psalm lxxvii. 3.

A. 1. Let all such consider, that God takes different ways of dealing with his people. He useth to treat young beginners otherwise than those who have made some progress in religion: he knows young beginners are raw and tender, and unable to bide a storm; and therefore it is said, 'He carries

‘ the lambs in his bosom.’ We use to hire children to learn their lesson, when they go first to school ; but afterwards we correct them, and make them learn with a frown.

2dly, We ought to remember, that Christ will have his people to live and walk by faith, and not by sense, to follow him in dark nights, and through rough paths, and even when he seems to flee from them. It would be no trial to our faith and love, to follow Christ in the roughest ways, had we still a view of the crown, and of Christ’s smiling face ; but Christ will have his disciples taught to follow him, without sensible encouragements. We see these that run a race, get a sight of the silver cup or prize, first when they set forth ; but perhaps never see it again till they get it in their hand, and yet they run on ; so a traveller may see the city he is going to, when he is several miles off, and yet it may be out of his sight when he is within half a mile of it : but he believes it is not far off, and therefore still goes on.

3dly, Let such disconsolate souls strive to keep up a warm love to Christ, and to commend him highly, even in his absence, as did the spouse, Cant. v. 6. There we see, she had sought Christ, but could not find him ; she called him, but he gave no answer ; and she is rudely handled in his absence by the watchmen, and upbraided by the daughters of Jerusalem : yet notwithstanding of all these discouragements, she breaks out in the most lofty commendation of her beloved, and his matchless excellencies, verse 10. to the close ; and concludes all with this, ‘ He is altogether lovely.’

4thly, However melancholy the present case of such may be, yet they should study to sing praises to God, in a thankful remembrance of the kindness he hath shewed to them in former times. It is a provoking carriage in many believers, that when any new cloud comes, or doubt arises, they prove as froward and unthankful to Christ, as if he had never done any thing for them at all. It would certainly be both just and generous in believers to sing praises to their beloved, under their darkest clouds.

Q. But how shall they sing, who think they have cause to weep with Jerusalem Lam. i. 16. For these things I weep, mine eyes run down with water, for the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me ?

A. 1. They should even mix their weeping with singing, for tears and praises are not inconsistent ; sometimes it rains

while the sun shines. Believers are called 'to praise God
' at all times, and in every thing to give thanks, and to re-
' joice evermore.' We see Paul and Silas sang praises to God
in a dark prison at mid-night, when their backs were torn with
scourges, and their feet fast with stocks, Acts xvi. 25. Hence
it is, that believers are called *singing-birds*, Cant. ii. 12.
They should sing in all the seasons and months of the year,
even in winter, and in the dead month of affliction and deser-
tion. When it is winter and foul weather they should sing
in remembrance of the fair blinks they have had, and in ex-
pectation of the summer-sun at the return of the year; and so
rejoice in hope of better times.

2dly, This course may prove very successful to the remov-
ing of our grievances, and altering of our frames. For thus,
some exercised souls have sung away their heart-plagues and
ill frames. By praising, they have conquered their unbelief,
distrust, and unworthy thoughts of Christ, as Jehoshaphat did
the Ammonites, by sending singers before the army into the
field, when he was in great distress, 2 Chron. xx. 21, 22.
So did David in his dejected and melancholly condition,
Psalm xliii. 6, 8, 9, 11. 'O my God, my soul is cast down
' within me, therefore will I remember thee from the land of
' Jordon, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar: yet
' the Lord will command his loving kindness in the day-time,
' and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer
' unto the God of my life.—I will say unto God, my rock,
' Why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because
' of the oppression of the enemy? Why art thou cast down,
' O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? hope
' thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of
' my countenance, and my God.' Where we may observe,
how David sings away his discouragement and dejection,
partly by reflecting and looking back on what God had done
for him before; and partly by expecting and believing what
God would yet do for him. Likewise we see the church in
the Lamentations, for as low as she was in distress, under
which she was mourning and weeping; yet she hopes and
praises in the midst of all, Lam. iii. 17, 18, 24, 25, 31, 32.

Q. *But what shall these do, whose case is so dark, and hopes
so sunk, that look they back or forward, they can see no light?
How shall they sing or praise?*

A. Though they had no other matter of praise, they

should try to sing of Christ's wonderful free love, his glorious undertaking, and amazing condescension, in leaving his throne in heaven, to dwell with worms on earth, and bear their sins upon the cursed tree. Is there not here sufficient, nay, endless matter of praise, both for angels and men?

Q. How shall these praise, who think they have no interest in that love-undertaking?

A. 1. How many things do we praise that we have no interest in, and are nothing the better of. We praise the strength of Samson, the wisdom of Solomon, and the courage of Alexander, that we are not interested in.

2dly, The angels admire and praise Christ's glorious undertaking for lost men, though he took not upon him the nature of angels, nor died for them; and much more ought we, whose nature he assumed, and to whom he so freely offers the benefits of his death, Rev. v. 11, 12.

3dly, It is surely our own fault, if we have not an interest in Christ's undertaking, seeing we are so pressingly invited to come and share of it; for if we will but come and accept of Christ's love, and the benefits of his death, then all is ours. And why then should we not willingly accept of the gospel-offer, and claim an interest in all that Christ hath done for sinners?

4thly, Let us mind to look to Christ, love him, and praise him as we can; and he will cause our sky to break, and give us more ground of praise. For we are sure he never sent one to hell, that loved and praised him with his heart.

Q. But what shall these dejected souls do, who can say they have prayed, they have praised, gone to many communions, attended all ordinances, and all duties, and essayed all means they can think of; but they miss God in them all, still he hides his face; and so they are almost hopeless, and fear matters will never mend with them?

A. 1. We have Job that eminent saint, making that very lament complaint, Job xxiii. 8, 9. 'Behold, I go forward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him.' Where we see, he tried all parts, essayed all means, and used all diligence to find God's gracious presence, and still he is disappointed. And good Hezekiah, in his distress, says, he mourned as a dove, 'and

‘his eyes failed with looking upward,’ Isa. xxxviii. 14. So that we see such a complaint is no singular case.

2dly, We should never succumb in the day of adversity, whatever be our trial, but always make known our case to God by prayer, and never faint, Prov. xxiv. 10. Luke xviii. 1. As this is our commanded duty, so it is the practice of the saints in the greatest straits; they still lye at the throne of grace, and never give over duty, Psalm cxix. 81, 82, 83. Yea, Jonah, when his case seemed most hopeles, he being in the belly of a whale, and in the bottom of the ocean, yet he persists in duty, Jonah ii. 6. ‘When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in unto thee.’

3dly, As we should persist in seeking Christ, so we should continue to do it sorrowing and weeping, as Mary did at the sepulchre; yea, her sorrow for her loss was so great, that two angels could not dry up her tears, nor comfort her heart without Christ.

4thly, Let us see that our sorrow be of the right stamp: that it be, 1. Not only for our loss, but for our sins that are the cause thereof; alas, it is our sins that hath grieved his Spirit.

2dly, That it be not so much for the loss of the comfort and sweetness we have felt in communion with God, as for the loss of God himself, and his presence, which is valuable.

3dly, That it be not so much for the disadvantage we ourselves sustain, as that we are less capable to serve God, having no life for duty, no strength to love or praise him, as formerly.

4thly, In the midst of our deepest sorrows for God’s absence, let us not omit to take notice of God’s goodness, in any thing that is favourable in our case, and bless God for it: as for instance, 1. That he gives us a sense of our condition, and that we are not past all feeling, as many are.

2dly, That we are living, and have yet time to search, mourn, pray, and use means for recovering his presence.

3dly, That we are not in a hopeles, despairing condition, like Spira, or the damned in hell; for what better are we than they?

4thly, When our reason tires and succumbs, then faith should take place, and we should even hope against hope, according to Rom. iv. 18. When ordinary means do not succeed, we should even look to God, that can work without means,

and beyond them ; and can act miraculously. Let us observe Jonah's behaviour in the whale's belly, Jonah ii. 3, 4. ' Thou ' hast cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas, and the ' floods compassed me about, all thy billows and thy waves ' passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight ; ' yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.' Jonah's case looked to be singular, he thought God had quite forsaken him, and would never return again ; for he had no example before him of any in his case, or of any that was delivered out of a fish's belly. There was no way of escape open to him ; but by a miracle ; and what ground had he to expect that a miracle of mercy should be wrought for him, who was now made a monument of justice. His own conscience, no doubt, would flee in his face, and tell him, that he had wickedly fled from the presence of the Lord, and therefore God might justly cast him out of his presence : that he had procured all this sad distress to himself, and so had little ground to expect deliverance. And yet we see how wonderfully his faith overcame his fear and despondency, verse 4. ' yet I will ' look again toward thy holy temple.' Though his guilt made him ashamed to say he would dwell in God's house either on earth, or in heaven ; yet he says, I will at least look toward it : though thou shouldst cast me never so far away from thee, ' Yet I will look again to thee : ' yea, though thou shouldst cast me down as low as hell, yet I will look up from it to thee again ; still my heart will hanker after thee, and I will look for pity at thy hand.

5thly, Let us plead the mercy of God's nature, and the faithfulness of his word, and stay our fainting souls on these props ; and when our darkness is great, let us send forth hope, that good messenger, to see what it can spy, and what good news it can bring in from the mercy and faithfulness of God, according to Psalm xliii. 5. Psalm cxix. 81. Psalm ciii. 9. Isa. lvii. 16.

6thly, It becomes us, under hidings and disappointments, at such a solemn occasion, humbly to submit to divine Sovereignty (for God knows what is best for us) and quietly to hold his time and leisure ; and still to hope for a visit from him in due time : it was a noble saying of one, in such a case, " Though he came not to dine with me, yet he'll come and " sup, therefore I will wait on." The Lord takes a liberty with his people while here, because he has a whole eternity to

manifest himself to them; the time is near, when these who groan under his absence, 'shall be ever with the Lord,' 1 Thess. iv. 17. O deserted believers, take comfort; for what you come short of obtaining on earth, will be abundantly made up to you in heaven; whatever doors, walls or latesses, are now betwixt you and Christ, hereafter there shall be none. You may say, how long he will hide, I cannot positively determine, but this I am sure of, he can withdraw himself no longer from a poor believer, than he is in this world. Rejoice in this, you shall drop all your complaints, fears and jealousies at heaven's gates, and never take them up again. And, in the mean time, let present hidings and disappointments have the same effect upon you, they had on the spouse, Cant. iii. 3. she turns sick of love to Christ, rises from her sloth, and goes through all the streets and ways of the city, seeking him whom her soul loved.

Q. But what shall be said to those distressed souls, who apprehend that none of these counsels and comforts that belong to God's children under desertion, are applicable to them, because they fear they are totally and finally forsaken?

A. 1. Let such remember what counsel they have sometimes given, to support others, in the like case, and study now to take it to themselves; lest it be applicable to them, what Eliphaz said to Job, 'Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees: but now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled, Job iv. 4, 5.' It is indeed much easier to give advice, than to take it: people in health will advise sick folk to take this and the other thing; and yet when the case comes to be their own, they are at a stand what to do.

2dly, Let such seriously consider, whether indeed they bear the characters of a total desertion, yea, or not; indeed, if their hearts be willing to quit God, give up all claim to him, be satisfied with the world, and indifferent whether he return again or no, it is a bad sign: but let them be ingenious: is there not still some hankering desire in their souls towards God? Is there not something in their hearts, that says, let him do with me as he pleases? I am resolved to lye all my days at Christ's feet, and never go to another door for mercy: though he should never smile on me; yet I'll still be uneasy and restless without his favour; I'll wait for him, cleave to

him, and mourn after him. Whatever the devil or my own heart suggest, I will not believe any ill report of Christ. I will not hear an ill tale of that lovely one, nor go from his door with any harsh thoughts of him. And though their case be very dark and hopeless like, yet let me ask them, if they would be willing to quit any little hope they have of Christ, for all the world's pleasures, or flattering offers that sin and Satan can make them? Nay, is there not something in their consciences; that still stands up for God against sin, saying, though I should die in darkness, yet I will never hearken to sin or Satan, I'll never quit prayer, I'll never hate Christ or holiness, I'll never yield to temptations, nor join with the wicked, who wallow in sin's puddle, and mock at religion. Do they not see many about them, that for as ill as their case is, yet they would not exchange cases with them, for all the riches and honours in the land? Then surely they are not totally nor finally forsaken. For what is it but the Spirit of God, that keeps them waking and restless without Christ, when others are sleeping in sin, and have no trouble for want of him? What is it, but his grace, that keeps them still waiting on God in the way of duty, and in the use of all means? And though they come little speed, yet they dare not slight ordinances, nor neglect prayer as many do, but still would be at casting themselves in Christ and his Spirit's way, and keep as near him as possible they can. And dare never think of saying to God, with the wicked, Job xxi. 14. 'Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.' Surely this is owing to Christ's upholding grace, and not to ourselves: for were we wholly left by him, we would run as far from God and his presence, as ever we could, and shun all sort of converse with him. Let us then receive and take notice of the least crumb of Christ's goodness with thankfulness, and cordially bless him for it, for that is the way to get more, Psalm lxvii. 5, 6. Luke xvii. 15.

Of the conversation of COMMUNICANTS, after they have been at the Lord's table.

Quest. *WHAT* is that conversation that communicants ought to have after the sacrament?

A. It must be a conversation that is rightly ordered, and suitable to the obligations we are laid under by this ordinance: particularly, it must be in some measure suitable to these things. 1. The rule of God's word. 2. The pattern of Christ's life. 3. The principles of our profession. 4. The vows we have made. 5. The sights we have seen. 6. The favours we have received. 7. The promises that are sealed to us in this ordinance. Lastly, The offices and relations, which Christ hath undertaken, and stands in to his people.

Q. *When is our conversation suitable to the rule of God's word?*

A. 1. When we conscientiously study to know God's mind revealed in his will.

2dly, When we put a high value on God's word, and esteem all its precepts to be just and right.

3dly, When we sincerely aim at an universal conformity thereto, both in heart and in life, without neglecting any known duty.

4thly, When we carefully notice all our wanderings and aberrations from this rule, mourn for them, reform from them, and also hate and avoid every thing contrary to this holy rule, Isa. viii. 20. Psalm cxix. 128.

Q. *When is our conversation suited to the pattern of Christ's life?*

A. When we study to follow his steps when he lived on earth, and imitate him in all his imitable perfections: particularly in these,

First, His meekness and lowliness.

2dly, His mortification and deniedness to the world, and its enjoyments.

3dly, His heavenliness and spirituality in discourse.

4thly, His frequency and fervency in prayer.

5thly, His love to holiness.

6thly, His zealous concern for the purity of God's worship and ordinances.

7thly, His readiness to do good to others.

8thly, His forgiving and praying for enemies.

9thly, His obedience to parents.

10thly, His peaceful and quiet deportment.

11thly, His temperance in diet.

12thly, His contentment in a mean condition.

13thly, His thankfulness for mercies.

14^{thly}, His willingness to die.

Q. When is our conversation suited to the principles of our profession?

A. When we distinctly know them, firmly believe them, openly profess them, stedfastly adhere to them, and have our practice corresponding to our profession. Particularly, when we live and walk as these who fixedly believe,

First, That God is infinitely holy and just.

2dly, That God is the fountain and giver of all good.

3dly, That all things in the world are vanity, and infinitely below God.

4thly, That sin is the greatest evil in the world, and cannot be expiated without an infinite satisfaction.

5thly, That Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of sinners, and infinitely precious.

6thly, That Christless souls are in a lost state, under the power of sin and Satan.

7thly, That a holy God hath tied sin and sorrow together.

8thly, That repentance is absolutely necessary to the pardon of sin.

9thly, That faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to reconciliation with God, and the obtaining of any mercy from him.

10thly, That without regeneration we cannot be admitted to communion with God, nor see the kingdom of heaven.

11thly, That holiness and happiness are inseparably connected together.

12thly, That God is a Spirit, and can never be pleased with bodily service, but must needs have the heart in every duty.

13thly, That we have no good thing in ourselves; grace must work all in us, and without Christ we can do nothing. Now if our practice be suitable to these principles, we must be numbered among these that glorify God, and order their conversation aright, Psalm l. ult. But if our walk be contrary thereto, we will be ranked among these that 'profess that they know God, but in works they deny him,' Tit. i. ult.

Q. When is our conversation answerable to our sacramental vows?

A. 1. When we keep up a lively sense of our vows and engagements upon our spirits, Psalm liv. 12.

2dly, When we distrust our own strength, for keeping and performing our vows, flee to God in Christ for strength, and

back our vows with earnest prayers, Psalm cxix. 8, 57, 58.

3dly, When we carefully study in Christ's strength to perform our vows, by a constant watchfulness against all sin, and a constant diligence in all duty, Job xxxi. 1. Psalm cxix. 106.

4thly, When we make these persons witnesses to the performance of our vows, whom we made witnesses to the making of them; that is, when we behave ourselves so circumspectly and christianly in all these parts of our conversation, which are visible to the world, that the whole congregation may observe a change to the better, and take notice of us, 'That we have been with Jesus,' Psalm cxvi. 14. Acts iv. 13.

5thly, When we stand upon our guard against all these temptations that may induce us to break our vows; such as evil company, and immoderate love to the world; for by these, both Peter and Demas were tempted to break their vows.

6thly, When we improve our vows, in time of temptation, for quenching the fiery darts of the tempter, and resisting all his solicitations, saying, 'Thy vows are upon me, O God. And how can I do this wickedness, and sin against God,' Psalm lvi. 12. Gen. xxxix. 9.

7thly, When we remember our vows, so as to rouse and quicken us to duty, when we begin to grow backward to it, or slothful in performing of it, Psalm cxix. 106.

Q. When is our conversation suited to the sight which we behold in the sacrament?

A. When we are so affected with the sufferings of Christ, and the dreadfulfulness of God's wrath, and severity of his justice against sin here represented; as to keep up constant impressions of the evil of sin, and to hate it, and avoid it with all carefulness, 2 Cor. vii. 11.

2dly, When we are so affected with the greatness of Christ's love to us here displayed, as to be thereby constrained to love him again, to admire and praise him; study likeness to him; converse much with him; avoid what he hates and forbids; and practise what he loves and commands, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

3dly, When we so believe the preciousness of our souls, that Christ gave his life a ransom for; and the worth of heaven, that Christ shed his blood to purchase; as to be willing to quit with all sinful pleasures to gain these; and make it the

uptaking business of our lives, to win our souls and eternal glory, Matth. xvi. 26. 2 Cor. iv. 18.

Q. When is our conversation suited to the favours which we receive at the sacrament?

A. 1. When we keep up grateful impressions, and a high sense of redeeming love upon our spirits.

2dly, When we labour to preserve these comforts which we have tasted at the Lord's table, and to keep these evidences unclouded, which we have got there cleared up, by our tender and humble walking with God, 2 John 8.

3dly, When we set ourselves with all holy care and watchfulness, to guard against the snares of Satan, the charms of sin, and every thing that is displeasing to Christ, who loved us, and hath done so much for us, Ezra ix. 13, 14. Psalm lxxxv. 8.

4thly, When from a principle of gratitude, we set ourselves not only to love and praise God for what he hath done for us, but also to walk before him in the land of the living, in a holy and exemplary conversation; to comply with his will, consult his honour, and lay out ourselves with zeal and cheerfulness in his service; thinking nothing too much to do, too hard to suffer, or too dear to part with, for him that hath done and suffered, and parted with so much for us, Psalm cxvi. 8, 9. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

Q. When is our conversation suited to the great things promised and sealed to us in the sacrament?

A. 1. When we firmly believe them, and rely on God's faithfulness for the accomplishment of them.

2dly, When we are thankful and praise God for making such great and precious promises to us, 2 Sam. vii. 18, 19.

3dly, When we undervalue this present world, with all its pomp, treasures and pleasures, and look for better and greater things to come, Heb. ii. 13, 14. 1 Pet i. 13.

4thly, When we are patient under trials and afflictions, expecting a happy change of our circumstances sooner or latter, Mic. vii. 9. Psalm xlii. 5.

5thly, When we wait quietly for the accomplishment of God's promises, even when he seems to stay long, believing, that at last he will make abundant recompense for his stay, Mic. vii. 7. Lam. iii. 25, 26.

6thly, When we live as heirs of the promises, and behave ourselves as candidates for heaven, resisting temptations, con-

quering lusts, contemning the world, overcoming the fears of death, and love of life, and studying to be holy in all manner of conversation, Heb. xi. 9, 10. 1 Pet. ii. 2. 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12.

Q. When is our conversation suited to the offices and relations, which Christ hath undertaken, and stands in to his covenanted people?

A. When we love and honour him in these offices and relations, and study to express our love and respect in our carriage and behaviour towards him. As for instance, 1. Is Christ our Prophet to instruct us? Then let us carefully hearken to him, and learn these lessons which he teaches us; particularly to condemn the world, deny ourselves, and depart from all iniquity: which he tells us, is the truest wisdom, Job xxviii. 28.

2dly, Is Christ our priest, that appeases offended justice for our sins, by his precious blood? Then let us hate sin, and fear to offend that holy and dreadful God, whose justice is so inexorable, that he would not pass sin without such a satisfaction.

3dly, Is Christ our King to govern us? Then let us behave as loyal subjects to him, obey his laws, oppose his enemies, and give no harbour or entertainment to these traitors that seek to dethrone him, or pull the crown off his head.

4thly, Is Christ our physician, to heal our diseases? Then let us obey his prescriptions, apply the healing plaister of his blood to our wounds, and beware of cutting or mangling ourselves of new by sin.

5thly, Is Christ our surety, to pay our debts? Then let us acquaint him fully with the state of our soul affairs, and beware of running ourselves into new arrears; for this were to turn the grace of God into wantonness.

6thly, Is Christ our cleanser, that washes us in the fountain of his blood? Then let us study to keep our garments clean, and beware of going again into the puddle of sin.

7thly, Is Christ our shepherd, that leads and feeds us in green pastures? Then let us follow him, and beware of straying from him, or going into the devil's fields to feed on swinish husks.

8thly, Is Christ our friend and agent in heaven, to appear in our name, and take care of our affairs? Then let us be con-

cerned for his interest here on earth, and beware of requiting his kindness with unthankfulness.

9thly, Is Christ our husband, to whom we have given ourselves in a marriage covenant, and sworn to be faithful? Then let us put away other lovers, and beware of going a whoring from him; seeing in that case we can look for nothing from him, but destruction, Psalm lxxiii. 26.

Q. What is the necessity of communicants studying such a holy and well ordered conversation?

A. 1. Negatively, It is not to merit or purchase heaven, for it is only Christ's holiness and obedience that doth this, and not ours. For, 1. Our holiness and obedience bears no proportion to the reward of eternal life. 2. The grace that enables us to obey, is freely given us of God. 3. Our obedience at best, is imperfect and mixed with sin. 4. It is our bound duty to God, though no reward at all had been promised; upon all which accounts we can merit nothing by any of our services, Job xxii. 3. 1 Cor. iv. 7. Psalm cxliii. 2. Luke xvii. 9, 10.

2dly, Positively, This holy and well-ordered conversation is absolutely necessary. 1. In respect of the command of God, that enjoins it as the beaten road, and pathed way to heaven, peremptorily declaring, 'That without holiness no man shall see God,' Heb. xii. 14.

2dly, It is necessary, that we may thereby be conformed to our head, the Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. i. 15.

3dly, That we may testify our thankfulness to God for his mercies, especially redeeming love, Luke i. 74, 75.

4thly, That we may evince and clear up our interest in God, and our title to heaven, 1 John ii. 29. Matth. xxv. 30.

5thly, That we may be made meet and capable to hold communion with God, here and hereafter. Without holiness we cannot be prepared either for the employments or enjoyments above, Col. i. 12.

6thly, That we may engage strangers to fall in love with Christianity and godliness, Matth. v. 16.

Q. What are the properties of this gospel conversation, which communicants ought to have after the sacrament?

A. 1. It must be a good conversation, for so it is termed, 1 Pet. iii. 16. because it is a conversation with a good God, according to a good rule, viz. His word; having good com-

pany, viz. His people; and leading to a good end, viz. To be ever with the Lord.

2dly, It must be an honest conversation, so it is called, 1 Pet. ii. 12. which includes sincerity towards God, justice in our dealings towards men, and purity and chastity in opposition to the filthy conversation of the wicked, mentioned 2 Pet. ii. 7.

3dly, It must be a heavenly conversation, Phil. iii. 20. which includes our deniedness to earthly things, our imitating the inhabitants of heaven, our delighting in heavenly exercises, our seeking communion with God, and aiming at heaven as our home.

4thly, It must be a humble conversation, Mic. vi. 8. which implies, our having a low opinion of ourselves, our being denied to our own performances, and counting all our own righteousnesses as filthy rags.

5thly, It must be joined with a constant dependence on Jesus Christ for strength and acceptance in every duty, Cant. viii. 5. John xv. 5.

6thly, It must be adorned with meekness, patience, and contentment in every condition, 1 Pet. iii. 4. Phil. iv. 6, 11, 12.

7thly, It must be an evenly and steadfast conversation, endeavouring to hold fast what we have got at the sacrament, were it only a good resolution or purpose, and carefully guarding against all apostacy and backsliding, 1 Cor. xv. 58. Heb. x. 38.

Q. Wherefore should communicants guard so carefully against apostacy and backsliding after the sacrament?

A. 1. Because God is much delighted with his people's steadfastness, earnestly wisheth it, and frequently enjoins it, Deut. v. 29. Phil. i. 27, 28. Heb. x. 23. 2 Pet. iii. 17. 2 John 8. Rev. iii. 3. Acts xi. 23.

2dly, Because of the solemn vows and engagements we have come under to steadfastness, Psalm cxix. 106.

3dly, Because we have many enemies and temptations to draw us from Christ and duty.

4thly, Because of the many sad evils and consequences of apostacy, Jer. ii. 19.

5thly, Because of our natural instability and proneness to backslidings, Hos. xi. 7. Jer. xiv. 10. Nay, the best of saints have been ready to miscarry after vows and signal mercies,

and manifestations of God's favour, as might be sadly verified by the instances of Noah, Lot, David, Hezekiah, Solomon, Peter, the Israelites, and Christ's disciples.

Q. What are the evils and sad consequences of apostacy and backsliding after the sacrament?

A. They are many; for thereby we do great and manifest injuries, 1. To Jesus Christ. 2. To ourselves. 3. To others.

Q. What injury do we to Christ by apostacy?

A. 1. We thereby requit his kindness to us with basest ingratitude.

2dly, We reflect and cast reproaches upon him as if he were a bad master; or by our turning our back upon Christ, after we have engaged with him, we on the matter say, That, "after trial we find the devil the better master of the two;" and this is a greater injury, than if we had given him a flat denial at the first.

3dly, We hereby open the mouths of Atheists, and the enemies of Christ to blaspheme, and say, "Where is the blessedness that ministers and professors of religion speak so much of? Where is the sweetness of Christ and his way, that is so much talked of? The report we have often heard is certainly not true, &c."

4thly, By apostacy from Christ, we wound him to the heart, and cause him to take up most heavy complaints against us, as these in Isa. i. 2, 3. Jer. ii. 5, 11, 12, 13. Mic. vi. 3. What a heart-affecting word was that, which Christ said to his disciples in a time of common defection, John vi. 67. "Will ye also go away?"

Q. What injury do we to ourselves by apostacy?

A. 1. By forsaking the Lord, we let go our life and all our happiness at once, Deut. iv. 3, 4. Deut. xxx. 20. John vi. 68.

2dly, We lose all our former pains, and will get no thanks for any thing we have done, Ezek. xviii. 24. 2 John ver. 8, 9.

3dly, We forfeit all fellowship and communion with God, in duties and ordinances, Jer. xvii. 5, 6. Heb. x. 38.

4thly, We may make ourselves incapable of ever recovering again, according to that terrible word, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.

5thly, We make ourselves the butt of God's fearful threatenings, and expose ourselves to many sad strokes and plagues,

both temporal, spiritual and eternal: particularly, apostates fall more under Satan's power than ever, like prisoners who have made their escape, and are afterwards retaken, their fate is to be loaded with double irons. We know what judgments the Lord inflicted upon Lot's wife, Judas, Spira, Julian besides many other apostates; and we see what he threatens against such as do backslide from him, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Psalm cxxv. 5. Prov. xiv. 14. Jer. v. 6. Heb. vi. 6, 8. 2 Pet. ii. 21.

Q. What injury do we to others by apostacy?

A. 1. We wrong the godly by fadening their hearts and offending them by our carriage.

2dly, We wrong the wicked, by hardening them in sin, stumbling them at the good ways of the Lord, and giving them occasion to think, there is no such excellency in religion, as the gospel doth report.

Q. Whence is it that communicants are so ready to backslide, and break their vows after a sacrament?

A. In hypocrites, it proceeds mainly from the want of a solid root, and good foundation laid in the soul, by a thorough-work of grace in the heart; for they that begin in hypocrisy, do commonly end in apostacy. But in believers themselves there is also great inconstancy, and proneness to backsliding, because of these things.

1. The immoderate love and cares of the world, which are most dangerous to the soul; hence it was, that both Judas and Demas apostatized from Christ: and hence it is, we soon lose any liveliness of frame that we get at a sacrament; which should cause us to take heed how we return again to the world after such an ordinance, that it be with jealousy and holy fear.

2dly, Because of our unwatchfulness, self-confidence, and security upon the back of a communion; we are too ready to be puffed up with our privileges and attainments, to think our mountain stands strong, and hence, to lift ourselves up above our neighbours, and despise those that come not our length; upon which account God is provoked to leave us for a little to ourselves, as he did Peter on the back of the first communion, for the same cause, and we know what came of him.

3dly, Because of Satan's malice and diligence, who seeks by all means and devices to winnow communicants upon the back of such an ordinance, that he may sift away their good

frames, and spiritual motions towards Christ and heavenly things, Luke xxii. 31.

4thly, Because of bad company that is ready to ensnare us to do that which is evil, as it did Peter after the sacrament; or have a bad influence on us, to cause us forget, or neglect that which is good: and therefore we should endeavour to shun the company of the wicked, their carnal joy, vain mirth, and worldly discourse, which tend very much to deaden the heart.

5thly, Because of the slavish fear of man, and of persecution for adhering to Christ and his interest. This fear had very bad influences on Peter, when he followed Christ to the high priest's hall.

Q. What course shall we take, that we may prevent our apostacy or backsliding after a sacrament?

A. 1. We must labour to keep up the constant impressions of the odiousness of sin: for if we would 'cleave to that which is good,' we must still 'abhor that which is evil,' Rom. xii. 9.

2dly, We must endeavour to keep up a constant high esteem of Christ, and a warm love to him; for we cannot think of parting with that, which we sincerely love and esteem.

3dly, Let us beware of entertaining any unmortified lusts, or secret idols; for these will be fair to loose our hearts from Christ, when religion begins to thwart with them. Herod heard John gladly till once his Herodias was struck at, but then he turned his enemy.

4thly, Let us beware of self-confidence, or high thoughts of ourselves; for Peter that promised most in his own strength, was the first that denied Christ.

5thly, Let us study to get as much nearness and communion with Christ as possible; and to experience the power of religion in our souls, which would be a noble preservative against apostacy; for these that know most of Christ will be most unwilling to turn their backs upon him, John vi. 68.

6thly, Let us be oft on the mount of contemplation, taking a view of the promised land, and the crown laid up for perseverers in religion, Luke xxii. 28, 29.

7thly, Let us always entertain a jealousy of our treacherous hearts, and guard against the first declinings thereof; for happy is the man that thus feareth alway, Prov. xxviii. 14. Judas was the last of the disciples that suspected himself, and said,

‘ Master, is it I?’ And yet was the first that betrayed Christ.

8thly, Let us be earnest in prayer, that God may hold us up by the hands of his power and mercy, which have always sustained his people, 1 Pet. i. 5. Psalm xciv. 18. As the child is never so safe, as in the nurse’s arms; so neither are we safe, but when we commit ourselves, by believing prayer, into the hands of divine power and mercy. And therefore we have still cause to pray with the Psalmist, ‘ Lord hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.’ Psalm xvii. 5.

Now to him, who only is able to guide us through the wilderness of this world, carry us over the Jordan of death, and land us safe in the Canaan of glory, be everlasting praise and glory in the highest. Amen.

F I N I S.

A N.

A P P E N D I X,

C O N T A I N I N G

Some THINGS useful for YOUNG COMMUNICANTS; such as,
*an Example of a personal Covenant, with Meditations and
Materials for Prayer, before and after Partaking.*

*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 of 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 be-
fore this time. O 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 shew-
ing 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 pe-

nitent 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 a-new 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 ; I do embrace thee in all thy offices, and give up myself 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 the 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 me : O let them be continued, and the good work carried forward in me to perfection : I do chuse 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 to 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 chuse the things which 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 lusts, thine and not my own ; I desire with my whole heart to chuse and avouch thee to be my God and everlasting portion, and also to devote and dedicate myself, soul and body, and all that belongs unto 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 for 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 all thou requirest the heart, I do here make an offer and surrender of my heart unto 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 the 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 I give it up to thee, to bring every thought and inclination into 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 heaven-ward, 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 of 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 trusting-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. xlii. 5.

'Now, I am thine, Lord save me.'

N. B. As for these 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, acceptation, dedication and engagement: and they may enlarge and be particular upon them, or any of them, as it may best suit the conditions 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 acceptation, 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, &c. God's covenant, his promises, his word, his precepts, his sabbaths, his ordinances, his people, his providences, 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, eyes, ears, hands, feet; our enjoyments, and all the good things we possess, such as our health, strength, gifts, interest, wisdom, power, reputation, substance, relations, times, 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 these 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. and also we must mind to engage to the life of faith, the life of prayer and thankfulness, the life of communion with God, the life of new obedience, &c.

S O M E

MEDITATIONS. AND MATERIALS

F O R

P R A Y E R,

Proper for COMMUNICANTS before Partaking.

M E D I T A T I O N I.

GOD's mercies to me have been very great and distinguishing. I was born in a valley of vision; I dwell in a lightsome Goshen, when many others are covered with Egyptian darkness, and sit in the region of the shadow of death. I hear Heaven's free market-day of grace proclaimed when others are trysted with silent sabbaths. I am invited to a rich gospel-feast, when others are trysted with a famine of the word of God.

It is a great privilege, that I am allowed to speak to God in prayer, or hear from him in his word; but how great is the honour he puts upon me, when he invites me to a communion with himself, at his holy table, where I may feast upon the fruits of Christ's purchase, and hear him say to the guests, 'Eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved.'

Oh! I am unworthy of the least crumb that falls from his table, far less of being admitted to sit with him at the table, and eat of the children's bread.

But since, he is pleased to honour me so far, as to call me to the marriage-supper of the Lamb; O that he would also give me the wedding-garment, prepare my unprepared heart, and grant me all the sacramental graces, that I may be in case to attend and entertain the King of glory.

O for spiritual hunger and thirst for the soul-feast, the heavenly manna, and water of life, that is to be set before me! O that I had wells digged in this valley of Baca, that heaven's rain would descend and fill the pools! That so the wilderness might be turned into a fruitful field, and the dry

land of my heart into springs of water, and my barren soul might blossom as the rose, and send forth a smell as of a field which the Lord hath blessed.

I am now to ascend mount Calvary, and go to the place where Christ is to be set forth as crucified before mine eyes; O that there I may look on him whom I have pierced, and mourn for sin, that made the nails, and drove them into my Redeemer! O that I may there receive a broken Christ into a broken heart! O that the blood of Christ, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, may there plead with God for me, answer all the challenges of the law, and speak peace to my conscience! Let him there kiss me with the kisses of his lips, and enable me to embrace him in the arms of my faith, saying, 'This is my beloved, and this is my friend.' O for a lively and strong faith, that I may take and hold a strong grip of my Redeemer, that like the spouse I may say, 'I held him, and would not let him go!' Alas, for my weak and slippery fingered faith, that oft lets Christ go, when I have fair occasions of getting grips of him. Oft do I lose my grips, Lord fasten them better. Did not Christ take faster grips of me, than I do of him, my soul had been in the devil's grips without relief. Ever blessed be his name for the strong grips he took and held of elect sinners on the cross: yea, so sure and fast were they, that neither death nor devils, the wrath of God, nor curses of the law could ever make him loose them again. Many waters could not quench his love, neither could the floods drown it. His love was stronger than death. Oh! where is my love to him? O that the infinite love of Christ in dying on a cross, might kindle in my frozen heart this sacred fire of love to him, that might burn up all my lusts and idols as stubble; and make me cry out, 'None but Christ, none but Christ.'

M E D I T A T I O N II.

I Was entered into covenant with God by baptism, and was then brought under strong engagements to be the Lord's: but oh! I have broken my covenant, and backslidden from Christ. Were I under the law or a covenant of

works, I would be utterly undone. But, blessed be God, I am under the tenders of a covenant of grace, that admits of repentance, and a surety for the guilty criminal; and graciously promiseth pardon to the penitent believer: nay, promiseth repentance to the hard-hearted, faith to the unbelieving, and pressingly inviteth backsliding children to return to God through a Mediator. I do here take hold of this gracious and well-ordered covenant, Lord seal it to me at thy table: what shall I render to the Lord, for instituting this ordinance, for leaving this precious legacy and token of love to his church, for preserving it to this age, and continuing it in this land: and particularly, for sparing and allowing me to come unto it? Glory to God, that I see the seal of this covenant, that I see this welcome rainbow appearing in the clouds of wrath, as a sign and token of God's confirming his covenant to believers, and securing them against a destroying deluge. Blessed be God, that I am neither among Jews or Pagans upon earth; nor devils or damned souls in hell. I thank the Lord of heaven and earth, that the things which were hid from the wise and prudent, are now revealed unto babes: and that my eyes see, and ears hear that which many prophets and kings desired to see and hear; and yet might not: and that now life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel.

O what would fallen angels, and damned spirits give for such a day, and such a prospect as I have. Lo, fire and brimstone from heaven is rained upon them, while manna is rained upon me. O that the solemn day I have in view, may indeed be a day of the Son of man, a day of his power, and a day in his courts, better and sweeter to me than a thousand!

O that the holy table I am going to, may be richly furnished by the great Master of the feast! O that he may grace it with his own presence, and abundantly bless the provision! That by it the starving creature may be fed, the needy beggar may be satisfied, the hard heart may be softened, the cold affections warmed, the cloudy soul brightened, the straitened heart enlarged, the dim eye enlightened, the wandering mind fixed, and the doubting soul resolved. O that it may be a feast of fat things full of marrow; a meal signally blessed from heaven to me! That it may prove life to my soul, death to my sins, strength to my grace, and poison to my lusts. Lord, let my heart begin to burn, when I see the elements; let my

bands be loosed, when I touch them; let mine eyes be lightened, when I taste them; and let my whole soul be strengthened, when I partake of them.

O that in receiving the bread and wine, I may be enabled to receive Jesus Christ into my heart; and may thereby get true and real infestment of all Christ's purchase, and a valid and unquestionable title to the everlasting inheritance, sealed and confirmed to me! Lord, make thyself known to me in the breaking of bread: manifest thyself to me, as thou dost not unto the world. O bring me into the banqueting-house, and let thy banner over me be love! Lord come to the feast, for it will be a dead and heartless feast, if thou be absent: sit thou at the head of the table, carve every one their portion, and give me a Benjamin's mess, (if it be thy will) that my soul may be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth may praise thee with joyful lips. And when the king sits at his table, let my spikenard send forth the smell thereof. 'Awake, O north-wind, and come thou south, blow upon
' my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out: and then
' let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant
' fruits. O let my well-beloved come and feed among the
' lilies, till the day break, and shadows flee away.

M E D I T A T I O N III.

Blessed are they that hear and know the joyful sound: but, O what will the news of Christ avail me, without an interest in Christ? What will it profit me, to have the Son revealed to me, if he be not revealed in me?

O for the practical and experimental knowledge of Christ! Lord hide not thyself from me, stand not behind the wall, but shew thyself to me through the lattice of ordinances. O draw by the vail of my guilt, and make a display of thy glorious and attractive excellencies, that mine eyes may see the King in his beauty, and my soul may be engaged to flee to him upon the wings of faith and love.

I am this day called to go to the table of this great King: but I am in a strait betwixt two: If I decline to come to this table, then I disobey my dying Saviour, who commands me

to shew forth his death in this manner ; if I come unworthily, then I fear lest I contract the guilt of his blood, and eat and drink my own damnation. Alas, my unworthiness makes me tremble to come ; and yet my need pinches me, so that I cannot stay away. To whom, Lord, shall I go, but to thee ; for thou hast the words of eternal life. Thou art my sun, from whose beams I must receive the light of grace. Thou art the fountain, from which I must draw living water. Thou art the root, from which I must receive sap of increase. Thou art my head, from whom I must get life and influence ; so that without thee, I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing. Let all my wants be upon thee, and let all my supplies come from thee. Surely, O Lord, the sea is not so full of water, nor the sun so full of light, as thou art full of grace and mercy. O fill my narrow vessel out of thy inexhaustible fountain. Cast open the doors of thy treasures, and let me have access to Christ's unsearchable riches. Are not these freely bestowed upon the needy, without money and without price ? O scatter thy bounty among poor beggars, and let me be admitted to gather it. Let not such a miserable object go from thy door without an alms, for thou wilt not miss a crumb to me. O let not the needy be forgotten, let not the expectation of the poor perish for ever. Let none return ashamed from the fountain, who come expecting water. Hast thou not said, ' Thou wilt pour water on them that are thirsty, ' and floods upon the dry ground ?' And is there any more dry, more poor and 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. Open my mouth wide, and then fill it. Alas, the voice of my prayer is weak, but O the cry of my wants is strong : Lord, hear that loud cry. Deal not with me according to my feeling and sense of need, which is small ; But O deal with me according to my real necessity and thy royal bounty, which is great beyond expression.

Lord, grace thy own ordinance, and beautify the assembly of thy people with thy presence ; put the wedding-garment upon the guests ; let thy Spirit rest upon them, let thy power be present to heal them, and cause thy glory fill the temple.

O that God would bow the heavens and come down ! O that he would touch the mountains, (viz. hard hearts, unbelief, pride, worldliness, &c.) and cause them all flow down at his presence ! Let the Jordan of my lusts be driven back.

Let the mountains skip like rams, and the little hills like lambs. Let the earthly hearts tremble at the presence of the God of Jacob. Let the rock be turned into standing water, and the flint into a fountain of water.

O come down as the rain upon the mown grass, and as showërs that water the earth, and do thou revive all the withered roots of thy people. O for a shower from heaven, even a shower of the holy Ghost, to make all their souls as a watered garden: that they might spring up as the grass, revive as the corn, grow as the lily, cast forth their roots, spread out their branches, and their beauty might be as the olive-tree, and their smell as Lebanon.

O if our Lord Jesus Christ's love and glory would come flowing like a full-sea, or the rushing of a mighty wind, and fill all the corners of his house and of his table, that great grace might be on all his people. O to hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees, a sign that God is gone forth before us to smite the hosts of our lusts, and triumph over our enemies. O that the kindly breathings and prosperous gales of God's Spirit would enliven all the drooping hearts, and fill all the empty sails of wind-bound communicants. O that the heavenly wind would blow from the right airth, that poor leaky vessels might come speed in their voyage, and sail straight forward to the shore of Emmanuel's land.

M E D I T A T I O N IV.

HOW great is the divine goodness and condescension to me, in that he is pleased to allow me such near access to him! The men of Bethshemesh had not liberty to look into the ark: but I have a warrant, yea a command to contemplate a crucified Jesus, who is the image of the invisible God, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person: yea, not only to look to him, but also to touch him, handle his wounds, embrace his person, and lodge him in my soul.

Oh, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; the house is so ruinous, smoaky, and defiled, thou hast not a fit place with me where to lay thy head; but since

thou didst not disdain to lye in a manger among beasts, nor to dine with Simon the leper; O come and furnish the house, prepare an upper room in my soul, and there abide and keep the passover with me. A look or word from thee would do it. Lord, speak the word, and thy servant's soul shall be healed and cleansed. Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.

Happy would I be, if I might get a heart-melting and soul-overcoming look of Christ's face, at his own table; even of his face that is white and ruddy, and fairer than the sons of men.

O for such a look as he gave poor Israel, when wallowing in his blood, a look that may cause me live. O for such a look as he gave backsliding Peter, a look that may pierce my hard heart, and cause me to weep bitterly. O for such a look, as he gave the publican Zaccheus; a look that might bring me speedily down from sins and idols, from my self-conceit and self-righteousness, and cause me receive Christ joyfully into my heart.

Lord, look all my idols out of countenance, and look my wandering heart into a right frame, for thy work. O come put in thy hand by the hole of the door, and let heaven's sweet-smelling myrrh drop upon the handles of the lock, that I may awake from my drowsiness, and open all my doors to to the King of glory. Come in thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without. Come and cast out all my idols, my worldliness, pride, prejudice, doubtings, and unbelief: come lay an arrest on all my wandering thoughts, and call in my straying affections: come, bind Satan the enemy of my soul, and restrain him, so as I may get my Saviour entertained, and a match concluded betwixt Christ and my soul at his own table: come in, Lord, and abide in my heart, as long as I abide here in the flesh. 'Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly.'

O thou who deliverest Noah from drowning in the great deluge, by the ark prepared for him; do thou deliver my soul from perishing in the fearful deluge of thy wrath, by the ark Jesus Christ, whom thou hast prepared for saving heavy laden sinners.

O thou who deliveredst Lot from Sodom and the flames of fire; deliver my soul from the Sodom of a natural state, and from the flames of divine anger, that will consume those that abide therein.

O thou who deliveredst Isaac from being slain and offered up a sacrifice, by the ram caught in the thickets : O deliver me from being sacrificed to divine justice, by Jesus Christ my propitiatory sacrifice, in whom thou art well pleased.

I am now to make a near approach to a crucified Christ, my ark and city of refuge : O to be safely lodged therein ! How sad will it be, if I be found hovering without the ark, till the flood come and wash me off from the very side of it ; and even when I see a window opened, and mercy's hand put forth to take in poor shelterless doves ! How sad eternally will it be, to be so near Christ, within a step of him, and never reach him ; but perish like the thief upon the cross, with a Saviour at his side, and sink into hell betwixt the outstretched arms of his mercy, and with his gracious calls sounding in mine ears ! What woful madness will it be, willfully to starve for hunger beside a rich feast that is prepared for the hungry ! To perish for thirst near a full and running fountain ! Or to die in my wounds beside the balm of Gilead, and the skilful physician there ! Let me stir up myself in time to take hold of him.

O that when I approach so near a crucified Jesus in the Lord's supper, I may with Thomas thrust my hand into his side, and also throw my heart into it ! Let me not only behold the wounds of his side, hands and feet, but also by faith drink the water of life that runs from them, and bath my soul therein !

M E D I T A T I O N V.

THE Lord is now calling me as he did Moses (not out of the midst of a burning bush, but out of the middle of the flames of his love) ' Put off the shoes from thy feet, ' for the place whither thou goest is holy ground,' O that I may put off the shoes of earthly affections, strip myself of worldly cares, and look narrowly to my steps, when making such a near and solemn approach to the great Jehovah. Had not I been invited and commanded to come to his holy table, such a sinful wretch as I, durst never have attempted it.

Instead of stretching forth a sceptre of mercy to invite me to his table, he might with the rod of his wrath, justly have

dashed me in pieces as a potter's vessel. Instead of entertaining me with the bread of life, and the cup of blessing; he might have given me the bread and water of affliction; yea, have thrown me down there, where I should in vain cry out for ever, for a drop of water to cool my tongue.

I am polluted and unfit to appear before God, but oh! they are undone, who keep away from him. I come not to him, because I am unworthy; but because he is rich in mercy, and has contrived a way for saving such as I am. I come as the poor starved wretch to the fire; I come as the hungry to be fed, as the naked to be clothed, as the sick and maimed to be recovered and healed; and as the unclean to be washed in 'the fountain opened to the house of David.'

Lord, make this a healing ordinance to my diseased soul, and the favour of life to my dead heart; make it also a sealing ordinance, to clear up to me the evidences of grace. Confirm to me the pardon of my sins, and the assurance of thy love. O that I may so approach to Christ at his table, that I may return from it with my heavy laden soul disburdened and at rest, my conscience quieted, my corruption subdued, my graces increased, my soul encouraged, and my heart enlarged to run the way of his commandments.

Lord increase my faith, excite my repentance, and warm my cold heart with affection to thyself; O that the love of God were shed abroad in my heart.

Lord, thaw my cold icy heart with the beams of thy love, and breathings of thy Spirit. May I have grace to wait closely upon God, and attend all the motions of his Spirit. And when he draws, O cause me to run; when he knocks, O make me to open; when he blows, O help me to spread the sails; and when the waters are stirred, O let me put in for cure. I am lying like the impotent man at the side of the pool, but of myself, I am unable to step in, and there is no man to put me into it; nay, all the men on earth, or angels in heaven cannot do it; only the man Christ Jesus can give healing virtue to the waters of the sanctuary, and apply them to me.

Lord, bless these who are to be employed as thy stewards, at this solemn feast: enlarge their hearts and open their mouths: give them both a door of utterance, and of entrance: let them speak from the heart, and to the heart. O make their tongues as fined silver, that their words may be power-

ful and pleasant, suitably and fitly spoke, like apples of gold in pictures of silver. And while they are busied in inviting, calling, and serving others at thy table; let them not go unserved themselves.

O that thou wouldest descend, at this occasion, upon the mount, in sight of all the people. Let the Spirit of God with his influences, be like Jordan, at this season, to overflow all its banks. O for a blessed inundation, and a high stream-tide of that river, whose streams make glad the city of God! Lord, send a stream of it into every communicant's heart, and let mine be well watered, and become like the garden of God. O that I had Jacob's spiritual strength, I would wrestle with thee for thy presence and blessing to myself and others; I would even say, I will not let thee go till thou blest me: nay, Lord, I would have the blessing, and keep thee too; for thy presence is the best of all blessings. And O it is a needful blessing at the solemn feast; what can the people do there without thee? They will be no better than a company of dead carcases set about thy table: Oh! there will be no life among them, if the Lord of life be away. If thy presence, Lord, go not with me, carry me not up hence: the desire of my soul is to thee, and the remembrance of thy name, for there is none in heaven or earth, but thou alone, who can suit my soul's necessities. Nothing less than infinite mercy can forgive my sin: nothing but infinite power can subdue my lusts: no less than infinite fulness can supply my wants: and nothing but infinite wisdom can guide me through this wilderness, and bring me to Canaan above.

M E D I T A T I O N VI.

SHALL such a wretched dog as I presume to come unto thy table, and eat of thy 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 show it to the unworthy, even to the chief of sinners. Lord, here is an object of thy pity; I am starving, and have no bread; naked, and have no clothing; wounded, and have no cure; polluted, and have no fountain; in debt, and have

money ; burdened, and have no rest. Thus I have destroyed myself, and have no remedy in myself ; but in the name of the Lord Jesus, I have a sure and all sufficient help.

Lord, I have a multitude of sins and miseries, but thou hast a multitude of tender mercies. I have deep and hainous guilt, but thou hast a deep fountain to wash it out. Behold one depth calleth to another, the depth of my misery, to the depth of thy mercy. My sore is broad, but thy plaister is answerable. My wound is great, but thy balm is excellent. Oh ! Lord, be merciful to me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee. Come, display the matchless excellencies, and healing virtue of thy balm at this time : and O begin with my distempered soul, and make experiment of it upon me. I am grievously stung with sin and Satan, these fiery serpents ; but blessed be God for providing the brazen serpent, and lifting it up on a pole, even Jesus Christ wounded, and lifted up on the cross. O give me faith's eye to spy him thus lifted up, under the symbols of bread and wine : O that I may lift up my eyes and see his healing wounds, and feel healing virtue come from them to my wounded soul.

Lord, draw me, and I will run after thee, cast a cord of thy love about my heart, and hale me to thee. Oh ! but my heart, my soul is heavy, I have great guilt, and many lusts like lumps of lead hanging at me ; how can I run, and how shall I be drawn ? But hast thou not said, Lord, ' If I be ' lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me ; ' sinners of all sorts and sizes. Surely a crucified Jesus lifted up on a cross, with his bleeding arms stretched out, to embrace lost sinners, is the most attractive and drawing sight in the world. This wonderful loadstone hath drawn thousands of iron hearts to it at once : and shall my obstinate heart refuse to be drawn ! O give me faith's eyes, and let me see the glorious conqueror, Jesus, dying and drawing his poor captives home to himself ; and let my heart be drawn with the rest.

Now the devil is holding, and Christ is drawing : now Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels are striving about communicant's souls ; O that Michael may prevail, and his followers be increased. O that the red dragon's head may be broken, and his interest get a fatal blow at this time.

Lovely Jesus, shew thyself at this occasion through the lattice, ' for thou art fairer than the sons of men, more glorious ' than mountains of prey, and the chiefest among ten thou-

‘sand.’ Thou art white and ruddy, white, in regard of thy spotless innocence; and ruddy, in regard of thy bloody passion; and this matchless complexion makes thee all together lovely in the eyes of all true believers. O bright morning star! I beseech thee shew me thy glory. Make thy holy table like mount Tabor to me, the mount of transfiguration, where I may get a heart-ravishing sight of Christ’s beauty, and such a view of his comeliness, as may satisfy my mind, captivate my heart, and make me long to be where I shall have the full and everlasting vision of his face.

Lord, meet with me at thine own table, and shew me a token for good. Deliver my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. Rescue me from the fearful pit, bring me out of the miry clay; set my feet upon a rock, and establish my goings; and put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed, even thy beloved Son in whom thou art well-pleased. Lord, shew thyself well pleased with me in him: and let me be accepted in the beloved.

Lord, say unto my soul, fear not, I am thy salvation. Thy voice is sweet, O cause me to hear it. And make me hear thee, so as I may follow thee; and follow thee, so as I may find thee, and find thee, so as I may never lose sight of thee again.

M E D I T A T I O N VII.

O Whither am I going, the place is holy, the table is holy, the bread I am to eat is holy, the cup I am to drink is holy; and God, who is infinitely holy, is ‘terrible from his holy places.’

A wrong touch or look now is criminal, and may cost me dear, as it did Uzzah and the Bethshemites. This fearful breach that was made on them, may cause me tremble, and cry out, ‘Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?’

If John the Baptist (one of the greatest that was born of women, and filled with the holy Ghost from the womb) thought himself not worthy to unloose Christ’s shoes; O how

much more unworthy am I (the meanest of creatures, yea, a transgressor from the womb) to be admitted to touch, nay, feed upon Christ's broken body and shed blood !

If Peter, having seen Christ's glory and his own vileness, thought himself unworthy to be in the same ship with Christ, and cried out, ' Depart from me, for I am a sinful man : ' how shall I, who am the chief of sinners, adventure to sit at the same table with him, and feed upon his flesh and blood !

If the poor woman who had the bloody issue, feared so 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 touch the sacred symbols of his body and blood, and to put my hand into his wounds, and feel the print of the nails ! Lord, if the holy angels, these pure and unspotted seraphims, who burn in zeal for thy service, must even cover their faces before thee ; O how dare I appear in thy presence, whose zeal is so languishing, whose love is so cold, whose mind is so earthly, and prayers so dull !

But what shall I then do ? Shall I with those who were bidden to the king's feast, refuse and make my excuse ? Oh ! I fear then the king would be angry, declare me unworthy to taste of his supper, and swear in his wrath, that I shall never enter into his rest.

I confess, Lord, I am fallen asleep with the foolish virgins, I find no oil in my lamp to go and meet the bridegroom at his table. But blessed be thy name, the market of grace is not yet ended : I will therefore go presently to those that sell it, not to the merit of saints or blood of martyrs ; but to Jesus Christ himself, who has graciously counselled me to buy of him tried gold, and precious oil, that will stand me in stead in time of need. O that my oil, and my lamp may be lighted at the beams of the sun of righteousness, and so it shall never be put out !

Many pieces of furniture do I need, I want 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, praises to my Redeemer and Captain of salvation, that hath provided a full store-house and armory to answer all my soul's necessities. O that out of his fulness I may receive grace for grace !

Lord, these things are so valuable, I have not wherewith

to buy them, for I am wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. But good news ! The poorest person in the world can make this purchase, for all gospel wares and commodities are bought without money and without price. O let me win to this cheap market, and be content to take all out of Christ's hand, as a free gift, disclaiming any worthiness in myself !

Lord, furnish me freely with all the qualifications and grace which I need : and when I come, and offer my gift at thy altar, I'll say with David ; all things come of thee, and of thine own have I given thee. For what have I but what I have received ? Nay, I'll join with the redeemed for ever in their song ; Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be glory.

M E D I T A T I O N VIII.

IF the centurion, whose faith was so strong and lively, that Christ said, he had not seen such faith in Israel; yet was fain to say to Christ, ' Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof ;' what shall I think of myself, who have so little faith, and so much unbelief ? Can I think myself worthy that Christ should come into my heart ? O ! I am utterly unworthy of such a guest : but seeing so great a king is willing to lodge in so poor a cottage ; Lord, send before-hand, and furnish it for thyself. O let thy Spirit come and adorn the upper-room; and make me all glorious within ! O for a penitent soul and a believing heart !

Moses of old with his rod, smiting the rock, brought forth running water. O if Christ with the rod of his word, would but touch my heart, it would soon melt into tears of repentance. Alas, my hard heart will neither break nor melt, till the Spirit of Christ come and deal with it. Lord, though I have not tears enough with Mary Magdalene to wash thy feet ; yet thou hast blood enough to wash my feet, head, heart, hands, and altogether : O bring my polluted impenitent heart to that fountain ; I know nothing will bring tears from mine eyes, and sorrow from my heart, if a believing view of that blood do it not.

O for the eyes of faith to look to Golgotha and Gethse-

mane, and view Christ's agony and bloody sweat; and the plentiful streams of his blood that flowed down from the cross. O that I could remember the wormwood and the gall, the cries and tears, the curses and pains, the desertion and anguish, which my sins brought upon the Son of God. O how did they pierce his head with thorns, his hands with nails, his side with a spear, and his heart with sorrows! O the sharpness of that sword that pierced his soul! O the bitterness of that cup which he drank for me, a cup all mingled with the guilt of my sins, and the curses of a broken law! O can I go to his table, look to his bleeding wounds, hearken to his dying groans, see my Redeemer's heart melted like wax; and yet my heart continue hard and unbroken! O shall the rocks rent sooner than my heart!

O my soul, where is thy faith? Where thy bowels? Where thy gratitude? Where thy humanity? Come then, behold the Author of life becoming obedient unto death; the spring of blessedness under-lying the curse; the fountain of happiness thrown into misery, nay, into hell, and all to save thee from it. O behold thy glorious surety with his head bowing on the cross, and inclining to die. Behold his innocent hands that healed all sorts of diseases, and were still doing good, pierced and besprinkled with his own blood. Behold his feet that never stood in the way of sinners, but always walked in the law of the Lord, with sharp and long nails fastened to the cross. Behold his side opened with a cruel spear, and all red with his own blood. Behold his bowels that yearned for sinners, now shrunk and dried up. Behold his face that was fairer than the sons of men, now defiled with the spittings of the ungodly. Behold his mouth that spake as never man spake, hath no other refreshment but vinegar and gall. Behold his ears that wont to hear the angels praises, now ringing with the mocks and blasphemies of the wicked. Behold these eyes that were brighter than the sun, now darkened with the shadow of death. Oh! now I see the Sun of righteousness under a fearful eclipse. I see his spotless soul covered with the black clouds of the Father's wrath; I see the heavens shut and darkened against him in the time of his distress. I see his royal visage turned pale, his strength dried up like a pot-sheerd, his tongue cleaving to his jaws, and the streams of his precious blood watering his pierced feet.

O shall I thus see the innocent Lamb of God, falling a sa-

crifice to incensed justice, for my hainous guilt, and not loath myself for all my abominations? O cursed sin! murderer of the Son of God! shall I ever harbour it any more? Oh, let me never look upon it, without tears of grief; nor think of it, without indignation and rising of heart. O that henceforth the face of sin may be more frightful to me than hell, and temptations to it more terrible than death.

M E D I T A T I O N IX.

UNDER the law, they who had touched the dead were forbid to come near the altar, upon which were offered sacrifices, that were but types of Christ upon the cross; and shall I who am by nature dead in sins and trespasses, and perform nothing but dead works, be allowed to approach that holy table, where a living Saviour and a living God is present.

Blessed be the Lord Jesus that has come to visit the dead though rotting and stinking in the grave. O that I may be raised up by the word of his power, as Lazarus of old was, and all my bonds loosed, that I may be at liberty to worship and serve him. And O that I may be allowed to be at the table with him, as was Lazarus after he was raised by him from the dead.

Lord, though I be dead in sins and trespasses, yet the bread which thou hast prepared, cannot only strengthen the living, but can also give life to the dead. Art thou not the resurrection and the life, who canst raise the dead to life, and call things that are not, as though they were? O cause me to hear thy quickening voice.

Blessed be God, for the encouragement he hath given me, to come to this great feast. It being a feast of charity, to which are invited not the rich; but the poor, maimed, lame and blind, who cannot make any return to the Author of it. My blessed Saviour while he was on earth, disdained not to eat with publicans and sinners: and surely though he be now highly exalted in glory, he still retains the bowels of a man, and all the pity and charity to perishing souls, that ever he had.

Lord, I am polluted, but will not despair, for with thee is the fountain of salvation. I am poor, but will not despond, for thou art the Lord of the whole earth, and opens thy treasures to the needy. I am naked, but I will not run away with Adam, and hide myself from thee, because I am so; but I will come with the more speed to thee, to cover me with the wool and fleece of the Lamb of God, even the spotless righteousness and innocence of my Saviour. All my righteousness is as filthy rags; but Lord, clothe me with the goodly raiment of my elder brother, which hath a sweet smell in my nostrils, that therein I may obtain the blessing of my Father, and a title to the inheritance: and let me by my Saviour's grace, be enabled to offer thee a sincere and contrite heart, which is a savoury meat, in which thou takest special delight. 'A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise,' Lord, break my hard heart.

And will God, in very deed, dwell and converse with men, yea, sinful men? With thee, Lord, is great and terrible majesty: nay, to the wicked and Christless, thou art a consuming fire. But, glory to thy name, I see thee seated upon a throne of grace, that a poor sinner like me, may draw near and converse with thee: yea, I see a rainbow about thy throne, a sure token of thy mercy and willingness to be reconciled to sinners through thy Son Jesus Christ. I see thee in the word and sacraments, reaching forth thy sceptre of grace, that I may come and touch the top of it and live. Lord, all my hope is in the mercy of thy bowels, and the merits of Christ's death. Surely, thou art more ready to give than I am to ask; and more willing to forgive than I am to repent.

I am now going to a great feast, Lord forbid it be to me like Belshazzar's feast, who in the time of it, perceived a hand writing his condemnation. But, O that I may see the finger of God writing my eternal absolution, and assuring me that God will not enter into judgment with me! And as of old, thy gracious presence in Solomon's temple, was manifested by the fire which came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering: so, I beseech thee to send from heaven into my heart, the fire of thy love, to consume my lusts, kindle my affections to thee, and make my prayers more fervent.

Lord, thou usest not to send beggars away from thy house without an alms. Yea, thou hast oft been found of them that sought thee not; and hast made surprizing and unexpected

visits to poor souls, and made them before they were aware, like the chariots of Aminadib. O that I could win near hand Christ at his table, O that I may be allowed to kiss his feet, hear his voice, feel the smell of his garments, and the favour of his sweet ointments. Amen.

S O M E

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M E D I T A T I O N I.

WHAT shall I render to the Lord, for all his gifts and benefits unto me? The royal Psalmist admires divine goodness, in causing the sun, moon, and stars to shine in the firmament, for man's behoof; and cries, 'What is man that God is mindful of him!' But surely, more cause have I to cry so, when I consider, how God has caused the Sun of righteousness to shine on me, in the firmament of gospel ordinances, and made the day spring from on high to visit me: O that I may find this heavenly light shining into my heart.

The same Psalmist also exalts God's goodness, in giving the beasts of the field, fowls of the air, and fishes of the sea to be food for man; but far greater cause have I to praise God's infinite mercy for giving me the flesh and blood of his only Son, to feed and preserve the life of my soul.

The poor woman of Canaan asked only leave to gather the crumbs which fell from the childrens table; but unworthy I have been admitted to sit at the table of the Lord, and eat of the children's bread! Nay, I have been invited to eat heartily, and drink abundantly. Seeing then I have eaten of Christ's meat, O that in the strength of it, I may travel a good journey, and work a good turn for Christ! O that I may be a diligent and faithful servant to so good a master! Lord, I have eaten of thy bread, let me never lift up the heel against thee.

Nay, Lord, I have gone to thy table, and adventured to seal a marriage-contract with Jesus Christ, as my Lord and husband: I am indeed a black and uncomely bride; but my glorious husband can beautify me with his perfect comeliness put upon me. Let me for ever discharge my old husbands and lovers, the law, my own righteousness, the world, my lusts and idols, and never have any hankering thoughts after them. O that I may be looking long, and providing for the marriage day! The Bridegroom is ready long since, O that I were ready to go forth and meet him! That will be a glorious day, when he will rend the clouds, come down and set tryft with me in the air; and send his angels to carry me up to meet with him there. Why then doth he delay his coming? Not because he is unready, but because I am not ready, and all the elect are not yet gathered in. O that I were made meet and prepared for his coming; and my heart and thoughts were still with him!

I have now a journey to go, and a race to run, even a race to heaven, and I have great need of strength and direction in it. O if Christ would take me up into his chariot of salvation, that is all paved with love, how easily would I sit, and how safely and pleasantly would I travel in the King's high road towards Emmanuel's land! What sweet views and prospects would I get from Christ's triumphal chariot! O the lovely hills, the fruitful valleys, and pleasant rivers, the fair gardens and flourishing trees, which I might see in the heavenly Canaan! What ivory palaces, golden streets, and gates of pearl might I see in the new Jerusalem! O could I travel in Christ's company, my journey would not be tedious to me!

M E D I T A T I O N II.

IF he, that wanted the wedding-garment at the King's table, was cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; what shall come of these, who have come to Christ's table, not only wanting the wedding-garment, but even clad with Satan's livery, wearing the rags of the old man, and drawing the chains of iniquity about with them! Lord, hadst thou dealt with me, and my fellow com-

municants, according to our sins, nay, according to our religious services, thou hadst made the congregation an Aceldama, a field of blood ! Alas ! we have mingled our sacrifices with our sins, no wonder, though thou hadst mingled them with our blood. But blessed be thy name, who, instead of destroying us with the breath of thy mouth, art pleased to breathe forth such words of comfort to us. ‘ I will not execute the fierceness of my wrath, because I am God and not man. I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob, are not consumed.’ Merciful God, thou forbidst men to give that which is holy to dogs, and cast pearls before swine ; and yet in thy boundless compassions, thou givest thy Son who is the holy one of God, and the most precious pearl in heaven, unto such miserable sinners as I am, even to me, who have so oft promised to live holily, and to leave my sins ; and yet have ever returned to my vicious course, as the dog to his vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. But seeing God has been yet again offering and speaking peace to me, O let me never again return to folly. Lord, save me from making peace again with these lusts, which nailed Christ’s hands, and made his soul heavy unto death. May I now be helped to abandon all my old sins, and never venture again upon that which killed my Saviour, dishonours his Father, grieves his Spirit, and damns my own soul.

Lord Jesus, undertake for me, deliver me from my spiritual enemies, and especially from myself, and from my false and treacherous heart, which hath so oft beguiled me, and yielded me a prey to sin, Satan and the world, and will now be ready to do it over again, if it be not prevented by thy grace. I have great need to be always near thee ; for without thee I can do nothing but sin ; I can do nothing but contract defilement for thee to wash, make wounds for thee to heal, and take on debt for thee to pay. O Lord, my poor soul is oft like a leaky vessel which is heavy laden, and ready to sink ; the tempest of wrath blows hard, and threatens to overset me ; O that I may get my vessel run ashore near the rock Christ, so that if it break or shipwreck any where, it may be about the clefts of this rock, where many a shipwreckt perishing soul hath found safety ! O, who ever perished at Christ’s lee-shore ! Who ever drowned in the sea of wrath, that sincerely aimed to grip to, and fasten upon the clefts of this rock !

M E D I T A T I O N III.

THE Manna in the wilderness was lodged in the tabernacle, and kept within a pure golden pot. And shall I lodge Jesus Christ, the Manna that came down from heaven in a corrupt and unclean heart? Lord, cleanse my heart from sin, and furnish it with grace, that it may be fit for thy residence! O that by tasting of the Manna, I may find my soul strengthened, and lusts weakened! O that by touching the border of Christ's garment, I may feel a secret virtue gone out of him, to stop the running issue of my corruption, and heal all my soul-diseases!

Jonathan's eyes were enlightened after he had eaten a little honey dropping in a wood; but I have been eating honey dropping from the Rock of salvation, Jesus Christ; O that I may find the eyes of my understanding illuminated therewith, that I may clearly perceive the vanity of the world, and excellency of Christ; the deformity of sin, and beauty of holiness; the emptiness of my own righteousness, and the all-sufficiency of Christ's merits!

Men admire Abraham's happiness, in that he lodged angels; but how far greater is my happiness, in lodging him whom the angels adore, and in whose presence they all cover their faces with their wings, and cry, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty, &c.' O that I had suitable room and entertainment for so glorious a guest! Lord, thou must both fit the room, and bring the entertainment with thee.

O be not a stranger unto me, or a way-faring man that only turns aside to lodge for a night; but let Christ dwell in my heart by faith. O that he may say of my heart, 'This is my rest for ever, here I will dwell, for I have desired it.' Lord, say this also of thy Zion in our land, and establish thy throne amongst us.

Lord, thou hast promised many special blessings to the utmost ends of the earth, and to the isles afar off in the sea, among whom we in this land are; O hasten the accomplishment of thy promises to these remote parts of the earth, and make the spirit of error, superstition and formality wholly pass out of them, that thy name may be great among us, and in every place incense may be offered to thee, and a pure offering.

Lord, send the news of Christ to the heathen nations, who

have long dwelt in the region of darkness. How sad is it, that God who made all the world, should have so little of its service; and that the devil who ruined mankind, should have the far greater part of the world to adore and serve him! Alas, that he should have so much to justify that usurped title of his, 'The God of this world!' Lord, destroy his kingdom, and hasten the downfall of Babylon; when shall the forty and two months be expired. Let the hills melt, and the mountains flow at the presence of the Lord, and the seven hills among the rest. O why is his chariot so long a coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?

Lord, remember the poor blinded Jews, the posterity of Abraham thy friend. Oh, we are many a prayer behind with them, they oft minded the little sister, when she had no breasts; and now the elder sister hath none. O what shall be done for her in her desolate case! O that the Redeemer would come to 'Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob.' Lord, lift up thy feet to these perpetual desolations, and let the receiving of them be as life from the dead.

Lord, plead for thy persecuted people all the world over; let their enemies know that their Redeemer is mighty, and will hear the sighs of the oppressed. Let the earth disclose her blood, and no more cover her slain.

M E D I T A T I O N IV.

O That I could wonder at the glorious Son of God, who descended from the highest heavens, and took not on him the nature of angels, but the nature of man, and hath crowned it with glory and immortality, yea, hath carried it above all heavens, above the seats of angels, beyond the Cherubims and Seraphims; and hath placed it on the right hand of his eternal Father! and hath likewise promised to exalt believers (whom he hath united to himself, as members of his body) unto the same honour and dignity! Lord, what is man that thou art thus mindful of him! and what am I, the worst of men, that I should be admitted to share in these glorious privileges which Christ hath purchased!

O that I could sing a song of praise to my well-beloved;

a song of his eternal love and glorious undertaking; a song of his passing through the red-sea, and fighting the red dragon; a song of his bruising the serpent's head, and unstinging the king of terrors; a song of his victorious resurrection, triumphant ascension, and glorious return! Lord cheer up and tune my heart to sing a song of Zion, and rejoice in Christ as my portion. Let me speak of the glorious honour of his majesty, and declare his wondrous works.

Lord, revive the spirits and enlarge the hearts of all thy people, give them high and exalted thoughts of Christ, that their soul may glorify thy name. Open thou their lips that their mouths may shew forth thy praise. Oh! shall the wicked go singing and rejoicing to hell, and thy people go always drooping and sorrowing to heaven? Is there any master like Christ, and can give any wages like to his! Let me never by my carriage bring up a bad report (as the unfaithful spies) upon Christ's way, or the land that is afar off. Thou hast recorded many encouraging words for thy people's comfort. Thou hast said, 'That light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.' O for a shower from heaven to make that seed to spring. Blessed be thy name, God's seed will not rot beneath the clods, it will spring up sooner or latter. Let me support myself with the Psalmist's cordial, 'The Lord liveth and blessed be my rock!' Why should believers look like dead men, while their Lord liveth, and their rock standeth? Their hopes may die, their comforts die, their frames die, their relations, their gifts and outward means may all die; but good news! their Lord will not die, their rock will not fall. No wonder though the disciples drooped and looked as dead men, when Christ was dead and lying in the grave. But, blessed be God, he is risen, he liveth, and will die no more. I have these good news from his own mouth, 'I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and death.' Is my Redeemer jaylor of the prisons of hell and the grave? Good news! he will not lock in any of his friends or lovers; none but his enemies and haters shall be made prisoners there.

Many are the comforts thou givest, Lord, unto thy people; but let me not adore thy comforts more than thyself, or love the apples of life more than the tree of life; let Christ himself have still the chief room in my soul.

M E D I T A T I O N. V.

WHO can utter the mighty acts of the Lord ! Who can shew forth all his praise ? From all eternity, thou didst mercifully foresee man's misery, and contrive a remedy for it : thou providest a surety for him before the debt was contracted, and a Saviour before he was lost. Thy wrath soon broke out against the angels that fell ; thou waitedst not for their repentance, but presently condemned them to everlasting chains of darkness. But long hast thou waited on me ; yea, followed me with mercy, and that even after I had many times undervalued and trampled upon the greatest gift and richest jewel of heaven, Jesus Christ.

Heavenly Father, though I have been a prodigal and run-away from thy house, yet graciously own me again, upon my return, for thy child. I am a poor destitute orphan, that can do nothing for myself, but in thee the fatherless findeth mercy. I am a helpless and needy child hanging at the breasts of ordinances. O let them not prove dry breasts to me, nor let me suck wind or poison from them, as many do to their destruction : but let me suck the sincere milk of the word, for my growth and enlargement in thy ways.

Lord, thou hast directed thy people, ' in malice to be children, but in understanding to be men ;' many, alas, are found the very reverse of this ; ' in understanding they are children, but in malice they are men.' Lord free me of the leaven of malice, of pride and envy. A child I am, alas, in knowledge, O that I were such in duty and affection. Lord, make me like a little child, meek and humble, obedient and tractable, affectionate and full of regard to thee my heavenly Father. O that I were born again, and had the spirit of adoption in me, enabling me to cry Abba Father : and inclining me to be much about my Father's hand. My needs are very great, but blessed be thy name thou hast erected a throne of grace for me to come to, in the time of need.

Many are the needs, which thou hast left upon me, that I might have the more errands to thy throne, and thou mayest the oftner hear my voice. Lord, pour out upon me a spirit of grace and supplication, and cause me to delight in approaching to thee.

Lord, help me to remember the vows and solemn engagements I have been taking on. I have been giving thee my bond at a communion-table, for thankfulness, love and obedience: O let me have Christ's back-bond for my relief, that he will strengthen me by his powerful grace, to pay my vows to God, for I do entirely distrust my own strength. O that my obedience may be universal, cheerful, constant, and growing like the morning light.

Give me grace always to believe and remember the end of my creation, and the vanity of this world; the shortness of my life, and the uncertainty of the time of my death; the miseries of such as die in their sins, and the unspeakable joys of those who die in the Lord.

M E D I T A T I O N VI.

I Have been swearing allegiance to the King of heaven over the broken body, and shed blood of his dear Son. And seeing I have now opened my mouth unto the Lord, O save me from going back. Yea, I have been lifting myself as a soldier to fight under the banner of Jesus Christ, as the captain of my salvation; and my captain has been giving me a feast to hearten and encourage me against all difficulties. O that I may be strengthened by it, to fight manfully against all his and my enemies, yea, and prevail over them, and put to flight the armies of the aliens. Alas, I must confess to my shame, that I have often fainted and turned back in the day of battle, I have gone from Christ's standard into the enemy's camp. O for the shield of faith! O for grace to depend more upon my captain for strength and furniture, whether for work or warfare, duty or difficulty! Lord, leave me not to tug at the oar of unassisted endeavours, or to struggle with duty in my own strength; but help me always to look to my covenanted Lord, for covenanted strength. O let covenanted grace be sufficient for me.

May I now be going on from strength to strength, from one degree of grace to another; from one evidence, experience and manifestation to another, till at length I appear before God in Zion. Let me forget these things that are behind;

and reach forth to these things which are before, and so press on toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And let me count all things but dung and loss, that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, but his to clothe me.

My days are flying away as a swift post, eternity is hastening on with wings ; much of my hand-breadth of days is worn away, and soon will my sun be turned, and be very low : O that I may be near my lodging against night. The blast of the last trumpet is at hand, and a proclamation will shortly be made by one standing in the clouds, that time shall be no more. O that I may improve precious time well while it lasts, and run fast, with my eyes towards heaven as my home and everlasting lodging place. It is an encouragement to run, that Christ is in heaven before me ; God send us a joyful meeting. Lord, give me the traveller's charges by the way, something to sweeten my journey, and make it lightsome. O where are the grapes of Eschol, the cordials of faith, the prospects of Canaan from Pisgah hill ? O that I were frequently sending faith and hope, these two faithful spies, to survey the promised land, or at least to visit the borders and outer coast of my Lord's country ; that they might bring me back some encouraging reports, to support and cheer my heart while in the wilderness.

Lord, my wants are many, and I need daily supplies from thee, but blessed be God, that I have such an agent in heaven as Christ to present my bills, petitions, and supplications. I put all my requests in his hand, and leave them to his care and management, who knows the fit time to present them, and send me an answer of them. I desire to put him on all my secrets, and trust him with all my concerns.

Lord, stay not away from me, but let me have some gracious visits now and then in thy ordinances. Give me thy holy Spirit to teach me, when I am ignorant ; to quicken me, when I am dull ; to awaken me, when I am secure ; to revive me, when I am faint. Let thy good spirit be still suggesting things to me, and bringing thy word and promises to my remembrance, that my hard heart may now and then gush forth in streams of love and desire towards thee. O divine shepherd, thou hast refreshment for my weariness, guidance for my wanderings, and balm for my wounds. O lead me into the pleasant pastures, that are watered by the fruitful streams

of thy Spirit, that so this tempest-beaten soul may at last be brought into the harbour of rest, and be laid up securely with thee.

M E D I T A T I O N VII.

GLORY to God, that hath not withheld his Son, even his only Son from me, but hath given him to be a propitiation for my sins, yea, and to be the life and food of my soul. Blessed be his name, that he who offered himself for me upon the cross, doth also offer himself to me at his table. O that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which he offered on the cross, and which I have been commemorating at his table, may atone for all the failings and miscarriages both in my preparations and performances! O blessed for ever be the Lord Jesus, for the wounds which he received on the cross, for my sins! O print them deeply on my heart, that I may still remember them, and continually bear about with me 'the dying of the Lord Jesus,' that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in me.

I have been eating the bread of my Father's house, O let me not return to feed on the husks of the world and sin. But as I have the Lord Jesus, so help me to walk in him. Uphold me by thy right hand, and let none pluck me out of it; and according to the well-ordered covenant. O put thy fear in my heart, that I may never depart from thee. O thou that givest power to the faint, and increaseth strength to them that have no might, and who art only able to keep me from falling, O stablish, strengthen, and settle me. Lord, never leave nor abandon me to myself, otherwise I will be as a reed shaken with the wind, and a leaf driven to and fro. Alas, my heart is like Reuben, unstable as water, O if it were liquid as water, that I might like Hannah pour it out in prayer before the Lord!

Lord, preserve any degree of softness of heart, or liveliness of frame which thou hast wrought in me by thy own ordinance, and help me to improve it; otherwise the devil and the world will soon come and lull me asleep, take away the living child, and leave a dead one in its room. Skreen me from the

cold chilling blasts, that come from the devil and the world, that my love be not frozen up: but let the south winds of the Spirit come, and kindly breathe upon any spark of grace thou hast kindled, cherish convictions, preserve good motions, and encourage desires. O maintain the fire of thy love in me, by the oil of thy gracious influences. Let the name of Jesus be always to me as precious ointment poured forth, that I may remember his love more than wine. And let the remembrance of his love be still efficacious to melt my hard heart, enliven my dead soul, and inflame my cold breast with a burning affection to him. O let the charms of my Redeemer's love triumph over all the charms of sin's pleasures, and Satan's devices, and cause me to reject all their solicitations with disdain and abhorrence. I have seen Christ's love in bleeding to death on the cursed tree, to deliver me from lying in hell; O let me never again wilfully walk in the road that leads to it. I have seen him wrestling in an agony to open heavens gates for me, let me never turn my back on heaven, and tell him by my unworthy carriage he might have saved his labours. O let me never requit the kindness of my glorious friend at this rate.

O that I could spend my life in admiring Christ's love, and contemplating his beauty: Surely he is the 'Rose of Sharon,' yea, the most beautiful rose in all the garden of God, and that rose that beautifies all the flowers in the garden. How charming is his beauty, and how fragrant is his smell! One leaf of this fragrant rose is sufficient to perfume the whole creation. O let the rose come and perfume my ill-smelled heart, and ill-favoured performances, that God may not reject both me and them. Let the sweet favour of Christ's sacrifice, and the odour of his intercession, so diffuse itself, and fill heaven, that the evil favour of my sins and duties may not enter. Surely if it were not for that sweet perfume, God would not suffer such a stinking dung-hill as I am, to approach so near him, and be as a smoke in his nostrils all the day. O if the wind of the Spirit would but blow the sweet smell of Sharon's rose on my unfavoury affections and withered soul, it would soon revive and blossom as the rose, and the scent thereof be as the wine of Lebanon.

M E D I T A T I O N VIII.

HOW marvellous is it, that the glorious bridegroom Christ, whose beauty is surpassing, his kingdom mighty, and his riches infinite, that such an one should offer to match with uncomely souls, and court a bride naturally as black as hell; yea, seek her through a sea of blood, through the pains of death, the torments of hell, and horrors of the grave: that he should follow me in my wanderings, through the wilderness of sin, with his alluring invitations and gospel-offers; yea, present me with the rings and bracelets of his precious promises and Spirit's consolations, and all to win my heart, and gain my consent to him! 'He is my Lord and my God.' Can my heart be but ravished with his love; he took shame and gave me glory; he took the curse, and gave me the blessing; he took death, and gave me life; he took my sins, and gave his righteousness! O wonderful and happy exchange for my soul, that was ready to perish; my soul's blessing be evermore upon his head, that made this exchange with me! O that I may be more and more acquainted with him, and the way of salvation through his righteousness and strength. Let me still desire to go out of myself, that I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of him. Let me always sit under the shadow of this tree of life, which yields the richest fruits, and O let these fruits be sweet to my taste. Blessed Jesus, thou art my life, my strength, my wisdom, my riches, my light, my health, my joy, my glory, and my all. Be thou never far from me; but give me faith always to live in thee, and depend on thee.

Lord pity these poor souls who have been watching for the Son of David, as he passed by in the ordinances; and yet are complaining, their eyes have not seen the King in his beauty: O draw by the vail, and shew thyself to them. Lord when thou shewest thyself, let me love thee; and when thou withdrawest thyself, let me follow thee, and lament after thee.

Lord, multiply the children of Zion, the sons born in thy house, even these, who are begotten again to a lively hope. And when the Lord shall count and write up the people, may it be written of many in this land, this man and that woman was born there.

Alas, for the unsuccessfulness of sermons and sacraments in this age! O where is the power and life that used to accompany solemn ordinances? Where are these breathings, pantings, mournings, meltings, longings, and heavenly frames that wont to be seen at such occasions. The day was, that one sermon hath pricked some thousands to the heart; but now many sermons are preached and sacraments dispensed, and scarce any pricked to the heart for sin.

Lord, hasten antichrist's downfall: remove that mother and mistress of abominations in the earth. Take graven images and superstition out of the way, and bring in the Jews in troops. Let the time come when this church shall sing for joy, when Scotland's moon shall shine like the light of the sun, and her sun like the light of seven days in one. Come and lay her stones with fair colours, and her foundations with sapphires: make her windows of agates, and her gates carbuncles. Let the name of our cities be, *Jehovah Shammah*, The Lord is there; and the inscription of the people's lives be, *holiness to the Lord*. O that the pleasant flowers may appear, and the time of the singing of birds may come. Amen.

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